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Spanish State

Andalusia: a step in the process

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The day after the Andalusian parliamentary elections on March 22, 2015, Podemos candidate Teresa Rodriguez made a statement that implies both a political balance sheet of the electoral campaign and anticipates its immediate political project as opposed to the social liberal government of Susana DÃ-az: “After elections all parties claim victory, but not us. We have obtained 15 seats in the Parliament but we have not achieved our objective because tomorrow we continue with the forty daily evictions from dwellings, Andalusia’s million unemployed and the million children living under the poverty line. Our goal is to win a political majority to govern in favor of the people and with the people as an active subject of its government. Until then we cannot claim victory”.

Teresa Rodriguez didn't claim victory because the PSOE maintained its 47 seats, while it lost 250,000 votes in comparison with the election of 2012; the PP crumbled yielding almost 200,000 votes to the PSOE (a historic landmark in Andalusia) but with its 33 deputies it was not surpassed by Podemos; and Ciudadanos appeared as an emergency replacement for the right that, with 368,000 votes, the majority from the PP, won 9 seats.

The leader of Podemos in Andalusia was not complacent about this important electoral advance for a force which is newly born, without financial means, organizational structure or previous institutional experience in a territory where the Socialist Party maintains strong clientelist networks that still have a significant weight on the electoral roll. However, it is important to highlight some positive aspects of the Podemos result. In its first electoral test after its appearance in the European elections of 2014 it won 590,011 votes, which represents 14.84% of the total in Andalusia, exactly 300,000 more than last year, or an increase of 300% in one year in Andalusia. The Podemos vote came from several sources: old PSOE voters (around 200,000), former Izquierda Unida voters (another 200,000), greens from Equo (almost 20,000) and the rest from the radical left and former left abstentionists. We should stress the positive cooperation during the campaign between green activists and the “Podemistas” which, unfortunately, did not result in seats for any of the Equo candidates. Podemos achieved the broadest popular mobilization across the campaign with more than 200 rallies and public events, and it's worth noting that the final rally in the velodrome of Dos Hermanas (Seville) brought together 16,500 people, exactly 6,500 more than the sum of those attending the rallies held at the same time by the PSOE, PP, IU and Ciudadanos.

The offensive of the political right and the media against Podemos, fraught with lies and slanders, has been a first sample of the media battle to be waged at the coming elections on May 25 in other regions and in the municipalities and, of course, in the general elections at the end of the year. The economic powers around the big companies in the Ibex 35 have three goals at the state level that have already been embodied in Andalusia: to stop the advance of Podemos, prepare a replacement for discontented PP voters through support for Ciudadanos and press for a stable grand coalition government between the PP and the PSOE that can be translated into a shared cabinet or a cabinet of the winner supported by the other party. In the case of Andalusia capital's main option is PSOE leader Susana DÃ-az.

But the Andalusian elections have shown that it is difficult to curb the desire for change by an important part of the working classes who are not resigned, who have abandoned old loyalties and look to Podemos as a means of electoral struggle. The organization of the activists in the Circles, the organization of the Podemos base, is the main political capital of the new organization. Change has begun in the Spanish state. It has begun in Andalusia. And a good symbolic example of this is that Teresa Rodriguez, publicly known as a Trotskyist (environmentalist and feminist) activist in Anticapitalistas, won the most votes in her city, Cadiz, for 20 years governed by Teofila Martinez of the Partido Popular.