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OPEN NATIONWIDE MEETING

Faced with the need for the class reorganisation of the labour movement

Every worker is part of the answer

February 14th & 15th, 2026

Introductory texts

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THE NEW LANDSCAPE CREATED BY THE ATTACK ON LABOR RIGHTS

The dismantling of labour relations and the laws that promoted it

In 2026, the working class and workers in Greece as a whole work and live in the bleak landscape created by decades of coordinated attack on workers' rights. This attack was methodically promoted through a series of laws that made anti-labor policies the norm and shaped what the system calls "normality": a new barbarism that is turning not only the world of work but society as a whole far back in time. The current situation has more and more in common with the beginning of the last century, as the system is targeting all those labor achievements that had forced it to impose restrictions on the exploitation of labor during the decades of the construction of socialism and the global development of the labor movement.

For our country, the period that began with the first memoranda in 2010 marked a harsh acceleration of the attack on every right of workers and the people. What were presented as "temporary sacrifices" proved to be structural elements of the attack. These were foundations that not only were not challenged by any subsequent government, but were used as a reference point for deepening the attack. Everything that defines the terms of exploitation remained in the line of fire, both directly, in the workplace, and more broadly, in the field of social rights.

A key part of the anti-worker attack is the attempt to undermine, suppress, and ban the working class and employees from organizing their resistance. To fight collectively to defend their rights and against the policies that seek to destroy them. The current situation, despite the negative correlation, embodies the history of the labor movement, its victories and defeats. The system cannot erase it. Knowing from experience the power that the working class can acquire if it unites, its ability to limit and even overturn the system of exploitation itself, it attempts to take its "historical revenge" with the working class in disarray. That is why it does everything it can to maintain this disorganization.

The system's policy has two fundamental objectives, which are interlinked and complementary:

- The complete subordination of workers' lives to the needs of capital
- The undermining of workers' ability to organize and take collective action

Capital strives to achieve these two goals, not only "individually" in each workplace, but collectively, using the bourgeois state as its main tool, which exists—with all its mechanisms—precisely to serve the interests of capital as a whole. In our country, this concerns both local and, above all, foreign capital and imperialism, on whose dependence the local ruling class bases its power over the people. The series of anti-labor laws of

recent years systematically serves the basic objectives of capital, forming a whole anti-labor policy with continuity.

The "development" law of 2019

From the first months of the New Democracy party's return to government in the summer of 2019, its intentions to pursue anti-labor policies became apparent, taking advantage of the groundwork laid by the previous SYRIZA-ANEL government. The so-called "development" law (4635/2019), passed at the end of October 2019, had "everything." It established the electronic General Register of Unions (GEMISOE) for the electronic filing of workers' collective bodies and the consolidation of state intervention and control over them, building on the also electronic Central Register of Beneficial Owners imposed by the previous government in 2018. It established the possibility of electronic voting in elections and general meetings of unions, with a special obligation in the case of votes relating to strikes, building on the 50%+1 requirement set by the previous government for primary unions. It legislated the possibility of exempting companies from sectoral collective labor agreements if they face "serious economic problems," as well as the possibility of local collective labor agreements with worse terms taking precedence, characterizing entire regions as "Special Economic Zones." It effectively abolished the possibility of unilateral recourse to the Mediation and Arbitration Organisation (OMED). It made it possible for part-time workers to "top up" their working hours without changing their contract to full-time. It facilitated collective dismissals through the legal loophole of characterizing as a "unilateral detrimental change in working conditions" the delay in payment of wages accrued over two months "regardless of the reason for the delay." It labeled employees for whom the employer had not paid social security contributions for the previous three months as "jointly responsible," exempting the employer from the obligation to pay them and reducing fines for undeclared work. All of the above complemented a number of concessions for capital and its "development," while also reinforcing the direction of privatization.

Taxiki Poreia revealed the anti-labor characteristics of the bill, serving the cause of the mass struggle to overturn it, against the climate of resignation, defeatism, and disappointment that prevailed as a result of the collapse of illusions about SYRIZA's "left-wing government" and the rise of the New Democracy party. At the same time, it denounced the stance of the union leaderships, which, to one degree or another, called for submission to the anti-labor measures. Either by undermining the mobilizations against the bill or by imposing aspects of its political direction, such as the recognition of court-appointed administrations or circulars to primary and secondary union bodies on how to register in the Central Register of Beneficial Owners. Taxiki Poreia placed particular emphasis on defending free unionism, independent of the state and employers. In this context, for example, Taxiki Poreia submitted and succeeded in passing a resolution against electronic voting at the Panhellenic Energy Federation conference in September 2019. In the same context, Taxiki Poreia promoted the line of rejecting state control over the life of unions and registration in any register.

Legislative Acts during the pandemic

The continuation and deepening of anti-labor policies, already evident in the first weeks of the quarantine in the spring of 2020, was implemented through a series of emergency decrees. With these, the government legalized every employer's arbitrariness during this period, with the aim of shifting the entire burden of the coronavirus outbreak onto the backs of workers. While the people paid with their lives for the consequences of the system's management of the pandemic, businesses were subsidized and facilitated in every way, whether they chose to underperform or increase intensification, working hours, and overtime. Key and profound issues proved to be the ban on demonstrations (which became law in the summer of 2020), including many prosecutions of union leaders for labor mobilizations, as well as "special purpose compensation." With the latter, the government expanded the memorandum framework for setting the minimum wage by the state to the general definition of income that is "more than enough" for workers, as government officials stated at the time for €553/month. It established the authority to calculate the "resilience of the economy," to subject workers to these capacities, and to forcibly impose the living conditions of the large social majority, while at the same time repeating the ideology of "individual responsibility" at every opportunity.

Throughout this period, the forces of Taxiki Poreia across Greece fought politically and practically to defend the right of workers to live and to struggle collectively and en masse. They highlighted that the pandemic period was not a "dead period," but an opportunity for the system to promote anti-labor policies, establish practices, and prepare for a new round of attacks.

The "Hatzidakis Law"

From the fall of 2020, the government's rush to proceed with a sweeping reform of labor legislation as a "return to normality" has become apparent. It will ultimately take until June 2021 to pass Law 4808/2021, the "Hatzidakis Law," with a huge range of anti-labor and anti-union provisions and at its core the narrative of "individual negotiation. The goal is the ideological disarmament of workers, along with the criminalization of their collective organization and action. With the same goal in mind, it includes certain supposedly "protective" provisions in order to cultivate the illusion of a "neutral state" that "cares for both workers and employers," but also to provide an alibi for the union forces that wanted to limit the widespread condemnation of the bill among workers.

Among other things, Law 4808/2021 introduced "individual working time arrangements," which allowed for six-month periods of 10-hour days with the same salary, with the promise of reduced hours or time off in the following six-month period. This option was first offered to employers in 1990, but only if they had an agreement with a union. The removal of this condition paved the way for the legalization of all kinds of violations of the eight-hour working day and the dramatic expansion of flexible working hours. In the same direction, subordinating the life of the worker to the needs of the company and their permanent availability, the law increased the annual overtime limit to 150 hours (from 120 in general and 96 in industry), dramatically expanded the sectors where Sunday holidays do

not apply, defined a half-hour "break" as "outside working hours," and allowed part-time workers to work additional hours (without extra pay) on a "split" schedule. It institutionalized teleworking, facilitated the "loaning" of employees to other companies, gave employers the option of granting annual leave up to the first quarter of the following year, and legalized "unpaid leave." All of this was supposed to be done with the "consent of the employee" and with "protective provisions," such as those for parental leave (always subject to the "smooth operation of the business"), but also those for employees via an electronic platform, which e-food used two months later in an attempt to convert permanent employees into "self-employed partners." It institutionalized the "digital work card," presenting it as "one of the most pro-labor measures of recent years," while it proved (as expected) to be a tool for making working hours more flexible and "proof of consent" by employees to unpaid overtime.

