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Greece

The "no" victory and the struggles ahead

- IV Online magazine - 2015 - IV486 - July 2015 -

Publication date: Tuesday 7 July 2015

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This statement was issued by on Monday 6 July by the Internationalist Workers Left (DEA) – a co-founder of SYRIZA in 2004 and a leading force in the Left Platform inside the party.

THE TRIUMPH of the "no" vote, which won by a margin beyond all expectations, is a great working class and popular victory. The people of Greece correctly understood the question that was being asked: Do you approve or reject the policy of hyper-austerity as it was formulated in the Memorandums and in the newer demands of the creditors? Their answer of "no" shows the true feelings "from below" of the masses of working people in Greek society, and it shows the dynamics of the balance of forces as it has developed in recent years in Greece – a Greece of both deep crisis and great social resistance.

The "no" side came together around the urban and rural workers of Greece, the unemployed and the poor. The working people spoke firmly, despite the threats – they had already felt the consequences of the closure of banks, the threats of mass layoffs, the warnings that their resistance would probably lead to a break with the euro. They faced an unprecedented propaganda campaign that the outcome of the referendum would be starvation, lack of medicine, lack of fuel, etc. The size of the "no" vote, despite all this, is an explicit mandate to break with austerity.

On the "yes" side was the ruling class and the upper middle class – in other words, all those who have an interest in making an agreement with the creditors "at any price," especially if that price means that others will be doing the sacrificing.

A clear class division emerged on this question. The soul of the "no" vote was the radical left, something that will have decisive effects in the future. The leadership of SYRIZA – which found the strength to refuse to submit to the dictates of the European Union and to call for a referendum so that the people's will could be expressed – is the winner.

The forces of ANTARSYA, which have their own political differences, gathered in the "no" camp. They have created new relationships with the rank and file of SYRIZA, relationships that will be important in the coming struggles.

On the other hand, the Communist Party (KKE), with its equivocal line – its unacceptable advocacy of neither yes nor no – refused to choose who to stand with and who to stand against. This attitude, even if it was not followed by a large part of its own members and its base, will haunt the KKE leadership for a long time.

The result has paralyzed the political forces of the bourgeoisie. The resignation of former Prime Minister Antonis Samaras as the leader of New Democracy, just a short time after the resignation of Evangelos Venizelos as the leader of PASOK, shows that the creditors and their Memorandums of 2010 and 2012 have been left without a confident political representative inside Greece. The "post-political" social liberals of Potami (The River) are not and cannot be a solution to this problem. The fact that all this became clear at the polls during the crucial referendum creates a great opportunity for SYRIZA. But it will also exert unprecedented pressure on it.

The great victory of workers and the popular masses in the referendum, in the face of the strangulation of the banking system and blackmail of the employers, will lead to critical conflicts in the coming period, starting with the first measure of the relationship of forces: the resumption of negotiations with the creditors this week.

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WE UNDERSTAND the pressures and dilemmas faced by the government; and in particular the extortion tactics of the creditors with their threats to the banking system. Those threats can only be answered by the nationalization of banks and the establishment of public control, under the direction of the workers in this sector. This is decisive for the functioning of the whole economy.

The "no" vote was an unwavering demand for the reversal of austerity. It is a call for SYRIZA to decisively implement the program of the radical left, taking all economic, political and financial measures necessary.

On this, the government and SYRIZA cannot deviate.

An agreement that would be, in essence, close to the proposal submitted to a vote in the referendum would produce disappointment and represent the overturning of the "no" victory. It would create opportunities for the bourgeois parties to reorganize and counterattack, with the aim of bringing down the SYRIZA government as soon as possible. As their representatives have stated openly, the leading European governments believe that the existence of a government of the left in Greece today is incompatible with the policies they want to impose at this "moment" of profound crisis, both at the European level and in Greece itself.

On this point, we must emphasize the internationalist solidarity shown toward the working class and the left in Greece. It emerged and was powerfully expressed in many places around the world.

We have a duty not to disappoint the hopes expressed by these demonstrations of solidarity. This is an obligation for the leaders of the government, and it creates essential tasks, not only for members of SYRIZA, but for everyone who fought for the "no."

The coming days will be decisive in the consolidation and further development of this crucial election victory.

Source socialistworker.org.