

MARXIST

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EDITORIAL BOARD

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CONTRIBUTORS

G. RAMAKRISHNAN is Polit Bureau Member of the Communist Party of India (Marxist).

JOHN CHERIAN is an eminent journalist and Consulting Editor, *Frontline*, based in New Delhi.

For subscription and other queries, contact

The Manager, Marxist, A.K. Gopalan Bhavan, 27-29 Bhai Veer Singh Marg, New Delhi 110001

Phone: (91-11) 2334 8725. Email: pdpbln@gmail.com

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COMMUNIST PARTY OF PORTUGAL (PCP)

Communique of the Central Committee

The Central Committee of the PCP having met on October 8, 2019, analysed the results of the elections for the Assembly of the Republic and the elections for the Legislative Assembly of the Autonomous Region of Madeira, and the resulting political framework, appreciated aspects of the international situation, and set down lines of action, political initiative and Party strengthening to respond to the demands that arise.

I—POLITICAL FRAMEWORK RESULTING FROM THE ELECTIONS

1. Failure by the PS (Socialist Party—Centre Left) to obtain an absolute majority, in a context in which PSD (Social Democratic Party—Centre Right) and CDS (People’s Party—Centre Right) saw their condemnation confirmed, is not in itself a sufficient condition to ensure a path of new and more decisive advances and to prevent the danger of going backwards in what has been achieved.

By honouring the commitments made to the workers and the people, the PCP will not fail with its political willingness, initiative, determination and independence to make the country and the life of the Portuguese move forward, to fight for an alternative policy, patriotic and left-wing, that, in rupture with right-wing policies, will disengage the country from the constraints that, by the option of the PS, limit and prevent the response to national problems and popular aspirations.

The Central Committee of the PCP reaffirms in this context that the votes entrusted to the CDU (Unitary Democratic Coalition—between the PCP and the Ecologist Party ‘The Greens’), associated with the mass struggle, are the force that will count towards advancing the living conditions and the development of the country. On the PCP’s part, this is the guarantee that the workers and the people can rest assured.

2. The results of the elections for the Assembly of the Republic reflect, albeit with alterations in the positioning and electoral expression among the political forces with parliamentary representation, a framework with a correlation of forces similar to that of 2015.

But this fact cannot delude that this current institutional arrangement of forces corresponds to a different political conjuncture. In 2015 the government’s action and policy of national disaster was halted, with the important decision then taken by the PCP and PEV (Ecologist Party—‘The Greens’) to contribute to an institutional solution corresponding to the social and electoral defeat, imposed over the political defeat of the PSD/CDS government, thwarting its plans to continue and intensify the offensive that the Stability and Growth Programs (SGP) and the Pact of Aggression had set down as a guideline, countering the efforts of the then President Cavaco Silva.

It has been clear in these years that steps have been taken in the defence, restoration and achievement of rights, but it has been equally clear that the negative measures that have been prevented and the advances made are not sufficient for the necessary response to the national problems and the materialization of a developed and sovereign Portugal.

The situation of the country and its evolution in recent years makes more pressing today the need to pave the way for a policy that breaks with essential options of right-wing policy that, despite being constrained by the parliamentary composition of the now-

ending legislature, the PS did not abandon and continued in structural aspects.

What a full response to the country's problems demands is a break with the interests of big capital, placing the valorization of labour and workers as a central objective and a break with the submission to the euro and the impositions of the European Union, affirming the right of the country to a sovereign development.

What is needed is the implementation of the alternative, patriotic and left-wing policy, that the PCP proposes and which a PS government does not guarantee.

What is needed, with the intervention of the PCP and with the mass struggle, is to move forward, not allow any setbacks, particularly in matters such as the so-called structural 'reforms', which PS and PSD share in several areas.

3. In the present situation, as it has been over decades and successive legislatures, the President of the Republic, after consulting the parties, appoints the Prime Minister, a government is formed and takes office.

It will be in the light of the PS's choices, the budgetary instruments it presents and the content of its legislation, that the PCP will determine, as always, its position, linked to its commitments to the workers and the people, determined to combat all the negative measures, all the regressions that the PS wants to impose.

The workers and the people will continue to count on the initiative of the PCP to present solutions that valorize their living conditions and rights, and to intervene to adopt measures that mean progress.

4. The result obtained by the CDU (329,117 votes and 12 MPs), which is less than the votes and seats it had won in the previous election (2015), is not conducive for the future of the country.

