

Military Resistance 13G6



EU Leader Says “Stand-Off Over Greece Has Given New Energy To Radical Political Groups On The Left And Right, Creating A Pre-Revolutionary Atmosphere”

“When Impatience Becomes Not An Individual But A Social Experience Of Feeling, This Is The Introduction For Revolutions”

“The Febrile Rhetoric From Far-Left Leaders, Coupled With High Youth Unemployment In Several Countries, Could Be An Explosive Combination”

July 16, 2015 by Peter Spiegel in Brussels, The Financial Times [Excerpts]

The bitter stand-off over Greece has given new energy to radical political groups on the left and right, creating a pre-revolutionary atmosphere that Europe has not seen since 1968, the EU leader who brokered Monday's bailout deal has warned.

Donald Tusk, the former Polish prime minister who now heads the European Council, said he feared "political contagion" from the Greek crisis far more than its financial fallout, arguing that common cause between far-right and far-left groups has been a precursor to some of Europe's darkest moments of the last century.

"I am really afraid of this ideological or political contagion, not financial contagion, of this Greek crisis," said Mr Tusk.

"It was always the same game before the biggest tragedies in our European history, this tactical alliance between radicals from all sides. Today, for sure, we can observe the same political phenomenon."

Mr Tusk, who chairs all EU summits, played a central role in forcing Alexis Tsipras, the Greek prime minister, and Angela Merkel, his German counterpart, to agree terms on Monday that will allow talks to restart on a new €86bn bailout as soon as this weekend.

The new bailout deal, which involves sweeping austerity measures including a requirement to put an estimated €50bn of Greek public assets into a privatisation fund supervised by EU authorities, has led to accusations in Athens that Ms Merkel forced on Greece the kind of punitive conditions Germany was saddled with at the end of the first world war.

Mr Tusk said he had been unsettled by the bitter recriminations that have characterised the contentious six-month Greek negotiations, particularly the anti-EU and anti-German sentiment that he believes has become part of mainstream political discourse.

He said he was taken aback by a speech Mr Tsipras gave to the European Parliament last week where his criticism of Germany — including an argument that whereas Germany was provided "solidarity" and debt relief after the second world war, Greece had been denied similar treatment — was loudly cheered by a large number of MEPs.

"It was the first time I saw radicals with such emotion, in this context anti-German emotion.

"It was almost half of the European Parliament. This is why I think nobody, but in particular Germany, are political winners in this process."

Mr Tusk said he was concerned about the far left, which he believes is advocating "this radical leftist illusion that you can build some alternative" to the current EU economic model.

He argued those far-left leaders were pushing to cast aside traditional European values like “frugality” and liberal, market-based principles that have served the EU in good stead.

He insisted these beliefs did not influence his negotiations with Mr Tsipras, whose Syriza party has been the most successful far-left party in Europe in decades. Mr Tusk said he took a pragmatic, non-ideological approach to the Greek leader.

Still, he said the febrile rhetoric from far-left leaders, coupled with high youth unemployment in several countries, could be an explosive combination.

“For me, the atmosphere is a little similar to the time after 1968 in Europe,” he said.

“I can feel, maybe not a revolutionary mood, but something like widespread impatience. When impatience becomes not an individual but a social experience of feeling, this is the introduction for revolutions.”

MORE:

**Open Assembly Of Workers
Says “We Will Go Door To Door
In Perama, Saying To People
That We’re Fighting”
“Then We Will Reach Other
Communities All Over Greece.
“They Feel They Would Have Nothing
Left To Lose From A Eurozone Exit”
“Anger Is Rising Here After News Of
Prime Minister Alex Tsirpras’
Capitulation And Further Belt Tightening
To Come”**

July 14, 2015 by Catarina Martins, Al Jazeera America

PERAMA, Greece —

The town of Perama, in the shipbuilding region of Piraeus, a 30-minute drive from Athens, is one of the poorest areas in Greece.

In the July 5 referendum on whether to accept the bailout terms offered by the country's creditors, 77 percent of Perama's voters rejected agreeing to the proposed austerity measures — one of the highest percentages of 'no' votes in the country.

Now, anger is rising here after news of Prime Minister Alex Tsirpras' capitulation and further belt tightening to come.

In a hot, smoke-filled hall in central Perama, 40 people gathered on Monday for a meeting of Open Assembly, a local group formed after the peaceful anti-austerity demonstrations in Athens's Syntagma Square in 2011.

Each week Open Assembly's members meet to discuss the community's needs and find ways to help the poorest.

In recent years the group has managed to illegally restore water and electricity to homes where those services have been cut off, persuade bus drivers to allow unemployed people to ride for free and get shoppers to donate food to those in need.

Today participants are talking about how to oppose the new bailout package, in which Greece could receive up to \$96 billion in exchange for drastic pension and public-sector cuts, a tax overhaul, changes to collective bargaining and other reforms.

"We are strong enough to do what we want. We do everything for the people," said one man, his shirt unbuttoned because of the heat, a cigar in hand.

By meeting's end, those present had made a decision. They would take to the streets to drum up opposition to the deal in an attempt to persuade Greece's parliament to reject the bailout terms. Tsipras has until Wednesday to get the agreement through parliament.

