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european network for alternative thinking  
and political dialogue

Special Edition on occasion of the Greek elections. In cooperation with *Nicos Poulantzas Institute* (NPI)

## The economic program of SYRIZA – For a government of the Left in Greece For Decent Wages - For a Decent Life – For A Truly European Greece

By Stavros Panagiotidis, *Nicos Poulantzas Institute* (NPI)

As soon as the new elections of 17 June were announced in Greece, SYRIZA (The Coalition of the Radical Left) faced a serious problem: The need to clarify the exact measures that the party will take towards the Memorandum, in case it comes first. A letter sent by Alexis Tsipras, head of SYRIZA, to the leadership of the EU, which stated the need to review the strategic structure of the Union, was paraphrased by the media and the party's political opponents and was presented as a rescission of SYRIZA from its position to denounce the Memorandum to the one of renegotiating it.

It was certainly clear, however, that the letter was referring to a broader issue, the need to change the logic of the EU, which of course includes the Memorandum. This tactic had some effect, since it succeeded in creating a confusion regarding the stance of SYRIZA. At the same time, a long discussion started on the economic program of SYRIZA and how realistic it is.

### Cancellation of the Memorandum, for a truly European Greece

Last Friday, 1 June, in a room crowded with people of the Left and with journalists – and a very large presence of representatives of the foreign press – Alexis Tsipras announced the updated programme of SYRIZA. He began by saying that the first action that will be taken by a government of

the Left is to cancel the Memorandum and its accompanying laws. Subsequently, as SYRIZA does not want Greece to exit the Eurozone and the EU, the government will make a new deal for the country's bailout agreement and the repayment of its debt, making sure to maintain the living standards of a European country and not to become a colony of the Eurozone. The main axis of this view is that Greece's debt is unsustainable and can not be repaid. This means that the final agreement must include the cancellation of its biggest part. The government will also claim a "development clause", i.e. that Greece should pay its debt only if positive growth rates are achieved, while the repayment should be proportional to GDP growth. SYRIZA will attempt to reach a common European solution for the (European) debt problem, because otherwise Greece will not be able to achieve fiscal adjustment, primary surplus, repayment of its debt and the financing of public investment and social policies at the same time.

### The financial measures: for decent wages, for a decent life

The commitments of SYRIZA include measures to relieve the people who are suffering due to the crisis: Cancel the reduction of the minimum wage by 22% and reset it to 750 Euro per month and the unemployment benefit at 461 Euro. Suspend cuts to social

expenditures, pensions and public sector wages. Extend the unemployment benefit to two years. Repeal the recent labour market reforms which allow employers to impose individual contracts when collective contracts expire. Abolish the many special taxes imposed on people of medium and low incomes. Immediately suspend reductions in social expenditures. Reduce the VAT, particularly on basic goods such as milk and bread, so as to boost consumption. Partially or totally cancel the debts of heavily indebted households and businesses. Reduce indirect taxes in the food industry and tourism. Freeze the privatization of strategic public organizations and gradually return, when economically possible, to the public control of companies that have been privatized.

### Where will SYRIZA find the money to do all this?

Explaining the way to finance these measures, Alexis Tsipras mentioned: the nationalization of all banks currently being recapitalized as part of the EU-IMF bailout, the radical review of public spending, the reinforcement of the authority that controls goods and services bought by the state, the creation of records on property in order for it to be taxed and avoid tax evasion, the confiscation of property for those who declare false assets, the reorganization of tax scales according to the European average tax in order for those

with higher incomes to pay more taxes, the increase of taxes for ship owners - who enjoy 58 different tax exemptions, the creation of appropriate conditions for the return of deposits in Greek banks, the development of the country's mineral wealth, the signing of an agreement with Switzerland on the taxation of savings of Greek citizens, the increase of the absorption of the NSRF (National Strategic Reference

Framework). In addition to the aforementioned, Alexis Tsipras announced a series of institutional changes, such as dealing with the fact that the private TV-stations – which belong to ship owners and major contractors of public works, who have intertwining relationships with the parties of PASOK (social democrats) and New Democracy (conservatives) – operate without a permanent permission and without

paying the state for the use of frequencies.

