

No to the Gaza genocide, mobilize workers against Spanish state complicity!

Santiago Guillen
25 September 2024

On September 27, the General Confederation of Workers (CGT) union has called a national one-day strike in Spain against the Israeli genocide in Gaza. Student strikes across Spain are also planned, with protests in multiple cities. Podemos and allied parties like Sumar have endorsed this action, though their affiliated unions, the social-democratic Unión General de Trabajadores (UGT) and the Podemos-linked Comisiones Obreras (CCOO), refused to join.

These demonstrations, coming amid calls for an October 1 nationwide protest in France and an October 3 anti-war demonstration in Berlin, point to explosive opposition among workers and youth to genocide and imperialist war. However, these protests raise urgent questions of perspective and class orientation.

Since the Zionist genocide began a year ago, there have been many mass demonstrations in Spain against it. But they have not kept Spain's Socialist Party (PSOE)-Sumar government, like the previous PSOE-Podemos government, from arming and supporting the Israeli state as it massacres Palestinians and now assaults Lebanon. Spain remains on the front line of Israel's genocidal aggression in the Middle East and NATO's war with Russia in Ukraine.

Protests against the genocide have up to now appealed to the capitalist state to stop collaborating with Israel. Workers joined individually in protests controlled by parties of the capitalist government, like Podemos and Sumar in Spain, not in collective strike action. This did not challenge the deadening grip of the CCOO and UGT bureaucracies over the class struggle, or link workers to their class brothers and sisters opposing the genocide internationally.

For workers and youth to stop the genocide, they must take events like tomorrow's protest as the point of departure for building an independent movement of

rank-and-file workers against genocide and war. Continuing meetings and protests of workers and youth must be organized, and rank-and-file organizations built to prepare actions independently of the pro-government bureaucracies. This is the only way for workers to bring forward the opposition to genocide and war of the vast majority of the people against parties that are hardened defenders of imperialism.

The CGT bureaucracy, a split-off from the anarcho-syndicalist National Confederation of Labour, is not calling the protest to oppose CCOO and UGT inaction on the genocide. It aims to corral growing working class anger and opposition behind the larger union federations and the PSOE-Podemos or PSOE-Sumar governments.

The CGT bureaucracy and the pseudo-left satellites of Podemos promote illusions that moral appeals to the PSOE-Sumar government will change its policy. The CGT states: "We at CGT demand that the Spanish government immediately break diplomatic, commercial and military relations with Israel, recognise and protect the right of return for all Palestinian refugees and implement all necessary measures to end the occupation by the Zionist State of Israel."

Revolutionary Left, the former Spanish affiliate of the International Marxist Tendency (IMT), has called for a student strike through its youth organisation, the Students' Union. After stating that it has no confidence "in governments or in rotten diplomacy," its call ends by appealing to these governments and this diplomacy, demanding "the immediate breaking of all relations with the genocidal State of Israel."

The Morenoite Revolutionary Workers' Current (CRT) claims "it is necessary to demand that the leadership of CCOO and UGT mobilize and break with their passivity and support for the progressive [social-

democratic and Sumar] government.”

After a year of genocide, fundamental political conclusions must be drawn on the bankruptcy of this perspective. The UGT and CCOO bureaucracies will not lead a struggle to halt the genocide. No matter how many moral appeals the PSOE-Sumar government receives, it presses ahead, like Spain’s other NATO allies. This is because Podemos and Sumar advance not a struggle against capitalism, but the interests of Spanish imperialism.

Podemos, Sumar and their pseudo-left defenders crossed every red line as the NATO powers normalized genocide and war crimes. The International Court of Justice (ICJ) is prosecuting Israel on genocide charges, and arrest warrants were issued for top Israeli officials. But the PSOE-Sumar and PSOE-Podemos governments continued Spain’s arms trade with Israel, as well as other commercial and diplomatic relations with the Zionist regime.

Although Madrid claimed it would not join NATO naval missions in the Middle East, in August Iran reported that the Spanish Navy’s flagship, the aircraft carrier “Juan Carlos I,” was in the Strait of Hormuz along with several US ships. In August, it was announced that a Spanish frigate would join a NATO naval group in the Mediterranean supporting Israel.

Moreover, the PSOE, with its allies Podemos and Sumar, have kept arming Ukraine, even as Washington now announces plans for long-distance bombing across Russia. In May, Madrid pledged to supply Ukraine with Spain’s largest-ever, €1.129 billion package of military aid. Thousands of Ukrainians received military training in Spain before being sent to die at the front as cannon fodder for NATO.

The Spanish supporters of the International Committee of the Fourth International (ICFI), the leadership of the Trotskyist movement and publisher of the *World Socialist Web Site*, explain that stopping the genocide means breaking the pseudo-left’s political grip over the class struggle. It advances the following necessary demands, whose implementation requires a revolutionary break by workers and youth with parties of the affluent middle class like Podemos.

Workers in Spain and internationally must struggle to block the production and delivery of arms to the Israeli regime. Israeli officials charged with genocide by international tribunals, as well as NATO officials

implicated in the genocide, must be prosecuted. Workers must oppose political parties, whether overtly fascistic, supposedly “democratic” or “left populist,” complicit in genocide or planning aggressive war—the crime for which Nazi leaders were executed after the Nuremberg Trials.

NATO’s war escalation against Russia, which threatens to provoke a bloodbath and a nuclear conflagration across all of Europe, must be stopped. NATO bases in Spain in Rota and Moron, agreed between Washington and Spain’s fascist Francoite regime after World War II, must be dismantled. Spain must leave the NATO alliance, in the course of a struggle by workers internationally to dissolve NATO and halt Europe’s plunge into a Third World War.

The PSOE-Podemos government approved Spain’s largest-ever increase in military spending, which now reaches 2.17 percent of GDP. It paid for this by cuts to pensions and wages and other austerity measures targeting workers, even as Podemos handed tens of billions of euros of EU bailout funds to Spanish corporations. These military spending increases and social cuts must be rescinded, and EU public funds impounded to serve the social needs of the population.

The struggle for such demands is inseparable from the building of a political movement in the European and international working class to take power out of the hands of the capitalist aristocracy and build workers’ governments pursuing socialist policies. This struggle cannot be pursued under the control of Podemos and its middle-class political satellites. It requires the building of sections of the ICFI as the revolutionary political leadership of the working class in Spain and internationally.



To contact the WSWS and the Socialist Equality Party visit:

wsws.org/contact