

A reply to a defender of SYRIZA

Robert Stevens
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The *World Socialist Web Site* was sent a curt criticism of the article, “Pseudo-left conceals refusal of SYRIZA, PASOK and trade unions to oppose Golden Dawn.”

The author, who identified himself as Konstantinos, wrote, “I do not know where your reporters are getting their information from, and if they can read Greek but SYRIZA did publicly call for participation in the anti-Nazi demonstration in Athens.”

He attached a link as supposed proof that the WSWs had misrepresented SYRIZA in stating that it had done nothing to mobilise support for a national protest against the fascist Golden Dawn on January 19, as evidenced by the small numbers who participated.

We explained that the protest was in reality an initiative organised by various pseudo-left formations within the SYRIZA coalition to make out that it was doing something to oppose Golden Dawn. This was motivated by a desire to conceal the fact that SYRIZA’s only real concern is to convince the Greek bourgeoisie, the European Union and the International Monetary Fund of its commitment to safeguarding capitalism by proposing a more “realistic” cuts programme and thereby ensuring that Greece remains within the euro currency zone.

The email sent by Konstantinos only serves to confirm this appraisal. It is a transparent and fairly desperate attempt to cover SYRIZA’s exposed posterior. His Twitter postings show he is very familiar with SYRIZA and its activities, with many coming from the London Branch of SYRIZA.

Our article states that “no national endorsement” was won from SYRIZA in support of this protest. SYRIZA’s name was not among the more than 20 organisations cited as having called the protest. Konstantinos is clutching at straws in attempting to prove the opposite.

The link he provides is to an events page on

SYRIZA’s web site. It consists of just two sentences, posted on January 18, just one day before the demonstration, calling for people to participate. A pro-forma appeal does not constitute the slightest evidence that the organisation is waging a genuine struggle against fascism, or that it did anything to mobilise its supporters on January 19.

In reality Kostantinos is forced to cite the party’s events diary because he cannot point to any more substantial coverage on its web site in the run-up to the demo—not a single article.

For the same reason, concealed behind a cheap jibe about an ability to read Greek, he does not address any of the critical points made in the article—above all its detailed explanation of how the pseudo-left formations sought to use the protest to conceal the refusal of SYRIZA to politically oppose Golden Dawn. Their campaign was not based on mobilising the collective strength of the working class, but securing the formal backing of selected labour and trade union bureaucrats and a few local councils in order to, as we explained, “drape these organisations in a progressive and antifascist guise”.

This was confirmed by the article on the demonstration published on SYRIZA’s web site January 20, the day after it had taken place. It was written by SYRIZA Member of Parliament Maria Bolari, whose presence on the demonstration was put to the same end of providing SYRIZA with political cover.

Bolari, a former Stalinist, is now a leading member of the Internationalist Workers’ Left (DEA), a sister party of the International Socialist Organisation in the United States, formed as a result of a split with the international grouping dominated by Britain’s Socialist Workers Party. She was elected a SYRIZA MP for the Athens A district last year and now functions as the party’s secretary of the Hellenic Parliament.

Her attendance at the protest is the exception that proves the rule—that there was no significant presence of SYRIZA’s leading figures or its party’s members at the January 19 protest in Athens. Her statement declares the rally to be “proof of the determination for daily action, in order to isolate the fascists, to overthrow the Samaras government who covers for them and uses them, to overthrow the troika policies of austerity and unemployment.”

These are bare-faced lies. SYRIZA rejects any such policy. Its leader, Alex Tsipras, is a self-professed opponent of any attempt to overthrow Samaras’s New Democracy/PASOK/ Democratic Left coalition and of any break with the European Union. Last October he said his party was not interested in bringing down the government, even as Samaras was finalising another €13.5 billion of cuts alongside his coalition partners. He stated, “Our top priority is to overturn this policy. It is not a time for tricks, it is not a time to provoke the fall of the government.”

Under Greek law, SYRIZA could have provoked the dissolution of parliament and blocked the cuts if 60 of its deputies had resigned. SYRIZA’s decision resulted not in the “overturn” of the austerity policy, but its full implementation. It also must not be forgotten that, until as late as 2010, those who now constitute the Democratic Left were all members of SYRIZA.

The role of Bolari, the DEA and of their defenders such as Konstantinos vindicates the analysis the *World Socialist Web Site* made in the article cited above and in the Perspective column we circulated in Greek prior to the January 19 anti-fascist protest, “Political issues in the fight against the fascist Golden Dawn.”

In it we wrote, “A host of pseudo-left groups such as the International Workers’ Left (DEA) and Xekinima are urging ‘left unity’ or ‘a united front of the left’ against the fascist threat. The essence of this political formula, as they use it, is to subordinate the struggle of the working class against Golden Dawn to the social democratic PASOK, the trade unions, and SYRIZA (the Coalition of the Radical Left).

“The rise of Golden Dawn is the price paid for what these parties have done in either directly imposing a social counterrevolution in Greece or, in the case of SYRIZA, making their central aim the defence of Greek capitalism and preservation of the European Union (EU).”

We called for workers and youth to take up a fight against Golden Dawn, including the formation of defence committees in every working class and immigrant neighbourhood, on the basis of a struggle for the establishment of genuine democracy and equality through social revolution and the formation of a workers’ government. Our appeal was part of a “broader political mobilisation of the European working class against the European Union and its constituent governments, and for the establishment of workers’ power in the form of the United Socialist States of Europe.” (See “Political issues in the fight against the fascist Golden Dawn”)

These are the issues that must be addressed by anyone genuinely seeking to oppose Golden Dawn, rather than jockeying for position as an apologist for SYRIZA, which is a political representative of the Greek bourgeoisie.



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