At the same time, the "Hatzidakis law" put into practice the provisions of the "development" law regarding the strict control of unions. The registration and recording of even more data in the General Electronic Commercial Registry (GEMISOE) became mandatory for a union to be able to declare a strike, sign a collective labor agreement, protect its administrative members from dismissal, or take any action. The use of electronic voting became mandatory both in elections and in General Assemblies that decide on strikes. The decision to strike now requires that the union "protect" strike-breaking in "public utility" companies (regardless of whether they are state-owned or private), will designate "minimum guaranteed service personnel" as those required for the operation of the company at 1/3, in the public sector, a request for dialogue with the OMED (and once this has begun, strikes are prohibited) must be made in advance, while it is also prohibited to cover strikes that are deemed illegal by a secondary or tertiary body. In general, any action by any union requires the approval of the state and employers, which is reinforced by a whole framework of punishment for any workers under the pretext of "combating violence and harassment." Moreover, the law has reduced the number of elected members protected from dismissal, abolished protection from relocation, and increased the grounds on which employers can invoke to bypass any protection.

From the outset, Taxiki Poreia highlighted the government's intentions and the scale of the attack it was planning. It contributed significantly to highlighting the need for a mass struggle to prevent the bill from passing, decisively reinforcing joint action in this direction, even though it was clear that, for the other union forces, their involvement was limited to a petty political effort to virtually "record correlations." This became even clearer after the bill was passed. As KKE/PAME declared its refusal to fight to overturn the passed law by stating that "it will remain on paper," the vast majority of union and political forces associated with the movement followed the same line of submission. Taxiki Poreia supported the gathering of the few forces that were willing to fight to overturn the law and spearheaded the formation of the "Initiative for the Abolition of Law 4808/2021" and its action for almost the entire year of 2022, despite the hostile attitude of those who decided not to participate. The whole movement was decisive in ensuring that the "Hatzidakis law" was widely recognised by workers as an anti-labour milestone, that its full

implementation was met with resistance, and that the goal of overturning it remained active.

The new Supplementary Insurance Fund

2021 was also the year in which the government legislated the "new model" of supplementary insurance for those who would be starting work for the first time after January 1, 2022. It established a new "Supplementary Capitalization Insurance Fund" with an emphasis on "capitalization," meaning a "guaranteed contribution insurance model" as opposed to "guaranteed benefits." In essence, it legislated for a state-controlled "individual piggy bank," with the state removing any commitment to the amount of supplementary pension it would owe the insured when they retired. Based on the reactions that the "Hatzidakis law" had already provoked, but also on the fact that the collective right of workers to social security had already been dealt a crushing blow by the "Katrougalos insurance law" in 2016 under the SYRIZA-ANEL government, the government chose to make the new blow "mild" and apply it to future (at that time) employees. And indeed, thanks to the union leaders, that blow to social security passed "unopposed."

However, this is a serious reinforcement of the policy of undermining the right to social security, which highlights the importance of the previous 2016 law on social security. This law managed to impose changes that had been "pending" since the first two memoranda and dramatically reduced the level of pensions, individualising them and linking them to contributions throughout the "working life" of each employee. In addition, it dramatically increased the conditions and age limits for retirement. The combination of the difficulty of retiring and low pensions clearly shows the consequences today, 10 years later: hundreds of thousands of pensioners continue to work in order to survive, while thousands are elderly immigrants, especially construction workers from Albania, who cannot complete the required number of years of service, as the "Katrougalos law" does not recognize years of employment in countries outside the EU.

The "Georgiadis Law"

Among its priorities after its re-election in the summer of 2023, the New Democracy government once again focused on labor issues. With Georgiadis as Minister of Labor, it also submitted an important bill, although not as broad in scope as the "Hatzidakis law." Taking advantage of EU Directive 2019/1152 "on transparent and predictable working conditions in the European Union," it legalized even more flexible and unpredictable employment relationships under the guise of "informing" employees about their working conditions. It introduced "on-demand contracts," although it was forced (in the first phase) to impose certain

restrictions in order to argue that these were not the infamous "zero-hour contracts" known in some European countries. It made it easier for companies to announce recruitment and, above all, to announce "voluntary resignation" when an employee is absent "without justification." It also added the reactionary measure of a "trial" period for fixed-term contract workers. It attempted to facilitate "individual working time arrangements" with digital tools for employers.

However, some of the issues raised by the bill were those that caused the most concern. The extension, even in cases of non-continuous operation, of the possibility for companies to impose a 6-day working week on employees with a 5-day contract if they have an "exceptional workload." The explicit provision for 13 hours of work for multiple employers, "clarifying" that the only limit was 11 hours of continuous rest, although it was never clarified how this would be ensured and which employer would be responsible if it was circumvented. The criminalization in a specific way of picketing a strike, as a minimum sentence of 6 months' imprisonment and a fine of €5,000 was set for anyone who "obstructs" (as defined by the police and prosecutors) strike-breaking.

The "restoration of the triennia"

At the same time as the Georgiadis law was passed, the prime minister announced the "restoration of triennial increases" to the minimum wage. At a time when the frustration of employees, as well as the general public, was being recorded and expressed whenever possible, the government was looking for narratives that could smooth things over. Part of this search was the reference to the three-year increments for the minimum wage, i.e., a 10% increase in the minimum wage for every three years of work for each employee, with a limit of 30%. A key political element in this "restoration," which the government did not want to be questioned under any circumstances, was the maintenance of the memorandum regime of setting the minimum wage by the state. This government had already announced some minor increases in the minimum wage, but now it wanted to confirm that it also had control over the three-year wage increases, which until 2012 had been the subject of the National General Collective Labor Agreement (EGSSE), agreed between GSEE and the major employers' associations.

What was announced, therefore, was the implementation of the memorandum measure to freeze three-year wage increases for as long as official unemployment remains above 10%. As the unemployment rate fell, the government made it clear that from January 1, 2024, the three-year wage increases would start counting again, but without counting the 12 years since 2012 when the measure was imposed, and without the measure itself being repealed. On the contrary, it was enshrined and made permanent.

The law on the minimum wage

The same establishment and permanent nature "forever" of the framework for determining the minimum wage by the state and the government of the time was served by the law on the minimum wage (5163/2024). Based on European Directive 2022/2041 "on adequate minimum wages in the

European Union," it extended until 2027 the memorandum procedure for setting the minimum wage essentially by the government, following supposed "scientific studies" and "social dialogue." The minimum wage is consistently adjusted to the "strength of the economy." This will remain the case after 2027, now combining a "Scientific Committee," a "Consultative Committee," an "adjustment factor," and "7 reasons for deviation" from it, so that on a permanent basis the minimum wage is practically in the hands of the government. And indeed with supposedly "scientific justification" that will "justify" condemning workers to permanent poverty, with consequences not only for those paid the minimum wage, but for all workers, as the minimum wage and its evolution have an overall impact.

