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Greece

Statement on the parliamentary elections to be held on May 6 in Greece

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There is another way! Without debt, euro, EU and memoranda!

For the anti-capitalist overthrow of the coalition government and the Troika!

Power and wealth in the hands of the workers! For a battle-front based on a break with the system and revolutionâ€™for a strong anti-capitalist left!

Whatever the parrots of the troika may tell us, the "haircut" (debt cut), carried out by the "black front" means the rescue of the bankers and social disaster for the population. The measures of Memorandum No. 2 amount to a war of extermination against the majority of the working class. The EU is imposing a devastating austerity program throughout Europe. The bankers are compensated with 50 billion euros while social security and other public funds are being robbed! The loan agreement creates conditions akin to those an imperial power would impose on a colony. There is a total absence of popular sovereignty and the selling off of public wealth along with the natural environment, while the debt is increased even further. New Democracy (ND) [1], PASOK, Troika and the mob of the sold-out media outdo themselves in order to frighten us with the specter of "ungovernableness." But what this "ungovernableness" actually means is the inability of the present government to push through its actions, which is the only hope for the people! They try to paralyze us but they will not succeed! There is another way: without memoranda, euro, European Union, beyond capitalist barbarism.

Prime Minister Papadimos, ND, and PASOK claim that the memoranda and the guardianship of the Troika is the only way to avoid disaster. But the greatest disaster for the people is that we remain attached to the memoranda, the euro and the EU, and have to repay the debt. Despite all the propaganda we say that there is surely a different way!

- Immediately terminate the loan agreement, any memoranda and all related measures.
- Do not recognize the debt, debt cancellation and suspension of payments.
- Break with the system and with the euro/EU.
- Nationalize the banks and corporations without compensation under workers' control.
- Immediately increase wages and pensions! Cancel the poll tax and increase the taxation of capital.
- Prohibit layoffs and fully protect the unemployed. Shorten working hours and reduce the retirement age.
- Expropriate hundreds of closed factories and re-commission them controlled by the employees themselves.
- Provide cheap and good quality food through agricultural cooperatives, poor and middle farmersâ€™without middlemen and large producers.

An uprising of the entire working populationâ€™anti-capitalist revolution!

Power and wealth belong in the hands of the workers!

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That is the only way we can avoid the bankruptcy of society. Our way leads to a break with capitalism by the overthrow of the current authoritarian political system and its replacement with a democracy and the power of the workers, with the widest control to be exercised by the workers and by the people. If the united front of workers, intellectuals and creative people take over leadership we can live in dignity, use the social productive forces collectively and break with the logic of profit, the market, "competitiveness," and environmental degradation.

We are strong enough to overthrow them!

We have demonstrated our strength during the great general strikes, the occupation of the ministries, the unique lessons in democracy and struggles during the occupancy of public squares. We can see it every day in small and large conflicts, in the heroic struggles of Chalivourgia (steel industry), in the movements of civil disobedience ("I do not pay"). It is shown by the many forms of organization and coordination of struggles by the rank and file, outside of and against the institutionalized trade unionism of GSEE and ADEDY [2], by developing new forms of solidarity, self-organization, and self-determination. The popular uprising, the continued popular and labor war that is increasing its strength, will lead to victory!

In the elections of May 6 we face the alternative:

- Either the forces of the merciless memorandum, the euro-junta, of the "creditors" and capital are strengthened so that they can form a "stable government."
- Or we strengthen the forces of resistance, of "destabilization" and the reversal of the attack, of the real struggle against the barbaric memoranda, EU and capital.

In the first case the forces of the Troika with the black front, Samaras [3] and Venizelos [4], Provopoulos [5] and Daskalopoulos [6] would be "confirmed" and would then lead the population into a genuine slaughterhouse! Cuts in wages and pensions, poverty and unemployment, sell-out of all public property and an "iron heel" against the struggles would be the result. In the second case the way may open to slow down the march towards barbarism, the mass movement could take a leap forward, so that we get back what was stolen from us and shake off the new tyranny.

We must condemn the black front ...