"We will go door to door in Perama, saying to people that we're fighting," said Babis, an Open Assembly founder who declined to give his last name. "Then we will reach other communities all over Greece. We will protest by the mayor's office. We will go to Athens."

In Perama, residents have staunchly opposed the bailout deal in part because they feel they would have nothing left to lose from a eurozone exit.

The financial crisis that began five years ago has taken a huge toll on the community's formerly vibrant shipping industry.

Once filled with cruise ships and shipping containers, the port here is half empty. Approximately 92 percent of workers in the shipyards have lost their jobs since 2010, according to Yiannis Lagoudakis, the mayor of Perama and a member of the ruling leftist

Syriza party. Then temporary jobs in the construction business, which had long provided some income to the community's poorest people, dried up.



Men walk to work at the Perama shipyards, near Athens, June 30, 2015. Daniel Ochoa de Olza / AP

Perama's general unemployment rate is 40 percent — twice the national average — and youth unemployment is close to 70 percent.

Nikos Psathas, 45, spent years as a metalworker repairing ships. Four months ago, he lost his job. Now he's entitled to 400 euros a month of financial aid from the government, for a year. He lives with his wife, who has been unemployed for a decade, and two children — a girl, Irene, 17, and a boy, Antonius, 13.

Psathas said he gets by with the help of his mother and mother-in-law. Sometimes he can't pay his bills.

But what really scares him is thinking about his children's future.

Irene, who wants to go to college next year to study economics, is frightened too. "My future is very difficult. No one can find jobs in Greece," she said. "There's no money in my house."

While Psathas worries about that near future, he is less concerned with what's happening in Greece right now.

"No worker cares if we have the euro or the drachma," he said. "I already lost everything."

But others in this community of 25,000 are dismayed.

“These measures are draconian,” said Lagoudakis of the bailout terms announced Monday. “We want another agreement. People in Perama can’t pay for their food, electricity and water. We want dignity.”

Still, Lagoudakis doesn’t blame Tsipras. “He did his best. He was a victim of blackmail. Negotiations were very difficult and I think that he did everything he could do.”

Babis, who runs a tool shop and struggles to pay his bills and put his older daughter through college, called the agreement “tragic.”

“There’s nothing for the poor and the workers,” he said.

But perhaps because its residents have helped each other cope amid the economic crisis, Perama did not descend into chaos in recent weeks when banks closed as part of the capital control measures imposed by the government.

Elsewhere in Greece, pensioners were photographed crying outside banks when they couldn’t get their payments. Bank withdrawals are limited to 60 euros per day — 1,300 per month — But that didn’t faze residents in Perama, said Babis. “No one in Perama has that kind of money, so no one cares about that. You should have come here two years ago, when the situation was really, really bad,” he said, referring to the time before Open Assembly found ways to help.

Christina, 32, who wished to be identified by only her first name, an unemployed mother of a 2-year-old boy, went to the Open Assembly meeting in part because of that support.

She used to sleep on the floor with her baby because she didn’t have a bed, she said. But then she asked for assistance from others. “Now I have a bed,” she said. “We are Greeks. We swim, we swim, we swim,” she added, pointing in the direction of the sea. “Sometimes we go down. And then we come up again. We are strong.”

Babis said that Open Assembly is a community group, not one aligned with any political party, even though some of its participants are Syriza supporters. Last week Open Assembly members went door to door asking people to vote ‘no’ in the referendum.

One thing that Open Assembly members ask of those they help is to reject Golden Dawn, a Greek neo-Nazi party. In recent years it has taken advantage of the high unemployment and poverty rates to exploit anti-Semitic and anti-immigrant sentiments. In 2012, Golden Dawn won 18 seats in parliament.

“People go to Golden Dawn to have food. They don’t even know what fascism is,” said Babis. “You can go to the church, to the local authorities, but you can’t go to Golden Dawn. You’re either with them or with us.”

That plea appears to be working. In the 2012 elections, Golden Dawn secured 14 percent among Perama voters, twice the national share. In January in Perama, the party won 9 percent.

Babis thinks the 2013 death of Pavlos Fyssas, a left-wing hip-hop artist who was allegedly killed by a Golden Dawn member, was a turning point in the party’s fortunes

here. (Golden Dawn denied any connection to the alleged killer.) Before Fyssas was killed, Golden Dawn threatened and beat Communist Party workers in the shipping industry, Babis said, and Egyptian fishermen in Perama.

In the mountains of upper Perama, the situation is even bleaker. There, facing the glimmering sea below, hundreds of illegal houses make up the suburb's largest slum. Few have electricity, and even fewer have sanitation. The smell of sewage and garbage is potent; the ground is strewn with broken glass and old clothes.

People there were poor long before the crisis started five years ago. But many had managed to find temporary jobs in the construction business or cleaning houses. Now most are destitute.

On a recent weekday morning, standing in the middle of a street called Hope, a middle-aged woman started screaming, "How can I get my medicine? I'm going to die! Just like my husband ... I'm going to die!"

Stilianos Papadakis lives in one of the slum's houses with his five children. A carpenter, he hasn't worked in years. The local church gave him five goats, he said, so he could have milk for the children. But the neighbors complained about the smell, and he had to give them away. "My children eat because there are donors in their schools who give them food," he said. "If it weren't for them, they would have to hold their bellies from hunger."

