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March 8, 2011 – 100th anniversary of International Women's Day

Greetings by the (n) Italian Communist Party to the World Conference of Women - Caracas - from 4 to 8 March

Appeal to help in the struggle against the Vatican

(from *La Voce* n° 37, March 2011)

The Vatican is one of the major world centers that promote and organize the undeclared war of extermination that the imperialist bourgeoisie leads against the popular masses in every corner of the world and seek to perpetuate the marginalization and oppression of women.

The new Italian Communist Party, heir to the Italian Communist Party of Antonio Gramsci, welcomes the World Conference of Women and wishes every success.

Humanity is experiencing a turning point in the world, an unique revolutionary period. We entered the terminal phase of the second general crisis of capitalism. The development of human activities continued under the capitalist social relations and under the direction of the imperialist bourgeoisie led us in an environmental crisis that is unprecedented. With the disappearance of what remained of the first socialist countries, particularly of the Soviet Union, it has worked out the momentum that the first wave of proletarian revolution had given to the progress of humanity. The imperialist bourgeoisie defends tooth and nail, with sophisticated maneuvers and increasingly deadly weapons, its system of social relations and international relations that is leading us to ruin. The imperialist bourgeoisie has led the exploitation and oppression on human beings and the plunder and devastation of the environment to a level that, to survive, humanity must end the dominance of the imperialist bourgeoisie. A new wave of proletarian revolution is necessary and urgent. It will establish new social orders in each country and a new system of international relations.

The human species is an intelligent species, and will not let itself be stifled by the system of social relations which it has created over the centuries: it will eliminate the imperialist world system, it will isolate and knock out those who insist on imposing it, it will establish socialism and launch a new course of human history. Women suffer more than men the exploitation and the oppression of the present social order. The new humanity could be formed only thanks to the particular contribution of women. In the humanity that is being born, the women will have a very different role from what they have had so far in human history. For this the new Italian Communist Party has supported the preparation of this Conference and wishes it to have great success.

One of the important and essential tasks that whole humanity, men and women together, must do to open a new phase in its history, is the elimination of the Vatican and the Catholic Church, of the network of its agencies and its officials that as a poisonous octopus with a thousand tentacles covers the whole world.

In order to avoid any misunderstanding, we premise immediately that eliminating the Vatican and the Catholic Church does not mean eliminating religion. Vatican and the Catholic Church are not the unique and essential expression even of the Christian religion: they are only the remnant in the imperialist epoch of the form the Christian religion has assumed in the European Middle Ages. They are a special kind of state, a hierarchically ordered body of organizations and agencies (ministries, dioceses, parishes, congregations, associations, etc.), and officials, one of the institutions by which the imperialist bourgeoisie imposes its will on the exploited classes and oppressed peoples.

Like other religions, the Christian religion is instead an individual and collective faith and practice of men and women; it is part of another order of things. The development among Christians of base Communities, of Liberation Theology and of many other initiatives in conflict with the Vatican and the hierarchy of the Catholic Church that reject the hierarchical dependence from the Vatican, its Church and its clergy, is the practical confirmation of the fact that the Christian religion today has to do with the Vatican and the Catholic Church only in the sense that they exploit the Christian religion, the faith of believers, to implement their goals and fulfill their role of perpetuating the imperialist system, the global system of exploitation and oppression of the exploited classes and oppressed peoples.

For us Italians, the Vatican and the Catholic Church are an enemy greater than for any other people in the world. But they concern all countries, those of Europe and America in a way, those of Africa in another way, and in an even different way those of Asia and of the former Soviet Union.

In Italy, the Papal Court is the only Court still reigning. Indeed, it has become the center of the State of the Italian imperialist bourgeoisie, after that, thanks to the victory over fascism, in 1946 the working class led by the Italian Communist Party eliminated the Court of Savoy.

Italy became an unified state only 150 years ago: the Kingdom of Italy was proclaimed on March 17, 1861. Until then, for centuries, Italy was divided into several states. Among them no one had ever managed to impose itself on others just because one of them was the state of the Pope. The Pope was a king who also had certain powers over all other kings of Europe and their subjects. Therefore he could not become the king of a particular country, Italy, in the same way the kings in other countries were. On the other hand no one could remove its particular rule in Italy, because this was an instrument of his power in the rest of Europe. Although later than in other European countries, Italy was unified, however, because the Italian bourgeoisie could not do without state unity of the country. So in 1861 a compromise came for which only two survived of ten reigning Courts sanctioned by the Congress of Vienna (1815) at the end of the Napoleonic era, (before the states were even more). The Court of Savoy was eliminated in 1946, so the Papal Court is the only one left. It presides over country's political life and in some fields even directly controls it through its regional branches, although officially it has no political responsibility. Therefore, about 60 years ago it has been carried out what it was a project of state unification that the bourgeoisie had developed and evaluated during the period when it was preparing the unification of the country. Best known and for different reasons most influential spokesmen of this project that aimed to put the Pope and his Court to the head of the unified Italian state, were Pius IX (reigning in the period 1846-1878) and Vincenzo Gioberti (1801-1852). The project was ultimately rejected because the Papacy (the Pope and his Church) was not willing to give up the request, unacceptable to the bourgeoisie, to exercise absolute and universal power, claimed to be coming directly from God. It could instead be taken up and implemented with some adjustments in the new situation created 1. by the change of direction made in the meantime by the Vatican that had established on a world level a cooperating relationship between the Catholic Church and the world imperialist system of which we shall

