

The Greek Referendum Battle: “We are aware that we are the”advanced guard“unit of the European left”

Monday 6 July 2015, by [NTAVANELLOS \(DAVANELLOS\) Antonis](#) (Date first published: 4 July 2015).

Antonis Davanellos’ statement, written before the results of the referendum were clear, was sent from Greece to be read at the final rally of Socialism 2015, a conference attended by more than 1,000 people over the July 2-5 weekend and co-sponsored by *Socialist Workers* and the International Socialist Organization (ISO, USA).

Dear comrades, we are living in a historic moment in Greece. As we write this message, we don’t know the result of the referendum. We don’t know whether we will suffer a major defeat or we will achieve a huge political victory, against mighty enemies.

As all the leaders of the European Union have said, the referendum in Greece is a choice between accepting and rejecting austerity policies. That is why the neoliberal leaderships all around Europe are weighing in decisively in favor of a “yes” vote.

They are openly blackmailing and threatening the population of Greece with economic strangulation. Their stated goal is to overthrow the government of SYRIZA, the first government in modern European history that is led by a party to the left of social democracy.

Inside the country, the referendum has created a clear class and political divide. On the side of the “yes” vote are the capitalists, the rich, the upper middle class that still has savings in the banks. Politically, they are supported by an alliance of the right wing, the social democrats and the “post-political” center-left Potami party. Most importantly, they are supported by the mass media and the constant blackmail of employers who are campaigning actively in favor of a “yes” vote.

On the side of the “no” vote are the workers, the popular classes, the poor. Politically, they are supported mostly by SYRIZA and—thank god—ANTARSYA, which had the courage to overcome sectarianism and take a clear stand in favor of a “no” vote.

The Communist Party, in this incredibly polarized situation, chose the road of abstentionism. They advocated a spoiled ballot, neither yes nor no! They are giving a better chance of victory to the worst enemies of our class. They will pay a price, both in elections and on the streets, in the years to come.

We state again that we don’t know whether we will win or lose. What we do know is that we fought, we are fighting, and we will continue to fight. That is why we believe that the left in Greece will remain strong and continue the struggle.

Many people, even among the international left, believed that SYRIZA was like a star falling from the sky in the middle of the night—that it would shine for a while before it disappeared forever. Underestimating the harsh difficulties we were facing, they preferred to provide us with predictions, rather than solidarity: SYRIZA will be a betrayer in the future, SYRIZA will be a betrayer right now, SYRIZA has already betrayed us. Together with thousands of activists of the left in Greece, we have proved them wrong.

Today, all around Europe, our class is facing a major assault, one of historic importance. This is what neoliberalism is about—a war unleashed by our enemies, a war that until now they are winning.

In Greece, the workers' resistance escalated to such a point that it caused a political break. It gave rise to an anti-austerity party, SYRIZA and brought it to power in government.

We are aware that we are the “advanced guard” unit of the European left that has reached the enemy lines and is facing the ferocity of the enemy forces. As a unit that is leading the charge, it is possible that we might be defeated—that we might suffer major casualties. But we will have paved the way for our brothers and sisters who are coming after us—in Ireland, in Spain, in Portugal.

We will hold on as long as we can until the major battalions of our class arrive at the battlefield—the left in France and Italy. And then we shall win.

Forgive us for the warlike tone of this message. But this is how we are experiencing the situation in Greece right now. We are facing a merciless political and class war, and we are under heavy enemy fire.

We understood SYRIZA and related to it in this open way from the beginning, with our most important criterion being the escalation of class struggle and the political struggle. This never meant that we underestimated—or even worse, collaborated with—the retreats of SYRIZA's leadership. We could easily provide you with a long list of persistent and difficult conflicts with the leadership of SYRIZA.

But for us, the important thing was that we had built the left wing of SYRIZA systematically and in an organized manner. This left can raise its voice on the front lines when it agrees with the party's policy, but it can also prevent compromises and unacceptable retreats when it disagrees. Today, everyone, from Angela Merkel to the Greek mass media—knows that they cannot make plans for Greece without taking into account the strength of a genuinely radical left current inside SYRIZA.

This is why we are standing before you with pride, because we know that we have done our duty. And that is why our organization is stronger and healthier than ever.

Dear comrades, we know that you are fighting for the same goals we fight for, and in this struggle, you are facing the mightiest enemy on the planet. The best help you can give us is to keep up this struggle. With one additional goal: Defend and strengthen the International Socialist Organization. You are providing an example—as we do and as other comrades all over the planet do—that in the most different situations, the insistence on the building of revolutionary socialist organization is an indispensable part of the more general plan for the political victory of our class.

And in this struggle, you should know, dear comrades, that on the other side of the seas, in a small country called Greece, a large and active left will continue, under all circumstances, to fight for you, too.

Antonis Davenellos

P.S.

* <http://socialistworker.org/2015/07/06/no-to-austerity-and-yes-to-solidarity>

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