Alexis Tsipras closed by saying, "The Greek people do not ask for money like beggars. They ask for work in order to have a decent living. They ask to meet their basic needs. We guarantee that financial resources can be saved without the brutal cuts of the Memorandum".

Find here the English translation of the **speech of Alexis Tsipras**, Athinas Hall, Friday June 1:  
<http://www.transform-network.net/en/home/article/a-road-map-for-the-new-greece.html>

## Not a Debate about the Euro

By *Elena Papadopoulou*, Nicos Poulantzas Institute (NPI)

For everyone who has studied backwards induction in game theory, "the case of Europe" could not constitute a better occasion for her to practice it. Players are there, uncertainty is there, probabilities are there, multiple outcomes are there. Only the game is real, and the way it turns out will not only determine whether in the forthcoming period Europe will move towards more integration or more disintegration, whether it will or will not have a common currency and whether its line of economic policy will remain adherent to neo-liberalism. It will also determine the everyday lives of European citizens and the way new political, ideological and cultural identities will start to be formed.

Despite the complexity of the issue, the situation involves certain important catalysts. The question of the Euro is one of them. During the last couple of years, in Greece (and in Europe no less) this debate – a debate as old as the Eurozone itself – has resurged on a number of levels and now, two weeks before the new elections of 17 June, it has become one of the central points of dispute of the pre-electoral period.

The Coalition of the Radical Left (SYRIZA) is accused of wanting the country's unilateral exit from the common currency, either on the grounds of

plain intention or on the grounds of that being the inevitable consequence of opposing austerity policies (expressed through the Memorandum). The reply to the former point is straightforward: the official position of SYRIZA – a position formed in the course of a very extensive debate within the Greek Left during the last year – is that the party is against a unilateral exit. However, in a left context, the "issue of the Euro" is certainly not merely a debate about the Euro. It is not only related to economic considerations (even the apposition of which goes beyond the scope of this text), but to the party's analysis regarding the ways to fight for an alternative Europe, the importance of not abandoning the European field of social struggle and retreat to national growth debates, as well as the need to fight against the nationalist sentiments that always lurk behind every debate in this kind of situations.

Yet, it is the reply to the second point that is perhaps even more crucial; not only for Greece and Europe, but – from the looks of it – for the global economy as well (the American stance on the issue during the recent G8 meeting is characteristic). Is the denouncement of austerity in Greece synonymous to the denouncement of the Euro? Is Greece jeopardizing the Eurozone? Much the opposite. Even before the result of the

elections of 6 May, the fact that austerity was leading the European economy further into the economic impasse and the European societies deeper into despair was becoming more and more obvious. And even though one can never know what lies at the end of a road she never took, it was also obvious that the adherence to neo-liberalism and to the strategy of internal devaluation as a means of superficially managing a deep systemic crisis would result in a catastrophe.

Opposing austerity and facing the true causes of the debt crisis in Europe, which are inextricably linked to the causes of the global economic crisis, is the only realistic way to keep Europe together on an utterly different basis. After the recent evolutions in Spain (and soon to come in Portugal, Cyprus and elsewhere) actions in this direction, in the direction of employment, development and the rehabilitation of democracy in all the European countries, are more urgent than ever. This cannot go through without serious clashes, but it has to be decisive. Because this is not a debate about the Euro. It is a struggle for the prevalence of equality, solidarity, environmental sustainability and human emancipation in Greece, in Europe, in the world.

