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Uruguay

Uruguay: Frente Amplio wins presidential election

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On Sunday 24 November, the Frente Amplio (FA) won the second round of the presidential elections in Uruguay. The pairing of Yamandú Orsi and Carolina Cosse won 49.8% of the vote against 45.8% for the right-wing Partido Nacional. A clear victory. The coalition-movement, as it statutorily defines itself, won in 5 of the 19 departments, whereas previously it had only won in the 2 largest cities, Montevideo and Canelones. The FA won 16 out of 30 senatorial seats and 48 out of 99 deputy seats.

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Social security at the heart of the debate

The first round of parliamentary elections took place on 27 October, and above all the plebiscite against social security reform. The majority current of the FA, the MPP (Movimiento de Participación Popular) led by former president Mujica, received the most votes. In October, this sector had opposed the referendum in defence of social security organised by the PIT-CNT, the central trade union confederation, and supported by the PC, PS and PVP, all parties with working-class bases. The plebiscite against pension reform failed to win a majority, but almost 40% of Uruguayans voted 'Yes'.

These results - parliamentary elections and plebiscite - imply a 'distance' between the leadership of the FA and the aspirations of the workers. This estrangement is not yet formal because the popular classes still have hope in the Orsi-Cosse government, which is natural just after their victory. The number of blank votes, around 38,500 (bearing in mind you need around 24,000 votes to be elected as a deputy), is undoubtedly a first expression of this. Some of the spoilt votes may reflect the desire of some left-wing voters to put in a 'Yes' ballot paper on 27 October, as a way of expressing their rejection of the two candidates.

Recomposition of the left

Yamandú Orsi has confirmed his willingness to open a dialogue on social security, but the statements made by the future Minister for the Economy, Gabriel Oddone, have set the tone for the next government: 'between the economic proposals of the Frente Amplio and those of the Republican Coalition (the right) there are not two radically opposed models of the country, but rather differences in priorities' (*El Observador*, 25 November 2024).

There is the beginning, albeit rather timid, of a recomposition of the popular movement and the left. Will the popular movement stand still while the government solves the problems? Will it continue to take initiatives like the plebiscite on social security if its expectations are not met? Will social movements behave in the same way as they did under previous left-wing governments? Will there be political space for the recomposition of an anti-capitalist left?

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These are all unanswered questions. The answer will depend on the measures taken by the FA government and the balance of power that political activists within and outside the FA, as well as the workers' and people's movement, succeed in imposing.

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Translated by **International Viewpoint** from [l'Anticapitaliste](#).

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