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Greece

Declaration of OKDE-Spartakos for the European Elections on May 2019

- News from around the world -
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After more than four years that SYRIZA, along with its social-democrat, right-wing and far right allies are in power, the workers' movement is still in a state of frustration and disarray. Hopes that a "left" government or a government of "social salvation" would effortlessly lead us out of austerity were bitterly disproved, as expected. The massive NO of the working class and the poor and oppressed strata in the referendum of 2015 was cancelled in the most provocative way, once more showing that a vote is not enough to save us. On the other hand, through years of struggles and strikes, working people have accumulated significant political experience, which will prove valuable in a new round of struggles. There are signs of a certain recovery of the movement, as frustration and disappointment will be subsiding.

SYRIZA has rapidly and absolutely adopted a policy in favour of the interests of the rich, industrialists, ship-owners, multinational and local big business. They imposed the third Memorandum and the endless austerity of the post-Memorandum budgetary surveillance. They privatised ports, trains and airports, handing the public wealth over to entrepreneurs. They destroyed the workers' rights and generalised precarious labour, with the bosses getting more and more out of control. In 2019 only, we have counted tens of workers dying upon work, while at the same time the legal framework on the so-called working accidents is getting stricter. They have imprisoned refugees in miserable concentration camps. They permanently allied with the "centre-left", i.e. with the cadres of PASOK who have been responsible for the dirty administration of the past decades. They became best friends with big business and they took them to the Republic of Macedonia to share the loot. They successfully claimed the role of the legitimate representative of the bloodstained NATO in the Balkans and the East Mediterranean.

Just before the elections, following the good old way, SYRIZA proclaimed some elementary benefits and measures of rationalisation that they themselves postponed for so many years: a slight increase in the minimum wage, facilitation measures for the indebted, a deferment of further cuts in pensions and a partial reintroduction of the 13th pension, some salary returns to specific categories of employees, that will probably be extinguished, if the tax-free salary level decreases again. Let there be no doubt, though, that even these benefits, which are ridiculous in relation with the needs of workers and the unemployed, could never be gained without all those years of struggle and if SYRIZA was not afraid of the rage they will face in the elections. We owe the government no favour. SYRIZA is not the lesser evil.

On the other hand, New Democracy is greedily waiting to come back to power. They promise the bosses to champion their interests in an even more scandalous way: to reduce business taxes, to freeze wages "until growth comes", i.e. until the restoration of the bosses' profits. They promise layoffs in the public sector, which is the sole management strategy they know from their past service in the governments of Papadimos and Samaras. They announce a fully competitive and individualised insurance system, where access to health insurance and pension will be granted only to those who have money. They align themselves with the fascists in the nationalist demonstrations against the Republic of Macedonia. They proclaim further authoritarianism and police everywhere.

The remaining bourgeois parties, KINAL, Potami, Enosi Kentroon, ANEL, are trying to secure a place in a future coalition government, but they are threatened with the disaster they deserve. The constant transfers of MPs from one party to another show that differences between them are highly relative. Even more, they show that the parliamentary system is in a state of moral and political decay.

The far-right and the nazis of the Golden Dawn are trying to take advantage of this situation. Despite the defeats they have suffered in the streets by the antifascist movement, which has led to their trial, Golden Dawn still exerts an electoral influence and attempts to benefit from the defamation of the left by the SYRIZA government, on one hand,

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and from the nationalist atmosphere cultivated by the media, the right and the governmental policy alike, on the other.

By its nature, ND has brotherly bonds with Golden Dawn. On the other hand, however, neither SYRIZA nor the "democratic forces" around it can be a hindrance to fascists; on the contrary, they nurture them with their policies.

Besides, the rise of the far-right is a pan-European phenomenon, as is the destabilisation of the traditional political system, with the interchange between the right and the social-democrats in governing the European states. A pan-European is also the refutation of the hopes that the working people have pinned on the "new" parties that have risen in the name of the struggle against austerity, following nevertheless the same old logic of managing the system, with the most striking examples being SYRIZA and Podemos. Workers, the unemployed, the youth see these parties more and more as "one of the same". The crisis of the parliamentary left due to its systemic logic feeds the rise of the far-right. The antifascist struggles unfolding across Europe are the only way to block its path.

The alternative to capitalist exploitation, oppression and fascism cannot be a party that will take over the government in our name. The real alternative lies in the workers' and social struggles: the workers' strikes and the yellow vests in France; the industrial strikes in Hungary; the huge mass of feminist mobilizations across the continent; the struggles against climate change that is caused in the pursuit of profits; the movement of solidarity with the refugees; the internationalist wave of solidarity among the peoples of Europe and those of the other continents, whose common enemy is the very capitalist system.