# The Politics of Austerity: Democracy in Deficit

By Loudovikos Kotsopoulos, Nicos Poulantzas Institute (NPI)

In their attempt to harness state finances, EU austerity plans openly promoted the implementation of a clear-cut neoliberal agenda with enormous political implications. Two years after these plans were set in motion, one can draw two safe conclusions: That economic recovery is still absent and that their implementation required a democratic “freeze” of the Southern European states, the weakest links in the state-debt chain. In fact, the Troika along with its political peers overtly tampered with the democratic regimes in order to secure high returns to their investments. This strategy was not deployed in an institutional void; rather it was well grounded in democratic deficiency tendencies already present in the European political systems, particularly in those of the South.

In the Greek case, the whole process of democratic “freezing”, so as to best accommodate austerity measures, was spurred by a double-faced insulation of the political system. On the one hand there was an insulation of social interests from democratic representation and on the other hand an insulation of the executive from parliamentary power – the latter taking place inside the political system.

Regarding the former aspect of this insulation, Greece has closely followed a post-democratic trajectory. During the last decade, popular participation in the decision making process was scaled down to the minimum and it was actually contained solely to electoral participation. So long as the, once, incumbent parties (PASOK, ND) were delivering the goods to key social categories, the system worked well. However, when austerity came in, the whole edifice collapsed. Social reaction against the measures was ignored by the PASOK government on the grounds of parliamentary majority, which was acquired in a completely different political context where the

electorate did not have a clue on the public debt problem. In view of this exclusion from the political system, people searched for alternative channels in order to defend their rights. At this point we have the emergence of the Syntagma square movement in Spring-Summer 2011. By the time the popular element rushed into the political arena, the argument of a legitimated government having the capacity to implement austerity measures single-handedly was neutralized.

In the period from May to October 2011, PASOK was trying to engage ND in a coalition government in order to share the blame. At the same time an atmosphere of terror reigned in the streets with the riot police brutally quelling all demonstrations. Eventually P.M. George Papandreou pursued his goal by intimidating the European elites. On 31 October, he announced his intention to organize a referendum for the new loan agreement. Displeased with the prospect of popular participation in the decision process, Merkel and Sarkozy were outraged with this initiative and stated explicitly that a referendum or a national election was to take place under no circumstances. Instead, they pushed for the solution they had in store for Southern Europe: coalition governments headed by technocrats.

Greece's coalition government was headed by the former Vice President of the ECB, Lucas Papademos, and was formed in 11 November with an initial plan of handing in its mandate in February. The job of the government was greatly facilitated by the second aspect of the insulation structure mentioned above, namely the insulation of the executive from the Parliament. This is well illustrated by the fact that PASOK, being initially the principal partner, held approximately 80% of cabinet positions with 153 seats. It retained this ratio well after the Febru-

ary reshuffle when its parliamentary power was reduced by 22 MPs.

This non-elected government passed a second Memorandum in February 2012, despite popular outcry. Once again terror spread around the streets with the riot police essentially banishing any form of protest by brutally beating up everybody irrespective of age, gender or political persuasion. Given the fact that this second Memorandum had to be accompanied by a series of new austerity measures, certain thoughts were expressed to prolong the coalition government's mandate. However, political elites succumbed to the widespread popular demands for elections.

The latter took place on 6 May and positioned SYRIZA second. A large part of its success is attributed to the promise to make the people part of the decision making process again. This aspiration was well encapsulated in the party's principle electoral motto “They decided without us, we move on without them”. It is exactly this call to revitalize democracy that petrifies both European elites and the Greek bourgeoisie. This is why they are both trying to scare the Greek electorate so as to vote against SYRIZA in the forthcoming elections. Mrs Merkel, who in October forbade even the very thought of a plebiscite, is now asking for one to be made along with the elections. The IMF and the European Commission urge the Greek people to vote for the “right” parties. The Greek media, mainly associated with construction capital and ship owners, present SYRIZA as nothing less than the Satan who is ready to annihilate the entire country. All these crusaders who are summoned to rally against democracy under the flags of neo-liberalism are already running out of arguments and soon enough they will also run out of votes.

