

Spain's Morenoite CRT works to trap anti-war sentiment behind pro-war Podemos government

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Ahead of next week's NATO summit in Madrid, Spain's ruling Podemos party, along with state-funded trade unions, the Podemos-linked Workers Commissions (CCOO) and the social-democratic General Union of Workers (UGT), are holding an "anti-NATO" conference this weekend. A rally is to be held this Sunday. Various allied associations, such as NATO Assembly Madrid No, National Platform for Peace-NATO NO, and the Popular Assembly against War, are to participate.

The politically two-faced and sinister character of these stunts is virtually self-evident. While de facto Podemos leader and Deputy Prime Minister Yolanda Díaz prepares to participate in the NATO summit of war planning, other Podemos government officials are holding "anti-NATO" protests. Many of these events will be organised in the state-funded union halls of the CCOO and UGT. These unions have at the same time supported the war drive and have isolated and suppressed strikes by truckers and metalworkers against inflation, as massive funds are wasted on war spending.

The very same Podemos party—which is sending delegates to a conference supposedly against NATO and for peace—is busily sending warships, jet fighters and soldiers to Eastern Europe and funneling tanks, ammunition and rocket launchers to NATO's Ukrainian proxies for use against Russia. During the NATO summit, the PSOE-Podemos government plans to announce that it will double its military budget to €24 billion, the largest military spending increase in Spain's history and call on NATO to escalate military interventions in resource-rich Africa.

The purpose of Podemos in attending an "anti-NATO" conference is to trap mounting opposition to war among workers and youth into the dead end of support for Spain's pro-war government. In order to suppress opposition on its left, the Podemos government enlists the services of an entire layer of cynical pseudo-left operatives to promote it as a non-aggressive party and downplay the undeniable support

of Podemos for Spanish and NATO imperialism.

An example of this cynical two-faced rhetoric is the piece by Morenoite Revolutionary Workers' Current (CRT) leader Santiago Lupe in the La Izquierda Diario website titled "The Spanish left and the fight against our own imperialism." In it, Lupe concocts out of whole cloth an intense debate supposedly taking place between a pro-war and a pro-peace factions of Podemos, while in fact it is an entirely pro-war party.

Lupe claims the polemic between pro-Podemos journalist Antonio Maestre and former Podemos leader Pablo Iglesias "dramatizes the differences in the Spanish reformist left on what is the best foreign policy for the interests of Spanish imperialism." Maestre, Lupe claims, is siding with NATO's policy of taking "advantage of the opportunity offered by the Russian invasion to impose a severe defeat on Russia."

Lupe claims that Iglesias, on the other hand, defends a pro-EU position based on greater autonomy from the US-led NATO alliance. Iglesias favours an "EU diplomatic solution in agreement with Putin that, necessarily, would imply some level of territorial transfers and Ukrainian sovereignty."

He claims this position is supported by France, Germany and Italy: "The three main European powers are increasingly committed to reaching some kind of agreement that contains the consequences of a war that is already hitting the EU economy and weakening it in its competition with the US."

Lupe's attempt to present Iglesias' pro-EU position as less aggressive vis-à-vis Russia than Washington was proven wrong days after his article was posted. Last Thursday, French President Emmanuel Macron, German Chancellor Olaf Scholz and Italian Prime Minister Mario Draghi traveled to Kiev to promise to supply Ukraine with more heavy weapons and to raise the prospect of accession to the EU. In doing so, they have consciously accepted the danger of a nuclear, third world war.

This week, the Baltic state of Lithuania, a NATO and EU member state, imposed an effective blockade on the Russian

exclave of Kaliningrad.

The CRT is perpetrating a political fraud, promoting a non-existent debate among pro-imperialist forces, and the fantasy that Podemos will convert itself into an opposition to its own policies. Lupe tells his readers that Spain wants to use the NATO summit to “Strengthen the southern flank, that is, North Africa, opening the possibility of military interventions to control immigration. Regarding these utter reactionary proposals, neither Podemos nor the PCE have shown opposition.”

