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Greek elections

First estimates on the results of the June 17 elections

- Debate - Perspectives in Greece -

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This statement by the Antarsya Central Coordinating Committee was issued on the 24th of June 2012.

1. The June 17 elections marked a turning point in the fierce confrontation waged within Greek society. They reflected the major conflicts and divisions that transverse Greek society, the intense social and political confrontations, the big labor and popular struggles of the past years, but also the attempts of the pro-austerity forces to regroup and reorganize after their loss of legitimacy in the May 6 elections. However, the rift opened by the popular uprising, which took an explosive form in the May 6 election, is still active.

2. New Democracy managed to take the first place, having managed to regroup around it a significant number of conservative voters. It benefited from the ideological blackmail that dominated the electoral campaign and it aligned itself fully with the most reactionary forces of the European bourgeoisie and took advantage of the scandalous intervention by A. Merkel and other representatives of leading capitalist countries in favor of it. However, its electoral success is far from being a triumph. Despite the support it took, it did not manage to pass the 30% threshold, remaining in lower results than its erstwhile historical low of 2009. Along with the continuous collapse of PASOK it is a manifestation of the deep crisis of the pro-austerity parties.

3. The success of New Democracy opened the way for the formation of a government by New Democracy, PASOK and Democratic Left. This government will also attempt to introduce even harsher measures against labor. Despite all the talk about renegotiating the loan agreement and a strategy of 'national salvation', it will be a pro-austerity, reactionary, authoritarian government, in full conformity to the demands of capital, the EU, the IMF, ready to impose budget cuts, lay-offs, wage cuts, and privatizations.

4. Despite the support it has from the forces of capital, the EU-IMF-ECB Troika and corporate Media and in contrast to Samara's insistence on a 'long-term government', the new government will be unstable, unable to last, a government that will soon face the anger of the people and a new wave of labor struggles. It is a government even weaker than the Papandreou or the Papadimos governments. That it is why they insisted on the participation of the Democratic Left, as a 'left' ally, in the same way they used the far right Laos in the Papademos government. However, in contrast to the rhetoric about a 'return to growth', the politics dictated under the terms of the loan agreements will only lead to a default and an even more acute crisis of Greek capitalism, in light of the global economic crisis and the crisis and reactionary mutation of the Eurozone and the EU in general. It is going to be a short-term government, and it is the responsibility of the movement to make sure that it does not last long.

5. During the whole period of the May – June elections there was a massive turn to the Left, mainly towards SYRIZA, leading to the biggest electoral results for the Left since 1958. The fact that so many voters turned their back to the austerity 'black front', refused to surrender to the ideological blackmail from the ruling classes, and chose to vote for the Left, is a sign of hopeful possibilities. Even in an uneven way, it is the manifestation of the desire of large segments of society to get rid of austerity and the terms of the loan agreement, especially if we take into consideration that most people from working class and popular strata, from productive ages, from urban centres voted for the Left

6. The fact that the fascist, far-right Golden Dawn kept its electoral strength is a negative development. It is the result of the far-right policies of Samaras who, in the same way as Sarkozy in France, adopted all the racist rhetoric, thus offering the necessary legitimacy to the neo-nazis. It is also the result of the policies of Venizelos that even after the violence of Golden Dawn MP Kasidiaris against MPs of the Left, insisted that for this display of violence it not Golden

Dawn that is responsible but the Left! We will continue to expose the nationalist demagoguery of the neo-nazis, who are servile towards the EU, the euro and NATO, but, at the same time, they instigate racist hatred against immigrants and the people in neighbor countries. Golden Dawn for us is a product of current capitalist monstrosity, of the deep economic, political and cultural crisis of modern capitalism and at the same time an integral part of the repressive mechanism against the movement. It time for the Left to condemn and fight the reactionary, systemic, pro-bosses role of Golden Dawn and to confront it with a strong antifascist movement. With unity and determination, we can win in the fight against fascism.

7. The SYRIZA leadership did not manage, during the electoral campaign, to answer the ideological terrorism about the euro and the need to avoid 'unilateral' actions against our creditors. By insisting on 'left europeanism' and making the 'yes to the euro' position the central tenet of its electoral campaign, it could not answer the ideological terrorism of the ruling classes. Consequently, the electoral debate shifted to a terrain that was more favorable to systemic forces. This is was expressed in the way SYRIZA's program turned more to the direction of a 'renegotiation' within the limits of the Eurozone and the terms of the loan agreements, exactly the limits that the ruling classes set after the May 6 election. Consequently, this program could not offer a way for the immediate relief of the popular classes, nor could it express the desire of the people for radical change. The 'realism' of SYRIZA leadership led to the pledges to the euro, to presenting budget surpluses as a solution, even to praising the police! And it is obvious that such positions do not answer the militant and radical aspirations of many of SYRIZA's voters and the demand of the people for the Left to be a force of struggle against the new government and not a force of 'responsible opposition' that will simply wait for the government to fall under the weight of its own contradictions. The tactics of 'responsible opposition' do not help the formation of a broader social and political front in order to answer the attacks by bourgeois and pro-austerity forces. Without a radical program, without organized movements and a strong labor movement, it is not possible to answer the attack and to struggle for power.

