

Europe's economic crisis and parliamentary election in Greece

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A parliamentary election took place in a European country, Greece, on January 25, 2015. It was a mid-term poll taken place after about two and a half years of the previous election held in 2012. None of the parties that had contested election could secure majority in it, nor any party succeeded to garner support of another party to form the majority alliance. Syriza, a political party, which is known as a "coalition of the radical left" has become the largest parliamentarian party in the election held this year by securing 149 seats out of total 300. It has formed a coalition government under the leadership of Alexis Tsipras, a Syriza leader, by having alliance with a rightist independent party that has secured 13 parliamentary seats in the present election.

The parliamentary election in a country and the formation of government by a certain party is at large a normal political phenomenon. Thus, it is not an issue which attaches so much of importance for us. Nevertheless, when this result is viewed in the context of severe economic crisis in Greece, the situation of entire Europe entrapped by this crisis, German imperialist's plans to "defer" it, the result of election and positive and negative impact it can impart to other countries etc., it turns to be a matter of serious concern for the world imperialist system in general and the European Union in particular. On the other, the questions like: up to which point will the party Syriza that has stood now against the neo-liberal economic policies imposed by imperialism take this movement and how will it influence others has drawn attraction of the patriotic and the communist forces all across the world. An attempt has been made in this article to study the questions related to it.

The prevailing economic crisis in Greece, which is situated in the weakest link of European Union, is the main reason behind this situation to happen. As an obvious result of the neo-liberal economic policy of imperialism, a serious economic crisis had erupted in most of the capitalist countries of the world from 2008. Of the western countries, mainly the US and Europe were the most sufferers from this crisis. Apart from Germany, almost all of the countries in Europe did not remain unaffected from this disaster. Greece, Portugal, Cyprus, Spain and Italy were the most sufferer countries in Europe. Thanks to this crisis, the economy of four countries mentioned above were so damaged that it was not possible to "save" them without external support. In order to "defer" the economic crisis that could erupt suddenly all across Europe, the European Union led by Germany had even established an "emergency bailout fund" equalling 700 billion Euros in 2010. Greek government had received 240 billion Euros in 2012 as a "bailout loan" to "rescue" the critical Greek economy. In return, Greece had to abide by the austerity measures put forward by European Central Bank, European Union and the International Monetary Fund (Troika). The conditions were: they had to decrease workers' pay, pension, social security allowance and treatment facility but increase labours' working hour and income tax and so on. The then Greek Prime Minister Antonis Samaras agreed the "bailout loan" by signing on the anti-people measures said before.

In the pretext of "deferring" the economic crisis in Europe, the measures which were brought in under the design of world imperialism and planned by European Union are anti-people measures. The government of Greece could make use of only 5% of the "bailout loan" in their own, while the rest was taken away by the old lenders. In fact, it was not to rescue Greece from the crisis but an economic plan prepared by troika to make Greece pay the loan back to the old lenders. By so doing, the troika made Greece a first guinea pig in Europe to test the neo-liberal model set by the world imperialism. There was no possibility that this model could defer the economic crisis, rather it invited a more terrible result. While arriving here, the economic crisis in Greece has started to be manifested in overall social and the political crisis.

Like for example, after the "bailout loan" and "austerity measures" were enforced in Greece the unemployment rate elevated from previous 7% to 26%, 60% of the youths turned unemployed, the pension and the social security allowance were dropped by 25%, the poverty rate increased from 23% to 40.5%, the events of suicide raised up so high that people stopped talking about it, the psychology of pessimism and helplessness spread all across the country, the total loan which was 125% of GDP in 2010 elevated to 175% of the GDP at the end of 2014 etc. In fact, it is not merely a situation of

common economic crisis but of a widespread social crisis and a terrible situation wherein the whole country has reached to the threshold of bankruptcy. On account of this, both the imperialism and world proletariat have now centred their attention on the condition of Greece.