Papadakis voted 'no' in the referendum; regardless of what happens, he feels little hope. "Not even the people who govern us can do anything. What can I do?"

Soula, 60, who gave only her first name, has the word "children" in Greek tattooed on her arm. She had six kids, but one died last year in a motorcycle accident. His obituary, printed in the local newspaper, still hangs on the door outside her home. Her electricity and water were cut off because she stopped paying the bills.

"The situation can't get any better or worse, and this has nothing to do with the agreement," she said. "I have no bread. I have nothing. I already lost everything. Half of Greece is starving."

POLICE WAR REPORTS

Sandra Bland Drove To Texas To Start A New Job, So How Did She End Up Dead In Jail?

**“‘A Warm, Affectionate,
Outspoken Woman’ Who Spoke
Out About Police Brutality Often
On Her Facebook Page”
“Video Obtained By ABC Doesn't
Appear To Show Bland Being
Combative With Officers”
“A Friend Of Bland's Who Witnessed The
Encounter, Told The News Station That
The Police Were Forceful During The
Entirety Of The Traffic Stop”**



Sandra Bland. Facebook

July 16 2015 By: Stephen A. Crockett Jr., The Root & July 15, 2015, WLS

On July 9, 28-year-old Sandra Bland of Naperville, Ill., drove to Texas.

Bland's friends say she had been with her family in suburban Chicago over the July 4th holiday, and drove to Texas for a job interview at her alma mater, Texas Prairie View A & M. Family members say she got the position and was to begin working in student outreach today.

On July 10, police stopped Bland just outside the campus for allegedly failing to signal while changing lanes.

Police claim that during the stop she became combative, was thrown to the ground, arrested and charged with "assault on a public servant."

On July 13, around 9 a.m., before her family could bail her out, Bland was found dead inside a Waller County, Texas, jail cell.

Some family members and friends say Bland was found hanging in the jail cell, but authorities have not confirmed the exact circumstances around her death.

Longtime friend LaNitra Dean tells the I-Team that Bland "was a warm, affectionate, outspoken woman" who spoke out about police brutality often on her Facebook page and was critical of injustice against African Americans.

Police claim she died from "self-inflicted asphyxiation." Her family and friends say that is impossible; that the woman they know, who fought strongly against police brutality and had just gotten a new job, would never have committed suicide.

"I do suspect foul play," a friend, Cheryl Nanton, told ABC 7. "I believe that we are all 100 percent in belief that she did not do harm to herself."

Video obtained by ABC 7 of Bland's arrest doesn't appear to show Bland being combative with officers, but does show two officers on top of Bland, who can be heard questioning the officers' methods of restraint.

"You just slammed my head into the ground," Bland can be heard saying on the recording. "Do you not even care about that? I can't even hear."

As she is being escorted to the police car in handcuffs, Bland can be heard yelling, "Slammed me to the ground and everything!"

Shortly afterward, an officer can be heard telling the person recording the incident that he or she needed to leave.

Malcom Jackson, a friend of Bland's who witnessed the encounter, told the news station that the police were forceful during the entirety of the traffic stop.

"After he pulled her out of the car, forced her and tossed her to the ground, knee to the neck, and arrested her," he said.

Waller County Sheriff Glenn Smith told ABC 7 that during the traffic stop, Bland became combative with the officer and was arrested and charged with assault.

The news station reports that Smith said “jailers saw Bland at 7 a.m. Monday when they gave her breakfast and again at 8 a.m. when they spoke with her over the jail intercom. Smith says she was found dead an hour later.”

In a press release from the sheriff's department viewed by ABC 7, authorities claim that CPR was performed shortly after Bland was found unresponsive in her cell and that she was pronounced dead moments later.

“I do not have any information that would make me think it was anything other than just a suicide,” Waller County District Attorney Elton Mathis told ABC 7.

Bland's friends told the news station that the woman they know was excited about starting her new job on Wednesday, July 15, and that she would never have taken her own life.

“The Waller County Jail is trying to rule her death a suicide, and Sandy would not have taken her own life,” LaNitra Dean told ABC 7. “Sandy was strong. Strong mentally and spiritually.”

On Wednesday, several of Bland's friends protested outside the Waller County Jail, which is 50 miles south of Houston. Family members told ABC 7 that Bland's body will be brought back to Illinois for burial as soon as authorities release it.

According to ABC 7, Texas state rangers are investigating Bland's death and have not commented on the video obtained by the news station.

Until the investigation is complete, Bland's friends and family will continue to speak out about the tragic loss they believe is highly suspicious.

“We're very suspicious and we're a very tight community and we're very upset that this has happened, and it seems like there's nothing really being done about it,” Bland's friend LaVaughn Mosley told the news station.

MORE:

Bland Was An Activist With The Black Lives Matter Movement, Producing A Series Of Videos Entitled “Sandy Speaks”

**“A Former Waller County Judge,
Described It As ‘The Most Racist
County In The State Of Texas’”
“Similarities Between Bland's Death
And That Of James Harper Howell IV,
Detained At Waller County”
“Howell Was Arrested Violently And Died
In His Cell Under Suspicious
Circumstances. Like Bland, Officials
Termed It A Suicide”**

July 17, 2015 by Nadia Prupis, Common Dreams [Excerpts]

The Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) on Friday announced it was joining the probe into the disturbing death of Sandra Bland, a 28-year-old black woman who died in police custody in Texas on Monday.

