



THINK TANK

Driving the Change of Governance System

International Association to Change the World

POLITICIANS DO NOT REPRESENT US

"They do not represent us" was the most pronounced sentence in a demonstration in Madrid, on May 15, 2011 (15-M). Who said this sentence expressed that politicians did not represent them and, perhaps, to the majority of Spaniards.

This sentence is used by the world movement of the outraged, has been translated into many languages and has been used in many countries, so it can be considered one of the great contemporary sentences.

To contextualize this sentence, it is worth remembering that Zapatero's PSOE was governing. Spain had been in a deep crisis for three years, which the government later recognized, so he had to advance the General Elections and the Spaniards decided to change their government.

In his day some said it was a populist and anti-democracy sentence, but the protesters did not recognize that this was the meaning of their complaint. In a representative democracy, the Government represents its governed.

Having discarded the anti-democratic meaning, we can think of two other meanings. The first would be a complaint because politicians do not represent the general interest. Probably the majority of the population of democratic countries would subscribe to this meaning and, probably, thinking about this meaning has become one of the great sentences of this century.

It can also mean that politicians do not do what protesters want. Surely, some of the protesters believe that they know what is best for the majority, but it is more likely that the majority do not agree with their vision.

Often these strong statements are often created by people with radical beliefs and this leads to another type of claim. Radicals want to use



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institutional power and money to impose certain ideas, intervene in the economy or change the way of life of people, or, on the contrary, that the public sector disregards social problems.

In the 19th century and, moreover, during the 20th century, two antagonistic political positions were radicalized, based on the two socio-economic theories that were outlined in previous centuries, with the creation of private property, the market and the public sector, especially the Social State, whose greatest exponent is the European Welfare State.

It is contradictory that, having considerably increased the complexity of society, the professional and vital possibilities, politics has been radicalized and simplified in these two anachronistic positions. In this sense, several studies of this century have shown that politicians treat people as if they were children.

Other studies show that the last generations have attention deficit and change their activity constantly. This way of acting makes it difficult for them to understand the current complexity and, in general, most of the parents have not understood it either, so they have taught their children a simple world that does not exist.

In this context, it is worth asking whether it would benefit the general interest that politicians and institutions represent what the governed want.

It is evident that politicians represent their own interests, those of all those who have power to oppose their privileges and those of all those who benefit them.

It is also evident that the majority does not defend the general interest either.

The rulers and the majority of the governed "do not represent us" (to the general interests); therefore, we must think of an alternative to representative democracy and how to make the change.

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