speak below, and in Italy, 2. by the defeat of fascism, 3. by the great strength reached by the communist movement, 4. by the political settlement of U.S. imperialism in our country.

The power of the Pope and his Church is the heart of the “Italian anomaly” that makes it difficult to understand the logic of Italian history and even current events of our country, by foreigners and anyone else who ignores the existence of the papal power, which in effect does not officially exist: in fact the institutional solution adopted in 1946 makes use of diplomatic and legal fiction introduced in 1929 by the Fascism according to which the Vatican is a foreign country towards Italy and the clergy do not hold political offices.

But in fact the Papal Court is the center of the Italian state order. So, as far as Italy is concerned, it is impossible to conceive and implement any effective renewal of the country, let alone establish socialism, without deleting the Vatican and the Catholic Church. Every law and order of importance in Italy is subject to the approval of the Vatican. The political official (constitutional) organs are formed and operate under the guardianship of the Vatican (as well as of the U.S. government). But the Vatican and the Catholic Church are not only an Italian question. They are an international, a world issue. For this reason the question was put on the agenda of a Forum of the World Conference of Women. This requires a worldwide mobilization for the elimination of the Vatican and the Catholic Church. Although we are fully aware that it is primarily for the Italian masses to do the work that also has world significance.

Why is this an international issue? We have already said that when Europe came out from the Middle Ages the Pope was a king who also exercised certain powers over all other kings of Europe and their subjects. This situation was gradually formed in the course of history experienced by peoples of Europe during the Middle Ages. Given the economic and political vicissitudes of those times, the Christian clergy and the Pope at his head step by step took on the role of supreme political and civil institution of the European Christians and the Church had finally taken the form of a monarchy, a hierarchical structure branched throughout the whole territory that oversaw social life of the whole of Europe, with its center in Rome where the Pope resided

When Europe entered the Renaissance period and formed the nation states that still exist today, the Pope of Rome continued to exercise some of its universal powers in every country and to maintain its agencies and its officials that even extended their range of action also to countries outside Europe that the European powers were gradually subjecting and colonizing. The nation States that were forming and strengthening in Europe, were trying to limit the power of the Pope and they were even able to do it, but at the same time they used the Pope and his Church to restrain the peasants and other parts of the masses. In particular, the kings used it to consolidate and perpetuate the bonds of allegiance of the nobles and of their other subjects. At the same time, European states made use of the Catholic Missions to subdue the colonial peoples and break their resistance to colonization.

This dual relationship of struggle and cooperation between the Papacy and the new ruling class that prevailed in Europe, the bourgeoisie, has taken a turn in the nineteenth century when in Europe a new player in the political struggle emerged: the communist movement. The Pope and his Church during the reign of Leone XIII (who reigned in the period 1878-1903) abandoned the role of main antagonist against the bourgeoisie, took advantage of its difficulties in coping with the communist movement and negotiated with it their role in the new system of Europe and of the world. The result was that they took as their main line of action the collaboration with the bourgeoisie to defend the common interests of the ruling classes against the communist movement, which pursued the elimination of private property and the overcoming of the division of society into classes and put at service of this cause and subordinated to it the

instruments of power that they had inherited from medieval history. They then integrated into the world imperialist system, taking their particular role in it. Since then the Vatican with his Church has become one of the main props of the imperialist world system in every corner of the world. It has coped with skill and a lot of pragmatism and opportunism not only with conflicts between the imperialist powers, but also with the deep wounds that have periodically divided the world imperialist system (First and Second World War), managing with unscrupulous cynicism to maintain good relations with both fields in the war and emerging unscathed from the wreckage of the loser. It even emerged unscathed from a long collaboration with Fascism and Nazism.

