



A Draft Action Programme for Greece

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The Greek revolution has become a key question for extending and deepening the class struggle in Europe ? against slashing the social and education systems, against austerity and mass unemployment and against the growing threat of racism and fascism. Solidarity with the Greek working class, the youth, the migrants, indeed the mass of the population, is a challenge we share with all other forces that are prepared to advance the class struggle in Europe.

We stand for the cancellation of debt, against the obscene demands of Merkel and the EU rulers. Although the ECB said a few days ago that it wanted to renegotiate with the Greek government - it also made it clear that it was not a matter of retracting its criminal actions against the Greek people, but only extending a short stay of execution.

The reason is simple. They fear that the situation in Greece could otherwise get worse, that even more people will place their hopes in Syriza and that the idea of a party and a government that rejects austerity could spread to other countries in Europe. Therefore, they want to appease.

They fear that the workers and young people across Europe will learn from the struggle of the Greek masses. Their fear is made worse by the knowledge that the crisis of capitalism may continue to worsen in the coming months. This is why the substance of their offer amounts to ?more of the same?.

As internationalists, we consider the struggle of the Greek working class to be our struggle, too. We are convinced that the crisis of capitalism, which is responsible for the impoverishment of the Greek people, cannot be solved country by country, but can only be overcome through an international resistance.

For us, this means a European revolution to overthrow the dictatorship of capital and imperialism. The situation in Greece is the key to the future course of the class struggle in Europe.

Therefore, we present our reflections on the situation in Greece for discussion with Greek workers and youth, members of left-wing organisations and none, with the aim of reaching a common understanding of how to build Europe-wide solidarity and resistance.

An Action Programme for Greece

Since the June election, the class struggle in Greece has entered a new phase.

The European and American imperialists and the Greek ruling class succeeded, by means of blackmail, threats and an undemocratic electoral system, in imposing yet another austerity government. Yet, because the anti-austerity forces centred on Syriza came so near to upsetting all their calculations, the Troika of the European Union, International Monetary Fund, European Central Bank and the imperialist governments of Europe are mounting a charade of renegotiating the memorandum.

Samaras and Venizelos are now pretending to be "tough" and "resolute" about this. What a joke! These politicians, these parties signed the very memorandum with the EU they are setting out to renegotiate. They have implemented draconian austerity measures, repealed the tariff laws and overseen the unemployment of more than half of all Greeks. Drastic cuts in the minimum wage, pensions, the closure of factories and workplaces, have deprived the Greek workers

and youth of any future prospects. They must answer for this policy of attacking the poor to pay the rich.

Now, thanks to the scare that Syriza's advance gave the EU leaders, they have an opportunity to haggle over the details. At the same time, they want to hide their past collaboration with the Troika and disguise the fact that it was they who agreed that the working class and the petty bourgeoisie must pay the whole cost of the crisis, while the banks, the big companies and big business will be bailed out.

At the same time, they want to demobilise the masses - the workers, clerks and young people who have repeatedly taken to the streets in their millions. They want to put a stop to the intensifying resistance that has developed through mass demonstrations, 24 and 48 hour general strikes, the occupations and workers' management of companies threatened with closure and the spread of local assemblies.

In short, the government wants to gain time. It wants the majority that voted against the dictates of the EU and the IMF in the May and June elections - mainly the left which has turned to Syriza - to keep quiet, hoping that they can be fooled by talk of "renegotiation" and "growth policies".

It hopes to persuade its "partners" in the EU to make some concessions in order to weaken the movement, to prevent the unification and politicisation of the resistance. Its plan is to demoralise the less conscious and militant sections of the class and then defeat the most conscious in one or two decisive battles.

The crisis is a crisis of capitalism

Whether the government can succeed in its plans is put in question by the further deepening of the crisis. It was not simply mismanagement and corruption that wrecked Greece's economy and disrupted society, but the historic crisis of capitalism itself, which erupted in 2008 and still plagues the entire system.

