

I'd vote No in Greece

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[Joseph Stiglitz](#), [Paul Mason](#) and [Aditya Chakraborty](#) all make clear what the issue is in Greece. All imply where their hearts lie. They would vote No in the Greek referendum. So would I.

I won't repeat their words. Please read each of them: they all have a distinct message. It is that Greece now has to decide. It has to decide its own fate. It can choose between democracy and the right to pursue its own path. Or it can choose to bow to the demands of a form of capitalism that says it is about choice but is not: which instead of being about democracy is about doing what is required to keep the bankers and a tiny elite in power.

We should, I suppose, be grateful that the elite do not deny this fact. Many papers report the same thing, which is that whatever it says on the ballot paper in Greece the real choice, according to Europe's elite, is different. They are saying to the people of Greece [that the referendum is about staying in the euro](#), or not. And there is little, if anything, that is subtle about their approach. It is a 'shut up, do as you're told, take the medicine and live under our protection' argument that many a feudal lord would have been entirely familiar with.

And what they are also delivering is a 'get rid of Syriza and Tsipras' message. As the [Guardian has noted](#), the unspoken message from Germany is that Tsipras is a dangerous man on a mission who has to be stopped because he is a threat to the European order.

I agree: he is. But that threat is needed. What has been proven over the past few days is that there is no democratic control within the Eurozone. And we already know that the European Central Bank is wholly unaccountable and the European Commission is little different. That combined expression of power for a few is without doubt threatened by democratically elected Syriza. The EU elite want to crush it as a result, and are simply astonished that it has not given in. It is beyond that elite's imagination that elected politicians will not do what they demand: all politicians have to date. That is one reason for admiring Syriza. They are genuinely courageous politicians.

And that is why what is happening in Greece is so much more important than being a simple referendum on the euro. As people across Europe demand autonomy and local power this struggle is as much about whether the people of Scotland and Wales and Northern Ireland, and even England come to that, can have power as to whether Greece can.

And this power struggle is about whether democracy matters or not.

And it is a fight to determine in whose interests economies are run.

Of course the people of Greece may vote Yes and stay in the euro on Juncker's terms. Democracy permits that possibility. But it is a possibility that democracy in Greece would have difficulty in embracing because Syriza would fall and there is no effective opposition: the main opposition political parties are not even campaigning in the referendum for fear that they will prejudice the Yes vote, so badly are they disliked and mistrusted. So a Yes vote might also be a vote to suspend democracy itself: assume a government of the bankers will be put in place.

Such a situation would not, however, be the end of the matter. Just as the Scottish referendum was not the end of debate on Scotland's right to choose a narrow Yes vote in Greece may be the last thing that Juncker et al really want. Their nightmares might only then begin.

And what happens if there is a no vote? Actually, no one does know. No one does know if the bullies of Europe will have the conviction to carry through on their promise to expel Greece, for which there is no mechanism in place. Will they really do what they have no power to deliver? That too could spell disaster for the EU elite because it would make clear that this is about their power, not about good governance or anything approaching it. None of them will want that to be made clear. No wonder they're frightened - and I am sure that they are.

In the face of all that I would have to vote No if I was Greek.

I would vote No to say yes to Greece, choice, the end of control, to break the power of the EU elite, to reject banker fuelled capitalism, and to reject the path to feudalism. But most I would vote No because there simply is no argument barring fear to vote Yes and imposed fear has never been a reason to do anything wise.

But I'd also vote No knowing that whatever Europe says now a No vote in this referendum does not close the debate: that will go on come what may in Greece, and it will grow for a simple reason, which is that the EU must now be petrified of a UK EU referendum. The chance that the debate in Greece rolls over into that campaign is very high indeed. And the chance that the EU bankers might begin to lose their power is looking ever more likely.

We are going to live in very uncertain times.

But the protection of Jean Claude Juncker is no alternative to that.