In the later period, Syriza has become a major political force that has been leading struggle against the neo-liberal policies imposed by troika. This is a loose type of coalition formed of many patriotic parties and organisations like: green party, Euro-sceptic parties, euro-communist parties, Trotskyite communist parties and also the Communist Organisation of Greece (KOE) that upholds Marxism-Leninism and Mao Tsetung thought as its guiding ideology. It was founded in 2004 and organised its first congress in 2013. Most of its constituents do not have independent existence now. It is neither a coalition of different parties developed as a united front nor is it a communist party that runs on the basis of democratic centralism. We still have to have in-depth study of its organisational principle and structure. Whatever it is, it has been established as a major patriotic force that firmly stands against the colonial oppression imposed upon Greece by the European Union and mainly the German imperialism. A big section of patriotic and revolutionary people in Greece has supported this alliance because it strongly opposes the anti-people austerity measures imposed by troika.

After the eruption of crisis in 2008, Syriza has been carrying out many militant struggles against the economic and social disaster that has resulted in Greece due to "bailout loan" and "austerity measures" enforced by troika. It is not an average achievement for this coalition to attain the political power by defeating the agents of imperialism in a short period of 10 years. Of course, it is the result of conscious rebellion of the patriotic and revolutionary Greek people against the anti-people policies imposed by troika in the past. Syriza has now led the patriotic movement against the anti-people measures let loose by troika.

At the time of election, Syriza had made promises that it would bring the fiscal monopoly of Euro to an end, renegotiate troika's austerity measures with the lender institutions and provide opportunities of employment by developing national economy in Greece. After the election result has been public, people think that the Syriza government has arrived at such a responsible position wherefrom it can set the Greek people free from the on-going crisis by materialising those promises. They expect respite from this government, because they understand that the slogans Syriza had propagated at the time of election have now become slogans to put into action by Tsipras government.

On the other, as a result of neo-liberal policy of troika, the economic crisis in various countries of Europe, not in Greece only, has been worsening. And people in those countries have been agitating against it. In the pretext of liberating country and the people, the agents of imperialism have been furthering crisis by imposing the package of austerity measures upon the dispossessed ones. And on the other the role played by traditional labour organisations has created disgust among the workers. As an alternative to all these, the formation of anti-establishment parties like Syriza is in the rise all over Europe. The organisations like: PODEMOS, a left party in Spain, Scotland National Party and Five Star Movement in Italy are its examples. All of these parties clash with the monopoly of Euro and troika. That is, the parties like Syriza in Greece have come forward to lead the people in the anti-imperialist movement in many countries of Europe. In Madrid, the capital city of Spain, tens of thousands of people had enthusiastically turned up in the election rally organised on January 31, 2015 by PODEMOS.

Thus, a strong political wind against troika is blowing in Europe now. And, there is a kind of political terror all across Europe including in England, because the ghost of Syriza is chasing the political parties and organisations partisan to European Union. David Cameron, the British Prime Minister, seems afraid of the possible victory of labour party in the upcoming election of England. In the days ahead, the polarisation between two streams, one, a neo-liberal stream led by troika and two, an anti-troika stream formed of Syriza and the likes, seems to sharpen further in Europe. In fact it is the manifestation of sharpening of the contradiction between imperialism and proletarian revolution. This contradiction is now coming up on the surface in Europe and smouldering in the bourgeois society all across the world. All this shows that the objective situation for proletarian revolution is getting favourable all over the world in general and Europe in particular.

Without a doubt, the European Union will further increase its intervention to suppress the anti-troika voice, a challenge for the imperialist system at present. Evidently, it will go on tightening its encirclement upon Syriza government to force it implement austerity measures and the neo-liberal economic policies as well. At that time, Syriza government will have only two options, first: break the imperialist encirclement and stand by the people or second: get allured in sweet words of imperialism and forget the promises made with them. Which course will Syriza follow, is not decided by its subjective wish. Rather, it is decided by the ideological and political line it adopts.

It has already been clear that Syriza is not a communist party built upon the ideological foundation of Marxism-Leninism-Maoism and also it is not a united front formed under the leadership of a genuine communist party. Therefore, the government led by Syriza does not have ideological and political status to fight imperialism till the last. The European Union, which knows it well, will work hard to use the government against people by intimidation of force or enticement of sweet words whichever works for them well. In general, Syriza and the Tsipras government don't opt to be a pawn of European Union but their subjective wish does not decide on what they to do. It is almost sure that the agreement they want to reach will not be in the favour of Greece and Greek people because their policy is to renegotiate the austerity measures with imperialism. It will ultimately make them stand by European Union led by Germany. This is the first possibility. It will mean to establish imperialist hegemony once again in Greece through Syriza and Tsipras. It is not in favour of Greece, Greek people, Syriza party and Tsipras government. Not to kneel down before imperialism but to stand by Greece and Greek people at any cost will be in the interest of Syriza and Tsipras as well.

