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Catalonia

"The mobilization against the repression will continue"

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Can you go back over the strike on November 9th and the demonstration on the 11th ?

The strike was very weak in the private sector, but stronger in the public sector, especially in education (around 40 per cent) and, to a lesser extent, in transport. Many teachers felt concerned by the indictment of eight teachers for "indoctrination" and "hatred" for having discussed the issue of police violence on the day of the referendum in front of their students, following the complaint of parents working in the Guardia Civil. Societat Civil Catalana (which organized the unionist demonstrations, with a key role played by far-right elements) is campaigning for more complaints to be filed in order to reinforce the intimidation of teachers.

In general, the popular layers and the working class remained very much on the sidelines, except in the public sector. The main dynamic element of the week has been the action of the Committees for the Defence of the Republic (CDR), which played a big role. A conservative but lucid journalist compares them with the dynamics of Lotta Continua in the 1970s in Italy, highlighting the dynamism of local groups and their ability to take action. The CDRs remain basically very heterogeneous, but they are developing. They are today almost 300, spread over the territory, recalling the dynamics of the 15M. The CDRs have blocked streets, highways and high-speed trains with hundreds of people, and the police have had a hard time intervening.

The mobilization against the repression will continue. The next step will be the procedures against over 700 mayors.

What about the political organizations and the December 21st elections?

Puigdemont has expressed his request for compromise in the framework of a more flexible Spanish state, with a modus vivendi without independence. Within PDCAT (the party of Puigdemont), the debates are very tense. Esquerra Republicana de Catalunya (ERC) will be the leading force in the elections. They are now coming out for a republican bloc, not independentist, a very ambiguous formula.

The independentists feel betrayed by the fact that the parties in power are changing their discourse: it is ridiculous to see Puigdemont say that he is no longer for independence after all that has happened! The ERC explains that the confrontation was not possible, that it was necessary to maintain a peaceful action. The independentist camp is now in difficulty for having sold an unrealistic solution...

In Podem, there is a very big mess following the departure of Albano Dante Fachin. Madrid negotiated directly with Catalunya en Comú (CeC, led by the mayor of Barcelona, Ada Colau) and imposed the candidates by going over the head of the Catalan organization. The approach of CeC is very electoral, their logic is roughly to win the base of the PSC because the drop in its support releases a space for a left social-democracy... The orientation of the activists of Anticapitalistas in Podem is to support the agreement with CeC despite their opposition to the authoritarian methods of the Podemos leadership, but also to have an opening towards the CUP, but this proposal remains very much a minority in Podem and in Catalunya in Comú.

The CUP has modified its project of building an independentist group, towards a "rupturist" block, which is pretty much correct. On this basis, it proposed an agreement for a list to Albano Dante Fachin. It is an intelligent proposition and a step forward, even though the opening remains limited to independents, small groups of activists, but not to other organized political groups.

"The mobilization against the repression will continue"

How do you see the next phase of the movement? How can you pose, in the elections and beyond, the question of the participation of the popular classes?

The electoral campaign effectively slows the momentum for a constituent process. For now, the demands remain focused on democratic questions. The ANC and Omnium lobbied for a united list, but it is now a thing of the past, because the ERC and the CUP will go it alone. The ANC and Omnium came across as supporting Puigdemont, backing the united list to the end.

In the CDRs, the discussion is just beginning. This framework is more sensitive to developments, discussions and experiences. We are trying, but it remains difficult, to move forward on the social demands, because the dynamic of rejection of the repression remains the central element. The mobilization is continuing at the local level, people mobilize every day, there are regular meetings to discuss, as during the movement of the indignados.

It is in the CDRs that the independentist sectors, those inherited from the 15M, and the popular layers are mixed, so this is where we intervene mainly.

This interview was conducted on November 14th by Antoine Larrache and published in Hebdo L'Anticapitaliste, weekly of the NPA, NÂ° 405, November 15th 2017.

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