

Issue 5



EQUALITY



IN

**FIGHT INEQUALITY**

**NEWSLETTER**

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<https://www.syria.gr/page/international.html>



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## Article by Alexis Tsipras in "Kathimerini" newspaper



# "The world is changing. Are we?"

**A** few years after the fall of the Berlin Wall (1989) and almost two centuries after the French Revolution (1789) – when the Right-Left political distinction was historically established – Norberto Bobbio attempted to define the dividing line between the two political wings in his book "Right and Left." According to Bobbio, the stance of political ideologies toward inequalities defines their difference. The Right considers inequalities "sacred or inviolable, natural or inevitable." The Left, on the other hand, believes that "they can and should be reduced or eliminated." If Bobbio's work seems too dated, one can look at the work of Thomas Piketty, who says the same thing in a new way. Employees of digital platforms know first-hand what this discussion is about. They experience the uncertainty of the self-employed

combined with the exhaustion of the worker, while being controlled by the "electronic employer" without any possibility to respond. However, the dominance of neoliberal doctrine, based as it is on the ideas of the Right, is being challenged head-on for the first time after four decades. The pandemic, the climate crisis, and movements for the protection of rights have brought focus back to values and needs that had been forgotten or neglected. First among them is the need to protect human life through strong healthcare and welfare systems. Second, the need to stop the destruction of the environment is finally being given attention. Third, the need to restore social cohesion, which has been dangerously fragmented by the frenzied growth of inequalities between developed and developing countries, but also within Western societies, is brought to the fore. Research shows that 1% of the

global population owns 50% of global wealth, while at the same time 1% is responsible for the emissions of more than twice as much CO2 into the atmosphere than the poorest 50% of the global population. The new US president seems determined to respond effectively to the challenge of inequalities: "It's time for big business and the richest 1% of the country to pay what's fair." As he said in his historic speech to Congress, social spending will increase, but will not be paid by the middle class, but by the richest. The speech signals much more than a change in the economic model of the USA. President Joe Biden brought common sense back into the discussion on inequalities. Humanity is at too critical a juncture to keep following doctrines that have failed. And it is almost certain that what President Biden's stance brings will sooner or later affect Europe as well.

Unfortunately, the government in our country is still fighting a rear-guard action to defend the old world. It does not follow President Biden's initiatives on increasing the minimum wage, taxing wealth by using new tools and strengthening state intervention in the market. It is inspired, rather, by what Kyriakos Mitsotakis himself said before the TIF Forum in 2017: "I do not have illusions about a society without inequalities. That would run contrary to human nature."

The problem with Mr Mitsotakis' strategy is not that he belongs to the Right. It is that he vigorously defends the principles of a world that seems to have run its course. And even though he desperately tries to spin every backward reform as somehow signifying progress, he is in fact unable to understand the radical changes that are taking place on all levels, also due to the pandemic.

His party's stance on issues such as citizenship, integration of refugees and immigrants, LGBT rights, police violence, or the Prespes agreement, is indicative. As indicative is the way in which he passionately attacked, almost as an automatic reflex, the proposal for waiving vaccine patents when it had just started gaining momentum.

Even if one were to dismiss the issue of vaccines and patents as extraordinary, the structural problem inherent in his positions becomes even more clear in the glaring case of labor reform. At a time when the global labor market is changing, when the necessary fiscal space is there, and when public discourse revolves around proposals to reduce working hours, Mr Mitsotakis

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is planning outdated reforms inspired by Reaganite and Thatcherite policies, such as abolishing collective bargaining and the eight-hour workday.

But our world is changing very fast. And the sooner the country starts to keep pace with and to play a leading role in this change, the faster and more effectively it will emerge from the crisis, serving the interests of the majority.

It is extremely crucial, for example, to use the resources of the recovery fund and the new National Strategic Reference Framework in a way that will finally transform our economic model and turn it in a sustainable direction. A transformation that will distribute wealth and profits fairly, that will protect small and medium-sized enterprises, and that will reduce inequalities. European resources need to finance the necessary reforms to establish an economic model based on a shift to quality products and high value-added services. Greece cannot and should not compete with other countries on the basis of reducing labor costs – in short, wages – but rather on the basis of increasing productivity and investing in training, research and innovation.