In advance of the elections ND and PASOK have already agreed to jointly form a government of the Troika and the memoranda. Their evil and dangerous allies are:

- The far-right LAOS [7], which is jointly responsible for the memorandum and were quick to take part in the Papadimos government.
- The neo-Nazis of "Chrysi Avgi" ("Golden Dawn") [8], the nostalgia addicts of Hitler and the quislings of the security battalions ("tagmatasfalites") [9], who have been supporting Manesis [10] against the heroic struggle of the steel workers, who attack the social uprising, cooperate with the cops and want to use their racist poison to divide the working class and the people. We can beat back the anti-democratic attacks and smash the Nazi gangs with unified struggles!

... but also its crutches

- The various "anti-memorandum"-parties that have emerged from either PASOK or ND and go fishing for votes in

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order to participate in post-election coalitions, such as Katseli [10] and Kammenos [11] must be rejected. The same applies to DIMAR. [12] Do not vote for these parties!

– The “patriotic fronts” that avoid talking about the local exploiters, either about SEV or the Greek bankers who furiously support the memoranda.

The solution is a strong Left struggling for a break with the system and the anti-capitalist revolution!

The parliamentary parties of the Left do not meet their historical responsibilities. SYRIZA suggests a “leftist government,” but does not dare to say anything against the euro and the EU. It is increasingly in search of “solutions” to the debt problem through agreements with the creditors! The Communist Party (KKE) [13] now rejects the recognition of the debt and takes a stand against the EU position, but points to the metaphysical presence of “peoples’ power” that should come into existence through parliamentary channels and through the conquest of the parliamentary majority in the election. This party avoids any overt political conflict and still refuses to participate in a united front for a workers and popular uprising. Such an approach is a barrier to the struggles. Joint action is more necessary than ever!

What is needed is the mobilization and organization of goals and demands, put today on the agenda by reality itself (cancellation of debt, leaving the euro zone and the EU, nationalization and workers' control). This can be achieved by a united front of all those who want a break with the system and revolution, by the escalation of the workers' and popular uprising combined with strikes, occupations, demonstrations, also by the organization and coordination of struggles at the level of the rank and file on the basis of an anti-capitalist program. This is the way to achieve the power of working people, true democracy combined with a socialist and communist perspective.

This is the left ???RS?? is struggling to create. We are committed to ensuring that this leftâ€”one which will break with the system and aim for the insurrection, the anti-capitalist revolutionary leftâ€”will come out stronger from the national parliamentary elections.

In the elections we give our voice and support to ???RS??!

OPEN CALL FOR UNITY

???RS?? calls on all of the collectives and movements struggling for the past two years against the terror of the memoranda, the Troika, and the euro-junta to communicate in solidarity and to cooperate before, during and after the elections. This appeal is directed to all forces that have bled in the strikes and clashes, that have filled the squares with life, that want to strengthen the rebellion of the labor movement, that are aiming for an overthrow of the government coalition, the EU, IMF and capitalist barbarism!

Whatever they may tell us, we know that history is not written in the corridors of power but in the streets where the real struggles take place. With a battle-front based on the need for a break with the system and revolution, combined with a strong, militant anti-capitalist left, we can win the fight!

Translation and notes: A. Kloke, 21 April 21, 2012

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[1] New Democracy is the leading right wing bourgeois party that ruled with Prime Minister K. Karamanlis (2004-09). In recent opinion polls it is clearly ahead of PASOK. After the elections of May 6 its current chairman A. Samaras is expected to become the prime minister of a new coalition government in which PASOK is very likely to be involved. The problem is that these two parties that currently support the policy memoranda will, even combined, not have a parliamentary majority according to the predictions.

[2] GSEE union is the trade union federation of the private sector, ADEDY of the public sector. The two trade unions are dominated by PASOK bureaucrats who are interested in keeping the resistance under control.

[3] see (1)

[4] E. Venizelos, Minister of Finance since June 2011 in the PASOK government and now also chairman of PASOK, undoubtedly one of the most ruthless memoranda politicians of the country.

[5] G. Provopoulos, Chairman of the Greek state bank, the "Bank of Greece."

[6] D. Daskalopoulos, Chairman of the Greek Industrialists Association SEV.

