

Political crisis in Moldova

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The Eastern European country of Moldova is engulfed in a deep political and economic crisis. Instability is gripping the pro-EU regime that came to power after the 2009 “color” protests led to the ousting of Vladimir Voronin’s Party of Communists. The leaders of the governing parties are increasingly seen by Western chancelleries as incapable of implementing the EU Association Agreement signed in June last year.

Disagreements between the leaders of the Liberal Democratic Party (PLDM), the Democratic Party (PDM) and their Western handlers began to develop early this year, immediately after the elections, when the European Union and Berlin strongly insisted that they include the pro-NATO Liberal Party in the governing coalition.

Instead, they formed a minority government with the parliamentary support of Voronin’s Communists (PCRM). A huge banking scandal was used to exert further pressure on the ruling parties. After the IMF and the World Bank cut funding to the government, threatening the country with bankruptcy, the Prime Minister was forced to resign, leading the way to the inclusion of the Liberals in the coalition.

The leaders of the PLDM and the PDM are frequently accused in the pro-EU media of being too soft in implementing the toughest economic reforms. They have also indicated a reluctance to further antagonize Russia.

On September 6, the “Dignity and Truth” civic platform (Demnităte și Adevăr, DA) organized a rally in the center of Chisinau, attended by several tens of thousands, denouncing official corruption and demanding the resignation of the government and key officials in the Moldovan state. The organizers set up a tent city in the Grand National Assembly Square, threatening to remain there until their demands are met.

The civic platform DA, founded in February this year, is composed of former officials, lawyers,

journalists and academics with ties to various European institutions and Western-funded NGOs such as the Soros Foundation in Moldova, the Association for Participatory Democracy and Transparency International Moldova.

They have received support from Western embassies, with the US ambassador calling on the government “to implement the necessary reforms” and the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, Zeid Ra’ad Zeid Al-Hussein, asking authorities to address the demands of the protesters.

The program and demands of the DA are entirely in line with the interests of Moldova’s external creditors, and are designed to confuse and dissipate any popular resentment towards the disastrous policies of pro-market reforms and the corralling of the country into war provocations against Russia. The opposition’s economic grievances center on the banking scandal, which they use to attribute Moldova’s disastrous economic state to official mismanagement of funds, rather than the implementation of policies dictated by the EU and IMF.

The pervasive corruption of the Eastern European regimes is enshrined in their very formation out of the theft, destruction and forced privatization of state assets after 1989, accomplished in close collaboration with the imperialist powers. When EU and US officials decry corruption today, they do so in order to blackmail various sections of the bourgeoisie into toeing the line. In Moldova, the imperialist powers are signaling their impatience with the local elites’ perceived complacency towards the aggressive drive to encircle and isolate Russia.

Writing for the pro-imperialist Carnegie Institute think tank, Judy Dempsey expresses official anxiety with the Moldovan authorities, saying, “there is a growing consensus among the EU, the World Bank, and the European Bank for Reconstruction and

Development that the elites have no interest in pushing ahead with reform.”

Dempsey goes on to compare the pace of reforms to the refusal of Ukraine’s deposed president Yanukovich to sign the Association Agreement with the EU: “Moldova is a microcosm of Ukraine, where since the early 1990s, the poisonous relationship between the oligarchs and national and local elites has made it impossible to introduce reforms and modernize the state institutions.”

Suggesting a similar outcome to the fascist-spearheaded coup that toppled Yanukovich, she describes the protests in Chisinau as being “almost reminiscent of Ukraine’s pro-EU Maidan movement ... Ukraine’s civil society groups have had to keep pushing the government in Kiev to deliver on reform. In Moldova, Dignity and Truth also seems determined to pressure the elites to reform. Their struggle has only just begun.”

Highlighting the threat of physical violence to be used against the government in case it is not amenable to its demands, “civil society” and DA leader Stanislav Pavlovski, a former European Court of Human Rights judge, said in an interview with Radio Free Europe that “nobody can predict the level of revolt that people can reach, in case our demands are not met. Don’t forget that Moldova went through the conflict with Transnistria; we have a lot of people, combatants, ex-military, that have real combat skills, not these children who stand outside the government, and the government that believes that these wretched 18-year-old policemen, will prove capable....they’re not even fed.”

Divisions are also developing inside the imperialist camp over how to handle the situation in Moldova. The organizations that are arduously promoting a union with Romania as the road towards European integration have been generally critical of the protests, accusing them of destabilizing the country at a sensitive time and thereby risking increased Russian influence. Romanian President Klaus Iohannis, who has close links to Germany’s Angela Merkel, has also maintained silence about the protests.

The politically volatile situation created by the various pro-imperialist factions vying for power in Chisinau only heightens the tensions with neighboring Transnistria, an unrecognized state backed by Russian troops that Moldova claims as its own territory.

Moldovan authorities came under fire in June when Vice Premier Victor Osipov agreed on a state visit to Moscow to the transit and supply of Russian peacekeepers en route to Transnistria through the Chisinau airport, after Ukraine terminated the agreement that allowed Russia the right to transit over its territory.

Transnistrian authorities have mobilized reservists in response to the building of fortifications and the concentration of thousands of troops on the Ukrainian side. Further provocations from the Moldovan or Ukrainian side could push the situation towards a devastating war between NATO forces and Russia.

Pro-Russian parties like Igor Dodon’s Socialist Party and Renato Usatii’s Our Party have expressed agreement with the demands advanced by the protests, in order to pressure the governing coalition to trigger early elections. Dodon and Usatii have announced that their parties will organize separate protests in front of the Parliament, beginning on September 27.

Some pseudo-left groups gravitate around the Socialists, the Party of Communists and Our Party, in an attempt to pose as anti-imperialists. Ivan Loh, writing for the In Defense of Marxism website of the pseudo-left International Marxist Tendency, first peddles the imperialist lie of “Russian political adventures in Ukraine and Moldova,” and then promotes groups such as Grigore Petrenco’s Red Bloc, a plaything of state agencies, as “the most militant political force” in the protests.

The only way forward for the workers of Moldova is a complete break with imperialist machinations, including the Association Agreement with the EU, and the development of an independent political movement, based on the internationalist, socialist strategy of the International Committee of the Fourth International (ICFI). They will immediately have to appeal to the workers of Transnistria, Romania and throughout the world, in a common struggle for peace and socialism.



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