

Spanish Morenoite CRT covers for Podemos' war drive against Russia

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NATO's reckless escalation of a military conflict with Russia over Ukraine is exposing Spain's Morenoite Corriente Revolucionaria de Trabajadores y Trabajadoras (Workers' Revolutionary Current, CRT), the Spanish affiliate of Argentina's Socialist Workers Party (PTS) and Left Voice in America. NATO's arming of Ukrainian far right nationalist militias like the Azov Battalion threatens to provoke a direct war with Russia. Yet the CRT is working to channel anti-war sentiment back behind Spain's Socialist Party (PSOE)-Podemos government, which has fully joined the NATO war drive against Russia.

CRT leader Santiago Lupe's article on the *La Izquierda Diario* website, titled "The Iberian Left amid war: between subordination to imperialist warmongering and diplomatic illusions," promotes false hopes that Podemos will suddenly shift to the left and implement an anti-war policy.

Concerned that Podemos' pro-war and austerity policies are exposing it in the eyes of the working class, he takes it to task because its "denunciations of imperialist warmongering [have] not gone beyond partial objections and some public staging." Lupe explains that he does not want workers and youth to conclude Podemos is guilty of "yet another imposture in government of which there are many over the past two years." Begging Podemos to break the alliance with the PSOE and leave the government, Lupe advises it to

abandon the executive, withdraw its parliamentary support for the government of the 'party of war' [i.e., the PSOE], demand the withdrawal of all the Spanish troops in Eastern Europe and the rest of the imperialist missions abroad, and break off all commitments with NATO, beginning with the closure of their bases in Spanish territory and the end of sanctions.

Lupe's proposal is cynical and reactionary. Podemos has been thoroughly exposed as a party of the affluent middle class and a tool of Spanish imperialism. Lupe is begging it to leave government so that the CRT can keep up its political charade that Podemos is a "left populist" and "progressive" party and call upon workers and youth opposed to the NATO war drive to continue supporting Podemos.

He is falsifying the character of Podemos, which is a pro-imperialist, anti-worker party. Podemos is not a party that has become "subordinated" to Spanish imperialism, as Lupe claims, and that can suddenly break free of the diktat of imperialism. In reality, Podemos is an imperialist party of the second rank, fully engaged in NATO policies that threaten to provoke all-out war between Russia and NATO.

Lupe falsifies the role of Podemos because frankly admitting its role would expose the role of the CRT itself as a cheerleader of political reaction. Since the founding of Podemos in 2014, the CRT and an entire range of petty-bourgeois parties of the same type have sought to tie workers to Spanish imperialism by promoting Podemos and speculating

on whether it would suddenly shift to the left. While the CRT droned on with empty speculations about Podemos, the PSOE-Podemos government implemented the following policies:

- It stationed around 800 Spanish troops in Eastern Europe against Russia, including a detachment of 130 airmen and four Eurofighter jets that regularly mount provocative missions from Bulgaria into the Black Sea near the Russian coast.
- It sent three warships to patrol the waters of the eastern Mediterranean and the Black Sea with NATO naval groups.
- It sent offensive military equipment to the Ukrainian army, as part of NATO's proxy war against Russia. This includes 1,370 Instalaza C90-type grenade launchers, designed to destroy Russian tanks, and 700,000 rifles and an undetermined number of machine gun cartridges to the Ukrainian army and its far-right militias. This includes the neo-Nazi Azov Battalion, which has already posted pictures on Telegram posing with Madrid's weapons deliveries.
- It supported EU-NATO's crippling sanctions against Russia destined to provoke regime change.
- It participated in the persecution and jailing of Spanish journalist Pablo González by the Polish government on bogus charges of spying for Russia.
- It pledged to raise the defence budget by €10 billion to €25 billion, the largest military expenditure hike in Spain's history.

Imperialist war abroad is going hand in hand with class war at home. The PSOE-Podemos government deployed 23,000 police against the three-week nationwide truck drivers strike, the largest police deployment and scabbing operation against a strike ever recorded.

Lupe himself admits he does not believe his perspective is realistic, that Podemos will leave the government and drop its support for war. He notes, "[i]t is hardly likely we will see something like this, unless the war and Spain's participation take new leaps." That is, this is a perspective whose slim chances for implementation depend on the eruption of open warfare between nuclear-armed NATO and Russia.

Lupe states that if Podemos leaves the government, it would be a "blow to the Spanish state's governability [and] to the warmongering dynamic and the strengthening of Spanish and European imperialism."

This is a lie. If Podemos were to leave the government, it would be a political manoeuvre designed not to oppose war but to strangle anti-war protests and strikes against imperialist war. The record of Podemos in government shows that it is a tool of the banks and big business. It implemented trillion-euro EU bank and corporate bailouts, social austerity, police crackdowns on striking workers and showered the Spanish army and industry with billions. During the COVID-19 pandemic, it consistently prioritised profits over lives, leading to over 162,000 excess deaths in the country during the pandemic, according to *The Lancet*.

The CRT promotes the pro-imperialist Anticapitalistas tendency

The CRT's promotion of Podemos is not a passing error of judgment but reflects the petty-bourgeois politics of the Morenoite PTS in Argentina and its allies, like the CRT. It is hostile to the building of a politically independent movement in the working class, preferring alliances on the national soil with pro-capitalist parties. Its class orientation finds conscious expression in the Morenoites' unprincipled attitude to the 1953 split between the International Committee of the Fourth International (ICFI) and the Pabloite political ancestors of Spain's Anticapitalistas movement.

