

How the Mainstream Media Discredit Greek Democracy

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Global Research, July 06, 2015

[Jonathan Cook: the Blog from Nazareth](#) 6

July 2015

Region: [Europe](#)

Theme: [Global Economy](#), [Media Disinformation](#)

The language the Guardian and all other corporate media have been using about Syriza's victory at the weekend against draconian EU-imposed austerity is revealing. Here are some examples of the subtle but effective framing from the paper's front page today:

* The referendum is described in the standfirst and text as “polarising” rather than what it is: an exercise in direct, participatory democracy. If a 61% win is an illustration of a polarised society, what does that make David Cameron's recent absolute victory in British parliamentary elections with 24% of the total vote? In the face of massive threats and intimidation from the EU establishment, echoed by European media, Greeks have shown there is a wide consensus against endless austerity. Nothing “polarised” about that at all.

* Syriza is repeatedly characterised as a “radical leftist” party, while its cool-under-pressure leader, Alexis Tsipras, is described as “fiery” (will the Guardian show some balance by labelling the German chancellor Angela Merkel “bullying”?). The truth, of course, is that Syriza is a broad alliance of parties representing an array of political views from the centre to the left united only in their opposition to a continuing EU-imposed austerity programme designed chiefly to benefit European financial institutions rather than the Greek people. Syriza only looks like it's on the radical left because media like the Guardian are positioned in the soft neoliberal centre.

* The article concludes by stating that the “no” vote won because it was “supported by the hard left and the neo-fascist right in Greece, while the mainstream centre-left and centre-right campaigned for a yes vote.” The Guardian's clear implication is that the lunatics have taken over the Greek asylum. But is that really the case? Or is that just the way EU elites want us to interpret the result? Germany has been pushing hardest for savage austerity in Greece. But it is worth recalling that after the Second World War, following German aggression that wreaked huge destruction across Europe, western countries, including Greece, that had suffered so much under the Nazis decided to forgive Germany much of its debts. In the exact reverse of Europe's austerity approach to Greece, the US implemented the Marshall Plan to help rebuild Germany and other devastated European economies to create markets for its own industrial expansion.

* The EU elites, referred to as “creditors” but actually representing Europe's large financial institutions, are repeatedly described as “mainstream”. That is presumably supposed to confer legitimacy on them and suggest they represent Europe and

Europeans. But there is nothing “mainstream” about these unaccountable elites trying to bring about “regime change” in Greece by bleeding the country of hope. If they succeed and Syriza goes down, Greece will end up with real extremists – either the neo-Nazis of Golden Dawn or the country’s crony elites who got Greece into this mess, with the aid of the wider European elites, in the first place. What “mainstream” opinion in the rest of Europe thinks about Greece, Syriza or the European project is impossible to gauge because most European countries are too terrified to put such questions to their electorates in the way Syriza has done.

www.theguardian.com/business/2015/jul/05/greek-referendum-no-vote-signals-huge-challenge-to-eurozone-leaders

UPDATE:

Yanis Varoufakis, the Greek finance minister, has stepped down. In a statement, he suggests that his remaining in his post, despite the backing he just received in the referendum, would make trying to renegotiate a deal with European financial institutions all the harder. They prefer his “absence”. A sad indication that the Europe Union is still a very undemocratic project indeed.

www.theguardian.com/world/commentisfree/2015/jul/06/yanis-varoufakis-resignation-statement-creditors-loathing-with-pride

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