

Conventional and Non-conventional Aspects of SYRIZA's Economic Alternative

Euclid Tsakalotos
Athens University
SYRIZA MP

International Initiative for Promoting Political Economy

Fifth Annual Conference in Political Economy

“The Crisis: Scholarship, Policies, Conflicts and Alternatives”

September 16-18, 2014, Naples, Italy

The Crisis: Scholarship, Policies, Conflicts and Alternatives

Introduction

SYRIZA Economic Programme = Wolf + Ha-Joon Chang +
radical twist

International conference on debt

- London 1953 agreement:
 - Debt haircut
 - Marshall plan
 - Export/growth clauses

Three pillars

- Confronting the humanitarian crisis
- Restructuring of production
- Reforming the state

Roots of the Alternative

Social democratic

- Demand policies – wages and pensions as part of the solution not problem – growth as prerequisite for any structural interventions
- Redistribution – debate on wealth taxes

Marxist

- Question of production
- Agents of production
- The Left as a pluralist force

Anti-global

- Shareholders versus stakeholders
- Participation – socialization vs nationalization
- Social economy

Shared inheritance => cooperation > competition

Social Solidarity and Economy

- Marx's VIII thesis on Feuerbach

All social life is essentially practical. All mysteries which lead theory to mysticism find their rational solution in human practice and in the comprehension of this practice.

- The German Ideology, 1845

Communism is for us not a state of affairs which is to be established, an ideal to which reality [will] have to adjust itself. We call communism the real movement which abolishes the present state of things. The conditions of this movement result from the premises now in existence.

Practical Solutions and the “Real Movement”

400 initiatives in 60 Greek cities, in around 70 areas of Athens

- c. 45 social clinics and pharmacies
- c. 60 solidarity networks, kitchen collectives, exchange bazaars etc.
- c. 35 cooperative coffee shops and restaurants
- c. 35 working collectives (web-radios, web-sites, civil engineers and architects collectives, accountants, computer engineers, web-designers, educational crammers, music schools etc.)
- c. 15 time banks
- c. 40 social and cultural spaces including ΕΜΠΙΡΟΣ theatre
- c. 70 “No intermediaries” and “solidarity trade” initiatives
- Networking services - providing consulting, good practices, legal support etc.
- Publishing initiatives

Theoretical Underpinnings

Economy of needs

- M Lebowitz: logic of capital vs logic of labour
 - G A Cohen: capitalist principle vs communist principle
- => Synaspismos programmatic conference 2009 (contribution to SYRIZA's programme)

Alternative practices

- L Suchting on agency-structure divide: Young Marx-Capital-Practices **and** intervening at the level of ideas => First/Second International + Third International + Action Technologies
- S Hall on neo-liberal practice and practices

Problems

- Beyond Legalism

leftist structural interventions need active agents to pick them up and run with them

what happens when there are no such active agents? 2 Examples

- Challenging the State

crisis of values, institutions, legitimacy => one can oppose the present without supporting the past