## Appeal:

# “Stand with the Greek Left for a Democratic Europe!”

By Etienne Balibar, Vicky Skoumbi, Michel Vakaloulis

A short version of this appeal has been published in French by Libération on June 5th

### The appeal has already been signed by more than 120 personalities, including:

Giorgio AGAMBEN, Tariq ALI, Elmar ALTVATER, Daniel ALVARO, Alain BADIOU, Jean-Christophe BAILLY, Fethi BEN-SLAMA, Fernanda BERNARDO, Jacques BIDEZ, Claude CALAME, Thomas COUTROT, Albano CORDEIRO, Yannick COURTEL, Costas DOUZINAS, Roland ERNE, Roberto ESPOSITO, Nancy FRASER, Elisabeth GAUTHIER, François GEZE, Max GRATADOUR, Jean-Pierre KAHANE, Jean-Marc LEVY-LEBLOND, Michael LOEWY, Philippe MANGEOT, Philippe MARLIERE, Ariane MNOUCHKINE, Warren MONTAG, Jean-Luc NANCY, Toni NEGRI, Bertrand OGILVIE, Ernest PIGNON-ERNEST, Mathieu POTTE-BONNEVILLE, Jacques RANCIERE, Judith REVEL, Rossana ROSSANDA, Bernard STIEGLER, Michel SURYA, Bruno TACKELS, André TOSEL, Gilberte TSAÏ, Eleni VARIKAS, Dimitris VERGETIS, Jérôme VIDAL, Heinz WISMANN, and Frieder Otto WOLF.

### Sign at:

<http://www.myonlinepetition.com/petition/699/With+the+Greek+Left+for+a+Democratic+Europe!/>

**French version:** <http://www.transform-network.net/fr/accueil/article/appel-avec-la-gauche-grecque-pour-une-europe-democratique.html>

**German version:** <http://www.transform-network.net/de/home/article/aufruf-mit-der-griechischen-linken-fuer-ein-demokratisches-europa.html>

It is clear that the responsibility for the chain of events that in a mere three years has plunged Greece into the abyss lies overwhelmingly with the parties that have held office since 1974. *New Democracy* (the Right) and PASOK (the Socialists) have not only maintained the system of corruption and privilege, they have benefitted from it and enabled Greece's suppliers and creditors to profit considerably from this system while the institutions of the European Community looked the other way. Under such conditions, it is astonishing that the leaders of Europe and the IMF, posing as paragons of virtue and economic rigor, should seek to restore those same bankrupt and discredited parties to office by denouncing the “red peril” supposedly represented by SYRIZA (the radical left coalition) and by threatening to cut off food supplies if the new round of elections to be held on 17 June confirms the rejection of the “Memorandum” clearly expressed in the elections of 6 May. Not only does this intervention flagrantly contradict the most elementary democ-

cratic norms but it would have terrible consequences for our common future.

This alone would be sufficient reason for us, as European citizens, to refuse to allow the will of the Greek people to be thwarted. But something even more serious is at stake. For the last two years, the European Union, in close collaboration with the IMF, has been working to strip the Greek people of its sovereignty. Under the pretext of stabilising public finances and modernising the economy, they have imposed a draconian system of austerity that has stifled economic activity, reduced the majority of the population to poverty, and demolished labour rights. This neo-liberal style “rectification” programme has resulted in the liquidation of the economic infrastructure and the creation of mass unemployment. Achieving this required nothing less than a state of emergency not seen in Western Europe since the end of the Second World War: the state's budget is dictated by the Troika, the Greek Parliament nothing more than a rubber stamp and the constitution re-

peatedly by-passed. This stripping away of the principle of people's sovereignty has gone hand in hand with the humiliation of an entire country. Here, indeed, it has reached an extreme, but it is not restricted to Greece. The peoples of all the member countries of the European Union are utterly disregarded when it comes to imposing a system of austerity that runs counter to any economic rationality, combining the interventions of the IMF and the ECB in support of the banking system and imposing governments of unelected technocrats.

