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EUROSOCIALISM, THE CASE OF GREECE

Introduction to the international anarchist gathering
by collectiva ARENA

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I would like to start my introduction with a short history of the Socialist movement in Greece. I believe that this will be of great help in the better understanding of the nature of PASOK, notably the first socialist party in the history of new society, which not only gained the highest percentage in the latest elections, but it is also the Government of the state.

So, in Greece, we will not be far from the reality if we say that the socialist movement until 1974 was merely non-existent. In the time of the second half of the 19th century, when every where in Europe, the socialist ideas gained ground among the workers and the intellectuals, in Greece only individuals knew what was the meaning of all these. The peculiarities accompanying the first stage of formation of the new society after one national-liberation struggle, did not allow the propagation of all these ideas in great masses of the population.

This situation remained the same until the beginning of the 20th century. Only during the decade of twenties and thirties when the first worked out socialist ideas appeared (mainly of humanistic content and without any reference to marxism). Always expressed by some distinguished personalities of the political or social scene, without any movement or institution behind (for example party, syndicate, etc).

The communist theory of marxism-leninism being helped by the Russian revolution, influenced all the creative spirits of that era. And inside the structural changes of the greek society in the period between the two world wars, we can say, that after the foundation of the Greek Communist party in 1918, it became the main ideology as well in policy, of all the criticized (with a view of over throw) the bourgeoisie society.

During the second World War and the German occupation, and again a part from the great movement of ideas, the socialists (now clearly of reformistic orientation) were not able to overcome some intellectual circles. Certain small parties were founded which were quickly absorbed either by various formations of the center or by EDA (The cover of the illegal at that time Communist party).

We can say that the first person to speak about socialism in Greece (with specific references to Marx) was the present prime minister Andreas Papandreou. At the early sixties while the formation of Center won the general Elections under the leadership of Andreas father Georg Papandreou, Andreas appears like the leading personality of the political scene.

Professor of Economics in the U.S.A, being not only a socialist like his predecessors but a marxist advocator. So Andreas Papandreou succeeds in attracting all the radical youth of Center, and persons who lay to the left section of the party, but they are clearly distinguished from the communist party with its intense past-consuming literature.

We must not forget that we are living in a period of economic growth of the Greek Capitalism. The police state (which follows the defeat of Communists during the civil war) has gradually adopted more accepted methods of social policy. The early stages of the agreement to join the European Community, brings Greece to the position of European Countries, with some kind of welfare state. The general tendency of the Greek society to smooth the political life, and the creation of a welfare state, the end of the police state, was violently ended first in 1965, with the overthrow of the Center government due the Royal Conspiracy, and then in 1967 with the junta of Colonels. During the dictatorship, Andreas was arrested but soon he was permitted to leave the country. It was then that he founded one of the strongest organization against junta, PAC. PAC will form the basis for the foundation of PASOK. It had among its ranks, all the tendencies gathered round Andreas and the Union of Centre in short, fighters of the resistance and civil war, were not related to the Communist party. Marxists, followers Tse and people against the Vietnam war. Young people fighting for the independence of Cyprus, better living conditions and education. People from the Center who saw in Andreas the natural leader of Center, as well as Trotskists.

This mixing shows the general picture of an ideology, which wants at least in words, to stand as an alternative of the bourgeois society, and more one to its fascist section. But in fact it will be no more than another view of the same society adjusted to the western model of capitalism, after the second world war.

In August 1974, junta falls and the traditional bourgeois political figures under the leadership of Karamanlis, return to their well-known roles.

2. PASOK AS AN OPPOSITION PARTY:

First of all we have to underline the significance on the leadership of A. Papandreou. To people who are accustomed to leaders, and who never vote for a party according to its political principles, but according to the person in the head of it, it seemed that Papandreou was the unique political personality, which could confront of Karamanlis (and under this point of view he really was.) Andreas on the other hand was taking interest in the development and conservation of his myth, giving always the impression of a leader who was easily accessible, enthusiastic and simple (always wore a pullover etc). His participation in the government of the Union of Centre, his resistant fight against junta, his rhetorical irreconcilability, were convincing those who incorporated in the bourgeois

ideology, thought that the solution of their problems could be achieved by, a parliamentary change.

