

Spanish Morenoites cover for Podemos war budget

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Spain's Socialist Party (PSOE)-Podemos government is set to pass the 2023 national budget. It contains the largest military spending increase in the country's history, as NATO's war on Russia in Ukraine threatens to escalate into World War III.

Official military spending totals over €17 billion. More accurate estimates, however, including all budget allocations of military nature, including foreign military deployments, show it is closer to €27 billion. Like other imperialist governments across Europe, the PSOE-Podemos government is using the Ukraine war as a pretext to build its army, while training and funnelling tens of millions of euros in arms to their far-right Ukrainian allies.

The bankruptcy of Podemos poses a decisive question to the working class in Spain and across Europe—the building of a new, socialist revolutionary leadership to build a mass global movement of young people to stop the reckless escalation toward World War III.

The Morenoite Corriente Revolucionaria de Trabajadores y Trabajadoras (Workers' Revolutionary Current, CRT), the Spanish affiliate of Argentina's Socialist Workers Party and Révolution Permanente in France, in contrast, provides political cover to the PSOE-Podemos government. As concern and anger at the war mount among youth and workers in Spain, the CRT is trying to whip up illusions in Podemos. This is the character of the program it is advancing for protests to be held today in front of the Spanish parliament.

Together with the Pabloite Anticapitalistas party, the CRT is sponsoring the Madrid Popular Assembly Against War under the slogan “Down with militaristic budgets! No to wars!” The People's Assembly states that it is “against the war and the constant fueling of the imperialist countries' militaristic escalation, leading to more killings, catastrophes and miseries for the whole of humanity.” It then outlines a list of demands, including:

- Reject the “agreed” increase for military budget at the NATO meeting in Madrid, which the US imposed on the other member countries.
- Reject the military spending increase in the [PSOE-Podemos] coalition government's 2023 budget proposal.
- Demand that Unidas Podemos and the parliamentary left not be complicit in this imperialist escalation and reject the militarist budgets.
- Defend internationalist solidarity among the workers hit by the war and the crisis.

The CRT advances slogans addressed to anger among youth against the NATO war and soaring inflation, which leaves workers unable to pay for basic necessities.

Youth and workers coming into politics cannot escape, however, a settling of accounts with the petty-bourgeois treachery epitomized by Podemos, but which is also shared by an entire layer of pseudo-left groups like CRT and its allies, the Pabloite Anticapitalistas party. These forces constantly promote the fraudulent line that Podemos and its factions—the United Left (IU) and the PCE—are trapped in a social democratic government and forced to accept measures they would otherwise not approve.

In its October 22 statement, “Down with militarist budgets, up with salaries and pensions!” the CRT declared: “The approval of these Budgets is a leap in militarist escalation that we cannot contemplate with crossed arms as hoped by Podemos, IU [United Left] and the PCE [Communist Party of Spain], which from the Council of Ministers and from parliament endorse this policy for armed defence of the interests of Spanish imperialism in the world.”

On the budget, the CRT posted an article titled, “Podemos agrees to the budget and swallows the ‘toad’ of imperialist rearmament: how much will military expenditure rise?” It noted that the budget “represents a further leap in the integration of Podemos in the Regime of 1978 and its commitments to imperialist militarism, which they are endorsing in ‘progressive’ colours.”

This is cynical and reactionary. Podemos is not a revolutionary party that is moving to the right and gradually integrating itself into the capitalist regime set up in 1978 after the fall of the fascist regime led by Francisco Franco. Podemos is a party of the affluent middle class and a tool of Spanish imperialism, fully engaged in NATO policies that threaten to provoke all-out war with Russia.

Since the beginning of the war, the Podemos government has stationed nearly 1,000 troops in Eastern Europe, including eight Eurofighter jets. It sent three warships to join NATO fleets patrolling the eastern Mediterranean and the Black Sea. It also supported EU-NATO's crippling sanctions against Russia intended to provoke regime change, and sent millions of euros in military equipment to the Ukrainian army, including anti-tank missiles to the Ukraine neo-Nazi Azov Battalion.

Imperialist war abroad has gone 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 deployed 20,000 police officers armed with 6,000 taser cartridges

to crack down on protests against the NATO summit. It now routinely uses minimum services requirements to break strikes in the public sector.

The CRT, however, absolves the PSOE and Podemos, claiming the military spending hike was “ordered by the US to the other member countries” during the Madrid NATO summit, as if Madrid had not for years aimed at increasing its military budget. The fact is, NATO’s instigation of the war in Ukraine has only provided a pretext for the longstanding goal of remilitarisation.

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. This is reflected in its alliance with Anticapitalistas to build the Madrid Popular Assembly Against War, largely defunct after being set up this March ahead of the NATO summit in Madrid.

Anticapitalistas is not an anti-war tendency, but is just as militaristic and pro-imperialist as Podemos. It 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 man who led that war on behalf of Spain that left 30,000 dead and Libya in ruins was Chief of 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.” Anticapitalistas then went on to support the NATO-sponsored war in Syria launched in the final months of the Libyan war.

In Ukraine, Anticapitalistas backed the US-NATO-sponsored coup in February 2014 against a pro-Russian government. Admitting the decisive role played by fascists in the coup, it issued a statement that called for participation in far-right 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 now regularly posts anti-Russian propaganda from its international affiliates in its publication *Viento Sur*. This includes the joint statement by the Russian Socialist Movement (RSM) and the Ukrainian group Sotsialnyi rukh (Social Movement) calling for an escalation of NATO’s war in Ukraine against Russia. It stated: “It is Putin, not NATO, who is waging war on Ukraine ... That is why it is essential to shift our focus from Western imperialism to Putin’s aggressive imperialism, which has an ideological and political basis in addition to an economic one.”

Viento Sur also regularly posts articles from Gilbert Achcar, a

paid adviser to the British army and member of the New Anti-capitalist Party (NPA), the French affiliate of Anticapitalistas in Spain. Early on in the war, Achcar laid out the roadmap for NATO, stating: “To give those who are fighting a just war the means to fight against a much more powerful aggressor is an elementary internationalist duty ... We are in favor of the delivery of defensive weapons to the victims of aggression with no strings attached—in this case, to the Ukrainian state fighting the Russian invasion of its territory.”

Anticapitalistas does not hide its support for Podemos’ militarist budget. Together with the pseudo-left Catalan Candidatures of Popular Unity (CUP), it presented friendly amendments to the budget in parliament. These include 800 million euros of investment in the southern region of Andalusia, where Anticapitalistas is promoting regional nationalism. This includes a bailout of Andalusian infrastructure multinational Abengoa and subsidies to protect flamenco dancing.

This is ludicrous. Humanity is facing a possible Third World War, but in order to cover for Podemos’ militarism, Anticapitalistas are proposing millions for infrastructure that will cease to exist if a nuclear conflagration breaks out.

Key political lessons must be drawn. Building a genuinely left-wing, socialist opposition to Podemos and its war policies requires building a movement in the European and international working class. That entails a conscious break with the petty-bourgeois class orientation and anti-Marxist traditions of Podemos. This means building rank-and-file committees independent of the union bureaucracies in a political struggle against tendencies like Podemos and the CRT to fight war and inflation.

The International Youth and Students for Social Equality is hosting an international online meeting on Saturday, December 10, for the building of a movement against the drive to war. We call on all those who wish to participate to read the statement, “[A call to youth throughout the world: Build a mass movement to stop the Ukraine war!](#)”, [register for the webinar](#) and [contact the IYSSE](#).

For more information and to join the IYSSE, visit wsws.org/iysse.



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