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Slovenia

# Parliamentary elections in Slovenia

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**A new electoral consultation took place in Slovenia on Sunday 3 June 2018. The ultra-right conservatives of Janez Jansa gained the highest number of votes with 24,96 %. It is followed by another right party that won 12,66 %. This important score is largely due to anti-migrant demagogy. But this election result is not enough to have a majority government and if he wants to be in power, Janez Jansa will have to find partners from the multitude of small parties, including the anti-islamic party that obtained 4,20 % of the vote. [It would be an exaggeration to call Jelinčič's party fascist. Jančič's party certainly has neo-fascist features and even originates from Slovene interwar fascism, but it would be anachronistic to describe it as such.] Meanwhile there are events that can provide hope. The Levica party (The left) won 9,29 %. This is to be compared with the 9,92 % gained by the social-democrat party. Lucien Perpette asked Marko Krzan, a militant of Levica to comment on these elections :**

**LP: Could you explain the circumstances in which Levica was born and what it represents in the context of the political parties in Slovenia ?**

The foundations of Levica (The Left) can be traced back to mass protest movement taking place in Slovenia in 2012 and 2013. The agenda of the protests was rather moralistic (anticorruption), but there was an organized socialist group that recognized objective economic factors behind their moralistic appearance. The group organized themselves in IDS (Initiative for democratic socialism), an anticapitalist party that formed an electoral coalition called United Left in 2014, the direct predecessor to Levica. Levica is the only parliamentary party in Slovenia with an anticapitalist stance calling into question the domination of Slovenian ruling classes and their foreign counterparts in the EU and Nato. However, Levica hasn't been able to position itself as an antisystem force amongst the broader public which see it as the most radical of the left-liberal parties (such as Social democrats), but not really opposed to them and the capitalist system. This is, to some extent, the effect of the workings of bourgeois parliamentary system and media apparatus, which always try to flatten the political field into two poles – liberal and conservative – thereby ousting the class struggle of the working masses against exploitation out of the everyday political life.

**LP: What is the electoral and militant base of Levica as well as its geographical implantation?**

Levica achieved the highest electoral results in the urban centers, especially in the capital Ljubljana. It has the youngest and most educated electoral base of all parliamentary forces. However, that base is petty-bourgeois (public sector employees, precarious workers) rather than working class. This is the consequence of the fact that so-called right wing populists – like Trump in the USA, or Orban in Hungary – were able to impose themselves as an antisystemic forces claiming to represent the "ordinary citizen" although their economic policy promotes the interests of large capital and their social policies benefit petty-bourgeoisie. The distance between the party and the masses is mirrored by the distance between the party leadership (professional politicians and active) and its ordinary members (taking the role of consumers of the official party ideology rather than its active creators and perpetrators). In this respect, Levica remains an ordinary petty-bourgeois political organization without specific socialist forms of political action and organizing.

**LP: Did Levica collaborate in social conflicts and can you describe its interventions?**

The greatest problem of Levica – and so-called radical left in general – is its weakness when it comes to radical theory and activism (militancy). Levica has definitively addressed issues of extra-exploited workers and fought for decreasing the rate of exploitation (by increasing wages). But this was done from the distance of the parliament and

not usually “on the ground”. Despite its relative electoral strength it is still unable to reach the masses directly in their struggle rather than through mediation of the parliamentary apparatus and mass media. This creates the constant danger of opportunism (stances outside the mass-media box are neglected and not communicated to broader public) and integration into capitalist political apparatus (since the party has no direct “access” to the masses it becomes more and more reliant on them).

**LP: Two candidates originated from the trade-union were not in a good polling position to be elected in the parliament. Don't you think that it would be worth backing such candidates who could be useful to settle a collaboration between the radical left and the working class movement?**

For sure, although this should not mean transforming good trade-union leaders and militants into permanent parliamentary politicians.

**LP: The temptation to participate to a new government that could be defined as left-center could be great. Don't you think that this could drive to dead end issues as it hapenend in Greece with the minister Tsipras?**

The comparison with Greece is not very useful, because the current position of Slovenia in the European capitalism and the EU is not such as to require or enable “the troika” to intervene in Slovenia the way it did in Greece. It is also the case that Syriza was the major party in a two-party government, whereas Levica would have to be a junior member of a coalition of 5 to 6 parties. So, it would have much less power than Syriza in a much less radicalized political situation. The most likely outcome of such coalition would be the integration of the party leadership in the political class and/or loss of support because the party would have to “take responsibility” for the decisions which it didn't take and couldn't prevent. This is the phrase used by left-liberal opinion makers cheering for Levica to join the government, not in order to promote the interests of the working class, but to prevent the conservative faction of the political class from taking power from the liberal faction and preserving their esteemed “liberal democracy” without interfering with capitalist exploitation. History teaches us that participating in bourgeois governments has nothing to do with taking power in order to transform the system, which is the task of the socialists.

**LP: What were the themes wich were proposed by Levica in the electoral campaign?**

Levica promoted the interests of working people, the unemployed and the retired workers against the forces of capital. This included the demands for the abolition of the most precarious forms of employment, higher wages, pensions and welfare benefits, as well as measures for achieving those goals, such as higher taxation of capital and high incomes. The second major issue was the demand that politics should benefit the welfare of the Slovene people rather than the interests of western powers and their organizations (EU, Nato). One of demands was to turn down the plan to invest 1,2 billion â,¬ in military equipment that doesn't serve the defense of the country but makes its army more useful for Nato's foreign interventions. However, the mass-media backed by the capital and its political representatives were the ones dictating the campaign. Its focus was the demand for tax-cuts for capital and the wealthy. This was imposed (together with the inevitable “migrant problematics” and imagined “security issues”) as the decisive question of despite the fact that Slovenia is experiencing rapid GDP growth, has one of the largest balance of payments surpluses in the EU and the taxation in Slovenia is below the EU average. To put it short: capitalist have been able to present their class interests as a formula for development, although even their mainstream economics teaches otherwise.

**LP : What will the the policy of Levica in the parliament?**

Levica should immediately put pressure on domestic capital and its foreign supporters in order to improve the status and position of working people and to channel public resources from military spending to public healthcare system

and the welfare state. I have no illusions that Levica could gain much in this relationship of force, but this could radicalize the masses and keep the party in the right direction: the direction of developing the political force that will, in proper circumstances, start the transition to socialism. This might sound pretentious, but it is the only acceptable alternative. Despite the economic recovery, it is evident that capitalist mode of production is in a deep crisis. Everyone, even the left-liberals, should realize that their “normality” cannot be saved with their left-liberal politics, because it is based on exploitation and expropriation of the majority of the population. It is getting harder and harder to reproduce this regime of exploitation (and mode of accumulation) with “liberaldemocratic” means. The people have to realize that this regime of exploitation has to be either overcome or left to be governed by the “right-wing populists”.