

GENERAL MOTION

The First "Hands off Cain" International Congress, held in Rome from 15th to 17th December, 1995, endorses the reports by the Secretary and Treasurer.

The Congress welcomes the progress made along the path towards the abolition of the death penalty over the last two years. There has been an increase in the number of "de facto" and "de jure" abolitionist countries, in the number of those which have adopted a moratorium on executions and those which signed or ratified international abolitionist agreements and protocols, such as South Africa, Ukraine, Moldova and Bosnia.

It considers that the establishment of the "ad-hoc" International Criminal Court on the Crimes Committed in the Former Yugoslavia and that on the Crimes Committed in Rwanda, as well as the adoption of the Statute of the standing International Criminal Court on the Crimes against Humanity are important results achieved thanks to a struggle in which the Transnational Radical Party was in the forefront.

The creation of courts which do not envisage the death penalty on principle will be crucial - especially if abolitionist countries eventually become the majority - to establish the international custom of excluding the death penalty in any case.

It endorses and promotes the international campaign "10 countries, 100 cities, 100.000 signatures for the UN to stop the death penalty" at all levels - in parliaments, other elected assemblies, provincial and town councils - and by collecting the signatures of citizens, in order to turn 1996 into "the Year of the Worldwide Moratorium on Executions".

It notes with satisfaction that the European Parliament, the Latin American Parliament, the Italian Parliament and Government and the Spanish Government have already declared to be in favour of the simultaneous joint submission to the United Nations of a resolution on the moratorium. It believes it is essential to work towards the inclusion in the initiative of at least one Scandinavian country, one country formerly belonging to the Soviet Union, one from the Arab world, one from Africa and one from America.

To this end, it entrusts its governing bodies with organising all possible support and information actions: a conference in Moscow inviting jurists and Members of Parliament of the Republics formerly belonging to the Soviet Union who are drafting their new constitutions or fundamental laws and their new codes, and a conference in New York inviting American citizens and Members of Congress, delegations at the United Nations, abolitionist activists, human rights and civil rights organisations, associations of artists, doctors and other working groups sensitive to abolitionism. It considers the Summer 1996 Olympic Games in Atlanta, Georgia, an important occasion to launch, together with competing athletes, the abolitionist message.

Moreover, the Congress entrusts its governing bodies with taking a joint action of civil disobedience in one of the countries where the death penalty still exists.

The Congress endorses, and entrusts its governing bodies with carrying out, the project of a Yearbook on the institutional situation of capital punishment, reporting the texts of acts passed by Parliaments, international conventions, the resolutions adopted by supranational institutions, the sentences pronounced by Supreme Courts. The Yearbook will be an essential tool for governments, lawmakers, constitutional judges, as well as abolitionist activists and organisations.

The Congress commits its members to and entrusts its executive bodies with promoting an extraordinary fund-raising campaign for "Hands off Cain" to be enabled to finance next year's political goals and the preparatory conferences, as well as projects and initiatives to sensitise the general public.

The Congress pays tribute to Mariateresa Di Lascia, the inspirer and founder of "Hands off Cain" and considers the creation of a Foundation bearing her name the best way to carry on with her struggle.