

Spanish Morenoite CRT covers for Podemos government's austerity, war with Russia

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After leaks of Pentagon documents further exposed the crisis of the NATO war on Russia in Ukraine, a deep political conflict has broken out in Spain's ruling Podemos party, the junior partner in a coalition government with the social-democratic PSOE, and its pseudo-left periphery. Podemos and its newly founded electoral rival Sumar, led by Deputy Prime Minister Yolanda Díaz, have exchanged tactical criticisms over their conduct of the war. Under these conditions, a layer of pseudo-left parties of the affluent middle class are shielding Podemos and Sumar from criticism on their left, to block a movement in the working class against Spain's capitalist government.

Spain's Morenoite Corriente Revolucionaria de Trabajadores y Trabajadoras (Workers' Revolutionary Current, CRT), the Spanish affiliate of Argentina's Socialist Workers Party (PTS) and *Révolution Permanente* in France, is leading this reactionary political offensive. It makes, to be sure, certain criticisms of the most widely hated policies of Podemos that are known to everyone in Spain. But everything they write is dictated by one objective: to prevent workers from drawing the conclusion that Podemos and Sumar are reactionary parties, whose rule must be brought down.

The CRT is manufacturing "left" credentials for Podemos and Sumar, claiming that they can still implement national reforms that improve working class conditions. This is the character of a battery of recent articles posted on CRT's La Izquierda Diario website.

CRT leader Santiago Lupe posted a piece titled "Sumar: a neo-reformist revival without glitter," insists that these forces can provide concessions to workers. Lupe states that Sumar "comes to consolidate the project of restoration of the regime of 78 with a 'progressive' story, offering some crumbs and (above all) allow the big IBEX35 [stock exchange] to continue governing with the least social protest."

In its May Day statement, CRT insists that the Socialist Party (PSOE)-Podemos government "is the friendly face with which a good part of the economic and social policy of

neoliberalism and the right has been continued."

Against the Current, CRT's youth section, presented a report titled "Youth, Revolution and Socialist Strategy," stating that "neo-reformist" Podemos and Sumar have a strategy "to tame capitalism." These forces do not intend to "overcome" capitalism, it writes, "but to create institutions within the state to control some of its excesses. From our point of view, this would be the logic of the neo-reformist strategy [...]. In reality, this strategy is not intended to build a socialist society, but to make capitalism 'friendlier'."

CRT's claim that Sumar and Podemos are "neo-reformist" parties, managing the capitalist state in a more "friendly" way, offering "a few crumbs" to workers is politically absurd. The CRT is falsifying the character of the PSOE-Podemos government. It is the most aggressively reactionary government Spain has known in decades, pursuing war with Russia abroad and draconian attacks against the working class at home.

Podemos and Sumar have played a leading role in the NATO war, sending hundreds of millions in military aid to Ukraine. This includes rocket launchers, armoured vehicles and tanks and the training of over 850 Ukrainian soldiers on Spanish soil. Spanish weapons provided by Podemos and Sumar ended up in the hands of the neo-Nazi Azov Battalion.

While the CRT drones on with empty speculations about Podemos, the PSOE-Podemos government has imposed brutal attacks on the working class. This includes pension cuts and a labour reform that has expanded low salaries and precariousness; a profits-over-lives policy in the COVID-19 pandemic leading to over 160,000 deaths; and the barbaric incarceration and murder of migrants, including the infamous massacre of 37 refugees at the borders of the Spanish enclave of Melilla in Africa.

When workers have attempted to resist paying for the ruling class's war and austerity to pay for the bank and corporate bailouts, the reply of the PSOE-Podemos government is violent repression. Striking metalworkers from Cádiz demanding wage increases above inflation faced

down riot police, who assaulted them with tear gas, truncheons, rubber bullets and the deployment of a 15-ton BMR armoured vehicle. Spain's principal unions, affiliated to the PSOE or Podemos, isolated the strikers and imposed a concessions contract.

When 75,000 truck drivers went on strike against soaring fuel prices amid NATO's war against Russia in the Ukraine, the government mobilised over 23,000 police, the largest police deployment and scabbing operation against a strike ever recorded. Continuing the Stalinist tradition of slandering all their opponents as fascists, the PSOE-Podemos government and its affiliated unions branded the truckers as a far-right movement.

Against striking health care and aircrew, the PSOE-Podemos government has imposed draconian minimum services requirements, making it illegal for most staff to strike. These measures are now used systematically against workers. The latest are 8,000 judges and prosecutors demanding better pay, threatened with the minimum services law.

The capitalist class, meanwhile, has made a fortune. Corporate profits rose to €56 billion last year as revenues reached €629 billion, a 35 percent increase over the previous year. This was aided by the receipt of €140 billion of EU bailout funds and savage austerity against the workers.

As PCE general secretary and State Secretary for the 2030 Agenda, Enrique Santiago, brazenly boasted: "In the history of Spain there has not been such a large transfer of resources from the state to private companies as the one carried out by this government."

By claiming against all evidence that Podemos and Sumar are "neo-reformist" parties seeking to improve workers living standards, the CRT is doing everything it can to push workers and youth behind the PSOE-Podemos government. The calculations involved are not difficult to see.

Millions of workers are preparing to enter struggles to renew their collective agreements as the union bureaucracies seek to impose below-inflation wage increases. Working class anger will be intensified as the PSOE-Podemos government slashes €24 billion in spending via social cuts and tax hikes over the next year. The pseudo-left is terrified that the movement will take the form of a working class revolt against the Podemos government and against themselves.

Indeed, one reason the CRT falsifies the nature of Podemos is that frankly admitting the role of Podemos would expose its own role as a cheerleader of political reaction. Since Podemos was founded in 2014, the CRT has sought to tie workers to Spanish imperialism by promoting Podemos and speculating on whether it would shift to the left.

Now, terrified of growing working class opposition, it is denouncing anyone critical of the union bureaucracies and Podemos.

Its youth section claimed that to break with the unions is an "abstentionist" strategy and "a type of sectarian purism that in fact despises the working class." They denounce the claim that "capitalism can't give any more concessions because it's in crisis, making the trade union institutions obsolete. This unilateral argument collides with reality when a government like the PSOE comes along and makes small concessions such as increases in the SMI [minimum wage], which are crumbs, but huge sectors of the working class consider it a relief for their situation."

The attempts to present a below-inflation minimum wage increase as a "neo-reformist" concession from Podemos to workers is ludicrous. The collapse of workers' living standards was even admitted by CRT's leader Santiago Lupe. He said that Sumar "waved the increase in SMI [minimum wage] during her legislature, ignoring that 90 percent of wage earners have seen their purchasing power fall by almost 10 points in this same period."

The decisive task facing workers and youth in Spain is a political revolt against the PSOE-Podemos government in Spain and its allied union bureaucracies and pseudo-left satellites. This requires building independent rank-and-file committees to mobilize and coordinate struggles of the working class against the union bureaucracies and the PSOE-Podemos government and link them to workers struggles that are erupting across Europe and internationally.

Fighting to build such a movement also requires building a Marxist internationalist, that is, Trotskyist party in the working class to oppose imperialist war and reactionary capitalist governments like the PSOE-Podemos government in Spain. This means building sections of the International Committee of the Fourth International in Spain and internationally, against middle class defenders of the capitalist state such as the CRT.



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