



SYNASPISMOS

COALITION OF THE LEFT OF MOVEMENTS AND ECOLOGY

Address: 1, Eleftherias Sq.
105 53 • A T H E N S
G R E E C E
Tel.: (+30) 210 3378400
Fax: (+30) 210 3217 003, 3219 121
E-mail: intrelations@syn.gr

Visit our Website: www.syn.gr

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European Left party

"No" to the Constitutional Treaty

Another Europe is Possible

For a **Europe of peace**, of the **peoples**, a **democratic** Europe of **universal citizenship**, **social rights**, a Europe of **equality and solidarity**

In October 2005 the European Left party will hold its First Congress in Barcelona, Spain. Following its Founding Congress last year in Rome, the Party has developed its activities in different areas. It also opened its central offices in Brussels.

An important campaign for the EL is around the referendums and the "NO" to the EU Constitutional Treaty on the basis of the following statement, which was approved by the Executive Committee of the EL.

In the face of the neoliberal globalisation we need more and more Europe. But the Europe which is materially being built is not the Europe the European peoples need.

That Europe is based on a single principle: the capitalist market economy and free competition. This is the reason why public services are under attack, working time is being increased, extreme forms of labour flexibilisation and casualisation are implemented and social regression is increasing everywhere. Today's Europe is a construction "from above", a product of the agreement between governments and deprived of any real democratic control in its fundamental bodies, such as the Commission and the European Central Bank.

The European peoples do not identify themselves with this construction, as was demonstrated by an extremely low turnout in the recent European elections.

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4th Regular Congress December 9-12, 2004

New period for Synaspismos

Alexandros Alavanos elected new party President

The 4th Congress of SYNASPISMOS was held successfully in Athens from 9 to 12 December 2004. It was attended by 1,141 elected delegates from all over Greece and the Greek diaspora. The presence of 20 foreign delegations and tens of solidarity messages from the five continents underlined its significance.

All the Greek political parties were invited to the opening session. The government party of New Democracy was represented by its Secretary Em. Meimarakis and PASOK by its President G.Papandreou. KKE did not respond to the invitation. In addition, the Congress was attended by other left groups participating in the Alliance of Radical Left, the party of Ecologists-Greens, DIKKI, leaders of trade unions and other social movements and leading figures from all walks of life.

The Congress elected Alexandros Alavanos, former MEP and presently Member of the Greek Parliament, to the post of President of SYNASPISMOS. Cde Alavanos succeeded Nicos Constantopoulos, who was SYN President for 11 years (1993-2004) but expressed his wish not to be re-elected for a new tenure.



Three candidates stood for the post of President. Alavanos got 58.5% of the delegates votes, Mihalis Papayannakis 33.18% and Christoforos Papadopoulos 6.94%.

A new Central Political Committee (CPC) was also elected (consisting of 111 members including the President) renewed by about 40%.

One week after its election, the CPC was convened to elect the new Political Secretariat consisting of 21 members (including the President). The party MPs and MEP, all members of the new CPC, expressed the wish not to stand for election to the PS. The members of the Political Secretariat are the following (in alphabetical order):

Alavanos Alexandros (President), **Apostoulou** Evangelos, **Baltas** Aristidis, **Flabouraris** Alecos, **Hadzisocratis** Dimitris, **Hountis** Nicos, **Lafazanis** Panayotis, **Leoutsakos** Stathis, **Lykoudis** Spyros, **Margaritis** Theodoros, **Papadoyianni** Sofia, **Papadopoulos** Christoforos, **Papayiannakis** Mihalis, **Sambatakis** Mihalis, **Stratoulis** Dimitris, **Theodorakopoulou** Natassa, **Theodossi** Avgi, **Tolios** Yiannis, **Trigazis** Panos, **Tsipras** Alexis, **Voutsis** Nicos.