Friends and family have said they believe her death was a case of foul play in an area with a deeply prejudiced history.

A former Waller County judge, DeWayne Charleston, described it as “the most racist county in the state of Texas

The system of “cradle to grave racism” previously described by Judge Charleston is also present in its jails.

Juan Thompson at The Intercept looked in-depth at the similarities between Bland's death and that of James Harper Howell IV, detained at Waller County Jail in 2012.

Like Bland, Howell was arrested violently and died in his cell under suspicious circumstances. Like Bland, officials termed it a suicide.

Authorities said her death was a suicide. But those who knew Bland said it was “unfathomable” that Bland would harm herself.

“I talked to her Friday and she was in good spirits,” Mosely told USA Today on Friday.

“Although she was incarcerated she was in good spirits. She was looking forward to posting bond Saturday and getting out. So you don't go from that to hanging yourself.”

“To know Sandy was to love her,” said her sister, Sharon Cooper. “It is unimaginable and difficult for us to wrap our minds around.”

Bland was an activist with the Black Lives Matter movement, producing a series of videos entitled “Sandy Speaks” in which she discussed her experiences of racism and the continuing fight for justice.

In a clip shown on Democracy Now!, Bland stated, “For those of you questioning why was he running away, well, (bleep), because in the news that we've seen as of late, you could stand there, surrender to the cops and still be killed.”

Backshooting South Carolina Cop Who Murdered Unarmed Man Filmed Attacking Another Unarmed Man Months Before Killing Walter Scott: “In The Middle Of The Night, As Givens Was Awakened By Officer Slager Banging On His Door, Yelling ‘Come Outside, Or I’ll Tase You!’” “I Raised My Arms Over My Head, And When I Did, He Tased Me In My Stomach Anyway”

April 14, 2015 By Cassandra Fairbanks / The Free Thought

North Charleston, SC– Dashcam footage was released on Monday of the officer charged with murder for killing Walter Scott.

The video shows Michael Slager tasing someone during a traffic stop in August of last year.

The man being tased, 35-year-old Julius Garnett Wilson, has since filed a lawsuit against Slager and the North Charleston Police Department. Garnett states that his civil rights were violated and is urging any others who may have had a similar experience to come forward and do the same.

Wilson had been stopped simply because it was a “high crime area” and was asked to step out of the vehicle when the officers believed that he had a suspended license. He initially refused to comply, as he reportedly had a valid Georgia license.

At this point, an officer reaches into the vehicle and unbuckles Wilson’s seatbelt. Wilson went to reach for his cell phone, and the officer pulled out his gun causing Wilson to freeze.

Wilson is then thrown to the ground as officers jam their knees into his back.

“Back up, I’m going to tase,” Slager yells before tasing the man who is face down on the ground. More video was later recovered from Wilson’s broken phone as well.

“He almost got shot; I’m not lying,” an officer says on the footage, The Post and Courier reports. “But he advised I was being recorded. I said, ‘Cool; you are, too.’
“

Wilson is the second person to speak out this week about the alleged excessive force used by Officer Slager prior to the murder of Scott.

The first was 34-year-old Mario Givens, who claims that he was tased by Slager for no reason in 2013. His encounter unfortunately was not captured on video.

The incident took place in the middle of the night, as Givens was awakened by Officer Slager banging on his door, yelling “Come outside, or I’ll tase you!”

This indicates he was going to use the weapon as a punishment, instead of as a necessary method to gain compliance and protect himself in a dangerous situation.

“I didn’t want that to happen to me, so I raised my arms over my head, and when I did, he tased me in my stomach anyway,” Givens told the Associated Press. “They never told me how they reached the conclusion. Never. They never contacted anyone from that night. No one from the neighborhood.”

The department has a long record of abuse lawsuits itself.

In one particularly bad incident, Sheldon Williams claims that he was asleep at a motel when officers burst through the door. After handcuffing him, the officers allegedly began taking turns stomping on his face, causing injuries so severe that the jail officials had to turn him away to be seen by a doctor.

He was left with a fractured cheekbone, a depressed fracture to the left orbital floor of his face, and a fracture on his left sinus wall.

The hospital provided law enforcement with instructions to have him see a surgeon within a week, but the instructions were ignored, and Williams was never treated.

He now has trouble sleeping and faces long-term neurological damage.

None of the officers accused of assaulting Williams were terminated from the force.

Over the past five years, officers in South Carolina have fired on suspects 209 times, few have been charged, and none have ever been convicted of wrongdoing.

The North Charleston Department, which is in a town that is 47% black, has 80% white officers and has been sued 46 times since 2000 in federal court alone.

At a press conference last week, Slager's alleged previous victim, Mario Givens, stated, "What came to my mind is if they had tried to listen to me that man might have been alive, because he wouldn't have been an officer in the field."