Furthermore, with Law 5163/2024, the government stipulated that any nominal increase in the minimum wage would also be applied as an absolute amount to the salary scales of civil servants. In this way, public sector wages will be constantly squeezed, seniority will mean ever smaller wage increases, and the government will use the link as an excuse to keep wages low in both the private and public sectors.

The case of the minimum wage law confirmed that illusions about the role of the state and, even more so, about the role of the EU, have a significant impact on all union forces, even those linked to the labor movement. While the "Hatzidakis law" was met with statements and posters calling for the abolition of "anti-labor provisions" , repeating the government's fairy tale that other provisions were in the interests of workers, in the law on the minimum wage we even saw expectations of an improvement in the position of workers. For some forces, the "adjustment coefficient" constituted—at least approximately—a "justification" of their demand-proposal for Automatic Price Index Adjustment (ATA) of wages, and the only problem that remained was the "7 reasons for deviation." For others, any mechanism for increases in the public sector was "a step in the right direction." Even greater were the illusions regarding the European directive, both in terms of minimum wages and in terms of increasing the percentage of workers covered by collective agreements. In any case, the "higher-ups," the state and the EU, were presented with a desire for rational management of wages and labor income, even if only on the basis of "healthy competition" between companies.

Taxiki Poreia attempted to deconstruct this distorted interpretation of reality, seeking opportunities for joint intervention among workers and joint action against the law. The stance of the union leaders showed that not only did they not oppose the call to take seats at permanent "social dialogue" tables, where they could negotiate their own role, while workers would be called upon to work and live in increasingly worse conditions dictated by the needs of capital and imperialism. What prevailed was what the government wanted: the continuation and deepening of anti-labor policies with workers on the sidelines. Even worse, with the dominant union forces creating a climate that the "road is opening" for collective agreements and wage increases. This climate included the "draft law" of 637 unions under the control of PAME, which was submitted to the KKE MPs and which, according to their leaders, was "comprehensive" and aimed to abolish "the entire anti-labor framework" of the last 15 years. This was precisely when this framework was being strengthened without the obstacle of labor mobilizations.

The "Kerameos Law"

Subsequent events confirmed that anti-labor government policy, when unhindered, proceeds not with some plan for the "rational management" of workers' impoverishment, but with a clear plan for the class imposition of capital's interests. After preparing the ground by publicizing the basic elements of its next anti-labor law and gauging reactions (which were non-existent), it presented a bill at the end of August 2025 focusing on the possibility of 13 hours of exploitation of every worker every day, by every company. In addition, it "improved" the "individual arrangement of working time" by allowing it to be done on a weekly basis, it allowed employers to require overtime even from employees who are on a rotating work schedule, it gave employers the ability to break up each employee's regular leave as they saw fit, with the only restriction being that five days must be consecutive. With reference to the possibilities of the "digital work card," it allowed for "flexibility" of up to 2 hours in relation to the declared working hours and added one hour of unpaid work per day in industry under the pretext of "preparation time" for "taking over" and "leaving" work.

It made labor relations even more flexible by reducing the terms that employees need to know before starting work and allowing express contracts, with an eye to employers' needs for strike-breaking in the event of labor unrest. It "finished the job" that had been started with the "Georgiadis law," removing all restrictions on "on-demand contracts" and essentially making them "zero-hour" contracts. It halved the period of "unjustified absence" required for an employer to claim "voluntary resignation" by an employee and dismiss them without compensation.

Continuing the pattern of incorporating supposedly "protective provisions," the bill devoted an entire section to how it would equip employers with tools to shift their (in essence) sole responsibility for the health and safety of workers downwards and outwards: either to the victims of workplace crimes themselves, or to those who survive them, or to third-party companies and safety technicians who are "self-employed." In this section, the bill served the central objectives of anti-labor policy. It was dressed up as a narrative of "protecting" workers, promoted the logic of "individual responsibility," and reinforced the logic of "social partnership" and "understanding" between workers and capital, at a time when the latter is gaining the ability to exploit workers without limit and escape the consequences, even fatal ones, that this exploitation has on workers.

Taxiki Poreia highlighted early on all aspects of the new anti-labor bill that was being prepared and attempted once again to organize joint action against it. It insisted on revealing that the statement "this law will remain on paper" with which the forces of PAME initially appeared facilitated not only the passing of the bill, but also the government propaganda that spoke of the "possibility, not the obligation" of workers to "accept" the 13-hour day and other anti-labor measures (provided that any refusal is made "in good faith"). They criticised the undermining of any strikes by the GSEE trade union leadership, which a few months later was revealed to have been in months-long talks with the government and employers' associations ahead of their "national social agreement" to limit collective agreements to the measures demanded by employers. The negative

groundwork laid by the dominant forces allowed the government to add Law 5239/2025 to its anti-labor arsenal.

The goal of anti-labor policy: bringing workers under the control of capital

The series of anti-labor laws passed in recent years has affected all aspects of employees' working and living conditions. Wages, working hours, intensification of work, effective security, labor relations, hiring, and dismissals have all worsened as a result of specific policy interventions, legislative provisions, decisions, and circulars. A key component is the trend toward the "individualization" of working conditions, not only as a means of suppressing workers, but also with the aim of dividing them into countless "separate" categories, undermining their unity. The disintegration of the world of work, combined with the suppression of collective organization and action, is a specific and permanent goal of the system's anti-labor policy. Precisely because the only force that can resist and even overturn this policy is the power of the organized working class and workers. They are the only ones who can defend their rights, which are crushed when the government "decides" and the "national social partners" "agree," calling the interests of the system of dependence, exploitation, and oppression "economic resilience."

The criminalization of union activity

The system's attack on the rights and achievements of working people and the working class goes hand in hand with the suppression of struggles and the undermining of unionism. Regardless of the state of union bodies, with disintegration prevailing and leaderships sold out, they remain the primary and fundamental vehicle for expressing and asserting workers' struggles and demands. For this very reason, the existence of unionism, freedoms, and the potential for collective mobilization of workers is a constant and permanent threat to the imposition of the labor Middle Ages that the system seeks to achieve.

The latest anti-labor laws have specifically targeted unions and the ability of workers to resist. Of course, this was preceded by a whole period of undermining unionism and, at the same time, gradual attacks on a number of rights, which paved the way for the current situation. This concerns all administrators of the system without exception. We also remember the SYRIZA-ANEL government's law against strikes, which required a special quorum of 50%+1 for a general assembly to decide on a strike, with Achtsioglou as Minister of Labor.

The monitoring of unions

The creation of GEMISOE and the compulsory registration of all unions in the electronic registry constitutes the complete monitoring of unions and makes them fully exposed to the state and its mechanisms. The organizational structures of workers and the working class are, by definition, structures that are opposed to the bourgeois state and capital. Their financial independence and operational autonomy are basic

prerequisites for political independence, which is essential in the process of claiming rights against anti-labor policies.

The system with GEMISOE attempts to interfere with the operation of unions, control their procedures, and record their financial and organizational data. In the same vein, it imposes a series of electronic procedures that facilitate filing and are completely porous and arbitrary. An even more important issue, of course, is the sterilization they cultivate in the procedures of unions, which are now becoming impersonal, procedural, and apolitical.

A blow to strikes

With the latest anti-labor laws, we are talking about the effective abolition of the right to strike. To the already loaded arsenal of capital, they have added a series of criteria that "must" be met in order for a union to decide to strike, including timely notification of the employer. At the same time, any union that has not submitted its files to the General Electronic Registry of Legal Entities (GEMISO) does not have the right to declare a strike. Overall, they are creating an environment where any strike can, for one reason or another, be declared illegal.