The reason for this lies in the fact that for all its apparent dynamism (new technology, globalising production, etc) capitalism is a declining system. Capitalists increasingly discover that the rates of profit they can make investing in production decline even whilst the mass of those profits are still expanding. This is because profit - the unpaid value produced by the workers - shrinks in proportion to the huge costs of investment in the new technology. The owners of capital start to desert production for speculation in real estate, finance, commodities, and government bonds where higher rates of profit can be won - until, that is, the crash comes.

Within the framework of capitalism, there is ultimately only one solution for this and even this is a temporary one. The destruction of "surplus", weaker capitals - the closure of businesses - and the mass dismissal of employees and their increased exploitation and impoverishment.

Added to this is a struggle between capitalists and their states for the redivision of the world - for markets, for labour, for raw materials. That is why countries like Germany are trying to shift the costs of the crisis not only to their own workers, but also onto weaker states in the EU. At the same time, we see everywhere a massive assault on wage earners, the young, the mass of the population who are being forced to pay the bill for the crisis of capitalism

All this is showing once again that under capitalism, production is not organised to meet the needs of the population, but to increase the profits of the capitalist class. There is only one solution for the working class - a socialist revolution.

Two Possibilities

The current crisis can ultimately only be solved in one of two ways. Either by the victory of the working class, the great mass of the population, or by the victory of capitalist reaction, the alliance between imperialism and Greek capitalists.

The Samaras government is trying to carry through the latter by means of a "democratic" mandate. But, behind him, stands a state machine, which has already used brutality against demonstrators, young people and struggling workers. Waiting in the wings of the "democratic state" are those who can go where "democratic means" for the suppression of

the movement are not enough; here stand the growing fascist and racist combat squads who already hunt down and attack migrants, the homeless, radical young people and the left.

For these reasons there is no time to lose. The working class is now the class of hope; the political left is a pole of hope for the masses. The massive growth of the left vote, especially for Syriza, proves this - despite the electoral victory of the ND. But, without resolute action to reverse the attacks of recent years, lift the threat of redundancies and reject the dictates of the EU and IMF, this militant feeling will be squandered.

The last period ? between the May and June elections - obviously raised the question not only of which party governs, but in the interests of which class will they govern? Although Samaras won, the defensive struggles against his government will inevitably raise the question of power once again.

Tsipras' post-election courtesies to Samaras and the wait-and-see attitude to the government's policies is an ominous indicator of what Tsipras and the Synaspismos majority faction intend. To wait for a new election and the 'failure' of New Democracy would be a disaster. With its huge reserve of support, Syriza can and should now transform itself into a fighting party of the class struggle. And it can do this if the left is both unsectarian in its drive for militant united action and unsparing in its criticism of reformist backsliding.

At the heart of the party's programme must be the recognition that only a workers' government, controlled and supported by organs of struggle, action committees, self-defence militias, arising from a political general strike and put into power by a mass uprising of the working people, will be able to implement a programme that delivers genuine improvement in the situation of the masses and breaks decisively the entrenched power of the capitalist class.

A Revolutionary Party

For years, Greece has been going through a revolutionary development that has led repeatedly to the outbreak of pre-revolutionary situations. The reason why these situations have not resulted in an acute revolutionary situation, and thus no genuine proletarian revolution, is specifically the failure of political leadership of the Greek working class - the lack of a genuinely revolutionary party.

The creation of such a political force is the key task for all class-conscious workers, youth and activists of the radical anti-capitalist left in the next period. In recent years, they have fought repeatedly against the attacks of imperialism and the government. But what has been missing has been an organised revolutionary workers' party and an action programme, a programme of transitional demands, outlining the key points on the road to a seizure of power.

