

Betrayal of Cádiz metal strike exposes Spanish Morenoite Izquierda Diario

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The betrayal of the strike of 22,000 metalworkers in Cádiz last month—by the coordinated efforts of the Socialist Party (PSOE)-Podemos government and its union affiliates, the Podemos-linked Workers Commissions (CCOO) and the PSOE-aligned General Workers Union (UGT)—has exposed an entire layer of petty-bourgeois groups in Podemos’ political orbit.

Aware of growing social anger at the criminal mishandling of the pandemic that has led to millions of deaths throughout the world, rising costs of living and austerity, they are trying to block working class opposition on their left. This is the content of the article posted by the Revolutionary Workers Current (CRT), the Spanish affiliate of Argentina’s Socialist Workers Party (PTS) and online publication *Révolution Permanente* in France, titled “The Cádiz metal strike and the subjective recomposition of the working class” written by Diego Lotito and Roberto Bordón on *Izquierda Diario*.

During the Cádiz strike, the PSOE-Podemos government sent squads of anti-riot National Police and paramilitary Guardia Civil officers and deployed a 15-ton armoured BMR (Blindado Medio sobre Ruedas, or Medium Armoured Vehicle on Wheels). The BMR drove through working class neighbourhoods of San Pedro and Bazán, crashing through the streets near local schools to try to terrorise the population. The government also banned solidarity protests in Madrid.

On its *Izquierda Diario* (ID) web site, the Morenoite Revolutionary Workers Current (CRT) peddles illusions in allies of Podemos who played a key role in suppressing the strike. It promotes Anticapitalistas, a founding tendency of Podemos, whose members applauded the contracts that the unions forced on the workers by crushing the strike. Instead, the CRT claims that the Anticapitalistas could have helped the strike by leading a struggle for “self-organisation” of the working class and “democratic assemblies” during the strike. On ID, Diego Lotito and Roberto Bordón write:

“Through its mayor of Cádiz, José María Gonzalez ‘Kichi,’ Anticapitalistas proposed a correct policy of solidarity. However, this went further and ‘Kichi’ offered himself to the regional government of Andalusia as a mediator, thus giving an endorsement to a treacherous negotiating table in which the employer’s association and the union bureaucracy sought to sign a downward agreement that would end the strike, such as it actually happened. As Santiago Lupe [leader of CRT] maintains in a polemic published in ID [*Izquierda Diario*], nothing could be

further from a truly anti-capitalist policy for the conflict, which in any case involved putting the institutional weight of the mayor’s office in developing workers’ self-organization and not negotiating behind workers’ backs at the same time.”

This is an absurd falsification of the class orientation and perspectives of Podemos. Anticapitalistas did not have an anti-capitalist policy, nor did it call for workers to break from the union bureaucracy and form independent rank-and-file committees to democratically represent them.

The role Anticapitalistas played during the strike has vindicated the *World Socialist Web Site*’s analysis on this tendency’s departure from the PSOE-Podemos government. The WSWP wrote: “While the name of Anticapitalistas proclaims it to be ‘anti-capitalist,’ it is no such thing. It is being sent out of Podemos to serve as a paid agent of the Spanish capitalist state, intervening on social media and in protests and strikes hostile to Podemos to spy on and strangle them.”

It was no overstatement, but an entirely warranted warning to call tendencies like Anticapitalistas political agents of the state. During the Cádiz strike, Cádiz Mayor González first hailed the unions for calling an indefinite strike. The unions, however, had tried to blow off steam with one-day protests and had just negotiated the closure of an Airbus plant in Cádiz. They only felt obliged to call an indefinite strike because they feared that they would lose control as anger surged among workers.

During the initial days of the strike, González addressed solidarity protests, assuring them that “the Cádiz City Council was, is and will be with the workers struggle,” while his wife, national Anticapitalistas leader Teresa Rodríguez, called for an alliance with Podemos General Secretary Yolanda Díaz. At the same time, Podemos was sitting in a government that sent police to assault strikers with tear gas, truncheons and rubber bullets.

Anyone “who is [in] our ideological spectrum, and Yolanda is, will be able to talk to us face to face, they will have an ally in us,” Rodríguez said. She said, “We are interested in supporting courageous policies, wherever they are made but carried to the end.”

