



SYNASPISMOS

COALITION OF THE LEFT OF MOVEMENTS AND ECOLOGY

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INTERNATIONAL / Bulletin

No 38, December 2010



3rd European Left Congress

In a period of deep crisis and growing social and economic problems in Europe and the world over, the European Left party holds its 3rd Congress in Paris, 3-5 December 2010, which will be hosted by the French Communist Party.

Since its founding on May 9 2005 in Rome, the EL membership has grown to 23 full members and 15 observer parties from EU and non – EU countries.

The Agenda of the 3rd EL Congress includes a debate and adoption of a “**Joint Action Platform for resistance and alternatives in Europe**”, proposed statute changes, several political motions and election of new Chairperson, Vice chairperson(s) and treasurer.

Also, the EL Women’s Assembly (to be held on 2 December 2010) and TRANSFORM reports will be presented to the Congress.

Every full member party can be represented to the Congress by 12 delegates, 6 men and 6 women.

The SYNASPISMOS delegation will be headed by party President Alexis Tsipras.

Joint Action Platform

The “Joint Action Platform” prepared for the Congress focuses on the unprecedented capitalist crisis and the catastrophic consequences of the austerity policies applied by the European Governments, conservative or social democratic, which require the broadest possible and coordinated resistance by the left forces and the social movements.

The draft document states that: “*Demonstrations, strikes and other forms of protest by workers, students, peasants and the retired all over Europe show that there is growing resistance against the tough austerity measures as more and more people demand a pro-people, pro jobs and pro-environment way out of the crisis in the direction of social cohesion, full employment, decent wages and pensions, improved education, health and other social services. However, the protests will not be successful in the long term without Europe-wide political action, and deep changes in the European policy and institutions – often formulated under the slogan ‘Another Europe is possible’.*

The European Left will act once more to broaden the appeal of sensible alternatives for a social, democratic, ecologic and peaceful Europe. ■

Broad Left Front against the Memorandum Extracts from the Central Political Committee Resolution

The Central Political Committee of SYNASPISMOS held a plenary meeting on the 27 and 28 of November 2010 in order to evaluate the results of the recent Regional and Municipal elections and draw a plan of action for the coming period.

The direction of our activities and the practical decisions reached by the Central Political Committee deal with all aspects of the new tasks facing us, on the political and social level, the common action of the left forces and the functioning of the party.

The Central Political Committee estimated that “the electoral result as a whole sent out a message of opposition and resistance to the “Memorandum” policies and to the two-party system in general. On the other hand, it was not strong enough in order to set in motion immediate political developments in a progressive direction”.

According to the CPC “the most significant message of these elections was sent by the abstention, the invalid and blank votes and this is a message that concerns the left too. In Athens the abstention was over 50% while it fluctuated around 40% in the whole of Greece while the void and blank votes went up four times compared with any previous electoral battle.”

Evaluating the total results of the local authorities elections, the CPC of SYNASPISMOS considers that



“ especially in the regions and the larger cities, even though the party percentages are stable, in the given situation they constitute stagnation, they do not meet our goals and this is not satisfactory for us”.

What to do

The local authorities elections constituted the continuation of important political developments. “In less than a year and a half, states the CPC resolution, we contested three significant electoral battles in adverse conditions. The crisis itself continuously poses new questions and creates new needs. We have the ability to cope with the situation. SYNASPISMOS has already shaped its own history, it represents the current of renovative and radical” *Continued on Page 3*

Alexis Tsipras in 21st AKEL Congress

The AKEL party of Cyprus held a very successful 21st Congress in Nicosia on 25 – 28 November 2010 which was attended by 67 foreign delegates.

The opening session was addressed by Cyprus Republic President cde **Dimitris Christofias**. The new CC of AKEL re-elected cde **Andros Kyprianou** as General Secretary.

The SYNASPISMOS delegation, headed by party President cde **Alexis Tsipras**, included CPC members **P.Trigazis** and **N.Pappas**.

In his address to the Congress, Alexis Tsipras expressed his high esteem for the struggles of AKEL and its role as a unitary force of the left in Europe and internationally. He expressed full support for the proposals and the consistent efforts of President Christofias towards a just solution of the Cyprus problem which will establish a bizonal-bicommunal federation, with political equality and one sovereignty, citizenship and international personality.

A key factor – he said – to achieve such a solution is the rapprochement of the two communities for which AKEL is fighting consistently.