The struggle for this party will not take place in a vacuum. More than 1.5 million people voted for Syriza in recent elections. Thousands, if not tens of thousands, have swelled its ranks. At the same time, KKE and PAME lost hundreds of thousands of voters due to their mixture of opportunism and sectarianism. The radical and openly anti-capitalist left in recent years has contributed greatly to the fight - but they did not understand or attract the masses. Overcoming this situation means revolutionaries now need to be where the bulk of the Greek working class today places its hopes - in Syriza, campaigning for it to become a democratic, class-conscious party. Concretely, this means launching an organised campaign to free Syriza from the influence of reformism and fighting for it to adopt a revolutionary programme and structure.

This battle is inseparable from the struggle against the bureaucracy in the trade unions. The apparatus of GSEE and ADEDY continue, via PASOK, to search for "cooperation with the government". The policy must be to build an inter-union opposition, which fights to transform the unions from sectional economic defence organs into organs of class wide struggle.

Fight for a united front

Criticism of the existing parties and organisations ? however correct and necessary it is ? will never be enough, on its own, to convince and win over either the masses, or even the vanguard, of the Greek working class. They want, and

need, a party that can unite and lead the workers and all the exploited and oppressed.

Therefore, revolutionaries must be the most consistent fighters for the creation of a united front of all labour organisations, including not only the revolutionary, anti-capitalist, socialist, anarchist but also the trade union and reformist ones. Such a united front does not mean forgetting political differences, but it does mean emphasising the priority of unity in action in the fight against the government and employers.

Only in this way will we be able to overcome the movement's current weaknesses and the obstruction of the existing leaders.

Mass meetings and action committees

Such a united front must be proposed at all levels. In some cities or regions, joint action will need to be organised for specific struggles ? for example in defence of occupied farms, the fight against closures or it could take the form of self-defence groups against fascist or racist attacks.

We call on all workers' organisations to mobilise their members and supporters to build active participation in such united fronts. We address this request to both the members and the leadership of these organisations. But the united front must not be merely an agreement between the party or trade union leaders.

Its goals, its methods of struggle must be openly and widely discussed and democratically decided upon throughout the entire movement. This will allow the most effective control over leaders and also guarantee the active involvement of everyone - including the previously unorganised workers and the unemployed and those who are not yet members of a union or left-wing party.

Therefore, we suggest that in all workplaces, in all districts, in cities, towns and rural communities regular mass meetings (general assemblies, departmental meetings, local district meetings, etc.) are held.

In this way, the divisions between the different unions, the split between organised and unorganised workers can be overcome in action. At the local level, not only can the unemployed, young people and senior citizens, women, immigrants and undocumented workers be drawn in, but also the small shopkeepers and farmers, the petty traders, and the salaried lower middle classes.

The workplace and district assemblies should elect action committees or action councils, responsible to the mass meetings, whose members can be immediately recalled and replaced if they prove incompetent or do not act according to the wishes of those who elected them. This will ensure their two most important qualities ? decisiveness and democracy.

Although these committees may initially be formed around practical and local issues, it will not prove possible to resolve many of these issues at a local level. Demands, proposals, solutions, will have to be focussed and resolved at the local, regional and national level. The assemblies and delegate councils can and must become centres of struggle, a countervailing force to the existing repressive and bureaucratic apparatus of the state and capitalist big business. The elements of self-organisation, which are already coming into existence, must develop further into councils, into organs of dual power.

A nationwide network of delegate councils

We advocate not simply the creation of such bodies in all districts. They should also be brought together as rapidly as possible into a national convention of delegates, who can speak for the entire movement, and decide on its battle strategy.

Such a conference would have to agree on the key tasks facing the Greek revolution:

Declaration and organisation of an all out, indefinite political general strike against the continuous attacks of the

government, against the Memoranda imposed by the Troika.

Fighting for an emergency programme to end the suffering of the masses and halt further impoverishment.

Fight to overthrow the government and for a workers' government based on councils and defence militias that can implement such an emergency programme.