Continued on Page 2 (Political Resolution)

Preparatory Assembly – February 25-27, 2005

Fourth European Social Forum in Athens - April 2006

The First European Preparatory Assembly of the ESF will take place at the Panteion University in Athens, on 25th-27th February, 2005; this meeting will be the beginning of the preparation for the Fourth European Social Forum that is to be held in Athens in April 2006. European Preparatory Assembly meetings are open and all organisations and networks that support the WSF Charter of Principles are encouraged to take part.

The Agenda includes European network meetings on Friday; these would include: education, health, antiracist-migrants network, anti-war network, local forums, women,

environment, memory project (memory of the movement), as well as the networks of the translators and interpreters, software etc. Special meetings will take place on the European Constitutional Treaty and on Latin America and Palestine.

The European Plenary session will take place on Saturday morning. The discussion will be around the procedures and the groups to be formed from now and until April 2006. There will also be ample time to discuss the campaigns including the March 19th and the G8 demonstrations.

On Saturday afternoon there will be working groups and networks

meetings; their conclusions will be proposed at the second Plenary session on Sunday (27/2) morning. This second Plenary session will make decisions on the proposals and also draw up the schedule of the next European Preparatory Assembly meetings.

In the early afternoon on Sunday, the Assembly of movements will discuss and decide about its own Assembly in Athens in April 2006; it will also discuss about its organising the campaigns decided in Port Alegre.

Later on Sunday afternoon, the Greek organising committee for the Fourth European Social Forum will be officially formed.

Brief CV of Alecios Alavanos

President of SYNASPISMOS



Alecios Alavanos was born in Athens on 22 May 1950. His origins are from Tinos, an island of the Cyclades. He is married to Aikaterini Charalambaki, psychiatrist.

They have two daughters.

He studied economics at the Law School of the University of Athens. As a student he joined the movement against the dictatorship of 1967-1974 in Greece and for his activities he was persecuted and imprisoned.

He has worked as an economist and journalist.

He was a member of the Central Council of the Communist Youth of Greece (KNE) and an alternate member of the CC of the CP of Greece. He has been member of the Central Political Committee of SYNASPISMOS since its foundation.

He served as a member of the European Parliament from 1981, when Greece became a member of the EC, to 2004. As a Europarliamentarian he was President of the Political Group "Coalition of the Left" in the European Parliament.

In the 2004 national elections he became a member of the Greek Parliament for the Athens district. He is currently member of the Parliament Committee on Education and Culture.

Alecios Alavanos was elected President of SYNASPISMOS by its 4th Congress on December 12, 2004.

He speaks English, French and German.

4th Regular Congress of Synaspismos Political Resolution (extracts)

The Political Resolution of the Congress estimates that "the re-election of Bush and his second four-year term of office constitute a great threat for the planet, for the democratic, social and cultural achievements of humanity," and that "the neoliberal capitalist globalisation, under the US hegemony, is developing today in terms of greater danger and difficulty for the peoples".

Regarding the resistances, it says that "the movement against the neoliberal capitalist globalisation is the new and hopeful development of our times. We, as a modern, radical left, must achieve an even broader and more powerful international horizon for our initiatives and actions, on the basis of a deeper and wider internationalism.

Our stance regarding globalisation and its answer to the problems caused by its neoliberal capitalist character is diametrically opposed to the phobic and nationalistic reaction of the extreme right and ecclesiastical forces. Our answer to the neoliberal capitalist globalisation is our resistance to it, on the basis of alternative demands. It is the globalisation of rights, of resistance and solidarity of the people."



SYNASPISMOS rally at the Sporting Stadium in Athens

"The creation of the Greek Social Forum, as part of the European and World Social For a, constitutes a great achievement of the movement against war and neoliberal capitalist globalisation.

The organization of the European Social Forum in Greece in 2006 constitutes a landmark in this direction."

With the Party of the European Left

Concerning Europe, the Resolution states:

"The European integration and its targets constitute a field of hard social and political confrontations. SYNASPISMOS supports the political unification of Europe on the basis of eliminating the democratic deficit, of the defense and broadening of the social state and the environmental protection, in the prospect of socialism with democracy and freedom; a Europe politically united on democratic terms, away from Atlanticism, with an independent international intervention for peace and a world of justice and solidarity..."