Who does the CRT think it is kidding? Why should Podemos oppose its own policies? Podemos is not an accomplice of Spanish imperialism as CRT repeatedly claims but a pro-imperialist party fully engaged in waging NATO’s proxy war against Russia in Ukraine.

In the past months, Spain has sent over 800 troops in Eastern Europe, a detachment of Eurofighter jets and three warships to the eastern Mediterranean and the Black Sea. It is also implementing crippling economic sanctions against Russia, while sending hundreds of millions of euros in arms to Ukrainian forces, including short range air defense SHORAD Aspide anti-aircraft missiles and Leopard combat tanks. One of its main proxy forces on the ground, armed with Spanish weapons, is the neo-Nazi Azov Battalion.

Imperialist war abroad goes hand in hand with ferocious class war at home. The PSOE-Podemos government sent tens of thousands of riot police to break the April truckers strike and is spending tens of millions of euros to deploy 20,000 police officers armed with 6,000 taser cartridges to Madrid to crack down on protests against the NATO summit.

Lupe’s promotion of Podemos exposes the reactionary role of the CRT itself. Shamelessly posturing as a Trotskyist, Lupe states that “Trotskyists maintained an independent position, away from any of the imperialist camps, at times like the Second World War.” This, he claims, has nothing “to do with the shameful positions of groups that claim to be Trotskyists—such as Internationalist Struggle, Red Current or sectors of Mandelism such as Gilbert Achcar—who are calling for NATO weapons for Ukraine, in the same way they called for ‘no-fly zones’ for Libya in 2011.”

The petty-bourgeois Internationalist Struggle and Red Current groups both back the US-NATO war, claiming Ukraine is waging a democratic struggle for self-determination against Russian “imperialism.” They have traveled to Kiev to donate money to the “Ukrainian resistance.” In a recent statement, Red Struggle demanded NATO further escalate the proxy war against Russia, risking a Third World War and called for “all countries that claim to defend the right of Ukrainians to their sovereignty, to send more weapons to Ukraine without any conditions.”

If Lupe finds these positions “shameful,” it is not because Internationalist Struggle or Red Current are embarrassed by their flagrant support for imperialism. It is because their pro-war positions expose the fraud of Lupe’s own posturing as an anti-war or even Trotskyist figure. In reality, the CRT bases its perspective on calls for united action with all these pro-war, anti-Trotskyist groups.

During last year’s Madrid regional elections, Izquierda Diario posted eight articles appealing to these parties to build an “anti-capitalist front.” In Argentina, its sister party, the Socialist Workers Party (PTS), works with the sister parties of Red Struggle and Internationalist Struggle in the Workers’ Left Front—Unity in the Argentine parliament.

As for Gilbert Achcar, he is a paid adviser to the British army, a member of the New Anti-capitalist Party (NPA), the French affiliate of Spain’s Anticapitalistas tendency, and a leading propagandist for NATO military escalation against Russia. Anticapitalistas regularly posts Achcar’s articles on its online magazine Viento Sur.

If Lupe is “embarrassed” by the hysterical pro-war position of Achcar, again, it is because it exposes the utterly fraudulent character of the CRT’s own anti-war posturing. Indeed, the CRT has worked with Anticapitalistas to build the Madrid Popular Assembly Against War association which will be participating in this week-end’s “anti-NATO” summit.

Ultimately, by joining hands with Anticapitalistas, Lupe and the CRT are working as a barely disguised faction of Podemos itself. Anticapitalistas helped found Podemos in 2014 along with Stalinist professors like Pablo Iglesias. The Anticapitalistas mayor in Cádiz, José Manuel González, supported the sale of warships to the reactionary Saudi monarchy because it “increases the workload in Cádiz bay’s shipbuilding industry.”

The Morenoites and Anticapitalistas work so closely together that CRT even called for a vote for the Anticapitalistas at last Sunday’s elections in the region of Andalusia.

Key political lessons must be drawn. Building a genuinely left-wing opposition to the US-NATO war and social austerity requires the building of a movement in the European and international working class. That entails a conscious and determined break with the petty-bourgeois class orientation and anti-Marxist traditions represented by Podemos and its satellites like CRT and the Anticapitalistas.



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