

## **REGIONALISM, THE CLASS STRUGGLE, THE HISTORIC DEVELOPMENT OF SPAIN AND SOCIALISM**

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Regionalism is a sentiment that the bourgeoisie transmits to keep its dominion over the masses. In Spain, antecedents of Spanish colonial imperialism linger in the depths of this sentiment. The sector of society most smitten by regionalism is also the most backward. That sector is not the proletariat or the petit bourgeoisie who fought in the Spanish Civil War of 1936.

The present wave of regionalism is directly stimulated by capitalism, but the deficits of the Communist Party and of the other workers' parties have contributed a lot to it. Spanish capitalism feels that it has not the force to develop the country, and it has not the force to dominate the proletariat either. This is its crisis. Having adapted to Franco for 40 years, it must accept now the liquidation of Franco (1978). It is the Spanish and the world proletariat who have liquidated Franco, supported in this by the Workers States and the USSR<sup>1</sup>.

### **In history, the setting up of nations has been a progress**

It is in the more backward sectors of the proletariat that regionalism finds support, as well as among people who joined the proletariat only recently. But regionalism weakens the country and creates ruptures in the concentration of culture, of science, of art and of the economy.

The setting up of nations has been a progress in history. If that progress was not greater, it is due to its bases in private property. Matters did not have to take this course, but the limited progress that was made allowed for a certain economic and scientific development, and an advance of people towards universal culture.

Those on the left in Spain have no interests vested in regionalism, but the bourgeoisie has. Regionalism makes it easier for the bourgeois class to exploit and dominate people. The bourgeoisie sets the trap of regionalism to stop the proletariat acquiring a scientific development of its own, and to keep it away from the influence of the revolutions in the world.

When they accepted regionalisation, the Communists gave the upper hand to the bourgeoisie. Now the latter uses it to contain the development of the class struggle. It fragments the working class and splits it between rivalling regions. This is an attack on the working class, and in front of it, the left must stand in defence of the unification, and centralisation, of the proletariat. No one but the proletariat can take Spain further up the ladder of progress. Only the proletariat can.

Spanish capitalism counted on Franco to keep the masses quelled and their smallest

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<sup>1</sup> In other documents, the author explains how the growing authority of the USSR was creating the world conditions for the elimination of fascism in Greece and Spain. As well as for the defeat of South Africa in Angola. Editorial.

demands crushed. Any progress in the economy and in society stands in frontal contradiction with capitalism. The economy, science, technique and culture tend to advance and elevate, but only the unified leadership of the proletariat can make them universal.

The masses in Catalonia or in the Basque Country expect regionalisation to weaken the bourgeoisie. This is an error. In the days of the struggle against Franco, the masses used regionalisation to deliver blows at capitalism. Today, this no longer weakens the capitalist regime. Regionalism has one meaning for the bourgeoisie and another meaning for the masses.

It falls to the Communists to intervene and explain this. In this error, the Communist Party bears the greatest share of responsibility. It even created regional 'parties' within itself in Franco's times. The local bourgeoisies supported regionalisation, but that was to defend themselves from Franco. Franco was standing for big capital, not for medium or intermediate capital. If the proletariat defended regionalism under Franco, it was to fight against him.

### **Regionalisation serves the bourgeoisie, not the development of the country**

One must call on the Communists, the Socialists and the Trade Unions to discuss these matters. Regionalisation serves the bourgeoisie, not the development of the country. When Spain became a country, and its economy and social relations unified, this was a progress in history. The fragmentation of Spain today is a retrogression. The country will only reach a higher stage of development when its bourgeois class is vanquished and capitalism is eliminated. With these measures, regionalism fades away.

No bourgeoisie is regionalist. Should the Catalan bourgeoisie happen to prevail, its first action will be to invest in the rest of Spain, spread its dominion, turn itself into a central power and subjugate the other regions. If it only opposes Madrid today, it is because the top bourgeois and finance sectors in Madrid prejudice its interests.

The resurgence of regionalism is a reaction of the capitalist system, not of the masses. Progress can only come with the taking of power and the centralisation of the economy. These actions do away with the need for regionalism. The masses were not born regionalist. They rebel against Madrid because it represents the central power. Yesterday it was Franco, now it is Madrid, in the sense that these stand for big capital, high finance and imperialism. The top Catalan capitalists are not really after the division or the regionalisation of the country. They want to dominate, and become themselves the multinational power that imposes itself to the rest of Spain. This is the depth of the matter.