The establishment of the party of the European Left, where SYNASPISMOS played a central part, constitutes a hopeful first step towards the creation of the political subject that will decisively defend the achievements of the working people of Europe and will support their short and long-term interests. The "Europisation" and radicalization of the trade union movement and the upgrading of the European Social Forum constitute an important element in this effort.

Both SYNASPISMOS and the Party of the European Left are under the obligation not only to defend the social state and the democratic rights, which are under attack all over Europe today, but also to struggle actively for the total reorientation of the policies applied today....

This struggle, today, has to go through, among others, the revision of the Stability Pact, the rejection of the European Constitutional Treaty, which institutionalizes neoliberalism, and the conduct of a referendum in our country; the opposition to the Euro-army, the demand for an authentic Constitution of the people of Europe which will guarantee and broaden their democratic rights and social achievements."

European Left party

"No" to the Constitutional - Treaty Another Europe is Possible

For a Europe of peace, of the peoples, a democratic Europe of universal citizenship, social rights, a Europe of equality and solidarity

...from the front page

We oppose the European constitutional treaty, which is going to be signed here in Rome on 29th October 2004. This treaty continues and deepens the neoliberal logic of the Maastricht, Amsterdam and Nice treaties. Market economy and free competition shall become the "constitutional" pillar of the EU instead of juridical rights, the right to work and a new kind of full employment, at the very moment when pension and welfare systems, basic public services, collective goods and natural resources are under attack everywhere. This treaty includes a process of further militarisation and a common foreign and security policy, by introducing the setting up of an additional European army subject to NATO and by increasing military expenses. This treaty does not include, instead, a clear repudiation of war as a means of international relationships. It rejects equality of rights for people who live in Europe and are no EU nationals, and therefore harshly affects our migrant brothers and sisters, who are victims of an extreme administrative repression. Furthermore, this treaty excludes citizens from decision-making processes.

The constitutional treaty has been adopted without a broad consultation and participation of citizens and people living in the EU, although it cannot be modified for the next thirty years.

Therefore, this Europe is not our Europe. We, forces of the

European Left, stand for another Europe.

These are the reasons why we wish new foundations for the new Europe, withdrawing it from the reckless domination of pillaging and warmongering financial capitalism, able to reconcile it with social progress, democracy, ecologically sustainable development, cooperation between peoples and, above all, able to act in favour of peace and disarmament in a world upset through war and terrorism.

We stand for a Europe of rights for everybody: right to work, to respect differences, to citizenship. We stand for a Europe strengthening social guarantees, defending nature and the environment, promoting cultural differences, respecting religious identities in a framework of fully secular institutions, and introducing gender democracy.

We want a Europe based on the right to citizenship for all people living in Europe. We want a Europe of international solidarity where all citizens are main actors of a real constituting process and can really decide upon the policies to implement and control their implementation with full respect of democratic participation.

In order to achieve this Europe we have to say no to the constitutional treaty which is going to be signed on October 29.

Our opposition totally conflicts with the anti-European reactionary forces. These forces reject Europe because of their growing populist, reactionary, xenophobic feelings in favour of sovereignty.

We want more Europe. We want to be "more" European. For these reasons we demand the rejection of this constitutional treaty. We say no from the left, to break with the neoliberal system as also demanded in the social and political mobilisations of the anti-war movements and the movements against globalisation. We will support this position in any country, parliament and referendum.

We want to start a debate to work out concrete alternatives to the present European project. It is necessary to link our proposals with a wide mobilisation from below, to involve the European citizens now and into the actions planned in the near future, such as October 30 in Italy where a demonstration against war and for a Europe of social justice is going to take place, as well as on November 11 against the EU Bolkestein directive, in the following months in Barcelona to oppose the treaty and on 19th March 2005 in Brussels on the occasion of the intergovernmental conference, according to the auspices suggested by the London ESF to support all those who demand a public decision in referendums on the EU constitution within or on 8th May 2005.

