

Dilemmas of Humanity

Dialogues Toward Socialism

Synthesis of Regional Conferences



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Between July and September of 2023, approximately 800 people from 260 organisations and 51 countries participated in some form of activity that debated the Dilemmas of Humanity. Each of these activities sought to bring together the many forces of the Left in each region to discuss how to overcome the many crises resulting from the continuation of Capitalism and explore pathways toward building Socialism.

1 **Our World is in Crisis: Hundreds of People Gather to Discuss the Dilemmas of Humanity**

In the Arab-Maghreb region, the conference was attended by 90 delegates from 54 organisations and 12 countries. This is a region where the legacy of colonialism and continuous and relentless imperialist aggression have condemned every country to varying degrees of underdevelopment and political, economic, and social instability. The most recent regional surge in popular mobilization, which began in 2010, resulted in reactionary governments, civil wars, or democratic processes that were later compromised - all due to imperialist intervention. The region continues to be conditioned by the control and subordination of national governments to imperialist hegemony, and in this regard, the Zionist occupation of Palestine is a prime example. Political repression, persecution, and the absence of civil liberties and democracy are at the front and center of the dilemmas that the

region must overcome. The absence of political freedom is directly connected to the economic backwardness the region experiences, for without access to participation and representation, the interests of the parasitic rentier class determine the economic agenda of many countries. In this context, ethnic, religious, and social conflict, as well as terrorism, are additional obstacles that a dispersed and divided Left must contend with.

In the Sub-Saharan African region, the conference *Pan African Dialogues to Build Socialism* was attended by more than 180 delegates from 65 organisations and 30 countries. In the last century, the independence of the states on the African continent has not yielded the anticipated advancements for the peoples of the region. The continent remains deeply impacted by the legacies of colonialism and imperialist exploitation. Foreign influence on the continent has been characterized by a heavy military presence, economic constraints imposed through international financial institutions, and diplomatic approaches that limit their autonomy to act in their own interests and pursue self-determination. Stemming from the effects of the 2011 NATO-led intervention in Libya, which created regional instability and the spread of terrorist organisations throughout West Africa, the region has experienced protracted military conflict and significant loss of life. Most recently, the coup and uprisings in Niger have given rise to broad anti-imperialist sentiments. Africa's Sahel- the region south of the Sahara Desert- has become the epicenter of calls to defend national sovereignty and to resist military intervention by ECOWAS, NATO, France, and the United States. Nevertheless, the lack of broader political formations on the continent has posed a serious challenge to the region. Many political parties with roots in national liberation and Socialist movements have transformed into representatives of Western interests. The main issue is not the ideological orientation of

mainstream political leaders but their lack of independence from the West. Within the continent, the challenge is to reassert its autonomy in the face of external influences and to champion a vision that genuinely serves the collective aspirations of the African people.

In the North American region, the conference *A Socialist Horizon: People's Solutions for Humanity* drew 320 in-person attendees to Atlanta, Georgia, representing 40 organisations and 25 US states. In the wealthiest country in the world, the false promise of opportunity and prosperity for all becomes more apparent every day. Income inequality and poverty have worsened since the 2008 recession and were exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic. The violent legacy of slavery, racism, and white supremacy has meant that Black people and people of color continue to be hit hardest by the crisis of Capitalism. The 2020 George Floyd uprisings against police brutality and state violence showed a heightened consciousness about the intersection of racism, poverty, and militarism. US imperialism continues to impose violence globally, exploiting labour and resources, fueling endless wars, and maintaining 800+ military bases worldwide. Domestically, military spending diverts resources from vital services, worsening poverty and limiting access to healthcare, housing, and education. The ongoing war in Ukraine, with over \$47 billion allocated by the US, shows no signs of ending. The US's Cold War against China also threatens to escalate militarism and anti-Communist efforts. In response, left-wing movements, including labour and Socialist movements, are experiencing a resurgence in the US. The challenge for the region is to overcome the violent assault of the US Empire against the working class and unite with the international working class.

