

Pro-EU technocratic government installed in Romania

Andrei Tudora, Tina Zamfir**17 November 2015**

Romania's Social Democratic Prime Minister Victor Ponta resigned on November 4, following right-wing demonstrations against his government. The protests, held in the aftermath of a deadly nightclub fire in Bucharest on October 30, were organized by media outlets and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) with links to various European interests and attended largely by professionals and layers of the middle class. Between 10,000 and 20,000 people took part in rallies organized in the Romanian capital of Bucharest and other cities throughout last week, with far greater numbers being cited in the media.

The protests were also supported by pseudo-left outlets, such as the CriticAtac platform and the Socialist Party (former Socialist Alliance), the Romanian sister-party of the German Left Party. Among the groups present was Action 2012, an umbrella of NGOs whose members have engaged in provocations inside the neighbouring Republic of Moldova.

The main accusation levelled against Ponta was that of corruption, which in Eastern Europe has been used by the US State Department as a synonym for susceptibility to Russian influence. While Ponta is a adamant defender of capitalism, the protests echoed concerns in Washington and Berlin that his government is incapable of maintaining Romania's new regional role as a heavily militarized outpost against Russia.

German Chancellor Angela Merkel in particular has consistently shown her impatience with Ponta, most recently in last year's presidential elections, when EU-backed accusations of voter irregularities played a key role in swaying the final results toward Ponta's conservative rival, Klaus Iohannis.

The demonstrations, styled in the media as a "popular revolution," represent the efforts of the imperialist

powers and local elites to cultivate a layer of the upper middle class as a constituency for their policies of war and austerity.

The peculiar situation created in Eastern Europe by the aggressive drive against Russia lends these movements an increasingly right-wing character. The alliance of pseudo-lefts, liberal NGOs and far-right thugs, all of whom are more or less integrated with various security agencies, are becoming a familiar sight in the region's capitals. CriticAtac and the international platform LeftEast played an important role in attempting to palm off the 2014 right-wing coup in Ukraine as the result of a popular revolution. They also supported the pro-EU protests organized earlier this year against the government in Moldova.

The deepening global economic crisis is placing the regimes that resulted from the Stalinist restoration of capitalism in Eastern Europe in an increasingly untenable position. Since the outbreak of the crisis in 2008, the Romanian bourgeoisie, having just completed the social devastation required for entry into the European Union, was tasked with imposing new attacks on the working class. Ponta and the most recent social democratic administration came to power in the wake of mass anti-austerity protests, and he immediately became unpopular with EU and especially German officials.

With the NATO redeployment and militarization in Europe, the social and political pressure increased enormously. Romania became a centre for a massive military naval and land deployment and a host of the anti-Russian missile shield. As the bourgeoisie was encouraged by the EU to pursue its local predatory ambitions, especially in the former Soviet Republic of Moldova, it now finds itself embroiled in a network of regional rivalries, with active border tensions with

Hungary and Ukraine.

The increasingly direct intervention of the EU in Romania's internal affairs and the cutthroat nature of Romanian political life are indicative of these pressures. After ostensibly consulting the major parties, as well as, unprecedently, leaders of NGOs, President Iohannis appointed Dacian Ciolos to form a new government.

Ciolos, who is a former European commissioner under Barroso and a special adviser on agriculture to Jean-Claude Juncker, the current president of the European Commission, is to form a technocratic government, until elections are held next year. Ciolos will enjoy the support of the conservative Liberal Party and smaller parties in parliament and is expected to encounter little opposition from the social democrats.

The creation of a technocratic government, on the model implemented in Italy and Greece in recent years, will signify a dramatic stepping up of austerity measures directed against the country's working class.



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