

CPSU AND SPANISH COMMUNISTS

The Spanish Communist Party has sent a strongly worded letter to the Soviet Communist Party protesting at its 'interference in the problems of our Party and assistance to those who are trying to split it.' This arises from the presence of a Soviet delegation at the foundation meeting of a breakaway Spanish 'Communist Party' in January organised by former members of the Communist Party of Spain, headed by 69 year old Ignacio Gallego, identified with political positions defeated at the Party's national congress the previous month¹.

Three official Soviet observers were sent, notwithstanding the Spanish CP's request to their party not to attend. Speaking on their behalf, G A Zhukov, editor of the CPSU journal *Party Life*, assured the breakaway meeting of the 'friendly help and solidarity of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union' because 'the courageous and combative party of Ignacio Gallego is the only one that really defends the interests of the workers.'

Seeking to justify their action, the CPSU Central Committee wrote to Dolores Ibarruri, president, and Gerardo Iglesias, general secretary of the Communist Party, claiming most curiously that 'the absolute



majority of communists in the country find themselves outside the ranks of the CP of Spain.' The letter went on: 'Also our Soviet comrades are puzzled: they do not understand why the CPSU does not maintain relations with those Spanish communists who hold firm class positions, who base themselves on the principles of Marxism-Leninism, proletarian internationalism, and who in an international situation which is so complex and decisive wish to have fraternal relations with the CPSU.'

In conclusion the Soviet letter stated: 'At the same time, the CC of the CPSU repeats its willingness to maintain and develop relations with the Communist Party of Spain on the basis of the principles adopted in the communist movement. This in no way contradicts existing practice. We can tell you that in some countries where there are two communist parties (eg, Sweden, India), the CPSU has relations with both parties.'

The Spanish Communist Party leadership refers in its reply to several attempts made since 1968 to split their party, all of which had failed. The 'inspiration, stimulus and support' for those groups 'can clearly be seen as coming from outside Spain.' The Gallego group, seeking to take advantage of the present crisis in the party, would also fail because it was 'a largely artificial creation, whose real roots are not to be found mainly in our working class, our people and our soil.' It constituted a 'factor of division' favouring the exploiters and fuelling the reactionaries' campaign of anti-communism and anti-sovietism.

One recalls the outside backing given to the attempts of Enrique Lister and Enrique Garcia to establish breakaway parties following the 5-power intervention in Czechoslovakia in 1968, to which the Spanish CP leadership, including at that time Gallego personally, had expressed its strong opposition. This backing came to an end in October 1974 with the meeting of Soviet and Spanish CP leaders, which issued a communique condemning 'all actions aimed at splitting and undermining the internal unity of fraternal parties.' Reference was made in it to the main* document of the World Communist Conference of 1969, which emphasised that 'there is no leading centre of the international communist movement' and reaffirmed that 'relations between the fraternal parties are based on the principles of proletarian internationalism, solidarity and mutual support, respect for independence and equality, and non-interference in each other's affairs.' Such principles had already been set out in the statement of the World Communist Conference of 1960, which affirmed: 'All Marxist-Leninist parties are independent and have equal rights ... Whenever a party wants to clear up questions relating to the activities of another fraternal party, its leadership approaches the leadership of the party concerned; if necessary, they hold meetings and consultations.'

The Soviet Communist Party's support for the Gallego breakaway is a clear violation of these principles. It was quickly

condemned by Georges Marchais, general secretary of the French Communist Party, who stated that 'for us there is only one Communist Party in Spain, that of Gerardo Iglesias' and emphasised French communists' refusal to countenance 'support for factions' anywhere.

Unfortunately it is not only in Spain that these solemnly proclaimed principles have been departed from. In his *Stalin and Great Power Chauvinism* (Japan Press Service, 1983), which has recently appeared in English, Japanese Communist Party chairman Tetsuzo Fuwa recalls the Soviet support given to the breakaway Shiga group from 1964. The CPSU acknowledged this to have been unjustified in 1979 when relations were restored with the Japanese Communist Party, which it then recognised as the sole party representing the Japanese communist movement.

In Australia the Socialist Party (SPA) has from the beginning received Soviet support and recognition as against the Communist Party of Australia, from which it broke away in 1971. In Sweden the CPSU has recognised the Workers' Party-Communists, whilst (as indicated in their letter to the Spanish CP) continuing to maintain relations with the much stronger Left Party-Communists, from which it split off in 1977 on a platform approved of by the CPSU.

The present Spanish case is special and disquieting because it is the first time that the CPSU has been officially and publicly represented at the founding congress of such a breakaway.

The Gallego group is also seeking to develop links with like-minded organisations in capitalist countries. We learn from Amsterdam that it was represented at the founding meeting of a 'Union of Dutch Communists', whose formation on the eve of the final session of the national congress of the Dutch Communist Party in February received publicity from the Soviet news agency, Tass. This body, grouping members of a so-called 'Horizontal Movement' inside the CP, is an openly factional organisation campaigning against the new programme adopted by majority vote at the congress. It has been denounced as thoroughly divisive by the Political Bureau of the Dutch CP, which is playing a leading part in the powerful movement struggling against the deployment of Cruise missiles in the Netherlands. Some of the factionalists have now left the party, though others have stayed on to continue their work inside.

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¹ See *Marxism Today*, March, p6.