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Greece

How to continue after the elections of June 17th

- Debate - Perspectives in Greece -

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1. The elections of June 17th represented the political climax of the class confrontation circle, that opened with the voting for the first memorandum in spring 2010 by the Papandreou government. Within the last two years the resistance movement has covered a great distance of politicization: from the economic battle of the first period (the first circle of general strikes), to the political battle, as that was represented by the turning point of the “indignation movement”, and it’s climax with the demonstrations during the parades at October 28th 2011, ending with the culmination of the political battle with the “struggle for the power”, at the double elective confrontation of May 6th and June 17th .

More than 15 general strikes, tens and hundreds smaller and larger struggles, three great uprising moments at May 5th 2010, October 19th 2011 and February 12th 2012, all these were politically condensed into the struggle for the formation of a government of the Left in these last elections. The massive labour and popular movement that rallied around SYRIZA to give this battle is coming as a result of a collective awareness that without political fight, without political subversion, without a government of the left we cannot stop the war machine of the memoranda, we cannot take an advantage in the fight, in the end, we cannot win!

2. The elections revealed a deep class polarization with unprecedented sharpness and at a large social scale. On the basis of the political division line “**continuation of the memorandum policies or abolition of the memorandum**” a confrontation of two competitive class camps took place. These two camps were constructed in the electoral process with political, and partly, ideological terms. On the one stood the working and popular strata that desired to give an end “here and now” in the memorandum war machine that functions at the expense of their rights and their conquests, rallying around SYRIZA. **These popular strata gave SYRIZA the first place in the constituencies of B' Athinon, Attiki, B' Pireus, A' Thessaloniki, Evoia, Voiotia, Xanthi [all these are working class areas].** On the other hand there were middle and upper class strata that supported Nea Demokratia (ND), but also parts of popular strata that either fell victims of the terrorizing dilemmas, or supported ND by ideological terms (“law and order”, anti-communism, racism etc).

The process of construction of these camps had intense ideological and political elements due to the content of the confrontation and the dilemmas that accompanied the electoral debate (cancellation of the memorandum and rupture with the troika, remaining “at any cost” or exiting the Eurozone, etc), but also due to the fact that ND gave ideological tone to the elections, in order to “repatriate” part of the right wingers that moved to right “anti-memorandum” directions. In addition, Golden Dawn expressed in the most extreme and cruel way the ideology of “prison-guard state” and “Keadas” [\[1\]](#) for those who are “abundant”.

Although the process of construction of these camps is not linear in ideological and political terms, this process of bipolarism has definitely a social basis, and it is determined at the same time by political, programmatic and ideological elements. But if the existence of the bourgeois political camp is self evident for the ruling class, for the working class is a process of political and ideological awakening and regroupment. We are at the beginning of this process and its deepening remains an open stake .

3. From this perspective, the electoral win of the memoranda camp and it’s main pillar, New Democracy, constitutes a marginal victory for the forces and the political representatives of the domestic and international forces of capital, giving back the political advantage to this camp. Respectively, for the hundreds and thousands of people that gave a hard struggle all around the country for a government of the left, the outcome of the elections constitutes a marginal political defeat. The 1.655.053 of the labor and popular basis that supported and voted for SYRIZA are feeling justifiably disappointed and numb about the result, as they know that the “war machine” of the memorandum will

keep up working against their winnings and rights, as they know that a great historical opportunity is now lost. **If our criterion is- and it should be- the interests of all these people and not the result of the elections or the narrow political "interest" of SYRIZA, then we don't have the right to celebrate or even more to appear "relieved" with this result.**

Of course, the projection of SYRIZA's electoral results from 4.6% to 27% within a month, the destruction of many political back-ups of the memorandum camp and reaching so close to the goal of a Left government, all these constitute a historic subversion in the balance of political forces. However, if the stake in the first elections (May 6) was to block the formation of a pro-memorandum government, in the last elections the dilemma was "they, or us". This target mobilized a popular current that supported SYRIZA, by this criterion the electoral result was judged by the popular strata that voted for SYRIZA, and this target was not achieved.