On a number of occasions the Greeks have made clear their opposition to a policy that destroys a country while pretending to save it. Innumerable mass demonstrations, seventeen days of general strikes in two years, and innumerable acts of civil disobedience, such as the movement of the “indignant ones” in Syntagma square have shown their refusal to accept the fate to which they have been consigned without any consultation. And what was the response to this cry of despair and revolt?

A doubling of the lethal dose and of police repression! It was then, in a context where the governing parties had lost all legitimacy, that it was decided that a return to the ballot box was the only way to avoid a social explosion.

Now, however, the situation is perfectly clear: the results of the 6 May elections have left no doubt about the mass rejection of the policies imposed by the Troika. Faced with the perspective of a SYRIZA victory in the 17 June elections, a campaign of disinformation and intimidation has been launched both inside the country and at European level. Its aim is to prevent SYRIZA from being seen as a trustworthy political interlocutor.

Every possible means is used to disqualify it, beginning with the application of the label “extremist” to place it on a par with the neo-Nazis of *Golden Dawn*. SYRIZA has been accused of every vice: fraud, double speak and irresponsible and infantile demands. If we were to believe this vicious propaganda, itself based on a racist stigmatisation of the entire Greek people, SYRIZA poses a threat to freedom, the world economy and the European project itself. In such a case, it would be the joint responsibility of Greek voters and of our leaders to stop it in its tracks. Brandishing the threat of exclusion from the Euro and other forms of economic blackmail, an attempt to manipulate the people is under way. It is a strategy of “shock and awe” by which the dominant groups

seek to use every means at their disposal to make the vote of the Greek people serve their interests which they claim are ours as well.

We, the signatories of this text, cannot remain silent in the face of this attempt to deprive a European people of its sovereignty for which the elections are the last resort. The campaign to stigmatise SYRIZA and the threat to exclude Greece from the Euro zone must stop at once. It is up to the Greek people to decide their own fate by rejecting any diktat, by rejecting the poisons that its “saviours” have administered to it and by engaging freely in the forms of cooperation indispensable to overcoming the crisis, together with other European peoples.

We, in turn, affirm that it is time for Europe to understand the signal sent from Athens on 6 May. It is time to abandon a policy that is bringing an entire society to ruins and that declares a people unfit to govern themselves in order to save the banks. It is urgent to put an end to the suicidal drift of a political and economic construction that transfers government to “experts” and institutionalises the omnipotence of financial operatives. Europe must be the work of its citizens themselves in the service of their own interests.

This new Europe which we – like the democratic forces that have emerged in Greece – wish and intend to fight for is that of all its peoples. In every country,

there are two politically and morally antithetical Europes in conflict: one which would dispossess the people to benefit the bankers and another which affirms the right of all to a life worthy of the name and that collectively gives itself the means to do so.

Thus, what we want, together with the Greek voters and SYRIZA’s activists and leaders, is not the disappearance of Europe but its re-foundation. It is ultra-liberalism that provokes the rise of nationalisms and the extreme Right. The real saviours of the European idea are the supporters of openness, and of the participation of its citizens, the defenders of a Europe where popular sovereignty is not abolished but extended and shared.

Yes, Athens is indeed the future of democracy in Europe and it is the fate of Europe that is at stake. By a strange irony of history, the Greeks, stigmatised and impoverished, are at the front line of our struggle for a common future.

**Let us listen to them, support them and defend them!**

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## Spanish Banks in Distress

By Javier Navascués, Universidad de Sevilla, Fundación de Investigaciones Marxistas

Since the crisis began, Spanish authorities have been denying emphatically any risk for the Spanish banking sector. In fact, reality was a different won and well-known at least since May 2006, when a group of *Bank of Spain* inspectors warned of an insurmountable pile of debt growing behind the real-estate bubble while the regulating and

economic authorities looked elsewhere celebrating the “Spanish miracle”.