Regionalisation worsens the economic conditions in the less developed areas of Spain, but it causes regression in the more developed areas too - like Catalonia. These more developed zones become increasingly dependent on foreign capital and on imports. They grow less able to plan their economies, and less able to coordinate with the rest of the country. This raises their production costs and holds back their economic progress enormously.

What has regionalisation to contribute to culture or to science? Nothing! It lowers the level of culture, and it lowers the level of science by limiting these to what is 'Catalan' or 'Basque'. Catalonia is a product of the world. There is no Catalan culture, but a universal culture with its applications in every country.

### **Why did the bourgeoisie reinstate the monarchy?**

During the 40 years of Francoism, the bourgeoisie did not need any king. It supported Franco because he was the centre that could impose itself on the nationalities. In Franco, the bourgeoisie also saw the essential means to stop the workers rising. Now that the world revolution, the Workers States and the Spanish proletariat got the better of Franco<sup>2</sup>, this same bourgeoisie no longer cares for him. Having lost Franco and his central power, the bourgeoisie feels vulnerable to the powerful proletariat and its movements. The bourgeoisie wants to break it up, fragment it and dominate via regionalisation. At the same time, it gets the king to replace Franco. Why did it not institute a Federation of Republics?

What is the role of the king? To be the instrument that centralises the bourgeois class and moderates its internal disputes. There is no social side to the king's functions. He does not represent one or other sector of class the way political parties do. His role is to represent big capital and stop the development of bourgeois tendencies capable of challenging it.

The bourgeoisie restored the monarchy in the knowledge that a Republic was going to accelerate the class struggle and lead to the rapid rise of mass movements to bring it down. One must pose the need to dislodge the king, create a Soviet democratic regime, statise<sup>3</sup> property and start economic planning. The problems of regionalism will disappear when the Spanish masses unify to bring capitalism down.

Regionalism contributes nothing to history, to life or to progress. Even the bourgeoisie uses centralisation to enable the influence of culture, of science, of art, of an economic planning. Regionalisation prevents the unification of the struggles. It instigates local preoccupations and divisions to stop the centralisation of the revolutionary sentiments of the masses. If the economy of Spain is to develop, its economy must be centralised. If not, small sectors make profits for a time, and then they too start stagnating. Under the regionalist banner, there is a limit to how long one can continue to say: 'I am still Spanish'. Regionalisation engenders regional sentiments and puts obstacles in the way of culture, science and the economy.

The capitalist system proved superior to feudalism by centralising countries. This made economic development possible. From now on, the next step up is the centralisation of Europe and the world. This is what the USSR and China have started: by unifying different nationalities, they laid the ground for their huge

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<sup>2</sup> When Franco sickened between 1974 and 1975, he called on Juan Carlos to act as Head of State. Juan Carlos was granted full control in October 1975, and Franco died soon afterwards. Editorial.

<sup>3</sup> To statise: The author uses this term instead of 'to nationalise', to intimate public control, not control by national owners. Edit.

economic, cultural and scientific progress. In sixty years, the Soviet Union advanced more than private property ever did in one thousand years.

Regionalism represents none of history's advances. Its common sentiment of 'nationality' keeps the masses subject to capitalist power, but the capitalist system is not guided by common sentiments. Its only guide is exploitation and profits. If it suits it, Catalan capitalism will invest in the whole world and not in Catalonia. It uses regionalism to split the masses between the different regions and keep them under its cultural domination, which is political too.

Appeals must be sent to the Communist parties, to the Socialists, to the Trade Unions. They must organise a centralised movement of struggle for the socialist transformation of the country. This will solve the nationalities question. A single Front is needed in the workers movement between the Communists, the Socialists, the Trade Union Centres. This is the way to progress the struggle for Socialism in Spain. The regionalism question must not be the greatest concern. The greatest concern must be the struggle to take power.

The goal of Socialism is to surmount the retardation carried forward by nationalities. On the road taking us to Socialism, the stage of nationalities has not been necessary to development. Indeed, it has been a regression instead. It has complicated enormously the class struggle and the struggle for Socialism.

Seeing the hostility of the masses towards central power, capitalism foments pro-nationality movements, and it finances these lavishly. Behind these movements, capitalism pressurises the proletariat to make it appear like the instigator of the mobilisations. This happens in Catalonia. But this is the proletariat that very nearly brought capitalism down in the civil war. There is nothing nationalist about this proletariat.

