

# Greece: Meet unconditional surrender with Unconditional Resistance

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After a 17 hour final session in Brussels, Germany's Iron Chancellor, Angela Merkel, and her finance minister Wolfgang Schäuble finally accepted the complete capitulation of Alexis Tsipras. Their terms reduce Greece to a virtual colony of the imperialist powers that dominate the Eurozone, supreme amongst them Germany. If this deal sticks, it will be a dark day not only for the Greek people but also for everyone fighting austerity in Europe, just as their fight back encouraged them.

Already, there have been demonstrations in Athens voicing a vehement OXI to this abject surrender. The only hope of avoiding an even greater social catastrophe is if this becomes a mass revolt, overcoming the confusion and demoralisation spread by the leaders of Syriza and preventing the carrying out of these brutal attacks on workers, pensioners, the unemployed and the young.

The spearhead for such a revolt must be ordinary working class people and youth themselves. The public sector union, ADEDY, has called a general strike for Wednesday. Can rank and file members in the majority union federation (GSEE) break away from their leaders who not only supported Tsipras' sell out but even urged him to accept the Troika's terms before he went to Brussels? Will PAME, the militant union led by the Greek Communist Party (KKE) strike together with other unionists fighting the great betrayal?

The forces of the revolutionary left, both those within Syriza, whose MPS voted No, and those outside it, in Antarsya, have a critical role to play now. So, too, has the Greek Communist Party (KKE) if it can shake off its sectarian policies.

The deceitful speeches in Brussels by Merkel and the French President, François Hollande, claiming that a further three years of cuts, the massive privatisation of Greece's public services and industries and the removal of trade union rights, will revive the Greek economy, will soon be exposed as the country slides into deeper slump than ever. If there is not a powerful fight back, we can expect the forces of the right, including the fascists, to revive and prosper in an atmosphere of despair. There is no time to lose.

## The return of the Troika

When Tsipras was elected in January, he told the representatives of the European Central Bank, the EU Commission and the IMF (the Troika) to pack their bags, and huge numbers rejoiced. The Troika's return to Athens, once again in charge of the country's economy, is not just a deliberate humiliation for the Syriza government, it is a deliberate trampling on the will of the majority of the Greek people. More, it is a warning of the fate that awaits future challengers to the domination of the Eurozone by Germany and its closest allies.

It exposes the fact that the real power lies not with the parliamentary democracy of states and peoples, but with the dictatorship of the big banks and capitalists of London, Frankfurt, Paris and Zurich. Not only will Greece now have to implement all the measures rejected in the July referendum, and more besides, but €50 billion of assets will be impounded. Half of this money will be used to recapitalise and then privatise Greek banks, with a smaller portion supposedly for investment in Greece. The remainder will be held as collateral to extort the full and timely repayment of future loans. In reality it will mean a veritable fire sale of Greek assets, ports, airports, and land.

The economy will be liberalised - pensions reduced, solidarity payments abolished, closed professions opened up. Automatic spending cuts will be implemented. The ports of Piraeus and Thessaloniki will be privatised. The Troika will have a veto over legislation and measures previously passed, which restored union rights, will have to be repealed. This is a total repudiation of the limited programme on which Syriza was elected. ??

This outcome was the aim of German-led European imperialism from the outset. There was no purpose whatsoever in negotiating with it from a position of total weakness, whilst the wealthy were taking billions of euros out of the country week by week. Unless, and until, an anti-austerity government had seized control of Greece's economic resources and stopped paying a single euro to the foreign banks and the institutions of finance capital and frozen the assets of Greek oligarchs, it had nothing to bargain with.

On 5 July, Syriza won a 61 percent mandate to reject austerity and then offered to make a deal worse than the one rejected; a clear signal that they were ready for a deal at any price. Tsipras revealed which of his two policies, ending austerity and staying in the Euro, was the real one and which the deceitful ploy to win elections. The imperialists were left with all the aces, and they knew it. All Germany had to do was tighten the screws and terrify Tsipras with Schäuble's threats to chuck them out of the Eurozone with hardly a euro to their name.

The Plan B of the reformist Left Platform MP and academic, Costas Lapavistas, was no better. Indeed, it was a utopia; a negotiated exit from the euro involving a write off of debt, predicated on the belief that Germany wanted Greece out of the euro and would pay for it. This amounted to offering to go quietly in return for a golden handshake from Schäuble. Of course that was never on offer. Like Tsipras' Plan A, Plan B rejected the very idea of mobilising the working class in defence of its own interests, in favour of negotiations. ?

Likewise, Tsipras' strategy of expecting to divide the rulers of the European Union and win support for Keynesian measures to replace the recessionary austerity programmes, was never going to work. Governments of states with high debts, like Spain, Portugal, Ireland, Italy, would not support Syriza's strategy of negotiating an end to austerity after they had presided over years of punishing cuts in their own countries.

