

Two Views on Syriza

We are reproducing excerpts from two long interviews which appeared in Jacobin magazine (<https://www.jacobinmag.com>), about Syriza. Sebastian Budgen, an editor at Verso Books, interviews Stathis Kouvelakis, a member of Parliament of Syriza and a leading member of the Left Platform within it.

The second view of Syriza is contained in the statement of the Central Committee of the Greek Communist Party on the results of the parliamentary elections (January, 2015) and the statement of the PB of the Central Committee (February 2015).

GREECE: PHASE ONE

Tell us about Syriza: when and how did this coalition of radical left parties come into being?

Syriza was set up by several different organizations in 2004, as an electoral alliance. Its biggest component was Alexis Tsipras's party Synaspismos — initially the Coalition of the Left and Progress, and eventually renamed the Coalition of the Left and of the Movements — which had existed as a distinct party since 1991. It emerged from a series of splits in the Communist movement.

On the other hand, Syriza also comprises much smaller formations. Some of these came out of the old Greek far left. In particular, the Communist Organization of Greece (KOE), one the country's main Maoist groups. This organization had three members of parliament (MPs) elected in May 2012. That's also true of the Internationalist Workers' Left (DEA), which is from a Trotskyist tradition, as well as other groups mostly of a Communist background. For example, the Renewing Communist Ecological Left (AKOA), which came out of the old Communist Party (Interior).

The Syriza coalition was founded in 2004, and at first it had what we might call relatively modest successes. Nevertheless it managed to get into parliament, overcoming the 3 percent minimum threshold. To cut a long story short, Syriza resulted from a relatively complex recomposition of the Greek radical left.

How do you explain Syriza's sudden electoral success in 2012?

There are three factors to consider. The first lies in the violence of the social and economic crisis in Greece and the way it developed from 2010 onward, with the austere purge that has been inflicted under the infamous memorandums of understanding (the agreements the Greek government signed with the troika in order to secure the country's ability to pay off its debts).

The second factor resides in the fact that Greece — and now also Spain — are the only countries where this social and economic crisis has transformed into a political crisis. The old political system, which was based on a very stable two-party duopoly, has collapsed.

The third factor is popular mobilization. It's not a coincidence that the two European countries where the radical left has taken off are Greece and Spain, namely the countries that have seen the strongest popular mobilizations in recent years. In Spain they had the indignados movement, whereas in Greece there was a deeper and socially more diverse movement.

Most of the forces that have freed themselves of the traditional forms of political representational binds have turned toward the radical Left, while part of society that has remained outside of this dynamic

has turned to abstention, which also rose very significantly since the start of the crisis, or toward the extreme right, namely the neo-Nazi Golden Dawn party.

But Syriza's electoral and political success is explained more precisely by the fact that the party has opposed the memorandums and austerity shock therapy from the outset. This is because after long debates, especially within Synaspismos, Syriza had rejected the idea of alliances with the Pasok ever since its creation as a coalition.

And due to its "movementist" sensibility, it has proven concretely and practically able to commit itself to the social movements and collective actions that have taken place in Greece in recent years. It has done so at the same time as respecting these movements' autonomy, including the most novel and spontaneous forms of mobilization.

Could you update us on any figures you have about the relative strength of Syriza in terms of membership and its social weight since 2012, and then say more about the internal dynamics of Syriza, the Left Platform, different constituent elements of that — and also the opposing side, the center, and the right?

Immediately after the 2012 elections, the process of unification of what was as until then a coalition of parties started. First with a national conference, which elected for the first time a leadership body and then the founding congress of Syriza in July 2013. I think that some important decisions concerning the structure of the party, and what we could qualify as the party form, were made at that stage, but the priority was to have a speedy process, which didn't leave time for a proper in-depth political discussion.

At the same time, and it was a process of opening up, but it was a process of opening up without addressing specific social constituencies and layers of people involved in social movements. So it was more or less a process leading more to a party of members than a party of activists or active members, a *parti d'adhérents* rather than a *parti de militants*. Which also means that this rendered Syriza as an organization to a certain extent permeable to the practices of, if not clientelism, at least the practice of local, traditional networks of power, which are still very strong in Greek society.

