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Greece

Don't let Dimitris Koufodinas die!

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It has already been said many times: the government of Kyriakos Mitsotakis, the offspring of a rich bourgeois family grabbing political posts, is that of a vengeful rightwing, with no other political project than that of showiering gifts on its industrial and financial cronies, breaking up what remains of public services and repressing anything that dares to voice the slightest criticism, without in the least embarrassing itself with what is called the rule of law.

Unfounded legal justifications

The latest example is the refusal to accede to the request of Dimitris Koufodinas, a member of the 17 November group sentenced to life imprisonment for murder, to be returned to the prison of Korydallos, in the Athenian suburbs, as required by law. Koufodinas began a hunger strike on 8 January in pursuance of this demand.

The weak team around Mitsotakis is burying in baseless legal justifications for this refusal, and keeping him in a high-security prison far from Athens. This raises the real question: why this murderous relentlessness on the part of the authorities? It is put presented as a desire for family revenge, one of the victims of the terrorist group having been the Prime Minister's brother-in-law.

But this explanation, which could be used by Mitsotakis in the context of “ancient traditions of revenge”, does not hold. On the one hand Dora Bakoyannis, the widow of the victim and former foreign minister, is demanding that the law be respected. And above all, because what is becoming increasingly clear that this is to divert attention from the fact that this extreme right - despite all the gifts it has made to the big media bosses – can no longer hide that it is incapable of dealing with the situation, especially on the health front, where its refusal to recruit care workers and open beds has led to a very serious situation: only 12 free resuscitation beds left in the Athens region today!

The polls show a sharp fall in positive opinions, the right is starting to tear itself apart, and what Mitsotakis and his extreme right-wing ministers (in particular the Minister of the Interior, a former leader of fascist organisations) are looking for is to revive themselves by closing the ranks of conservatives and extreme right-wing extremists. Koufodinas could well be an ideal victim of this cynical strategy.

Preventing this foreseeable crime

What the great strategist (seriously nicknamed Moses by part of his fan club!) Mitsotakis certainly did not expect was that the just claim of the prisoner Koufodinas would be supported not only by the radical left, the libertarians and the whole anarchist movement, but also by Syriza, the KKE and even the PASOK (under its new name of Kinal). And above all, there is also a good part of the social movement which demands respect for human rights, and in this case prisoners' rights. The student movement, the national federation of the public sector ADEDY, the national union of sailors, the unions of lawyers (that of Piraeus in particular), and even the union of judges and magistrates, without forgetting members of the right in power, who refuse to be associated with such a denial of human rights, are mobilizing to prevent the death of Koufodinas, who has now started a thirst strike.

The first gatherings, which took place quite early on, were immediately gassed and beaten by the police. But in

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recent days, the indignation has become such that thousands of demonstrators have been marching in Athens since Sunday, without the police being able to stop them. As a result, the authorities are trying to silence the protest by “shutting down” the Facebook pages (through the French multinational Teleperformance). Among the targets is the website of the organisation Synantissi (see their press release below).

To prevent what could be the first death on European soil of a prisoner on hunger strike since Bobby Sands and his comrades condemned by Thatcher, international solidarity is urgent. Doctors are very pessimistic for the coming days. In order to prevent this foreseeable crime, everywhere let our voice be heard for the respect of human rights, the respect of prisoners' rights!

1 March 2021

This emergency motion was adopted by the International Committee of the Fourth International on 23 February 2021.

The International Committee of the Fourth International urgently demands the fulfilment of the just demands of the political prisoner Dimitris Koufodinas, who has been on a hunger- strike since January 8, 2021. If the Greek government does not take immediate action, the loss of his life or irreversible damage to his health is imminent.

We demand:

- that he be transferred to Korydallos prison;
- a stop to all arbitrary legal and factual interventions against him;
- a stop to all discriminatory treatment against him.

PS:

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