Alexis Tsipras stressed that the Cyprus problem is at the heart of the struggle for peace in our troubled region and referred to the possibility of new militarist and war dangers because of the current deep crisis of the neo-liberal capitalist globalization which is also a crisis of the system of international relations.

He emphasized that among the new, very negative developments is the adoption of a new strategic concept making NATO a “global policeman” and expanding its interventionist role.

But he also mentioned positive developments, such as the development of the social movements globally and the left victories in Latin America. ■

Evros Appeal

For the mutual and balanced reduction of arms of Greece and Turkey

A joint appeal, entitled the “Evros appeal” for the mutual and balanced reduction of arms and military budgets of Greece and Turkey, was signed symbolically on the bridge of Evros (Meric) River, which is the northern Greek-Turkish border, by the Presidents of Synaspismos of Greece and ODP of Turkey, Alexis Tsipras and Alper Tas respectively.

The Synaspismos delegation was made up of Panos Trigazis, head of the Foreign Policy dpt, Mustafa Mustafa, former MP, Takis Haritos and Kostas Pantazidis, secretaries of the SYN prefectural organizations as well as Youth cadres. The large ODP delegation included Prof. Hairy Kozanoglou, former party President.

A message by Lothar Bisky, President of the European Left party, was read to the participants of the events that followed on both sides of the border.

The full text of the Evros appeal is as follows:

“From the river Evros (Meric), the border between Greece and Turkey, the Freedom and Solidarity Party (ODP) and Synaspismos (Coalition of the Left of Movements and Ecology), launch an appeal for the mutual and balanced reduction of arms and military budgets of the two countries.

Carrying on the campaign for this proposal, which we have formulated and claimed over some years, we are holding joint events in Edirne and Alexandroupoli-Komotini on 24 and 25 of September 2010.

We state once again that peace is the only choice for the peoples of Greece and Turkey. The problems in Greek-Turkish relations need and can be solved peacefully, through dialogue and in accordance with international law.

We **strongly oppose** militarism and chauvinism and the cultivation of nationalist hatred between our peoples

Today, when the whole world is experiencing the painful consequences of an unprecedented capitalist crisis, **the struggles for peace and disarmament-nuclear and conventional- assume greater significance.** The mutual and balanced reduction of arms and military budgets of Greece and Turkey will constitute an important step towards real peace, mutual trust and good neighbourly relations between the two countries.

The exorbitant military expenditure and the expensive arms constitute a heavy burden on the economies of Greece and Turkey.

The military budgets of both countries as a percentage of the GDP are more than double of the European and NATO averages. The continuation of the arms race between them is catastrophic for both countries and peoples. It harms both societies and benefits only the military industries and those who want to apply the imperialist “divide and rule” doctrine in Greek – Turkish relations. It serves the war plans of the USA and NATO.

We cannot reconcile ourselves with this reality which deteriorates the social and developmental problems of the two countries. The adoption of our proposal will release huge resources for their economic, social and ecological development. At the same time, it will be a heavy blow to the militarist forces and a victory for democracy and the culture of peace.

We call on the governments of the two countries to move beyond words to action and to set, as a priority, to the greek-turkish dialogue the issue of arms expenditure reduction. But, in order to achieve



SYNASPISMOS and ODP Presidents sign the Evros appeal

this goal we need to strengthen and broaden the “citizens diplomacy”.

We take this opportunity to send a common message of solidarity to the Cypriot people, declaring our full support to the efforts for a just and viable solution through inter-communal dialogue within the framework of the United Nations and on the basis of its resolutions. The peoples of the island – Greekcyprits and Turkishcyprits can build a bicomunal-bizonal federation for an independent and demilitarized Cyprus, free of foreign bases.

Peace is an urgent duty for our wider region. The Eastern Mediterranean and the Middle East need urgently denuclearization and demilitarization processes. They need to be rid of wars and imperialist interventions. In this direction we support the creation of a nuclear free Middle East. First of all the Palestinian issue must be solved, in accordance with UN resolutions, with the creation of an independent Palestinian State in the ‘67 borders, with East Jerusalem as its capital.

Alexandroupolis - Edirne
24 September 2010 ■

SYN EXTRAORDINARY CONGRESS

SYNASPISMOS (Coalition of the Left of Movements and Ecology) held its 6th (Extra-ordinary) Congress in Athens, from 3 to 6 June 2010.