The establishment parties have been de-structured at the national level. They do not exist as centralized parties, or hardly so. Pasok has completely disintegrated and it was by far the most powerful party machine in Greece, and because New Democracy, which used to be a rightwing mass organization, is also very seriously weakened, but the networks linked to these parties are still very strong at the local level. We saw that in the last local elections, for instance, where the gap between the local electoral influence of Syriza and the capacity to win local councils is very, very significant.

The other negative feature of the new structure is that Syriza has become clearly a leader-centered party, and this is accentuated by the fact that the internal structures are very numerous, dysfunctional, and they tend less and less to function as real centers of policymaking or of decision making. The whole process of decision making has become actually more centralized, more opaque, with the leader playing a very crucial role, combined with various informal leadership circles, rather than a collective leadership, or even a more restricted group of leaders.

One of the aims, I think, which was pursued by the party leadership was to marginalize the left tendencies within Syriza. They very seriously thought that we were relatively strong in the old Syriza (in the pre-2012 Syriza), which was organized as a coalition, a constellation of various parties, but with the inflow of new members, our relative weight would diminish drastically inside the party.

To give you an example, which is more specifically about the biggest — by far — component of Synaspismos: at the last congress of the party, the congress in which Dimar departed, the left current, led by Alavanos, got about 25 percent of the vote.

So when the Left Platform got 25 percent at the November 2012 inaugural National Conference of Syriza, it came as a big surprise to the leadership. It was an even bigger surprise for them that the Left Platform increased its relative weight in the founding congress of Syriza and got over 30 percent.

In between, the membership of Syriza approximately doubled, and it remains stable around these figures, an increase from about 17,000–18,000 members to 35,000–36,000. It developed geographically quite significantly, but the gap between the electoral influence and the organized force is still huge, and the links between the party and the core of its electorate — the urban working class, essentially — remain weak.

Syriza is still dominated very much by intellectual layers: public-sector workers with a high level of skills and education. In terms of age, it is also quite problematic: the relative weight of the younger layers remains quite limited.

What are Syriza's priorities for Greece?

There are four main things to work on — and here I'm not putting them in any particular order. The first consists of emergency measures to deal with the most shocking aspects of the disaster of recent years: reconnecting the electricity supply to all homes, school meals for all kids, and reestablishing a health care service worthy of the name — as things stand, a third of the population is excluded from the health care system.

The second thing: dismantling the hard core of the memorandums. That would mean setting the minimum wage back where it was before 2010, as well as the collective bargaining agreements and social legislation that have been entirely destroyed. That would open up a field of action for labor, and would result in immediate improvements. We also have to get rid of the absurd property taxes that the state has been extorting from the population for several years. All this is non-negotiable.

The third thing to work on is the debt — and here there will be some negotiation. There is no chance of sorting out Greece so long as servicing the debt under the memorandum régime continues to grind the country through the mill.

There has been a bloodbath of public and social spending cuts in order to free up budget surpluses to pay off the debt and end the need to finance it. This is impracticable. The budget surpluses could never be enough to cover the costs of servicing the debt, whose burden has increased as the GDP has fallen — it's now reached 177 percent of GDP.

We need to find a solution to this. Syriza will insist on a solution like the one that was demanded in the case of Germany in 1953: that is, canceling the greater part of the debt and paying back the rest within the terms of a growth clause.

But what will we do if the Europeans refuse? Once again all the options are on the table, but Syriza will not retreat and let itself be blackmailed the way Anastasiades, the rightwing Cypriot president was in spring 2013 when the parliament of his country reject by a unanimous vote the bailout plan proposed by the EU.

The fourth thing to work on is kickstarting the economy, which has been destroyed, in order to deal with the massive unemployment (26 percent, and 50 percent among youth) that Greece is currently experiencing. Only public investment can really get to grips with this. It's a very complicated question, but we need to relaunch the economy in a way that suits social and environmental needs, much unlike what we have currently.

GREECE: PHASE TWO

One spin, which is the dominant one both on the Marxist critical left and in the business press (except for figures like Paul Krugman and Galbraith), is that the Greeks — Varoufakis and so on — went in trying to play poker but without the right cards at their disposal, without anything ready to back up their strategy, and were basically beaten by the EU and particularly by the Germans.