On the other, in case imperialism fails by any means to make Syriza and Tsipras kneel down it will tighten its political encirclement, impose economic sanctions, break up the coalition and ultimately establish a puppet government by incorporating its diehard agents. As a result, it will further jeopardise the national independence of Greece and the Greek people will be forced to live a difficult life than now. This is the second possibility.

Of the two possibilities said before, none of them is in favour of Greece and Greek people. However, the first possibility is more deadly. Not only for Greece and the Greek people, it will be in favour of neither Syriza nor the government led by it. It spreads pessimism among the people and destroys anti-imperialist movement in Greece for long. We are ourselves a witness that the loss inflicted by the betrayal of leadership has been several times painful and shocking than the loss incurred by the oppression of enemy. Therefore, if one has to make a choice between these two, the second possibility is in favour of the country and people. Because, the possibility of waging and developing movement to defend national independence and ensure the people's democratic right and people's livelihood remains more in the second option. In the given situation, the movement in Greece may go a little farther but it cannot defeat imperialism because it lacks a clear ideological and political line and a genuine communist party to lead it. So, it is almost sure that the problems of national independence, democracy and people's livelihood in Greece will further deteriorate in the days ahead and the Greece will fall in the vortex of additional crisis. It is true not only for Greece but all the movements against troika that have started coming up in the countries like Spain, Portugal, Italy and Cyprus as well. In the present era of imperialism and proletarian revolution, the political party that can fight imperialism till the end is a communist party built under the ideological guidance of Marxism-Leninism-Maoism.

It has already been mentioned that the public opinion is getting polarised for and against austerity measures all across Europe. The polarisation, in which imperialism and their agents have stood at one pole and patriotic and the working people at the other, is rapid. The main political reason behind this polarisation is the result of intensification of two contradictions in Europe: one, the contradiction between European Union at one pole and oppressed nations and people on the other and two, the contradiction between capital and labour in the countries of Europe. In addition to this, the world is getting polarised and the inter-imperialist contradiction is sharpening. It is also playing indirectly a role in the polarisation going on in Europe now. All this leads to a conclusion that the polarisation in Europe at present is the result of intensification of all the world's basic contradictions in that continent. It shows the objective situation in Europe is getting favourable for proletarian revolution to advance.

After the collapse of social imperialism in Russia and mainly after the fall of Berlin Wall in Germany, the slogans like "Marxism has failed", "Communism turned futile" and "Capitalism is inevitable" etc. used to be rampantly chanted all across Europe. But, now the slogans like, down with imperialism, down with neo-liberalism, long live communist party, long live socialism etc. have started reverberating in the streets of European cities. In fact, it has once again brought to surface that the failure of capitalism has caused the socialism to come forward as its substitute. It is not simply a coincidence that the slogans like long live socialism have started reverberating now in Europe, which was sometimes before a centre of socialist revolution. It can easily be guessed that the essence of socialist revolution is hidden inside the wave of anti-imperialist movement now in Europe.

Long term solution of the crises and the contradictions that have surfaced all across Europe in these days is not and cannot be parliamentary election nor can it be a "pro-people government" or a "revolutionary opposition" elected by it. Only the proletarian revolution under the leadership of a Communist Party guided by Marxism-Leninism-Maoism can bring all sorts of reactions including imperialism to an end and thereby solve all the contradictions the imperialist world order has created. So the present necessity is to develop class struggle in a planned way. It has to be done with a strategy of proletarian revolution where the MLM parties exist and take up the task of building a communist party in the countries where it does not. Therefore, the revolutionaries in Europe including Greece should lay emphasis on building a revolutionary communist party and developing struggle for socialism than being engaged in building a "pro-people government" or a "revolutionary opposition" by way of parliamentary election. This is the one and only one way that can liberate forever the oppressed nations and people from the imperialist oppression all over the world including in Greece.

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