But the most significant blow is to the strike itself and the picket line, which is also becoming illegal. Essentially, the laws prohibit the blockade of the workplace and the obstruction of strike breakers. Strike picketing is labeled psychological violence, and the police are given full authority to beat and suppress strikes, with expedited procedures and no legal obstacles.

New disciplinary measures in the public sector

The new disciplinary framework in the public sector attempts to impose a climate of terror on workers so that they do not raise their heads. It is no coincidence that at a time when teachers across Greece are fighting hard against evaluation, the system is attempting to crush workers' resistance and terrorise them. The tightening of penalties with fines and permanent dismissal, the accusations of "refusal to recognize the constitution" against workers who react or oppose laws and their implementation, clearly target union and political struggles.

Prosecutions

The persecution industry that has been set up recently ties all this policy together. Overall, unionism, the processes, the struggles, are being put on hold, but any voice that is raised, that breaks the silence and goes against the grain, is terrorized. We have thus witnessed the first suspension for union activity of a public school teacher since the restoration of democracy. At the same time, thousands of teachers are facing disciplinary action and persecution. This tactic of intimidation through targeting is not unprecedented, but it has intensified recently, as we saw in the recent agricultural protests, with even members of mainstream parties (New Democracy) being targeted. The law banning

demonstrations, with the requirement to designate an "organizer" and obtain a permit from the police, is based on the same principle.

Stand up for the right to struggle

It is clear that one of the system's main objectives, alongside labor rights, is to crush the right to struggle and unionize. This is a prerequisite and a safeguard for its attack on the working class. This is also the reason why, despite the unfavorable class relations and the disintegration of the working class and its organs of struggle, the system never misses an opportunity to smear and slander the concept of unionism.

The movement and its structures must face this reality head-on and not sugarcoat it or sweep it under the rug. The tactic followed by union leaders is one of bourgeois legality and submission. And if this is self-evident for the forces that serve the system anyway and add fuel to the fire of union slander, the same result is achieved by the forces that refer to the left and the movement but choose not to clash with the policy of criminalizing union action.

PAME's basic tactic is to sweep the issue under the carpet, arguing that the laws "will remain on paper" and, therefore, there is "no need" for people to get together and organize their response to the profiling of unions and their members, the prosecutions, and the criminalization of strikes and struggles. This rhetoric collapses in the face of the system's own attack, which—having the class correlation on its side—comes to enforce everything it has voted for. Then what "would remain on paper" is presented by PAME as a necessary evil: unions are registered with GEMISOE without even discussing it with their members, electronic procedures and elections are conducted in accordance with the requirements of the law, now being presented as an "opportunity" for greater participation and organization of workers, the same arguments used by the government when it imposed them.

PAME neither wants nor is able to defend independent and class-based unionism that would oppose the system and its policies. There are also a number of forces on the non-parliamentary left that, at best, criticize PAME's tactics but end up accepting their introduction into the unions, , thereby following, participating in, and legitimizing these practices.

The decisive development of mobilizations in defense of the right to union action is also hampered by the views put forward by the same forces in the face of prosecutions and suspensions of teachers, such as that "disciplinary proceedings are slow to be tried" or "we should not raise the issue so as not to scare people."

People are frightened by the very policies of the system that threaten them, deprive them of their rights, and prevent them from fighting back. Only a conscious and organized struggle against these policies can provide a way out.

For Taxiki Poreia, it is clear that the movement's independence from the system and its mechanisms must be non-negotiable and constitutes a political line that must be opened up to the unions and discussed. Even if we wanted to, class relations and attacks cannot be swept under the carpet. At a time when the system believes it has the opportunity to put unionism in a cast, issues must be raised openly within the procedures,

they must be a field of confrontation, and the line of non-submission and conflict with anti-labor policy must prevail. Only through mass struggle can terrorism and fascistization be broken; the potential for developing and massifying this struggle has been demonstrated in the persecution of teachers. Only through decisive struggle and conflict, against the law, can prohibitions be broken; strike struggles, such as that of Malamatina, have shown this.

Collective agreements and collective struggle

Collective labour agreements (CLAs) are a key achievement for the working class and employees. They are a field of open class conflict. Whether CLAs exist, what their content is, and who is covered by them depends directly on the balance of power between workers and capital and the outcome of their struggle. When the labor movement is in retreat, CLAs are weakened, stripped of workers' rights and achievements, or abolished in practice. However, when workers organize and fight collectively, they become a tool for defending, securing, and expanding their rights.

CLAs in the line of fire

Collective agreements were not granted by any government or employer as an act of "social responsibility." They were won through hard struggles, strikes, persecution, and conflicts between workers and capital and the state that serves it. They were forced retreats by capital in the face of the power of the organized struggle of the working class. That is why they have always been treated as a threat. Capital accepts them only when it cannot avoid them and constantly attempts to limit them, undermine them, or turn them into a mechanism for disciplining workers.

In our country, especially after 2012, collective agreements have been at the center of a total anti-worker attack. The memorandum legislative framework abolished the National General Collective Agreement as a tool for determining the minimum wage, imposed the primacy of company agreements, dissolved the universality and extensibility of sectoral agreements, and drastically restricted collective bargaining. These changes were not only aimed at reducing wage costs and intensifying the exploitation of workers, but also at dividing the working class and weakening its collective power. This strategy was not temporary, nor was it the result of "exceptional circumstances." The attack on collective bargaining agreements is a central choice of capital and the state, as it is an important lever for promoting the strategic goal of restructuring labor relations across the entire spectrum of workers and employees.

"Return of collective bargaining agreements" or refinement of anti-labor policy?

Recently, however, attempts have been made to cultivate an image of a supposed "return" to collective bargaining agreements and collective negotiations, in accordance with the European directive that sets a target of increasing the percentage of workers covered by a collective agreement

to 80%. The government, employers' associations, and the union leadership of GSEE, blessing the EU and wearing a "pro-labor" cloak, declare that they are working on a plan that will "strengthen the conclusion of collective labor agreements." After seven months of consultations, which were kept secret from the workers, they signed the so-called "social agreement" on collective agreements.

In reality, this is an agreement that aims to legitimize and institutionalize the existing anti-labor situation and bury labor rights. It does not restore collective agreements as a tool for demanding and improving working conditions, but attempts to turn them into "rules of operation" for businesses. The framework being shaped by the government, employers, and union leaders, in accordance with European directives and in line with all anti-labor laws, is to formulate collective agreements that will legitimize anti-labor measures, tailor them to the needs of each sector, and limit workers' demands. They cultivate the illusion that working conditions can be improved through consultations with the same employers who impose 13-hour working days, intensification, and employer crimes, without conflict with them, without strike pressure, without even the active participation of workers.

Even terms such as "social agreement," "social partners," "national interest," "workers' representatives" (GSEE) are intended to undermine the class consciousness of workers so that they accept an agreement imposed from above as their own. On the one hand, there is capital and its state, which shape the modern labor Middle Ages, and on the other, there are the sell-out labor leaders, who constantly undermine the struggles of workers solely to secure a position as official interlocutors with the system. The so-called "social agreement" serves as a tool to defuse anger and prevent struggles, attempting to replace collective struggle and demands with a virtual "social dialogue" without real content.