The other spin, which comes from the pro-Varoufakis, pro-Syriza leadership media is that, actually, they played the negotiation game extremely cleverly and managed to turn the tables at least

partially by putting the Germans on the defensive and by buying some breathing room that they wouldn't have had otherwise, and by legitimating a discourse about the un-payability of the debt and the inefficacy of the austerity measures and so on.

I don't know whether you'd agree with that characterization of the two dominant readings, and if so, where do you position your interpretation of what has happened in relation to them?

I recognize much of what you're saying. I don't really want to position myself in regard to these two broad approaches, though without necessarily disagreeing with you. I'll tell you what I think, and then it is for readers and others to work out which side I am most sympathetic with.

My main point, and I can start with that, is that this government went into negotiations with an approach which, as I've already said, was critical to its composition, to creating it, which is that we can go into the negotiating room and we can demand and fight for significant changes, including the lifting of austerity and the writing off of debt, while remaining firmly within the confines of the monetary union.

This is the key point. This is what I have called in my own work the "good euro" approach. That, by changing politics, by winning elections, by changing the balance of political forces in Greece and in Europe, we will negotiate and we will transform the monetary union and Europe as a whole because of the political cards that we will bring to the table. That's how they went in. And their negotiating strategy was determined by that.

Now, there were elements of inexperience, which are inevitable, elements of personality, which are inevitable and to which were alluded to previously when you discussed Varoufakis (the Finance Minister – Editor) and so on. These are important elements. However, the key thing was not that. The key thing was the strategy, and that needs to be understood very well, because you can get lost in arguments about poker, about bluffing, and this, that, and the other.

This government had a strategy, and it was as I laid it out just now. And it discovered reality. A reality, which is, I think, that this strategy has come to an end. It didn't work. Yes, the political balance had changed in Greece, and changed dramatically. Because it isn't just that this government had 40 percent of the vote, it also had 80 percent of popular support, as all polls were showing. But that counted for very, very little in the negotiations.

Why? Because the confines of the monetary union are what they are. They are not susceptible to this kind of argument. It's a very rigid array of institutions with an embedded ideology and approach to things. The other side wasn't going to budge just because there was a new left government in a small country.

So the Greeks went in there, they had high hopes, and they fell into the trap that those institutions had set up for them. And that trap basically meant (a) a liquidity shortage and (b) a financing shortage for the government. This is how the institutions translated their structural advantage in relation to the Greeks.

The Greeks had no options. They could not deal with that. Syriza could not deal with that, because it had accepted the confines of the euro. As long as you accept the confines of the Euro, you've got no effective answer. That's the reason why this in the end took the form that it took.

They tried, they strove for something different. The other side, particularly the Germans, dug their heels in. And, towards the end of the negotiations, it was a matter of days before the banks would have had to be shut down. In that situation, the Greeks basically accepted a poor compromise.

What I think lots of people outside Greece have trouble understanding is both the idea that they might be tied to the euro as a matter of principle, a matter of faith; or the idea, that seems very naive, that these social liberal governments — or in the case of Obama, neoliberal governments — would somehow be objective allies against the Germans and the hardliners within the European Union. What's your take on that? What's the most charitable reading of the analytical framework they're working from to write this strategy?

My reading of the analytical framework, when I approach it as a political economist, is completely damning, and I've said that openly. I said that many years ago actually, and I think events in the last few weeks have confirmed my initial position. I believe that, as Marxists, we must commence with the political economy of the situation, not with the balance of political forces. Unfortunately, the Greek left and much of the European left does it the other way around.

Starts with geopolitics rather than political economy?

Geopolitics and domestic politics. The balance of political forces, because that's what Marxism has been reduced to, unfortunately. And, when you do that, when you commence with the politics — the balance of forces domestically or internationally — it is easy to engage in flights of fancy. It is easy to begin to think that, in the end, everything is politics, and therefore you can change the balance of political forces, and anything is achievable.