When opposition threatened to get out of control, Kichi then offered himself as a “mediator.” He told the press that he had gotten in touch with the right-wing run Popular Party (PP) regional government of Andalusia to see “how the negotiation situation was and, secondly, to make myself available if she [Rocío Blanco Eguren, Regional Council of Employment] understood that we

could help in some way as mayor of Cádiz. One has to contribute and give the best of oneself to try to solve an issue that directly involves my countrymen.”

Once the unions had rammed through a de-facto pay cut in the form of a 2 percent wage increases as inflation surges to 6 percent, Kichi demanded that workers accept the agreement. He told Andalucía Información, “I will not promote the accord as it does not correspond to me but, only and exclusively, to the workers. ... But it is what was agreed, and so not only will I agree to it, I will be the first to demand that it be put into practice...”

The filthy anti-worker role played by Anticapitalistas in the Cádiz strike also exposes the politics of the Morenoite CRT. For over a decade, CRT and its predecessor, Clase contra Clase (Class against Class), have sought to block an independent political movement of the working class, insisting the working class must subordinate itself to the trade union bureaucracy and form broad “left” fronts composed of CRT and factions of Podemos, like Anticapitalistas.

When Podemos recruited former Civil Guards and military staff to its leadership, like General Julio Rodríguez, who led Spain’s participation in the war in Libya in 2011, Anticapitalistas hailed it as an example of “plurality” within Podemos. CRT responded by promoting the Anticapitalistas as revolutionary and appealing for them to break with Podemos.

When Anticapitalistas announced it was leaving the PSOE-Podemos government last year, CRT welcomed it as a step towards joining the CRT in a political front. Its leader, Santiago Lupe, declared, “The CRT has been arguing that this leap in the integration of Podemos [in government] made it urgent for Anticapitalistas to definitively break with Podemos.” He appealed to Anticapitalistas to “rethink the left” and to “propose, together with the rest of the anti-capitalist left of this country ... to fight for a clear anti-regime and anti-capitalist program.”

When Anticapitalistas called for a Podemos vote during the Madrid regional elections, against the appeals of CRT to join them in a front, CRT continued to leave the door open to an alliance. While critical of this decision by its “comrades,” it welcomed Anticapitalistas’ decision to hold “open assemblies” to debate new political fronts.

In reality, the record of Podemos and Anticapitalistas marks another bitter experience of the working class with so-called “left populist” parties following the treachery of the pro-austerity Syriza (“Coalition of the Radical Left”) government in Greece, which imposed billions of euros in austerity. Its entry into positions of power and influence in the capitalist state has ended in disaster for the working class.

Podemos has escalated austerity measures, violently attacked strikes, and forced millions of workers and children back to work and back to school amid the pandemic, which has left over 1.7 million dead in Europe, and over 105,000 in Spain. The government routinely sends police to smash strikes against “herd immunity” policies and to monitor working class opposition on social media.

With consummate charlatantry, the CRT nonetheless claims that factions of Podemos like Anticapitalistas are key to the “recomposition” of the working class.

The workers’ “defensive and offensive fighting capacity,” Lotito and Bordón claim today, “must therefore be a conscious task of the combative trade unionists, as well as of the left that claims to be anti-capitalist and revolutionary.” A key task in this, they claim, is “to develop the assemblies and the methods of workers’ democracy in the workplace, as well as to recover the unions and works councils from the hands of the union bureaucracies to put them at the service of the class struggle.”

This is a fraud. The task of the organization of the working class in independent rank-and-file committees is to politically oppose the Podemos government and its trade union accomplices. The CRT, speaking for the same layers of academia and the union bureaucracy as Anticapitalistas and Podemos, tries on the other hand to cover up their rotten, anti-worker record by claiming that they are considering organizing a working class revolt against the bureaucracy. In reality, these parties have no intentions of organizing such a revolt, which would be directed against themselves.

The decisive question facing workers and youth in Spain and internationally seeking to struggle against the effects of the coronavirus pandemic, social austerity, war and military-police repression is to ensure their political independence from the trade unions and these middle class forces.

The International Committee of the Fourth International (ICFI) insists upon building rank-and-file committees in every school and workplace. This allows workers in Spain and internationally to build a powerful organization of struggle, the International Workers Alliance of Rank-and-File Committees (IWA-RFC), against wage and social austerity, military-police repression, and policies of mass infection during the pandemic.

The essential precondition for such a policy is building a movement in the working class that is consciously opposed to the PSOE-Podemos government and its reactionary policies. Building such a movement requires a merciless, politically-conscious break with petty-bourgeois groups like the CRT, and the construction of sections of the ICFI in Spain and internationally.



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