A central element of this agreement is the role of the state. Once again, the state proves that it does not function as a neutral regulator of class antagonisms, but is an active mechanism for enforcing anti-labor policies. After all, it already shapes labor relations through successive anti-labor laws, and with the law on the minimum wage, the state and the government of the time have taken on the role of determining it. This "competence" is confirmed (with the signature of GSEE despite its half-hearted statements about the abolition of the National General Collective Agreement) by the agreement, and indeed extends it to sectoral collective agreements. The final say on the extension and declaration of mandatory application to all companies in a sector will continue to lie with the Minister of Labor, provided that the unions and federations involved are placed under the strict control of the state, having been registered in the electronic register (GEMISOE). In this way, the state is even more involved in shaping the terms of each CLA, with the aim of ensuring that it remains within the limits of anti-labor policy.

Today's collective agreements reflect the disintegration

The majority of collective agreements currently in force are moving in this direction, primarily serving the needs of employers, who have an anti-union legal arsenal at their disposal. With unions under suffocating control, strikes criminalized, union activity freely punished with dismissals and

prosecutions, and workers disorganized and marginalized, the ground is mined for any meaningful "collective bargaining." Thus, a series of collective agreements (whether sectoral or company-specific) at best provide for nominal wage increases, but in exchange for "labor peace" on the part of the workers. These increases, of course, are usually lower than inflation or lower than the established level of wages and daily rates (a typical example is the collective agreement for construction workers). Others do not provide for any increases at all, while there are also cases of collective agreements that do not even mention wage levels, but legalize anything that serves the needs of employers (typical examples are the implementation of a 6-day working week in the sectoral collective agreement for tourism and hospitality and the two consecutive 12-hour shifts provided for in the DEMO pharmaceutical company's collective agreement, which does not even specify wages). Such collective agreements are not a victory or achievement for workers, even though they are presented as such by the forces that sign them.

In this whole situation, the role of the forces that dominate the union organizations has proven to be crucial. Both government-employer unionism and reformism function as mechanisms for integrating, defusing, and neutralizing workers' reactions. The basis of their formation is "labor peace" and compromise with employers, cultivating illusions of "common interests" with the bosses. They sow illusions about the "classless" nature of the state, which is why the permanent "way out" that is put forward is parliamentary procedures, legislative proposals, and waiting for the next elections. This line of delegation has led to demobilized unions, disillusioned workers, distanced from their organs of struggle and without any experience of collective achievements and struggles.

Although there are numerous unions, in reality the overwhelming majority of workers do not participate in them. Many of them are merely rubber-stamp unions, with no activity other than calling on their members to participate in elections every two to three years. They do not organize or participate in mobilizations, they have no involvement whatsoever in the workplace, they have not signed any collective bargaining agreements, they do not even issue announcements, they do not "exist" except for the election of the board of directors and representatives for the higher bodies.

Achieving collective bargaining agreements is a matter of collective struggle by workers.

That is why today the central task is to rebuild the labor movement in every sector. Through vibrant, mass unions, with real worker participation and collective processes, with real and mass assemblies. Without opportunistic logic and symbolic gestures, but with real decisions to fight and meaningful action, with strikes and demonstrations. Unions that will not be limited to managing problems and collecting complaints, but will channel the anger and concerns of workers into organized and collective struggle, with demands for victory and not compromise. Without illusions about the role of the state and its mechanisms. Without illusions about "saviors" and "experts" of the movement.

For us, it is clear: workers' rights are collective and are achieved collectively. Wages, working hours, rest periods, health and safety,

insurance, and unionism are not secured individually, but only through organized collective struggle. Individualisation is not freedom, as the dominant propaganda of the system bombards us with, but isolation and weakening of the collective struggle of workers. Capital does not grant rights unless it is forced to do so; otherwise, it constantly attempts to take back what has been won.

Therefore, the struggle for collective labour agreements cannot be separated from the overall struggle against exploitation, poverty and the devaluation of our lives. Collective agreements that are not empty promises, but cover the real cost of living, ensure humane working hours and rhythms, guarantee permanent and stable jobs, full rights and effective health and safety measures, and act as a barrier to employer arbitrariness, can only be achieved through the collective struggle of workers. Without pressure from below, without every step being a matter for the workers as a whole, any negotiation will end in a compromise at their expense. The path of collective struggle is not easy. However, it is the only one that can open up prospects for workers and their needs.

The situation of public sector employees

In recent years, conditions in public sector workplaces have deteriorated dramatically.

Salaries have remained frozen for over a decade, with two small one-off increases, €70 from January 1, 2024, and approximately €30 from April 1, 2025, due to the implementation of the minimum wage law. Otherwise, the SYRIZA government's "uniform" pay scale remains in force, which has cemented the wage poverty and cuts imposed by the memoranda. It is significant that new hires are paid a salary that, even in the PE and TE categories, does not exceed €700 net.

As regards the claim for the 13th and 14th salaries, the government remains adamant and the matter has been referred to the courts, pending the decision of the Council of State on the famous "model" trial.

Along the same lines is the claim for hazardous and unhealthy work allowance, for which a special committee has been examining the relevant requests for seven years now, and has been ruling sparingly and "in bits and pieces." And while this applies to the majority, the "uniform" pay scale does not prevent the government from giving allowances and increases to uniformed personnel and promoting the famous bonuses for a few willing individuals, always in coercive connection with the evaluation-targeting system and in exchange for the enforcement of government policy and evaluation.

The staff is aging and exhausted.

The minimal recruitment of permanent staff, which falls short of requirements, and the anti-insurance laws of all governments have resulted in 67.74% of civil servants being between the ages of 41 and 60. And, of course, we do not underestimate the debate that occasionally arises about a possible further increase in the retirement age. Low wages, combined with anti-labor legislation that allows for up to 13-hour workdays, have led thousands of civil servants to take on second jobs, reinforcing the unthinkable situation of workers being unable to live decently from their work.

The aging and exhausted public sector workforce, combined with inadequate and outdated infrastructure and the state's indifference to workers and their working conditions, has led, first of all, a sharp increase in workplace accidents. For example, the POE-OTA announced 91 deaths and 214 injuries for the period 2024-2025, with the number of victims increasing dramatically every day.

It has also led to a serious deterioration in the level of services provided to the people, especially in areas related to their rights and achievements (municipal nurseries, cleaning services, etc.), intensification of work in the workplace, an increase in "mistakes," with dozens of disciplinary proceedings and frequent incidents of violence between citizens and workers.

Fragmentation, division, and terrorism

Fragmentation and division prevail at all levels in the public sector workplace.

Fragmentation in labor relations, with over 20% of staff working in some form of flexible employment, and this percentage reaching or even exceeding 40% in local government. This situation is perpetuated by the government through a series of legislative interventions, such as the infamous "Voridis provision," and dozens of court rulings, in order to completely block any attempt at permanent employment. It is a fact that the issue of permanent employment, apart from being openly attacked by the government, has already been undermined in practice, both with the introduction and rapid expansion of flexible forms of employment, and with the new disciplinary code that provides for the penalty of permanent dismissal for a series of offenses, culminating in non-participation in the evaluation.

There is also a wide gap in salaries, with a significant financial divide between "old" and "new" employees. If we also take into account the huge financial difference in the responsibility allowance, which applies to 1 in 10 "select" employees, the gap reaches 30%. This is in addition to the dividing lines that are artificially created between employees of different categories, responsibilities, etc., which are exacerbated under conditions of intensification and staff shortages and are exploited by the government and management.

