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Greece

# The tasks for the left after SYRIZA's victory

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**This statement by DEA (Internationalist Workers' Left), member of Syriza and the Left Platform within it, was issued on 27 January 2015. It was first published in Greek on the [RProject website](#). The English translation was published by [socialistworker.org](#).**

1. The defeat of the coalition government of Antonis Samaras and Evangelos Venizelos in the January 25 elections is a historic political victory of the forces of social resistance.

The working class and the popular masses in Greece have struggled constantly since the outbreak of the crisis and the introduction of the Memorandums, challenging the agreements made by the Greek class with the Troika and international lenders, which have imposed a brutal austerity policy. This election victory is the result of the general strikes, mass demonstrations, the "movement of the squares" and decisive sectoral and local struggles that have continued, despite the decline of the great wave of resistance between 2010 and 2012.

During this time, the people who participated in these grassroots struggles expressed a set of demands, hopes and expectations that remains alive today. At the center of them is the demand for the overturning and reversal of austerity, and despite the smears of the mainstream media, they have insisted on placing their hopes on the left to accomplish this. This is the basis of the election victory of SYRIZA, which grew larger than many expected, as well as the vote for the Greek Communist Party.

2. The massive shift to the left, while manifested in the results from January 25, gives SYRIZA more political momentum than is revealed by its 149 seats in parliament—which is just short of the 151 seats needed for an outright parliamentary majority.

Despite the scandalous support of local and international conservative forces, the New Democracy party of Antonis Samaras sank to 27.8 percent of the vote, marking a new low point for its influence. New Democracy emerged from the electoral battle deeply wounded, both politically and strategically. The differences between right-wing populism, with its emphasis on racism and nationalism, and the "social radicalism" of traditional center-right, will inevitably emerge again inside New Democracy. For now, it is unknown whether there is a united future for conservative party in the area it has dominated on the right.

3. The decision of the leadership of SYRIZA to form a coalition government with the Independent Greeks [known by its initials ANEL, it is a populist right-wing party that holds nationalist positions, but is also against the Memorandums] led by Panos Kammenos, underestimates this dynamic.

Forming a coalition wasn't a necessary response to the outcome of the elections, as a way of winning a confidence vote in parliament—not so long as the commitments at Thessaloniki [where Alexis Tsipras unveiled a "reconstruction" plan that he said would be the first steps of a new government of the left once it took office] and the program of the founding conference of SYRIZA are taken as a guide.

The decision of the SYRIZA conference, which was confirmed in its founding declaration, repeated the longstanding rejection of searching for political alliances with the center-left. We believe that applies—much more so—to alliances with the center-right.

Crossing this "red line" to form a coalition government with ANEL contradicts the mood of a large part of SYRIZA's

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membership. It was also act as a tether that will transfer pressure from the system as a whole onto the government of the left.

Under these conditions, the coalition agreement with ANEL jeopardizes the political project for a government of the left with a transitional policy and strategy.

4. For members and supporters of SYRIZA, for the whole left, for activists in the social movements, new circumstances have arisen.

The implementation of the commitments made at Thessaloniki will be the first stop for the new government. Restoring the minimum wage to its pre-crisis level; returning to the additional pension payments for the poor that were abolished under the Memorandum; re-establishing collective labor agreements; and lastly, restoring the exemption on income taxes up to the minimum level of 12,000 euros and abolishing the United Estate Property Tax [an unfair tax on any property, even if it is empty, that was implemented as a temporary measure under Samaras and later made permanent] and the special tax on heating oil—all this should be the first strong political message to stop the downhill slide caused by austerity.

Returning to the starting point with these essential measures should open the way for the overthrow of austerity, once and for all—to overturn all of the Memorandum laws and measures! At the same time, restoring the jobs of the workers at ERT [the public radio and television station closed down by the government in the spring of 2013], the cleaners at the Ministry of Finance [who have also waged a long struggle after they were fired when their jobs were subcontracted] and others will send an equally important message, both to working people on our side, and to the other side.

5. In these new circumstances, the role of SYRIZA as a political party is irreplaceable. The functioning of its organizational bodies and membership, with collective participation and democracy throughout the party, is not an optional extra, but a pre-condition for the final victory of SYRIZA, and the final victory of the whole of the left and of our people.

Internationalist Workers Left  
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