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Spanish state

If there are new elections, what shall we do?

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"To let things continue as before, that is the catastrophe," Walter Benjamin [Charles Baudelaire]

The holding of new elections is already a real possibility. The parliamentary arithmetic has produced what we saw: several months of staged negotiations, during which the population passively watched the show and the precariousness of daily life continued as if nothing had happened. There was not the least improvement in the situation of workers: it is clear that if we let those above negotiate, without those below moving, very little will change.

The goal of the elites is simple: it comes down to building a new normality so that they can continue to govern while the crisis stabilizes, a normality that can support corruption scandals [2] while the cuts demanded by the European Union are accepted like the rain that falls from the sky [3]. On this question, which is fundamental, the PP (Popular Party), the PSOE (Spanish Socialist Workers Party) and Ciudadanos (a party that emerged in in 2006 and is led by Albert Rivera) agree, even though they are all considering different strategies to achieve it.

The various negotiations for the formation of a government clearly show that the PSOE has no intention of breaking with those who hold economic power. Along with all of European social democracy (with the exception of Labour's Jeremy Corbyn), it has been converted into a neoliberal zombie: the differential factor in the Spanish state lies in the irruption of an electoral force that is outside the traditional power structures. And that is able to penetrate corners of society in which the classical left never managed to establish itself. This is the result not only of the skill in communication of some spokespersons, but especially of the cycle of struggles that was opened up by the 15M the *indignados*, on May 15, 2011), which overturned former loyalties and gave birth to a popular active base capable of being the component of a new majority. This social substrata is not dead, as was demonstrated in the last consultation organized by Podemos [4].

This situation is however marked by a special feature. We are in a moment of deadlock, where, if we stay where we are, it will mean a setback. A small leap forward means everything, just keeping our positions means stagnating, going back to the routine and allowing the so much hated normality of budget cuts and corruption to continue.

However, new elections can be an opportunity to change this routine and to prevent our post-election offer to be a "a Valencia-style government" [5], that is to say a government in which there can be movement on only a few little things, while on all the fundamental points everything remains unchanged. There is another option, to handle the question of investiture in an offensive way, following the "second electoral round," one based on the "relationship of forces" and not on a conditioning resulting from a "correlation weaknesses," putting us on the defensive.

This option involves, in the first place, an identification of the means: to overtake the PSOE, to turn it into a subordinate force. At present, the realization of this objective involves an alliance with IU and its million votes and an open, participative, campaign, which could lead to it having its own dynamic, as happened with the Ahora Madrid campaign [6]: it would also have to have a programme of breaking with the existing order.

This also involves maintaining and strengthening the agreement with the formations ComÃ° Podem (Catalonia), En Marea (Galicia) and CompromÃ-s-Podem (Valencian Community). An alliance does not mean a fusion of projects: it means reaching agreements to achieve concrete objectives. It is a matter of common sense that to overtake the PSOE involves today establishing this alliance, which could also have the multiplier effect of polarizing the options: the three parties of the rich against the alliance of the plebs. An axis of conflict favourable for those who are aiming

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for real change because, in fact, the great struggle that the country is going through concerns a property-owning and parasitical minority which is getting rich while the majority of society, which works, experiences a deterioration of its living conditions and sees the destruction of the elements of social security that still exist [7].

[<https://www.internationalviewpoint.org/IMG/png/ElecEsp.png>]

Antonio Gramsci spoke in his *Brief Notes on Machiavelli's Politics* of two types of politics. "Small politics, partial and everyday issues within an already established structure because of the struggle for supremacy between the various fractions of the same political class." "Big politics", however, deals with issues of the state and social transformation. The Sardinian genius [Gramsci] warned against the danger that "any small political element necessarily turns into a big political issue".

We must ask of Podemos generosity and a capacity for openness; of IU, that the interests of its apparatus and its identity reflexes should not be an insurmountable barrier. Let us follow Gramsci by saying that "small politics" should not be the obstacle that prevents us from solving the big questions.

23 April

[1] After this article was written, new elections were in fact called for June 26.

[2] Not a day goes by without new scandals emerging, particularly concerning the PP. Three examples: the industry minister has resigned following the revelations of Panama Papers; the Mayor of Granada has been arrested for corruption and the entire ruling circles of the PP of the Valencian Community are stained by corruption. It is needless to add that the PSOE is also regularly the subject of affairs of corruption.

[3] The Troika is demanding additional budget cuts of several billion euros. Various figures are mentioned, various announcements and various pressures come in to play to indicate the way forward, whatever the government. The IMF has suspended the publication of its report on Spain until the formation of the government, which did not prevent it from stating on April 14, that due to the growth of the deficit "considerable fiscal adjustments" would be necessary. This demand did not fall on deaf ears, since the next day, April 15, the Finance Minister announced an initial budget cut of at least two billion euros in the budget of the central government.

[4] On April 18, the organization secretary of Podemos, Pablo Echenique, released the results of an electronic consultation held over several days between April 14 and 16: 130,148 (88 per cent of those taking part) voted against an agreement supporting the formation of a government PSOE-Ciudadanos; 135'400 (91 per cent) answered yes to the second question put to the vote, whether those consulted supported the formation of a government of change defended by Podemos and lists of convergence.

[5] Following the recent elections in the autonomous communities, a coalition government was formed between the Socialist Party and Compromis; the latter is a formation that brings together different left forces; it allied itself with Podemos for the general election.

[6] A list comprising various left forces, which won the election for the Madrid City Council

[7] The poll published by *Publico* on April 22, 2016, for the June elections, gave the following results (number of seats in Congress), taking into account a list of convergence between Podemos and Izquierda Unida.