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Spanish state

“We need a left that is not a crutch for the PSOE”

- IV Online magazine - 2019 - IV538 - November 2019 -

Publication date: Tuesday 26 November 2019

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Election campaign, elections, results and within 48 hours, the announcement of the pre-agreement for a coalition government by Pedro Sánchez and Pablo Iglesias. Everything very fast and, suddenly, silence. The negotiations between the PSOE and Unidas Podemos to form a government and a programme continue away from the media, while, in parallel, the Socialists work to obtain the necessary support to carry out the investiture before Christmas.

The organizations involved in the possible coalition government (PSOE, Podemos, IU and En Común Podem) are consulting their activists in internal referendums hoping to obtain a green light for it. Other left-wing organizations watch from the side-lines. Anticapitalistas have long since been more outside of Podemos than in it, except in Andalusia. Always critical of governing with the PSOE, always in the minority in the purple formation, today they are observing the steps of Podemos with suspicion and distance. Their spokesperson, Raúl Camargo (born Madrid, 1978), says that in March there will be a political conference of Anticapitalistas where they will determine the strategic direction of the organization in the new scenario. He is convinced, he says, that a left-wing opposition to the PSOE-UP government is needed, if it goes ahead.

We know about the ERE court ruling [\[1\]](#) It brings to mind the slogan “PSOE, PP, it’s the same shit”.

Yes, that legendary chant of the 15M movement has not lost its validity. The PSOE of the ERE is not from the past, it still has Susana Díaz at the head of the Andalusian federation. Díaz was then in a high position and replaced José Antonio Griñán, today sentenced to six years in jail. We understand that the PSOE in Andalusia remains a corrupt structure.

The positions that have been maintained by the comrades of Podemos Andalucía during these years have been consistent. Imagine if they had succumbed to the pressures for a pact with this PSOE, today it would have been a disaster, today those are condemned for corruption going back decades, for taking the funds that should have been allocated to people who are unemployed to distribute them among friends.

It is a very serious judgement, which demonstrates the widespread corruption in one of the pillars of the regime, the PSOE, and in our opinion confirms that the best stance is political independence with respect to this type of party, with the exception of reaching specific agreements.

I understand here a critique of the possible coalition government between PSOE and Unidas Podemos. The position of Anticapitalistas is clear: to facilitate an investiture of a socialist government following a programmatic agreement and to remain in opposition to force, from there, compliance with the agreed programme. How do you rate the pre-agreement last week?

We always taken this stance, for five years. We promoted Podemos because we believed that this country was lacking a left that channelled the constituent and rebellious impulse of 15M. Without Izquierda Anticapitalista there would have been no Podemos. That impulse was against the right, but also against the PSOE. Remember that the PSOE of the ERE ruled with IU in Andalusia. That was key to understanding that we need a left that is not a crutch for the PSOE. The IU made that pact with Griñán, who has now been convicted.

We believe that this is not the political moment, neither in terms of economic forecasts, nor the territorial crisis, for a leftist force to govern in a subaltern way with this PSOE. It is a PSOE that has not broken with the period of the ERE,

and nor has it settled accounts with its past with the GAL, industrial reconversion, employment counter-reforms, the ETTs, NATO, the Maastricht Treaty... Sánchez has a line of continuity with the whole neoliberal trajectory of this party.

In our opinion, governing with them is an obvious break with the foundational lines of Podemos. Podemos was born to govern, but not in a subaltern manner with the PSOE. There was no talk about it, about minority rule in a coalition with the PSOE.

We continue to defend the same thing we defended five years ago. We believe that it is a position that we must continue to defend: a left that aspires to change the rules of this country's game. With the current rules of the game it is not possible to change things. With the current Constitution, with the position it has on social rights, with how it regulates the territorial issue it is not possible to make leftist policies in this country. We aspire to a left that is not satisfied with being a crutch for the PSOE.

From “storming the heavens” at Vistalegre I to “the heavens are taken with perseverance”, in the last letter to the members from Pablo Iglesias. What does this evolution suggest?

That the heavens are taken by storm and not by consensus was said by Pablo at that assembly, because from our team there were also people who are now with Pablo like Echenique and other people, we appealed for consensus. A consensus was needed between the different proposals that were available. He said no, no consensus, that the heavens are taken by storm. Thus, a committee was created, a leadership, which had almost no control.

The result of that was good at the electoral level, but the heavens weren't stormed and nor was any consensus agreed with almost anyone and the political evolution has resulted in something similar to the IU of Cayo Lara or Gaspar Llamazares. The current result is more like that than what we aspired to in 2014.

Perseverance is good, you have to recognize the perseverance of Iglesias. Although the vote dropped in these elections, his political theses have been imposed: he wanted to enter the government at all costs, and it seems that he will succeed. I believe that perseverance should have been in other matters, such as having a territorially established organization, with an open and comradely relationship with social movements, which would have been able to integrate different sensibilities. The Podemos that exists today no longer has any of this.

Perseverance is a good recipe, Pablo has used it to enter a minority government led by the PSOE, from Anticapitalistas we will use it to defend the need for a left which is independent of the parties of the regime and the material pressures which are involved in forming part of the state.

Is Anticapitalistas already a project outside of Podemos, independent?

In some territories no, we are still inside Podemos, but in the majority we are already outside. Yes, it is true that the Podemos project has been moving towards a strategic orientation that we do not share, this is increasingly evident. Anticapitalistas is a confederal organization, and there have to be debates in the regions. In March, we will have a confederal political conference of Anticapitalistas to decide on our political commitment for the coming years.

During these months, we will be debating, but this coalition government, if it is finalized and they finally get the numbers, shows that the distance is getting bigger.

