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Greece

Convergence of struggles around the tragic anniversary of Tèmbi

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For several weeks now, the student movement, which has engaged in an impressive mobilization to reject the bill to create private universities, has been seeking to join its struggle to those of the workers' movement and farmers. Last week, a "raid on Athens" by caravans of tractors brought together 10,000 demonstrators in solidarity with the student collectives and PAME, the trade union branch of the KKE (Greek Communist Party).

On Wednesday 28 February, we moved up a gear, with an impressive mobilization one year after the Tèmbi rail tragedy. As you will recall, the head-on collision of two trains travelling on the same track killed 57 people. Attributed by the government to a stationmaster's error, the massacre highlighted the disastrous state of public services, and of the railways in particular, as a result of the privatization policy. Hundreds of thousands of demonstrators took to the streets in anger and outrage. Since then, the Mitsotakis government has been using scandalous methods (for which it has been condemned by the European Parliament) to prevent a proper investigation and bring justice to the victims, as demanded by the families' association and a large part of the population. There is no question of forgetting, as many banners on 28 February made clear.

An anniversary day of struggle

To honour the memory of the victims and denounce the murderous destruction of public services, ADEDY (the public sector trade union federation) called for the 28th to be a day of strikes and demonstrations, with demands including 10% pay rises (a teacher starts at 734 euros, a nurse at 680 euros, etc.) and massive recruitment. And it had called for a major day of action on 28 February.

The call was widely heeded, even though the leadership of the GSEE (General Confederation of Greek Workers) did not join in. In Athens, there were marches from various public sectors, branches of the private sector, grassroots unions, and on an avenue parallel to the ADEDY demonstration, PAME and KKE.

Thousands more came from the education sector, including teachers and, in impressive numbers, young people at school, who were still reeling from the tragedy at Tèmbi, where many students died. Because of the large crowds, there were very large student contingents in various parts of the demonstration! Their rejection of the creation of private universities was all the more justified on this day.

In this huge demonstration, which probably drew at least 40,000 people, the common slogan for all was: "It's either their profits or our lives". And in many towns, such as Larissa, Karditsa and Patras, huge anger-filled demonstrations also took place on the 28th. In Thessaloniki, there seemed to be even more people than in Athens to denounce what was not an accident but a crime.

University protests continue unabated

For two months now, there has been no let-up in the mobilization against the plan to create private universities, despite the repression (cops recently at the Athens law school) and the propaganda about the "need to be a modern country"! General assemblies and occupations continue, and every Thursday thousands of students demonstrate

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across the country. Faced with this, the government is trying to rush the situation: it plans to have its draft law debated very quickly and put to a vote in Parliament on 8 March.

In the same way that Mitsotakis refused to give anything to the farmers, the government is playing hardball despite the massive rejection (by students and university staff, the parliamentary left, and even Pasok, which was obliged to reject the bill)... and the fact that many legal experts consider the bill to be illegal: the constitution does not allow the creation of private universities, and this is becoming widely known!

The coming week will be decisive. There's no question of the movement giving up! This morning, they returned to Parliament Square: the names of the 57 victims, painted yesterday, had been erased that evening by the parliamentary services. The students rewrote them in paint, under the gaze of the cops, saying loud and clear: "You will not erase this crime". A determination that deserves the greatest solidarity!

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Translated by **International Viewpoint** from [l'Anticapitaliste](#).

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