SYNASPISMOS proposal for dialogue

For a NEW European Agreement for sustainable development, social protection & employment

On January 24 2005 SYNASPISMOS presented at a Press Conference the following proposals regarding the replacement of the Stability Pact by a European Agreement for sustainable development, for social protection and employment. The full text of the proposals that are submitted for dialogue both on the national and European levels is as follows:

We submit the following proposals for discussion as our contribution to the formation of the final proposal for the replacement of the Stability Pact by a new European Agreement for sustainable development, social protection and full employment.

- ⇒ A gradual increase of the EU Budget to 5% of the Gross National Product (GNP) of the EU. The primary aim of this proposal is to fund economic and social convergence of the country-members, taking into account the new needs that have been brought about by the EU's enlargement.
- ⇒ EU monetary policy to be formed by the Council of Economics Ministers in co-operation with the European Central Bank, with the primary aim of promotion of development and full employment in the EU and not just to combat inflation.
- ⇒ The formation of a European Programme of public investment, which will be financed on favourable terms by the European Investment Bank, equal to at least 1% of the European Union GNP. The primary target of this programme should be the promotion of development in the EU, the improvement of infrastructure and the ecological reformation of various sectors of the European economy, including the energy sector.
- ⇒ The gradual establishment of a minimum level of social services, labour rights, and income covering the whole of Europe, adjusted to each member – country's GNP in relation to the EU average. It is, of course, understood that in countries where the existing social, labour and income safeguards are higher than the minimum ones they will be strictly observed and improved. The target of this effort is to avoid the practice of "social dumping" which is followed today, to combat social inequalities and poverty and to gradually converge the levels of social services, labour rights and incomes to a higher basis than the one existing today, parallel to economic and social convergence.
- ⇒ The gradual establishment of a common, relatively high, level of tax on the profits of corporations throughout Europe (e.g. above 40%), which could be brought about by negotiation. For member – countries with a GNP that is lower than 75% of the EU average, this level of tax could be at most 10% below the common European tax level. This measure aims at avoiding the existing "tax dumping" in favour of corporations profits, the strengthening of State income so that it can carry out its social policies and the gradual harmonization of the corporations tax denominator to a higher level than it stands today throughout Europe, parallel to the social and economic convergence. At the same time, we propose strict measures for the abolition of the corporations' ability to pay fewer taxes by taking advantage of offshore companies. This move should be taken together with strict measures against "money laundering" through the same companies.
- ⇒ Establishment of a special tax of 0.1% (Tobin tax) on speculative, non-productive capital movement to and from the EU. The resulting income could be used to increase the EU resources and be put to good use for the enhancement of social policies, ecological protection within the EU and humanitarian aid to the third world.
- ⇒ The obligation of the EU member countries to contribute 0.7% of their GNP as aid to the third world should be strictly monitored. Gradual increase of this aid to 1% of the member countries' GNP. We propose that we should establish a similar percentage to be paid by countries worldwide. This of course would apply for countries with a certain minimum GNP.
- ⇒ The establishment and strict monitoring of the 35hour working week, without a reduction in salaries or an increase in employment flexibility, in all EU member countries, in the prospect of a further reduction of the working hours without a reduction in income. Parallel with the establishment of the 35hour working week it is necessary to take measures all over Europe to combat the precarious and flexible forms of employment.
- ⇒ The abolition of the arbitrary limits of 3% on the deficit and 60% on public debt, which is imposed by the Stability Pact as it is today. The possible deficit of one of the countries should be monitored by the Council of the Ministers of Economics, without arbitrary limits and after the proposal of a certain number of member countries. This control should be carried out on the basis of a variety of criteria which will deal with the GNP in relation to the EU average, the levels of social protection, employment, public sector investments, growth rates, economic and social convergence, etc., which can come about as the result of meaningful negotiations on a new basis.