Well, I'm sorry, that's not the case. And that's not Marxism. As Marxists, we believe that politics, in the end is derivative of the material reality of economic and class relations. That's a very, very profound statement by Karl Marx, so long as it is understood properly, so long as it's not mechanical. The bottom line is this statement means that not everything is possible through politics.

And that's exactly what we've just seen. Why? Because the political economy of the monetary union is paramount. Whether we like it or not, Europe and Greece exist now within the confines of a monetary union.

Unfortunately, much of the Marxist left has pretended that this is not the case or misunderstood the importance of money here. And that's not surprising, because the European left simply doesn't understand money and finance. It pretends that it does, but it doesn't.

I repeat, what is feasible and what is not ultimately is determined by the political economy of the monetary union. Within the confines of European capitalism, of course — capitalism is the defining feature. Now Syriza has just discovered that. And it's about time that it reconsidered things and it began to see how to shape politics and how to shape its political approach within those confines.

If it wants to achieve other things politically, it must change the institutional framework. There is no other way. To change that framework, you've got to go for a rupture. You've got to go for a break. You cannot reform the euro system. It's impossible to reform the monetary union. That's what became very clear.

Now, is this position tantamount to saying you cannot do anything unless you overthrow capitalism, which is what sections of the ultra-left are saying? That is clearly absurd ultra-leftism. You don't need a socialist revolution, and you don't need to overthrow capitalism at every minute of the day to do small things. Of course, we aim for the overthrow of capitalism, and of course ultimately we would like to see the socialist revolution. But that's not in the cards at the moment.

You don't need socialist revolution in Greece, and you don't need to overthrow capitalism in Greece to get rid of austerity. You don't. But you certainly need to get rid of the institutional framework of the euro. That simple position is not understood — or is not widely appreciated — within Syriza and not within the European left, and that has been a tragedy for years.

STATEMENT OF THE CENTRAL COMMITTEE OF THE KKE
ON THE RESULTS OF THE PARLIAMENTARY ELECTIONS ON THE 25TH OF JANUARY 2015

1. The CC salutes the thousands of members, friends and supporters of the party and KNE, allies and voters who fought, mobilized and contributed to the strengthening of the KKE. The KKE saw a rise in its percentage (+1%), votes (61,000) and MPs (+3) in relation to its percentage, votes and MPs elected in the

elections of June 2012. In these elections it had 15 MPs elected. The positive trend for rallying around the KKE, the recovery of lost votes and the winning of new ones has been confirmed.

In particular, we want to salute the voters who voted for the KKE for the first time, because they appreciated its firmness, consistency and selflessness, its militancy in the struggle for the interests of the working people, even if they do not all agree with every position of the KKE.

We call on those who took the positive step and voted for the KKE for the first time to continue and to meet with us in the daily struggles, in the trade unions, the workplaces, the youth, the movement. To join with us to struggle for urgent demands, the recovery of the losses and more generally in the fight for changes at the level of power. It is an immediate priority, responsibility and duty for the party to strengthen its relations, from the Central Committee to the level of each Party Organization, with all those workers, pensioners and young people who took the step and stood at the KKE's side, strengthened it in the elections, widening its bonds with new working class and popular forces.

The factors that shaped the election results are not just to be found in the last month, in the election campaign period itself. The intense ideological, political and organizational work of the entire party and KNE in order to ideologically reinforce our ranks, our wider periphery, that preceded the election period are of particular importance and primacy. The KKE's stability, particularly since 2012 and despite its significant losses, in promoting its strategy, the stable front of confrontation against the ND-PASOK government as well as against SYRIZA, exposing its constant mutations, contributed significantly to today's results. The valuable experience from this activity must become an integral and permanent element in the work of all the Party Base Organizations, as well as of the organizations of KNE.

2. The election results in general express, via the ballot box, the great discontent and anger of the people towards the parties of ND and PASOK and those that cooperated with them, those who condemned them to poverty and unemployment in the period of the economic crisis.

The elections results were formed under the pressure of a strong current that demanded an immediate change of government. The rationale "which government-which negotiator" was the prevalent one, always inside the anti-people walls of the EU, remote from the real problems of the people.