It is extremely crucial that the restructuring of our economic model and our technological capacity

goes hand in hand with the necessary steps toward a green transition and a digital transformation of the economy. We need to build a modern, efficient and decentralized state with the active participation of society. It is only a strong society – not market forces – that can lead to strong sustainable development. Reforms must therefore aim at establishing a universal welfare state, a guarantor of real social security.

At this historical turning point, it is necessary for our country to be on the right side of history. But that requires a new government, a progressive government. A government that, when faced with the question of where it stands in terms of political dividing lines, will always choose to be on the side of the interests of the majority. On the side of working people and the productive, innovative forces of Greek society. After all, they are the ones who built Greece. Not the few families who chose to send their money abroad during the crisis, share the country's spoils, and once again, today, expect to become the main beneficiaries of the recovery fund.

<https://www.ekathimerini.com/opinion/1160824/the-world-is-changing-are-we/>

## All out attack on labour rights

article by Mariliza Xenogiannakopoulou, MP, Shadow Minister of Labor and Social Affairs SYRIZA -Progressive Alliance :



tations. It aims at the complete deregulation of the Labor market, at the generalization of flexible and cheap labor, at the abolition of the eight-hour working day, by arranging working time under individual contracts and the imposition of ten-hour Labor without additional pay, as well as at the doubling of cheap overtime work. In the neoliberal conception the employer and the employee are equal; therefore, any notion of regulation and collective agreement is unnecessary. In addition, by overturning the trade union law, it undermines trade union freedoms, the right to strike, and seeks to intimidate workers, even with the threat of dismissal for their collective claim and trade union action.

**T**he neo-liberal government of ND immediately after the 2019 elections launched an attack on workers and their rights. The "labor bill" they presented is the final blow to workers and wages, in a time of crisis, declining incomes, precariousness and unemployment. It affects all employees, both private and public. It also affects the unemployed, as it encourages the over-exploitation of workers by reducing wages, thus preventing new hires. It strikes the new generation first and foremost, condemning it to a future of cheap, flexible work, job insecurity and low expect-

At the mass strike mobilization on May 6, thousands of workers gave a strong and decisive message against the government's anti-labor policies. SYRIZA Progressive Alliance was there, and we are fighting this battle on the side of the workers in the workplaces, in society and in Parliament!



## All progressive forces need to join together

**Remarks by Alexis Tsipras at the conference "Our Europe, our Future" organised by the PES, S&D and Partito Democratico**

**F**or over a year we have been faced by a global pandemic crisis that has challenged our institutions and daily lives deeply.

Over many decades, progressive values and ideas have been viciously attacked by conservative and neoliberal forces.

Today, in a most tragic moment of Europe, the progressive ideas and values are vindicated in a crystal clear yet tragic way.

The establishment of the Recovery Fund, the suspension of the Stability Pact, the bond buying program of the ECB, and the promotion of a Green Deal with a Just Transition Fund are important steps, but still far smaller than the bold steps that the US is taking on all levels.

We are at a crossroads. Conservative, neoliberal and nationalist forces are trying to impose their agendas so that post pandemic Europe takes steps back instead of forward. This is why all progressive forces need to join together on a new contract on a more social, sustainable, democratic Europe that promotes peace.

We need to find ways to overcome patent restrictions and produce more vaccines for Europe and for COVAX- we all see what is happening in India.

We need to transform the Stability Pact into a Pact for sustainable development, cohesion and economic convergence.

We need to strengthen the European pillar of social rights, fight inequalities and protect workers in a new more digital labour market.

We need to fight tax evasion and increase taxes on multinationals.

We need a migration and asylum system based on real solidarity, shared responsibility and respecting international law.

We need the accession process in the Western Balkans to move ahead.

And we need a strong European foreign and security policy based on protecting international law particularly in our neighbourhood.

Altiero Spinelli wrote from prison, that victory against fascism would be not have great importance if Europe did not manage to unite and change the economic and political system of nationalism and antagonisms that led our continent to crises again and again.

His message is more important today than ever.

Video : [www.youtube.com/watch?v=Avb1SdoA1h4](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Avb1SdoA1h4)



## **SPINELLI GROUP MANIFESTO 9 MAY 2021 (signed by Alexis Tsipras, Dimitris Papadimoulis, George Katrougalos)**

**W**e are striving for a Union that is both a community of destiny and values and a model for the new world now taking shape - an example of how countries can live in peace together, build cross-border and social solidarity, and protect human rights, the rule of law, and fundamental freedoms.