5th World Social Forum returns to Porto Alegre

The 5th World Social Forum returned to Porto Alegre, Brazil, after stopping at Mumbay last year. It took place from 26th to 31st January, 2005.

There were more than 155,000 participants from 135 countries; About 6,880 meetings were held in 16 languages with the support of more than 2,800 volunteers.



More than 100,000 people took part in the opening march that was dedicated to peace and the dignity of the peoples and, once again, the city centre was inundated with music, colours and enthusiasm.

The WSF cultural activities included 100 concerts, 41 theatre performances, 13 dance performances and 85 exhibitions. A large group represented the Greek Social Forum at Porto Alegre. The delegation of SYN was headed by its President Alexandros Alavanos and other members of the PS and CPC. A delegation of the Youth of SYN was also present.

Under his capacity as MP of the Hellenic Parliament, Alexandros Alavanos participated in the World Parliamentary Forum along with other Left MPs from all continents.

The social movements issued a call for mobilisation against the war, neoliberalism, exploitation and exclusion and for reinstated their conviction that Another World Is Possible.

28th NELF Meeting in Stockholm

Preparatory meeting in Brussels finalises date and topics

On 18-19 February 2005 the Preparatory Committee for the 28th NELF session met in Brussels. The committee consisted of the representatives of three parties: Partito dei Comunisti Italiani, Left Party of Sweden, Synaspismos and representatives of the Working Groups on the Middle East and the WTO.

According to the Rome NELF meeting last December, the 28th Session will take place in Stockholm hosted by the Left Party of Sweden on 10, 11 and 12 June 2005.

The overall theme will be **"THE LEFT IN EUROPE: BETWEEN NEO-LIBERALISM AND NEO-FUNDAMENTALISM"**.

The sub-topics to be discussed will be **"Building a Transatlantic link of the Left"**

(with the participation of a guest from the USA and possibly one from Venezuela); **"The Left and the fight against terrorism: "War on terror" as a pretext for war on political liberty and rule of law; "New trade union strategies in the age of neo-liberalism" (with the participation of a guest from the Italian Unions); "the struggle for water: Privatization, war and migration"; and, "Organising migrant women in Europe: fighting against patriarchal tradition and/or neo-liberal exploitation"**. On the final day, there will be reports from the Working groups as well as NELF organizational matters.

At the meeting, SYNASPISMOS presented its proposals regarding a Euro-Middle East Left Forum to be combined with the 29th NELF Session in Athens in November, 2005.

"European NO" by D.PAPADIMOULIS



SYNASPISMOS MEP Dimitris PAPANIMOULIS (newly elected last June) voted "no" to the EU

Constitutional Treaty in the European Parliament on 12.1.2005. "The left European NO of SYN – he said – is directly opposed to the NO of those who are against EU integration. We want more Europe, dialogue, citizens' participation and referenda".

You may contact the youth of Synaspismos at the following address

53, Solomou & Third September Str.
104 32 Athens

Tel.: (+30) 210 523 1520

Fax: (+30) 210 523 2224

E-address: www.neolaiasyn.gr

E-mail: neolaiasyn@syn.gr



Visit us at: www.syn.gr

WHAT IS SYNASPISMOS

SYNASPISMOS is a new left party, which was 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 1 June 2003 and since that date 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 a 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 League of Synaspismos (Neolaia SYN).

Parliamentary representation

Since its foundation, SYN has contested 4 national and 3 European

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

Today, SYN has 6 Members of Parliament following the 7 March 2004 National elections, which were contested within an electoral alliance called "Coalition of Radical Left".

As for the European Parliament elections of June 2004 SYNASPISMOS stood its own candidates winning 4.16% and electing 1 MEP, cde Dimitris Papadimoulis.

Strong presence in Local Government

According to the October 2002 Prefectural and Municipal elections SYN is the third party in terms of representation in local government.

In addition, Synaspismos has a strong presence in the social field as well. It has high-level representation in all major trade unions and social movements – women and feminist organizations, peace, environmental, antiracist, human rights movements.