

Statement from some groups in Athens

10 May 2010

Some background notes:

1. On the 5th of May three people lost their lives in a fire at Marfin bank in the centre of Athens, during one of the greatest demonstrations the capital of Greece had ever seen.
2. 200.000 people participated. For the first time, even the Communist Party, usually patriotic, sectarian and lawful, joined tens of thousands of demonstrators in their attempt to enter the functioning parliament. Their general secretary was even forced to declare later that the CP block had been a victim of provocation by fascists, who waved red flags and were recorded calling for the burning down of the parliament.
3. The mass media workers were all on strike. Nothing was being reported about the mobilization in the morning. As soon as the three deaths at Marfin banks were announced, the strike was lifted.
4. The bank manager of Marfin on Stadiou street had threatened workers they would lose their job if they took part in the general strike and didn't show up at the bank which, it turns out, had no fire exits or other provisions for the security of staff in case of fire.
5. Vgenopoulos is a successful grand capitalist backed by Arab and other capital, buyer of Olympic Airlines, and CEO of the Marfin Investment Group, often celebrated by the media and the polls as the ³solution to Greek economic problems².

On the events of the 5th of May

In December 2008 during the riots that followed the murder of Alexandros Grigoropoulos, the anarchist-antiauthoritarian milieu responded to the media's fascist appeals for return to law and order with the slogan: ³You're talking shopwindows, we're talking lives².

Some dangerous tolerance of hypocrisy is now allowing certain people to talk about the lack of fire-security measures in the bank, some Orwellian reversion of reality is allowing them to refer to the tragic death of the three workers as if it were a mere domestic accident.

Don't we understand that this is exactly the NATO-speak of ³collateral damage"? Don't we understand that the protests against the expected cynicism of a businessman who forced the workers to stay in the bank, will not wash anybody's hands of the blood?

Don't we understand that by using the tactics of the Beast, you become very much like it?

In a demo on the 6th of May 2010 at the centre of Thessaloniki, called by the Union of State Hospital Doctors and first degree unions, one of the many demos protesting the unprecedented attack against collective contracts and workers¹ rights, wages, welfare and pensions to satisfy the IMF- and EU- economy of bankers, many antiauthoritarians from the last contingent of the demo repeatedly shouted: ³it was murder, we have no illusions the State and Vgenopoulos murdered the workers.² For some people, an easy conclusion is indeed comforting: ³The State and Vgenopoulos are killing workers². Yet do they realize what this actually means and what they consequences are of this wishful thinking?

We do not know what exactly happened at Marfin in the afternoon of the 5th of May. What we do know for sure is that when we heard the tragic news, nobody in our circles was in any position to refute, with absolute certainty, the verdict of the media. And that was tragic too. For if we cannot render completely unthinkable (first of all to our own selves) that what happened might have anything to do with people in our milieu, then we have already prepared the grounds for tragedies like this (be it through fatal irresponsibility, twisted malice, or perilous tactics).

In a general uprising there can be deaths under uncontrollable circumstances it happened in LA, it happened in Argentina. It never occurred to anyone to blame the deaths on an organized political movement of dissent. The mere fact that the 3 murdered people in Marfin bank are being associated with anarchism points to anarchists¹ great responsibility. Who can really ignore the tolerance of vanguardist practices, who can ignore the contempt of life? Sure, anarchists are experienced, they have burnt so many banks and noone's life was ever put in danger. Sure, Vgenopoulos forced the workers to stay in the bank, had no fire security. No matter what we say, the responsibility cannot be shifted. If even a miniscule number of people who define themselves as anarchists are irresponsible enough to burn a building with people inside, we must ask ourselves how this irresponsibility has been licensed and cultivated. If, and that is even worse, we have laid the grounds for the grandest act of postwar provocation in Greece, then the longterm consequences surpass even the tragedy of the 3 murders.

The answer is not the soothing declaration that ³the enemy is ruthless². We are aware of what happened in Piazza Fontana in Milan, and at the Scala in Barcelona.

The answer is the nascent opposition, spreading its roots in all social groups throughout the country, doing hard and stubborn work, with mutuality, solidarity and a spirit of community and comradeship. The answer is the collective struggle for life, not death.

Signed by:

Panopticon publishers/journal
Editions des Etrangers
Stasei Ekpiptones Editions
Black Pepper of Euboa
Nyktegersia Journal
Exarcheia Editions