The vote for SYRIZA was chiefly a vote that rejected the previous anti-people government of ND-PASOK. It was a vote that was characterized by reduced demands and also illusions about the character of the EU. It was not a vote that demanded the satisfaction of the real needs of the workers and people today. To a degree it was a conditional vote, a vote that will be reviewed in relation to the government's course, which as regards the contradictory interests of capital and the workers will side with the former.

To a great extent it expresses the false hope that the new SYRIZA government can follow a pro-people political line. The KKE assessed and assesses that the formation today of a SYRIZA-ANEL coalition government will operate within the framework of the EU one-way street, the retreats and compromises, the commitments to big capital, the monopolies, the EU and NATO, with the negative implications for our people and country. The new coalition government will pick up the baton of the anti-people political line in order to safeguard, via the Draghi package as well, liquidity for capital, without restoring the people's losses from the crisis.

3. The change in government and specifically the new SYRIZA government does not constitute a political change in favour of the people. The SYRIZA-ANEL coalition government will continue the anti-people commitments of the country to the EU and creditors and of course this will provide breathing space for the bourgeois political system that seeks to assimilate the people more deeply into the system. The bourgeois political system will attempt to achieve this via its recomposition and at a crucial moment for the people and its movement. SYRIZA has already admitted that the next day there will be a program that will be formed in agreement with the creditors. This program, even if it is not called a memorandum or does not have the formal appearance of today's memorandum, will contain anti-people conditions.

SYRIZA's program is not pro-worker, pro-people. It is a program that, both regarding its strategic directions and its specific proposals for its four-year term, will operate in the framework of serving the interests of the monopoly groups, the strategy of the EU. This is a program that tells the people to forget about taking back all that they have lost and only promises some crumbs in the manner of the "poor house" to those who live in extreme poverty. And these crumbs will evaporate due to the anti-people political line as a whole. The SYRIZA program, as regards the majority of workers and popular families, will share out poverty and unemployment to even more people.

SYRIZA has also stated that it will observe Greece's commitments to NATO, the strategic alliance with the USA. This is particularly dangerous, in a period when NATO and the EU are developing even further into factors that undermine the country's sovereign rights, sharpen the competition for markets and raw materials and lead to the gathering of war clouds in the Eastern Mediterranean, the Middle East, Ukraine, with the involvement of Greece as well.

4. The change of government in Greece is being utilized by bourgeois political forces inside the country, the Eurozone and also internationally. These are forces that want a more relaxed monetary and fiscal policy as tool that will help them escape the stagnation of the levels of production. The KKE at its 19th Congress had underlined the prospect of a differentiation in the formula of bourgeois management, which arises from the need to deal with the hesitation and caution of the business groups in investing capital that is at the moment sitting idle, accumulated as it was in the period of capitalist growth. This will occur on the condition that class exploitation is intensified, taxation on capital is reduced and finally that the average of rate of profit increases. This is in any case is the much touted "re-starting" of the capitalist economy.

SYRIZA in particular systematically fostered the misleading and entirely false position that the EU can change in a positive direction in favour of the people, because it is moving to a less restrictive political line, to the so-called quantitative easing. For this reason, it celebrated the Draghi measures and the buying of state bonds by the ECB. Such a change however is not a pro-people one. It is in the interests of the monopoly groups, banks, industrialists, those to whom the funding packages will be directed to and which will burden the workers once again.

The change in government also symbolizes and serves the pressure of the USA, France and Italy on the German government in order to change the apportionment of the burdens and profits, in relation to the management of the indebted Eurozone states. SEV (The Hellenic Federation of Enterprises) also supported this direction in the election period.

5. The overall election result bears witness to the course of the reformation of the bourgeois political system, which began in the two elections of 2012, in conditions of the deep capitalist economic crisis. This reformation is necessary for the political power of the capitalists, in conditions when, due to the new massive wave of unemployment and poverty, the great political ability of the traditional social-democratic and liberal bourgeois parties to manipulate working class and popular masses has weakened, with the result that the normal rotation of one-party governments between the two parties does not function. The reformation of social-democracy proceeded very rapidly. In essence PASOK has been replaced by SYRIZA as a party of government, without the latter achieving the level of PASOK's former influence. The reformation of the liberal current is still underway, despite the significant splitting off of nationalist and fascist forces that it has already undergone.

