

“If things carry on like this, there won’t be work for any of us,” say Spain’s indignados

Our reporters
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On Saturday a *World Socialist Web Site* reporting team spoke to a number of people who are protesting in the Puerta del Sol square in Madrid.

Susana is currently studying in high school. She told the WSWs about the poverty facing many working class families.

“I don’t agree with the way the government are treating us. They are increasing the taxes, taking our money from all sides. We can’t leave our parents’ homes, have our own life. We are controlled by a few people who say what we have to think and do.

“My father was a first-level electrician, but he is currently unemployed. He has been unemployed for four years. He lives off subsidies that they give him, but my father has no money to spare at all. Added to this situation is the fact that he is disabled, but they don’t want to give benefits to him. My mother is mopping up front doors for €500 a month, and with this she has to sustain my brother, who is also unemployed, and pay the bills.

“Here the subsidies are €400 a month, €300 of which, at least, goes to food. You will probably think that with €400 a person can live, but a whole family is another question. It’s not a question of my mother not wanting to give me money, but because we don’t have it. We have to eat!”

Pedro, 16, who lives in Madrid, is in his final year of high school. He was at the camp with two of his friends.

He said, “I have come here to fight for the future. If things carry on like this, there won’t be work for any of us. I am going to study for my final exams this year. I want a career in audio and visual entertainment. I want to go to university and want to get a job if I can get it.

“I come to the camp here in the afternoon. The majority of my friends support the movement”.

Pedro’s mother is a secretary and his father is a financier. Asked if they supported the protests, he said he thought most people supported it.

“Five or six years ago there seemed to be money around for people. Now there is just enough money for people to scrape by”.

Asked what he thought the movement was fighting against,

Pedro said, “I think it’s against capitalism and the false democracy we have now. I think there should be electoral reform, and we should be against the politicians who don’t represent us.

“Capitalism is great for the rich, but for the poor it gets worse. We just want a normal future. We don’t want to live in a situation where we can’t get to the end of the week, and that they don’t exploit us.

“I think socialism would be very good because we would have equality. This would be against capitalism, which is all about inequality. The PSOE (Socialist Workers Party of Spain) are just the same as the Popular Party, they don’t do anything good. I think the real socialists are on the streets, not the politicians”.

Asked what he thought about the police repression in Barcelona’s Plaza de Catalunya the previous day, Pedro said, “They weren’t provoking anyone, and it’s bad that the people were attacked. I hope they don’t do the same in Madrid”.

He said in relation to the struggles of workers and youth in Tunisia, Egypt, Greece and Portugal, “We are all different people, but we are fighting the same struggles. When you see people who are struggling all over the world, you see that this isn’t just about some stupid protest in Madrid”.

Juan is a part-time student from La Mancha and now lives in Madrid.

He said, “I’m from a small town, and it’s awful. Ten of my friends have lost work. There is brutal unemployment. There is not a lot of money to go to university. In the countryside people are not receiving any help from the government. If you do have work with half decent pay, then you are a slave to the banks.

“I don’t have enough money to live on. For food and your flat, and if you want to do some courses, etc., you need about €800 a month. If you have got €1,000 a month you are lucky. I earn about €900 a month, and this involves lots of work. I am working part-time in a theatre improvisation group and part-time in a restaurant.

“On May 15, I was away working, so I missed the demonstration. The press coverage of the demonstration has been different to what is happening here. There has been a lot

of manipulation of what is going on. We get all our information from the Internet. People are being mobilised through the Internet.

“Every day there are protests here from different collectives. Sometimes there are bigger ones. I like being in the camp because you get a sense that everyone is here together.

“On May 15 there was a lot of violence against the demonstration by the police. They tried to disperse it. But about 20 or 30 people from different collectives stayed and set the camp up. On May 16 and 17, we then had about 150 people in the square”.

Asked what he thought about the groups involved in the movement, he said, “This camp is not Real Democracy Now. They were just the group who called the May 15 demonstration. The camp was a spontaneous thing; it was people coming together who were angry, the indignant. I think the movement is growing and spreading.

“We want to change things little by little, demand by demand. The world won’t be changed in 15 days”.

Asked what he thought of the PSOE, he said, “I think the PSOE is contaminated completely. The PSOE is united with the right. They are influenced by the European Union and the IMF. They’re very corrupt and they don’t represent the people—the peasants, the workers, the students. They are only interested in representing the bourgeoisie.

“The key is that the parties don’t represent the people. They are more interested in the bourgeoisie. The PP represents the whims of the European Union and the International Monetary Fund”.

Juan said the police repression in Barcelona “was a crime of the government. The reason for the repression was that more people were getting involved in the movement. They want to stop more people coming out to support the movement. The excuse for the repression was that the people were being violent and that they had provoked altercations with the police. But this was a lie and you can see on the Internet that the protests were peaceful”.

Juan pointed out a headline in the right-wing *La Razon* newspaper that said, “The indignant of Barcelona provoked the violence”. “The parties, through the press, are trying to manipulate things through the media”, he said.

When asked about the trade unions, he said, “They’ve forgotten about the workers. The people don’t feel supported or protected by the unions. All the prices in Spain have gone up, but the wages have stayed at pre-euro levels. They have increased the hours of work. People want to have a general strike, but they don’t feel supported by the unions. People are beginning to talk to each other in the streets about politics and improving things. There are movements in Greece and in Italy and it’s growing.

“Capitalism only benefits a very small minority, and every day the gap grows between the richest and the poorest. It seems more like a feudal society. The government doesn’t represent

the people. They represent the banks and the multi-nationals and are just puppets of capitalist power. There is a sign here in the camp that says the system can’t be reformed. It must be destroyed”.

José is 23 years old and is currently studying. He said, “My father works in construction, and obviously that has been central to the economic crisis in Spain. With the problems in the industry, my family were close to losing everything. Lots of my friends are very worried because they can’t find work. There is 40 percent unemployment. After I leave university, I will try to find work. But if not, maybe I’ll have to leave Spain. Lots of young people are talking about going to Germany and living in other countries. It will be disaster if lots of young people leave. We’ll try to stay here and find something, but we need money. We have to have some kind of future.

“I would like it if there was a real socialist government in power. I wish the PSOE was socialist, but it isn’t. It is capitalist.

“The first aim is to change the democracy so that people can involve themselves in the democracy. There’s no opportunity in this country to change anything. You have to vote for one or another of the PSOE or the PP.

“I don’t know much about politics, but I think socialism is more focused on the people. It’s not just about the power of the rich.

“The trade unions don’t do anything. They have loads of money and loads of power, but where are they? When you look at the PP you can see they are right-wing and for the rich, but when you look at these groups who are called socialist, they don’t seem to be socialist.

“If you look at what happened in Barcelona with the police, there are no words to describe it. I was really scared. The only reason they did that is to scare whole country.

“I think we should broaden this out to the workers. The youth are nothing without the workers, and the workers are nothing without the youth. We have to grow together. It’s impossible to find a solution without a coalition between the young people and the working class. Our parents are working class. The young people are working class. The movement is fighting against the politics in the country and against the system in general, which is wrong. And we’ve had enough”.



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