4. The victory of ND is marginal, not only because of the slight percentage (2.5%) ND was ahead from SYRIZA , but for essential political reasons:

a. Because they have already destroyed to a large extent the political system backups, and now are forced to push for a co-government from New Democracy, PASOK and the "left" backup of the system, Democratic Left (DIMAR). If it took 3 months for the Papademos government to prove weak, despite its vast parliamentary majority, it won't be better for the Samaras' government. After the formation of this coalition government, any "anti-memorandum" traces of the ND will collapse very soon, along with PASOK's attempt to survive politically, while the Democratic Left will be cancelled as a left partner of the system. **So, it is certain that very soon will appear dissolving phenomena in this government.**

b. Because the troika is not willing to offer Samaras' government any margin, not only for renegotiating the memorandum, but even for slight changes on it. The temporal extension of the program for one year and the weak "growth bonus" is not going to prevent a "humanitarian crisis" in Greek society, the deep recession and the "death spiral" of the Greek economy. A new, third, memorandum is inevitable, a new Greek debt restructuring is also inevitable, and along with them a Greek exit from euro - if the Eurozone, meanwhile, survived. The Samaras' government will wobble severely from such events, which are placed in short-medium term.

c Because the bipolar political system that has emerged from the last elections, has nothing in common with the bourgeois-pro memorandum bipolar political system that collapsed, since it represents a class bipolarism. The political forces forming the new government reflect the class camp of the political forces who benefit from the memorandum and its class policies, while SYRIZA represents the labor and popular strata suffering from the memorandum policies. If this class political bipolarism is consolidated, then the crisis and the instability of the bourgeois political system will deepen acutely.

5. The fact that the victory of the pro-memorandum forces is marginal and that the Samaras' government will soon prove a weak government, does not mean that this government will not be dangerous for the rights and gains of workers, or that will be easily subverted or even more, it will fall like a mature fruit. The Samaras government will clearly be a civil war government. It will implement tough measures, with violence and repression, racism and anticommunism, trying to establish "law and order." The state of emergency and the fascist terror will "hit red." The Golden Dawn, the fascist party of counterrevolution, will endeavor to take advantage of the mistakes and weaknesses of the Left. The social "humanitarian crisis" creates anger and despair, that if it is not politicized by the Left will become a force for the state of emergency and the fascists.

Finally, the domestic and international system will fully support this government and they won't repeat the mistake to go into elections if they won't ensure first that these will offer them a victory, being ready this time to use any kind of "constitutional diversion".

Therefore, the struggle against the government will not be easy. A line of "responsible" and institutional opposition, or a return to a stereotypical "movementism" is not what is needed right now.

The bourgeois-pro memorandum camp will try to take advantage of the governmental power in order to shape the conditions for crashing our camp. At this goal, the "deep state" will cooperate with the Golden dawn fascists, while the government will give them more "space" to act against the movement and the Left. **To confront all these, we need urgently a plan of general regroupment of our class camp, not only in terms of movement, but also in terms of political and ideological regroupment.** And this has to begin right now, since the political time has been accelerated. Only in this condition we will regain the political advantage to subvert the government and pave the way for a left government and the social transformation.

6. The accumulation of the political preconditions for building a working class political camp is a duty that is passing mainly through SYRIZA. SYRIZA constituted the political vehicle for the labor and popular movement for giving this battle. This choice was not accidental, being explained by many factors: the consistent presence of SYRIZA in the movement (since the period of the Social Forum), its unitarian political line not only in the movement, but also in demanding a unitarian political front of the Left (unity both from above and below), the proposal for a Left government (thus, putting in the agenda the issue of power), its radical programme (abolition of the memorandum and its laws, memorandum in paying the debt and struggle for erasing its biggest proportion, nationalization of banks etc).

Although SYRIZA failed in taking the first place and forming a Left government, it became a government within the Left. This renders SYRIZA more responsible for the continuation and the outcome of the class confrontation. The developments inside SYRIZA will determine to a high extent the preconditions for a counterattack and victory of the working class. **SYRIZA will certainly be transformed into "an area of class struggle": on the one hand the pressure of the system and on the other the pressure of the workers and popular strata. This struggle will form three main currents inside SYRIZA, a right, a centre, and a left. The prevalence of the one or the other current will determine SYRIZA's consistency in breaking with the memorandum and the system, its programmatic and political consistency, and its strategic orientation.**

