

# Australian pseudo-left group hails Syriza's victory in Greece

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The Australian organisation Socialist Alternative (SA) is among the pseudo-left tendencies internationally rushing to laud the outcome of the Greek election. As in Europe and elsewhere, SA is seeking to cover up the profound dangers to the working class contained in Syriza's victory, and its formation of a coalition government with the extreme right-wing nationalist Independent Greeks.

As the WSWS Perspective warned on January 27: "Syriza's election victory does not express a political development, a step forward, progress or anything of the kind by or for the working class. In its origin, social composition and politics, Syriza is a bourgeois party—one of many, including the Democrats under US President Barack Obama—that come to power making promises of 'hope' and 'change' and then impose policies of austerity and war. It will inevitably betray, sooner rather than later, the aspirations for an end to social hardship and suffering that it has cynically exploited."

The response of SA is diametrically opposed. On January 26, SA's publication *RedFlag* hailed the election as a "stunning victory of the left in Greece." It declared Syriza was committed to "a series of decisive reforms" that represented a "direct challenge to the neoliberal agenda that has dominated Western capitalism over the last 30 years."

SA asserted: "If Syriza does not back down and pushes ahead with its anti-austerity program, that will raise hopes and aspirations throughout Europe and could trigger a sharp swing to the left."

SA's enthusiasm stems from its years of lies and falsifications to promote illusions in Syriza and present it as a model for new "left" formations internationally, including in Australia. SA's Greek co-thinker, the Internationalist Workers Left (DEA), is part of Syriza

and its Left Platform faction. Some of the DEA's leading members sit on Syriza's Central Committee.

SA has done everything it can to support the DEA's assertions that Syriza, headed by Alexis Tsipras, could be pressured to the left by self-styled socialists and "revolutionaries" working within this bourgeois formation. SA conferences featured DEA speakers, while *RedFlag* published glowing endorsements of their activities in Syriza.

The real political role of the DEA and Left Platform has to been to assist the Syriza leadership confine resistance to austerity to impotent general strikes and rallies. The revolutionary potential of the opposition of Greek workers has been blocked and the working class channelled behind the delusion that the assault on its living standards can be reversed by electing a Syriza-led capitalist government.

Syriza's decision to ally with the anti-immigrant, pro-church, oligarch-linked and ultra-nationalist Independent Greeks is a damning indictment of the DEA and Left Platform, as well as SA and the entire international pseudo-left milieu. Syriza is committed to the defence of the Greek capitalist state and capitalist property. The choice of the far-right as its partner signals that it will not hesitate to use state violence against opposition from the very workers who voted for Syriza. That is underscored by the fact that the Independent Greeks leader Panos Kammenos has been installed as defence minister. He has close links with the military—that is, the same military that ruled Greece between 1967 and 1974 with an iron fist.

On January 27, DEA leader and Syriza Central Committee member Stathis Kouvelakis asserted that the participation of "*even one minister*" from the Independent Greeks in a Syriza government would "symbolise the end of the idea of an 'anti-austerity

government of the left’.” He noted that the Independent Greeks were primarily concerned with protecting the “hard core” of the state apparatus, meaning the military and police. He concluded that, for Syriza, “there is no middle course between confrontation and capitulation” and “the moment of truth is at hand.”

The moment did not even last 24 hours. Yesterday, January 28, the DEA spelt out its own capitulation to Syriza’s coalition with the Independent Greeks. Making clear it will remain in Syriza and serve its reactionary leadership and program, the DEA stated: “In these new circumstances, the role of Syriza as a political party is irreplaceable. The functioning of its organisational bodies and membership, with collective participation and democracy throughout the party, is not an optional extra, but the precondition for the final victory of Syriza, and the final victory of the whole of the left and of our people.” By declaring that Syriza is “irreplaceable,” the DEA makes it plain that there is no line it will not cross in supporting this bourgeois government.

The DEA’s assertions that the working class must be confined to seeking to influence Syriza, poses immense dangers. Time and time again, most recently in Egypt, claims by fake socialists that “left” bourgeois governments could be pressured to implement social and democratic reforms have served only to politically disorientate the masses and provide the ruling class with time to prepare mass repression and dictatorial forms of rule. Strategic experiences in country after country have proven that without a genuine Marxist party, fighting for international socialism and the complete political independence of the working class from all factions of the bourgeoisie, the working class will be defeated.

SA and *RedFlag* are preparing to play a similarly treacherous role in Australia. For the past several years, SA has devoted much of its energies to trying to assemble a so-called unified “left” that could enter into an Australian version of Syriza. At a conference last April, during a joint seminar with a DEA leader, SA National Committee member Mick Armstrong declared: “[W]here opportunities open up we have to seize them... There is nothing like Syriza on the agenda in Australia today, but at some stage that will open up as a possibility, at some stage, things will move.”

Any move by elements of the Labor Party or the trade union apparatus to corral political opposition in the working class behind some self-proclaimed new “left” party in Australia would find enthusiastic collaborators in SA. Under conditions of mass alienation from both Labor and the traditional big-business Liberal Party, the prospect is not far-fetched. As the global and domestic economic situation deteriorates and the dangers of war grow in the Asia-Pacific as a result of the Australian-backed US pivot against China, politics is becoming increasingly fraught. Already, divisions in ruling circles and broader social antagonisms have seen a range of right-wing, populist formations established, such as the Palmer United Party.

In Greece, SA’s counterpart, the DEA, is directly complicit in the subordination of the working class to Syriza. SA’s protracted promotion of the DEA’s entry into Syriza is part of its preparations to perform the same service in defence of the Australian capitalist state.



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