

Syriza betrayal exposes role of Irish pseudo-left

By Dermot Quinn and Michael Lynch
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The capitulation by Syriza in Greece to the demands of the European Union has seen a rush by Ireland's pseudo-left to distance themselves from the party they were only recently celebrating.

Irish TD [Member of Parliament] Paul Murphy of the Anti-Austerity Alliance and Socialist Party (SP) complained that Syriza's "leadership was humiliated after it bowed down to a huge amount of austerity. Syriza is finished now as a vehicle for working people."

Commenting on the decision of Syriza to ignore the massive "no" vote to austerity in the July referendum and agree instead to imposing tens of billions of euros in new austerity measures, the Socialist Workers Party's Kieran Allen wrote, "The Syriza government that was elected to end austerity has been forced to implement it."

Such statements are a cynical manoeuvre to distance Ireland's pseudo-left from Syriza's criminal betrayal of Greek workers and youth, in which they were willing accomplices.

These organisations enthusiastically endorsed Syriza as the supposed opposition to austerity in the run-up to January's election. Eleven TDs, including Murphy and Richard Boyd Barrett of the Socialist Workers Party/People Before Profit Alliance (SWP/PBP), signed a letter of support declaring "our solidarity and hopes for a victory for Syriza in the elections in Greece. We welcome your commitment to end austerity and to take measures to combat the human crisis that austerity has caused in Greece."

The SWP/PBP stated in the *Socialist Worker*, "Syriza is pledged to end austerity and to negotiate a massive reduction of Greece's debt burden. If they can do it why can't we."

The statements from the SWP/PBP and the SP passed

over in silence Syriza's coalition with the right-wing Independent Greeks (Anel) and the reassurances from Syriza leader Alexis Tsipras to Greece's creditors that his government would do nothing to jeopardise the country's euro zone membership.

Instead, the SWP/PBP claimed, "The election gives the lie to the mantra of every political establishment across Europe that there is no alternative and can give huge encouragement to working people, to trade unionists and to the left everywhere that a fight back against austerity is possible."

Ireland's "left" maintained this fiction for months, continuing to provide a political cover for Syriza's rotten manoeuvres.

In the run-up to July's referendum, called by Tsipras as a supposed plebiscite on the European Union's proposed "bailout" programme, seven TDs visited Greece to endorse the coalition government.

Tsipras called the referendum with the intention of losing the vote, and easing the way for EU diktats. Even though it was clear Syriza was utterly opposed to any measures that might destabilize European capitalism, both the SWP/PBP and the Socialist Party sang its praises.

Whatever efforts these groups are now forced to make to try and distance themselves from the criminal actions of Syriza, the Greek and Irish pseudo-left are united in their hostility to the political independence of the working class.

Indeed, Ireland's pseudo-left has the distinction of charting the course that their Greek counterparts have now taken to its logical conclusion. It was their groupings in the Dail, along with other nominally independent TDs, which cooperated with the EU/European Central Bank/International Monetary Fund "troika" in 2010 to facilitate devastating austerity

cuts.

As the Fianna Fail/Green Party coalition government sought to slash some €750 million in welfare spending as part of the EU's own bail-out package for Ireland, SP and SWP/PBP representatives held regular quarterly meetings with the troika—under the pretext of “securing information.”

Their readiness to integrate themselves into the very structures being used to decimate workers' living standards cemented their role as the government's loyal fake left opposition. For this, they were duly rewarded by the political establishment, with hours of airtime on television and radio to promote their demands for a more regulated version of capitalism that would serve the interests of the privileged petty-bourgeois layers they represent.

Mass social opposition to austerity was channelled back into parliamentary politics. Through single-issue campaigns such as opposition to the introduction of water charges, they spread the lie that the whole Irish people are in the same boat—that it is “our economy” and “we all” have an interest in its restored global competitiveness within the EU.

The SWP, through its People Before Profit front, refused to allow even the word “socialism” to appear in their aborted attempt in 2010 to unite the various pseudo-left tendencies. The PBP advances the reactionary fraud of a nationally based capitalist solution to the economic crisis, arguing in its founding documents that, “The Irish economy needs a major stimulus package now to develop *our* indigenous industries. We need to develop new strategic industries, which take Ireland's industrial development forward.”

The sheer scale of the opportunism and hypocrisy of the pseudo-left in the Dail is further illustrated by their call on the Irish government to “support the Greek people against the dictates of the EU institutions.”

As the crisis in Greece unfolded, the Irish Fine Gael/Labour coalition government made it clear last month that it would stand in support of the EU and its financial institutions in dealing with the Greek debt crisis. It was the Irish government that was foremost in demanding Greece toe the line and accept the conditions of a further bailout that is inflicting an even greater social catastrophe.

Prime Minister Enda Kenny insisted there could be no question of Greece delaying its debt repayments,

stating, “If the Greek government now wish to have further assistance and facilities made available from Europe, then they have got to ask for a third [austerity] programme.”

It was also widely reported that Minister for Finance Michael Noonan, while visiting a meeting of the centre-right European People's Party, to which Fine Gael is aligned, pressed for emergency financial support for Greek banks to be stopped unless capital controls are imposed. Even after years of vicious austerity by the Irish government, the nominal left in the Dail asked that the government make a “change of course” and “stand by the Greek people.”

Even before Tsipras and his then-finance minister Yanis Varoufakis were in discussions in Brussels, the SWP's Boyd Barrett and company had met with the same layers in Dublin. In 2012 they sat down with the troika alongside “independents” in the “technical” group. One of the independents, Catherine Murphy went on to form the Social Democrats, a party openly hostile to workers' interests, along with former independent TD Stephen Donnelly and former Labour Party TD Róisín Shortall.

There was no question ever of these fake left groups advancing a socialist perspective against the Irish bourgeoisie and the European ruling elite.

A way forward for the Irish and European working class requires the systematic exposure of the fake left as the organic opponents of socialism and working class interests. This is critical to developing the necessary independent political organisation of the workers and youth in the fight against international capital and for the United Socialist States of Europe.

The Socialist Equality Group in Ireland, in solidarity with the International Committee of the Fourth International, is dedicated to this struggle.

For further details contact: Socialist Equality Group.

To contact the WSWS and the
Socialist Equality Party visit:

<http://www.wsws.org>