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Spanish state

Podemos contests European elections

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At the forthcoming European elections a new movement which brings together left anti-capitalist activists and new generations will appear on the lists – “Podemos”. Miguel Segui of France’s Nouveau Parti Anticapitaliste (NPA) met two activists who will be candidates on its lists.

Can you introduce yourselves?

Teresa Rodriguez I am an activist in Izquierda Anticapitalista, a trades unionist in the education field and an activist in the movement in defence of public education “Marea Verde”. I am number 2 on the Podemos list for the European elections.

[https://internationalviewpoint.org/IMG/jpg/Teresa_Rodriguez_2_DR.jpg]

Jesus Jurado I am 27 years old, and I am a political scientist, currently unemployed like more than half of Andalusian young people. I am active in the “Plataforma de Auditoria Ciudadana de la Deuda” and in neighbourhood movements in Seville. I am a candidate on the Podemos list.

[https://internationalviewpoint.org/IMG/jpg/Jesus_Jurado_DR.jpg]

Can you introduce the Podemos movement to us?

J.J. It is a political project in construction, resulting from the coming together of social movements, anti-capitalist political organisations and intellectuals. We are united to build a new political framework to stop the current process of destruction of our rights and liberties. This emerges in a phase of exhaustion of the political model inherited from the Transition. [1] A model deconstructed from above at the social level and placed in question by its democratic limits.

In this context, Podemos presents itself as a broad movement, not free from ambiguities, but clearly identified as breaking with the established order, while stressing the incapacity of the current regime to respond to the urgent social needs of the people.

T.R. It is an electoral project created 4 months ago with the intention of responding to the accumulated violence of attacks against social rights, the crisis of alternatives and the absence of perspectives. It is necessary then to respond to a situation of crisis of the bipartisan system which opens a space as well as opportunities allowing us to break the vicious circle: a PSOE which systematically disgusts its social base... and which opens the road to the PP... against those who vote again for the PSOE, still more on the defensive... and then it starts again, and so on. Above all, our role is to serve as a factor of political unfreezing as well as corresponding politically to the movement of the indignant.

What are the main demands?

T.R. It is about recovering sovereignty. Nobody doubts any longer that those who decide our future are not elected or under anybody’s control. No international power or privileged minority class should rule our lives. It is not possible that the only thing which is today sovereign is this illegitimate debt which asphyxiates us! It is also about recovering social, democratic and ecological rights sacrificed on the altar of the markets. Housing, employment, health, education, social services, care for people and the planet.

Currently to demand these rights it necessary to uproot the acquired privileges of this privileged minority which puts our backs against the wall. Those who do not guarantee these rights are of no use.

Finally we need to practice politics in another way, and build a new political ethic: without professionals, without privilege, guaranteeing the collective control of those who represent us publicly. We need to build a new popular power of the majority and denounce corruption as a mode of government.

J.J. Our programme has been built in two stages, with the open participation of all: one virtual and another physical. The result of this process has been the adoption of a programme influenced by both the ideas of the movement of the indignant, the end of neoliberal policies and democratic radicalism. In this sense, I believe the two main demands of our programme are the public audit of the debt and the opening of a constituent process.

How is Podemos structured?

T.R. We have more than 300 “circles”: these are open spaces which allow the exercise of a collective political power, where nobody asks for sharply defined political identities, where people are not asked to abandon their social or political choices or engagements, and where we participate equally with those who have no political affiliation.

J.J. Since January, these circles have spread across the territory, including in rural areas traditionally distanced from political initiatives of this type. However this organization, self managed in assemblies, is weakened by the lack of political experience of most of those who participate. It is in this context that we have constituted a “sponsor” group as “provisional directorate” until the end of the elections. In June, we will hold the first general assembly where we can define the statutes of our new organisation. It is important that this allows us to strengthen internal democracy, by creating a coordination of the circles which are the main bodies of decision and control.

How can the NPA help you?

T.R. We have many common programmatic demands and political objectives with the NPA. We should have supple and fluid relations. This can also establish Podemos “circles” among Spanish immigrants living in France. We should be able to organize sites of unitary debate which help us build another future for the peoples of Europe, to exchange and advance on strategies which allow unity of the social majority which is today suffering the crisis.

J.J. One of the most important social groups for Podemos is that of young immigrants obliged to leave the country to find work, funds for study and research and so on. The support of allied organizations is decisive to inform the mobilizations of Spanish immigrants as well as to coordinate our struggles on a broader scale. To dismantle the Europe of the markets, we must strengthen solidarity between our peoples.

[1] The transition to parliamentary rule after the death of General Francisco Franco, who ruled the Spanish state in a dictatorship from 1939 to 1976.