If Syriza ever expected France and Italy to stand up to German imperialism and offer Greece a better deal, then this illusion has been cruelly dashed. François Hollande played a comedy of persuading Schäuble not to force the Greeks out, while pressing the Greeks to give in. He proved the proverbial broken reed that pierces the hand that leans on it. Within the Eurozone, none of the other countries were a match for Germany's financial muscle when push came to shove.

Faced with this intransigence, Syriza refused to do the one thing that would have stopped the imposition of austerity; repudiating the debt, seizing control of the banking system and the major means of production, and appealing to the European working class to mobilise in its defence, against the extortion and coercion of their own governments.??

Yet, here, another force let down the Greek working people badly; the European labour movement. The trade unions and the parties of the social-democracy bear a heavy responsibility for their failure to come to the aid of Greece. Indeed, the German Social Democrats, sharing office with Merkel and Schäuble, did nothing beyond a few words to distinguish themselves from these imperialist predators. The Social Democrats in the rest of Europe backed their governments and austerity and offered nothing more than rhetoric in support of Syriza.

What about the parties of the European Left? Where was Podemos, the 'Spanish Syriza'? Although there were pickets and demonstrations, there were none of the mass demonstrations we saw last year. This is shooting yourself in the foot if, like Podemos, you hope to win an election in November on a policy of rejecting austerity. The uncritical flattering of Syriza, common on the left over the previous year or so, meant such parties were paralysed when a decisive defeat for workers across the whole continent loomed in Brussels. Without a radical uprising in Greece, and a wave of supporting action in rest of Europe, we will all pay a high price for our inaction. ??

The extent of European imperialism's punishment of Greece for defying it, was made possible by the passivity of the leaders of the European labour movement. These leaders, too timid to seriously confront their own austerity regimes, have added a new stain to their record of cowardice and betrayal at a critical moment. ??

We must learn the lessons of this betrayal

The institutions of the EU and the Eurozone exist to enforce the domination of a handful of imperialist powers, the strongest of which when it comes to the EU's economic policy is undoubtedly Germany. The European Union, the Central Bank, Commission etc. cannot be reformed but must be resolutely fought by an EU wide struggle to overthrow them and replace them with the rule of the working class.?

The nature and scale of the struggle posed is clear; there is no reformist and Keynesian strategy, and no section of European capital that has abandoned neoliberalism. An end to austerity in the foreseeable future means the overthrow of the capitalist class dictatorship that has pulverised Greece. The primary obstacle to this is the leadership of the working class that seeks to minimise class confrontation and accommodate to the 'reality' of neoliberalism.

The European Left parties and the leadership of the labour movement are not fit for purpose; not only are they unable to organise credible resistance in their own countries, they are too cowed, too timid, to organise elementary European wide solidarity with a people being put to the sword by a rampant capitalist class ramming home the message that resistance is futile.

Europe - what is to be done?

We need to create working class parties willing and able to lead a class struggle against austerity, an International party based on a strategy for the revolutionary overthrow of capitalism. ?

The model of a Left party that promised to defeat austerity merely by winning office via elections, with the support of social movements maybe, but not on the road of class struggle and the seizure of power, has been put to the test in Greece and failed it disastrously

The majority of the Left in Syriza, judging by the votes in parliament, may have wanted a more intransigent policy but were too terrified of splitting Syriza to mobilise against the sellout. This is the historical role of left reformism and those centrists who hang on to it, talking revolution, but acting just like reformists when it comes to the crunch.

Meanwhile, in Greece, it is clear that Tsipras will have to form a government of national unity, in practice if not in name, relying on the discredited and defeated bourgeois opposition parties already pledged to austerity. Against the threat to hand over the country's economic and political system to the administration of the Troika and pro-austerity parties, the workers, youth and unemployed must organise to make the country ungovernable by the Troika and its stooges.

However, there are those within the Left in Syriza who did dare to vote against the betrayal and they can now play a vital role in uniting the forces of resistance. They should do all in their power to mobilise the rank and file of Syriza against the collaborationist leadership. They should appeal to the branches to condemn the capitulators, call an emergency conference to throw out the leadership and take to the streets to oppose the deal.

If, on the other hand, as is rumoured, Tsipras purges the party of the Left, they should do all in their power to unite with the Left outside the party, particularly those in Antarsya. The initial basis for uniting within a new working class party should be an action programme of resistance to the Troika and its government. This should include the following demands:

Occupy the docks, airports, transport and big industries and run them under workers' control ??

Organise councils of action, composed of delegates of workers and youth, to prepare to defy the counterrevolutionary reaction ??

Launch an all out general strike to bring down the Troika's government and bring to power a workers' government.??

Appeal for socialist and working class anti-austerity forces to form a new fighting party of resistance to the capitalist offensive??

Appeal for international solidarity and working class mobilisation in the imperialist heartlands to force the Troika to abandon its plans?

Fight for a United Socialist States of Europe to replace the capitalist European Union

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