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Spain

On the PCE Congress

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At the recently held 16th Congress of the Communist Party of Spain (PCE) there appeared, for the first time in the party's history, a nationwide platform that presented alternative political documents and put forward its own candidates to the Federal Committee and the General Secretariat.

This Platform, although conforming to the statutes of the party, had enormous difficulties in functioning that it is not possible to enumerate here, but in spite of this, the candidacy to the Federal Committee obtained 21% of the votes.

The PCE congress represented a further phase in the process opened at the 6th Assembly of the Izquierda Unida (IU) with the Alternative Document that was presented there. The development of events since October 2000 has confirmed the validity of the analysis put forward in the Alternative Document. In brief, the central elements are:

A: War, on a global and lasting basis, and the deepening of repression, are not accidental but rather strategic elements of capitalist globalisation.

B: War and repression are constituent elements of the new order and the new so-called 'anti-terrorist' alliances. Social democracy, hegemonised by the Third Way, is a structural element of the new imperialism.

C: The response of global capitalism to the increasingly deep and extensive economic crisis is the intensification of the mechanisms of exploitation and the elimination of the vestiges of legitimation of the system: relatively 'progressive' taxation, systems of social protection, social, trade union and political rights.

D: The complicity of the great majority of the political and trade union forces of the left in these brutal aggressions expresses itself in the total refusal to lead a resistance and to struggle through effective general mobilizations.

E: The first consequence is a serious crisis of political representation, intensified by the generalized scandals of corruption linked to privatisation. The increasing abstention on the left reflects the defeat of left reformist positions that scarcely conceal the adoption of neo-liberal policies and complicity with war. The PSOE-IU pact in 2000, the defeat of the Olive Tree coalition in Italy or the foreseeable electoral collapse of the PCF, are good examples of it.

F: Secondly, there is the increasing loss of legitimacy of the leaderships of the majority unions, which are increasingly seen as an element of the state apparatuses.

G: The bankruptcy of political and trade union representation, most vividly seen in Argentina, but with a general character, is linked to the emergence of the 'movement of movements', which shows that the days of impotent defeat are over and that it is possible to go onto the offensive, providing the starting point is the recognition that another capitalism is impossible.

H: A radical critique of the system and a strategic commitment to deepening and extending social conflict are essential prerequisites for the construction of new and broad forms of unity. That means participation in government must be subordinated to the interests of the social struggle.

I: It is vital that the most advanced and more combative sectors of the labour movement form part of the

anti-globalisation movement to develop a dialectical relationship between social mobilization and intensification of the class struggle.

J: In the same way, the anti-globalisation movement must link itself to the workers' struggle to advance in the recomposition of class unity, incorporating alternative values, the fight for peace, internationalism not only as attitude but as a method of work and the construction of forms of direct democracy.

The Platform questioned Stalinism in an explicit and radical form; in theory and practice, in internal political activity and in the very conception of power. Also it argued for a profound debate about the transition from Francoism and its consequences. In the words of one of its paragraphs: "Starting from the 13th Congress, the PCE initiated a timid criticism of the transition [from Francoism - ed.] and the political action of the leadership of the party during this period. In the 16th Congress it is necessary to go further and to consider if it makes any sense to maintain any loyalty towards a constitutional pact whose real consequences are the constant erosion of workers' rights and the reduction, until its disappearance, of democracy. We must consider if the construction of democracy does not rather necessitate the questioning of the present political system of our country and the updating of the central subjects that we defined in the project of democratic rupture, whose postponement decisively contributed to breaking the powerful popular movement constructed against the dictatorship".

The debate we raised in the PCE, far from being a short-term internal battle, relates both in theory and practice to the great question facing the fragmented and weak combative left in our country: the construction with many other people of a movement that can advance the viewpoint, as this year in Porto Alegre, that another world is possible only with socialism.