Emergency measures of the working class

The emergency programme, which aims to mobilise the working class around measures which break down the capitalists' stranglehold over economic and political life, would have to include the following measures:

1. Tear up the Memorandum; stop all debt repayments to EU, ECB, IMF! Against secret diplomacy, publication of all contracts, agreements and 'understandings' between Greek governments, banks, international institutions, the EU and European governments!
2. Repeal all anti-union laws passed by governments in recent years: the reintroduction of full collective bargaining rights for all workers! Reversal of all cuts in wages, unemployment benefits and pensions. Minimum wage, minimum pensions and unemployment benefits from €1000 per month! Automatic adjustment of income to the inflation rate ? a sliding scale of wages, controlled by the workers' organisations.
3. No to all redundancies in the public sector and private enterprise! Expropriation without compensation of all companies who do not pay wages and / or sack workers. Continue production under workers' control! Legalisation of all workplace occupations!
4. No to exorbitant rents and homelessness. Control of rents by district committees of the tenants, expropriation of housing and real estate speculators! Distribution of vacant residential space in the mansions of the rich by tenants' committees.
5. No to racism and fascism ? for a united front against the attacks on immigrants!

Every day migrants are exposed to attacks by fascist and racist gangs. The police do not stop this; in many cases they collude in it. They harass the youth and the unemployed. We can only fight back by creating self-defence units to protect our communities and streets. Syriza, KKE, the unions must contribute actively to create anti-fascist and anti-racist militias uniting Greek workers and migrants.

Such organisations would have to take on the tasks of defending strikes and occupations and defending homeless people, Roma and other victimised sections of the working class.

But it is not only the extreme right who blame migrants for their problems. Even the middle class wants to make them responsible for the crisis, wants to deport them and deny them any support. It is necessary not only to defend migrants against the attacks of the extreme but to fight racism and discrimination in all its forms, We fight against all immigration controls, we stand for open borders, we are fighting for equal employment and education rights of all who live in Greece and for the full integration of migrants within the Greek labour movement.

6. Women and youth must organise against their oppression

In addition to the migrants and others, women and young people have been particularly hard hit by the crisis, by unemployment and by decreasing incomes. The fight against unemployment, against the closure or deterioration of childcare facilities, schools, and services must be a class-wide struggle.

But women and youth also have an enormous revolutionary potential. Often they are at the forefront of the fight. But equally often they are under-represented in the organisations and leaderships of the movement, which remain old and mostly male. Therefore, building a proletarian women's movement and a revolutionary youth movement is vital to fully integrate these parts of the movement and ensure their rightful role at the centre of its leadership.

7. No to taxing the poor - the rich must pay!

While millions are driven into poverty and misery, the billionaires, the rich and super rich escape unscathed by the crisis. We demand the abolition of all regressive taxes such as VAT which put the burden of tax onto the weakest backs. Assets, income and profits of the rich must be disclosed and taxed heavily by a progressive income and wealth tax!

8. Expropriation without compensation of the banks, insurance companies, and their concentration into a central bank under workers' control.

Such a central bank could be a powerful lever to secure the savings of ordinary people, to grant credits at low rates for wage earners, small farmers, fishermen, small business owners. This requires, however, not only control over private entrepreneurs but also the corrupt state and business bureaucracy. It can be implemented by the organised bank employees together with the representatives of other wage-earners in all sectors of society.

9. Nationalisation of the major companies, shipping companies, foreign investors

The expropriation of the banks and debt cancellation is a pre-condition, but is not sufficient to wrest control of the economy from the profiteers. This requires the expropriation of the big capitalists with the continuation and reorganisation of production under workers' control.

10. A Social Emergency Plan - under workers' control

The control of the banks and large-scale production is a prerequisite for the introduction of an emergency plan to meet the most pressing task - the fight against unemployment through investment in infrastructure, health, education and training.

On this basis, we can really tackle unemployment through a programme of socially useful work and the involvement of all in planning and executing it.

11. Expropriation of the capitalist media!

Under capitalism, freedom of speech is a sham ? this freedom (the freedom to address millions of people) in reality exists only for the rich and powerful. A tiny group of billionaires control the newspapers and other private media. In their hands, the media are a powerful weapon of manipulation, disinformation and racist incitement. The state media ? as long as they are in government hands, or controlled by ?responsible? bourgeois opinion-makers, are little better. Ordinary journalists have little or no control over what they broadcast.