It cannot be ignored, however, that this result, which is identical in number of MPs to that of 2002, is obtained in a

political and ideological framework that had already been present in the elections to the European Parliament and which translated into the electoral expression then obtained.

CDU's result is inseparable from an intense and ceaseless operation it encountered, sustained by lies, slander and the promotion of prejudices, either by manipulating its positions or in the spreading of stereotypes, aiming to attribute to the PCP and to PEV concepts that their course, practice and project do not portray, an operation that methodically bolstered other political forces and amplified aspects of distortion and mystification of the PCP action in national political life in the previous legislature—translated either by repeated insistence on the existence of a 'left-wing majority' or a 'left-wing government', either by systematically erasing the decisive role and intervention of the PCP in what has been achieved, or by its obsessive presentation as a waning force, in stark contrast with the obvious promotion of other forces.

An operation that targeted the PCP, precisely for its decisive role in the restoration, defence and achievement of rights, its full and consistent assumption to uphold the interests of the workers and people, for the affirmation of its proposal, programme and communist identity.

Only the dimension of the electoral campaign, built with the militant commitment of the CDU activists, only the patent recognition of their action and the trust placed in those who do not betray pledges, only the deep connection and rooting of the CDU forces with the workers and the people, enabled in the present situation to endure the attempt of electoral erosion to levels that some had described as 'inevitable' and beat the powerful campaign unleashed by the centres of monopoly capital and the instruments at its service. This does not mean acknowledging weaknesses and shortcomings of various kinds that must be assessed, corrected and overcome.

The PCP will honour its commitments to the workers and the people, giving strength to their struggle, counting on the

mobilization of all, even if they did not realize that what was truly decisive in these elections was to strengthen the CDU, they will soon realize that it is on this force that they can count on and that it is the strongest guarantee to stand up to the projects of increasing exploitation, to defend rights and contribute for a better life.

As always, it will be the struggle of the workers and the people that will be called upon to prevent setbacks and make advances possible.

5. These elections highlight the significant loss suffered by the PSD and CDS, adding to the defeat they had already registered in the 2015 legislative elections, in itself inseparable from the reaffirmed disapproval of their recent responsibilities in the policy of social regression and economic decline that they imposed on the country. This does not, by itself, mean that the projects associated with right-wing policy and its associated agenda have been defeated.

The PS, which registers an increased electoral expression in votes and mandates, does not, however, achieve the coveted absolute majority which it called in the name of a hypothetical 'stability', while the Left Bloc reduced its votes and kept the same number of mandates.

The constitution of a parliamentary group, PAN, and the first-time election of representatives of Livre and two new political forces (Chega and Liberal Initiative), which are linked to the most reactionary centres of monopoly capital, with undisguised populist and democratic agendas, should also be noted.

6. To all those who took the step of transforming their support and recognition of CDU's determination and coherence into a vote, in particular to all those who did so for the first time, the Central Committee of the PCP reaffirms its commitment to always honour its word, to intervene in defence of the workers and the people, their rights and aspirations.

The Central Committee of the PCP salutes the thousands of activists who, side by side with the candidates, set up a campaign of

enlightenment and mobilization that contributed to building the outcome of the CDU. A campaign that raised the awareness of the workers and the people to face the many struggles that will ensure that there is no turning back, to resist attempts at new attacks on rights and to continue the struggle to build a political alternative, patriotic and left-wing, to ensure Portugal with a future.

7. The past four years, which corresponded to what has been termed the 'new phase of national political life' in its relationship to both the previous legislature and four decades of unchanged right-wing policies, have not been travelled in vain. During this period, dogmas collapsed, theses and reasons repeatedly underlined by the PCP were confirmed, lessons have been learned that will integrate the PCP's heritage of struggle and intervention.

A period that confirmed the decisive intervention of the PCP, its proposals and solutions, its determination not to waste any opportunity to defend and conquer rights. A period that has highlighted the irreplaceable role of the struggle of the workers and the people and which, however difficult and prolonged, eventually sets the course of events. A period which revealed that, contrary to what they were trying to instil in the conscience and life of the people, the improvement of living conditions, the expansion of rights, the valorization of wages and pensions, the increase in the income available to families, is a condition for economic growth, job creation, budgetary balance, and development of the country.

A period that has shown once again that when others give up or adapt, the PCP strives to break new ground, broaden perspectives and build new solutions to defend the interests of the people and the country.

A period that has also shown, as the PCP has always pointed out, that notwithstanding the importance of responding to the most pressing problems, the solutions and policy that the country needed and needs to overcome its structural deficits and ensure sovereign development is a patriotic and left-wing policy that frees the country from submission to the euro and the impositions of the

European Union, valorizes labour and workers, promotes national production, ensures public control of the banks and of the basic and strategic sectors of the economy, promotes an administration and public services to serve the people and the country.

