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Spanish State

What social and political scenario will emerge after June 26?

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As we enter the last week of the electoral campaign (the election is on June 26), it is impossible to deny that, in spite of the efforts of most of the candidates in the elections to talk as little as possible about the “red lines” that the Troika intends to impose on Spain (budgetary cuts of more than 8 billion euros as well as a fine for not having respected the objectives concerning the budget deficit), the referendum on June 23 in Britain places the future of the European Union at the centre of the political agenda.

Indeed, whatever its result and over and above the economic consequences that it will have, it is not difficult to predict that the project of “more Europe” will not survive it, confirming definitively the end of this project. This also illustrates the tendencies within the EU, with an increasingly variable geometry, simultaneously seeking to safeguard the unity of the euro zone. The first tendency limits it to the status of a commercial bloc (precisely at the moment of negotiations with the United States over the TTIP). The second aims at ensuring greater internal cohesion by means of new steps in the direction of an authoritarian federalism (in the midst of the increasing tensions between the countries of North and South, between Brussels, Frankfurt and Berlin).

We should add the movements against the counter-reform of labour legislation in France, that is to say in a key country of the Union and the euro zone, precisely at the moment when criticisms of austerity policies, seen as ineffective, can now also be heard within the OECD. It is certain that it will not be easy to force a retreat on those who have dictated these policies and this law, in the service of which François Hollande has placed himself, as a recent article indicated [1]. But it is already obvious that the rejection of these policies extends from now on beyond the countries of the South.

At the same moment, the tragedy of the “crisis” of the rights of the refugees and of asylum continues, doubled with the shame provoked by a Europe occupied exclusively with blackmailing the governments of the neighbouring countries of the South, obliging them to build a greater number of concentration camps in return for “development aid”. It thus continues to turn a deaf ear to the words of which the Somali poet Warsan Shire reminds us: “Nobody leaves their house until their house is this small voice in your ear/Which says/Leave/Leave here immediately/ I do not know what I have become/But I know that anywhere/Will be surer than here [2].

In the midst of this climate of uncertainty as to the future of the European Union, we are also faced with another unknown factor, that of the results of the elections on June 26. However, the majority of the surveys coincide on the possibility of a relative repetition of the scenario resulting from the last elections on December 20. The difference concerns large-scale abstention, for the benefit of the PP and to the detriment of the PSOE. But also the real possibility that Unidos Podemos (UP, an electoral coalition of Podemos, Izquierda Unida and various “lists of convergence” in several autonomous regions) is transformed into the second political force, although with the electoral system in force there remains a doubt as to the relationship between the votes obtained and the number of seats, between the PSOE and UP). On the other hand, we do not have data concerning the possible results for the Senate. So it is to be feared that, taking account of the practically majority system of this election, we do not manage to prevent the presence within this discredited institution of a majority having the capacity to block any democratic “change” of the Constitution, a function for which it was really created.

In spite of the fact that a significant sector of the electorate has not yet decided where its vote will go, it seems highly probably seems that in the end the governmental options are situated between the alternative that the PP represents, on one side, and on the other, UP. Consequently, we have to envisage what will be the correlation of forces within the new Parliament, what alliances and the agreements will again be indispensable in order to form a new government and, in this way, to avoid new elections, without, however, that being a guarantee of a parliament that will last for four years.

In the context of this possible scenario, the key to the investiture of a new government will reside in what the PSOE will be able to do, by means of its vote in favour or its abstention, whether it is with respect to the PP or UP. However, the leaders of the PSOE continue to resist recognizing this bipolarisation of the electorate. Nevertheless, it has been demonstrated sufficiently during this campaign: on one side, the forces that are ready to allow the continuity of corrupt elites and the austerity policies of the euro zone (which the PSOE has shared until now); on the other, those which aspire to progress towards a break with that continuity. This bipolarisation is leading to a contracting of this idealized space of the “centre”, within which the PSOE still wants to operate during these elections. This is a difference from Ciudadanos, whose leader, Albert Rivera, has chosen to reveal the real face of an ultraliberal and centralist Right, increasingly bellicose against Podemos, for fear of losing votes to the advantage of the PP.

A recent article by Susana DÃ-az (president of the Junta of Andalusia and a leader of the PSOE) in the daily *El PaÃ-s* confirms her obstinacy in the face of this evidence, reiterating her rejection of any rapprochement with UP, since if it were to happen, “social democracy runs the risk of giving up its positions and its fundamentals, taking the discourse of the alternative currents as a reference and leaving the field free for them” [3]. A position which, certainly, contrasts with the timid openings that some Socialist leaders in Catalonia have expressed towards In ComÃ-1 Podem, and who seem to be expressing the attitude of a significant part of their own electorate. It would be advisable to wonder what this Andalusian leader means by the word “positions”. Would it not rather be a question of the privileges accumulated by an elite which attains, with the ERE [4] of Andalusia, its highest degree of infamy and which, moreover, resists any renouncement of the mechanism of the “revolving doors” (term which indicates moving from political posts to positions within companies)? And also to look at the meaning of “fundamentals”. All that does not have anything to do, of course, with the fundamentals of the socialist ideology which the party – within which the “careerists” exert more and more influence and the “believers” less and less – renounced several decades ago, in spite of the respectable efforts of the critical sector led by JosÃ© Antonio PÃ©rez Tapias (a member of the PSOE who teaches at the University of Granada).