**Newly Released Dashcam
Footage Shows Texas Cops
Suffocated Man To Death:
"While Mr. Aguirre Was On The
Ground He Made Numerous Cries
For Help And Pleaded He Could
Not Breathe"
"The Department Told His Wife That
He Died From Cardiac Arrest"
"When He Stopped To Speak To The
Officers, He Is Handcuffed And Then
Violently Flipped Head First Over A
Concrete Road Barrier"**

April 18, 2015 By Cassandra Fairbanks / The Free Thought Project [Excerpts]

San Antonio, TX–

The family of Jesse Aguirre, 37, who was killed by San Antonio police just over two years ago have filed a lawsuit against the city and eight police officers involved in his killing. Recently released dashcam footage captured the final moments of the tragic event that left a boy without his father.

Named in the suit are officers Cristina Gonzales, Roberto Mendez, Jennifer Morgan, Bettina Arredondo, Ronald Haley, Benito Juarez, Robert Encina, and SAPD spokesperson Douglas Greene.

The lawsuit, filed on behalf of Aguirre's son and widow states that Aguirre's civil rights were violated when the officers ended his life.

Aguirre had been in a car accident. He was intoxicated and high on cocaine when he attempted to leave the scene of the crash in an "excited delirium" after his girlfriend decided to break up with him. The police allege that he was driving a stolen vehicle and arguing with his girlfriend when he crashed into a fence.

The department alleges Aguirre resisted arrest when officers caught up with him and cuffed him. They claim four officers were needed to subdue him.

The department told his wife that he died from cardiac arrest, and it wasn't until she received the autopsy report that she found out that wasn't exactly the case. The lawsuit alleges that the police suffocated him to death.

While Mr. Aguirre was on the ground he made numerous cries for help and pleaded he could not breathe," the lawsuit states.

"The officers were deliberately indifferent to the fact that Mr. Aguirre was suffocating under the weight of the officers and in serious physical danger of asphyxiation based upon the positional restraints and body weight and force applied to him."

In the video, Aguirre is seen walking, not running, away from officers who have their weapons pointed at him. When he stops to speak to the officers, he is handcuffed and then violently flipped head first over a concrete road barrier.

"Come here, come here, I'm going to shoot you motherfucker!" a female officer yells as she approaches him.

Eventually, he is slammed face down on the ground as the officers pile on top of him.

"After several minutes without any action taken by the officers to relieve Mr. Aguirre of physical distress and danger, Mr. Aguirre stopped communicating and moving," the complaint stated.

"After several more minutes of Mr. Aguirre lying motionless face down on the highway with the officers' body weight on top of him the officers finally realized he was not breathing."

The problem of corruption and negligence within the SAPD is anything but isolated. In fact, their rap sheet rivals some of the larger and more corrupt departments throughout the country.

In February, an SAPD officer, held his wife and children hostage in a standoff with police. Because of the ridiculous system of justice, this cop gets to keep his peace officer's license.

Last year, three SAPD officers severely brutalized an innocent man as he tried to photograph his wife's new location for her medical practice.

When KENS 5 news interviewed then SAPD police chief William McManus, he stated that "Clearly it was a case of mistaken identity. From the report that I've read, from the photo that I saw and from your description, I've not seen anything at this point that would indicate to me that anything out of order happened."

According to the chief himself, beating an innocent man to the point of hospitalization is completely normal.

Also in January, a former SAPD officer was sentenced to 18 months in jail for gruesomely stabbing and shooting his family's dog.

In July of last year, it was the SAPD who brutally beat a 16-year-old boy because they smelled marijuana.

Also in 2014, it was 2 SAPD officers who brutally beat a 70-year-old man because they thought he was drunk. He was having a diabetic attack.

FORWARD OBSERVATIONS



“At a time like this, scorching irony, not convincing argument, is needed. Oh had I the ability, and could reach the nation’s ear, I would, pour out a fiery stream of biting ridicule, blasting reproach, withering sarcasm, and stern rebuke.

“For it is not light that is needed, but fire; it is not the gentle shower, but thunder.

“We need the storm, the whirlwind, and the earthquake.”

“The limits of tyrants are prescribed by the endurance of those whom they oppose.”

Frederick Douglass, 1852

Marxists know that democracy does *not* abolish class oppression.

It only makes the class struggle more direct, wider, more open and pronounced, and that is what we need.

The fuller the freedom of divorce, the clearer will women see that the source of their “domestic slavery” is capitalism, not lack of rights.

The more democratic the system of government, the clearer will the workers see that the root evil is capitalism, not lack of rights.

The fuller national equality (and it is *not* complete without freedom of secession), the clearer will the workers of the oppressed nations see that the cause of their oppression is capitalism, not lack of rights, etc.

-- V. I. Lenin, Collected Works, 4th English Edition; Vol. 23

Greece: Capitalism Can't Be Elected Out Of Existence: It “Will Need To Be Overthrown By Workers Acting Above And Beyond The Ballot Box”

July 14, 2015 by Danny Katch, Socialist Worker [Excerpts]

As is so often the case in our world, we were meant to view the crisis in Greece in purely economic terms of debt repayment, rather than raise democratic questions about who

decides which debts are paid and by whom--or whether some project is worth going into debt for in the first place, for that matter.

