

# Syriza attempts to rewrite history in futile effort to stem collapse in support

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On Tuesday, just five days before the September 20 Greek general election, Syriza finally issued its programme. The fact that Syriza puts out a 130-page document, with just days to go before the vote, is a travesty. It befits the fraudulent character of the snap election called in August by Syriza leader Alexis Tsipras, then prime minister.

The election is not intended to register the democratic will of the population. The move to elections was a manoeuvre aimed at establishing a new political framework for pushing through deeply unpopular austerity measures. Tsipras said his government, elected in January on an anti-austerity ticket, had “exhausted” its “political mandate.” The “political mandate” of Syriza was in fact exhausted by the government’s betrayal of the anti-austerity sentiment that brought it to power.

Syriza’s election programme is a pack of lies. Under conditions in which the party has haemorrhaged support in the population, the programme is a desperate attempt by Syriza to rewrite history. Just weeks after signing along with the European Union-led “troika” the harshest austerity programme yet imposed against the Greek population, Syriza’s manifesto claims that the party remains an anti-austerity movement, dedicated to reversing the savage cuts it has just embraced and held up as the only realistic alternative available.

Syriza’s programme declares, “The aim of Syriza is to implement with different terms, after seven months of experience with negotiation and governance [!], a four-year government programme *to disengage from neo-liberalism and austerity, to achieve a radical, democratic transformation of the state, while at the same time seeking solutions to limit the [negative] repercussions of the agreement*” (emphasis added).

While stating that what it agreed with the troika is “a

harsh programme,” it claims there are some “limited gains” within it for the majority of society.

It continues, “In many areas, the direction of implementation will depend on future negotiations between Greece and its creditors. There is ample room to develop policies and social struggles to defend wage-earners, the self-employed, and public property.”

Just writing these words reveals the contempt these petty-bourgeois dissemblers have for the working people of Greece.

Referring to the austerity agreement it signed, the manifesto states, “At a given moment with given balances of power, one must make a temporary and tactical compromise, so as to be in a position to continue to struggle for the strategic aim of socialism.”

Syriza, as is amply evidenced by its history, programme and social composition, is a party that supports capitalism and has nothing to do with socialism. Its signing up to mass austerity was not based on any “temporary and tactical compromise,” but flowed inevitably from this history, programme and class character.

In June, after months of negotiations with the troika, which consisted of Syriza ditching every promise contained in its pre-election “Thessaloniki Programme” to reverse austerity, Tsipras called a referendum on the troika’s austerity package. Syriza officials have since confirmed that Tsipras wanted a “yes” vote to austerity, in order to justify his planned capitulation to the EU’s austerity demands.

On July 5, the population rejected austerity in a landslide vote. Syriza responded by rapidly agreeing to the harsher measures now to be imposed. Syriza’s programme has the gall to describe the referendum as the party’s “crowning achievement.”

To rub salt into the wound, the manifesto pledges that

following a first adjustment review by the troika of the austerity programme, scheduled for later this year, Syriza will forward a comprehensive proposal to restructure Greece's debt.

The reality, as everyone knows, is that the troika agreement turns Greece into a de facto colony of the European Union and places the country under the dictates of Brussels and Berlin. There will be no genuine debt relief. Indeed, the terms of the austerity programme stipulate that Greece will fund its own debt through privatisations. The remaining most valuable national assets are to be pillaged, so that Athens can continue to pay back loans from the EU, the European Central Bank and International Monetary Fund.

Syriza is promoting its false version of history as a last gasp attempt to stem the stampede away from the party by many workers and youth who previously gave it their support. From what was an unassailable lead it commanded in winning the January elections, Syriza is now neck and neck in the polls with the conservative New Democracy (ND).

Syriza's support has collapsed most particularly among working class youth, who have been among the worst hit by the imposition of years of savage cuts to living standards, ongoing recession and mass unemployment.

According to a recent poll published by *Ethnos*, just 18.6 percent of 18 to 34-year-olds are set to vote for Syriza on Sunday. This is almost half of the more than 30 percent in this age group who voted for the party in January. This disillusionment was expressed within Syriza itself. According to reports, there has been a mass exodus of youth out of the party, with just a few dozen activists now remaining.

One of those who left posted a message on the Syriza Youth Facebook page reading, "The reason why many people left SYRIZA and youth of SYRIZA (including me) is that we took a decision to keep on fighting against capitalism and memorandums as the only way to survive and implement our true beliefs."

This week, Agence France-Presse reported the comments of Manos Papazoglou, a political scientist at the University of the Peloponnese, who observed, "In January, Syriza represented youth, hope and change. But they have lost this image very quickly. It's very rare in Europe to see a party lose its political capital like this so fast."

Syriza's former Left Platform, whose leaders participated at the highest levels of Tsipras's government and who have now established a new formation, Popular Unity, bear a central responsibility for the betrayal. Claiming to represent the "radical" pre-January Syriza, Popular Unity is standing in the elections as a separate party. But their attempt to conceal their involvement in Syriza's betrayal is not proving successful. According to opinion polls, Popular Unity may not even score above the three percent threshold necessary to enter parliament.

Today Syriza's programme differs in no fundamental way from that of the pro-austerity New Democracy and Pasok. Both of these deeply discredited parties have been able to gain traction because of Syriza's betrayal. In addition, the fascist Golden Dawn, which poses as an opponent of austerity, has also gained support and now place third or fourth in Sunday's poll.



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