8. The Central Committee of the PCP underlines the persistence in the national political life of the traits, present in the elections and their results, inseparable from the process that the most reactionary sectors have under way to recover the lost space and time, in the intensification of the offensive they have entered as their objective and which has experienced, even partially, in the last four years, a setback that they never accepted.

A process marked by a prolonged and systematic attack directed against the PCP, in which some present and former Party members have taken part, entertaining backward and populist ideas and conceptions, including whitewashing fascism and what it represented, by the provocative operations that from various structures and movements aim to divide the workers and discredit their struggle and their representative class organizations, by the spreading of factors that target democracy itself and political action in general, regardless of the content expressed by putting forward objectives that seek new steps in the subversion of the Constitution of the Portuguese Republic.

9. The Central Committee of the PCP notes the electoral outcome that, in the Autonomous Region of Madeira, enabled the election of a CDU MP and the preservation of parliamentary representation in the Regional Legislative Assembly.

A result that, without denying the loss of an MP and a loss of votes, cannot be separated from an intense and artificial operation of bipolarization and the dispersion of candidacies created to facilitate the objectives of the PS and PSD in the Region.

The Central Committee of the PCP salutes the Party militants and CDU activists who carried out a campaign of enlightenment and mobilization that enabled to resist and confirm the CDU as an indispensable force.

In the context of the loss of an absolute majority by the PSD and the formation of a successor PSD/CDS government, the Central Committee of the PCP also stresses the political significance of PS's repeated calls to the CDS to support a regional government, in a ridiculous process of dispute between PSD and PS to engage CDS as a future governance partner.

II—STRENGTHEN THE STRUGGLE, SOLIDARITY AND ANTI- IMPERIALIST COOPERATION

1. Against the background of the structural crisis of capitalism, the international situation remains characterized by great instability and uncertainty, with signs of deterioration in the economic and financial situation and 'announcements' of a new peak of crisis, used as a pretext for the intensification of a policy of exploitation and attack on fundamental democratic rights.

2. The promotion of reactionary and undemocratic values continues, as exemplified by the infamous anti-Communist resolution and falsifying of history recently adopted by the majority of the European Parliament, trying to subvert the commemoration of the 75th anniversary of the Victory over Nazi-fascism, on May 9, 2020.

3. Particularly serious is the US's aggressive spiral—sustained, albeit with growing contradictions, by its allies, notably NATO and the EU—against countries and peoples that they consider to be an obstacle to their interests, clearly pointing out as their strategic opponents the Russian Federation and People's Republic of China, which commemorated the 70th anniversary of its founding on October 1.

Faced with the resistance and struggle of the peoples and the process of rearrangement of forces under development worldwide, US imperialism eschews no means—from economic warfare to direct military aggression—to counter the tendency of its relative

economic decline and seek to safeguard its global hegemonic domination.

The US has effected a huge escalation in its military budget, also involving its disengagement from relevant nuclear arms containment and limitation treaties, posing a serious and increased threat to world peace and security, which in no way should be overlooked.

4. The Central Committee points out that the legitimate concerns about environmental problems—which should not be confused with any manipulative view of this problem—cannot be dissociated from the predatory nature of capitalism, together with its exploitative, oppressive and aggressive nature, as presently the decision centres of big capital seek to impose.

5. The Central Committee of the PCP welcomes and values the courageous and persistent resistance and struggle of workers and peoples in defence of their rights and sovereignty, and calls for the enhancement of internationalist solidarity and the strengthening of anti-imperialist unity in defence of peace, sovereignty and social progress.

The Central Committee of the PCP calls for the strengthening of the fight for peace and disarmament, particularly for nuclear disarmament, notably against the holding of the NATO summit in London on December 3/4.

The Central Committee reaffirms PCP's commitment to strengthening and uniting the international communist and revolutionary movement by contributing—on the basis of compliance of the principles of relationship between Communist parties—to overcome persisting weaknesses and to project into the world the communist ideal and project whose validity and topicality is reaffirmed in the face of a capitalism in crisis, steeped in its contradictions and unable to respond to the problems and aspirations of Humanity.