What SYRIZA's election did was to expose the bankers' laws and rules as not natural at all--a dangerous message for which Europe's leaders seem determined to punish both the party and the people who elected it with economic devastation for decades to come.

The referendum called by Tsipras was nonbinding--as later events would depressingly prove--but it nonetheless showed the explosive power of democracy, bringing to mind the truth of Frederick Engels' observation in *The Origin of Family, Private Property and the State*:

“Universal suffrage is thus the gauge of the maturity of the working class. It cannot and never will be anything more in the modern state, but that is enough. On the day when the thermometer of universal suffrage shows boiling point among the workers, they as well as the capitalists will know where they stand.”

Engels' point was that while democracy is both a tool and an aim for socialists, capitalism is a fundamentally undemocratic economic order that can't be elected out of existence, but will need to be overthrown by workers acting above and beyond the ballot box.

Alexis Tsipras and his co-thinkers in the SYRIZA leadership are committed to different version of socialism, based on the strategy of gradually winning national power through parliament--and more recently, wining continental power via the European Union.

That's why almost immediately after the referendum, Tsipras announced that he was going back to negotiations and was willing to accept most of the harsh measures that Greeks had just decisively voted down in the referendum that he had called.

In effect, Tsipras decided to use the mass democracy of Oxi! as a bargaining chip in negotiations to try to remain in the far less democratic club of the European Union.

The EU responded to the referendum as it did to SYRIZA's election in January, calling for even harsher austerity measures--including forcing the Greek parliament to pass a series of laws undoing every SYRIZA promise and demanding that 50 billion euros in Greek assets be turned over to a fund controlled by EU.

What was the point of the referendum if the will of the people was going to be so quickly ignored?

That question is being asked by millions of Greeks as well as their supporters around the world.

But the referendum won't have been in vain if organizations on the Greek left--inside and outside SYRIZA--are able to mobilize opposition to the new austerity program, both in parliament and in the streets, workplaces and campuses of Greece.

The democracy practiced by Pericles and the Athenians of ancient Greece was real, but very limited, resting on an economic foundation of slave labor.

In every society since that was dominated by a minority class, democracy has been at best an ideal that is never close to fulfilled.

Among the many things at stake today in the battle for Greece is the question of democracy under the harsh conditions of 21st century capitalism.

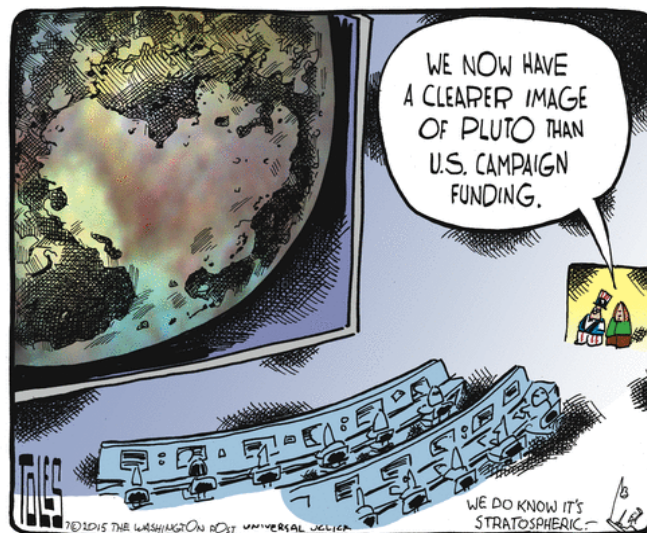
And we certainly know, from observing the behavior of the European political and business elite, which side values democracy.

The rulers of the “free” market system don't even bother to pretend they care about it any more.

YOUR INVITATION:

Comments, arguments, articles, and letters from service men and women, and veterans, are especially welcome. Write to Box 126, 2576 Broadway, New York, N.Y. 10025-5657 or email contact@militaryproject.org: Name, I.D., withheld unless you request publication. Same address to unsubscribe.

DANGER: CAPITALISTS AT WORK



OCCUPATION PALESTINE

Palestinian Woman Suffers Miscarriage After Assault By Zionist Settlers In Occupied Jerusalem: “We Were Attacked With Stones And Batons” Occupiers Arrest Her Two Relatives For Being Attacked While Palestinian

July 7, 2015 SILWANIC

Silwan, Jerusalem

The Israeli police released on Monday Hasan Masri with a third-party bail.

Wadi Hilweh Information Center was informed that the occupation forces arrested Masri and his brother Ahmad after they were attacked by settlers in Street number 1 in Jerusalem on Saturday night.

Masri and his brother were with their families at the time of the assault and Sabreen Masri suffered a miscarriage due after suffering a state of extreme fear.

In a conversation with Ahmad Masri, he said: “We were on our way to Bethlehem last Saturday evening and a group of settlers were randomly throwing stones towards the vehicle. We were hit once and then against at the next intersection and then we were attacked with stones and batons.”

Masri explained that he got out of the vehicle with his brother to keep the settlers away especially that there was a lot of traffic. One of the settlers ran towards a nearby house while another settler threatened him with a knife but the police was in the area and confiscated the knife.”

Masri also added that a group of settlers attacked the people inside the vehicles once again. Among them were his father and his 30-year old wife Sabreen who suffered a state of extreme fear which resulted in a miscarriage; note that she was two months pregnant.