In 1953, forces led by Michel Pablo and Ernest Mandel broke with the ICFI and with Trotskyism, arguing that the Trotskyist movement should politically dissolve itself into Stalinist and bourgeois nationalist parties. Nahuel Moreno, the founder of the tendency in Argentina to which the CRT is affiliated, initially supported the ICFI. However, he sought an unprincipled reunification with the Pabloites, becoming the leader of the Pabloites' Latin American Bureau in 1963. Since then, the Morenoites have combined unprincipled alliances with Stalinism and Pabloism with hostility to the ICFI's defense of Trotskyism.

Lupe then promotes the Spanish Pabloite Anticapitalistas movement, which backed NATO's imperialist wars in the Middle East and Africa and helped found Podemos as a party in 2014. Lupe hails Anticapitalistas European Member of Parliament [EMP], Miguel Urbán, elected on a Podemos slate in 2020, for taking a supposedly "principled" position on the war. Urbán, Lupe writes, cast "the only principled vote against the resolution on Ukraine approved in the European Parliament, explaining that it covered up the militarization of Europe and the advance of NATO and calling for a return to the path of dialogue and diplomacy."

He admits, however, that "On sanctions against Russia, it is not clear if Anticapitalistas defends to the end the line of its sister organisations of the USEC [United Secretariat, the Pabloite movement]—which in a shameful statement pronounced itself in favor of these measures—or if they maintain their own position opposed to it. Its EMP Urbán considered that 'sanctions and pressure to end the war are much more useful than sending rocket launchers.'"

In fact, it is perfectly clear that Anticapitalistas is just as militaristic and pro-imperialist as the international Pabloite movement of which it is a part. Anticapitalistas endorsed the US-NATO war against oil-rich Libya in 2011. In the name of "democracy, social justice, and the improvement of the situation of women," two leaders of Anticapitalistas, Esther Vivas and Josep Maria Antentas, condemned the "anti-imperialism of some sectors of the left" and advocated "the political and economic international isolation of the [Libyan] regime and the unconditional supply of weapons to the rebels."

The European powers and the US then employed precisely this strategy to wage a war for regime change in Libya. It cost over 30,000 deaths, leaving the country in ruins, and created the conditions for the return of slave markets to Libya. The country still is mired in a civil war between competing Islamist factions that NATO had supported which has killed tens of thousands and displaced over 100,000 people. The man who led that war on behalf of Spain was Chief of the Defence Staff Julio Rodríguez Fernández, who joined Podemos in 2015 after retiring and is currently the Chief of Staff to the Second Deputy Prime Minister, Yolanda Díaz.

Anticapitalistas justified Rodríguez's recruitment by calling him an example of the "plurality that fits within Podemos." It defended Rodríguez "against those who post a lot of clichés about Podemos." It then went on to support the NATO-sponsored war in Syria that was launched in the final months of the Libyan war.

In Ukraine, Anticapitalistas supported the US-NATO sponsored coup in

February 2014 spearheaded by neo-fascists units fighting Russia. Admitting the decisive role played by fascists in the coup, it republished a Pabloite statement that called for participation in the fascist protests: "While the main organized political forces are, for now, from the right and the far right, we support the social and political forces which are trying to build a left opposition within that movement. In so doing, they have refused to stay outside the movement and to identify the whole movement with its far-right component."

Anticapitalistas and its international affiliates are now issuing anti-Russian statements indistinguishable from CIA propaganda, whipping up a war fever that could lead to war between nuclear-armed powers.

Lupe's fraudulent call to build anti-war protests with Podemos

Having begun his article with reactionary fantasies about Podemos breaking free from imperialism, he ends with the ludicrous comparison between Podemos and the Marxist revolutionaries and anti-war socialists who organized the 1915 Zimmerwald Conference during World War I. He argues that Podemos and Anticapitalistas can repudiate imperialism and emulate the Zimmerwald Conference:

The slogan of "war against war," approved at the 1915 Conference of Women Against War and taken up by the revolutionary wing of Zimmerwald against the First World War, could serve as an inspiring flag to raise another left that fights for an independent path to the imperialist barbarism to which our governments lead us.

To compare the forces of Zimmerwald with CRT, Anticapitalistas and Podemos is a political and historical fraud. The Zimmerwald Conference, whose participants included Marxists like Vladimir Lenin, Leon Trotsky, Grigori Zinoviev and Christian Rakovsky, was a powerful international anti-war conference. It prepared the arming of the working class for a series of revolutionary uprisings in Europe that broke out as World War I ended. The most prominent of these struggles was the 1917 October Revolution, led by the Bolsheviks under Lenin and Trotsky, which brought the working class to power in Russia.

What are some of the differences? The Zimmerwald Conference opposed imperialist war; Podemos and Anticapitalistas are pro-war. The attendees at Zimmerwald were left-wing opponents of war persecuted by European capitalist governments; the members of Podemos and Anticapitalistas are capitalist government officials. And while Lenin and Trotsky were Marxist revolutionaries of world historic significance, Podemos and Anticapitalistas are tools of counter-revolution.

CRT's attempt to promote Podemos and its satellites with a new left-wing guise underscores that it is itself a barely disguised wing of Podemos.

Building an anti-war movement requires an open struggle against these tendencies. The ICFI calls for the building of an anti-war movement in the working class, independent of and against the union bureaucracy and the pseudo-left parties. This perspective for building an international anti-war movement in the working class separates the ICFI, the world Trotskyist movement, from the middle-class tendencies represented by Podemos, CRT and Anticapitalistas.



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