But without media controlled by the movement, by rank and file journalists, by working class people, a real public information service is a fiction. The private media must be expropriated and, along with the state media, placed under workers' control. Occupations of papers show that many journalists, technicians and other media employees are ready for this and will help workers and youth to express themselves to millions.

All workers' parties, all action committees, all the currents of the movement must have open access to these media. Syriza should set up a daily newspaper (with website and other electronic and social media), which will serve as a means of information, politicisation and mobilisation, presenting all the views and opinions of the party rank and file and all its currents, giving a voice to the masses of non-party workers and youth. This will root the party deeply and permanently amongst millions of people, making it truly a mass party.

12. For workers' power! Break the power of the ruling class!

A Workers' Government

The fight for these demands ? all of them vitally necessary - is inextricably linked to the question of power.

In June, a large minority of the masses instinctively understood that they needed a government that would stand up to the Troika and reject the austerity. That was why they turned to Syriza. Resistance which stops short at protest, or which tries to build alternative institutions of daily life whilst leaving the bosses and the politicians (and behind them their police chiefs and generals) in power, is doomed to frustration and failure.

We ourselves - the workers and the youth - the women and the small farmers, the migrants, and oppressed, we alone have the power to run a new society in the interests of the millions ? not the millionaires.

But only a government that is based on wage earners, the working class and the middle classes will be able to carry through such a programme and break the resistance of the tiny layer of exploiters and their servants. For this purpose, we must wrest power from the ruling class and its police and military forces.

The existing election rules, which give 50 extra seats to New Democracy, make a mockery of democracy. Yet, even the most democratic bourgeois constitution, even the most liberal capitalist state, would ultimately still be an institution that serves the ruling class, the employers. Why? Because they monopolise control of its economy and its accumulated riches; not just in Greece but across the international markets, which have repeatedly brought governments to heel and, in the blink of an eye, forced them to reverse the policies they promised to their electors.

The bureaucratic, corrupt state apparatus with its many tentacles, grasping and strangling society, is closely connected with the capitalist class. If Syriza had won a majority in June, if there had been a "leftist government", this monstrous apparatus would have set out to frustrate and sabotage any serious reform effort - not to mention any direct anti-capitalist intervention in the economy.

They would have set out to politically kidnap Alexis Tsipras and his ministers as they did with Papandreou and Pasok, blackmailing them into betraying their voters and playing into the hands of reaction. Tsipras' decision to respect Samaras' mandate, to give him a breathing space to negotiate, to let him enjoy a honeymoon period, indicates the reformists' readiness to compromise, rather than risk a revolutionary confrontation. But the ruling class will not extend him or Syriza such gentlemanly courtesies. The police the army and the bureaucracy all exist precisely for this purpose.

The police are for the existing, corrupt and bourgeois system. They always tolerate the baiting and direct attacks on immigrants and left-wing activists. A large part of the apparatus sympathises with the extreme right - with the Golden Dawn fascists.

The Greek army is integrated into the reactionary NATO alliance and relies on imperialist support to enforce a brutal border regime against refugees and migrants - it is also prepared in an "emergency" to defend capitalism with authoritarian and dictatorial measures, as so often happened in Greek history.

The upper layers of the Greek state are staffed by loyal servants of the system who systematically frustrate real democracy, block the initiative of the masses, carry out their own massive frauds and foster petty corruption further down the chain.

If the leaders of Syriza had faced this machinery alone - just as Labour and Socialist governments of the reformist left in Europe do ? they would have been lost. That is why revolutionaries should fight for a radically different kind of government. That is why if Syriza had won the elections, revolutionaries should have fought for it to become a government based on the organs of resistance and struggle of the working class ? a workers' government. It is why, now, we have to carry on the fight to win power and install such a government ? not waiting for, or subordinating ourselves to, the heavily rigged and corrupted electoral process ? but taking the road of mass uprising by the working people - the road to revolution.