Some regional customs are very beautiful, but they contribute only limitedly to the construction of the universal capacity of observation of human life and of nature. They do not assemble the elements of progress arising from various parts. Those who do this are Art, the economy and science, whose ability to assemble the various advances allows them to generalise these and to develop the collective sentiments of humanity.

One does not go about chiding the masses for the transient support they may be giving to regionalisation. The task is to demonstrate the superiority of political centralisation, and that of economic planning throughout Spain. Economic development must be for the whole country! The 'autonomist' plans of the Catalan and Basque bourgeois leaders do not stop them flying together with the birds of big capital.

The bourgeois class values only the reactionary aspects of nationalism. This is not so for the masses for whom nationalism means an attachment to local customs. Today is different from the stage of the civil war in 1936. This present battle is not arms in hand.

Where regionalism prevails today, it is at the expense of the economic, social,

political and cultural fabric of the country. What needs defending now is the unity of Spain. Regional characteristics must be protected, certainly, but in a way that does not prejudice the economy, art, technique, science and culture. Regional customs are limited in that they do not generalise intelligence and the human sentiments. They do not generalise the human relations. It occurs to no one to invent a 'Catalan' remedy. Such an invention, where it happens, gets immediately generalised and reaches the whole world.

There are comrades for whom the defence of regional languages is a special question. The latter may be special but it is not determinant. A confined language keeps the population in a backward state. Observe how the bourgeoisie, for its part, invests the world over and intervenes in counter revolutionary wars on a global scale. The Spanish bourgeoisie did just this when it handed over the Sahrawi peoples to Morocco, to stop them fighting for a Workers State in Western Sahara<sup>4</sup>.

### **Though they still lack experience, the Workers States show how to resolve the regional problems**

In the Soviet Union, the regions were infinitely more numerous and backward than those in Spain. Yet the USSR has known what to do. Even the bureaucracy there does not encourage the development of regional interests. The development of the economy of the USSR is [structurally] for everyone, for the whole country. The aim of Socialism is universal culture.

The centralised economy centralises the vision of the human being, with the result that it centralises science, technique and Art. Regionalism works against this. It is a stumbling block. The examples of the USSR, of China and of Yugoslavia have shown that the centralised planning of the economy does away with the narrow confines of the regions.

In the future, when capitalism and bureaucracy no longer exist, Soviet democracy will develop freely. For each person, work will be what each person can do. All the best regional characteristics will become included in the general development of humanity, and competition will have stopped.

It is necessary to centralise the economy, state property and plan production. This done, everyone contributes to the generalisation of all the partial and regional experiences. Regionalism on the other hand means the continuation of cultural and economic backwardness, the continuation of the domination of the bourgeois class and the continuation of its political leadership. This applies as much to Spain as to any other country.

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<sup>4</sup> In 1976, the *Polisario Liberation Front* declared **the Sahrawi Arab Democratic Republic (SADR)** in an area of the Sahara that Spain had originally colonized and then handed over to Morocco. The Polisario Front was a former Communist Liberation movement much influenced by the Cuban model. Today, the SADR is member of the African Union and has diplomatic relations with 40 countries and is recognized by 84 United Nations states (Edit. Note, 2017).

The Workers States are still lacking in the experience needed to resolve the nationality question. Their conception is still bureaucratic. It is only recently that they started pulling out from under the Stalinian bureaucracy. The best that the USSR achieved was during its seven first years, with Lenin and the Bolshevik Party who unified a large number of nationalities. In doing this, they built one of the essential pillars that sustained the huge development of the Soviet Union afterwards.

The masses of Spain accept this perspective. They are the same masses who based themselves on the USSR during the civil war. Having no individual or regional axe to grind, they want to progress communally; but they cannot reach the next level of culture without the overthrow of capitalism. This applies to Spain as much as to anywhere else in the world.

### **The united struggle for Socialism is needed to resolve all the problems**

Centralisation is the essential means to resolve all the problems of humanity. The centralisation of the economy lays the ground for the homogeneous development of intelligence. The social problems we face gush up from the private property base of our society. It is the class struggle that resolves these problems, and not regionalism. It is the proletariat that resolves them, and not the bourgeoisie lurking behind regionalism. One cannot resolve the problems posed by regionalism without being based in the proletariat.

