

Spain's Pabloite Anticapitalistas call to vote for pro-war Sumar in July 23 elections

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19 June 2023

The gains of the right-wing Popular Party (PP) and the neo-fascist Vox party in the May regional and local elections and the debacle of Podemos, which has ruled in a pro-war, pro-austerity government with the Socialist Party (PSOE) for nearly 4 years, shows the political bankruptcy of Podemos. Reacting to these results, the PSOE-Podemos government announced snap elections for July 23. Focusing on discussions with the PP on Spain's presidency of the European Union amid the NATO war on Russia in Ukraine, it is leaving open a path for the PP and Vox to come to power.

The petty bourgeois Pabloite Anticapitalistas tendency is seeking to tie workers to the electoral platform of the Sumar party, which was recently formed by forces in the PSOE-Podemos government. The aim of this reactionary policy is to block a movement of the working class against both neo-Francoism and the utterly reactionary policies of Podemos. This is the character of the article by longstanding Pabloite Jaime Pastor in *Viento Sur*, titled "From 28M to 23J. Right-wing wave vs declining progressivism."

Pastor writes that "the anti-capitalist left must also assume its share of responsibility" in the electoral debacle and "should not ignore the need to help prevent the victory of the right-wing bloc, since we cannot underestimate the threat that its access to the state government would entail, with the consequent attack on fundamental civil and social rights (in the first place, against people from the South and women) ... and even outlawing parts of the parliamentary spectrum."

Pastor effectively endorses Sumar—an electoral alliance composed of Podemos, Movimiento Sumar (the Unite Movement), and the Stalinist-led Izquierda Unida (IU, United Left). It is led by acting Deputy Prime Minister and Labour Minister Yolanda Díaz. Last week, Sumar launched a right-wing, pro-war campaign, running dozens of pro-NATO candidates who have pursued the PSOE-Podemos government's policies of imperialist war on Russia abroad and class war on workers at home.

Anticapitalistas' organisation in Spain's most populous region, Adelante Andalucía (Forward Andalusia), has

already said it will not run in seven of the region's eight provinces, to not take votes from Sumar. Anticapitalistas has issued a statement declaring this "a responsible exercise to contribute to stop the right and far-right."

The Pabloites' presentation of support for Sumar as a strategy to fight the rise of the far right is a political fraud. In reality, the Anticapitalistas-backed PSOE-Podemos government itself implemented policies which previously would have been unthinkable except under far-right regimes. This paved the way for the Spanish bourgeoisie to legitimise Vox.

The PSOE-Podemos government's brutal attacks on the working class include pension cuts consolidating the retirement age to 67, below-inflation wage increases on broad layers of workers, and a labour law reform slashing workers' legal protections in the workplace. It has imposed strike-breaking minimum services laws on aircrew and health workers. It also deployed tens of thousands of police to break strikes by metalworkers and truck drivers.

The PSOE-Podemos government also implemented the anti-migrant fascistic policies advocated by Vox. It was only after Podemos reached power that a Spanish government sent the army against refugees in Ceuta, lobbied NATO to include migration as a "hybrid threat," interned migrants in concentration camps in the Canary Islands and committed a massacre against refugees in Melilla last year leaving 37 dead.

The PSOE-Podemos government joined the NATO war against Russia in Ukraine and imposed the largest military spending increase in Spanish history, to over €26 billion per year. It sent hundreds of millions of euros in military aid to Ukraine. These funds went to 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.

Podemos and Sumar are not fighting the far right, but serving as political tools for the bourgeoisie to implement fascistic policies. It is only possible to oppose such policies

by making a conscious break with pseudo-left parties of the affluent middle class like Anticapitalistas.

For decades they have worked to politically strangle the working class, demanding that workers subordinate themselves to imperialist parties like the PSOE or Stalinist parties like the United Left or Podemos. This now allows parties like Vox to posture as the only real opposition to Spain's discredited political establishment.

In 2014, Anticapitalistas founded Podemos with Stalinist professors, explicitly orienting to the PSOE, Spain's main party of capitalist government. In 2018, amid mounting popular opposition to the PP and its repressive policies in Catalonia, Podemos organised a parliamentary maneuver, ousting the PP and replacing it with a minority PSOE government. Anticapitalistas welcomed this, admitting that the PSOE was "not a real alternative," but claiming it would be subject to "strong pressure in the institutions and the streets" from Podemos.

The Podemos-backed PSOE government continued the PP's austerity budget, showered the army with billions of euros, attacked migrants and continued the anti-Catalan campaign. All throughout, the initiatives of Anticapitalistas were aimed not at organizing opposition to the ruling class and its fascistic policies, but at safeguarding essential strategic interests of Spanish and European finance capital.

In 2019, the PSOE government called new elections in a desperate and ultimately failed bid to shore up its support. After the April 2019 elections, which produced another hung parliament, a bitter debate erupted in the Spanish ruling class over how to assemble a government. The PSOE was determined to announce a draconian sentence after the show trial of the Catalan nationalist prisoners, in October 2019, in line with demands from fascistic forces like Vox.

A debate arose in Podemos on whether to go directly into government with the PSOE. Anticapitalistas ultimately won the debate. Pastor called for caution, advising Podemos to wait briefly before entering into a PSOE-led government. It was willing to support adaptation by Podemos to the PSOE, but it cynically insisted that Anticapitalistas could not be seen to be doing so.

In *Viento Sur*, Pastor wrote: "It was difficult to think that Podemos could have developed left-wing policies from within the government and, on the other hand, by its silence it would have had to admit it was complicit in right-wing policies on economic and social questions and repressive policies in Catalonia."

Pastor did not oppose entering into a PSOE-led government and being complicit in right-wing policies. Indeed, Anticapitalistas went on to join the PSOE-Podemos government in January 2020, before leaving three months later. It did not oppose any of Podemos' signature policies

in government: its policies of war and militarism, its back-to-work order amid the COVID-19 pandemic which led to hundreds of thousands of deaths, its austerity policies and its police-state measures in Catalonia.

In fact, its statement on its departure declared it "will support all the gains made within this [PSOE-Podemos government] framework" and added that "there is no doubt that we will find ourselves in many common struggles with the people of Podemos."

At the time, the WSWS warned that Anticapitalistas' departure was a maneuver to preserve the ability of Anticapitalistas to hide its right-wing record and intervene in social struggles to block working class opposition. It was being sent out, the WSWS wrote, by "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."

These warnings were fully born out. From its mayorship of Cádiz, Anticapitalistas demanded 22,000 striking metalworkers in the city respect the union sell-out in November 2021, as the Podemos government sent riot police and armoured vehicles against the strikers.

After war erupted in the Ukraine in February 2022, Anticapitalistas posted virulent anti-Russian, pro-NATO articles on the pages of *Viento Sur* as Podemos sent millions of euros to Ukraine.

Workers rightly see Anticapitalistas as part of the political establishment. In last month's local and regional elections, it shared the same fate as Podemos. Its front, Forward Andalusia, lost the mayorship of Cádiz and was left without representation in all the other important cities of Andalusia.

The reactionary record of Anticapitalistas underscores that the decisive strategic question today is building the International Committee of the Fourth International (ICFI) as the revolutionary leadership in the working class against corrupt pseudo-left forces like Podemos. This requires building sections of the International Committee of the Fourth International in Spain and internationally, based on the colossal political experiences embodied in its defence of Trotskyism, to wage an uncompromising struggle against the whole political establishment, including the union bureaucracy and groups like Anticapitalistas.



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