A situation of fragmentation, therefore, that has multiple consequences. It holds workers hostage, undermines the unity of their demands and, in the absence of a labour movement, reinforces clientelistic relationships of dependency, leaving room for the administration of the day, often in close cooperation with the dominant union leaders who want to maintain their clientele and positions, to intervene by sowing promises and illusions.

And, of course, none of this could be achieved without the terror that the government wants to impose in the workplace: with dozens of disciplinary measures for union and political reasons throughout the public sector, targeting anyone who resists, and the new disciplinary code that speeds up disciplinary procedures and provides for the penalty of permanent dismissal for a number of disciplinary offenses. It is no coincidence that the majority of disciplinary proceedings concern unionists, even union presidents, and mainly punish the expression of opinion and the publicising of problems and shortcomings in the workplace. The government wants public sector workers to be silent, disciplined, and divided, pitted against each other, without rights and, above all, without a voice.

The forces that participate in unions

Faced with this intense offensive, the union forces DAKE (New Democracy), DISYP (PASOK), SYN.AN. (PASOK in POE-OTA) and EAEK (SYRIZA) not only remain silent, but also undermine and sabotage any attempt at resistance. Their unionists are outside, literally and figuratively, the workplace and its problems. They choose to join unions with various

"vague" names and participate in unified "baptismal font" ballots in order to confuse people, while ostensibly maintaining their distance from government policies. In any case, however, they express reactionary views and have right-wing positions. The non-participation of workers in unions suits them, as it does not challenge their dominance. On the contrary, they reproduce it and, ultimately, burden the workers themselves with arguments such as "the people are not pulling their weight." They worship delegation and either cooperate with each other, as was the case in the last formation of the ADEDY Executive Committee, where three members elected to the General Council with E.A.E.K. very comfortably switched to SYN. AN., or they negotiate with government officials and management executives, supposedly bargaining for workers' demands. Hence, they support the "restoration of collective bargaining," envying the... glory of GSEE! On serious issues, however, such as wage increases, permanence, discipline, and evaluation, they seek "feasible" proposals and are much more sympathetic to the difficulties of the government, with which they feel closer than to the workers and their needs. Indicative of the stance of these forces is the development of the claim for the 13th and 14th salaries and the "response" to the new disciplinary measures that was never given.

D.A.S. (PAME) is striving to be in the forefront, without any intention of mobilizing the people. It supports and relies on the mandate to credit itself as "the only fighting force." It undermines any mobilization that moves outside the framework of legality, upholds laws and regulations, a typical example being its stance on Law 1264/1982, and, despite its militant rhetoric, has no problem negotiating with government officials. Its stance at the last ADEDY conference in December 2025 was indicative. It made an appearance as the winner, attempted to exclude those who were not "its own," as the leading force, it announced a strike on 16/12/2025 with a call to the afternoon rally of PAME and voted against the decision to re-announce the strike-abstention from the evaluation, invoking legalistic tricks. Unionism on the edge of legality with no desire to clash with government policy.

The PAREMBASIES KINISIS SYSPEIROSIS (Interventions, Movements, Coalitions), exploiting workers' anxiety for a militant response to the attack, proclaim themselves to be "the only fighters." Behind disparate and ephemeral electoral alliances, they compete with the D.A.S. on proprietary grounds and militant slogans that do not correspond to reality at all. A common ground is the distrust in the capabilities of the workers, with activism and "exemplary actions" of deflection, and the glorification of delegation with factionalism. As for the serious issues, real increases are priced at €1,200(!), the fight against evaluation is limited to "stopping any disciplinary action for participating in the strike-abstention", they also demand a "collective labour agreement on all matters", they call for "disobedience in the application" of the laws of Georgiadis, Hatzidakis, Achtsioglou, and Kerameos, and, of course, they demand the abolition of VAT, ENFIA, the return of stolen funds to the insurance funds, a 35-hour work week, and the nationalization of public goods. These are reformist positions that show they don't really get the nature, depth, and intensity of the anti-worker attack. And all this while workers are disorganized and on the sidelines.

The situation in the unions

The 714,039 (2023 data) public sector employees are registered with 1,040 primary unions and 36 federations. Despite the existence, unlike in the private sector, of union structures to which almost all are registered, public sector employees are, in reality, alone in facing the attack. The majority of primary and secondary bodies do not function, except at the level of administrative councils. They only carry out the minimum required by their statutes and have no collective procedures. No assemblies are held and, above all, there is no involvement of employees, resulting, among other things, in their lack of representation on the streets. Hence, in the ADEDY strikes, the unions that support the rallies can be counted on the fingers of one hand, not all the members of the boards of directors show up, and, worst of all, the employees do not even go on strike, but, citing mainly economic reasons, which are indeed serious but not critical, they choose to take leave and, above all, not to support the strike rallies.

In any case, the bottom line is that workers feel distrustful of union leaders, do not believe they can fight for and win their rights, do not believe in their own strength, and are not convinced that with the strikes organized by ADEDY, the perfunctory way in which they are announced and implemented, and the lack of support for them, will achieve anything. This situation, combined with the defeat of the communist movement, the disintegration of the labor movement, and a lack of confidence in their own abilities, is sowing disappointment among workers.

The intervention of Taxiki Poreia and the formations in which it participates

Our work in the unions is not easy. We are up against the state as an employer, with its arsenal of legal weapons and the civil justice system at its service. We are up against the mechanisms of administration and disciplinary bodies, which lie in wait to prosecute anyone who resists and fights back.

We are also faced with the discrediting of unions in the eyes of workers, for which the dominant political forces are responsible. which makes them distrustful of their union organs and makes it difficult for them to trust organized action, collective struggle, and their own strength.

For us, the way out lies only in real struggles, in building the labor movement in a revolutionary direction, with collective organization and action as our weapons. In making problems the object of collective struggle and demands, and the unions the instruments of the workers. The state is not neutral. Class antagonisms are irreconcilable, and the victory or defeat of the workers is a question of class relations. The only barrier that can be placed in the way of the system's savage attack on workers' rights and achievements is their own organization, the creation of pockets of resistance in every workplace, the massification and revitalization of unions in a militant direction, the massification of strikes and protests in the streets.

The main pillars of our struggle are:

- Permanent and stable jobs for all
- Permanent contracts for all workers on fixed-term contracts
- Real wage increases that cover the cost of living

- No to the minimum wage law
- No to performance reviews
- No to the new disciplinary code
- Withdrawal of all disciplinary proceedings for union reasons
- Repeal of all anti-insurance and anti-labor laws of all governments

The new landscape for healthcare workers

Healthcare workers in public hospitals constitute a significant portion of the public sector workforce They experience the attack on the system in a similar way, but also with the particularities that arise from the fact that people seek care in their workplace. As workers, they face the consequences of the attack on their labor rights, as well as the blow to the people's right to equal, full, and free healthcare. This is a two-pronged attack, expressed as a single complex and producing unresolved contradictions outside the struggle that worsen the working and living conditions of healthcare workers.