The conference in Latin America and the Caribbean was attended by more than 200 people from 111 organisations and 23 countries,

held in Chile near the date of the 50-year anniversary of the coup against Left president Salvador Allende. This context substantially impacted the conference, which was marked by the reaffirmation of the continued struggle to build Socialism and the timeless and undefeatable character of class struggle for social transformation. Recent victories of progressive governments in countries like Brazil and Colombia contributed to a spirit of hopefulness, which was tempered by concern regarding the growth of extreme Right forces throughout the region. The ascent of the Right throughout the region has been the product of targeted efforts at questioning the legitimacy and credibility of progressive forces and ideals. Broad sectors of the population have been influenced by reactionary political discourse largely due to effective communication strategies of the Right based on the manipulation of information. Another trend that marked the attack of the Left in the region was the use and manipulation of the judicial system as a tool to launch political attacks against the Left. The struggles in the continent are focused on confronting the super-exploitation of labour, increasing levels of poverty and hunger, forced migration, poverty, violence caused by militarization and policing, and environmental crises caused by the continuation of Capitalism and imperialist presence in the region.

Struggles to Overcome Capitalism

In all regions, participants discussed the many issues and crises that the people are experiencing due to the continuation of Capitalism and imperialism, underscoring in all cases the non-viable nature of Capitalism as a system to promote development in the Global South and justice and equality around the world.

Organisation of the Working Class

Be they women, Black people, workers in the formal or informal sector, indigenous peoples, rural peasants, urban dwellers, unemployed peoples, migrants, LGBTQ+, or youth, every regional conference discussed the diversity and conditions of the working class and the urgency of building organisation.

All conferences debated the challenges and opportunities for advancing towards greater organisation of the working class. The need to build organisation and organise the unorganised was a topic of debate at all conferences. In Chile, the participants highlighted the importance of seeing organisation as the only means of building worker power and effecting fundamental transformation in the lives of the working class. In South Africa, there was discussion around the need to counter efforts at co-optation of struggles by NGOs and multinational corporations. Similarly, in the US, a discussion arose about the limitations of non-profit leadership in working class movements. A resounding call emerged from the US conference: the need to build a Communist party capable of harnessing the aspirations and energies of the millions of working class and oppressed people searching for an organisational vehicle. In Tunisia, an overarching theme throughout the conference was the need to regain the necessary political freedoms and liberties which are essential to building organisation. The dire conditions of repression and persecution, including the rising numbers of political prisoners across the region, were deeply debated, underscoring the enduring need for democratic guarantees and conditions suitable for organising.

In Latin America, participants asserted the need to build organising strategies that draw on the concrete realities of different communities and territories, insisting that approaches must correspond with the

concrete conditions. This sentiment was echoed in the conference in Tunisia, where emphasis was placed on the diversity of the working class today and the need to better understand its composition and reality. All four conferences in Sub-Saharan Africa, the Arab-Maghreb region, Latin America, and North America underscored the need to seek approaches tailored toward the reality of informal workers. In Sub-Saharan Africa, an additional concern was raised regarding the unemployed. In the Arab-Maghreb region, an emphasis on the specific conditions of women workers, young workers, and migrant workers was raised as a key task to advancing towards a more representative and powerful trade union movement. In Latin America, participants discussed the possibility of other types of organisations beyond the trade union without dismissing the importance of organising the working class in relation to their work and workplace. These reflections resulted from a debate on the transformation in the world of work in the region. Neoliberalism has generated various modalities of employment, of which most are informal and precarious. In light of this reality, the Latin American conference discussed the need to consider the popular economy - a system of self-organised work devised as a survival strategy by workers who have been denied access to employment - and its specific challenges regarding building organisation. In North America, participants highlighted the importance of building a multiracial movement, and many stressed the necessity of prioritising people of colour, particularly Black workers, in organising efforts.