The leadership of the proletariat itself must be seeking social transformation. It needs a programme and a policy for this purpose. It is the task of the Communist Party to intervene and educate the population. The Party must demonstrate that centralisation resolves the problems of the economy. This is how the Soviet Union broke out of centuries of retardation in only a few years. It is Lenin, Trotsky and the Bolsheviks who created the political leadership capable of this.

If falls to the proletariat to develop the economy, hence the anti-capitalist struggle worldwide. It is the struggle of the proletariat for Socialism that resolves the problems of regionalism. Because the Trade Unions and the workers' parties are in all the mass struggles, they already coordinate between the regions. By taking power, centralising property and planning the economy, the proletariat lays the ground that does away with the regional problems. These are fundamental conclusion for the workers' leaders.

### **Regionalism is a surrender to bourgeois interests**

The Catalan bourgeoisie pushes the cart of regionalism when this suits its fight against the Madrid administrative apparatus. For the latter imposes all sorts of measures detrimental to the Catalan bourgeoisie. Each bourgeois sector wants to be one in charge. The Catalan bourgeoisie does not object to centralisation per se; it objects to the centralisation of the country led by Madrid. It wants to develop Spain in the way that suits its interests, which are village interests - whilst in reality Spain is capable of a very great development. The proletariat is perfectly apt and capable in Spain, and the peasantry has led very important struggles. In all the big battles, the petit bourgeoisie has been behind the proletariat and the peasantry.

If the Catalan question were only a matter of language, it would be easily solved. The real problem lies in the submission of the area to the Catalan bourgeoisie which channels the representation of regionalism and competes with the rest of capitalism on the back of the subjected and oppressed masses of its region. The Catalan bourgeoisie wants to block the class struggle and any general anti-capitalist outcome for the whole country.

Historically speaking, the national State has been a great progress. Having lost the power to maintain it, capitalism now wants it broken up into pieces that it can continue to profit from, using the conditions still existing in Catalonia and Spain. And it wants the workers' movement to accept this. If the problem were only a matter of language, it would be easy; the proletariat, the peasantry and the petit bourgeoisie already know that one's language must not stop communications with the world or with the rest of Spain.

### **With regionalism, the Catalan bourgeoisie will dominate**

It is not for fear of a State coup, or of a military one, that the workers' parties surrender to regionalisation. They do this because of their lack of Marxist theoretical and political preparation - their lack of study of the historic experience of the Soviet Union and China. Instead of generalising the lessons of the Workers States, they adapt to the limitations of the ruling circles. To endorse the local prejudices is an encouragement for the most backward and reactionary sectors of society (bourgeoisie, army). This surrenders to them the political leadership of our movement.

The Spanish civil war was not lost through some powerlessness inside Spain. The fall of Spain to Franco happened only because capitalism organised a world coalition, directly shored up by the [so-called] democratic countries - of which the France of Leon Blum. There was also the lack of support from the Soviet Union under the leadership of Stalin.

The present balance of forces is infinitely more hopeful. World imperialism, that is to say Spanish and world capitalism, allowed Franco to fall because they could no longer sustain him in power. During the 40 years of Francoism, their power did nothing but decline. The might of the army is insufficient to keep the people down. In Spain, the workers, the peasants and the petit bourgeoisie have a great disposition to struggle, a disposition never fully expressed in elections.

Language, culture and the local customs are no problem as long as centralisation for economic development is allowed to continue. This is not what the bourgeoisie of Catalonia is doing. With regionalism, it serves only its own interests. It foments incidents and acts of sabotage to rouse the masses of Catalonia against the rest of Spain where the masses struggle to make a Workers State.

The Communists and the Socialists view Spain in isolation from the world process of the class struggle. They do not generalise the experiences already made in the Soviet Union. The class struggle of the masses is harmonious: far from seeking to destroy, it is the instrument for the progress of history. One must learn from the experiences of the class struggle and place the USSR at its essential core.

There was no proper functioning of the economy and of society under Franco's dictatorship. Had imperialism been strong enough, it would have stopped the fall of Franco. Someone like him was a much better deal than the present government which has to make space for Socialists and Communists. The Spanish bourgeoisie has not become anti-Francoist. It only got rid of Francoism to stop the economy suffocating.