III—STRENGTHEN THE PARTY, STIMULATE POLITICAL INITIATIVE

1. The Central Committee of the PCP salutes the Party and JCP organizations and militants for their work, dedication and militancy which ensured a strong political and institutional intervention, the development of the mass struggle, the implementation of measures to strengthen the party organization, the holding of the 43rd edition of the Avante! Festival, the intervention of internationalist solidarity, together with the political campaign of the masses that the elections for the Assembly of the Republic constituted. An extraordinary action that placed great demands on the organization and leadership work and to which the Party responded, fulfilling its role as a necessary, indispensable and irreplaceable party, resisting the intense and diverse campaign launched against it, affirming its communist identity.

2. In the current context of the country's situation, the Central Committee of the PCP underlines the great demands placed on the action of the Party collective and points to the need for a strong political initiative in the affirmation of the patriotic and left-wing alternative, in the development of mass struggle and the strengthening of mass unitary organizations and movements, the stimulation of intense action in local government, the Legislative Assemblies of the Autonomous Regions of the Azores and Madeira, the Assembly of the Republic and the European Parliament, and in the strengthening of the Party.

3. It is in this context that the Central Committee of the PCP points to the need to hold meetings and plenary sessions of militants at various levels of the party structure, promoting the analysis of the current situation and programming their work and intervention.

The Central Committee of the PCP highlights the initiatives already underway, namely the rally to be held on October 11 at the Lisbon Forum, the Regional Meeting of Cadres on October 19 in Porto and the rally on October 26 in the Setúbal Peninsula.

4. The PCP, in answer to the commitments made to the workers and the people, sets down as its immediate objectives the struggle for the general increase of wages and of the national minimum wage to €850; fight precariousness and deregulation of working hours; demand the repeal of the grievous norms of labour legislation; increase retirement pensions; create conditions to ensure free kindergarten nurseries for all children up to the age of three; for the right to housing; for a strengthened and qualified National Health Service; for public services able to respond to the needs; for investment in public transport; for a fair fiscal policy; for a dignified public administration; for expanding social aid; ensuring the protection of nature, environment and ecological balance.

5. The Central Committee of the PCP underlines the great political and cultural success of the Avante! Festival, which is an important contribution to the affirmation of the April Values, marked in the context of the 45th anniversary of the April Revolution, and for the affirmation of the Party and its ideal and project. The success of which is all the more significant as the Festival was silenced and was built with the Party's own means and forces, with many friends of the Party and of the Festival, who see it as their own, and in the preparation of the elections to the Legislative Assembly of the Autonomous Region of Madeira, a few weeks after the elections to the European Parliament.

The Central Committee of the PCP stresses that the next Avante! Festival, on September 4, 5 and 6, 2020, places on all organizations the need to begin its planning and preparation, including its dissemination and affirmation.

6. Strengthening the Party is a key priority in **articulation** with its political initiative and intervention.

Bearing in mind the Resolution of the Central Committee 'On the Strengthening of the Party For a Stronger and more Influential PCP', the Central Committee of the PCP points to the need in every organization to evaluate the steps taken, set priorities and

move towards achieving the guidelines defined for strengthening the Party.

Following the intense intervention of the Party, steps must be taken to strengthen the work of leadership at various levels, ensure the accountability of cadres and militants for permanent tasks and responsibilities, pursue political and ideological formation, promote affirmation of the Party's working principles.

We highlight the priority of promoting organization and intervention with workers in companies and workplaces. The Central Committee of the PCP underlines the importance of the action taken on the 5,000 contacts, wherein already 3,500 people are contacted, and more than 1,000 workers had joined the Party, enabling the creation and reinforcement of cells and the intervention in many companies where there was none, further rooting the Party with the workers, as well as the willingness of many other workers to support the PCP and participate in its activities. These potentials need to be harnessed with the integration of new militants and progress towards contacts to complete this action. It is necessary to promote the reinforcement of cadres and means, ensuring an action that has as its fundamental concern the knowledge of workers' problems, aspirations, claims and state of mind and the initiative to promote their unity, organization and struggle, undertaken with the aim of further strengthening the Party.

It is also necessary to pursue the implementation of the other guidelines for the strengthening of the Party, namely the handing of the new membership card, the promotion of intervention among social groups and specific sectors, the strengthening of local organizations, the work of propaganda and Party press, guaranteeing the financial independence of the Party, holding assemblies of the organizations.

At a time marked by uncertainties, dangers, and also the potential for growth, the Central Committee of the PCP points, with confidence in the workers and the people, to the development

of the mass struggle and the strengthening of the Party as the necessary path for the defence of peace, development and progress, the construction of the patriotic and Left-wing alternative, the advanced democracy with the April Values in the future of Portugal, of socialism and communism.