

Podemos obeys Spanish fascist Vox party's demand for no shelter-at-home

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After the January 6 fascist coup attempted by Donald Trump in Washington and amid growing, public threats of a Francoite coup in Spain, the fascist Vox party is increasingly dictating terms to Spain's Socialist Party (PSOE)-Podemos government.

COVID-19 is running rampant across Europe, with record number of infections and daily deaths mounting to several thousand per day. Yet when Vox denounced a shelter-at-home policy needed to halt the pandemic, the PSOE-Podemos government immediately accepted.

On Friday, Vox leader Santiago Abascal intervened in a party-sponsored event titled "The Future of Patriotism in the US and Spain" in Barcelona. Other far-right attendees included Georgia Meloni, of Fratelli d'Italia; far-right Chilean politician José Antonio Kas; and US Republican operatives Ted Bromund of the Heritage Foundation think tank and Grover Norquist. The latter is the brother of David Norquist, appointed acting secretary of defense by the incoming Biden administration as a sign of "unity" between the Democratic Party and its "Republican colleagues" after Trump's coup.

Abascal denounced Twitter for closing Trump's account during his coup attempt. The Vox leader said it was the result of "hatred," which "shows the fear of the globalists, of the left, who have perceived that the future does not belong to them, it belongs to the patriots." He concluded with a call for the fascists and far-right extremists to work together, "coordinated and united" against the "left," that is to say, against the working class.

Shortly before the meeting, Abascal reacted publicly to news that Spain's conservative Popular Party (PP) may change its opposition to a state of alarm to implement a shelter-at-home policy. He made clear there could be no attempt to change health policy:

"Spain must protect itself, but Spain cannot stop. They have no right to arrest Spaniards in their homes condemning them to their ruin. For many months they have not been allowed to work, or their rights are being restricted."

Hours after Abascal's intervention, Fernando Simón, director of the Centre for the Coordination of Health Alerts and Emergencies, made clear, as he has done for a number of weeks now, that the PSOE-Podemos government will not reverse to shelter-at-home. Simón said: "The option of home confinement, as always, is there. But it does not seem, right now, necessary. We will see in the future. The control measures implemented are very similar to that of France or Germany."

He falsely claimed that the limited measures adopted by regional governments across Spain, like shutting down bars and restaurants while allowing non-essential work and children back to school, "will not have the name of confinement, but the set of measures has a very similar effect."

The following morning, as if to further reassure the fascists, Health Minister Salvador Illa said in a press conference: "At the moment, we do not contemplate any home confinement. We dominated the second wave without home confinement. We will defeat this third wave through co-governance and the current state of alarm, which works." He added, "We are in the third wave, we are reporting very worrying figures, but we want to remind everyone that we have the knowledge, the experience and we know how to bend this curve."

Spain's PSOE-Podemos government is lying. One cannot define the current state of the pandemic as a third wave when the second one—which itself was only the resurgence of the virus after the premature ending of lockdown measures in the spring—was never brought

under control. The virus is running rampant throughout Spain, and ICUs throughout the country face collapse.

Last Monday, Spain reported 61,422 new coronavirus cases, the highest weekend figure so far. By the middle of the week, on Wednesday, the number of new coronavirus infections reported was 38,869 in 24 hours. This was the worst seen so far in the pandemic until Friday, when Spain reported 40,197 new infections. The number of “excess deaths” above the historical norm—a better indication of deaths caused by the pandemic—now stand over 84,000.

The reaction of the government confirms the warning that it does not represent a “progressive” faction of the capitalist establishment. The working class cannot “pressure” the “left populists” in Podemos and trade unions to obtain a less callous and repressive policy, or a scientifically-based approach to combat the virus. These forces are becoming the main instrument through which the increasingly fascist ruling establishment implements its policy.

It confirms the warnings of the International Committee of the Fourth International: If the control of the virus is left in the hands of the capitalist governments in Europe, the result will be hundreds of thousands of further unnecessary deaths. Capitalist elites in country after country have rejected any response to the pandemic that conflicts with corporate profit interests and the drive for the accumulation of private wealth.

The EU bailout, co-managed with Podemos and union representatives, transferring €140 billion to corporations and banks is being paid with the thousands of infections and deaths in herd immunity policy, pension and labour reforms, and brutal police-state repression to suppress social opposition.

Meanwhile, Podemos is intervening to cover up advanced coup plans of Vox and sections of the army. For over a year, these forces plotted to impose a dictatorship under the guise of a national PSOE-PP-Vox unity government.

Vox’s attacks on the PP for considering shelter-at-home policy, reveals the class interests underlying this policy. Just days after retired Lieutenant General Emilio Pérez Alamán wrote to the Minister of Defence on the same day Trump launched his coup, demanding it “change the course” of the government, a PP internal debate emerged whether to align themselves with the

fascist campaign.

It is also an exposure of both the social-democratic PSOE and the “left populist” Podemos, and its allies across Europe, that Vox is intervening not to shift the policy of the PSOE and Podemos, but to ensure that there be no change to the murderous policies that they are already implementing.

The debate takes place amid rising working class opposition to the PSOE-Podemos government’s “herd immunity” policy and a growing class gulf separating the workers from the capitalist class. Nearly 60 percent of Spaniards believe the government should have taken stricter measures to control the virus, according to a survey conducted in early December by the state-funded Centre for Sociological Research (CIS).

It reflects a gulf between the policy of death and profits and the police of saving lives and socialism. The capitalist policy must be countered by the unified struggle of the working class across Europe. Schools and non-essential workplaces must be closed, with living wages provided to everyone, and full compensation provided to small businesses.

In opposition to the dead-end policy of pressuring the trade unions to fight, the International Committee of the Fourth International and its Socialist Equality Party sections call for the formation of independent rank-and-file committees in schools and workplaces, for the organization of a general strike to enforce a scientific response to the pandemic.



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