Masri also said that the settlers deliberately damaged the windows of their vehicles.

Heroic Occupation Forces Attack Peddlers For Selling Fruits And Vegetables While Palestinian “Israeli Forces Fired Tear Gas At The Roadside Sellers”



July 8, 2015 Ma'an

HEBRON -- Israeli forces on Wednesday afternoon detained a Palestinian man after confiscating fruits and vegetables being sold by the side of the road in Beit Ummar near Hebron.

Spokesman for the popular resistance committee Muhammad Ayad Awad said Israeli forces fired tear gas at the roadside sellers stationed on the main road of the town, before detaining Omar Walid Omar Rashid Ikhleil, 20.

An Israeli army spokesperson said one Palestinian was detained shortly and then released on the spot, without giving further information regarding the rationale for the detention.

The spokesperson had record of incidents with roadside sellers in Beit Ummar however referred Ma'an to the Israeli police spokesperson for further details. The police spokesperson did not immediately respond for comment.

Last month, Israeli forces shut the central vegetable and fruit market in Beit Ummar for two days, with several shop owners detained and forced to close their produce stalls.

The market closure coincided with increased activity in the town by Israeli forces, who carried out multiple overnight raids in June.

During the raids, Israeli forces reportedly searched homes, handed out summons for interrogation, and detained several residents.

Beit Ummer residents are subject to recurrent targeting by Israeli forces, with over 60 Palestinians detained from the town between January and March 2015, nearly half of whom were minors.

Many Palestinians Quit Medical Study In Venezuela: “They Weren't Getting The Training They Needed To Become Recognized Physicians” “Doctors From Other Institutions Warned That Their Education Wouldn't Meet International Standards” “Their First Year Consisted Only Of Spanish Language Lessons And Indoctrination About Venezuela's Revolution”

Jul. 16, 2015 By HANNAH DREIER, AP. Associated Press writer Mohammed Daraghme in Ramallah, West Bank, contributed to this report.

CARACAS, Venezuela — The Palestinian students were greeted like celebrities upon arrival in Caracas. President Nicolas Maduro wore a kaffiyeh headdress and played up their symbolic importance during an address broadcast across the socialist South American country.

“Today, Palestine enters the heart of Venezuela,” Maduro declared in November when he greeted the first 119 recipients of a medical school scholarship, adding that the historic exchange with a key ideological ally had made him cry.

The program to train young Palestinians as doctors was to be the latest addition to an array of international solidarity programs the late President Hugo Chavez established, the best-known of which provides Cuba with cheap oil in exchange for the services of tens of thousands of health professionals.

But eight months later, about a third of the Palestinians have dropped out, complaining the program lacks academic rigor, according to interviews The Associated Press conducted with students, teachers and government officials. At least 29 already have gone home, while the other dropouts have stayed on living rent-free as they wait to receive plane tickets.

The Palestinians who left the Yasser Arafat Scholarship Program, which included seven years of room and board at a state-run school staffed by Cuban doctors, said they weren't getting the training they needed to become recognized physicians. Dismissing those concerns, school officials say the young people were homesick and susceptible to manipulation by government critics.

The students' decision to leave prompted Venezuela to freeze the scholarship program that was supposed to bring in hundreds more Palestinians to study in various fields, according to an official in the Palestinian Education Ministry in the West Bank city of Ramallah.

The young people's choices have raised diplomatic tensions between the two allies, said the official, who insisted on anonymity because he was not authorized to talk to the media.

Chavez, who saw himself as a leader of the developing world, was a vocal proponent of the Palestinians' right to statehood, which he saw as part of a broader battle against colonialism and the West.

Sandra Moreno, director of the Dr. Salvador Allende medical school, did not respond to multiple requests for interviews, nor did federal health and higher education officials in Venezuela.

Initially, the aspiring doctors were delighted to receive the scholarships named for Arafat, the late chairman of the Palestinian Liberation Organization. Many were escaping refugee camps, or leaving behind Gaza, which was ravaged last summer by a conflict with Israel that left more than 2,000 dead.

But the students who dropped out complain that their first year consisted only of Spanish language lessons and indoctrination about Venezuela's 16-year-old revolution.

They say they were surprised when their teachers presented a curriculum centered on community health and worried when doctors from other institutions warned that their education wouldn't meet international standards.

Fouad Fattoum, 19, has been waiting since early June for program administrators to provide him with a return ticket to the West Bank. He now expects to fly home Saturday.

"I want to help my people, and what they need are doctors," Fattoum said. "I want learn as much information as possible and that's not what I would get in this program."

Departing students have also complained about crime in Caracas, which has a homicide rate that mirrors a war zone even in the absence of an armed conflict.

The Salvador Allende medical school, a sister facility to Cuba's Latin American School of Medicine, is named for the Marxist president of Chile who killed himself while being overthrown by a 1973 coup. The school outside Caracas is adorned with shaggy palm trees and busts of revolutionary figures.

Instructors and students at the school defend the curriculum, saying it emphasizes preventive medicine that has a greater impact on daily life than traditional training that might involve costlier diagnostic technology. Students accompany Cuban physicians on rounds in poor neighborhoods and attend classes emphasizing their work's social impact.

