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Spanish state/Catalonia

After the referendum of 1 October

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1. The referendum held on 1 October in Catalonia puts on the agenda a series of fundamental questions. The savage repression from the People's Party (PP) government and the state apparatus is the demonstration of an authoritarian project incapable of responding in a civilized way to the democratic demands of the people. Its image, broadcast by the Rajoy government, taken up by the media of the whole world, sends us back us to the dark times of late Francoism. Any real democrat will feel shame and opposition to the pictures of the police beating up people who sought to exercise their right to vote or requisitioning ballot boxes. We condemn the actions of the government and the state apparatus and we convey our sympathy to the hundreds of wounded, among them militants of Anticapitalistas.

2. The Catalan people have demonstrated, both on 1 October and in the last few weeks, a collective will and a capacity for enormous self-organization. It has created a massive peaceful civil disobedience movement: community-based school and college occupations, reserve in the face of police provocations, local committees for the defence of the referendum, a broad mobilization that has included working and popular classes, going beyond the framework of official policy. The fact that the referendum was held successfully demonstrates that we are not dealing with a simple set of operations of a political elite. We are faced with a broad movement, in which ordinary people have expressed their determination to decide on the relationship they intend to maintain with the central state.

The sovereignist movement in Catalonia has placed on the agenda two elements that are becoming increasingly difficult to deny. On the one hand, the impossibility of reforming the Constitution and the 1978 regime towards a federation (that is, accepting the free will and sovereignty of the different parties). On the other hand, the demonstration that only the massive exercise of civil disobedience can be the instrument with which the working classes can go beyond the institutional limits.

3. The tripartite PP-PSOE-Ciudadanos [party of Catalan origin led by Albert Rivera] regime systematically refused to propose a democratic and peaceful solution to the demands of the people of Catalonia. Their strategy was a lamentable failure. The referendum was successfully held in a scenario in which the authoritarianism of the PP government broke the bridges of dialogue, with the result that today an increasing number of people in Catalonia understand that there is no possibility of "integration" [a Catalan State integrated in a federal State] in this Spanish State. The PSOE, in its subordinate support to Mariano Rajoy, was unable to propose a different path. The alleged renovation proposed by Pedro Sánchez [leader of the PSOE] is nothing but a cosmetic change that does not translate into an alternative political proposal to that of the PP.

4. On Tuesday, 3 October, the trade unions called for a general strike in Catalonia in the face of the repression of the State and in defence of the Catalan people's right to decide. The action of those from below is fundamental to ensure that the Catalan constituent process challenge an economic model that benefits only a minority. It is in this struggle against those from above that the working and popular classes will find themselves. And we will be at their side.

5. The Spanish elites have failed to resolve the "Catalan question". They have only made things worse, provoking hatred, weakening democracy and using brute force against ordinary people. Among the elites, the weight of the PP and the government of Mariano Rajoy was decisive, opting to block any solution to the Catalan question in a democratic form and dialogue. This position of the reactionary bloc is useful for him in the rest of the Spanish state to consolidate the decline in social, labour and environmental rights that we have been experiencing since the beginning of the crisis.

After the referendum of 1 October

No one should be mistaken: the strengthening of Mariano Rajoy around the Catalan question is a weakening of our rights in the rest of the country. This is the issue outside Catalonia.

Another country can only be built in without the PP in government. We must therefore work now to force Rajoy out of the Moncloa [seat of the Spanish government]. Faced with this dilemma, Sánchez's reaction has been a lukewarm defense of the Rajoy government, demonstrating the real limitations of a policy that would count on him to create a constituent bloc working for an alternative in favour of the social majority. This can only disappoint those who saw in him an option for "transforming" the PSOE and confronting the PP. In this situation, it is increasingly evident that a new project for the working classes will only be possible by promoting constituent processes that go beyond the 1978 regime.

At the present time, it is therefore urgent to promote a democratic movement which defends the legitimacy of the decisions of the Catalan people and which, at the same time, confronts the reactionary offensive of the PP. Only in this way will we be able to build a social majority capable of doing what the regime cannot: dialogue among equals, without repression or padlock, in order to struggle to build a free and united democratic cohabitation, where those below are the actors and where the will of the those concerned constitute the elements of mutual relations.

Madrid, 3 October 2017

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