More than 12.000 party members participated in the pre-congress proceedings (approximately 75% of the total registered membership). In total, 1356 delegates were elected by the local assemblies all over the country (an analogy of 1 delegate for every 12 members, with a 30% representation quota for women).

Re-election of Alexis Tsipras

Alexis Tsipras was re-elected as President of Synaspismos. He received 785 votes (75,63% of the vote of the 1038 delegates who took part in the election of a new Party President). A second candidate for the post, comrade Giorgos Vlahogiorgos, got 56 votes (5,40%). 162 delegates casted blank votes and there were also 35 invalid votes.

A new Central Political Committee was elected by 1040 delegates. The new CPC consists of 125 members (including the President of the Party and the Secretary of the Youth of Synaspismos, as ex

officio members). In the election of the CPC there was a 28% quota for women (equal to the percentage of the registered women delegates) and a 30% quota for new members. Five different lists competed for the vote of the delegates, with the following results:

“Left Unity” : 50.63%, 62 members (17 women),
“Left Current”: 29.83%, 37 members (11 women),
“Unified List of SYN members 2010”: 17.23%, 21 members (6 women),
“Initiative for the Left Re-composition”: 1.17%, 2 members (1 woman),
“List of independents”: 1.17, 1 member

The new CPC members are 46 (37%), the women CPC members are 35 (28%).

Also, a new 5-member Economic Control Committee was elected.

Breakaway group

The “Renovative Wing” of Synaspismos contested the majoritarian “Political Decision Document” with their own Document, which called for the immediate withdrawal of Synaspismos from our political and electoral coalition of SYRIZA. Immediately after the massive approval of the “Political Decision

Document”, the leader of the “Renovative Wing”, MP Fotis Kouvelis, announced that the Wing would not participate in the following votings for the new Party President and Organs (CPC and Economic Control Committee). After this announcement, the majority of the registered delegates of the “Renovative Wing” (approximately 200 delegates) walked out of the Congress. Among them were 3 MPs of the Parliamentary Group of SYRIZA, comrades Fotis Kouvelis, Thanassis Leventis and Nikos Tsoukalis. However, many other leading figures of the “Renovative Wing”, like our MP and former MEP, comrade Dimitris Papadimoulis, declared their position in favor of the unity of the Party, stayed in the Congress, and finally voted in the remaining processes.

On Saturday, 12 June 2010, the newly elected CPC of Synaspismos held its first meeting, to elect a new Secretary and the new Political Secretariat of the Party. Comrade Dimitris Vitsas was re-elected as Secretary of the CPC (85 votes in favor, 40 blank votes). The new Political Secretariat consists of 21 members (5 women and 16 men). ■

... from the front page

Broad Left Front against the Memorandum

Extracts from the Central Political Committee Resolution

left, with its own past, present and future.”

The CPC also notes that “we respond to the great attack that is developing world wide, on a European and local level, by participating in the active resistance of the forces of labour, we formulate alternative radical proposals which correspond to today’s social needs, show and open the way to our strategic goal: socialism with democracy and freedom”.

Regarding the immediate goals of SYNASPISMOS “**the whole party struggle is oriented towards repulsing government policies as they are planned and implemented in accordance with the International Monetary Fund, the European Union and the European Central Bank.** It is our belief that these policies as a whole and every measure that is against popular interest should meet with the active resistance of the working people, the unemployed, the pensioners, the youth. We strengthen our internationalist cooperation and solidarity. **We work for the unitary action of the left and the cooperation of all the forces which struggle from a progressive perspective for the overthrow of the Memorandum, the government policies and the government itself.**

SYNASPISMOS is committed to creating “the widest possible social front of resistance and a political front of cooperation reaching from the radical social

democracy to the radical ecology. Our goal is to create a new political hope, which will receive and offer support to the social struggles, will raise the issue of governance of the country and a new course of Greece but of Europe too on the basis of the decisions of our recent Congress”.

In this direction, “**our party should promote actively the cooperation and common action of all the political forces of the left on a specific agenda which will include the following subjects:** Unemployment, collective labour agreements, education, health, culture, environmental protection, labour and social rights.

We suggest to the SYRIZA parliamentary group to take immediate steps for dialogue for the common action of all the forces struggling from a left point of view against the memorandum government policy.”

In addition, the Central Political Committee decided **the organisation of a broad campaign**, for the two coming months in order to promote the party’s alternative answer to the economic crisis.