Despite the intensity of the attack and its successes, as well as the current inability of workers to organize effective resistance to it, it is important that, with regard to labor rights in public hospitals, permanent and stable employment is a given and a benchmark for working conditions. Similarly, despite widespread and growing "deviations," the provision of care in these hospitals remains a benchmark for the right to FREE healthcare. These points of reference, at this stage of the formation of the labour jungle, the domination of capital over the working class and the adaptation to the demands imposed by intra-imperialist competition with the spread, among other things, of military spending, are both targeted by

the system's attack, essentially constituting "foreign bodies" in its nature and needs. This does not mean, of course, that it can easily deal with them, having to manage the discontent of those "below" as well as the consequences of the general intensification of the contradictions produced by the system's policies as a whole.

Conditions in public hospitals keep getting worse

With a series of laws, the New Democracy government, pursuing its policy of attack, is constantly reshaping public hospitals, leading to a continuous deterioration in the working conditions of healthcare workers and the conditions of care for the people. Chronic uncertainty about job security, wage freezes in the face of inflation, the elimination of the 13th and 14th monthly salaries, the implementation of performance evaluations, the law on "personal doctors," the law on afternoon surgeries, the so-called "psychiatric reform," the expansion of outsourcing, the cessation of secondary transfers by EKAV, the change in the on-call system in Attica, the health map of the hub-and-spoke model, the implementation of electronic systems for unified hospital stays (DRG), the TEP bracelet, the new disciplinary system, and the influence of central anti-labor laws, all, regardless of the extent and depth of their influence and "success," contributed to this direction.

The government's narrative about increasing funding, innovating electronic systems, renovating emergency rooms, and building the long-awaited hospitals donated by the Niarchos Foundation is an attempt to conceal this very policy of attack, while at the same time feeding its contractors, attacking workers' rights, intensifying fascistization, and preparing the ground for the continuation of its aims. Any increase in funding, as proclaimed by Minister Georgiadis, concerns the absorption of funds from the Recovery Fund and the financing of contracts that serve to intensify the exploitation of workers and centralize control by the ministry, transforming hospitals into institutions that operate according to private-sector economic criteria, while at the same time reducing personnel costs.

Working conditions

Healthcare workers operate in an intensified work environment as a result of understaffing. They cover double and triple posts per shift, consecutive morning-night shifts, and on-call shifts without days off, while having dozens of unused days off and leave. The whip of evaluation and the narrative of "getting the program done" impose these conditions, with transfers being an element that was added especially after the pandemic. Salaries are being eroded by inflation, a fact that even the ministry itself has been forced to officially acknowledge. Georgiadis publicly admitted that nurses' salaries are very low. However, they are among the highest in the sector, as paramedics, food service, distribution, cleaning, and security workers, who are contract or temporary employees, earn much less, with many of them working for a second employer to supplement their income. Healthcare workers, without being classified as "heavy and unhealthy," are in a health-hazardous workplace, and this applies to everyone working in the field, regardless of their specialty. At the same time, the nature of their work and the prevailing conditions put not only

the workers themselves at risk, but also the patients who receive their services. Over the past year, the ministry, using the narrative of "individual responsibility" and to divert attention from the responsibilities of their policies, it has begun a campaign of prosecuting and incriminating employees for "mistakes" made at work. This trend has taken on new dimensions with the prosecution of psychiatrists for their handling of "prosecutorial" cases, which have gone so far as to bring them in for questioning during their on-call hours. Overall, conditions prevail that are far from the "calm working conditions" for which the public sector was renowned and which, since the pandemic, have been steadily driving a significant number of workers to resign. Permanent employment coexists with unstable employment relationships, with contract and subcontracted workers accounting for more than a quarter of the total. The system's policy has invested in the fragmentation of workers even within the same profession, in order to undermine the perception of a common destiny among workers and the prospect of a common struggle.

Healthcare workers are overloaded with work by management and employers, and by the pressure created by the healthcare system itself. In other words, they face the pressure of understaffing, the whip of evaluation, the bureaucracy of procedures that serve the logic of "income-expenses," the terror of "individual responsibility," there is also the appeal to the integrity of the service towards the suffering patient. Because the attack on the right to healthcare has reached the point where healthcare workers are faced with patients who are tormented by hours of waiting in emergency rooms, transferred from hospital to hospital, being treated on stretchers in the corridors with their relatives taking on the role of nurses, and most likely their treatment will remain incomplete and they will be discharged with instructions for private tests for those who can pay. This situation forces healthcare workers to struggle to balance the exhaustion of their work with solidarity with their patients. This situation is largely unsolvable given the conditions imposed by the system, but it fuels a series of reactionary narratives that are promoted by the system itself. As long as the resistance movement does not gain ground, workers remain prone to views that see patients as a burden. "They come to the hospital for no reason" or "relatives are a problem when they don't take care of the patient" or "discharge them to free up the bed," as well as accepting the criminalization of aggressive behavior by indignant patients and relatives due to long waits in the emergency room. The violence observed between healthcare workers and patients is the result of the violence of the system and its policies, which are truly responsible for working and care conditions.

Union leaders undermine the necessary struggle

The solution and response to workers' needs for jobs with humane conditions and wages that cover the cost of living, as well as for demanding, alongside the people, full and free healthcare for all, lies in organizing their struggle and their movement in the direction of resistance to the policies of the system. A movement that requires the mass involvement of workers, with them taking responsibility through their unions and with strike action to confront the policy of attack. Essentially, what is needed is a central political battle by the sector on the key issues,

but building this requires overcoming all those who deliberately mislead or undermine this direction on behalf of the system.

The struggles of healthcare workers have so far failed to create conditions conducive to a prospective confrontation. Even the pandemic, which "shone a light" on public hospitals, did not serve as a catalyst for the struggles, but rather as a catalyst for the attack. The sell-out union leaders, and especially POEDIN with its declaration to suspend the struggles, became a weapon in the hands of the government. The situation prevailing in the union bodies, with bourgeois unionism (PASOK) having the upper hand, is a fundamental bastion of the system. They have rendered valuable services in disorienting and demoralizing workers and in dismantling the movement's struggle. They exist and reproduce themselves as negotiators with the system, claiming a role for themselves in every phase of the attack and selling out workers' rights. At times, such as during the pandemic with the layoffs of unvaccinated health workers, they have also become the mouthpieces of government policy. Their tactics consist of media hype, bureaucratic unionism, undermining of strike action, and divisive union demands in which they always act as representatives and mediators between workers and the ministry. Faced with the intensity of the attack, the retreat of the mass struggles of the sector, which they use as a bargaining chip with the government, and the pressure they themselves are under as a "body" from the government, even with prosecutions, they have gotten the message that the system will not tolerate any mobilization that could contribute to its instability at this stage. This has led the leaderships to openly support various aspects of government policy, from evaluation to support for Israel, allowing the minister to treat them to sweets on a day of strike action. The primacy of bourgeois unionism is reproduced by maintaining a situation in the unions that serves precisely this purpose: their disarmament as instruments of workers' struggle and the reproduction of union leaderships. In small hospital associations, mainly in the provinces, the complete inaction of the union and the indoctrination of employees that they have nothing to expect from it are essentially rewarded. In large hospitals, urban unionism maintains a network of control and influence in the workplace, essentially acting as the long arm of management. In this way, it manages to reproduce these relationships in the union field, with a characteristic expression being mass participation in union elections, while participation in other union processes is low.