[7] LAOS, the far-right party led by the entrepreneur G. Karatzaferis, who founded the party in 2000 after he had resigned from ND, is represented in parliament since 2007. LAOS has got a lot of fascist elements in its ranks, but displays a more parliamentary profile. The party supported the first memorandum from the beginning (since May 2010) and formed together with PASOK and ND the coalition government led by banker L. Papadimos in November 2011. Before the vote on the second memorandum in February 2012, the so-called PSI Agreement, Karatzaferis backed out and withdrew from the government. After that, M. Vouridis, an active fascist since his youth who served as Minister of Transport for LAOS, left the party together with A. Georgiadis and joined ND, so that he could retain his ministerial post. LAOS has slipped sharply in opinion polls since 2010. Without doubt this is primarily due to its advocacy of the memoranda policies. The rise of the neo-Nazi organization Chrysi Avgi, which we have seen particularly since autumn of last year, is a result of the impoverishment of petty-bourgeois layers due to the prevailing policy, but obviously also to the shortcomings and the lack of credibility of LAOS.

[8] Chrysi Avgi is the neo-Nazi terrorist gang that gathers 4 to 5% of the vote in the polls over the last few months. Thus it is very likely to be elected and to take seats in the Greek Parliament. (Political parties or electoral lists are represented in parliament with 3% of the votes). Chrysi Avgi has managed to gain a foothold in some run-down neighborhoods of downtown Athens with a high percentage of "illegal" immigrants, but also with high criminality, by using its good relations with the Greek police. The left has been neither willing nor able to respond to these developments, with some minor exceptions on the part of extra-parliamentary organizations and groups. Chrysi Avgi has evolved to become an essential core of a potential future fascist mass movement in Greece. All major "traditional" (particularly according to the example of Germany in the years 1928-33) prerequisites are met for such a development, primarily the disastrous social situation with a seemingly unstoppable mass unemployment and spreading impoverishment, a profound decline of the petty bourgeoisie, and the structural weakness of the parties and organizations of the left and the labor movement which are unable to react in a united way to confront this threat.

[9] The infamous "Security Battalions" ("tagmatasfalites") were institutionalized in 1943 by the I. Rallis "government," collaborators of the occupation powers. They specialized in "liquidating" communists, but also any others who attempted to resist, by whatever means, the German army and the SS. This was certainly the worst kind of collaboration which developed under the conditions of that time.

[10] Luka Katseli was PASOK - Minister "of Labor and Social Security" from September 2010 to June 2011, when she was transferred to another ministry. In February 2012, she decided to vote against the second memorandum, left PASOK and is trying to establish a new social democratic formation called "Social Agreement."

[11] P. Kammenos, longtime ND - Member of Parliament and always clearly attached to the (extreme) right wing of the party, refused in February 2012 to support the second memorandum, left ND and formed a new party named "Independent Greeks." This new political grouping has achieved high approval ratings of around 8% in recent weeks—apparently because it is a variant of the right wing, but somewhat logical (or rather logically appearing), rejection of the memoranda policies. Even I. Dimaras, one of the few "renegade" PASOK - deputies who refused the memoranda policies from the beginning (May 2010) and therefore were excluded from PASOK, announced his support for the "Independent Greeks" two days ago. His previous negotiations to be a candidate on the SYRIZA ticket had apparently failed.

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[12] DIMAR ("Dimokratiki Aristera" Democratic Left), is a right-wing split from SYN, the main part of SYRIZA, a left-reformist party that emerged from euro-communism. Some groups of the extra-parliamentary far left, like KOE and DEA, also belong to SYRIZA. DIMAR also has quite good poll numbers, around 8 or 9%, but is considered, in addition to the formation of Kammenos, to be one of the most important potential partners in a coalition government with ND and PASOK if these two parties do not gain a parliamentary majority, as expected. SYRIZA is, however, together with the Communist Party, the main representative of the oppositional left in these elections. Its main proposal is a left-wing government based on a rejection of the memoranda policies. Due to the harsh disagreement with such a perspective by the Communist Party, along with an insufficient number of deputies that can be expected, this proposal does not have any prospect of realization.

[13] KKE, the Communist Party of Greece, is probably still the biggest reformist-parliamentary left party in the country. At the same time it is highly sectarian and oriented to the Stalinist past. The party leadership attaches great importance to denouncing all other political formations of the left as "objectively oriented to the defense of the capitalist system" and similar accusations.