I find it a curious contrast. It is said that Podemos has become a kind of crutch for the regime, but at the

same time we see the rightists and representatives of the economic powers nervous and belligerent about Podemos entering into a national government. Perhaps Podemos governing will be dangerous for the privileged.

I think they want to discipline them before they arrive. We have seen that one of the main political powers of European geostrategy is the European Commission and the European Commission has given the seal of approval to the entrance of Unidas Podemos. In this country there is a Neanderthal right, a Francoist right not only in state institutions, but also in the economy.

Those fears are not founded either: Podemos already governs in six autonomous communities and nothing happens. They are not carrying out collectivization. Things are managed, more or less, as they were managed by the PSOE. No button is pressed that affects the large investment funds, the banks, the large holders of housing ...

It's an over-reaction so as to discipline Podemos in advance. This, in turn, puts more pressure on Sanchez and the PSOE to discipline the ministers of Unidas Podemos. But anyone who checks what is happening in autonomous communities or municipalities where Podemos has governed can see a more honest management, which is not corrupt, but nothing to justify the fuss made by these great powers.

On the other hand, they would complain in the same way. Recall the first legislature of Zapatero. We already knew what Zapatero meant politically and, nevertheless, the right declared war on him with the bishops, the PP, the protests on any subject related to ETA ... They portrayed him as some kind of Lenin, and we saw what Zapatero did with article 135.

Podemos has every right in the world to be in government. What we say is that for a left that aspires to a deep social transformation, a profound transformation of the economic and political system, doing so leaves it in a very delicate situation for a project that has to be considered in the medium and long term.

Faced with a political, media, economic, social, right which is hyper-mobilized against the possible coalition government of PSOE and Unidas Podemos, would Anticapitalistas defend the government, mobilize in favour of the coalition government?

If the right manifests itself against an opening in favour of dialogue in Catalonia if there is a courageous position on the part of the government, no doubt. If the right were mobilized against the repeal of the employment reform, gag law, LOMCE, approval of laws in a left-wing sense, we will undoubtedly be supporting the government. There is no doubt about that.

What cannot happen is that the right exerts pressure and the government goes backwards, which is what we have seen many times. To avoid that, it is necessary to have a counter-power formed by the social movements and organizations of the political left that demands the government comply with the programme that the social movements have already put on the table in relation to the issues that I have just described and others, such as rent regulation. By the way, the European Commission is belligerently against this and I don't think that, with Nadia Calviño inside, they will compromise.

If the government only has pressure from the right, it will increasingly turn to the right. Therefore, it is necessary to have pressure from the left. That does not mean that we are going to do anything with that right, but quite the opposite. That right and the extreme right are enormous dangers for the social majorities, we must fight them without rest, but for this we need a courageous left. There, we have doubts that the PSOE or Unidas Podemos can be that, with this correlation of forces and having to be loyal to the decisions of the Council of Ministers.

In the electoral campaign, Anticapitalistas called for a critical vote for Unidas Podemos and, at the same time, welcomed the possible arrival of the CUP in Congress. Finally, the CUP will be in the new Congress of Deputies. Some of the first statements they have made were to encourage the other pro-sovereignty forces of the state not to facilitate the investiture of Sánchez. Do you understand this position while the extreme right increases in each election?

Indeed, we have been happy with the result of the CUP. We believe it is healthy that an anti-capitalist force with which we have a friendly relationship has a presence in Congress. We understand what their position is, but it is not ours. Our position is to negotiate strong programmatic points, supported by the movements, to facilitate an investiture agreement. We do not believe that a legislature agreement can be reached with the PSOE, but we can get a few commitments.

On the other hand, we understand that they reject the pre-agreement between PSOE and Unidas Podemos, that only talks about dialogue within the framework of the Constitution and sees the problem of Catalonia as one of coexistence. If they want to have the votes of a Catalan party, including the abstention of ERC, they will have to modify that point.

But it's not just about Catalonia. A third election holds the enormous risk that the extreme right becomes a second force or can even propel itself to being first. Although we are small, we have to think big, have a point of hegemony. We must make proposals that are not seen as too risky by the social majority of the left.

We understand why they say that, we believe that with the wording of point 9 of the pre-agreement there will be no investiture. We also understand that, in a situation like this, it is not the same as having a social-liberal government or a government with the extreme right inside. We have our differences in this matter, although we agree on other issues.

Finally, you say that in March you will hold a political conference. You have also suggested that a leftist political force that is not “a crutch for the PSOE” is needed. Are we facing an embryo, before the creation of a new leftist political force beyond Podemos?

That we will have to discuss, also with people beyond Anticapitalistas, with many other comrades from other forces, even with many of those in Unidas Podemos. This debate must be had to the extent that Unidas Podemos leaves a space to its left. Being part of the government, it will surely develop practices that will not satisfy an important part of its social base. It will be discussed, the relationship between the left is dialectical, it is not static. It will be seen, in our political conference and beyond, if this possibility is real or not.

It will also depend on the political situation of the country. It is not the same to create a political force after great convulsions and mobilizations as it is without anything moving. Let's look at the mobilizations for the climate, the feminist and new mobilizations that arise in the heat of a new crisis. What is clear is that Podemos, as the catalytic force of all the alternative left of the state, has come to an end. That does not mean that something alternative will be created immediately. It will be seen. The deadlines are set by history.

*Source: interview by Sato Diaz, 20 November 2019 [Cuarto Poder](#), translated by **International Viewpoint**.*

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[1] A corruption case in which two former prime ministers of Andalusia, which the PSOE governed for 36 years, were found guilty and one of them was sentenced to six years in prison.