[Spinelli Group Manifesto](#)

**Heinz Bierbaum – President of the European Left : CONFERENCE ON THE FUTURE OF EUROPE: POLITICAL ACCOUNTABILITY IS THE NECESSARY CONDITION FOR CONCRETELY ACHIEVING SOCIAL JUSTICES AND INTERNATIONAL SOLIDARITY**

**W**e need to reset Europe and protect people's lives. The European Left took the task of proposing an alternative model for this Europe, and we will be vigilant and demand a real break with the past, against any attempt to hide decades of bad politics.

The pandemic showed the failure of the neoliberal governance and policies. These have to be abandoned in favour of an active and democratically controlled process to invest in social services and for a social-ecological transformation of industry.

<https://www.european-left.org/conference-on-the-future-of-europe-political-accountability-is-the-necessary-condition-for-concretely-achieving-social-justices-and-international-solidarity/>

## **Parliament's vital vote to waive Covid-19 vaccine patents**



**A**fter months of shameful right-wing stalling and delaying tactics, the European Parliament approved a resolution to tackle the AIDS epidemic which includes a Left demand for waiving intellectual property rights on Covid-19 vaccines. The proposal championed by Left MEPs also demands the waiving of intellectual property rights for equipment and other treatments, urging pharmaceutical companies to share their knowledge and data through the World Health Organization COVID-19 Technology Access Pool (C-TAP).

<https://www.guengl.eu/lifted-parliaments-vital-vote-to-waive-covid-19-vaccine-patents/>

## Immunity of greek neo-nazi MEP lifted

### SYRIZA-Progressive Alliance MEPs about the the waiver of immunity of Ioannis Lagos

The Plenary Session of the European Parliament took a historic decision with the waiver of the immunity of MEP Ioannis Lagos, with the overwhelming result of 658 votes in favor of the waiver of immunity, 25 against and 10 abstentions in a total of 693 votes. Ioannis Lagos has been sentenced to 13 years and eight months in prison since October 7th, 2020 by a Greek court. This decision - a message of democracy throughout Europe and around the world - paves the way for the sentencing in Greek prisons of the convicted by the Greek Justice system, Ioannis Lagos, with the heaviest possible sentence imposed on the members of the Golden Dawn formation. It is worth reminding that, according to the official briefing of the President of the European Parliament, David Sassoli to the Vice President of the European Parliament Dimitris Papadimoulis, the main reason for this delay was that the official request from the Greek Government to Brussels was accompanied by a file of 2,000 pages, all in Greek.

The decision of the European Parliament is a challenge for the Greek Ministry of Citizen Protection and for the Greek government to speed up its investigations to locate the other wanted Golden Dawn Member, Christos Pappas, whose traces and were lost shortly before the

decision was made - with the responsibility lying with the Greek public authorities.

<https://www.syriza.gr/article/id/108598/SYRIZA-Progressive-Alliance-MEPs-about-the-the-waiver-of-immunity-of-Ioannis-Lagos.html>

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## Statement of the Sector of International and European Affairs of SYRIZA-Progressive Alliance on the worrying developments in East Jerusalem 09/05



Alexis Tsipras  
@tsipras\_eu

The message of the international community following the evictions of Palestinian families and violence against worshippers at the Al-Aqsa mosque, must be clear.

Israel must respect international law and credible talks for a two state solution must restart.

Μετάφραση Tweet

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The violent repression of Palestinians protesting against the eviction of families from their homes since the 1950s in the Sheikh Jarrah district of occupied East Jerusalem, as well as the eviction process itself, are acts against peace, stability and the necessary coexistence of Israelis and Palestinians. The implementation of Israeli law as well as the creation of settlements in occupied territory is a clear violation of international law.

The only way to resolve disputes is through mutual respect for international law and respect for UN resolutions.

Today, it is more necessary than ever to resume peace talks between Israelis and Palestinians under the auspices of the UN. In this endeavour, the international community must take immediate action and the EU must take a firm stand.

SYRIZA-Progressive Alliance has always supported a just and viable solution to the Palestinian question, in accordance with the UN resolutions. A solution of the two states, Israel and Palestine, coexisting in peace and security, on the borders of 1967 and with East Jerusalem as the capital of the Palestinian State.