Another important point is the differentiation of PASOK from the two communist parties, something which means that, although PASOK is based on certain marxist ideas, it does not accept completely the marxist ideology and especially Leninism. From the beginning of its function PASOK took a critical position regarding the model of Soviet Union. The marxism of PASOK in the degree that it concerns economic matters, is similar to the marxism of the school of "Monthly Review", whereas its attitude towards the social matters it is more confused.

So in more details in the conditions of the capitalistic crisis PASOK speaks for a rational economic development, a better use of the productive factors and resources, a control over the monopolistic corporations by the state, an extensive programme of nationalisation, aiming at the more equitable distribution of national income, a reform, and a simplification of the bureaucratic machine of the public sector. However, on the social level, without ever disturbing the basic relations of power and the state. PASOK also is supposed to fight for a democratic university, for the women's rights, and for the improvement of the every day life. The ultimate aim of PASOK's strategy is the socialistic transformation of the greek society, a transformation which until today, remains extraordinary ambiguous.

A third characteristic of PASOK's policy as an opposition party is, the co-existence of different political tendencies, including simultaneously elements of the political circles of the centre-right, and of the communist-marxists. So, in the same political party, we can observe the co-existence of the politicians of the Union Centre who were seeking for a revenge, for the events of 1965, politicians of conservative origin, without any relationship with the left ideas. We can also find social-democrats admirers of the German model or the English Labour Party, marxist followers of Che and the national-liberation movements of the third world. Finally Trotskyists, who even issue their own journal criticizing PASOK from inside. Besides the disputes in the interior of the party reaching their peak at 1977, the different fractions of PASOK, remains apparently unified under the indisputable leadership of Papandreu.

The Fourth characteristic of PASOK is, its intense populism. In Greece the end of the civil war and the final defeat of the communists, was followed in reality, by a parliamentary dictatorship. Exiles, imprisonments, executions, beatings, forced the social movement to retreat. Whereas in the rest of Europe, capitalism introduced the collaboration of the classes, under the shape of the "welfare state", in Greece nothing similar happens. Even the effort which was done in the beginnings of the sixties by the government of the Centre, was interrupted violently by the dictatorship. As Karamantlis is unable to fulfill this vacuum, PASOK undertakes this role. It's ^{theory} has not a class reference, in contrary, its ultimate aim is to conceal

Therefore the ideology of PASOK is identified with the resistance against the German conqueror (on the other hand it differentiates itself from the powers of the left which conducted the civil war), accepts the demands of the large, social strata of the population, for peace, democracy, and the termination of state suppression, and proclaims the collaboration of classes, presenting at the same time, the social contrasts of the capitalist society as an opposition between the people and the big capital. Finally, PASOK propose the vision of Greece, independent from the foreign centers of decisions (Greece belongs to Greeks is the main signal of PASOK).

So we can now arrive at the fifth element-characteristic of PASOK's policy: the intense aversion for the foreigners as it is indicated in the following "motos" of PASOK: National independence, Yankees go home, Greece out of the block of E.E.C and NATO. PASOK reflects the public sentiment when it demands the independence of the foreigners, because the greek people have suffered a lot of them, and especially the Americans.

Relevant to all these, was the oppositional policy of PASOK against the right. With "motos" were confused and contradictory, PASOK managed to convert voters from different social strata (workers, young people and students, peasants etc). Taking interest always in not touching basic principles of the capitalistic values and institutions were in danger (for example the attitude of the youth of PASOK, towards the occupations of the universities in 1979) using an arbitrary phraseology in matters as the contrast against The Turkey or the Americans, PASOK managed to win the social acceptance.