The current state of trade unions and union struggle were deeply debated in Sub-Saharan Africa, North America, and the Arab-Maghreb region. In South Africa, participants asserted that retrenchment and unemployment are enormous challenges for trade unions who must seek not only to raise wages but also to organise new workers across borders and sectors and seek the means to incorporate the unemployed

in some capacity. In the US, there was a strong call to actively engage in the recent resurgence of the labour movement and strike activity, and participants debated new forms of union organising that must be used to adapt to the reality of informal work in the country, in which traditional union organising is unviable. In Tunisia, the repression and external control of trade unions, coupled with a tendency towards bureaucracy and the separation of political from economic struggle, were perceived as the key issues confronting the trade union movement. Much of the discussion in Tunisia also reflected a need to better understand the working class's new composition to devise the correct strategies for organising the unorganised. Cooperation, collaboration, and exchange of information between trade unions in the region were raised as a priority, considering the creation of online platforms that could gather knowledge regarding labour conditions and struggles and even the potential creation of a regional trade union federation.

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Youth and the specific approaches to organising them were topics of debate in the Arab-Maghreb region. The region discussed the lack of opportunities that youth face in countries that are racked by war and severe economic crisis. Proposals were made regarding the formation of regional fronts of students as one approach to mobilising the youth in a united struggle against the normalisation of relations between Arab-Maghreb states and Israel. This issue is key to the political and anti-imperialist struggle in the region. Participants were united around the idea that political education efforts need to continue and redouble with youth, and new communications tools need to be developed to further politicise and engage youth in struggle.

Every region was united around the idea that the feminist struggle against patriarchy and for gender equality has been central to the emancipation of the working class and to class struggle today. In

North America, the debate around gender centred on the struggle for reproductive justice in the face of a nationwide trend to overturn policies that protect women. Specifically, the discussions about reproductive justice emphasised that this includes the right to have or not have a child, bodily autonomy, and the right to raise children in a safe environment. In Latin America, feminism has been central to struggles that seek to push back neoliberal reforms and defend basic rights. This experience led the region to discuss the importance of not treating feminism as an isolated sectoral issue but rather adopting a cross-cutting approach that integrates it with all other struggles. This point was also underscored in the Arab-Maghreb region, where the specific conditions of women were discussed in relation to all sectoral struggles. In the conditions of war that abound throughout the Arab and Maghreb, women are special targets of humanitarian crimes and extreme forms of violence. Concerning labour, women occupy the worst jobs and often work in sectors where unionisation is criminalised in Arab-Maghreb countries. This reality of acute exploitation and oppression of women must inform any Left program in the region. Similar discussions regarding the specific and profound ways Capitalism attacks women were also held in Sub-Saharan Africa and North America.

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In Tunisia, women highlighted that despite the central role that women have played in popular uprisings, their participation in the leadership of parties and trade unions has still not reached parity. The need to push for a dedicated feminist agenda within Left parties and the insistence on more significant participation in leadership was raised. Both the Sub-Saharan African and Arab-Maghreb regions discussed the limitations of bourgeois feminism, underscoring the way that class strongly conditions the oppression and exploitation of women. In the Arab-Maghreb conference, participants insisted on not allowing

the women's movement - which has a rich and long history - to be absorbed by bourgeois feminism that serves an imperialist agenda in the region.

Regarding LGBTQ struggles, the conference in Sub-Saharan Africa debated the huge challenge these pose in a region where the majority of the population has been historically conditioned towards discrimination against LGBTQ people. While the need to advance efforts and awareness and protect the lives of LGBTQ people was raised, the need to avoid alienating the base of parties that are growing in membership was a concern.

Immigration was also discussed at the South African conference, emphasising the need to tackle the dehumanisation of African lives inherent in how African migrants are treated. Meanwhile, in Chile, the topic of security was raised considering the high rates of violence that many countries experience for various reasons, threatening the lives of the people and forcing them to a precarious migration journey. The question of security is central in the discussion regarding regional sovereignty, given the levels of interference in security and defence that imperialism has imposed on the continent. New approaches to the question of security must be developed from the perspective of the community's sovereignty over the care and protection of their territory, along a different rationale than how the Right treats the need for security.

Struggles for Material and Social Goods

In every region, there is a range of struggles in both urban and rural areas that seek to address the lack of access to basic social and material goods from which the working class suffers. This denial of basic goods and services to large segments of the population is

understood by all regions as a symptom of Capitalism and imperialism, and these struggles are essential to advancing towards Socialism.