Biology teacher Sol Potino said that the Palestinians are probably just missing home and that students dissatisfied with the program should supplement their studies with additional research if they don't think they are getting the information they need.

"People criticize this kind of medicine because they know it's associated with the left," she said. "But you can make a lot of things better with just primary care, in terms of individual health and the health of a country."

Razi Sulaimon, who grew up in a West Bank refugee camp, said he believes his Venezuelan degree will enable him to work as a doctor and is among the many who are staying.

"It's a good program, and I like it a lot," Sulaimon said.

Shadi Ali is among the students who already returned to the West Bank. He said Thursday he hopes to resume studying next year at a university in Romania, where he says the education standards are higher, and life is far safer. His father and grandfather have agreed to help him pay the \$3,000 yearly tuition.

Some departing Palestinians acknowledge they will probably have to abandon their dreams of studying medicine.

Anas Manasrah, who has been waiting for a ticket back to Ramallah, doesn't think Middle Eastern medical authorities would have accepted his degree. The 19-year-old now plans to study engineering.

"To study medicine in Palestine you need a lot of money, and my family can't pay," Manasrah said.

Fattoum, one of those who has had to wait for a plane ticket, hopes for another grant to study medicine abroad, but says Palestinian education officials have warned he'll be at the bottom of the list after dropping the Venezuela scholarship.

Still, he's happy he got to know South America. He sent a photo of himself at the Caribbean to his siblings, who like him had never visited the sea because they didn't have permission from Israeli authorities to travel to the Mediterranean coast a half hour away.

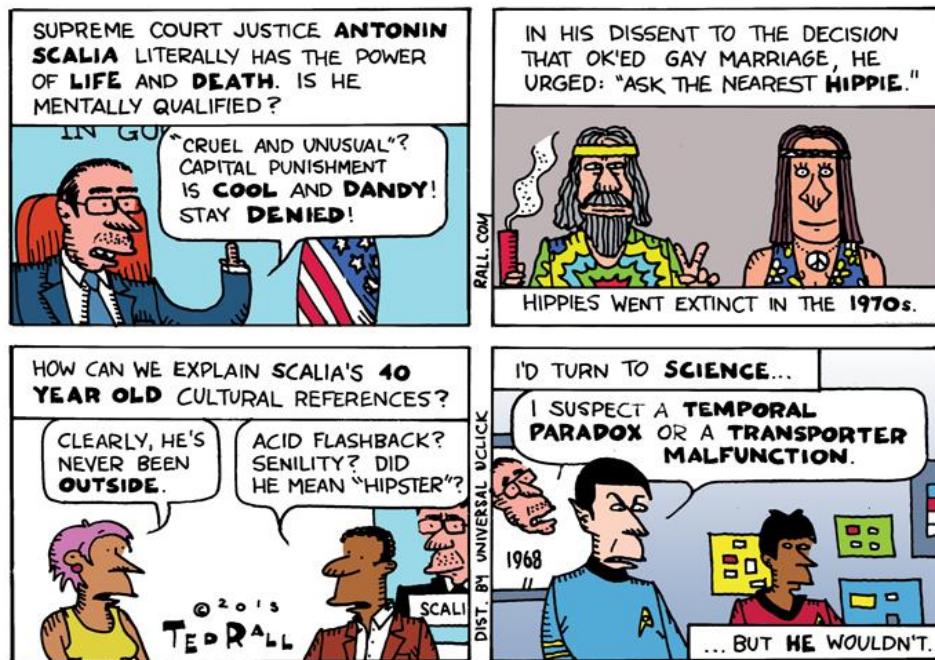
"I'm glad to be able to do things like go on road trips, but I thought I would be studying and learning pretty much every spare moment," he said. "I don't need so much relaxation."

To check out what life is like under a murderous military occupation commanded by foreign terrorists, go to:

<http://www.maannews.net/eng/Default.aspx> and
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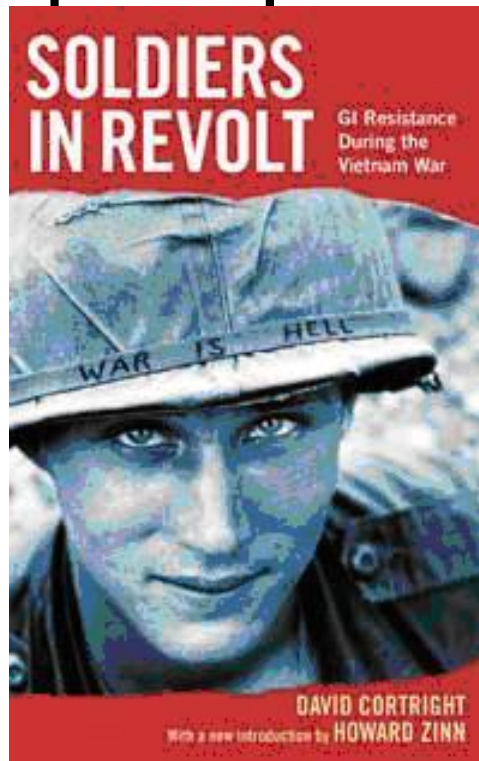
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