

Spanish state — Anticapitalistas y Podemos: six years of ups and downs from the Teatro del Barrio to the expected farewell after the coalition government

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“It’s not pretty, it’s not beautiful, but among those of us who defend social justice it’s not goodbye, it’s au revoir.” With these words, Podemos leader Pablo Iglesias conveyed this Wednesday in a video broadcast with Teresa Rodríguez a feeling that underlies Rodríguez’ departure from the Andalusian leadership: it foreshadows the probable absence of Anticapitalistas from Vistalegre III and anticipating their departure from Podemos, which will be decided in a congress at the end of March, after the State Citizens’ Assembly (Vistalegre III) of Podemos.

Exactly six years ago, on 14 January 2014, the Mover Ficha manifesto was launched, signed by, among others, the now Vice President of the Government, Pablo Iglesias; Teresa Rodríguez; the actor Alberto San Juan; the professor of Applied Economics Bibiana Medialdea; Jaume Asens; Isa Serra; Rita Maestre; Antón Gómez-Reino and Jorge Moruno. Three days later, it was presented at the Teatro del Barrio. That day, Teresa Rodríguez, Miguel Urbán, Ana Castaño, Juan Carlos Monedero and Íñigo Errejón – who had just arrived from Latin America – spoke.

Anticapitalistas, then Izquierda Anticapitalista (IA) - before, when they were in Izquierda Unida, they were Espacio Alternativo and their known leader was Jaime Pastor -, was one of the legs on which Podemos was launched: that day in the Teatro del Barrio, Urbán was presented as the party’s organizational secretary.

Podemos, in January 2014, was the decantation of the 15M movement into which converged the association of students and professors of the Faculty of Politics of the Complutense University, Izquierda Anticapitalista itself, activists from different social movements -Youth without Future, PAH, tides, etc-, professors linked to the CEPS Foundation and friends who knew each other from previous activism -Izquierda Unida, UJCE (Young Communists), MRG (Global Resistance Movement)...-.

Shortly after that meeting at the Teatro del Barrio, eldiario.es published the contents of an [internal bulletin](#) in which IA had set out “the political points of the proposed process in view of the European elections” in the days leading up to the launch of the [Mover Ficha manifesto](#). “In this context”, states the leadership of IA, “we have the possibility of promoting a process that will culminate in a candidacy for the elections”. What are the determining factors? “The presence of a series of personalities with media visibility as the public face of the project [Pablo Iglesias, who was not mentioned], which opens up the option of connecting with sectors of the population on the left that are dissatisfied with traditional organizations.”

The difficulties between the trotskyst family within Podemos and the statewide leadership had existed since a few days before the Teatro del Barrio, in fact. It was at the penultimate minute when Íñigo Errejón, a newcomer from Latin America, wanted to touch up the manifesto, which was vehemently opposed by Urbán, a participant in the project from the very beginning, in the face of a disgruntled Iglesias.

In the end, the manifesto remained as it was, without Errejón's last minute contributions, and Podemos was presented in society in Lavapiés. Five months later, in the European elections of May, it burst into Spanish politics institutionally with five MEPs.

But before those results, Teresa Rodríguez presented an alternative list to that of Pablo Iglesias in the primaries for the European elections in May 2014. Since then, Anticapitalistas has stood for the leading bodies of Podemos, with candidates in the first two state Citizens' Assemblies.

The first time was in Vistalegre I, in October 2014, when Rodríguez brought together various sectors that had arrived at Podemos after its launch, including Pablo Echenique himself. In that Assembly, the leadership the people and even the political project of the newborn Podemos were at stake. It was at this point that Iglesias proposed the "assault on the heavens" that has accompanied the entire evolution of the Podemos leader to the vice-presidency of the government.

Vistalegre I represented the victory of the first leadership led by Iglesias, with Monedero, Errejón, Luis Alegre and Carolina Bescansa. Alegre was the first to fall, in autumn 2016, while the break-up of Errejón and Bescansa came with Vistalegre II, in February 2017.

Precisely two years ago, on 12 February 2017, that Second Citizens' Assembly concluded, in which Errejón and the Anticapitalistas, again, put forward alternative documents and leadership to Iglesias, who again emerged victorious from the highest body of the party. There was still one year left before Errejón would split, coinciding with the fifth anniversary of Podemos on 17 January 2018, to launch a new political project with Manuela Carmena - Más Madrid, embryo of Más País.

In any case, the relationship between Anticapitalistas and the statewide leadership has gone through better and worse times and lived through tense situations. For example, in autumn 2016 Anticapitalistas and Ramón Espinar made an agreement and won the leadership in Madrid from Rita Maestre and Tania Sánchez; in the statewide campaigns there has been sometimes more Andalusian support and sometimes less; those close to the statewide leadership presented an alternative list around Isa Franco to that of Rodríguez's team in Andalusia; in the last European elections Urbán was placed in a position to be re-elected as an MEP; and the statewide leadership supported José María González, Kichi, for the re-election as mayor of Cádiz.

But in recent times relations have been worsening. On the one hand, because of Rodríguez's political aspiration to convert the Andalusian movement, *Adelante Andalucía*, into a political subject of its own - including registering it legally as a political party with its own membership register and its autonomous leadership, giving *Catalonia in Comú* as an example. An aspiration that is not shared either by the statewide leadership of Podemos or by its main Andalusian partners, *Izquierda Unida*.

But above all, there has been Anticapitalistas' opposition to the idea of a coalition government with the PSOE. From the outset of the negotiations they made their opposition public, and part of their political strategy is to represent those who do not share the perspective of co-government with the PSOE. The consultation of the Podemos membership was a setback for those positions: it registered 96% of votes in Andalusia in favour of the entry of Unidos Podemos into the Government.

In the farewell video with Pablo Iglesias, Teresa Rodríguez cites several times her opposition to the

coalition, a perspective she does not share, but says that she wishes Iglesias and Podemos Unidos good luck in government.

All this has generated a complicated pre-assembly climate, to which we must add the tensions over the position on the process, where Anticapitalistas have been closer to independence; or the electoral process in Madrid, where the political family of Urbán and Rodríguez converged with IU in *Madrid en Pie* for the City Council and, later, that alliance of *Madrid en Pie* did the same with Podemos for the region. That is, de facto, Anticapitalistas already operated as a political space outside Podemos in the Madrid region.

And this is the path that has led to this Wednesday, when Iglesias and Rodríguez have announced a friendly separation in which the hitherto leader of *Podemos Andalucía* is not standing for re-election in May. In this separation, the role of Urbán is key, to avoid an abrupt exit.

The date of the Andalusian Assembly has also been the subject of controversy. The convening of the third State Citizens' Assembly for the third weekend in March has altered the Andalusian calendar, against the wishes of Rodríguez, whose leadership went so far as to accuse the state leadership of "interference" a few weeks ago.

"We are not going to show up, a new team that is in tune with the statewide organization must lead the project," Teresa Rodríguez explains in the video broadcast Wednesday on social networks with Iglesias, with whom she comes together in a hug. "We made the decision t