

Greece's Syriza: Full partner in historic crime against refugees

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With the sailing Monday of ferries packed with hundreds of refugees and migrants expelled from the Greek Aegean islands of Lesbos and Chios to the Turkish coastal town of Dikili, an international crime of historic dimensions has begun to unfold.

Refugees, the great majority of them fleeing the murderous violence unleashed by US and European imperialism's interventions and proxy wars in Syria, Iraq, Afghanistan and various parts of Africa, are being told by the governments of Europe that there is no place for them on the continent, or, indeed, anywhere else on the planet. By direct force, they are being loaded onto boats and thrown back into the killing fields.

Under a filthy and illegal deal reached between the European Union and Turkey, those who have managed to reach the shores of Europe, risking their lives in leaky boats, are being sent back the way they came. They are being delivered into the clutches of the authoritarian regime of Turkish President Tayyip Erdogan, which is being paid billions of euros and given other rewards for doing the EU's dirty work.

The mass expulsions, along with the detention of refugees under conditions of abject misery, are meant to send a signal that the trans-Balkan route for escape to Western Europe has been sealed shut. Far from halting the flow of refugees, these punitive measures will at best only force this tide of human suffering onto more dangerous routes, such as through Libya, further escalating the death toll.

In the run-up to the first mass deportations, the group Doctors Without Borders (MSF) closed down its clinic at the main refugee camp on the island of Lesbos. The aid group's head of mission explained that "continuing to work inside would make us complicit in a system we consider to be both unfair and inhumane." He added

that MSF refused "to be part of a system that has no regard for the humanitarian or protection needs of asylum seekers and migrants."

Similarly, the United Nations refugee agency, UNHCR, terminated key operations in Greece, protesting that the refugee camps had been turned into "detention centers" in preparation for mass deportations.

There is one organization that has shown no such qualms about forced detention and deportation, trampling the fundamental rights of refugees into the mud and sending them back to imprisonment, torture and death—Syriza (Coalition of the Radical Left), the current ruling party of Greece.

The Greek government, a coalition between Syriza and Anel (Independent Greeks), a right-wing nationalist party, is a full and indispensable partner in the EU's crackdown on refugees. Last Friday night, the Greek parliament voted to put in place legal and administrative changes, as well as massive police power, to facilitate the deportations of refugees to be carried out under the EU-Turkish deal. Only one Syriza legislator voted against the new crackdown, while one other abstained.

The rest of the deputies voted together with the Greek right to proceed with a criminal policy that is a milestone in the destruction of the rights of refugees, itself symptomatic of the global eruption of militarism and the steady march toward world war.

The Syriza government of President Alexis Tsipras is using the Greek military together with riot police, whose ranks include no small number of supporters of the fascistic and anti-immigrant Golden Dawn, to suppress, round up and deport refugees. Its policy toward the refugees stands in stark contrast to the widespread sympathy for their plight among the Greek

people. The Syriza government's response is to attempt to criminalize solidarity organizations, while using heavy-handed police tactics to suppress media coverage of its anti-refugee crackdown.

The beginning of mass deportations coincides with the resumption of negotiations in Athens between the Syriza government and the so-called "quartet," including the European Union and the International Monetary Fund, on a new round of austerity measures, further decimating the living standards of the Greek working class.

It is less than 15 months since Syriza and Tsipras, claiming to be left-wing and even socialist, were brought to power on a wave of popular opposition to the austerity demands of the EU. Within barely seven months, the Syriza government accepted—after calling a popular referendum in which EU austerity demands were decisively rejected—far more devastating measures than those implemented by the right-wing governments that preceded it.

Last year, the whole coterie of pseudo-left groups internationally, from the French New Anti-capitalist Party (NPA) to the International Socialist Organization (ISO) in the US and the Brazilian PSTU, hailed Syriza's election as a victory for the working class. Only the International Committee of the Fourth International and the *World Socialist Web Site* warned from the outset that Syriza would not "represent a way out of the crisis." Rather, we wrote, "it would represent an enormous danger."

As the WSWs explained: "Despite its left-wing façade, Syriza is a bourgeois party that rests on affluent layers of the middle class. Its policies are determined by union bureaucrats, academics, professionals and parliamentary functionaries who seek to defend their privileges by preserving the social order."

After Syriza's abject capitulation to the EU and its acceptance of what amounts to Greece's semi-colonial subjugation by Germany and international finance capital, the International Committee issued a statement declaring: "Masses of people are being brought face-to-face with the bankruptcy and treachery of political parties that have dominated protest movements and what passed for left politics over an entire historical period... For decades, these parties palmed off their politics as radical or anti-capitalist, when they were, in fact, no such thing. Their first experience in

government has exposed these pretensions as a fraud, providing political cover for pro-capitalist policies designed to advance the interests of the top 10 percent of society at the expense of working people."

The analysis of Syriza advanced by the ICFI has now received even further and more tragic vindication in its criminal policy toward refugees. While a host of pseudo-left groups internationally have given political support to imperialism, justifying wars for regime-change in Libya and Syria as "humanitarian" interventions or even "revolutions," Syriza has given practical assistance of the most repellant kind, using police state powers to persecute the victims of these wars. This has shattered the "human rights" pretensions of both imperialism and its pseudo-left agencies.

The fight against war and the defense of the working class and refugees requires the building of a new revolutionary party to arm the coming mass struggles with a revolutionary, socialist and internationalist program. Such parties can be built only in an irreconcilable struggle to expose and defeat Syriza and similar pseudo-left defenders of the capitalist order.



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