There have been, there are and there will be such struggles on the European, national and local level. They need to be decisively supported and organised so as to achieve greater participation, as they are our future.

We need to demand to stop the post-Memorandum programme of budget surpluses that impose indefinite austerity. To erase the debt, that has been repaid countless times by the working people who haven't created it. To cancel all privatisations, whereby the public wealth is handed over to capitalists and workers are forced to work in jobs without rights and with ridiculous wages. To impose massive new jobs in the health, education and service sectors, that can meet the real needs and provide decent working conditions, but are never created because the debt must be paid and the entrepreneurs must be given more motives. To demand public investments that will offer stable jobs, for a production that will benefit the social majority instead of a bunch of capitalists. To achieve permanency for all contract and precarious workers, to ban layoffs, as we don't accept the risk of the capitalist production and its crises being charged to the workers, while the bosses claim their profits. To impose real rises in wages and pensions.

The above cannot be done without taking over the banks, so that they don't continue to handle the people's money at will. The governments have rescued them on our money, only to give them away to local or foreign capitalists again. They cannot be done without taking over the big production units, energy, industry, transport, communication, without any compensation to capitalists, as they have already profited enough. Without organising independently, against a state made for the interests of capitalists: in the trade unions, in urban movements, but also in popular assemblies, inspired by the examples of the squares' or "indignants" movement, of the occupations of town halls and ministries in 2011, of the antifascist committees. Such structures are the only possible basis for a power of our own, of the working people, the producers of the society's wealth, against exploitation and oppression.

All the above cannot be done without struggling against the EU. The EU is not a bulwark against nationalism; it is the main lair of fascists across the world. It does not guarantee the well-being and rights; it is a place where big business are lurking and trampling on the worker's rights. It is not a haven of democracy and tolerance; it is the Fortress Europe that murders the poor and hunted people reaching its borders. It is, in short, the lobby of the European capitalists against the workers of all countries. We need to put forward our own unity against it, to fight for a future of internationalist fellowship and coexistence among all European peoples, for a large federation free of capitalism.

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In this struggle for real liberation, the parliamentary left, which is itself integrated in the dominant political system, is not enough. The bureaucratic KKE subordinates the struggles in its own development and calumniates any militant who does not agree with the party leadership. The nationalist Popular Unity flirts with the nationalist demonstrations against the Republic of Macedonia and fantasises in vain a new SYRIZA, only honest this time. The militants of those parties, as well as all militants in the mass movement, are needed in the struggles. However, we also need an independent political expression of those who realise the importance of the struggles from below, of the anticapitalist program as described above, of the total independence from the state, its institutions and whomever wishes to manage them, in their own interest, or, supposedly, in that of all workers.

The anticapitalist left, with the forces of ANTARSYA in its core, is such a force, a real one even if being a minority among working people. ANTARSYA refused to support SYRIZA and its project from the beginning. At the same time, it took part in all important struggles, often leading them: in the rebellion of December 2008; in the great strikes of the era of the Memoranda and in the squares' movement in 2011; in the occupation of ERT (Public Television) in 2013; in the strike in the high schools that could block the national exams in 2013, but was finally cancelled by the unions' bureaucracy; in the antifascist movement that took the streets back from the fascist gangs; in the victorious struggles of the contract workers to win their jobs; in organising precarious workers; in the mobilizations high schools students against the nationalist hysteria over Macedonia and against the new laws in education; in the occupations of universities; in the feminist struggles and those of the LGBTQI; in the movement of solidarity with refugees and immigrants, who organise and struggle themselves; in the environmental struggles, in Skouries, Lefkimmi and Keratea; in the mobilisations of farmers and agricultural workers; in every neighbourhood, workplace, faculty.

That's why we support ANTARSYA in the European elections and the anticapitalist lists in which ANTARSYA takes part in municipal and regional elections. We aspire to attract more forces in ANTARSYA and the anticapitalist collectives, new militants that now enter the struggle, but also those who have drawn political conclusions from their own experience of the dead-ends of SYRIZA, LAE and KKE.

We will not be new claimants of power. We don't promise a supposedly good government that will solve our problems in our name. We promise to unite forces with those who struggle. To use those elected in the councils in order to reveal and denounce the role of the power of capitalists and their political delegates. To open the doors behind which professional politicians take their decisions in secret, for the workers and the movements to enter and impose their demands and rights. Our already elected comrades in regional and municipal councils have proven to do this. That's why it's important to reinforce them.

- Vote for ANTARSYA and the anticapitalist left, for those who exploit and oppress us to fear. Mobilise, organise and fight, for their fears to come true.

PS:

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