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Spanish State

# Resurrections and frauds of Pedro Sanchez

- IV Online magazine - 2017 - IV508 - May 2017 -

Publication date: Wednesday 24 May 2017

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**Pedro Sanchez was re-elected as leader of the PSOE (Partido Socialista Obrero Español - Spanish Socialist Workers' Party) – defeating his right wing opponent, Susana Díaz, after having been forced to step down from the leadership under pressure from the right in October 2016.**

1. Disoriented and without a project, cut off from its traditional social base and disconnected from youth, European social democracy (in its senile phase) is not having a pleasant sunset, but an ongoing crisis full of upheavals in which the apparatuses most identified with austerity policies clash with their own activists who launch, here and there, smaller or larger internal rebellions in reaction to the decline of their parties, but with political crystallizations of diverse nature. Corbyn, Hamon or the resurrection of Pedro Sanchez express, in different contexts, similar situations from the point of view of the causes and nature of the crisis of their respective parties but represent very different political projects: a genuine and honest reformism in the case of Corbyn, and a very limited regeneration in the case of Hamon and, even more so, in that of Sánchez.

2. The visible head of a generation of leaders which was born old, the defeated Susana Díaz represented the worst possibility for the PSOE. A PSOE very little accustomed to losing and still not understanding the historical significance of 15M. A PSOE damaged by history and by the devastation created by an economic model that it had adopted with enthusiasm and that was one of its systemic guarantors. With the failure of Díaz, which is undoubtedly excellent news, we see the end of the ridiculous history one of the most sinister characters, as insignificant as he is symbolic, in the crisis of the PSOE: Antonio Hernando. Sanchez's key man up until the internal coup last October, who at the last minute betrayed him, and betrayed himself (in the unlikely event that there is something inside him worthy of being betrayed), to save his post and become a regrettable parliamentary-puppet and the visible face of the most botched episode in the parliamentary party's history, the investiture of Rajoy. The "AntonioHernandization" of European social democracy is doubly a cause and a consequence of the crisis. A current in decay produces characters like this, and these in turn will only deepen the crisis of which they are the fruit. A symbol of mediocrity and betrayal, AntonioHernandization is a mere subsidiary version for middle leaders and followers, the process of "FelipeGonzalezization" of the PSOE and European social democracy, that is, its most complete overlap with global economic and financial power and its absolute moral and spiritual corruption.

3. A caricatural marketing version of Corbyn, Sanchez is an impostor who knew how to transform itself in order not to perish. In his long political career he never championed any type of project which, however timidly, deviated from social-liberal orthodoxy. But to survive politically in his first stage as secretary general he had to reject any logic of "grand coalition" with the PP and realized that he was playing for his future in the dispute with Podemos for the leadership of the left. And after his resignation he was forced to adopt a regenerating, leftist and democratic rhetoric to mark his differences with Susana Díaz and give a political meaning and a coherent narrative to his attempt to regain the general secretariat, channelling the discomfort of the party rank and file towards a regeneration project of a political force whose boastful mediocrity shamed its own activists. But once the path was chosen he was a prisoner of it and of the hopes and expectations generated, which makes him an annoying element of destabilization of the systemic governance scheme of the current phase, which requires a PSOE which is disciplined and not adventurous, and a threat to Podemos, which can be cornered by Sanchez if he is capable of combining an image of solvency and renewal, of synthesis between the best of the PSOE and a credible change in the spirit of Podemos, but without the adventures and risks this carries for a part of the electorate. In any case, his victory is a setback, real and symbolic, for the media and financial block which last year ordered his dismissal and will now have the dilemma of whether to make his life impossible, pushing him towards a relative "Podemosization" of his discourse, or on the contrary, trying to reach an understanding with him to deactivate the destabilizing effect of his project. Political life is full of paradoxes and the orchestrated removal of Sanchez in the name of reasons of state has now led to a return of the former secretary general under a narrative that for the moment cannot be integrated into its scheme of state governance.

4. Sanchez has sold the project of a “new PSOE” that is perceived by its activist rank and file as an attempt to return the PSOE to what it was in its heyday. There is some truth in this because it is clear that the degeneration of the party had reached unusual heights. But in reality a “new PSOE” that was really capable of sustaining a project opposed to policies of austerity and the real implosion of the representative democratic systems under the yoke of the financial dictatorship would be *a PSOE which was no longer the PSOE*, i.e. it would cease to be a party embedded in the structures of the state and the financial-economic power as it has been since the transition. A contradiction in terms. Something impossible and completely foreign to the intentions of Sanchez. Putting an end to austerity policies requires much more than what Sanchez and the “new PSOE” can offer, however positive their victory against Diaz. This is the Achilles heel of his proposal and the main asset that Podemos should exploit.

5. The illusions of a progressive government of PSOE and Unidos Podemos, with Sánchez at the head, may be real in a significant part of society and, faced with the apparent impossibility that Unidos Podemos could form a government on its own or be the hegemonic force within one, an alliance with the Socialist Party could appear as the only credible concrete perspective to exit from the current impasse. Unidos Podemos, En Compañía Podem and En Marea face the complex situation of neither appearing sectarian (as Sanchez will certainly try to make them appear), or feeding illusions of “change” that do not correspond to the reality of a possible government led by Sanchez. Before a new contender in the rhetoric of “change”, Podemos and its allies would commit a big mistake if they choose to compete with Sanchez on his own ground, blurring the differences with him uncritically in a bloc led by the PSOE. On the contrary, at this stage the (often improvised) shock effect politics characteristic of Podemos, whether successful as in the current motion of censure or sloppy as in the offer of a coalition government in January 2016, will more than ever need to give way to a *more substantive politics* in which *programmatic proposals* and *extra-institutional politics* will be decisive. It is in the programmatic debate on the realization of “change” where the limits of Sanchez may become more clear (or where his tensions with the establishment will increase if he is forced to maintain specific radical positions), and in the ability to show that there is life beyond the institutions where the new PSOE could show its continuity with the old one.

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