7. At the same time, SYRIZA has new responsibilities and potentials to create the conditions for a political front of the Left. At this direction, the following steps should be followed:

a. Immediate enactment of a process of transformation of SYRIZA into a party-federation of multiple currents, with members, constituent groups, representative and decisive collective bodies and elected leading bodies. This is a term for the political engagement, and the politicization of the avant-garde of the working-popular current, it is a term for the creation of a massive radical left wing inside SYRIZA, which is the only guarantee against the tendencies of compromise and retreat inside SYRIZA.

b. Common initiatives with the other forces of the Left (ANTARSYA, KKE), for unity in action, but also for forming a political front, targeting at the subversion of the Samaras government and the formation of a left government.

c. The forces of the anticapitalist and revolutionary left must be protagonists in the creation of a massive radical left wing in SYRIZA, which will give the battle for SYRIZA's radical orientation, for defending and expanding the radical features of SYRIZA programme, for defending a line of rupture (abolition of memorandum, nationalization of banks, etc) and defending the working class, internationalist and socialist orientation of SYRIZA.

d. The forces of the revolutionary left inside and outside SYRIZA should converge, cooperate and form an alliance in order to represent the most class consistent, internationalist and strategically equipped political force in a plan of rupture and subversion.

8. **Another very crucial precondition for the victory of our camp is to give a decisive battle against fascism and the party of the counter-revolution, the Golden Dawn.** There is a debate in Greece, keeping on since the last elections, where the majority of the Left seemed to undermine the rise of the fascists. A typical example of this is that the general secretary of the Communist Party (KKE) before the May 6th elections falsely predicted that when they enter the parliament "they will wear suits" and they will become a common neoliberal party. But this is not the case with them. The common conception in the Left about Golden Dawn is that we can fight them by exposing them to the light. This has already proved to be very wrong. The idea that Golden Dawn's voters are misled, and that, since they reveal their real face they will be marginalized, proved wrong as well. In the two consecutive electoral procedures more than 600.000 voted for the neo-nazis, while in the meantime Golden Dawn's spokesman slapped on TV air a female MP of KKE and the everyday attacks on immigrants became an ordinary phenomenon. The neo-nazis current is structured mainly through the establishment of a regime of fascist terror on the streets, and not mainly through the battle in the field of ideas. **It is time for an emergent re-orientation of the antifascist struggle: antifascist campaigns, concerts and demonstrations are necessary weapons in this fight, but they are not enough anymore. It is compulsory from now and on to confront fascists with a wide network of people's self-defence groups, to stop them in the streets before they impose the law of terror. The forces of the Left have to be ahead in this effort because any procrastination will be dangerous.**

9. The third basic condition for building our class camp are the clear ideological imperatives, especially in four key areas:

A. Socialism: The fact that SYRIZA declined to directly integrate their political project in a process of social transformation and socialism, is a real weakness, with significant negative consequences. The class opponent is structured around the ideas of **the end of history** (the globalized market capitalism and bourgeois democracy is the highest degree of development - anything other is not only futile, but also an anachronism or despotism), **the eternity of capitalism** (the only conceivable idea is the overcoming of the capitalist crisis, therefore, the limits of the policy of the Left are left suggestions for the overcoming of the crisis of capitalism - proposals for overcoming capitalism are unthinkable), **the "internal devaluation"** (for the crisis and the "deviation from normality the blame is put on the workers and middle classes, who "lived beyond their means" their forces, "so the only way are the austerity measures), with the ideas of **the "state of emergency"**, **anti-communism** (the Left who does not accept all the above, it can only be a proponent of "corruption" and of the "privileges of the trade-unionists," underminers of the "national effort" to overcome the crisis, a real enemy of democracy.

This coherent and completed ideological "system" is exemplary for its coherence, for its organic relationship between its parts, between ideology, policy and specific practice. It provides great power to the economic and political plan of managing the crisis by the forces of the system and it gives clear advantage against the Left. **Especially for SYRIZA, the plan of rupture with the memorandum will seem contradictory, unsubstantiated and adventurist, unless it is clarified that it is a plan of social transformation, a plan beyond capitalism in crisis and not a -utopian- left plan of return to the capitalist "regularity" before crisis.** The only convincing "documentation" of SYRIZA's programming proposals, what can make them realistic, is the dynamic that can be created by the process of the social transformation: the overthrow of the model, the sidelining of the profit, the social ownership of the means of production, the social plan in the place of individual property and distribution of the social resources according to the profit and the competition of the individual capitalist capitals.