Finally, the Central Political Committee decided the convocation of a **thematic Congress on European policies** in the first half of 2011. A Congress which can also constitute a kind of international forum where all the parties of the European Left will be invited to attend. ■

Important Local Elections In Greece

Regional (first time) and municipal elections were held in Greece on 7 and 14 November 2010.

SYNASPISMOS fought these elections with a variety of alliances. In 10 out of 13 regions the SYRIZA allies were together. In the Region of Athens (Attiki), where almost half of the national population votes, our list, “Cooperation for Attiki-No to the Memorandum”, a coalition of SYN forces and PASOK dissidents, gathered 6,2% (our highest regional percentage) and elected 3 delegates to the biggest Regional Council of the country.

In every region, SYN and its allies won representation by one or more regional councillors.

Important successes were scored at the municipal level. In the third biggest Greek **municipality of Patras** Yannis Dimaras was elected as new Mayor with the support of SYN and other left forces, against PASOK, N.D. and KKE supported lists. Similar victories were achieved in **Argyroupolis – Ellinikon, Elefsina, Nea Ionia, Keratsini-Drapetsona, Saronicos, Lykovrisi- Pefki, Limnos.** With broader Municipal movements SYN members were elected Mayors in **Aghios Nicolaos** (Crete) and Ikaria. .

But in some cases, as in **Kessariani** and **Petroupoli**, SYN members who were outgoing Mayors failed to be re-elected. Unfortunately, the historically significant and well-known for its left tradition, Municipality of Kaisariani (in the region of Attiki), SYN and SYRIZA forces lost the majority after 12 years. The candidate of PASOK won the second round for just 12 votes, while the leadership of KKE publically ordered their local voters to cast a null vote in the second round.

The number of votes and the percentage of the two bigger parties (PASOK and New Democracy) hit a record low, despite the fact that PASOK and New Democracy “shared” all 13 Regions (PASOK won 8 Regions and New Democracy the remaining 5). PASOK received 1.100.000 less votes in comparison to the last Parliamentary Elections (October 2009), while the right wing “New Democracy” lost another 600.000 votes. It is very important to note that the two bigger parties failed to exceed 70% in total. The KKE increased its percentage nationally and its votes, but as it fought the elections on its own, elected only

one Mayor.

The new, interesting but also alarming element of these elections was the **increasing abstention**. The trend that was noted in the first round (around 47-48%), increased to almost 60% in the central Region of Attiki in the second round. This radical increase of abstention shows the increasing discontent and the lack of political representation that large masses of voters express. According to the polls, a large part of the people that abstended rejects the bipartisan policies, but still does not recognize themselves in one of the existing alternatives.

According to some election analysts the results of the first round of the elections in 7 November gives the following projection in case of national elections (in parenthesis the comparison with their percentage in the 2009 National Elections):

PASOK: 34,5% (-10%), New Democracy: 32,7% (-0,8%), KKE: 10,9% (+3,3%), 4. SYN / SYRIZA: 4,5% (-0,1%), LAOS (extreme right-wing): 4,3% (-1,3%), Ecologists-Greens: 2,7% (+0,2%), Democratic Left (split from SYN in June 2010): 2,1%, 8. ANTARSYA (anticapitalist left): 1,8%

The total percentage of the various Left forces shows a significant increase: It is now nationally estimated around 23%. More significantly, in the central region of Attiki, the lists supported by the various parties and organizations of the wider Left (KKE, SYN/SYRIZA, Democratic Left, ANTARSYA, Ecologists-Greens, etc) gathered an impressive, historically high 33%.

However, a divided left is not able to promote alternative policies effectively. SYNASPISMOS strongly believes that the duty and the need to overcome the existing fragmentations and build a wide alliance of all political and social forces opposing the Memorandum, the PASOK policy and the IMF-ECB-EU Troika is now becoming even more urgent.

SYNASPISMOS will continue to work on our unitarian plan, to have a left that can struggle together on a wide spectrum of alternative policies from the “smallest to the biggest problem”. Furthermore, we will continue to work with people who differentiate themselves from PASOK, who are disillusioned with the harsh neoliberal policies of PASOK. ■

NO TO NATO – NO TO WAR!

The adoption by a NATO Summit in Lisbon (19-20 November 2010) of a new strategic concept which transforms the Atlantic alliance into a “global policeman” caused widespread protest. An anti-NATO summit and a big march were organized in the Portuguese capital where SYRIZA was represented by Olga Athaniti.

