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Greece

# A historic victory and many questions

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**The Syriza electoral victory is a historic event for Greece of course, but still more for Europe, and it is almost amusing to see socialist leaders being pleased with this success, alongside a total collapse of PASOK, which in 2009 had won more than 3 million votes with a score of 44% and 160 seats: yesterday evening, it won just 290,000, 4.7% of the votes. The extreme examples of its collapse being in its historical bases like Crete with votes swinging mainly to Syriza: in 2009, PASOK won 54.6% of the votes in Heraklion, Syriza 4.3%; in June 2012 18.6%, Syriza 33.6%; and yesterday PASOK was at 5.9%, Syriza 47.9%!**

This is one of the lesson yesterday's poll: yes, it is possible that, groggy from the austerity policies of the last 5 years, the population can turn from Socialist Parties to the left, this is excellent news for France, the flight to the right or worse is not pre-ordained!

However, on this first post-electoral morning, we can already note some important results of these elections.

## **The policy of the troika has been defeated but not smashed**

Admittedly PASOK has crumbled and the recent split by Giorgos Papandreou won only 2,5%, taking votes from Venizelos the leader but also Syriza (in Heraklion, it won 5.06%). The right, no matter what far right former Prime Minister, Antonis Samaras, says has also been rejected: whereas it wagered everything on class polarization, it has dropped from 1.825 million, 29.66% in June 2012 to 1.717 million and 27.81% in 2015. Internal criticisms were flying yesterday evening against a of hardly cold campaign, and only the recycled fascists in New Democracy were pleased yesterday with a gap with Syriza of "only" 8.5% of the votes! At the end of December, such a gap was completely unexpected: the most probable was a very narrow difference, and one can already say that this big gap between Syriza and the right is the product of 3 factors: a very bad rightwing campaign, with small rallies; signs of opening by the European authorities (see Dranghi's decision), the result of both protests against their anti-left interference but also of the reassuring contacts with representatives of Syriza; but especially a growing popular feeling which it was necessary to get rid of the memoranda and that meant a Syriza vote.

However, after 5 years of memoranda, the situation has not been completely clarified, far from it: other clearly rightwing scores should be added to those of the right and PASOK. First, of course, those of the Nazis: although they have lost a little (441,000 votes in May 2012, 426,000 in June 2012, 388,000 in 2015, going from 18 to 17 MPs), they are the third party, after an extremely discreet campaign with half of their chiefs in prison and the label of a criminal organization. The mobilization against the Nazis must develop from now on!

At the same time various rightwing groupings remain, sometimes calling themselves of the "centre", in any case they are clearly anti-left. These go from the far right LAOS (1%) and various groups like POTAMI (the River, latest gadget created and supported by the media: 6%!) or Union of the Centrists (1,8%) or Teleia (1.7%)... A typical case is that of ANEL (Independent Greeks) of the former rightwing MP Kammenos : this party, which has won 4.75% (7.5% in June 2012), is ready to support Syriza or to even take part in the government to get rid of the memoranda, but while warning that its reactionary nationalism and its reactionary positions (savage defense of the Orthodox church) will be its guiding principles...

## On the left: first estimates

Of course, one can only salute the score of Syriza, which has known how transform popular anger into electoral victory, with impressive scores: in the number of votes, it has risen from from 315,000 in 2009, 1.655 million in June 2012 to 2.244 million in 2015, with increases according locally varying from 7 to more than 20%. It is clear that a large part of the Pasok electorate has switched to Syriza, and that is a very good thing! However, apart from the dead ends in the programme of a party largely dominated by the rightwing leadership of the former Synaspismos, the electoral evening showed worrying limits, that only workers' mobilization will be able to overcome: and the first is precisely the very high abstention, the second highest since 1974: 29% in 2009, 34.9% in May 2012, 37.5% in June 2012, 36.1% in 2015. This score is a sign both of the impact of the crisis on confidence in political solutions and the fact that Syriza did not manage to convince a whole section of the popular layers in underprivileged areas like Evros.

At the same time, Syriza's results in working suburbs are encouraging: 37.8% in the suburbs of Athens (31.4% in June 2012), 42 (36.3%) in that of Piraeus... Yesterday evening, the atmosphere reflected this situation : a festive atmosphere in the centre of Athens, around the Syriza headquarters, but without the crowds of the evenings of victory over the right in the 1980s to 2000s. And more symbolic: Tsipras in his speech, yesterday did not mention two or three significant struggles for which socially just solutions are expected as fast as possible: the Ministry of Labour cleaners, the inhabitants of Skouries, who have been fighting for months against the opening of a goldmine, and the reopening of radio TV ERT, reduced to a blank screen by Samaras and co. In this latter case a representative of Syriza certainly went yesterday evening to meet the workers who have fought by maintaining ERT-open, but it was especially a message to say that there would not be a rally there this Sunday evening although many activists were preparing for it! However, we should be clear: in a situation where the left is a minority (total approximately of 47% of the votes), only mobilizations can improve the situation of young people and workers, and doing everything to ensure that they are unitive!

And precisely, for the KKE (Greek CP), yesterday evening nothing seemed to have changed: with a score of 5.5%, its leadership is almost triumphant, insisting on its gains compared to June 2012 (4.5%). But by doing this, it forgets that the goal was to be the 3rd party (it is 5th), and that in May 2012, its score was 8.5%... Its first declarations are not in the direction of unity in struggle.

Antarsya comes out rather well from a difficult electoral test in a context where many of its sympathizers were voting Syriza, without illusion: it has gone from 20,500 votes in June 2012 to 39,400 (0.65%). But of course, it is far from the threshold of 3% necessary to get someone elected , and also from the 75,400 votes of May 2012. Its first declaration calls for mobilization to take back everything that was stolen , while insisting on the role that the militant forces of the left must play.

In this complex situation, a combination of immense joy at achieving victory for a left "No" to austerity but and many worries over what happens next, it is clear there is not a second to lose: fight together in Greece and Europe, to defeat the policy of the troikas of capital!

*Athens,*

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