

Spanish Communists Criticize Eurocommunism

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BARCELONA, SPAIN

The Spanish Communist Party (PCE), one of the major components of the Eurocommunist trend and once the most influential force in the Spanish working class, is undergoing a major internal crisis that has already seen mass expulsions and the resignations of top party leaders. Many of the PCE's former militants are gravitating toward an effort to forge a Marxist-Leninist Spanish Communist Party centered around the recently formed Communist Party of Catalonia (PCC) and four other groups.

The Eurocommunist trend, basing itself upon acceptance of the institutions of bourgeois democracy as inviolable representatives of the popular will, conceives of the struggle for socialism as an evolutionary process taking place within those institutions and regards solidarity with the socialist camp as an historical anachronism that only alienates Western European communists from their respective working classes. At the height of its influence in the mid-1970s, Eurocommunism was the official outlook of the influential Italian, French and Spanish Communist Parties, as well as of numerous smaller parties in Western Europe.

In the last few years, the Communist

Party of France (PCF) has pulled back from a number of Eurocommunism's central theses, though its continued participation in the Mitterand government and conciliation of the Socialist Party's anti-national liberation and anti-socialist policies indicate that the break is hardly a thorough one. Criticism of Eurocommunism in the Spanish communist movement, however, has been much sharper, leading to unprecedented turmoil within the PCE and the very real possibility that this party may be supplanted by a formation to its left as the main representative of communism in Spain.

The first sign of the emerging crisis within the PCE was the open denunciation of Eurocommunism at the 1981 5th Congress of the party's Catalan branch, the United Socialist Party of Catalonia (PSUC), a central pillar of the PCE since the Spanish Civil War. The majority of the PSUC was then expelled from the PCE, and went on to form the PCC in

April 1982.

Over the following year there was a steady decline in PCE membership and the party did very poorly in Spain's national and municipal elections. Then, this October, the PCE was shaken by the resignation of Ignacio Gallego, a veteran party leader and the top official responsible for party organization. Until recently, Gallego was considered a close ally of Santiago Carrillo, former general secretary of the PCE and one of the figures most responsible for elaborating Eurocommunism's theoretical framework and political strategy. Gallego attacked the basic tenets of Eurocommunism in his letter of resignation addressed to the PCE Central Committee (as quoted in the Madrid daily *El Pais*):

"My identification with the principles of Marxism-Leninism and proletarian internationalism clash with what most of you call the Eurocommunist strategy. . . .

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I also know that many of those who distinguish themselves for anti-dogmatism have ended up defending the dogmas of social democracy. Forgetting revolutionary principles inevitably leads to confusion, pragmatism and, ultimately, to reformism in one guise or another.”

Gallego also repudiated the cosmetic adjustments made by the PCE to the Eurocommunist line over the last year in an attempt to stem the party's crisis. Last year, Carrillo was replaced by a party leadership committed to “renewal” in the party—but one that did not challenge the fundamental assumptions of Eurocommunism.

The PCC, which is at the center of efforts to unite communists in a new, revolutionary party, also traces the demise of the PCE to the abandonment of Marxism-Leninism. In an article from the PCC's official organ *Avant*, reprinted in the August 1983 issue of *Socialism: Theory and Practice*, the PCC states:

“From the moment the party could function legally [1977] its leadership began making one concession of principle after another to the bourgeoisie in the bid to ‘look nice’ in their eyes. It nourished the hope to secure at last an invitation to share in a ‘unity government’ . . .

“On the international scene, the PCE leadership came up with unfounded criticism of the French and Portuguese communist parties, encouraged the ‘Eurocommunist’ tendency in the Italian Communist Party and courted European social democracy. On top of it all, Carrillo sharply attacked the socialist countries. . . .

“The PCC will continue its effort to create in Catalonia a mass-scale communist party loyal to the principles of Marxism-Leninism. We shall promote in every way the re-emergence of a genuine Communist Party of Spain.”

Concrete steps toward this end are already well underway. At a major PCC-sponsored rally here in Barcelona October 16, over 8,000 people turned out to hear calls for the “*recuperación*” (recovery) of a Marxist-Leninist line and the “*re-establecimiento*” (re-establishment) of a revolutionary communist party in Spain. Representatives were present from communist parties and liberation movements in Greece, Italy, Lebanon, Chile, Nicaragua and El Salvador. Gallego particularly electrified the crowd with his support for the party building effort and his statement that Leninism cannot be separated from Marxism. Plans are also being made for a “Congress of Unification of Communists,” tentatively scheduled for Madrid early next year. □