

Spain's pseudo-left Sumar party implodes after European election debacle

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Sumar, a coalition of 12 petty-bourgeois pseudo-left parties formed for last year's general elections, and the coalition partner of the Socialist Party (PSOE)-led government since November, is imploding after suffering a debacle in the European elections. Sumar garnered just 811,000 votes and three seats in the European elections. In comparison, in the 2019 elections, Podemos alone secured 2.2 million votes and six seats.

Sumar's vote has been collapsing ever since it was launched. In last year's general elections, it won 31 seats or 3 million votes. This was 600,000 votes less than Podemos in 2019, when it obtained 38 seats. It also lost seats in every regional election since then as compared to Podemos' results. It fell from six to three seats in the Basque Country in April and eight to six seats in Catalonia in May. In Galicia, it failed to get any representation at all in February.

For millions of voters, Sumar was correctly seen as no alternative to the rotten pro-war, pro-austerity politics Podemos championed while it was in government with the PSOE, from 2020 to 2023. Podemos had faced successive electoral defeats, as it imposed labour reforms, pension cuts, massacred migrants on Spain's borders, and sent millions of euros of arms to Ukraine for war with Russia. For the past six months in power, Sumar has only intensified these policies.

Fourteen months ago, however, Sumar was presented with great fanfare as the new "left" party of government to replace Podemos in last year's general elections. The Stalinist-led United Left (IU) coalition, Podemos split-offs like More Madrid led by "Left Populist" theoretician Iñigo Errejón, and former Barcelona mayor Ada Colau all flocked to its banner. It was led by Yolanda Díaz, Deputy Prime Minister and Labour Minister under the PSOE-Podemos government (2020 -2023) and who holds the same posts in the PSOE-Sumar government.

Her initiative was enthusiastically backed by capitalist

media, given her credentials of imposing labour reforms expanding the low-wage sector, and her role in reopening nonessential workplaces during the COVID-19 pandemic that led to mass deaths.

Spain's main bourgeois newspaper, *El País*, enthusiastically supported Díaz. An editorial declared she was "seeking the transversality that the first Podemos had, but changing its old epic of the people against the caste for the more immediate and material appeal to 'useful politics' through negotiation and dialogue." It added, "Everyone needs boldness and generosity to strengthen the platform that ... shows popular support and a hopeful project for an institutional left with a transformative vocation."

The rosy picture *El País* painted in its postmodernist jargon failed to materialize: Sumar collapsed in the European elections. It ran a campaign criticising the rise of the far-right, promoting Estrella Galán (the former director of the Spanish Commission for the Support of Refugees) as its main candidate, making pro forma criticisms of the military budget, and feigning sympathy for Palestinians amid the genocide in Gaza. However, this is in evident contradiction with the policies Sumar implements in government.

The PSOE-Sumar government is rolling back the social concessions it was forced to make to the working class during the COVID-19 pandemic and amid spiraling inflation provoked by NATO's against Russia in Ukraine. It is committed to imposing €15 billion cuts and tax hikes this year.

Over 5,000 African refugees have died trying to reach Spain's Canary Islands on makeshift boats. Helena Maleno, spokesperson for Caminando Fronteras, denounced this "massacre" as the direct consequences of the PSOE-Sumar's "bilateral agreements with other border countries that focus on preventing departures, but not on protocols to guarantee the right to life of people at

sea. During this period, we have witnessed a significant lack of search and rescue resources when there are alerts of missing boats, and this has been crucial in the increase of victims over these 5 months.”

Above all, the PSOE-Sumar government has escalated war abroad. It has cynically feigned sympathy with Palestinians, like recognizing the nonexistent Palestine State or supporting the International Court of Justice, without calling Israel’s actions genocide. However, it continued to sell millions of euros worth of weaponry to the Israeli regime and import Israeli weapons “tested in combat,” i.e., on Palestinians. Spanish ports continue to be key to shipping weapons to Israel.

In Ukraine, Sumar has intensified Podemos’ policy of escalating war with Russia, sending millions of euros of weaponry to the far-right regime of President Volodymyr Zelensky. Last month, Spain pledged €1 billion in military aid to Ukraine, as Spain and Ukraine signed a security pact in Madrid selling Zelensky Patriot missiles and Leopard tanks.

After the European elections, the pseudo-left parties backing Sumar are now fleeing like rats from a sinking ship. Díaz herself cynically resigned as Sumar party leader but happily remained as deputy prime minister and labour minister. She blithely commented, “I feel that I have not done the things the way they should have been done. ... The citizens have perceived this.”

Stalinist IU coordinator Antonio Maíllo said, “[T]he idea of a party [Sumar] that encompasses everything is outdated, and we will not be under any umbrella.” More Madrid called for “comprehensive and profound” reflection on the results. The Valencia-based regionalist party Compromís even denied ever being part of Sumar, saying, “We are not from Sumar.”

These bought-and-paid-for parties are only debating how to ensure their weight in the capitalist war machine. They all share the same anti-Marxist policy and anti-worker orientation, and do not intend to change the policies of war, austerity and far-right rule they have pursued until now.

Díaz briefly referred to the growth of the far right in the European elections, calling it “of enormous gravity” and adding, “in Europe, international hate, in its various forms, has taken a step forward. We cannot look the other way.”

But they can, they have, and they will look the other way, as their policies disgust and demoralize broad layers of workers and youth, turning a growing layer towards a far right vote. In Spain, Sumar had barely 10,000 votes

more than the newly created far-right party The Party’s Over (Se Acabó La Fiesta, SALF), led by fascistic YouTuber Alvise that obtained 800,000 votes and 3 seats. The neo-fascist Vox party won 9.6 percent of the vote and 6 seats, 3 more than the 2019 elections.

But Diaz pledged to continue in her role in the PSOE-Sumar government “to ensure that the progressive coalition government turns this groundswell of hatred and disaffection into a wave of rights and hope.”

In fact, the growth of the far right, the drive to dictatorship and war against Russia and China are above all due to the fecklessness and treachery of the pro-capitalist pseudo-left. Spain’s Podemos and Sumar are a rotten manifestation of this process. As the WSWS noted in its Perspective “Why is the far-right vote surging in the European elections?”:

The rise of the far right is the product rather of the systematic disenfranchisement of the workers by nationalist, bureaucratic organizations that the media and the ruling class promote as the “left.” Unlike the far right—which tries to exploit mass discontent with the existing political system, denouncing it as a conspiracy against the nation and expressing reservations about unrestrained war with Russia—these parties of the affluent middle class exude complacency and self-satisfaction.

Even in the face of war between nuclear-armed powers, genocide and the surge of police-state and fascistic forms of rule, these organizations insist that popular opposition must be tied to debilitating alliances with parties of capitalist government and allied union bureaucracies. Whatever criticisms they make of the far right, they are far more hostile to Trotskyism and to building a revolutionary movement in the European working class for socialism.



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