

Requiem at an Empty Grave: Syriza's Momentous Day

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Did those who are already raising Lenin from his tomb to render quick judgement on Syriza's abject "[world-historic defeat](#)" (without saying much about what victory would look like or require) actually bother to read the rather similar plans that Syriza put forward before the referendum and that were consistently rejected by the EU and IMF "Institutions"? This rejection is what the referendum was about.

The resounding OXI was then used by Greek Prime Minister Alexis Tsipras to secure the resignation of the leading political representative of the domestic ruling class (and former Prime Minister), Antonis Samaras, and to get all the party leaders with any such claim or ambitions to speak for that class to adopt Syriza's position on the need for debt restructuring and investment funds. One might even say that if there was a class crossover involved here it was the other way around, one that looks more like what Gramsci meant by a hegemonic strategy rather than the way it is presented from the perspective of those standing on Lenin's Tomb.

The virtually same formulations in Syriza's plans that were just yesterday called intransigence by mainstream media in Greece and aped by the media abroad are now presented as capitulation in order to disguise the significance of this. This is not surprising but what is surprising is the immediate acceptance of this capitulation interpretation by so much of the Western radical left from whom one might have expected a rather more sophisticated reading and less quick rush to negative judgement. Of course, the latter view is shared by many on the radical left here in Greece, including those Syriza MPs who opposed or abstained on the vote in the Greek parliament. But in doing this, they only raise the question of whether the Antarsya strategy of Grexit (which obtained less than 1 per cent of the vote in January) is any more viable today than it was then.

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The real situation is this, as we await the outcome of what will in fact be a momentous day. If there is in fact some significant debt restructuring and investment funds in a deal today and this is not effectively tied to further conditionality, this would offset many times over the four year \$12-billion plan for fiscal surpluses in the plan just passed by the Greek parliament. Of course, even if this is the effective outcome of this weekend's final manoeuvres, this will require some political sophistication to discern, since it will be concealed somewhat so that other European leaders can disguise this from their electorates, whose attitudes the Northern and Central European labour movements have done little or nothing to change. Tsipras would need to explain this well to get people to understand the significance of the victory he - and they with their support in the referendum - would have pulled off.

It will not be a "world historic" victory, for those who like such language, since it will still involve tying the revival of the Greek economy to the fate of what remains a very much capitalist Europe, but this would not mean that the Syriza government would exclude itself from the continuing struggle to challenge and change that.

On the other hand, if Tsipras walks away today accepting the same conditionalities as before to debt restructuring, and without any guaranteed investment funds on top of this, then it will indeed be interesting to see where Lenin will take us once he is let out of his tomb, and sees that he faces yet again the sad fact that a break in the weakest link could not break the stronger links of the labour movements in Central and Northern Europe to both domestic and global capitalism. •

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