

# International Socialist Organization calls for Greens to support US-backed “revolution” in Syria

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In the run-up to this week's US Green Party convention, which will nominate Jill Stein as the party's presidential candidate, the International Socialist Organization (ISO) has published an editorial, titled “Can you vote for what you want in 2016?”, which criticizes the Green Party for not lining up openly behind US-backed forces in Syria.

The article appears under conditions of a renewed eruption of American militarism, with an expansion of US bombings of civilians in Syria and the launching of a new air war in Libya, and the shift of the Democratic Party, along with the pseudo-left groups such as the ISO that are in its orbit, even further to the right.

At the Democratic National Convention last month, the so-called socialist, Bernie Sanders, consecrated his “political revolution” by endorsing Hillary Clinton, the candidate of Wall Street, the Pentagon and the CIA. Since then, ever-larger sections of the financial aristocracy, the military and the foreign policy establishment have rallied behind Clinton, who has sought to position herself as a more far-sighted and reliable prosecutor of American imperialism's interests than her opponent, Republican candidate Donald Trump.

In the presidential election primaries, pseudo-left groups such as Socialist Alternative and Solidarity directly integrated themselves into Sanders' campaign for the Democratic presidential nomination. The ISO, however, declined to formally endorse Sanders, while nevertheless promoting illusions in his ability to push the Democratic Party to the left.

The ISO has throughout the year promoted Stein and the Green Party, itself a pro-capitalist party representing sections of the upper-middle class. In its

August 3 editorial, the ISO employs the non-class term “independent left alternative” to obscure the class basis and history of the Green Party. The Green Party platform, as the WSWs has explained, “is steeped in nationalism, defends capitalist property relations and opposes the political independence of the working class.”

While the ISO praises Stein's vague reformist proposals, the central purpose of the editorial emerges in its criticisms of the Green Party's foreign policy positions. It states: “[R]eaders of this website will have a lot in common with Stein's radical political vision, though we do have some disagreements. For example, while opposing US intervention in the Middle East, Stein has sometimes downplayed the role of other imperialist forces, such as Russia, which is intervening to uphold its own interests.”

The ISO goes on to state that “Stein's newly announced running mate Ajuma Baraka is a dedicated fighter for Black liberation, opponent of US imperialism and supporter of the Palestinian struggle.” It complains, however, that “he has written articles minimizing the scale of repression carried out by the regime of Bashar al-Assad in Syria against the revolutionary opposition, while reinforcing the myth that the Assad regime represents an expression of ‘national sovereignty’ against US imperialism. These mistaken views will only alienate people drawn to Stein's vision of a democratic struggle for change in the US.”

These passages amount to a demand that the Green Party and its presidential candidate explicitly support the US war for regime-change against the Russian-backed government of Syrian President Bashar al-

Assad--a war that has already destroyed the country, killing over 400,000 people and turning millions more into refugees.

The ISO finds itself capable of writing about the “revolutionary opposition” in Syria after more than five years of a bloody proxy war organized and carried out by the United States in cooperation with its right-wing regional allies. With the support of the CIA, reactionary monarchical regimes such as Saudi Arabia have armed and funded the opposition to Assad, which overwhelmingly consists of Al Qaeda-linked Islamist militias, such as the former al-Nusra Front (now called Jabhat Fateh al-Sham) and the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS).

The ISO's support for this imperialist war crime is not the result of confusion on its part. From the beginning, it has presented the Syrian war as a popular “revolution” in an attempt to legitimize the war and manipulate public opinion to support it. This is a continuation of the ISO's integration into the camp of US imperialism, signaled by its support for the US-led regime-change operation in Libya that killed over 40,000 people and ended with the overthrow and murder of Muammar Gaddafi.

Of particular significance is the ISO's use of the term “imperialist” in relation to Russia. It and many other pseudo-left organizations have adopted this term as an epithet hurled against both Russia and China, echoing Washington's pro-war propagandists who routinely label Moscow and Beijing as imperialist in order to justify the US diplomatic, economic and military campaign to isolate and militarily encircle these countries. The aim is to reduce them, by means of war if necessary, to semi-colonies as part of the drive of American imperialism for hegemonic control of the entire Eurasian continent.

The ISO is lined up behind those ultra-militarist factions within the US military and intelligence establishment, the State Department, and the Obama administration itself, including Bush-era neo-cons and the Democratic presidential candidate Hillary Clinton, who oppose Obama's war policy in Syria as being too “restrained.” They advocate all-out war against Damascus, including, if necessary, a direct military clash with nuclear-armed Russia, which is heavily involved militarily in support of Syrian government forces seeking to crush the “rebels.”

The Green Party itself is by no means an anti-imperialist or antiwar organization. In countries where it has come to power, particularly in Germany, it has supported military intervention under the fraudulent pretext of “human rights.” The US Green platform, despite the inclusion of pacifist phrases, makes clear that the Greens in the US are prepared to do the same.

Thus far, the Green Party has attempted to maintain a studious silence on both the war record of the Democratic Party and its future military preparations. However, for the ISO, and the sections of the AFL-CIO trade union bureaucracy, Democratic Party and foreign policy think tanks for which it speaks, this is not enough. They are determined to develop a united front of support for war among the most prominent organizations of the official “left.”

It is significant that even as it has criticized Stein and the Greens for failing to explicitly back the US war in Syria and Washington's war preparations against Russia, it has said nothing about the record number of civilian casualties from US bombing attacks in Syria or the launching of a new and open-ended air war in Libya.

While the ISO formally endorses the Green campaign and Stein, its longer-term aim is disclosed later in the editorial, which states: “Clinton and her party assume the liberal Democratic base will vote for them because there is no other ‘realistic’ choice—and so they won’t feel under any pressure to respond... A vote for Stein, on the other hand, won’t be a vote for the winning candidate in 2016. But it will send a message.”

In other words, the ISO, oriented towards the upper-middle class “liberal Democratic base,” views the Green Party campaign as a means to promote the illusion that the Democratic Party can be “pressured” to the left, and thus keep workers and young people politically subordinated to it.



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