Without these conditions, the line of rupture (with the memorandum and the loan agreements, which implies rupture with the system) will be tottering, will look adventurist (from the view of "realism" that is wrecked by the coercions of the globalized capitalism) and will be underestimated on tactic (which realism will not be able to "get proven" either). So, serious work must be done in order to restore the coherence of our political plan and prove its realism with the only possible way: **its organic integration on a plan of social-socialist transformation.**

B. Internationalist line of rupture: A plan of rupture with the memorandum and troika cannot be implemented

victoriously only on national level. The contemporary capitalist internationalization and the terms of the European capitalist integration don't let any margin of rupture with the system on a national level, unless there is a quick transformation of it into a European and international subversive current. **We must not only imagine, but also orientate and plan the transformation of the rupture in Greece into a European outburst against the austerity policies, aimed at a contemporary European "rise of people" which will knock down the absolutism of the markets and profits. In order to prepare this kind of perspective, we must create the conditions of a European movement against austerity and solidarity with Greece and people of the European South.** Prerequisite for this is to make the "Greek issue" a European issue, to internationalize the struggle and the dynamic of the rupture, to regenerate the internationalism in Greece and in Europe, to work on a internationalist line of rupture. **This kind of orientation is opposed to the adjustment with the coercions of the E.U. and the Eurozone** (the line of rupture with the memorandum and troika is not possible without the rupture with these coercions) **as well as the line of nationalist wrap and recovery of the competitiveness through a Greek national currency** (line of rupture with the Eurozone and the E.U. but subjection to the coercions of the capitalist globalization and competitiveness).

C. Defending immigrants: Not having any margin for "Keynesian" policies for managing the crisis, and as the political crisis deepens and the battle for the power has already begun (at least with the form of battling for the government), the system resorts to a line of constructing its own class camp, having as basic ingredients the vindication of the state of emergency ("law and order"), the state of exception (the rights are not for everyone neither for every situation - on emergency conditions they can and they must be aborted), the society of exception (those who "do not fit" will be ostracized socially), the anti-communism (neither the Left party "fits" in the system, just like before the crisis). **All the above elements are becoming legalized par excellence through racism and the hunting of the immigrants, on which "law and order" are confirmed with the most cruel way, the state and the society of the exception, the anti-communism** (the Left party -apart from other- protects the immigrants). So, the defense of the immigrants is a vital issue on the juxtaposition of the two class camps, and not an issue that "disorients the class battle".

This, however, cannot be achieved if we assign the leadership to the opponent, that is, by "admitting" that "immigrants are a problem", "admitting" that "they are more than the Greek society can fit," etc. That is why the "unconditional" defense of immigrants is necessary, as only this can establish a solid foundation in our class camp:

Defense of the right of people to move freely, not of the capital: because everybody has the right of free movement from country to country, and especially those whose lives are in danger from hunger and war. Because "closed borders" means fences and mines, which increase the lost human lives and the "rates" for the circuits that exploit immigrants. And finally, because "closed borders" means setting up a second army next to the one that already exists - with all the harmful consequences of that fact...

Legalization for all immigrants: Provision of documents (non-prosecution for illegal entry, recording, immigrant identity and travel documents, legalization with simple conditions, citizenship to children of immigrants born in Greece). Because the term "illegal immigrant" means that no one is entitled to escape from famine and death, because there are no clandestine people, because racism wants them "clandestine", so the trafficking networks (carriers, Greek and foreign mafia) will enrich, so that various political scum can have a political career, and so that the Right and the Far Right can speculate politically. Because fascists need the "clandestine" to confirm the theory of "Keadas" and assume the role of prison guard in a prison-society.

Solidarity: This is not only a value-statement, but a practical defense of immigrants from the persecution of the police and the fascists, an active effort to help them join our unions, social organizations and movements.

Disengagement from the NATO, military bases closure, no participation in imperialist wars: The caravans of

immigrants and refugees do not come to Europe as tourists, but they have violently uprooted from their countries because of poverty and war. The war "against terrorism, which was opened by J. Bush, in which the EU and Greece through NATO contributed, meant the extermination of people in Iraq and Afghanistan, who are now seeking a better life in Western countries. It is plain pharisaism those who bombed and maintain occupation troops, uprooting these people, to erect walls when they try to escape certain death. And especially the Greek government is complicit, since Greece not only became a base for imperialist interventions, but also contributes to the military occupation of Afghanistan.

