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Spanish state

Fascism and racism in the Spanish State

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Just like the rest of Europe and the world in general, the far right is gaining ground in both institutional and ideological terrains.

The Spanish State is no exception, and the major force of the far-right that has emerged in recent years is Vox, an extreme right-wing populist party that has grown with alarming speed and has representation and influence in the autonomous communities and over 50 members of the central Spanish parliament. In fact, Vox is unique in comparison with other far-right parties in Europe in that it is a split from the main traditional conservative party (PP) rather than a new party. This split is part of an attempt to save the right (beleaguered by corruption), as was the creation of Cs (Ciudadanos); Cs hooligan and provocative politics opened the door for Vox, and it is no coincidence that Cs voters have gone wholesale to Vox. The existence of far-right populism gives a chance to the traditional right to broaden its base; the PP is seen as too 'posh' and mainstream and a combined PP - Vox vote is greater than PP alone.

They have grown due to several factors: disillusionment with politics and the traditional parties by a large section of the population, including sections of the working class who are punished by the system; outside of Catalonia, rabid hatred of the pro-independence movement, and this anti-Catalan sentiment has brought them many votes but also inside Catalonia, with C's going to Vox in Catalonia), a key difference from the rest of Europe; the textbook racism and islamophobia that is the mark of all these populist parties across the world; and a cry for the nostalgia of the Spain of Franco; patriotic, flag-waving nationalism, attempting to claim the homogeneity of the right at the expense of other right-wing parties. And of course, a hatred for the left, calling the PSOE-Podemos government a "communist" government. In brief, a classical far-right/fascist discourse adapted to the specific Spanish state, with all the distortions and lies that are the trademark of early fascist movements. To sum up, its key questions to mobilise are based around race, Catalonia and misogyny: the latter also differs (if only in degree) from the rest of the far-right in that they deny the existence of gender violence.

And what is the response of the left to this rise in a right-wing organisation?

At an institutional level, little or nothing. Despite making brave speeches about the threat of the extreme right, the PSOE-Podemos (UP) government capitulate to the extreme right on questions of immigration, human rights, refugees, repression and anti-Catalan sentiment.

Antifascism is seen as more as a crime in the courts than the constant acts of fascist groups across the state, clear evidence that the old Francoist regime was never removed from the judicial system.

While both government parties are formally antifascist, it is questionable if they use their influence to do much about the question.

At a local level, members of UP are more active, particularly, but not exclusively, outside of Catalonia.

PSOE hide behind the purple cloak of Podemos to give themselves a left cover, and Podemos continue to shred any left-wing participation in their ranks, with more purges and expulsions and become just another left reformist electoral option. Any antifascist action taken by the social-democratic left will only be as a result of pressure from the popular movements.

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Where VOX have tried to appear in public with stands in working-class neighbourhoods, such as Vallecas in Madrid, or pro-independence towns in Catalonia, such as Vic, they have been met with organised opposition from all sections of local society: the young antifascists, tenants associations, trade unionists, and general public who recognise VOX for what they are: the old fascist movement of Franco with new branding, in common with the discourse in the rest of Europe, although its leaders undoubtedly are Francoists.

As revolutionaries, our task is not easy. We must build opposition to VOX on the street and in the communities, and work with people on this question who maybe we do not agree with on some other issues, but as I always say, nobody has a copyright in the fight against fascism and racism. We have the task of participating in building a unitary movement against the extreme right, but which must be based in the communities and workplaces, and not a "front" organisation, or a virtual one, but a real united front movement that can involve people who want to fight back and stop this tide of racism that is approaching.

However, a united campaign against fascism on its own is not enough; not enough if the aim is to undermine its working-class votes; a political alternative is needed, and this alternative is not offered by non-anti-capitalist allies; so while inevitably a united campaign means working with reformists (especially base of UP or ERC in Catalonia, for example), these parties are incapable of offering an alternative to alienated working-class Vox supporters who are alienated from the system.

PS:

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