

# افغانستان آزاد – آزاد افغانستان

AA-AA

چو کشور نیاشد تن من مباد بدین بوم ویر زنده یک تن مباد  
همه سر به سر تن به کشتن دهیم از آن به که کشور به دشمن دهیم

[www.afgazad.com](http://www.afgazad.com)

[afgazad@gmail.com](mailto:afgazad@gmail.com)

European Languages

زبان های اروپایی

<http://www.counterpunch.org/2015/07/16/riots-in-athens-eus-impending-collapse/>

## Riots in Athens: EU's Impending Collapse?

by Norman Pollack

July 16, 2015

People move events. The Greek people are trying to shape their own history. They aren't there yet—even the Left hasn't quite joined them. But a coalescence of forces is on the horizon: either Syriza radicalizes or it will be left behind. Capitalism by its very harshness is creating its own antithesis. Ideological labels are not important; what is, is a genuine people's government. The riots in Athens, while the Greek Parliament passed the austerity measures, may be the first sign of the breakup of the EU, itself a political formation of advanced capitalism unable to meet the needs of its poorer members.

“Breakup” is too strong a term. Shrinkage, disruption, and greater transparency, the last signifying EU's role as spearhead for US-defined globalization, the mix of market fundamentalism and militarism, would be difficult to hide and all three revealing unity as a German-inspired economic monolith for achieving an intra-Europe division of labor, nations rich (North) and poor (South), while providing political cover for NATO in its continued prosecution of the Cold War. Austerity is repression, pure and simple. It is also, as I recently pointed out, the framework for class warfare, in both cases to the extreme detriment of working people. The people in the Athens street know this, know that Tsipras and Syriza have not done right by them. The public workers' union went out on strike Wednesday. Crowds gathered before Parliament in the evening. Tsakalotos, the new finance minister, was shaken, reluctant to approve the bailout,

in microcosm, representing the many, in and out of the party, who saw the mounting pressures and if not succumbed then made a forced choice.

This was not the affirmation one expects from a basic settlement, and rather, a period of deliberation, of gathering force that, should the EU turn the screws further, might well explode, not as revolution, but a willingness to say No and from there leave the eurozone and the EU itself. Why would Germany and the other stalwarts, Finland, the Netherlands, and the Baltic countries care? For the reason that Greece is a living refutation of all the stalwarts value: balanced budgets, taxation favoring business growth, gradual diminishment of labor rights, erosion of pension and social-welfare programs, etc. By bringing Greece to its knees validates austerity: there is no other way than this, the best of all possible worlds. Capitalism, both in Europe and America (indeed everywhere), thrives on false consciousness lest its destructiveness becomes apparent. Hence, it must thwart Left social movements; antecedently, it must deny the idea of alternatives, that which shows a better way to social justice, peace, a humane life.

Greece is on the edge of the precipice, struggling not to be pushed over into the abyss. It wants to fight back (here calls to national honor and dignity are not empty and/or retrograde rhetoric), where for once nationalism—in the face of imposed conformity to rules, procedures, and values intended for permanent political-economic subjugation—acts historically as a progressive social force. Supra-nationalism, candy to the idealist, turns out to be rotten, and is workable, worthwhile, and just, only when it is equalitarian in structure and substance, which the EU is not. Today, small riots, as the gap widens between citizenry and politicians; tomorrow, with other nations in the EU watching events in Greece, and facing similar if not identical circumstances of deprivation, perhaps they too—Italy, Spain, Portugal, Ireland—will take to the streets and proclaim No to austerity, as increasingly the viper's nest of fascism.

I hear pebbles loosening in the base of the EU edifice, which is ever so slowly shaking. Yet it takes little, one or more false moves, for the ground itself to rumble. Avowed declarations of denying sympathy for those hurt by austerity, Merkel leading the chorus, may register 3.1 on the political Richter scale, but a 5.5 mark is in the cards when the EU professes clearly its identity as the viable political setting for NATO to move ever eastward in confrontation-mode against Russia. The same countries critical of Greece are in the vanguard of anti-Russian feeling. As I've noted elsewhere, Latvia is now the dumping ground for heavy weaponry near the Russian border, with B-52s in the skies. Is this relevant to Greece? Yes, it is being punished less for indebtedness as such than for exposing the fragile character of EU unity and the means used to keep the member nations in line. The psychopathology of militarization has been made a supremely binding agent for economic cooperation, false consciousness carried to lengths Marx never envisioned—hence, deviations, like the Greek referendum itself, must be ridiculed and viewed as un-European and ingratitude. I am heartened, though, by the scenes before the Greek Parliament hours ago. The Greek people have an unquenchable thirst for freedom.