Audacity is basic to the triumph of the revolution. Far from this, however, the Communists and the Socialists embrace electoral perspectives and the niggardly pluralistic calculations that go with it. They put their trust in the balancing act of those in power: the bourgeois today, the left tomorrow. This is absurd. The economy cannot function on that basis. Had capitalism been really powerful, it would have assassinated half the world by now - what with all its atomic weapons everywhere. It cannot do it because the Soviet Union stands there.

With the present level of technique and science, it should be possible to develop the economy hundreds of times more than capitalism does. The latter cannot do it - and the Workers States are hampered by having to dedicate huge means much to war preparations<sup>5</sup> and their support to the anti-capitalist struggle. They are hampered by their bureaucratic apparatuses too, but the block to progress is not the Workers State, even with its bureaucracy. The block to progress is the capitalist system.

### **Spain needs a programme of social transformation**

The workers' parties do not have a programme, and they do not speak of the historic means that allow society to progress and be transformed. Because they do not propose the unification of Spain for Socialism, capitalism still has a little chance to use regionalism. However, humanity lives now with an indisputable historic example in front of it: the capacity of the Workers State to resolve all the problems. Workers State means stasised property, planned production and the masses intervening in the leadership of the economy and society. These things can only be realised when the masses intervene to the full.

The regionalists press down on the most backward sectors of society to make them accept their views. They pose as the protagonists of a popular aspiration, but they are no such thing. They represent the aspiration of the local capitalists, against the other capitalists and against the masses most of all. Their views are opposed to any programme tending to revolution or to the transformation of society.

The intelligence of the world shows most conclusively in the fact that the masses of the most backward countries of Asia, Latin America and Africa, seek the example of the USSR. Populations now living in feudal, semi-feudal or even slave States proceed directly to make Workers States.

The world masses are not after regionalism. They seek the centralisation of culture, of science, of technique and of the economy because the most elevated advances come in that form. They embrace this centralisation by bringing into it the customs that do not harm it. Every shred of human progress goes against capitalism which no longer

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<sup>5</sup> War preparations are forced upon the Workers States by the war that capitalism prepares against them. Editorial note.



develops science, art or culture. In the most backward countries, the masses seek the best social example and regime. They give no thought to regionalism. They have no wish to dominate others.

Lenin and Trotsky already analysed that it is possible to leap from feudalism and servitude directly over to the Workers State. The Posadist IV International stands on this analysis. The conditions for this leap may not exist in the most remote and backward countries of Asia, Africa or Latin America, but they do exist in the rest of the world. Where they are located, they influence and stimulate the intelligence of the masses everywhere.

History effects this change through this dialectical leap. The masses pass from feudalism directly to centralised and planned economies - and this, even where the local conditions are not present. The conditions were not present in Angola<sup>6</sup>, but they existed in the Soviet Union. And they existed also in the proletariat of Portugal, of France, Italy and others, who gave the example.

In this stage of history, the progress of human intelligence is an essential trigger. The leading comrades in the Socialist and Communist parties, those in the Trade Unions (like the UGT) and in the *Workers Commissions*, must base themselves on this comprehension. They must recognise that the present level of human intelligence – represented by the proletariat – is what causes history to take leaps, to pass directly from tribalism to the Workers State.

From when Lenin lived until now, the role of the workers' parties and of the Trade Unions has become simpler and easier. The intelligence of the masses has reached the point where it can view the act of transcending individual interests as a progress of history. In countries still subject to tribal organisation the peasants are no longer clinging to their small plots. Ask them what they wish for, and they will say: "Lets collectivise the land and work it together".

It is not that the historic stages are being eliminated. They are combining. In some African countries like Mozambique or Angola, some political movements propose to make a Workers State right now. They are even moved by some communist principles like 'to each according to their need'. It is not acceptable to wait centuries to achieve this.

In Spain, it is also a matter of counting on the world relations of forces. The latter stop capitalism intervening as it would wish. This is no longer the time of fascism. Hitler and Mussolini failed, and the bourgeoisies could not re-conduct Francoism after its 40 years of its rule. The latter failed because it ran counter to history. The force relations in the world are such that the Soviet Union cannot allow regression, or the return of fascism in Spain, or in any other European country.

### **J Posadas**

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<sup>6</sup> In 1978-79, the government of Agostinho Neto in Angola worked with Cuban forces and Soviet advisers to defeat the counter revolutionary war of Apartheid South Africa. Editorial note.

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