



Written by [Selwyn Duke](#) on June 10, 2015

Seeing Red: Will Communists Take Over Spain?

“What’s so bad about communism?” a teenager once naively asked me. It was an illustration of how freedom can be lost in one generation because knowledge of history can be. And one nation perhaps poised to repeat the Marxist mistake of the past is Spain, where a new political party — described by many as communist — may take control of the country in the December general election. As *American Thinker’s* Rick Moran [writes](#):



Europe’s debtor nations are rapidly being radicalized as communists and other left wing radicals run on promises that they will ditch responsible governance and return to the days of massive welfare spending.

The latest example is Spain, where radicals have taken over municipal administrations in almost all of the major cities. The Spanish version of Syriza — the radical left Greek party that is running that country into the ground — is called Podemos, and it’s led by Pablo Iglesias — a pupil of Venezuela’s late dictator Hugo Chávez. With national elections six months away, and both the center right parties and socialists hugely unpopular, it seems very possible that Podemos will become the first communist government in Western Europe freely elected by the people.

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Podemos has perhaps taken a leaf out of Barack Obama’s book as its name translates into “We Can.” But what can they — and, more importantly, will they — do? It seems even many Spaniards didn’t know when they empowered Podemos in last month’s municipal elections. As the Daily Beast [reports](#), people voted against Prime Minister Mariano Rajoy “so enthusiastically ... that almost nobody had bothered to read the political program of the new parties to which they threw their support.” Hence, in Spain, “the most searched-for phrase on Google during the election night last month was ‘Podemos political program for municipal election.’” The site continues:

What voters discovered was that they’d cast their ballots massively for a coalition of the extreme left that promised more government spending, new municipal taxes, free housing for all, water and electricity to households that cannot afford them, and punishment for real estate speculation. They would favor small businesses and impose restrictions on the activity of large corporations, declare the cities “live-animal-show-free zones,” and create public land banks for agro-ecological farming.

The Petri dishes where these experiments are to be carried out now include Madrid, Barcelona, Zaragoza, Valencia and Santiago de Compostela.

It’s not surprising that Podemos is, to an extent, an unknown quantity. Formed just January of last year, its rise has been meteoric, as the party “stunned the Spanish political establishment in the European elections four months later, securing 1.2 million votes and five seats — and doing so with a campaign budget of only 150,000 Euros,” [wrote](#) *Newsweek* this past October. And with the victories in this year’s municipal elections, Podemos has made history: becoming Spain’s second largest party and upending



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the two-party power structure that had seen the Socialists' Workers Party (PSOE) and the People's Party (PP) control the country, in one form or another, since the restoration of democratic government in 1978, three years after the death of longtime ruler Francisco Franco.

But it is the dying of Spain's economic prospects that has paved the way for the radical Podemos. As Madrid-based CEO and political scientist Javier Unda [explained](#) in November:

Unemployment stands at 24% for the general population and over 50% among those under 30. Over half a million families have no income earner and thousands are at risk of defaulting on their mortgages. Promise this audience changes like a substantial increase on minimal wage, setting a legal maximum wage, lowering retirement age to 60 (currently 67) etc. Hardly a surprise that their [Podemos'] message resonated with voters.

Moreover, Podemos and Iglesias have another benefit: fresh-face appeal. While the ruling PP can be attacked for corruption and blamed for the economic woes, as Unda tells us:

Pablo Iglesias has no past for most Spaniards. He was known on small left-wing circles, especially as a college professor at one of the biggest and best universities in Spain and as a talk show host for HispanTV (Iran's Spanish TV channel). Contrary to his enemies, he has no record on the national political scene, neither good, nor bad. And this has been one of his biggest advantages.

So Iglesias is no doubt benefiting from a very common citizen attitude: "Things couldn't get any worse." Yet history teaches otherwise. Many Russians under Tsar Nicholas II, and Weimar Republic Germans, surely thought things couldn't get any worse. Then they ended up with Lenin and Hitler.

How aggressive a Marxist program Iglesias would pursue is a matter for debate, but he certainly is the embodiment of a left-wing cliché. Sporting a trademark ponytail and eschewing suits to strike a populist image, the 36-year-old has plied the leftist bastions of academia and the media as a political-science professor and a TV and print journalist. In addition:

- His party's founding conference was called a "citizens' assembly."
- He was a pupil of the late Hugo Chávez and has praised his government.
- He was a member of the Communist Youth Union of Spain.
- There are videos of him singing the Communist Internationale anthem.
- He has [used language](#) such as "Heaven is not taken by consensus ... it is taken by assault" (whom you'd be taking Heaven from, and that it is a place not to be "taken" but in which to serve, are points to ponder).

And he just may be Spain's next prime minister.

In reality, though, the man with no political past is actually just resurrecting his nation's political past. Unbeknownst to many today, pre-Spanish Civil War Spain was governed by a "republican coalition of communists, socialists, and other assorted leftists whose death squads were partially staffed by Soviet secret police"; this radical "Popular Front" government, as it called itself, also "demanded public renunciation of the Catholic faith as a requirement for a civil marriage and ... would kill priests and nuns on a massive scale (known as the Red Terror)," as I [wrote](#) in 2011. This was, by the way, the violent group against which General Emilio Mola launched his 1936 military coup, an action that would ultimately lead to the rule of brother-in-arms General Franco (who was neither a fascist nor an ally of Hitler).



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Yet, unfortunately, Spain isn't alone in its dalliance with Marxism. It has to an extent [taken hold in Japan](#) and elsewhere, and Karl Marx is [more popular](#) than he has been in decades. It's no surprise, either, despite communists' track record of slaughtering 100 million people during the 20th century. As Spanish philosopher George Santayana wrote, "When experience is not retained, as among savages, infancy is perpetual. Those who cannot remember the past are condemned to repeat it." And that's when the eternal kids may ask, "What's so bad about communism?"

Spain may, the hard way, soon find out.



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