Since when at the end of the Second World War, the U.S. imperialist bourgeoisie took over the direction of the world imperialist system, the Vatican and the U.S. government have worked hand in hand: the powerful U.S. Catholic Church headed by U.S. Cardinal Spellman (archbishop of New York in the period 1939-1978) acted as an intermediary between the Vatican and the new leading power of the imperialist world system. They have worked closely not only in Europe, the traditional field of action for the Vatican, to prevent the anti-fascist movement run by communist parties to complete its offensive in Italy, France and other countries, but even in countries where Catholic Church has a few followers, such as Korea and Vietnam: here too the U.S. imperialists were able to establish their puppet governments through the network that the Vatican provided on site and politicians (respectively Syngman Rhee in 1945 and Ngo Dinh Diem in 1954) made available by the Catholic Church.

The combination of Karol Wojtyła (John Paul II) and Ronald Reagan, who boasted of having led and jointly won the “war against communism,” faithfully represents the role of the two centers of the world imperialist system, and their division of labor for the defense of the current world order at any cost.

As the demolition of the Administration in Washington is the task which mainly the people of the USA must make itself responsible for, but it is a matter for the masses of the people around the world, so the elimination of the Vatican is a task which mainly we Italians must make ourselves responsible for, but it is matter for the exploited classes and oppressed peoples of the whole world. In fact they are very few, if any, the countries where the Vatican and the Church do not arrive with their tentacles, with their network of relationships and agencies and local officials and where they do not weave their plots to defend the imperialist system world, mobilizing also local reactionary forces..

Because of this, we call the progressive forces around the world to support us in our struggle against the Vatican, and at the same time to profit by the results of our struggle to advance successfully in their struggle. Eliminating its appendices and local branches, they reduce its power at the center in Italy. But at the same time they weaken the forces of conservatism in their country. The struggle against the Vatican is a common struggle of progressive forces around the world, as it is the struggle against the U.S. government. The two struggles are both components and expressions of cooperation and common destiny that unite the masses of the world, of proletarian internationalism.

The first elementary common task is to unmask and denounce the role that the Vatican and its Church carry out in defense of the social order, in every field, in every country.

As regards the Vatican and its Church to expose and to denounce is particularly important. The Vatican and its Church try to hide much of the nefarious role they play against the popular masses under the guise of concern for the people, for the salvation of their souls or “battle for life”, just they who are an important prop to the system which condemns to hunger, poverty, exclusion, ignorance, brutishness and death millions of human beings. Similarly they conceal their

great financial wealth and real estate (land and buildings) and their participation in the division of the spoils of imperialist exploitation and plundering imperialists behind the screen of the works of charity and beneficence.

The role that the Vatican and the Catholic Church carry out against women is pretty well known on the rights to divorce, the right to assistance in case of abortion, the right to conscious procreation, the right to sex education: in short, women's rights in the context of couple relationship. Less well known and not reported is the responsibility of the Vatican and the Catholic Church in preserving the status quo and then prostitution, exploitation of women's bodies, the commercialization of women, particularly the economic exploitation and the other horrible suffering to which this order subjugates women even more than men, and the male oppression of women these order maintains, feeds and perpetuates to divide the exploited and oppressed in order to perpetuate its life. We must consistently follow the criterion that all persons and institutions that have authority under the current social order, are responsible for its work. Both for what they do to support it, to replenish it, to perpetuate and to induce the masses to resign. Both for what they do not: because they do not use their authority to mobilize and unite the exploited and oppressed to end the chaos in which the ruling classes have plunged us and the fratricidal war in which they are pushing us, while their authority and the conception of the world they spread stifle the initiative and the rebellion of the masses. Declaring good intentions and not using honestly and without reservation the means they have to mobilize the masses to end the misfortunes afflicting them is hypocrisy and deceit. In particular, the Vatican and his Church are responsible for polluting the masses widely and systematically injecting its concepts and precepts of the relations subjects-lord of the European Middle Ages and slave-master of the slave era.

If this World Conference on Women will help us move forward even only in this field, it will have made an important contribution to the emancipation of humanity from the dark sides of our past and from the tentacles with which it chokes our present. The capitalists are the last surviving species of troglodytes of a past in which men were tearing food each other. They embody, perpetuate and enforce the spirit, the habits and feelings of a time when there was not enough food for all, in which it was impossible to have all the best that humanity had developed and produced. Today, humanity has the means and knowledge to produce an abundance of all goods and services necessary for every human being could have a life of dignity, for he could use at his best capacity the cultural heritage of humanity and contribute to enrich it, for he could participate in planning and managing social life and other activities that distinguish the human species from other animal species. The maniacal fury with which the capitalists and the rich have accumulated money and still subject the entire life of the people to the accumulation of money, is the clear demonstration of the absurdity of the survival of their social order.

Let this conference be a step in the mobilization of women for their emancipation from the double oppression!

Let this conference be a contribution to the emancipation of the exploited classes and peoples oppressed by the imperialist world system!

Let this conference be a contribution to the second wave of the proletarian revolution that advances all over the world!