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Greece

Support the student mobilizations in Greece!

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On 26 May 2022, a student from Thessaloniki, Yannis Doussakis, was almost killed by a grenade fired by one of the many Greek riot squads, the MAT, who had invaded the university. Since then, a slogan of many protest demonstrations has been very clear: "It did not fall by chance, the grenade".

By creating a university police force (OPPI), prime minister Mitsotakis and his far-right government want to terrorize university youth. In recent days, many students have been injured or arrested during big mobilizations.

In fact, since the summer of 2019 when Mitsotakis, a former student at a US private college, became prime minister, with the appointment to the Ministry of Education and Religion of a bigoted ultra-neoliberal, Niki Kerameos, students have mobilized, at that time against the abolition of university asylum. But long before this date, the right, with the help of its tame media, was attacking the public universities, accused of being dens of the left and drugs. Students were preparing for an active resistance against a multifaceted repression.

The Aristotle faculty at Thessaloniki has been at the forefront of mobilizations but also provocations: the cops did not hesitate to bring in a water cannon vehicle to better repress ... which allowed the students to organize a fine press conference in front of the machine! Faced with this anti-youth policy in the name of "Law and Order", protests and demonstrations are permanent: a demonstration of 5,000 students and sectors of the workers' movement in Thessaloniki on 27 May; in several university cities, notably on 2 June, exasperated teachers shouting at the MAT to disappear so they could teach; condemnation from Amnesty International; a student text with hundreds of signatures denouncing the attempt to transform the university into a "socially sterile place delivered up to praetorians and the interests of private companies"...

And the results of the university elections were a blow to the government - with each department organizing elections by lists of tendencies, in fact political factions, in the absence of a (re)unified student unionism: while for about 40 years it was the right-wing tendency that prevailed, it fell to about 27%, with the CP tendency (KKE) in the lead with about 34%, the radical left tendency not far off 20%, and Syriza obtaining 2.5%.

Of course, the constant repression aims to impose a project that Kerameos has just tabled: to drastically reduce the number of students in public universities (with 20,000 prevented from access in 2021), to conclude agreements for degrees meeting strictly the needs of companies, with increased social selection (transition to scholarships on criteria which are no longer social but of "merit") and threats to the existence of small colleges in medium-sized cities. The second axis: to modify the administration, by abolishing collective functioning (the university president, instead of being elected by hundreds of colleagues, would be elected by a "council" of 11 members, including five from outside the university) and breaking up democratic student life, aiming to eliminate the current politico-union groupings... The college of clientelism, such is the vision of the right and the minister.

In this situation, the movement will surely expand - what is clear is that it will need all the international solidarity it can get!

PS:

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