

# France's *Lutte Ouvrière* group covers for Syriza's betrayal in Greece

Stéphane Hugues  
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With the devastating character of Syriza's betrayal of the Greek people exposed for all to see, pseudo-left groups around Europe are seeking to defend Syriza, while distancing themselves from its imposition of deep austerity against the Greek working class.

Fearing the political fallout as workers and youth across Europe consider the implications of Syriza's capitulation, including the imposition of tens of billions of euros of new austerity measures and privatizations in Greece, they are all covering for Syriza's reactionary policies. *Lutte Ouvrière* (LO, Workers' Struggle) in particular has roused itself from its usual stony silence on international issues and is coming forward to present Syriza in a sympathetic light.

In its July 13 editorial, LO blames the EU for Syriza's policies, presenting Syriza leader and Greek Prime Minister Alexis Tsipras as a "left" politician who, unlike LO, is unfortunately not radical enough.

LO writes, "Tsipras never pretended to contest capitalist rule or represent the political interests of the exploited against the exploiters. He was fighting for the dignity of Greece, so that it would not be considered as a semi-colony and for its right to more freely decide its internal policies. And even that, the great powers did not grant to him; they forced him to betray his own promises."

This presentation of Tsipras as a defeated fighter for the dignity of Greece is an out and out lie. Syriza did not fight the EU for anything—every time the EU, Germany, France and the other euro zone countries demanded even bigger austerity packages in the five-month negotiations, Tsipras agreed. Never seeking to mobilize opposition to the EU in the working class, he violated his election promises and extended the EU austerity Memorandum in February.

Even after the massive "no" vote in the July 5

referendum, Tsipras returned to the EU talks and then personally rammed massive austerity measures through the Greek parliament.

LO concludes, "Negotiating or begging for concessions is useless. Any party that has not decided to fight the bourgeoisie and the roots of its power—private property and the means of production, market economy, and competition—can promise whatever it wants, it will govern inevitably in the interests of big capital."

There is nothing more cynical and demoralized than this type of empty rhetoric, mouthing a few abstract truths to justify a policy which in facts consists of accommodation and surrender to finance capital. While LO postures as an anti-capitalist critic of Syriza, it has for decades integrated itself into France's corrupt trade union bureaucracy and the periphery of the ruling Socialist Party (PS).

Its relatively friendly treatment of Tsipras, the free-market politician, reflects the fact that Tsipras expresses essentially the same class interests as LO.

LO represents in France the middle class layers—parliamentarians, up-and-coming trade union executives, and "left" academics—that Syriza speaks for in Greece. In its decision to run joint slates with PS officials in local elections, and in the role of leading LO member and union official Jean-Pierre Mercier in overseeing the closure of the Aulnay auto plant, it retailed the same anti-worker policies Syriza is now dispensing wholesale against the Greek people.

This underlies LO's instinctively hostile reaction to every expression of genuine political opposition in the working class to the austerity policies of the EU.

LO was, in particular, shocked and stunned by the "no" vote in the July 5 referendum on EU austerity called by Tsipras. While Tsipras had hoped to obtain a

“yes” vote that would justify stepping down and allowing another government to impose the EU dictates, the working class and poorer layers of the Greek population defied the media and the EU to deliver an overwhelming 61 percent “no” vote against EU austerity.

LO’s July 6 editorial darkly warned, “Amongst those who applauded the success of the ‘No’, there were not just the friends of the exploited classes. There are all those, and not only the extreme right, that hold out decoys to distract the popular classes from their true enemies.”

Seeking to explain who the “true enemies” of the Greek working class are, it added: “Who is responsible for the misfortunes of the Greek people is neither the euro zone nor the intransigence of Germany nor of Europe, but big capital and all those who own it.”

This is a cover-up for the role of the EU and the euro currency, which aims to shield LO’s own political responsibility. The EU and the euro zone countries, led by Berlin, worked with Syriza to impose devastating austerity measures on the Greek working class in the interests of finance capital. A key accomplice of Berlin in the imposition of austerity measures in Greece was the PS government of French President François Hollande, whom LO supported in the final round of the 2012 presidential elections.

LO tries to hide behind more gaseous rhetoric, dissolving all the real enemies of the Greek working class into an abstraction LO calls “big capital”.

LO’s reaction to the betrayal of Syriza is a warning to the working class: were it to arrive in power, this party would move to relentlessly attack the working class, as Syriza has done.



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