8. The great electoral loss of the Communist Party (KKE) is not a positive development for the people and the labor movement. However, it is the result of its strategy and politics. Its sectarian tactics, the hostility against other forces of the movement, the postponement of any possibility for anti-capitalist changes until the far future of 'people's power', the refusal to take a clear position on the dilemmas posed to Greek society such as the euro, the defeatist insistence on the impossibility of victory, the refusal of unitary action with other forces of the Left, its hostility against major expressions of popular struggle, all these contributed to this result. Today the challenge for all the forces of the Left, including the KKE is to contribute to the necessary unitary struggles and the necessary anticapitalist program.

9. ANTARSYA suffered big electoral losses in comparison to the May 6 elections. It is a negative result in contrast to the significant rise of our vote in May. It is true that thousands of ANTARSYA voters (but also from other currents of the Left and KKE), choose to vote for SYRIZA, but this should not be read as an endorsement to a 'responsible opposition' tactic. We have to organize with them the new struggles to which ANTARSYA has to play an indispensable role. We would like to thank the thousands of ANTARYA militants that fought a hard and difficult electoral campaign, avoiding useless polemics against other forces of the Left, and insisting on the necessary anticapitalist program, on the necessary militant front of struggle, on the need to escalate the confrontation. ANTARSYA was the only force of the Left that insisted that the exit from the Eurozone and the EU, the annulment of the debt, nationalizations and workers' control could be the starting points for the immediate relief of the people and for the overthrow of austerity policies. ANTARSYA supported many labor struggles. It insisted on the unity in struggle of the forces of the Left. That is why ANTARSYA is indispensable for the future of our struggles. ANTARSYA is a crucial force of the Left. We have a responsibility against the movement

That is why it is necessary to have a self-critical discussion of this negative electoral result.

– The electoral result made evident problems and deficiencies in our ability to mobilize all ANTARSYA militants.

– There were also problems in our ability to connect to all these people that turned to the Left, both in political and organizational terms.

– There were deficiencies in our political and ideological preparedness. On the one hand, these had to do with the anticapitalist program. We did not manage to explain why it could lead to the relief of the people, nor did we elaborate on its reference to a socialist and communist strategy. On the other hand, they had to do with the question of power and how the struggle for political power must be based on modern conception of the revolutionary strategy, in order to avoid defeat.

We need a thorough discussion of the program, political line and tactics of ANTARSYA, in an open and democratic way, insisting on the necessary political and ideological autonomy of the anticapitalist Left, as a different current within the Left. We must work on the anticapitalist program and explain how it can lead not only to the immediate relief from austerity but also to radical social change. We must work on a strategy and tactics regarding the question of governmental and political power, the necessary forms of people's and worker's self-organization, the revolutionary break with capitalist social relations, the necessary forms of organizing the necessary militant front of struggle. We must intervene in the debates in the Left insisting on the need for an anticapitalist strategy.

10. Ahead of us are great challenges.

– To help build the necessary militant front of struggle and escalate the struggle for a movement that will fight the new attacks and overthrow the government; to escalate the forms of struggle, instead of the 'responsible opposition' tactics; to insist on the necessary political demands of the movement, demanding the complete repeal of the laws associated with the austerity policies, the unilateral refusal of the loan agreements, the break with the euro and the debt, the need for immediate measures for the relief of workers;

– To take the initiative for an immediate militant response to urgent matters such as collective contracts, privatizations, mass lay-offs, tax-hikes, the University Law; to organize a strike and mass demonstration, once the government is in office; to insist on the need for the coordination of the trade unions in rupture with the trade union bureaucracy.

– To organize the people as a necessary condition for its survival and also for the reversal of austerity, through a new class-oriented regrouping of the trade union movement, through popular assemblies in neighborhoods and workplaces in order to organize the struggle and to discuss the political strategy of the movement, with various forms of solidarity, with the organization of resistance and self-defense against the 'black front'.

– With unity and determination, we must fight against the neo-nazis. We need mass action in workplaces, in schools, in neighborhoods, to fight the social roots of the problem, to expose the reactionary role of the neo-nazis, to call for unitary antifascist action of the Left, to fight racism through the class unity of workers, Greeks and immigrants, with unitary democratic antifascist committees and initiatives.

– To take the initiative for the regrouping of all the forces that have an anticapitalist and anti-EU position, that insist on the break with the debt, the euro and the loan agreements, beginning with those currents and comrades that supported ANTARSYA in these elections, but also opening the discussion to all those that share these aspirations.

– To have a more profound and democratic discussion inside ANTARSYA, opening up the discussion on all levels, at local assemblies, at the National Coordinating Committee.