D. Opposing the notion "we are against violence from wherever it comes from": In our memorandum society there is widespread violence against the unemployed, the homeless, the destitute, the poor and the immigrants.

On this 'basis' are underpinned the state of emergency, the state and society of exclusion, the repression, the fascist terrorism, as well as the reinforcement and the expansion of any mafia. The system, while having the prerogative and the monopoly of exerting violence, demands from everyone to obey to behave "lawfully! In contrast, the criminality of those who haven't got any shelter, nor food, the rocks and yogurt students had thrown against the police stations in 2008, the jeer etc. against political cadres of parties which are in favor of the Memorandum, the "mess" in national parades, the defense against the attacks of the police - all these are "unacceptable violence"... And those that are accused by the state that they don't strongly oppose to violence (if not also orchestrate it) they are threatened to be pushed outside the framework of legality - and it is understood that the guest of honor in this accusation is SYRIZA.

On the other side, the tv channels, the journalists-puppets of the system discover the "social utility" of the fascist violence (e.g. the myth that the Golden Dawn offers "social services" to the residents of Agios Panteleimonas). And when some types of this kind of violence are impeached mandatory (such as the attack of Kasidiaris to Liana Kanelli and Rena Dourou), then they discover the theory of the "violence of the edges" (Golden Dawn and SYRIZA) and they impeach violence "wherever it comes from". Based in this theory, whoever breaks "legitimacy" (gets motivated in order to prevent the application of voted laws, not to pay the tolls etc) and whoever covers the violence of "yogurting" and demolition of the national parades etc, is considered and exponent of violence of the edges and joins the same group with Golden Dawn.

The answer to this theory must be also aggressive and not "shy" - if anything, it can never be the slogan "we will agitate legitimacy". We have to focus on the social violence of the memorandum (unemployed, homeless, property stricken people etc), on the politician violence of the state of emergency (chemicals, attacks on the demonstrations, suppression), on the status of exception that is being built. In the battle of which narration of "legitimacy" will prevail, we will have to impeach as illegal their policies and set the issue of "legal defense" against these policies. The battle of the determination of the content and the limits of "legitimacy" is a critical ideological front, where we must give the battle in order to de-legitimize the memorandums, the practices of the state of exception and emergency and respectively to broaden the limits of legitimacy for the practices of resistance and solidarity.

10. The self-evident "turn to the movement" after the elections must not be done by a stereotypical way, but in the light of total, with political and ideological terms, reconstruction of the working-folk class camp, in these directions:

a. Battle for the leadership within the unions: The effectiveness of a new round of struggles against the memorandum, but also the political overthrow and a Left government premise a great change of the balance of power inside the labor movement. The forces of SYRIZA and generally of the Left must ally and draw a plan which will change the balance of power inside the labor movement, claim of leadership in the unions, creation of new unions.

b. Generalization and national networking of the popular assemblies: The Popular Assemblies is the most advanced form that revealed the movement against the memorandum. It's the form in which all the brooks can converge and express (initiatives against the taxation, for defending hospitals, for solidarity etc) and where every

form of the avant-garde of the movement can converge. The forces of the Left must agree on a common agenda of extension and coordination of the popular assemblies, with radical and open spirit. The objective must be a big - national assembly of the movement, with elected and recallable representatives from all the popular assemblies, as well as from labor initiatives, left factions and radical unions.

c. Movement of resistance against fascism: The emergency of organizing the resistance against the fascist terrorism (attacks against immigrants as well as the Left party) requires the creation of a wide anti-fascist front and at the same time a network of groups for safeguard and folk self-defense on every neighborhood and social spaces (first of all schools, but also labor places). These groups of safeguard must be the militant arms of the various forms of the movement, and the forces of the Left must be protagonists in creating them.

d. Solidarity networks: On a context like the one we live in, solidarity is needed to become a central issue. Although we must not address it like a Non Government Organization, neither like a strategy of creation "liberated zones" inside capitalism, but from the perspective of radical Left: we need to establish solidarity networks in order to organize the unemployed and poor people as a power of resistance, in order to defend the fighting parts of the movement, to support and at the same time to integrate the poor people in the battle, to organize the "social reserves" in the power for struggle.

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[1] Keadas is the name of a gulch in ancient Sparta, where, it is said that the Spartans threw the disabled and peaky infants in order to preserve the purity of their race.