

Green Party mayor demolishes refugee camp in Grenoble, France

By Athiyan Silva
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On May 24, over 100 CRS (Compagnies Républicaines de Sécurité) police rounded up and forcefully expelled refugees from the Valmy Refugee camp in Grenoble, in southeast France. More than 100 refugees plus their 54 children were transported temporarily to the Alphonse Daudet and La Houille Blanche gymnasiums in Grenoble. After the evacuation, the camp was completely destroyed by police.

Most of the refugees were from Albania, Macedonia, Kosovo, and Serbia—countries devastated by capitalist restoration and NATO wars in the 1990s, in which tens of thousands died and hundreds of thousands more were dispossessed. Since February, the refugees have been installed in a set of tents and makeshift huts in Valmy and have lived in appalling conditions, without water and electricity.

The mayor of Grenoble, Eric Piolle, of the Europe Ecology-the Greens (EELV) party, filed a lawsuit to the Administrative Court for the expulsion of the refugees from the Valmy camp in mid-April. Piolle was elected in 2014 with backing from organizations including Jean-Luc Mélenchon's Left Party, the New Anti-capitalist Party (NPA), and the Alternatifs.

Two days before the expulsion, the Valmy camp was attacked and the refugees terrorized by fascist thugs. The night of Saturday May 20th, about 30 goons on motorcycles penetrated the camp and made death threats against the refugees. They had sticks, baseball bats, knives and iron bars, and smashed everything they could find in the camp.

Monique Fraysse-Guiglini, of the association Accueil Migrants Grésivaudan (Immigrant hospitality at Grésivaudan, or AMG), told the media, "the refugees were very scared. A little Albanian boy came towards me to tell me that the Nazis had come. They were

armed with batons. They shouted death threats to the refugees and said themselves they were from the extreme right, from what I've been told. They said that they would come back every day until the refugees left. That's why many refugees fled."

On the evening of May 22, thugs threw Molotov cocktails into the camp's garbage and set it and a nearby vehicle alight. Two days later, the police prefecture and municipal council took advantage of these incidents to expel the refugees and destroy the camp. A member of the "La Patate chaude" (the hot potato) association commented: "I'm disgusted about this, the Police Prefecture seized upon this pretext to expel them rather than house them."

The reactionary policy of Piolle, who enjoys the support of the NPA and similar petty bourgeois organizations, is the product of decades of anti-immigrant policies and the stoking of racial hatred by the Socialist Party (PS) and its political periphery. Amid rising social anger at social cuts and imperialist wars, these forces have sought to divert the anger of workers and youth against immigrants.

The former PS government has carried out enormous attacks against the French and immigrant working class, as well as refugees. It persecuted the Roma and ordered police to destroy their camps. Former Prime Minister Manuel Valls went so far as to say that the Roma population should be deported, and that France was not here to "welcome these populations." Last year, the PS destroyed the camp in Calais where refugees were waiting to go to the UK.

The barbaric attack on refugees in Grenoble points to the reactionary role of the Green Party and the pseudo-left organizations like the NPA. In 2012 they helped bring the PS to power. This year, they backed the former Rothschild banker and PS minister

Emmanuel Macron, who went on to win the 2017 presidential election. They claimed Macron and the organizations supporting him were a lesser evil compared to the neo-fascist National Front (FN), and that workers had to vote for them in order to halt attacks on democratic rights and on immigrants.

In fact, the various organizations in the periphery of the PS are capitulating to the far right, attacking democratic rights and stepping up the persecution of immigrants and refugees. The FN has only benefited from the anti-immigrant mood promoted by the PS and its allies. It received over 30 percent of the vote in the last presidential election.

In expelling refugees from the Valmy camp, the Greens are helping to carry out xenophobic and racist policies desired by the fascist goon squads and their backers.

This points to the correctness of the *Parti de l'égalité socialiste's* policy during the presidential elections, and particularly its call for an active boycott of the second round between Macron and FN leader Marine Le Pen. It insisted that only an independent perspective for the working class and its mobilization in a political struggle against the incoming president would allow the working class to oppose the vast shift to the right being prepared by the ruling class.

Piolle's demolition of the Valmy camp in Grenoble just weeks after Macron's election is a warning that vindicates the analysis of the PES: Macron's victory, with the support of Green and pseudo-left forces, has only set the stage for enormous attacks on basic social and democratic rights.

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