

Campaign grows inside Podemos for alliance with Spanish right

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Nearly a month has passed since top Stalinists associated with the Podemos leadership in Spain wrote an initial article endorsing the policies of the far-right-wing government in Italy. Since then, numerous members of Podemos have come out to defend this position, seeking to create a new movement based on nationalism, economic protectionism and appeals to the far right.

Former Communist Party leader Julio Anguita, Podemos deputy Manuel Monereo, and law professor Héctor Illuega published two articles in pro-Podemos online paper *Cuarto Poder*. The authors, all of whom are top associates of Podemos General Secretary Pablo Iglesias, hailed the Italian neo-fascists' "Dignity Decree" as "a remarkable effort to defend the Italian people against the lords of finance." They remained silent on Rome's austerity policies, military intervention in Libya, terror campaign against the Roma and refugees, and threats of mass deportations.

In a series of interviews, Monereo and Anguita defended their positions and denounced the "political correctness" of their critics. They have enjoyed wide press coverage in official media. In a *Ctxt* interview, Anguita asked "how have the Spanish people benefited" from the EU and called for an exit from the euro currency, saying: "I want to regain sovereignty and the state, I want power to do something" while cynically claiming not to be a "nationalist."

Similarly, Monereo told *Cuarto Poder* that the new movement's aim is to "change the [European Union's] fundamental treaties and the exit of the Euro, especially by the countries of the South." He attacked Germany, claiming that "German Europe is breaking with a part of European history linked to the workers' movement, to social rights, trade unions and popular sovereignty."

Both Monereo and Anguita are quite open that the

aim of their "Initiative for the III Republic" is to forge ties with the right and far-right. Monereo states that "the III Republic will not only be for the left, it will be democratic federalist and defender of social rights and it will go beyond the left as we know it today." Similarly, Anguita says the new movement will be open to "democrats...but not necessary from the left."

The endorsements of xenophobic policies and far-right parties from within Podemos testifies to the bankrupt and reactionary character of Podemos, a coalition of Spanish Stalinism with *Anticapitalistas*, the Spanish allies of France's Pabloite New Anti-capitalist Party (NPA).

Stalinist, Pabloite and social democratic parties, as well as openly right-wing parties, have repeatedly enforced the interests of the financial markets and the European Union's (EU's) austerity diktat against bitter opposition from workers. This is again the case in Spain, where the Socialist Party (PSOE) minority government is supported by an alliance of the Stalinist-led United Left and Podemos. The PSOE government is adapting itself to EU budgetary austerity, military spending increases and the rapid turn to the right of the European bourgeoisie as a whole.

Such policies have led to disastrous social conditions. More than 4 million people in Spain live in severe social exclusion, 40 percent more than 10 years ago, according to Caritas Spain's latest report. There are 3 million unemployed, and a third of youth have no job. Across Europe, these betrayals have repulsed workers and youth, and—absent a visible socialist alternative—driven some angry and desperate sections of the population to vote for far-right parties.

As far broader discontent provoked by deteriorating living standards and the extreme concentration of wealth emerges in the working class, sections of

Podemos are responding by trying to channel this anger behind xenophobic Spanish nationalism.

Even though Anguita and Monereo began by defending far-right Italian minister Matteo Salvini's policies, a number of Stalinists within Podemos have emerged to defend their position. The camp inside Podemos of what one *Cuarto Poder* reader aptly called "the white-washers of the white-washers of Salvini" is rapidly growing.

Hugo Martínez Abarca, who was a member for two decades of the Stalinist-led United Left until he left to pursue a career within Podemos in 2015 as deputy in the Madrid regional assembly, posted an article under the title "Republic or the Left: for a Patriotic Republicanism." He calls the "left" to abandon any left content related to a "Third Republic" demand, so it can be a "transversal project for the country."

Martínez, like Monereo and Anguita, makes clear that this new Republic will be compatible with right-wing politics: "If there is an opportunity for the Republic to be the name of change, this passes through untying its identification with the left and fill it with content shared by large sectors [of the population]: to make political republicanism synonymous with institutional republicanism." The "content" would be "democratic, ethical, modernising values, and above all, extraordinarily tied with the future."

Clara Ramas, a professor at Complutense University of Madrid, which is close to Podemos, wrote a piece for *Ctxt* defending a "new democratic patriotism, which speaks for law and order in a non-reactionary way, which offers security, welfare, belonging and protection."

Salvador Arnal, another Stalinist university professor, defended Ramas in another article posted in *Rebelión*. He defends Ramas's "democratic patriotism," stating: "Certainly in Spain a bloody counterrevolution triumphed, but not all the history of Spain in these last two centuries can be reduced to that triumph. That appeals to patriotism have been linked to repressive bodies such as the Civil Guard for about four decades [under the Franco dictatorship] does not mean that this has always been the case or that it always has to be so."

He provides examples of "democratic patriotism" in the "democratic-patriotic struggle ... of 1936-1939 against fascism and foreign intervention." He also hailed the supposedly progressive use of "patriotism"

by Spanish Stalinists and Maoists under the Spanish fascist dictatorship of Francisco Franco.

These are anti-Trotskyist historical lies serving to cover up the rapid evolution of the Stalinist groups towards support for xenophobic positions and far-right organisations. The Stalinist promotion of nationalism during the Spanish Civil War, as well as during the fascist dictatorship that emerged from Franco's victory in the war, was not a democratic and revolutionary policy. It was a defence of capitalist property against the repeated revolutionary uprisings of the working class during the Spanish Civil War and the workers' deep opposition to the Franco regime.

During the Civil War, based on their bloodthirsty opposition to socialist revolution, the Stalinists tortured, jailed and murdered Trotskyists and anarchists who opposed the Popular Front government of the Second Republic.

Eighty years after the end of the Spanish Civil War, and a decade after the eruption of the 2008 global economic crisis, the calls for more nationalism and patriotism emerging from Podemos again reflect its bitter opposition to a political movement in the working class challenging European capitalism on the basis of a Trotskyist programme. While the working class is moving towards ever broader strike action and political opposition to the regime, Podemos and its allies are moving into the orbit of right-wing and even neo-fascistic tendencies.



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