Clearly a workers' government cannot rely on the former rulers' repressive instruments to rule. The bodies of armed men must be disbanded, dispersed and replaced by the working class. We, therefore, fight for the dissolution of all special forces and police. We fight for the formation of soldiers' committees who refuse the orders of their reactionary officers and place themselves and their weapons on the side of the workers and youth.

We now need action committees and self-defence militias, which, in the course of a general strike, must become the organs that can defeat and disarm the fascists, replace the institutions of the capitalist state, and democratically defend the new proletarian power.

They are the organisations that would be capable of creating a workers' government in the next stage of the Greek revolution. We call on the working class parties and trade unions to take the road towards such a government.

To play a real revolutionary role, such a government, would start by:

Rejecting the dictates of the EU, the IMF, the ECB and stop paying the debt.

Expropriate the large capitalists and banks in order to introduce an emergency plan under workers' control.

Disarm the counter-revolution.

Base itself on the democratic institutions of the working class, to action committees and councils as well as the armed workers' militia.

Greece and the European Revolution

The fate of the Greek revolution is inseparably linked with the future of the European working class. A defeat of the Greek masses would have extremely negative, demoralising effects on the entire continent.

Conversely, a victory in Greece could be a beacon ? lighting the fires of a European revolution.

Therefore, the immediate course of the Greek working class, as well as the strategy of a future workers' government, must be to take the fight into Europe as a whole.

This means today that we need a European-wide, coordinated fight against the policies of the Troika, for the renunciation of public debt, for the massive taxation of the rich and the expropriation of big corporations and banks and their unification into a European Central Bank under workers' control.

The idea of an "independent" capitalist Greece restoring the drachma during the biggest capitalist crisis in decades is a reactionary, nationalist myth. The Greek workers and poor farmers would have to pay for it with hyperinflation and the destruction of what is left of their savings.

The world economy has long had an international character; no country can regress to national isolation without massive contraction of the productive forces, such as happened in the 1930s. The aim of the working class must therefore be to link the struggle for power in Greece with the struggle for power in Europe.

Of course, a workers' government in Greece would immediately suffer a massive attack by imperialism, the European Commission, the ECB and the governments. They would threaten it not only with expulsion from the EU, but also with a virtual blockade of the country.

This is a battle not only for the Greek movement, but for the working class throughout Europe and even worldwide. Indeed, a workers' government in Greece could never stand alone without compromising its class independence. The workers of Europe would have to advocate - as in the struggle against the isolation of the Soviet Union after the Russian Revolution - that economic relations with Greece be maintained and even expanded.

This would simultaneously be part of a struggle against "their own" governments for the creation of workers' governments in all the European countries. The conditions in Portugal, Spain and Italy are certainly most favourable at the moment, but the struggle to overthrow the governments of the dominant states ? Germany, France and Britain, is crucial to free smaller European countries from their subordination to the interests of imperialism.

The struggle in Greece is only the sharpest expression of a historic crisis of the entire European continent. To exit this crisis, three possibilities present themselves.

First, the collapse of the EU and its replacement with nation states or smaller blocks in permanent crisis and violent competition with each other.

Second, the further deepening of imperialist domination of the EU under German and, to a lesser degree, French, finance capital. Such a pressurised "agreement" based on extortion and robbery would of course guarantee future conflicts and even wars.

These two reactionary variants are plainly against the interests of all working people of Europe and indeed of the world.

But there is also a third, progressive, variant: the reorganisation of Europe by the working class. The struggle for workers' governments across the continent and for the formation of a United Socialist States of Europe.

This is the future. Here is the hope not only for the Greek and European working class, but also a powerful boost for the world socialist revolution, the struggle to overthrow the capitalist system, which has to nothing to offer humanity but misery, poverty, environmental destruction and imperialist war.

Just as the Greek revolution needs a revolutionary party to lead the working class - the international revolution needs a new worldwide political party, a Fifth International.

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