In Latin America, emphasis was placed on the need for movements to seek solutions to satisfy the material needs of the people as a means to build power and organise while also highlighting the inability of Capitalism to meet the people's needs. Regional integration was discussed as one approach that could enable progressive governments to better satisfy the needs of the people. A deep debate regarding regional integration took place, emphasising the role it can play in developing both national and regional sovereignty. Deeper integration through the further development of existing mechanisms like the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States (CELAC), the Union of South American Nations (UNASUR), and the Bolivarian Alliance for the Peoples of Our America– Peoples' Trade Treaty (ALBA-TCP) could advance with greater participation from social movements. Additionally, integration should be explored along the lines not only of commercial and economic avenues but also defence and in the realm of the judiciary. It was also raised that integration projects must advance a decolonial agenda in various ways, including through the joint pursuit of reparations, the decolonization of Puerto Rico, and the respect of the sovereignties of Cuba and Haiti. Finally, there was discussion around the possibility of initiatives aimed at integration from the social movements themselves to satisfy the needs of the people as a regional project for integration.

In Sub-Saharan Africa, the topic of housing was central to the conference based on the dire need for housing faced by people across the continent in both urban and rural areas. Based on the understanding that the commodification of land and resulting unequal access to it are at the root of the housing crisis, a need to pursue

decommodification and collective ownership was affirmed. Activists engaged in housing struggles insisted on the importance of framing housing as a human right in public discourse and resisting narratives that reinforce unequal access as inevitable. A similar call for housing as a human right emerged in North America, where the housing crisis impacts people in rural areas, urban areas, on the US-Mexico border, and in Native reservations.

The South African conference also discussed the inadequate and unequal access to healthcare, concluding that only a Socialist approach that decommodifies health services could satisfy the needs of the people. The discussions reaffirmed that health, science, and technology must be conceived as matters of human dignity developed for universal access. In the US, the issue of healthcare was similarly raised, particularly the severe impact of hospital closures and public health insurance cuts to millions of working people. The discussions reaffirmed that the right to healthcare is vital to building a dignified future.

The question of food and agriculture was discussed in Tunisia, South Africa, and Chile, and all conferences agreed on the unviability of agriculture under Capitalist logic due to its destructive and exploitative nature and its inability to feed the people of the world adequately and sufficiently. The commodification of nature was diagnosed as a root cause of the environmental crisis by all regions, and efforts towards bringing land and nature under public domain and democratising access through Agrarian Reform projects were seen as alternatives to the current structure.

The conferences in South Africa and Tunisia discussed the problem of hunger in their regions, which has been exacerbated by the conflict

in Ukraine in the case of the Arab-Maghreb region. The Sub-Saharan African, Arab-Maghreb, and Latin American regions agreed on the key role of peasants in crafting solutions to the problems of agriculture under Capitalism. In all three conferences, there was unity around the idea that environmentally sustainable farming and agroecology are viable alternatives and that peasant and rural communities hold important knowledge and expertise. In particular, discussions in Chile pointed to principles of reciprocity and complementarity, community-based approaches, and networks devoted to the reproduction of life that are part of the ancestral and native culture of many of the peoples of the continent.

The need to spread agroecological farming practices and create conditions for successful small-scale farming was discussed. In Sub-Saharan Africa, participants considered that extreme hunger in the region called for exploring mechanisation and large-scale production as part of a comprehensive approach. In the Arab-Maghreb region and Latin America, there was a focus on the question of unequal access to water and the severe problems that this creates for small and peasant farmers. In North America, participants underscored that US corporations' control over food, agriculture, land, chemicals, and environmental costs put the whole world at stake. Food sovereignty was discussed in all regions as a necessary approach, and in Tunisia, there was an emphasis on the connection to national sovereignty as well.

In all conferences, there was agreement regarding the importance of prioritising the struggle over nature and the environment and confronting the crisis with a Socialist program, with greater participation from working class movements. In this regard, there was a divergence between the call for greater participation of working class movements

in spaces where the environmental crisis is discussed, such as the United Nations Climate Change conferences (COP), or the possibility of creating entirely separate spaces based on a different logic and approach.

