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Obituary

# Troglo: will, initiative and revolutionary generosity

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### **José Ramón Castaños known as Troglo (1950-2018) was a long-time leader of the Fourth Internationalists in the Basque country. he died in April 2018.**

We were expecting the fatal outcome, but when the blow came it was no less harsh. José Ramón Castaños, known to hundreds as Troglo, has died. I identify with the heartfelt words written by Jon Fano Letxepan, Petxo Idoiaga, Jaime Pastor, Martín Caussa, Raul Camargo, Pierre and Sally Rousset published in Viento Sur which I recommend to the activist generations of today who need to know more about this part of the history of the social and political struggles in the Spanish state, most especially in Euskalherria. [1] For my part, I will add my feelings and some more elements that show the intersection of this life of a militant with the trajectory of Anticapitalistas (section of the Fourth International in the Spanish state.)

One of the best experiences of those who were in the LCR was to meet and merge with that very close group of people that made up ETA VI and very specifically Troglo. [2] From different starting points and experiences, suddenly, in the heat of the anti-Franco struggle, through the common aspiration for a socialist society, and thanks to the good influence of the people of the French Ligue and the Fourth International, we were able to converge in points of view and projects with a high degree of agreement. And, in addition, something to emphasize, they were loyal people. I met Troglo in a period of clandestine activity. I do not remember exactly when, but I am sure that we began to work together as a result of his transfer to Madrid to participate in the unified party leadership.

In those years I knew how easy it was to discuss with Troglo, who defended his ideas and proposals with passion, but also, that it was even easier to finally reach agreement on “what is to be done”. The important thing. And all accompanied by a friendly, unconditional comradeship. Something to be valued in times when competitiveness between individuals and lack of political debate characterized the life of the forces of change.

It is impossible to summarize in a few lines a life full of revolutionary activity of a person with great capacity for initiative and infinite dedication to the cause.

I will highlight two aspects not addressed in the previous In Memoriam articles that affected me more directly. After the failure of the unification with MC - a fusion that led to the unjust and erroneous price of leaving the Fourth International - Troglo and I felt a moral and political obligation to repair the damage done; we were accomplices in the “return” to the International's leadership body (IEC) of the people in Euskalherria who shared with Troglo the need to establish this relationship and the people who, in Euskalherria and the rest of the state, were grouped together in a long sequence (Izquierda Alternativa, Espacio Alternativo, Izquierda Anticapitalista and finally Anti-capitalistas) that we wanted to be part of the international organization. In those years, our friendship and collaboration were strengthened, even though we did not have the same political-organizational project in construction of the party, but we did have a broad pool of ideas, programmatic points and ways of seeing the relationship between the social and political struggle. And in particular the ecosocialist vision.

The other question that I want to highlight is that Troglo, at the initiative of the Ecosocialist Encounters that began in Geneva, passed the baton to Madrid and then were held in Bilbao – thanks to his commitment when he was already very sick – established a very close path of collaboration with Anticapitalistas and with the environmental organizations of the Spanish state. Thanks to his proposal and commitment, they will continue in Lisbon in November 2018 .

Knowing Troglo is how I understood in a simple way that one can have a firm pro-independence political position in

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defence of the rights of the Basque people and, at the same time, not have to resort to identity politics. Or so I understood it. And, at the same time, he was an internationalist and in solidarity with the struggle of the peoples like few others.

As a friend Troglo never failed me and I knew of his capacity for affection when I needed it the most in 2008 and 2009, in the various trips he made to chat with me. Just to chat between one bus and another bus. To paraphrase and invert the Sandinista motto, for Troglo, tenderness was solidarity among people. And he practiced it.

Just a final remark. On 31 December 2016, Sophie, Josu, Marga and I went to see him in his hamlet. Luckily, we got there, and did not get lost in those roads and curves between mountains and valleys. In those hours of New Year's Eve he never stopped making proposals for future work: an agreement between foundations, which, unfortunately, we have not yet documented; a social initiative against precarity with sectors of the church; and, as already said, the preparation of the fourth meeting of the Ecosocialist Encounters. He gave us messages and proposals. We will fulfil them.

Troglo lives, the fight continues.

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[1] See [here](#).

[2] ETA VI was a current from the Basque armed struggle organization ETA that from its 6th congress in 1970 decided to take a different political path. In 1973 it fused with the LKI, the Basque section of the Fourth International in the Spanish state to form LKI-Eta VI.