

# Merry Christmas!

*“No one has the right to use this tragic incident as an alibi for brutalities”.*

Statement by prime minister K. Karamanlis, one of these days

*“There is no question of ‘violence’; there is just a side being attacked during a war already in progress and thus the question of the means sufficient for victory”.*

Sorbonne Occupation Committee in Exile, Paris, June 2006

*“VIOLENCE means working for 40 years, getting miserable wages and wondering if you ever get retired...”*

*VIOLENCE means state bonds, robbed pension funds and the stock-market fraud...*

*VIOLENCE means being forced to get housing loans which finally you pay back as if they were gold...*

*VIOLENCE means the management’s right to fire you any time they want...*

*VIOLENCE means unemployment, temporary employment, 400 Euros wage with or without social security...*

*VIOLENCE means work ‘accidents’, as bosses diminish their workers’ safety costs...*

*VIOLENCE means being driven sick because of hard work ...*

*VIOLENCE means consuming psycho-drugs and vitamins in order to cope with exhausting working hours...*

*VIOLENCE means working for money to buy medicines in order to fix your labour power commodity...*

*VIOLENCE means dying on ready-made beds in horrible hospitals, when you can’t afford bribing.”*

Proletarians from occupied GSEE, Athens, December 2008

## 1.

This December, the wind of insurrection blew once again over cities. The joyful and festive atmosphere was set on fire together with the Christmas tree on Syntagma sq. The

assassination of the 15-year-old student Alexis Grigoropoulos by special police guard ignited the spark. Thousands of enraged proletarians got to the streets and set the cities of commodity on fire. The social explosion we still live cannot be explained only by means of rage against one more state assassination or against police. It's much more. It's the explosion of accumulated rage deriving from their constant attempt for years now to depreciate our lives, something which seems to be accelerated by a capitalism in crisis. At last, we had the opportunity to decisively and practically declare "That's enough! Now it's our turn!". Despite our smaller or greater sporadic reactions, we have all these years been tolerating more and more work for increasingly tinier wages, we have tolerated our indirect wage being attacked by the benefits-pensions system reform, student life being intensified, the recent universities' reform, more and more layoffs, growing precariousness, environment's devastation and brutality against immigrants. We have been tolerating the multiplication of human-waste -those who don't fit to their economy's development diagrams- and bosses' arrogance. And during all these years, we have been accumulating rage, while bosses hoped this social bomb wouldn't explode and the naive wouldn't believe it will explode. But history proves that explosion is inevitable and it always compels everyone to take sides. The old mole is not dead yet...

## 2.

Since we got to the streets, a grand mass of non-politicized teenagers showed us what we had to do in order to proceed. However, this revolt isn't a student one. We met school kids, university students, young (mainly, but not only) workers, unemployed. Several of them (mainly in Athens) were immigrants who stood up against brutal exploitation, silently tolerated for two decades now. We heard about prisoners abstaining from food for 24 hours, manifesting their support to rebels in the cities. In the streets, dividing identities were practically negated. We merged in a crowd attacking police departments, banks and stores, fighting police, liberating public buildings (even provisionally) at the center of the cities and various suburbs, holding popular assemblies and demonstrations in the neighborhoods. This mixed crowd obtained homogeneity in the revolt against the everyday violence of commodity's dominance, in the violent manifestation of its desire for real life. This insurgency is spontaneous and uncontrollable, while at the same time it explicitly implicates the rejection of politics, since no concrete demands or political proposals were put forth. We made clear that we don't trust politicians of any kind, whose only goal is to maintain social peace; peace that veils the misery of our everyday life, our exploitation and alienation. Our rage is manifested in the wild simplicity of banners saying "Murderers!". This insurgency constitutes an authentic proletarian moment of negating the conditions which we are forced to live in...

### 3.

From the very first moment after the assassination on December 6, state and media mechanisms were activated to confront the explosion of the proletarian rage. Initially, they attempted to put possible reactions under control exploiting the spectacular submission of the resignations by Pavlopoulos and Chinofotis (the Minister and ex-Deputy Minister of the Interior, correspondingly), the Prime Minister's promise that anybody responsible for the death of the 15-year-old kid will be 'exemplarily punished', all oppositional parties' and many journalists' disapproval of the government and the 'discreet stance' of cops against demonstrators. However, very quickly, they unleashed every form of repression: threats of declaring the country in a state of emergency, mobilization of fascists and para-governmental organizations of 'indignant citizens', dozens of arrests and beating of demonstrators, more shootings by cops in Athens. All bosses' parties in a body (with the Communist Party being the most vulgar amongst them) and the TV scamps attempted to spread fear. Similarly, the two major union confederations, GSEE and ADEDY, cancelled the routine strike demonstrations against new year's state budget when they suspected the danger of those demos being transformed into riots. However, against union bureaucrats' jabber about government's failing to ensure social order and peace, demos did take place during the general strike day and were indeed wild. Thus, reality is different: bosses are those who are afraid. When the foreign minister of France stated from the very first days of the insurgency '*I would like to express our concern, everyone's concern about the progress of conflicts in Greece*', he would express bosses' fear for the possibility of this social explosion to be circulated, since solidarity demos to insurgents in Greece are taking place in many cities all over the world. Particularly in France, the Ministry of Education withdrew the impending reform in secondary schools, thus giving an end to an emerging movement of high school kids applauding the flames of insurgency in Greek cities and towns.

