

# **GREECE: BEFORE A DIFFICULT BUT PROMISING PERIOD**

**Wednesday, January 7, 2009**

Almost a month after the cold blooded murder of the high school student Alexis Gregoropoulos by a policeman, in the center of Athens, the youth and workers mobilization continue to take place. Although it was Christmas holidays, the mobilization continued, less in number and mainly propagandistic. There are also some buildings occupations and various information activities. At the same time the presence of the police has increased significantly and the courts have started imprisoning some of the more than 200 arrested people during the demonstrations and the clashes with the riot police forces. There is an increased turmoil across the country and many new big mobilizations and demonstrations have already been announced for Friday, January 9. There is estimation that a second round of mobilization and confrontation with the government will take place.

The just and heroic eruption of the Greek youth and significant segments of the Greek workers and immigrants for the murder of the young student was the escalation of an –at least – two years social unrest and impetuous development of the youth movement, centralized in the university campuses and high schools. This movement focused against privatization in education and discipline of the students' movement and developed a mass movement of campuses occupation and demonstrations that blocked the constitutional reform which indented to change the constitutionally secured public 3rd degree education. This reform was the common objective of both the (right wing) government and the social democrat bourgeois opposition. During those struggles a militant consciousness was formed within the youth which developed and radicalized later.

A significant factor for this radicalization was the rapid worsening of the economic situation of the workers and the lower social strata that were affected by the economic crisis and the anti-popular and anti-labor policies of the government. The so called new generation with income less than 700 euros has become the great mass of new workers that enter labor market while one out of four is unemployed. The Greek economy, tied hand and foot with the Stability Pact of the European Economic and Monetary Union is facing the spectrum of bankruptcy. Businesses close down, there are mass layoffs, the agricultural economy is devastated and the foreign capital is withdrawing its investments. The traditional sectors of Greek economy (tourism, services and shipping) are affected by the international economic crisis. All economic analysts predict a very difficult year for Greek workers and the poor people's strata while the Karamanlis government in collaboration with the European Union staff is preparing new economic-measures-shock.

The two biggest parties of the capital that rotate in the administration of the country during the last decades, followed the same policies, imposed by the European monopolies, the European Union and the big Greek capital which is co-identified with the foreigners. Today and despite the extortion and threats of chaos, these two parties are in the lowest level of people's acceptance and they are unable to control social indignation. The development would surely be more

promising if there was an alternative, left and revolutionary political proposal by the Left. Unfortunately both parties that call themselves left (KKE (CPG) and SYRIZA (Coalition of Radical Left) insist on following the parliamentary way and try to turn the people's and workers' anger into votes and parliamentary seats. Particularly SYRIZA (Coalition of Radical Left) continues seeking government collaboration with social democracy while at the same time remains tied to its pro-European policy it has followed the previous years. Both parties hurried the first days of the youth revolt to meet with Prime Minister Karamanlis and declare thus their submission to the bourgeois parliamentary legitimacy.

2008 was the 90th anniversary of the establishment of the Communist Party in Greece. However the present CPG is the ghost of the old heroic CPG (KKE). This was proved once again to thousands Greek leftists and communists during the recent days of the Greek youth's revolt. The leadership of this party strongly opposed the explosion of wrath of the Greek youth, tried to undermine mass mobilizations and denounced as a whole the youths who were clashing for days with the police, as provocateurs and opportunists. For decades, and more particularly after the junta the CPG leadership is systematically trying to show respect to bourgeois legitimacy and control the working and youth struggles when they acquire mass and radical features and goals.

The lack of a reliable, revolutionary left in mass scale was very obvious, in this explosion of wrath that was rapidly spread all over Greece with various, manifold, mass and militant mobilizations. This Left should lead the people's movement and orientate it to the direction of constant resistance and overthrow. Not simply the toppling of a government so another one comes with the same policies like the social democrats and the reformists anticipate but the overthrow totally of the anti-popular and anti-labor policies and in the direction of a broader social and political change. CPG (m-l) and its mass-front organizations are moving to this direction, participating from the very first in the mobilizations that took place during last month. It calls out all the other left organizations to this direction, to coordinate their activities and initiatives in the next future.

The government and the other forces of the regime will try these days to consolidate state and police intimidation and repression, being aware that the country has entered a long period of intensive social struggles. They will also try to use as a pretext the recent provoking actions like the recent armed attack against policemen in the center of Athens. The maximum possible mobilization of the people and youth will be required in order to cancel their schemes and continue the mass struggles. The international solidarity as it was expressed all over the world recently will also be required and needs to be consolidated. The times to come are going to be difficult but at the same time promising.

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