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Spanish state

Anticapitalistas on the current political scenario

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This statement by Anticapitalistas on the failure of PSOE to form a government argues for Podemos to turn to re-energizing social movements in preparation for a new round of elections in which it should stand as a radical alternative to the mainstream parties, neoliberalism and capitalism.

AFTER TWO failed attempts to form a parliamentary government by PSOE leader Pedro Sánchez, we in Anticapitalistas believe that a new political and social dynamic is taking shape.

Both votes demonstrate that there are only two mathematically viable parliamentary majorities: either a coalition government between the elite and pro-austerity forces, or a turn by the PSOE toward a new type of government that seeks a broad coalition with Podemos and secures the neutrality of the Catalan and Basque nationalist parties.

However, after the regressive agreement reached between the PSOE and Ciudadanos, and based on the current correlation of forces, we believe it would be politically bankrupt to continue proposing to the PSOE that it form a "strong government for change."

The insistence of PSOE's leadership on taking its agreement with Ciudadanos as a starting point for any negotiations with other forces can only invalidate the possibility of forming a transformative government that aims to conquer rights for the working-class majority. Anticapitalistas believes that it is no longer realistic, after this agreement has been struck, to assume that any sort of alternative government to the Grand Coalition of all the mainstream parties (including the PSOE, Ciudadanos and the conservative Popular Party) is possible.

PSOE has remained frozen in place in the last few weeks: it cannot serve as a reliable ally in the necessary process that we need today for profoundly changing social and political structures. Its loyalty is to the Troika, to neoliberal and business-as-usual economic policies, to the restoration of an exhausted political regime.

The process of change that began on 15M (May 15, 2011) with the mass Indignados protests and occupations is still alive, even as it confronts difficulties and retreats. But this process cannot advance without struggle, and it can never subordinate itself to the logic of "lowered expectations." We have not come so far to simply get in line behind a "lesser evil" that, after all, will end up supporting the "greater evil"—that is, we cannot allow the social bloc seeking radical change to be assimilated into the governing logic of "no, it cannot be done."

Continuing to advocate the idea of a "government of change" led by the PSOE can only generate unfounded hopes and could even sow illusions. Thus, faced with the PSOE-Ciudadanos agreement (one which may expand to include the Popular Party), there are only two solutions: the Grand Coalition or new elections.

In either case, Podemos should prepare itself to organize its own response and put itself in the best position to confront whichever scenario plays out. Above all, the discourse of "change" must be more sharply defined and clarified if we are to unmask the fake "change" underway, and in order to stand up against any new government that may arise from the current attempt to form a Grand Coalition.

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POSSIBLE NEW elections must be approached with one objective strictly in mind: Accumulate the social and electoral forces needed in order to disrupt the so-called reform projects being carried out by the current regime and, in this manner, place the questions of a constituent process directed at reorganizing the Spanish state and the democratization of the economy in the middle of the national political debate.

Component parts of these two problems include: overturning neoliberal labor reforms, nationalizing and socializing strategic sectors such as banking and utilities, introduction of forms of workers control in workplaces, rent control, etc. These radical reforms can culminate in a new federal agreement between the peoples across the territory of the Spanish state while moving toward a new institutional configuration where power is exercised more and more from below.

In Anticapitalistas, we believe that the challenge looming before the bloc for change is enormous. On one side, we must deal with a political dynamic where many people feel resigned to the eventual consolidation of a Grand Coalition. On the other side, we must do all we can to prevent the closing of the political cycle that has remained open since 15M.

This means broadening the social and political scope of the forces for change. Specifically, we must prepare and better situate ourselves in a climate filled with risks, but also one ripe with possibilities for those promoting a rupture with the post-Franco Regime of 1978 and its brand of totalitarian austerity.

In this sense, the elites, the oligarchs and the European institutions hope their Grand Coalition will unfold against a backdrop of social passivity and thereby facilitate a restorationist dynamic.

Faced with this danger, we believe that only a new round of mobilization can change the current political context, a context intended to generate a sense of stability in an economy that, despite frequent boasts about recovery, continues producing only unemployment, poverty and precarity. The forces of change must put forward a Grand Social Coalition with the goal of upending the political and social scenario.

Without doubt, we in Anticapitalistas believe we are living through a change from one phase to another. This means, first, cutting off discussions with the PSOE, as it has proven itself incapable of breaking with the elites and with neoliberalism. Second, we must put into motion an alternative dynamic that breaks with the elites, one which expands the social base of the bloc for change by organizing the popular classes.

While the parties of the Regime of '78 go about constructing their Grand Coalition, the forces for change, based in all our diversity, must advance toward the building of a social bloc capable of taking over the leadership of the country so that capital never again governs.

Statement: Preparing for new elections in Spain

Elections in the Spanish state last December saw a surge of support for new parties—Podemos (meaning "We Can" in Spanish) on the left and Ciudadanos ("Citizens") on the right. Two mainstream parties, the center-right Popular Party and the center-left Spanish Socialist Workers Party (PSOE), have rotated in and out of power in a relatively stable bipartisan system since the return of electoral democracy in 1978 after the death of fascist dictator Francisco Franco. This so-called "Regime of '78" has also sought to incorporate nationalist parties in the Basque and Catalan areas, some of which advocate national independence and separation from the central Spanish state.

With no party winning sufficient votes to elect a prime minister in December, there have been several attempts by the PSOE to cobble together a governing coalition—following the model of the multi-party "Grand Coalitions"—that could win a majority in parliament. The options have been either uniting with its bipartisan rivals in the Popular Party or by taking a turn to the left and entering into a partnership with Podemos, as the center-left Socialist Party has done in Portugal with the support of the Communist Party and the Left Bloc.

Since the rise of the Indignados movement in 2011, Spanish politics have been disrupted by working-class discontent and increasingly assertive demands for national independence in the Basque and Catalan countries. The activists in Anticapitalistas are members of Podemos and were instrumental to its founding. In this statement published at the Anticapitalistas website in early March and translated here by Todd Chretien, they argue that the time has come to break off negotiations with the PSOE. Instead, they argue, Podemos must turn toward reenergizing social movements in preparation for a new round of elections—in which it should stand as a radical alternative to the mainstream parties, neoliberalism and capitalism.

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may arise from the current attempt to form a Grand Coalition.

9 March 2016

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