

From Dromos tis Aristeras (The Road Left)  
24 February 2017

*The Syriza Wave: A Third Glance*

by Stelios Elliniadis

Helena Sheehan did not become a friend of Greece only because of the crisis. She begins her new book *The Syriza Wave* writing, "Greece lived in my imagination long before I set foot in it... As a teenager, outside the school curriculum, I read the Socratic dialogues and imagined ancient Athens." Sheehan studied philosophy, became a philosopher, a professor at Dublin University, and wrote important books like *Marxism and the Philosophy of Science: A Critical History*. For 25 years, she monitored the political situation in Greece. At the start of the crisis, she was one of the first in Europe to highlight the rise of the left in the south and to play a part in the creation of a dynamic pan-European solidarity movement. To live up close to the events and to understand developments in recent years, she made repeated visits to Greece and came into contact with many people, both left cadre and ordinary working people. She recorded these encounters and events. There is a brief but useful timeline on the front pages. She recounts her flow of meetings with many interlocutors. This is a very interesting feature, especially for what they said about Syriza, Europe, governance, socialism. Among those discussed are: Manolis Glezos, Aristides Baltas, Kostas Gavroglou, Costas Lapavistas, Costas Isychos, Yiorgos Ayfantis, Zoe Konstantopoulou, Stathis Kouvelakis, Andreas Karitzis, Panagiotis Lafazanis, Aris Chatzistefanou, Michalis Spourdalakis, Yanis Varoufakis, Haris Golemis, Nikos Potamitis, Kostas Skordoulis and Stelios Elliniadis, but also foreigners such as Leo Panitch, Paul Mason and Paul Murphy.

Throughout the narrative, Sheehan maps many developments in the evolution of events in Greece and notes many details regarding parallels in different countries. The author in no way hides her enormous sorrow for the mutation of Syriza, not reducing it to aphorisms, but working through the same events and people to comprehend the exhilarating path to victory and the stark descent into submission. The account is personal and expresses without exaggeration the high enthusiasm for the winning effort, as well as the agony and disappointment about the outcome. There is a close, step-by-step monitoring of the dramatic developments of the 2012-2016 period, encompassing the battle for ERT, the refugee crisis, Golden Dawn, the processes in the Greek left, the solidarity of the left in other countries, but also the climate in Europe. The story shows from within a special moment of the effort to repel neoliberal policies spearheaded by Greece and the Greek left. A very interesting third eye.