

Scottish Socialist Party defends Syriza

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Syriza's abject capitulation to the European financial oligarchy provides a devastating exposure of Europe's pseudo-left tendencies, none more so than the Scottish Socialist Party (SSP).

For years, Syriza has been hailed as a model party of the future. Now the model is in pieces. Syriza leader Alexis Tsipras is preparing to impose unprecedented levels of pro-European Union (EU) austerity measures, for which all those who have hailed Syriza share responsibility.

Syriza can continue to count on the support of these tendencies, even as it intensifies its assault on the working class.

The comments of SSP co-leader Colin Fox are a record of political blindness—at first characterised by wild enthusiasm and then by cynical dissembling and demoralisation.

Writing on his blog on January 25, Fox breathlessly celebrated Syriza's electoral victory as the coming to power of "Europe's first radical left-wing government since 1945." He described Syriza as offering a way out of "social and political purgatory."

For Fox, Syriza's rise to power was an opportunity to promote illusions in a perspective based on national economic development under capitalism and within the framework of the EU. It provided the SSP with the possibility of arguing that meaningful social concessions could be won outside of and in opposition to a revolutionary struggle against capitalism. According to Fox, Syriza in government implied, "Hope is coming. Greece will advance. Europe is changing."

Events have left Fox's claims in ruins. By June, he was forced to admit, "Any honest and objective assessment of the progress made on [its] pledges does not flatter Syriza. Prime Minister Alexis Tsipras and his colleague Janis Varoufakis have succumbed to pressure applied by their creditors in Berlin, Frankfurt, Brussels and New York. The debts have not been written off. Indeed unaffordable repayments have all been made in full. The Port of Piraeus, the jewel in the crown of the Greek state, is to be sold off to a Chinese company. The promised increases in the minimum wage and state pensions have not happened either."

Two weeks later, Fox wrote, "This depressing picture is all

a far cry from the euphoria of January 25th when Syriza won the General Election"—without once acknowledging that he played his part in whipping up such sentiment by advancing Syriza as a vehicle through which to oppose austerity.

In what is a now theme of his writings, Fox baldly declared, "Unfortunately none of those promises has been kept and for one simple reason. It has no power to do so. The Troika [the International Monetary Fund, European Central Bank and European Union] hold all the 'aces'."

What an admission! After months of hailing Syriza as the most left-wing government elected since 1945, Fox conceded that the gangsters of European capitalism "hold all the aces" and that all of Syriza's pledges have proved to be lies. Fox, nevertheless, shrugged his shoulders and continued to defend Syriza.

The referendum victory of July 5 was seized on by Fox to resume his unabashed glorification of Syriza. To do so, he not only concealed the fact that Tsipras had called the referendum as a cynical manoeuvre based on an assumption that a "Yes" vote would be declared to austerity. He also conveniently "forgot" the political record of Syriza's capitulations to the EU and International Monetary Fund he had acknowledged only days earlier.

The vote was now to be seen as "an extraordinary vindication of the Syriza Government and its record since January 25th."

"All previous Greek Governments have humiliated the Greek people with their acquiescence to the money men and their cuts. Syriza are profoundly different in this regard. That is why they won today," he enthused.

This was proof of how "the Greek people have again resoundingly backed *their radical left wing Government*," [emphasis added] he proclaimed, before predicting, "Today's referendum result is therefore an astonishing victory for Syriza and for the Greek people as the Troika will be forced to make considerable concessions."

Fox was proved to be a political liar within hours. Tsipras went on national television that same night to insist that Greek negotiators would return to austerity talks with the EU, claiming, "the mandate you give me is not one of rupture with Europe." He then flew to Brussels to negotiate

Syriza's terms of surrender.

On July 10, less than a week after the landslide "no" vote, the Greek government agreed to a massive new €13 billion package of austerity measures, far more than the proposed €8 to 9 billion initially demanded by the EU.

Six days later, Fox wrote an article not to condemn Syriza's betrayal, but to excuse it.

Headlined, "Doomed if they do and doomed if they don't," Fox began by stating, "The 7 point manifesto Syriza put to the people in January, its 'Thessaloniki Declaration', is today in tatters. They promised to get 50% of Greek debts written off and improve the repayment terms on the remainder—none have in fact been written off and they have signed up to €85 billion more. They promised to increase the national minimum wage and the state pension but have delivered not a penny more. They promised no one would be disconnected from their electricity supply and yet will now oversee the privatisation of the entire industry."

However, for Fox it was not Syriza that was to blame for this monstrous debacle, but Greek workers.

He naturally never considers a perspective based on mobilising the working class in a struggle against Greek and European capitalism. The only alternative to Syriza's capitulation he acknowledges is a "Grexit" (Greek exit) from the eurozone, conceived of as a means of preserving Greek capitalism. Of this bankrupt perspective, he declares, "The Greek people have made it clear they do not have the stomach for its consequences, which would involve an even more dramatic collapse in their living standards in the short term."

What the Greek working class had the "stomach" for was a political struggle against their oppressors, the oligarchy in Greece and the European and international bourgeoisie. That is what the massive "no" vote of July 5 reflected and what was betrayed by Syriza.

"The unavoidable truth is that SYRIZA and 11 million Greeks were powerless in the face of European institutions representing 550 million people with the world's financial institutions behind them," Fox insists.

This is an extraordinary statement. Fox identifies the EU as the legitimate spokesman for the continent's working class, in effect blaming them for what has been done to Greece, before proclaiming that therefore the numbers simply do not stack up to justify any struggle in Greece.

Fox makes abundantly clear that what Syriza has done in Greece, the SSP would be more than ready to do in Scotland.

He does not want Syriza to be exposed because this would impact on the SSP's own pro-capitalist agenda—which he advances on behalf of the Scottish bourgeoisie and a privileged petty-bourgeois layer who seek to benefit from the creation of a separate Scottish state operating as a low-

tax investment platform within the EU.

The SSP's manifesto describes the EU as a "neoliberal trap", but only in order to insist that the task is to "change it from within."

To accomplish this, the manifesto states, requires that the SSP work in a "pan-European socialist alliance"—one made up of the likes of Germany's Left Party, Spain's Podemos and, of course, Syriza.

That is why, when Fox goes on to explain, "The Syriza Government were also isolated internationally," he does so in reference to it having "failed to win the backing of other 'debtor' nations like Ireland, Spain, Italy and Portugal," i.e., a failure to form a coalition of bourgeois governments to possibly secure a less onerous agreement with the EU.

The notion that Europe's workers should be mobilised in defence of their Greek brothers and sisters and against their own governments (including Syriza) and the EU is anathema to Fox. He concludes his article by calling for "international solidarity" with Greece and for the "socialist movement worldwide... to bring forward such practical solutions to help the Syriza government as best it can."

International solidarity aimed at helping the Syriza government is not a programme for the working class, but a rallying cry pitched at the myriad pseudo-left tendencies to do all they can to shore up the authority of what has now been exposed as the chief political instrument for imposing austerity on the Greek working class. It is a means of suppressing the class struggle with the aid of their international co-thinkers, not only in Greece but across the continent.



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