Susana DÃ-az thus demonstrates her firm alignment on the campaign of fear conducted by the majority of the establishment confronted by the hypothesis of a government led by UP and the “lists of convergence”. A campaign which throws light on the worst demagogic practices of the old and the new Right, just like those of the old and the new guard of the PSOE. The parties are in competition with each other to find the best way of sowing panic within the electorate in the face of the possible victory of these new forces, in spite of the many guarantees that some of their principal leaders demonstrate concerning respect for the “responsibilities of state”. For example, the admiration expressed by Pablo Iglesias for JosÃ© RodrÃ-iguez Zapatero, former prime minister of the PSOE government from 2004 to 2011; the very government that initiated the turn to austerity in May 2010, then concluded a pact with the PP to carry out the counter-reform of article 135 of the Constitution (which gave priority to the repayment of the debt) in August 2011.

We have of course already noticed the president of Bankia, JosÃ© Ignacio Goirigolzarri, asking for a prolongation of the time for the reprivatisation of this bank, which is going through a process of cleaning-up thanks to public money, and protesting against the proposal of UP to transform this bank, along with the Banco Mare Nostrum, into the starting point for the creation of a new public bank. This is only one symbolic sample of the new series of “red lines” which will be drawn by those on high over the coming days and weeks, without forgetting the political significance of the visit of Obama, president of what remains an imperial great power, between July 9 and 11, following the summit of NATO in Warsaw and in the middle of the negotiations aiming at the formation of a new government. In politics, coincidences like this do not exist.

To this distrust in the face of a programme which can, in fact, be described as social-democratic, is added the fear that if UP arrives in government it will be able to reveal new scandals of systematic corruption which spread since the “Transition” (in 1978) and reached its apogee with the real estate and speculative bubble of the last decade. There is no doubt that there are still many aspects which must emerge, as we are seeing at present in many autonomous communities and town halls, among others in the capital of the kingdom, Madrid. For this reason, the fear of Rajoy and company that the *aforamientos* concern the past are not surprising [5].

What social and political scenario will emerge after June 26?

The first battle which will follow June 26 will be therefore be the interpretation of its results: will they will be examined in the same manner according to whether a new anti-PP majority is formed, anti- austerity and anti-centralist (i.e. in favour of a multinational Spanish State or even a referendum on independence in Catalonia); or, on the contrary, whether the votes and seats can be added up to make possible the creation of a bloc which defends the regime? A bloc which is defines itself as being that “of the constitutionalist forces”, ready to prevent the access to the government of these alternative forces which worry Susan-DÃ-az so much? For the moment, the leaders of the PSOE seem to incline towards the second way of seeing things, setting as the only condition the resignation of Rajoy or the search for alleged “independents” who would be favourably received by the new triad PP-PSOE-Ciudadanos.

If this hypothesis turned out to be right, which would not be at all easy but on which without any doubt the big economic powers are betting, we could be heading for an open confrontation which, except for those who do not want to see it, will most probably have been expressed in the ballot boxes. On one side, the will of a clear majority of the electorate to drive the PP from power, as well as the firm decision to embark on a new road, the road of the conquest of democracy – economic, social, political, environmental, citizens’ and international –, as expressed in the “50 steps to govern together” stipulated by UP. A common programme whose many steps must be concretized, for example the one that concerns the struggle against the debtocracy (the holders of debt), and other questions which are lacking, but which must constitute, if UP gets into government, a starting point to move on, together with millions of people who will have given it their vote on June 26, towards an even broader convergence even fuller, between the various peoples of the state: a convergence towards a common project (whether it is federal and/or confederal), on the basis of respect of the right to decide on their future for those who, as in Catalonia, demand it.

We should not spare our efforts, through the growing self-organization and empowerment of our peoples, those from here and those from elsewhere, to be worthy of this exceptional historical opportunity and to cope successfully with the enormous resistance of the representatives of the oligarchical despotism which dominates today over these lands and in Europe.

June 20, 2016

[1] “Comment l’Europe a pesé sur la loi El Khomri”, *Médiapart*, Martine Orange, June 12, 2016

<https://www.mediapart.fr/journal/france/120616/comment-leurope-pese-sur-la-loi-el-khomri>

[2] 2] See the reading of this poem here: <https://youtu.be/p50wr2JiX4>)

[3] *El PaÃ-s*, June 18th, 2016

[4] ERE (Expediente deregulación de empleo), indicates, according to Spanish legislation, a procedure which can be used by companies in the case of economic difficulties to ask for an authorization to suspend or to lay off workers. In the Andalusian case, the government of the PSOE of this autonomous community, headed by Manuel Chaves, had constituted in 2001 special funds for the ERE of more than 700 million euros. A judicial inquiry in progress indicates that part of this fund, between 130 and 150 million euros, was used, among other things, to ensure early retirements and subsidies to fraudulent companies, as well as financing a vast network of law firms, trade unionists and consultants of the clientele network of the Andalusian PSOE.

[5] The *aforamiento* refer to a jurisdictional privilege, fixed in the Constitution of 1978, from which benefit a large number of elected officials and magistrates, such as the president, the ministers, certain judges, etc. The *aforamientos* offer them a large degree of immunity