

The class character of Syriza revealed

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It has not taken long for the radical posturing of Syriza to be exposed following its assumption of state power in Greece.

For years Syriza's supporters hailed the organisation as a beacon in the fight against austerity and a shining example for workers internationally. However, as the second president of the United States, John Adams, famously observed, "Facts are stubborn things; and whatever may be our wishes, our inclinations, or the dictates of our passion, they cannot alter the state of facts and evidence."

The thoroughly establishment and bourgeois character of Syriza is exposed first of all in the political alliance that the organisation has formed with the Independent Greeks (ANEL), a right-wing xenophobic split-off from the conservative New Democracy (ND). Syriza leader Alexis Tsipras' decision to enter into a coalition with ANEL was entirely a matter of choice. Had it elected to do so, Syriza could just as well have formed a minority government, counting on the vote of the Greek Communist Party (KKE) and others to back it on major initiatives.

By joining with ANEL, Syriza was seeking to create the best conditions for shifting its policy to the right, while signaling to the Greek and international bourgeoisie that its new government is no threat to their fundamental interests.

Control of the Ministry of Defence has been handed to Independent Greeks leader, Panos Kammenos, a man with close links to the military. In his first statement as minister, Kammenos pledged to find funds for new armaments programmes, maintain current ones and review new threats to security.

Syriza and Tsipras are fully aware of the implications of such a political appointment. Between 1967 and 1974, Greece was ruled with an iron fist by a military junta. Within a week of seizing power, the military arrested more than 8,000 people, based on lists

meticulously prepared beforehand. Thousands of people suffered horrific torture in specially-created camps at the hands of the regime.

Kammenos, who was an ND deputy for 20 years, has close connections to Panayiotis Baltakos, the former cabinet secretary of the recently deposed ND Prime Minister Antonis Samaras. Last year Baltakos began moves to set up a far-right party, *Rizes* (Roots), based on "the Orthodox Church, the Security Services and the Armed Forces."

Syriza is making its own appeal to these forces. As soon as the polls closed, the prospective minister of the interior, Nikos Voutsis, phoned the heads of the police and army. Channel 4 News journalist Paul Mason reported that Voutsis told them, "We trust you". Mason noted that this was said even though the "Greek military and police force have been configured since the Cold War to suppress far leftism, even giving their officers political education as to the perils of Marxism."

Prior to the election, Syriza said they intended to disband riot police units and merge them into the general force. This pledge didn't last a single day in government, with a Syriza deputy minister at the ministry of the interior announcing, "The police will have weapons at protests."

It is well known that the Greek police force is staffed with supporters of fascism. In last week's election, as was the case in the 2012 election, between 40 and 50 percent of officers voted for the fascist Golden Dawn party.

Voutsis' declaration is not an example of political naiveté. He is informing the police and army that, under conditions of deepening economic and social crisis and faced with the inevitable emergence of mass protests against the government once it begins to impose its own version of austerity, Syriza will depend on and utilise all the forces of the state to crush opposition.

In international policy, Syriza signaled its general alliance with European imperialism by supporting sanctions against Russia at the European Union foreign ministers meeting yesterday. “We are in the mainstream; we are not the bad boy”, declared Tsipras’ foreign minister, Nikos Kotzias, a former member of the KKE who supported the crushing of the Solidarity movement by the Polish Stalinist regime in the 1980s.

As for domestic policy, in an attempt to make a popular appeal during its first day in office, Syriza’s ministers ladled out anti-austerity rhetoric. But this was couched first of all in nationalist terms, with Tsipras declaring that his would be a government of “national salvation”, and all invective was reserved for just one imperialist power, Germany.

Syriza’s concern is not for an end to the attacks on the Greek working class. Rather it complains that the austerity measures championed by the government of Angela Merkel are detrimental to both Greek and European capitalism.

The Syriza government is appealing to European countries, including Italy and France, and above all to the United States, to urge the type of reflationary strategy of quantitative easing already announced by the European Central Bank—in order to prevent a renewed plunge into global recession. Its declared programme is based on an appeal for international creditors to accept a temporary freeze on Greece’s 300 billion euro debt while it pledges to maintain a balanced budget and create the basis for repayment further down the line.

Signaling Syriza’s intention to develop an economic policy aimed at creating the best conditions for capitalist exploitation, Deputy Prime Minister Giorgos Dragasakis said yesterday, “The Greek economy has many opportunities, our government is interested in attracting new investments ...We are preparing a long list of projects and investment opportunities.”

That same day, President Barack Obama congratulated Tsipras on his election and said the United States “as a longstanding friend and ally, looks forward to working closely with the new Greek government to help Greece return to a path of long-term prosperity.”

Syriza’s pro-capitalist and pro-imperialist policies ensure that it will, in the near future, come into direct conflict with the working class. Its role, backed by the

collection of political frauds and pseudo-socialist charlatans who have promoted it internationally, is to prevent the emergence of an independent political movement of the working class and to confuse and disorient workers and young people, while the most reactionary layers within the state prepare for such a conflict.

In opposition to the Syriza-led government and its political apologists, the working class in Greece must turn to the building of its own revolutionary party, a section of the International Committee of the Fourth International.



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