As soon as international finance markets froze, Spanish banks became unable to roll over the loans they got from European core banks, but this was presented as a crisis of liquidity. For a while they relied on the facilities of the ECB backed by Spanish State guaran-

tees and sovereign bonds. In the LTRO operations last November and February they were able to borrow up to EUR 100 billion which provided for refilling the ATMs and repaying due debts, hopefully at a discount. This combination of drip-feeding with occasional massive injections of money has kept the liquidity problem at bay but has had no effect

on the real disease which is one of solvency.

The solvency problem of Spanish banks lies in bad loans, in particular those to real-estate developers. While the household indebtedness is punitive for the incumbents the rate of non-performing loans remains manageable for the banks, because the former will make any sacrifice before losing their homes. But the loans to the real-estate business amounting to EUR 400 billion are different as they pose a formidable deadweight with very slim chances of recovery. This adds to an economy depressed by austerity where more and more loans turn bad as time passes by.

This problem, which has been known about since the very beginning, has been carefully hidden until now. Semi-public savings banks have been privatised and whenever one of them has appeared as insolvent it has been merged with others, so the outcome was a larger insolvent institution. *Bankia* is the creature of one

of these financial engineering operations. Chaired by former Popular Party Minister of Finance and later CEO of the IMF, Rodrigo Rato, it has lived a short life as the largest bank in the country when it went public last summer, as the result of the merger of several savings banks.

Now the Spanish state is struggling to raise EUR 24 billion to recapitalise *Bankia* that must be found after forcing a EUR 10 billion cut in health and education down the throats of Spanish people. Nobody knows which bank will come next though there are several candidates. An “independent” audit is to be carried out to delineate the real problem but it will be done by the same who proclaimed *Anglo Irish* the “best bank of the world” two years before it went bankrupt. With how much comfort will these audits furnish the large French, German and Belgian banks which happily bought MBS and bonds issued by their Spanish colleagues during the good

old times? Most of this paper is now endorsed to the ECB which also holds a creditor balance of EUR 270 billion against the Spanish financial system through the Target2. These are numbers giving hints of the magnitude of the problem as compared with Greece, Ireland or Portugal.

Coming out of this zombie setting can prove very costly for Spanish ruling classes. Either the funds are found in the exhausted public accounts or Spain turns to ESM funds to recapitalise Spanish banks which amounts to handing control of the financial system over to “Europe”. The first way will surely give rise to a high tide of protests and its feasibility is not even clear. The second means losing the major stronghold of the Spanish bourgeoisie, the financial industry, which has cast its shadow over the democratic transition, EU accession and the birth of the Euro, falling ultimately prey to its own success.

## The 1<sup>st</sup> Balkan Forum:

# “Another Balkans is Possible!”

By the Subversive Forum team, Zagreb

The 1<sup>st</sup> Balkan Forum took place within the 2012 Subversive Forum in Zagreb on 17-18 May and gathered up to 40 progressive organisations and movements from across the region.

The 1<sup>st</sup> Balkan Forum prioritised the following issues: social justice, resistance to the neo-liberal agenda, the struggle for the commons, economic relations, deindustrialization and workers’ struggles and, finally, the crisis of representative democracy and the need for deep democratization of Balkan societies.

### Social Justice

The last two decades of the post-socialist ‘transition’ to a free market economy have been marked by the devastating effects of neoliberal policies. In this situation, a wave of strikes

and protests has recently swept from Romania and Croatia to Slovenia and Montenegro. However, the ongoing social struggles are still isolated and lack a common narrative. The Balkan Forum confirmed that a common ground exists and that there is an urgent need for the alliance of leftist political organizations and movements. Artificial boundaries within the Balkans are to be rejected in the current struggles, whether they be between the ‘Eastern’ or ‘Western’ Balkans, or between EU members, EU candidates and internationally supervised (semi)protectorates. In addition, issues such as the protection of human rights, anti-nationalism, anti-fascism, the promotion of minorities’ rights and the struggle for gender equality must re-

main an integral part of the overall strategy of the Left.