Latin American movements discussed the need to reframe the narrative and adopt a different language to speak about the current situation. Participants raised the need to no longer speak of an “environmental crisis” and instead of the need to defend life and the common goods of nature. Additionally, the region advocated for an approach to organising that integrated this struggle with the existing anti-patriarchal, anti-racist, anti-Capitalist, and anti-imperialist agendas. Movements gathered in Chile planned to develop a process in 2024 to build a comprehensive synthesis of the knowledge, policies, and points of unity between the different Left forces regarding the environment as a means to advance.

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The Battle of Ideas

The battle of ideas, understood as a need for a Left project to dispute ideas, narratives, emotions, and beliefs that are the service of Capitalism, was discussed in all regions. There was consensus around the need to engage in an ideological battle over the interpretation of reality based on an understanding that the representation of reality that is present in the mainstream disguises the true nature of the problems the people face. In more than one conference, there was specific reference to the Capitalist narrative regarding the environmental crisis and the urgency of confronting it.

The conference in Chile called for the need to reclaim a dialectical historical and materialist framework in communications while seeking to incorporate philosophical references from the region connected to an

emancipatory politic. In terms of advancing the creation of alternative media projects, one important point that was raised was seeking policies in progressive governments to fund and support the development of popular communication. The need to better understand the ideological terrain of the working class today was raised, perhaps through the use of advanced data-gathering tools. Greater collaboration, cooperation, and the formation of effective networks of popular communications were proposed, as well as developing tools to conquer some measure of technological sovereignty. The conference also emphasised the need to dispute subjectivities through various means, which include research, editorial publications, art, and culture. The dimensions of social relationships, emotions, and the human experience in its broad sense must be considered when discussing Capitalism's failure. Social relations and the subjective experience of humans under Capitalism are compromised due to the system's inherent unequal and exploitative logic, and this reality must be exposed, questioned, and debated from a Left, humanist, and anti-Capitalist perspective.

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In the South African conference, there was an understanding that a significant expression of Capitalism hegemony in society was the control of information. The need to expand work in media, education, and the production of art and culture were key tasks for advancing a Left project. These efforts in the region are not only necessary for waging an ideological battle against Capitalism but also contribute towards the overall development of the continent.

In the US conference, a key topic of debate was how anti-Communism, anti-intellectualism, and the nationwide trend of erasing political truths from public education curricula have shifted national attitudes toward Socialism, including in popular organisations. Significant discussions took place about the need to prioritise political education and

ideological warfare in order to counter this regression.

Religion was a topic of discussion in the Arab-Maghreb, Sub-Saharan African, and North American regions, where participants discussed how religion has been weaponized for the purpose of seeding division as well as preserving the existing order. In the Arab-Maghreb region, there was discussion around the need to overcome ideological efforts that link cultural and religious identity to ideas and principles that serve Capitalism and existing class structures. Meanwhile, in Sub-Saharan Africa, there was discussion around the need to study and understand the actual connection between religion and terrorism, avoiding mainstream narratives that attribute violence to certain religious belief systems. In North America, discussions surfaced regarding efforts to combat right-wing, white supremacist Christian Evangelicalism that shapes the consciousness and daily experiences of the working class and their oppressors alike. However, the strategic approach to engaging with matters of faith - stemming from the storied history of faith-based organising in the US - remains an outstanding question.

Points of Political Unity

In each conference, key points of political unity were underscored as a road map to continuing on an agenda that builds Socialism today.

A strong point of unity in the Arab-Maghreb region concerns the need to build the power to confront imperialism in the region, understanding its influence and presence as the greatest obstacle to advancing a Left project. Specifically, the absence of democracy in most countries and the prevalence of war, conflict, and authoritarian regimes subject political activists to repressive conditions that hamper the ability to build durable projects and organisation. The occupation of Palestine by Zionist forces and the denial of national sovereignty to Western

Sahara demand the formation of broad regional fronts of political action for sovereignty. To this end, intense and permanent work must be developed to counter the division sowed by the region's ruling class. Organising efforts in the region must advance in four sectors: women, youth, peasants, and labour, creating mechanisms for greater exchange and the capacity for joint action. Movements and parties in the region are united around the strategic importance of advancing political education to craft greater unity, develop joint organising strategies, and confront the region's organisational and political challenges.

