

Morenoite CRT tries to tie anti-genocide protests to Spain's pro-government union bureaucracies

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It is over a year since the NATO-backed Zionist genocide of Palestinians in Gaza began. This is part of a broader imperialist offensive including bombings and a ground invasion of Lebanon, strikes in Yemen and Syria, and the Israeli military's recent missile attacks on Iran. This escalation increasingly threatens to become a direct war between Israel and NATO against Iran, potentially drawing in its allies, Russia and China.

A massive global wave of protest has erupted against the genocide, as millions of youth and workers globally join the largest anti-war protests since the Vietnam War. They have joined demonstrations, student protests in schools and universities, and worker-led boycotts, like the blocking of 21 tons of ammunition destined for Israel by Greek dockworkers at Piraeus.

The question facing workers is how to stop the Gaza genocide and the broader imperialist offensive in the Middle East, as well as on the interconnected fronts: Ukraine, where NATO is waging a proxy war against Russia, or the Pacific, where the US and its allies are surrounding China with military bases. The International Committee of the Fourth International (ICFI) explains that this begins with building an international socialist movement among workers and youth against imperialist war and its source, the capitalist system, independent from pro-capitalist parties and union bureaucracies.

This is a perspective opposed to the middle-class Revolutionary Workers' Current (CRT), the Spanish branch of the Morenoite Socialist Workers' Party (PTS) of Argentina and Permanent Revolution of France. In "After September 27: A Contribution to the Analysis and Perspectives of the Movement for Palestine," an article on the general strike called on September 27 by Spain's CGT union, a split-off from the anarcho-syndicalist National Confederation of Labor, the CRT writes:

Overall, September 27 was an important day of struggle across the country, highlighting the need for the working class to take a stand in internationalist solidarity with Palestine.

The CGT bureaucracy did not mobilize masses of workers, and the CRT acknowledges that "September 27 was not a true 'general strike.'" They propose therefore to "publicly call on the leadership of CCOO [Comisiones Obreras – Workers' Commissions] and UGT [Unión General de Trabajadores-General Union of Workers] to mobilise and withdraw their support for the government."

The CRT continues by proposing to hold assemblies and preparatory sessions of students and workers, "to push for a united front with the leadership of CCOO and UGT, with the goal of building a large-scale general strike against the genocide in Palestine."

The differences between the perspectives put forward by the ICFI and those proposed by the CRT go far beyond tactical differences or disagreements; they reveal a class gulf separating the two. While the ICFI fights for the political independence of the working class, the CRT, from its upper-middle-class orientation, seeks to tie workers to pro-government union bureaucracies. The CCOO and UGT bureaucracies are linked to Sumar and to the PSOE, respectively—that is, to Spain's government parties, which are still sending arms to Israel.

First, the CRT deceives its readers as to the CGT bureaucrats' real intentions. They did not call the September 27 strike to counter the inaction of CCOO and UGT. Rather, they aimed to channel working class anger against the genocide behind impotent petitions and moral appeals to the PSOE-Sumar government, which in reality has continued to arm the Israeli state during the genocide.

The CGT expressed this in their call, stating: "The CGT demands that the Spanish government immediately cut diplomatic, commercial, and military ties with Israel, recognise and protect the right of return for all Palestinian refugees, and implement all necessary measures to end the occupation by the Zionist State of Israel."

The CRT tries to push students and workers behind union bureaucracies that, in Spain and internationally, have supported imperialist governments' war policies, while refusing to lift a finger to halt the transport of arms and materials for Israel's war machine. Its political rhetoric never aim to challenge the

CCOO and UGT bureaucracies or to mobilize workers against the PSOE-Sumar government, but rather to ensure there is no political break with the union bureaucracy and the PSOE-Sumar government.

Second, the two major union federations, CCOO and UGT, have made no effort to mobilise the working class in strikes and protests, either against Zionist genocide or against the PSOE-Sumar government's support for Israel. They hypocritically joined the maneuvers of the PSOE and Sumar, as well as other groups like the Stalinist Communist Party and Podemos—which sent weapons to Israel when they were in government—to organise a so-called “pro-Gaza” demonstration in February.

Moreover, UGT, a union linked to PSOE, has a long-standing relationship with Israel's Histadrut (General Federation of Labor in the Land of Israel) union, which is a pillar of Israel's apartheid regime and fully supports the war on Gaza. UGT Secretary General Pepe Álvarez had no qualms about joining gatherings in front of the Israeli embassy organised by pro-Zionist groups and meeting the Israeli ambassador to support Israel and denounce the “ Hamas attacks ” of October 7.

In fact, CCOO and UGT cooperate very closely with the PSOE-Sumar government, as they did with its predecessor, the PSOE-Podemos government (2019-2023), to impose austerity at home. They have implemented pension reforms that slash pension amounts and pave the way to privatize pensions.

Under the PSOE-Podemos government, not a year passed that the bureaucracies did not facilitate the state's use of police to break strikes. In November 2021, it sent armoured vehicles and riot police against striking metalworkers in Cadiz; in April 2022, it sent 23,000 police to crush a National truckers strike against rising fuel prices amid NATO's war against Russia in Ukraine. Against healthcare and airline strikes, the PSOE-Podemos government used minimum services laws to break strikes, with acquiescence from CCOO and UGT.

CRT covers up this record, as it would undermine the illusions they promote that bureaucracies can be forced to oppose capitalism and war. They write:

We need truly militant and democratic unions that include all sectors of our class—a diverse class, increasingly feminized and racialized, which, in addition to exploitation, suffers from precarious conditions, exclusion, and racism. For this reason, it is necessary to reclaim unions from conciliatory bureaucracies aligned with imperialist governments complicit in Zionism.

There is no shortage of opposition to austerity, genocide, and militarism. But to wage a real fight, workers must take matters into their own hands and break the stranglehold of the union apparatus. Rank-and-file committees, controlled by workers

themselves and independent of the bureaucracies, must be built in every workplace. These must organise workers and forge links with workers internationally, in the broadest possible struggle against multinational corporations and the financial elite.

The rotten nationalism, appeals to the anti-working class union bureaucracies, and hostility to an independent anti-war movement based in the working class, is the product of the CRT's defence of the material interests of affluent, pro-imperialist layers of the middle class.

This orientation is embedded in the anti-Trotskyist political DNA of the CRT. Its predecessor, Clase Contra Clase, was founded in 2005 after leaving the Stalinist-led United Left coalition and affiliating to the so-called Trotskyist Fraction–Fourth International (FT-CI). It founded the CRT in 2017. The FT-CI and CRT stand in the anti-Trotskyist tradition of the Argentine Pabloite Nahuel Moreno, who broke with Trotskyism and the International Committee of the Fourth International (ICFI) in 1963.

Moreno advocated liquidating the Fourth International in Latin America and sought to subordinate the working class to bourgeois and petty-bourgeois nationalists, from Juan Peron in Argentina to Fidel Castro in Cuba. His political descendants in Spain combine this petty bourgeois orientation with a historical defense of Spanish Stalinist bureaucracies and their orientation to the capitalist state.

Only the international unification and mobilization of workers and youth against the Gaza genocide and imperialist war on Iran can halt a deepening third world war. Mass opposition must be freed from the debilitating influence of parties that try to tie workers and youth to imperialist governments. Amid the mass protests against the genocide that have erupted in America, Europe, Asia and the Middle East, this means fighting for a Trotskyist perspective against pro-imperialist parties like Podemos, Sumar and the CRT.



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