The **European Left** Secretariat issued a statement which said that:

“Instead of disbanding itself, following the end of the cold war and the dissolution of the Warsaw Pact in 1991, NATO is being expanded and globalised. It is involved in the so called “war on terror” and conducting barbaric wars, as happened in Yugoslavia in 1999 and in Afghanistan since 2001.

We are totally opposed to NATO’s new interventionist role and its transformation into a “global policeman” which will further undermine and marginalize the UN.

Its new strategic concept is an anachronistic and militarist concept. It will feed militarism, escalate tensions and provoke new wars. It will further increase world military spending, which already



accounts for more than 4.2 billion dollars per day globally, while millions of people die from hunger and social protection systems are radically cut in the name of the current capitalist crisis.

We strongly deplore NATO’s dangerous nuclear strategy of “first strike” and its plans to build an “anti-missile shield” promoted by the USA. A peaceful Europe requires the abolition of all nuclear weapons throughout the world.

Euro-atlanticism and NATO’s eastwards expansion creates new divisions and new enmities in Europe. We demand the termination of the NATO-EU coop-

eration, not its enhancement as is provided by NATO’s new strategic concept. We call upon all European states to withdraw from Afghanistan and contribute to the end of the 9-year war through political dialogue within the UN framework.

The European Left believes that the multi-form security challenges confronting Europe and the whole world in the 21st century cannot be addressed by military means and an expanding NATO, which must be abolished. What is needed is a comprehensive all-european security system based on the OSCE and its principles, which can safeguard peace through disarmament, equitable cooperation and co-development for the peoples of Europe and the whole world”

On behalf of SYN, Political Secretariat member **Costas Issyhos** pointed out that:

“It is a paradox, today, when Greece is facing the worst ever economic crisis in its recent history, that the Greek Prime Minister should take part in the Summit, agree to all its decisions and submit to NATO policies which give birth to new dangers for the security and the territorial integrity of Greece.” ■

PROFILE OF SYNASPISMOS

SYNASPISMOS (abbreviation SYN) is a political party of the renovative, democratic and radical left, founded in June 1992. Its name, “Synaspismos”, (Coalition of the Left and Progress) has been retained from its previous structure, which was a coalition of left and progressive parties and groups that was formed in 1989. The transformation was decided in 1991 after the CP of Greece (KKE) split from the Coalition. The name of the party was amended on June 1st, 2003 and since then SYNASPISMOS is the “Coalition of the Left of Movements and Ecology”.

Synaspismos identifies itself with the ideas and values of democratic socialism, ecology, feminism and anti-militarism. It believes in pluralism and considers the defense of human rights non-negotiable.

The Party’s regular Congress is held every three years, electing a Central Political Committee (CPC). The Congress elects the Party President and the CPC elects its Secretary and Political Secretariat.

On major issues the party members decide directly (e.g. the lists for national and European elections are composed through secret ballot among the members).

The Party is closely related with the **Youth of Synaspismos (Neolaia Synaspismou)**.

Parliamentary representation

Since its foundation, SYN has contested 5 national and 4 European parliament elections. In October 1993, it failed to win representation in the National Parliament by 0.06% (the threshold was 3% and it got 2.94% and 203,000 votes). But in the European Parliament elections in June 1994 the party won 6.3% (408,000 votes) and elected 2 members to the European Parliament (Greece had then 25 MEPs). In subsequent elections SYN was represented both in the National and the European Parliament.

Before the national elections in 2004, SYN participated -together with a number of smaller political organizations of the radical Left- in the

foundation of a political and electoral coalition called SYRIZA (acronym for *Synaspismos Rizospastikis Aristeras* / Coalition of the Radical Left). SYRIZA contested in the National Elections of the same year, received 3.26% (241,539 votes) and elected 6 MPs (all members of SYN).

After a short period of internal turbulence SYRIZA was re-launched and managed to achieve a significant presence in very important social struggles. This led to a notable political enlargement and electoral reinforcement of SYRIZA (5,04% and 14 MPS in the national elections of September 2007).

In the elections for the European Parliament (7 June 2009), SYRIZA got 4.7% (240,930 votes) and elected 1 MEP, Nikos Chountis (former Secretary of the Central Political Committee of SYN).

In the last national elections of October 2010, SYRIZA got 4,6% and 13 MPs.