The conference in Sub-Saharan Africa reached unity around a series of resolutions that reaffirmed the commitment to Pan-Africanism and the struggle for Socialism and against colonialism and imperialism around the world. National sovereignty and self-determination are a political priority in Africa, and movements committed to solidarity with struggles that seek to assert these and continued rejection of foreign military bases on the continent. Movements in the conference expressed support for the continued development and expansion of BRICS as a potential counter to a unipolar order. The region condemned the escalation of the war in Ukraine by the West and appealed for a peaceful resolution while congratulating the People's Republic of China for restraint from falling prey to Western provocation. Regarding the key issues that mobilise the working class on the continent - gender equality, housing, access to health technology and science, youth, and labour - the region is committed to further developing political education spaces and capacity. Through exchange between the countries and further exploration and study of themes relating to key issues, the region sees a pathway for advancing the Pan-African project of building Socialism and national sovereignty.

In North America, there was a unified conclusion that building Socialism

is the imperative solution in the face of the threat posed by Capitalism and US imperialism. Despite the diversity of organisations represented at the conference, there was a clear call to construct a shared understanding of Socialism through political education and unearthing grassroots solutions to building Socialism. Political education was also named as a path forward to combatting the new McCarthyism and all expressions of anti-Communism, domestic and foreign, including US aggression against Cuba, Venezuela, and China. To counter US imperialism, there was agreement that engaging in international working class struggle and resistance must be central to the region's organising work and approach. There was a common recognition of the limitations of "single-issue" organising and the need to build a movement united by a more comprehensive political program with a substantive sense of strategic cooperation across struggles. With the alternative forms it has taken in the US in recent years, the region acknowledged organised labour as a key arena in which the region must engage. The region recognized the need to persist in constructing a collective vision, forging a shared commitment to concerted action, and developing dedication to cultivating principled unity.

In Latin America, there was unity around the importance of crafting Socialism today, reflecting the anti-racist, anti-colonial orientation as well as the indigenous and Afro-descendant heritage of the peoples of the continent. To advance a Socialist agenda, the possibility of building broad fronts was discussed, ensuring that these did not impede movements from continuing to radicalise and advance an unequivocally Socialist agenda. Progressive governments in the region continue to be seen as a possibility for advancing a Left project. Still, movements were united around the need for deeper and more meaningful popular participation in these governments. It was recognized that multipolarity is a context that must be taken seriously

and that it implies a more careful and deeper analysis to understand what place countries of Latin America and the Caribbean occupy in the rearrangement of global power structures and concerning China. It was agreed that multipolarity in and of itself is no guarantee of regional and national sovereignty, and regional integration continues to be a priority for the Left project in the region.

The International Dilemmas of Humanity Process

In the face of the challenges posed by the present crisis of Capitalism, it is clear that genuine solutions to the Dilemmas of Humanity are emerging within the working class all over the world. The resounding message from these conferences is clear: the working class, the backbone of society, is the only group capable of shaping a vision for a future world that is worthy of humanity, based on the values of solidarity, justice, respect and love for others, and care for the environment.

Popular movements around the world are daily confronting a relentless assault on the well-being and aspirations of the peoples. Capitalism and imperialism threaten not only the fragile balance of our planet but also the very essence of our shared humanity. It is evident that the present system is fundamentally incapable of solving the Dilemmas of Humanity. Amidst these existential crises, it is not enough to merely identify the problems we know that we face; we must actively pursue solutions.

The regional conferences of Dilemmas of Humanity represent a significant stride forward in the ongoing struggle of the working class. These conferences not only provoked critical debates but also kindled hope and commitment toward building a better world. These conferences are only one step in advancing a Socialist project. As we

move toward the next stage– the International Dilemmas of Humanity Conference in October 2023– we must carry forth the resolve of the working class of the world that was expressed in these conferences to build a brighter and more humane horizon.

Notes





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