### Resistance

The Euro-integration process has been used by local political actors to justify further neo-liberal reforms and has even been encouraged by Brussels in the name of creating free market economies without state or public interference.

In many Balkan countries one of the main obstacles to meaningful resistance is still the strength of nationalism, both as a conservative and discriminatory ideology and as a mobilising force. We can see at an every-day level a rampant historic revisionism, the rise of fascist groups, as well as an

openly racist discourse targeting ethnic minorities, especially the Roma.

However, we can also identify a strong resistance from below in all Balkan states. The new resistance movements are seeking a change in power relations and challenging the dominant public and media discourse. In order to be successful, it is crucial to establish mutual cooperation.

### **The Commons**

Privatizations, commercialisations and enclosures of public water systems, public utilities, medical systems, higher education, agricultural land, public space, and natural resources have put people's livelihoods and the environment at risk. With its talk of non-proprietary resources, collective management and the creation of new forms of social organization, the notion of the commons offers new perspectives and ways of mobilization, signaling a space of action beyond a binary notion of public and private, beyond the dichotomy of state and market. The goal is the socialization and re-socialization of services and resources run for the public and by the public, where the aim is both social justice and sustainability.

### **Workers' Struggles**

The privatisations have led to a degradation of working conditions. Moreover, there has been a corresponding destruction of human knowledge and capacities. Temporary work is becoming more widespread, which has an especially negative effect on women who are more often than not put in a difficult position due to double oppression. Solidarity among workers' un-

ions, organisations, independent actors, scholars, temporary workers, as well as the unemployed, is needed more than ever.

We can witness different successful models of workers' struggles against deindustrialisation and privatisations such as workers' share-holding and active management of their workplaces (e.g. *Jugoremedija* in Serbia) or the anti-privatisation pressure that results in partnership between the state (as the main share holder) and the workers as part of the production and management process in their enterprises (such as *Petrokemija* in Croatia).

The issue of ownership and democratic management has returned to the table as the crucial question of our future.

### **Democracy**

The question of democracy, its meaning and models, must be put on the agenda across the Balkans as well. The model of electoral and parliamentary democracy introduced and practiced in the post-socialist Balkans over the last 20 years has turned out to be nothing more than corrupt partitocracy and the unchallenged rule of political and economic oligarchies.

The experience of rebelling students in Croatia, Serbia, Slovenia and Bosnia is a valuable example of self-governance and political action, through which we can witness the re-establishment of social ties and solidarity. Different forms of radical democratic methods create new political subjectivities and as such are to be encouraged. The inclusive character of these models and the rejection of simple majority rule promote the wide inclusion not only of citizens but also of minority groups

such as LGBT, the Roma, immigrants, ethnic minorities etc. The Balkan Forum underlines the fact that one of the most crucial fronts of struggle for democracy is widening participation in the economy, industry and the workplace. There can be no real democracy in the political or social sphere if there is no participation at the workplace. In other words, no real democracy is possible without the development of models of economic and industrial democracy.

The Balkan Forum sees radical democratic practices as an alternative and applicable model that might serve as a much-needed corrective and counterweight to the dominant model of representative electoral democracy that has been hit by a crisis of legitimacy. At this given historical moment, the political forces of the Left should also envisage models in which democratic pressure from below and the independence of horizontally-organized movements and actors is combined with use of the existing structures of the current representative system.

The 2<sup>nd</sup> Balkan Forum will take place in Zagreb between 12 and 18 May, 2013, and will further define concrete answers and strategies to tackle the above-discussed issues.

Abridged by the editorial office. Find the full version at: <http://www.transform-network.net/en/home/article/the-1st-balkan-forum-another-balkans-is-possible.html>

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