

Specters over Chile

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If there is any consensus in the southern country, it is that a final round will be necessary to define the next ruler. Photo: Sputnik World

By Guillermo Alvarado

With less than a month to go before the November 21 general elections in Chile, there have been numerous changes in the electoral chessboard, among them the collapse of the government's candidate for president, Sebastian Sichel, and the rise of the extreme right represented by Jose Antonio Kast.

A few weeks ago, the landscape predicted a fight for the Palacio de La Moneda between Sichel, of 'Chile Vamos', and the young lawyer Gabriel Boric, who was one of the leaders of the student struggles of 2011 and is now the proposal of the leftist coalition 'Apruebo Dignidad'.

The official aspirant began to lose spaces due to his ambiguous position on the fourth withdrawal of the pension fund, a popular demand to face the difficult situation created by the covid-19 pandemic.

His fall from second to fourth place in the polls of voting intentions was caused, however, by the implication of President Sebastián Piñera in the Pandora's Papers scandal.

In the meantime, the extremist and newly founded Republican Party gained followers among the most conservative right wing with a hard stance against migrants, a law and order discourse similar to that of Donald Trump in the United States, and the promise of a return to the most rancid neoliberalism.

Several prominent members of Piñera's party announced in recent days the withdrawal of their support for Sichel (left in the photo), as well as their adhesion to Kast (D), in whose rise there are external factors from Brazil and the United States and even from the European extreme right, in particular from the VOX party of Spain.

Thus, he suddenly appeared in the polls in a technical tie with Boric, until then in the lead, and the last sample of the CADEM firm put him two points ahead, although far from winning in the first round.

It must be said, however, that this is one of the most questioned market research companies in Chile due to the low effectiveness of its projections, something that also affects its counterparts.

It should not be forgotten, too, that its main business is with the Piñera government and that today Kast is, ex officio, almost the official candidate.

If there is any consensus in the southern country, it is that a final round will be necessary to define the next ruler, scheduled for December 19, and there two antagonistic models will face each other.

A triumph of the left is possible if the other forces, such as Yasna Provoste's New Social Pact and Marco Enríquez-Ominami's Progressive Party, are aware of the danger and close ranks around Boric.

Otherwise, the specter of Pinochet and his brutal neoliberalism would fall upon Chile, which would be a continental tragedy.

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