The Left under the shape of PASOK, managed on 1981 to afford the alternative solution to the old-fashioned ideology and policy of the right. The character of this Left, it's a question which will be answered in the following lines. However, the result of the elections of '81 should not surprise anyone who had maintained his contact with the social reality. We can say that the most of the greek people "forgetting" the basic class contradictions, voted PASOK, in a situation where each one was thinking only his individual interest and his personal vision.

As regarding the relationship of PASOK with the social-democratic parties of Europe, I think that according to what already said, it became clear that the Greek socialist party, has certain similarities with the corresponding European, but it also has some original characteristics, related to the general particularities of the evolution of the Greek Capitalism.

3. PASOK IN POWER :

PASOK in the first year of its ruling, saw to manifest its good intentions. Despite the huge economic problems, gave a rise to the wages and especially some kind of pensions which were in a very low level. He recognized the National Resistance by passing a law in the parliament. He granted pensions to the old fighters, and he banned the celebrations who reminded people the civil war. He offered economic advantage to the army officers, and he promoted officers that were loyal to him, in the police force. He founded the ministry of Youth and Athletics, a ministry that tries to solve the problems of young people. PASOK banned the laws against workers which Right had used a lot. Holding firmly his position against NATO (for example the Polish affair) and an offensive policy against EEC, he satisfied the public feeling.

But in the second year as problems remained unsolved, things began to change. As the Keynesian policy did not bring any results, the wages were freezing, the automatic price adjustment is out off. Every move for strike was provoked by the government unionist. Despite the efforts to maintain the conditions of cooperation with the government, the problems of the capitalist accumulation are so urgent, that need other kind of measures.

So, laws that mainly prohibit strikes are put forward, especially in the public sector,

and in the Banks, which had a lot of successful strikes in their history. The workers on strike, are now facing the police violence, as they demand to stop the unemployment, and don't close corporations, because of economic problems and big debts. As for this situation is concerned, PASOK discovers self-management, and nationalization, so the workers are not harmed. The private bosses give their places to public ones, and the unionists servants.

At the universities, we have a new law that seems to be democratic, including some kind of participation of the students. All interest is directed to the foreign affairs, and mainly to the problem of Turkey, which is now, the number one problem of the Greek society. It's a wonderful excuse not to reduce the military service. Despite the fact, that the number of suicides among soldiers is increasing, the national security remains the main goal.

As we running the third year of a socialist ~~government~~ government, problems remain the same. In the economy, we had a slight decrease in the inflation, but it is still one of the highest in the European community. The unemployment grows up, to a part that can hardly hidden behind very carefully presented statistics. Strikes despite the sabotage by the unionists of PASOK and Communist party, increase in numbers. The base overthrows the leadership, and proceeds to the struggle (for example the buses of Athens and their strike, which lasted for months).

In private corporations which face up problems, the occupation of factories succeed one after the other. PASOK answers with violence, but until what? Young people enter the margin of society and don't correspond to the formula - social value: school, university, job. Hoodlums, punks, begin to exist in the Greek society. Outside of the big cities, young people deny their marginal role, publish magazines, encourage cultural activities, which the ministry of Youth tries to control. PASOK, turns gradually to the Right, accepts Karamanlis and his opinions, as he now the president of the Greek "democracy".

After all these what conclusion can we reach? First of all, despite its retreats, PASOK and his leader undoubtedly maintain their attraction to the Greek people. This can be shown by the elections for the European parliament, in which PASOK gained the 42% of the voters. But also until now, the reasons, which brought PASOK in power have not definitely been overturned. However as the problems of the Greek Capitalistic society do not come to a solution, and after PASOK there is no alternative solution (there was when the experiment of Karamanlis failed between '74-'81), we are facing with the problem of what's next.

Of course we are living inside reality and do not assert that we will have a revolution tomorrow. But some sporadic actions at first, which increase in number, at the same time with the crisis of social values, make us to feel optimistic. The OVERTHROWN of this miserable society, on a final aspect, depends on our hands. Let's struggle to bring this time closer.

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