

The pseudo-left unmasked in Greece

Alex Lantier
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It has taken only a few days since the Coalition of the Radical Left (SYRIZA) became the front-runner in Greece's June 17 elections for the bankruptcy of its politics to become clear.

Millions of workers are expected to vote against Greece's major parties, the social democratic PASOK and the right-wing New Democracy (ND), in order to register their opposition to the economic disaster created by the so-called bailouts these parties negotiated with the European Union (EU). Greece's economy has shrunk by more than 20 percent since 2009, the greatest collapse since the Nazi occupation of the country during World War II.

Workers want to take back the wages and social services the EU has stolen from them and destroy the bankers' dictatorship overseen by the "troika"—the EU, the International Monetary Fund (IMF), and the European Central Bank (ECB).

SYRIZA has responded to this rising anger by criticizing EU austerity policies. In advance of his recent trip to Paris and Berlin, however, SYRIZA leader Alexis Tsipras told politicians and journalists to pay no attention to these statements.

Stressing, in an interview with Reuters, that "what is being transmitted in Europe about us is not what we represent and want," he pledged "long-term reforms." On the basis of these reforms, Tsipras hopes to hold the EU and the euro together and guarantee the banks that "we'll be able to pay back the money they gave us."

Tsipras omitted the fact that the banks are to be repaid by massively lowering the living standards of the working class. His attempt to combine criticisms of austerity with support for the framework of the EU has rapidly proved to be untenable. His posturing as a "radical left" politician, thanks to which SYRIZA hopes to win 28 percent of the vote, did not even survive the time it took him to pack his bags for Berlin.

SYRIZA's attempt to broker a better deal with the

European ruling classes has collapsed into an effort to secure cosmetic changes in austerity measures to be imposed on the workers. In this, Tsipras represents layers of the Greek upper-middle class and bourgeoisie. He is appealing to sections of the European bourgeoisie, including newly-elected French President François Hollande, who prefer austerity policies as designed by the US rather than by German Chancellor Angela Merkel.

Tsipras praised Obama's larger bank bailouts for making "recession less severe than in Europe." He told the *New York Times* that he wants to "press Merkel to follow the example of America, where the debt crisis wasn't tackled with austerity measures, but with an expansionist approach."

What a fraud! While Washington has spent trillions on Wall Street bailouts and imperialist wars in the Middle East, the American working class has been bled white with social cuts. In the US as in Greece, access to health care and education is being slashed, millions are unemployed, and youth joblessness in major US cities like Washington, DC and Detroit equals the 50 percent level in Greece.

The working class faces a struggle not against one or another individual imperialist politician, but against a social order—capitalism—that has failed around the world.

In Europe, this is bound up with an international struggle to overthrow the European Union, a thieves' kitchen in which imperialist politicians—of the right or, like Tsipras, of the bourgeois "left"—thrash out plans for attacks on the proletariat on a scale unseen since Hitler ruled Europe. Workers must reject any call for sacrifice for the sake of saving this reactionary institution.

In the coming class struggles, SYRIZA will confront the workers as an enemy. Its aim, whether in or out of power, is to contain popular opposition to austerity

policies and maintain the political domination of finance capital over the working class. Should SYRIZA be allowed to take power by the Greek ruling class, in an attempt to head off the radicalization of the population, this will produce only further disappointments and defeats for the working class.

Many of SYRIZA's international allies, like the German Left Party and the French Communist Party (PCF), have long records of carrying out social cuts in local or national governments. As for other parties applauding SYRIZA's rise in the polls, like the New Anti-capitalist Party in France and the International Socialist Organization in the US, they too are drawn from affluent social layers hoping to benefit materially from their ties to governments attacking the workers.

The truth of these parties' class basis and fraud of their left posturing will out. They are not socialist or revolutionary, or even reformist. Their policies offer not an improvement, but a retrogression in the living standards of the working class.

The only way for Greek workers to oppose the demands being placed on them is to appeal to the working class in Western Europe and beyond for a common struggle against the dictatorship of capital—that is, to adopt a revolutionary policy. The only viable perspective is the fight for socialism, through the seizure of state power and wresting of control of the economy from the hands of the capitalists.

Socialist-minded workers and youth must fight to break the influence of the pseudo-left parties and build a socialist leadership in the working class, based on the traditions of Trotskyism as defended by the International Committee of the Fourth International. The historic task of the coming struggles in Greece is the overthrow of the European Union and building of the United Socialist States of Europe as an integral part of the world socialist revolution.

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