

After installation of Popular Party government

Podemos, pseudo-left prepare for political power in Spain

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After former Prime Minister Felipe González's putsch inside the Spanish Socialist Party (PSOE) paved the way for the installation of a right-wing Popular Party (PP) government, the Podemos party is signalling that it plans to form Spain's next government after that.

The Pabloite Anticapitalistas faction of Podemos and General Secretary Pablo Iglesias are seeking out alliances with disgruntled factions of the political establishment linked to the PSOE. They are well aware that the incoming minority PP government will be weak, deeply unpopular, and quite possibly very short-lived.

Workers must be warned: the government coalition Podemos is seeking to build in Spain would be an enemy of the working class. Were it to come to power, Podemos would pursue an agenda of war and austerity—just like Podemos' ally, the coalition government between Syriza and the far-right Independent Greeks party in Athens.

Days after González ousted PSOE leader Pedro Sánchez and pushed for the PSOE to back the installation of a PP government, Iglesias called for forging alliances with social democratic unions, a critical prop of successive PSOE and PP governments. Since 2012, the unions have remained silent as millions of workers suffered unemployment, wage cuts and redundancies.

Referring to the PSOE-linked General Union of Labour (UGT) and the Stalinist-led Workers Commissions (CCOO) trade unions, Iglesias said: "If the working class organisations call a general strike, Podemos is ready to make this general strike different." He continued, "The general secretary of the UGT said something reasonable: 'no, we do not discard the

possibility of calling a general strike if the PP rules.' This is very important, very important."

Iglesias told eldiario.org that "the delivery of the government by the PSOE means we have to make parliamentary activity consistent with the construction of a popular movement."

Iglesias is well aware that the PP government will be Spain's weakest in the post-Franco era. The PP is massively unpopular due to its savage austerity measures and is involved in numerous corruption scandals. Just last week, Spain's largest corruption trial in years opened; among the 37 accused are three former PP treasurers.

The PP's electoral base is little less than 20 percent of the electorate, many of them pensioners, who face grim prospects, as Spain's social security fund is predicted to run out of cash in late 2017. At the same time, the PP has already prepared a €5 billion austerity package to be implemented with the European Union once it takes power.

On Sunday, after the PSOE's Federal Committee voted to allow the PP to rule, a decision that was the *raison d'être* of the coup against Sánchez, Iglesias wrote a piece for *Público*. In it, he declared that "we are the opposition because there is where they have taken us, and we will assume it with pride. But I assure you that we prefer to govern and we will continue to prepare for it. Be assured that sooner or later it will occur."

Podemos is conscious that the blow to the PP-PSOE two-party system means that the ruling class will sooner or later rely on Podemos to carry out its policies of austerity and war.

The PSOE has been the main party of bourgeois rule

in Spain for the past 40 years. Re-founded in the dying days of the fascist regime of Francisco Franco by González, with the aid of European social democratic parties and semi-tolerated by the fascist Franco regime, the PSOE has undermined itself by backing a PP-led government. It is clear to ever broader masses of people that the two-party system in Spain in the entire post-Franco period was a duopoly between reactionary bourgeois parties deeply hostile to the working class.

Podemos hopes to be the entirely undeserving beneficiary of mass anger with the PSOE and PP. Two years since its creation, Podemos is virtually indistinguishable from the PSOE in terms of its pro-capitalist programme and its imperialist foreign policy.

Podemos is signalling as aggressively as possible to the media that its populist rhetoric is purely for show, and that it will carry out whatever policies are required by the banks and the financial aristocracy. Two weeks ago, Iglesias bluntly stated: “If we rule, we will look for compromises and consensus, and we would openly say that our populism has ended, that it was useful in the fight.”

To the extent that Iglesias is briefly adopting deceitful populist rhetoric in a cynical bid to prepare Podemos for power, however, this has provoked an enthusiastic endorsement from the Pabloites.

Previously, Anticapitalistas had directed mild criticisms at Iglesias after the June 26 elections, when Unidos Podemos—the alliance between Podemos and the Stalinist-led United Left—lost 1.2 million votes.

Anticapitalistas blamed Podemos’ loss on Iglesias’ blatant attempts to reassure the Spanish and European banks that he would protect their interests, by forming a “left coalition” with the PSOE. In the days before June 26, Iglesias declared that Podemos was the “new social democracy,” and that former PSOE Prime Minister José Zapatero was “the best PM in Spain’s history.”

Speaking to the Pabloite web site International Viewpoint just weeks before the González putsch, Josep Maria Antentas, a leading member of Anticapitalistas, complained that “voters have seen Podemos say one thing and do the opposite: rejecting left unity and then making an alliance with United Left; saying they would never form a joint government with PSOE only to then make an offer to do just that; refusing the label ‘left’ and then embracing the label of ‘social democracy’.”

Antentas raised the fear that Podemos’ leadership was moving “to further moderate the party’s positions in order to increase its governmental and institutional credibility, especially among those potential voters still suspicious of Podemos.”

After González’s coup against Sánchez, however, Iglesias has changed course and distanced himself from those inside Podemos who advocated an alliance with the PSOE and even with the right-wing Citizens party.

This has been well received by the Pabloite Anticapitalistas. In Madrid, where Podemos is holding primary elections to decide on the region’s leadership, the Iglesias faction and Pabloite Anticapitalistas have joined forces.

The written agreement cynically declares the party is “not looking for moderation” and that “they will have no insecurities about scaring the privileged.” Their aim is to create a party “that does not surrender itself now that the PSOE has chosen the PP.” They both agree that Podemos will not enter alliances with the PSOE in the region of Madrid.

The Pabloite leader and Podemos Eurodeputy Miguel Urbán declared that “this does not end here,” stating that the aim is to replicate the Madrid agreement at the national level.



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