### 4.

On the news, we watch the police campaign of dividing demonstrators, either by presenting insurgency as an adventure of teenagers, whose inherent sensitivity due to their age gives them a right to rebel against their parents' world (as if proletarian parents wouldn't rightfully desire this world's destruction) or by mobilizing racist reflexes using the fake separation 'Greek demonstrators – immigrant looters', but mainly by attempting to divide demonstrators between good-peaceful ones and bad-rioters. The right of demonstrating is affirmed by bosses and their lackeys only to suppress the need to revolt. Because they want to avoid any further socialization of violent behaviours in the streets, they seek by all means to present them as actions of 'antiauthoritarians' or 'hooligans' who intrude into demonstrations of otherwise peace-loving civilians. Well, not only (and not mainly) anarchists loot, smash and attack police. Anarchists participate up to a point. The significant depreciation of youngsters and immigrants for years now explains the harsh and standing conflict against the state and the generalized looting. Smashing as a proletarian action declares the everyday existence of police departments, banks or chain

stores as moments of a silent war. It also manifests the rupture with the democratic management of social conflict, which tolerates demos against this or that matter, provided that they are deprived of any autonomous class action. Invoking the ultimate political rampart of capital's dominance, that is democracy, the prime minister declared that *'social struggles or the death of a teenager cannot be confused with actions against democracy'*. Democracy of course approves devastating cities and the countryside, polluting atmosphere and contaminating water, bombing, selling weapons, creating dumps of human beings, forcing us to stop being humans in order to become objects-that-work (or look for work, since more and more people are or will be unemployed because of the crisis). He thus implicates that some people can destroy anything they want as long as new chances for profit are created and development is promoted. However, doing this against private property constitutes the ultimate scandal for a society which has established this essential right from its early birth. Burning and smashing constitute wounds to this society's legitimacy. The 'hooded rioters' is an empty notion, intended for police use exclusively. Police monopolizes the shaping of the threat's profile.

## 5.

For the image-producing machine, the very opposite of the 'hooded rioter' (that is, the image constructed to separate proletarians) is the 'peaceful civilian whose property is destroyed'. Who is this celebrated 'peaceful civilian', enraged by smashing? In this occasion, 'peaceful civilians' are the small businessmen, the owners of 'small' stores, the petit bourgeoisie. The state has been fooling even them, since many of them are being destroyed by the capitalist crisis. During this December, turnover is half of that of December 2007, not only for stores at Ermou and Stournari streets (the first being the place with the more expensive stores in Athens and the second the main street in Exarchia district), but also for open-air markets; yet no such market was attacked during last days... Bosses claim that smashing stores has made many people lose their jobs, while at the same time one hundred thousand layoffs are to be announced soon in Greece because of the crisis. However, whatever smashes of 'small' stores were not carried out by hooded state servants are commented by workers in such stores in a leaflet written by the 'Autonomous Initiative of Shop-assistants of Larisa': *'We denounce whoever attempts to terrorize and convince us that defending some properties stands above human life and dignity; besides, these properties have been created by precarious workers' unpaid, black and surplus labour; no small properties have been damaged during symbolic attacks against banks and public buildings [indeed, this is true for Larissa and other provincial cities]. If they really care about shop-assistants, they should increase the miserable wages they give them, they should learn what social security is and they should create human working hours and conditions'*. Let bourgeois (petit or grand ones) worry about their stores. We don't stand at the same side in the class war; during periods of social polarization, as the one we live today, each one has to take sides.

## 6.

This is insurgency's third week. Although mass media attempt to conceal this by all means, demonstrations, occupations, popular assemblies still continue to take place, mainly in Athens but in other cities as well. Insurgents demand the immediate release of everyone arrested. The only effective way to support arrested people is by developing the struggle, part of which they are as well. It's true that this very moment it's difficult for anyone to estimate whether and how this social unrest will continue. Regardless of what will happen, nothing will be the same not only for us who have been in the streets but for the whole working class as well. Lots of discussions and critical accounts have to be made regarding what happened during this December. But such a project concerns insurgents or whoever has interest in this world's destruction and not the news or politicians. To conclude: this year, Christmas is canceled; there's a revolt goin' on!

**Nothing is over yet, the struggle continues!**

**Immediate release of everybody arrested during the social revolt!**

*Some of those who have been in the streets of insurrected cities*

December the 23rd 2008