6. As regards the KKE, the result was formed in conditions when its forces were buffeted by extorting dilemmas regarding the existence of a "good" and "bad" path inside the Eurozone, the prospect of a "leftwing" change inside the EU, or illusions that an alleged "left" government of SYRIZA will change the trajectory of developments in favour of the popular forces.

A crucial negative factor for the correlation of forces, and consequently for the political influence of the KKE, was and is the situation regarding the mass participation in and orientation of the labour-people's movement. As long as the movement and the workers' participation in it remain in the doldrums, despite the initiatives of the KKE and other radical forces, class conscious forces, the more the rationale of waiting, passivity, and the quest for saviours and nonexistent solutions from above will prevail. In the course of events, the working class and popular strata, due to reality itself, will reconsider the predictions and assessments of the KKE, will join forces with the KKE for the regroupment of the labour-people's movement and the strengthening of the people's social alliance.

7. Despite the positive trend for rallying around the KKE, the overall correlation of forces remains negative. The election result does not express a tendency for the emancipation of working class and popular forces from the EU, the path of capital and the interests of the monopolies.

An expression of this negative of correlation of forces was third place achieved by the criminal Nazi Golden Dawn (GD), a party with specific criminal murderous activity, a party that was formed by the mechanisms of the system. It maintains a high percentage, despite the losses it had in actual votes. Particular responsibility for the electoral percentage of GD belongs both to the ND-PASOK government that fostered anti-communisms, the theory of the two extremes, the scape-goating of immigrants as well as to the blurred "anti-memorandum" line promoted by SYRIZA which exonerates the people's real opponents, the capitalists. This specific criminal fascist organization developed on this ideological and political terrain. The KKE remains the stable opponent of fascism, precisely because the KKE opposes capitalism as a whole, the system that creates fascism, nationalism and racism.

The system, the monopolies and their power possess further reserves in order to trap the popular strata in a period when the process for the reformation of the political scene has not finished.

The line of counterattack and rupture with the capitalist path of development, the EU and against the policies that support this path through assimilation and passivity must be strengthened among the working class, the youth and the movement. Today the people face the permanent memoranda of the EU, the goals for competitiveness and the new recovery of capital's profitability that lead to the even greater bankruptcy of the people and can not solve the sharpening popular problems, such as unemployment. The SYRIZA-ANEL coalition government and the other parties serve this anti-people path and attempt to prettify it in the eyes of the people.

8. The KKE, consistent with what it said before the elections, is not going to support or tolerate the new government. It will utilize the rallying of forces, which it carried out in this phase, to do what it promised the people to do. So that there is a strong workers'-people's opposition in favour of the people in parliament as well, with its proposals, but above all in the movement in order to strengthen the people's alliance today and for the future. In order to strengthen the struggles against the EU, the permanent memoranda, the monopolies, capital and its power. So that the workers recover their major losses from the crisis period. So that the monopoly groups and capital, not the salaried workers and unemployed again, pay for whatever crumbs are given to the extremely poor.

The KKE will increase its efforts and initiatives regarding the sharpening problems of the people, for the relief of the unemployed and popular households. It will strengthen its efforts for the regroupment of the labour-people's movement, for the development of people's solidarity, for the construction of the people's alliance against the monopolies and the capitalist system.

The KKE will continue to promote amongst the people and struggle for the only pro-people way out: with the people in power, truly sovereign, capable of choosing their own government, the government of workers'-people's power, abolishing capitalist ownership. Only the socialization of the means of production and infrastructure can support another path of development for the people's needs, with central planning, with entirely different criteria for the distribution of resources. This is the path that will

lend a pro-people content to the disengagement from the EU and the unilateral cancellation of the debt. So that the people can develop mutually beneficial relations with other peoples and countries.