## SOLIDARITY WITH WOMEN IN POLAND

#FreeAbortionWorldWide



 EuropeanLEFT

### Letter by the Syriza-Progressive Alliance delegation in the European Parliament on the recent clashes in East Jerusalem and the military escalation in Israel and the Gaza Strip

"The EU should take concrete initiatives and underline that Israel should restraint and refrain from violence that escalates conflict and inter-ethnic and inter-religious hate in the region and call on all sides to fully respect international law and to find a peaceful solution on the settlement issue and to initiate immediately credible talks for a two-state

solution, the only viable solution, as the UN has repeatedly underlined in its resolutions."

<https://www.syriza.gr/article/id/109169/Letter-by-the-Syriza-Progressive-Alliance-delegation-on-the-recent-clashes-in-East-Jerusalem-and-the-military-escalation-in-Israel-and-the-Gaza-Strip.html>

### SOMOS COLOMBIA/ WE ARE COLOMBIA:

An international appeal for the respect of rights in Colombia is signed by George Katrougalos, shadow foreign minister of SYRIZA-Progressive Alliance. He co-signs it with Noam Chomsky, Rafael Correa, Thomas Picketty and 141 other personalities of 16 countries.

<https://somoscolombia.es/>

### GENEVA SETBACK FOR CYPRUS

An informal 5-party conference in Geneva, 27-29 April 2021, did not succeed to provide a basis for the resumption of inter-communal talks under UN auspice for the solution of the Cyprus problem, despite the efforts of the UN General Secretary Antonio Guterres.

The main obstacle has been the position of Ankara and the new Turkish-Cypriot leader Ersin Tatar, for two states in the legalization of the present status quo of de facto partition of the island. This would be contrary to UN Security Council resolutions, which provide for the end of the Turkish occupation and the reunification of the island through the establishment of a bizonal-bicommunal federation with polit-

ical equality, a single citizenship, sovereignty and a single international personality

The EU also favours the UN provided solution, but did not take part in Geneva as a result of a veto on the part of Ankara.

The new setback shows clearly that time is not working for a just and viable solution in Cyprus. Now, is the time for further strengthening of international solidarity with the people of Cyprus, Greek Cypriots and Turkish Cypriots. In addition, it must become crystal clear that the Cyprus issue is a major peace issue for the Eastern Mediterranean, concerning Europe directly. In this sense, Cyprus fights for Europe!



## “Wounded” Acropolis

An international press theme during May was the Acropolis, because of works done there on the initiative of the Ministry of Culture and Sports. Interventions on the top of the famous hill, where the Parthenon is located, are regarded as a sacrilege against the ancient site.

Visiting the Acropolis, Alexis Tsipras lashed out at the government and PM Kyriakos Mitsotakis accusing him of “abuse to our cultural heritage”, adding that the government was exhibiting an “authoritarian and ownership mentality even in culture.”

The intervention including a cement path is an insult to a monument of world civilization, which generated national and international criticism.



## Fire Disaster

This year’s start of the “antifire period” in Greece was coincided with yet another forest disaster, a few tens of kilometers from Athens.

In particular, last May a major wildfire ripped through a thick pine forest, between Megara and Korinthos.

Fortunately, there was no loss of lives, but a huge cloud of smoke and ashes were spread across southern Greece, including Athens where it obscured the view of the Acropolis. About 52,000 acres of pine forests and 20,000 acres of agrarian crops were destroyed, but the government failed to prevent and deal with the fire, which went on for five days.

## BICENTENARY OF THE GREEK INDEPENDENCE REVOLUTION

Throughout this year, the Greek people celebrate with multiform events the bicentenary of the Greek Independence Revolution (1821-2021). It was a historically very important development for the entire Europe, but it was not expected to break out and succeed.

From the beginning the Greek Revolution against the then powerful Ottoman empire, generated a very broad movement of international solidarity in Europe, the Mediterranean and across the Atlantic (Philhellenic movement).

On this landmark occasion, the president of SYRIZA-Progressive Alliance party issued a declaration praising the successive struggles of the Greek people for national independence, democracy and progress: “This year of celebration of the bicentenary of the Revolution, our people give yet another great battle, battle for life to regain hope and the future. History has taught us that great victories are a cause of ordinary people, those who with self sacrifice and selflessness serve a cause superior even to their life itself. Those people, the heroes of our time, are those men and women who today battle in hospitals, the physicians and medical staff who save lives. (...)”

We have before us a battle that must be won, so that the next day finds all of us united and determined to build the Greece, which the future generations deserve”.