THE CC OF THE KKE
26/1/2015
NO TOLERATION FOR THE NEW AGREEMENT
REACHED BETWEEN THE GOVERNMENT AND THE EU
TO EXTEND THE MEMORANDUM
STATEMENT OF THE PB OF THE CC OF THE KKE

The new agreement, which the SYRIZA-ANEL coalition government signed with the EU, ECB and IMF, is both in form and in essence an extension of the memorandum and the commitments provided for in it, a continuation of the anti-people political line of the previous governments of ND and PASOK. This agreement and the list of “reforms” include all the measures that are negative for the workers. These are measures that were taken by capital, its governments, together with the EU in conditions of the economic crisis, measures that assisted the recovery of capitalist profitability. I.e. all those things that bled the Greek people dry in the previous years and which they had fought against: strict supervision and evaluation by the troika which is now called the “three institutions”, observance and extension of the anti-worker and anti-people directions.

This agreement confirms that the negotiations even the so-called “tough” ones, which are conducted inside the framework of the EU with capitalist recovery as their goal, consistently have anti-people outcomes. The alleged “proud” negotiation was an advertising scam.

If there is any revision of the previous program, e.g. lower primary surpluses, it will not be done in order to relieve the people, to increase salaries, pensions, social benefits but in order to save state resources which will then be used to support capital, its investments and profitability, as well as to pay the lenders. The employees, unemployed, self-employed, poor farmers and pensioners will go on paying the price for any recovery, through the continuation of austerity, which the government calls “frugal living”.

Even the crumbs, chiefly for those who live in absolute poverty, promised by the government in its program, are up in the air and will depend on the agreement with the partners and with the precondition that they will not endanger fiscal discipline, the recovery of the economy and the profitability of the big businesses.

For this reason ND, PASOK, other parties and forces that support the system, like SEV (Hellenic Federation of Enterprises), and backed the anti-people political line in previous years, welcomed the government’s agreement as being something positive.

The SYRIZA-ANEL government presents the new agreement as a result of the people’s will and the people’s support for the government’s political line. It seeks to deceive and foist the responsibility for the compromises and anti-people agreements with the EU onto the people. It is trying to manipulate the labour-people’s movement, to transform the people into the government’s cheerleaders, to convince them that they must continue their sacrifices and compromise with crumbs of bread.

There must be no support or toleration for the government that continues on the same path of commitments to the EU and the profitability of the monopolies. For this reason it labels the needs of capital and the path that serves this as a “national” matter. However this is not in the people’s interests. In any case, the people have experience that they must use i.e the “national goals” of the governments and capital have always ended up in the workers and people’s rights being sacrificed to a great extent.

Those who had hoped for something better must not become disillusioned, they must react. What is even more important is that they must not give up on the goal of really abolishing the memoranda, the application laws, the anti-people restructurings. They must not give up on the struggle to recover their losses.

The desire of the people to be rid of the anti-people political line that is implemented via the memoranda, to be rid of the measures and supervisors, can acquire real content when the people struggle to regain what they have lost, with the following immediate demands:

Immediate measures to relieve the families from the popular strata and to protect the unemployed.

Return of the 13th and 14th salary, compulsory implementation of Collective Bargaining agreements and the abolition of the measures that attack labour rights.

A real immediate return via legislation of the minimum wage to at least 751 euros for all, without exceptions and asterisks, as a basis for further wage increases.

The return of the 13th and 14th pensions and the abolition of all the anti-people measures that reduced the pensions and increased the retirement age. At the same time they must demand the return of what has been stolen from the social-security funds' reserves and that the plutocracy and state immediately meet their payment obligations to the funds.

The liberation of the popular families from the heavy taxes, the abolition of ENFIA (the new property tax) and the solidarity tax, the abolition of VAT on basic products consumed by the people, the abolition of VAT and other taxes on heating oil and natural gas, the increase of the tax threshold to 40,000 euros for each family and a simultaneous increase of the taxation on capital.

No seizures of first or second homes of families from the popular strata. Cancellation of interests on debts, drastic reduction of the loan repayments of the popular households.

An increase of spending for exclusively public and free education, healthcare and welfare.

The working class and people can achieve these things by organizing their struggle and alliance, fighting for another development path that will serve the needs of the people today, with disengagement from the EU, unilateral cancellation of the debts, with the socialization of the monopolies and with the people holding the reins of power.

This is the way for the Greek people to take a truly proud and dignified stance.

The PB of the CC of the KKE
Athens 24/2/2015