The reformist unionism of the KKE, for its part, has no intention of disrupting this agreement in order to organize the health workers' movement. It seeks better positions for itself within the same system of representation and mediation, without this having any impact on the "grassroots," i.e., on the situation of the unions, the involvement and participation of workers, or the state of the movement as a whole. It has achieved this through its leading role in OENGE, where, despite the thousands of votes it received nationwide and especially in EINAP, this has nothing to do with the ability of workers to fight against government policy. In recent years, reformist unionism has invested in media confrontation with Minister Georgiadis. A confrontation that takes place between the members of the KKE-PAME on the one hand and the unspeakable minister on the other, and always, of course, in front of the cameras or on social media. This tactic has helped both sides rally their audiences. More important is the content of the confrontation, which

revolves around whether the National Health System is collapsing or being modernized. This is a debate that, by its very nature, leaves workers inactive, whose role is to vote for the best administrator of the ESY and the system as a whole. At the grassroots union level, it is characteristic that the situation does not differ significantly where there are union forces of the KKE. In some unions where it has the upper hand, it presents as "great victories" whatever emerges after consultation with management, while where it has little influence, it undermines any militant action by promoting the "overall" model-proposal for the management of "exclusively public free healthcare."

The defense of ESY is the field in which the other reformist forces of the transitional programs operate. Despite their differences from KKE, they share the same platform of ideas. It should be noted that defending ESY as a system and improving it as each party envisions is the ground on which reformism meets bourgeois unionism and, consequently, the government and the system itself. The debate surrounding ESY, besides obscuring the existence of employer power within it and the attack that is unfolding within its framework as described initially, also undermines the necessary mobilization of the workers themselves as subjects in the struggle for their rights. Rights that are by no means guaranteed within the framework of any ESY. The origin of these reformist ideas lies in the view of the state as a field of class struggle and in the support for the possibility of a more "pro-people" - bourgeois - state. Faced with the intensity of the attack and the ongoing fascistization and restructuring of the state and therefore the public sector (prosecutions, disciplinary measures, dismissals), these forces are talking big while they are completely up in the air at the same time that rights are being trampled on. The elections of the system are the arena in which all these views hope to gain strength, regardless of how far they are from reality and the needs of workers.

The need to build resistance and conditions for a central political struggle

Healthcare workers who are members of Taxiki Poreia must strive in their workplaces to contribute to the organization of workers' resistance to the system's attacks, and to the defense and assertion of their rights. They must understand the nature and intensity of the attack, both as part of the overall policy of the system in the context of escalating inter-imperialist competition and the class attack of dependent capitalism in our country, and how it manifests itself in the workplace at any given moment. Having a clear view of the prevailing conditions and the forces that currently lead the union bodies, as well as the aspirations and reactionary contribution of the reformists to the development of the struggle. Having clarified the ideological lines associated with the various narratives, systemic and reformist, that exist in the field. Having confidence in the potential of the mass labor movement and its politicization through multifaceted processes, which do not only concern sectoral union demands and their level of development. Above all, having an objective reading of reality and the conditions of class struggle, we must measure the limits of our own capabilities. So that we can be effective and expand these possibilities. We are at a stage where, at the same time that political and union work needs to counteract systemic and reformist forces in order to defend the line of resistance and the need to establish conditions for a central political

struggle, it must simultaneously build the hubs of resistance that are necessary to implement this direction. At this stage, no other distinct force wants or is able to contribute to such a formation.

We intervene in workplaces by defending the basic principles of our struggle, especially in hospitals:

- Classification of the workplace as unhealthy, with all that this entails. With the understanding that:
  - it is the right of all workers in the workplace and a factor in their unity
  - it is not a matter of a bonus but of all issues related to the burden on workers' health due to the conditions to which they are exposed (retirement limits, working hours, rhythms, rest periods, etc.)
  - it is a matter of workers' struggle and not a field of negotiation-compromise or recognition of the "offer" or compensation for "injustice" with regard to the existence of the right in the private sector
- No hospital closures - No mergers of health units/clinics
- Equal, full, free healthcare for all

ON WHAT BASIS WILL THE CLASS RECONSTRUCTION OF THE LABOR MOVEMENT TAKE PLACE?

The state of the unions

The current period, based on developments, is such that discussion about the situation of unions is required. The answers to questions surrounding this situation can strengthen an entire workforce that, in today's harsh working conditions, has decided honestly and selflessly to take steps towards unionisation.

This is important because the unions that workers who "take the plunge" encounter are, in practice, far removed from being the organizations that were born out of the working class's need to negotiate better working and living conditions with capital. In practice, they are far from being instruments of struggle, especially collective rather than individual struggle.

If we want to start from the beginning, we must accept that the situation of unions today, as always, has been, is, and will continue to be directly linked to the situation of the labor movement and the degree of organization of the working class. Their situation and power are a reflection of the balance of power between the forces of capitalism, the bourgeoisie, and the forces of the working class and workers as a whole.

Dominance of bourgeois and reformist views

This raises a crucial, decisive political issue. The conflict between capital and labor is reflected in political orientations and opinions within the unions. To sum up the above in slightly different words, we could say that the current general situation of unions (with all its asymmetries) is the result of the dominance of bourgeois and reformist views in the labor movement. Their orientation, directions, activity, and functioning are the result of the reflection of bourgeois views and lines within them. A key element is the struggle of political views within the unions. The element that determines the course of a union is how this struggle of views ends up addressing the capital-labor contradiction. Is it irreconcilable, with the position of workers in the struggle between labor and capital as the critical issue, or, on the other hand, is it a dilemma of class cooperation?

Social democracy and reformism, given this view (of class collaboration between capital and labor), formed an entire body of union expression, which in turn had a catalytic effect on the current general situation of trade unions. Of course, if a few decades ago class collaboration was the vehicle of the above forces and shaped the image, content, and directions that older workers knew, under current conditions, the very matrix of class collaboration, combined with the disintegration of the working class and workers, is shaping unions that are completely subservient to capital and the bourgeoisie.

Based on this, one can interpret the complete surrender of workers by the leaderships of GSEE and ADEDY, without any objection or pretext, to the appetites of capital and the state with the anti-labor laws of recent years.

Let us be more specific by describing aspects of this situation, namely the dominance of bourgeois and reformist views in the unions. This is particularly true in the private sector, although there is no real difference in the public sector.

If one observes the pyramid structure of the unions in reverse, from the top to the bottom, one can clearly see how the disintegration and dominance of the bourgeoisie is reflected in the views expressed mainly by the bourgeois parties (PASOK-ND-SYRIZA) but also reformist parties (KKE).

The higher union bodies serving the system

Not only does the majority of workers not rally behind GSEE and ADEDY, but GSEE and ADEDY are light years away from and opposite to the issues that concern workers. Not only do they fail to represent them, but those who dominate these organizations have distanced themselves so much from workers that they perceive their existence and prospects as a class only through their relations with the dominant parties, state institutions, and the system.

The third-level expression functions as a stepping stone for party officials rather than as a representative of workers. Based on the view of class coordination, they understand the needs of capital and the system, and exist to serve the promotion of bourgeois policies, blocking workers' reactions. Capital's zero tolerance towards labor, combined with the disintegration of the labor movement, has even deprived them of their basic raison d'être: the right to negotiate and sign collective labor agreements.

The undermining was so successful (!) that the system keeps limiting their role. Any mention of collective agreements in recent years has been about finding a role as a "spokesperson-representative," not about workers' needs. The celebrations ahead of the upcoming law enforcing the "social agreement" on collective labour agreements can be interpreted as based on their anxiety and eagerness to have this role recognised in the current era.

The use of unions as rubber stamps and bargaining chips for this layer, which is concentrated in the leadership of third-level institutions, highlights the content and purpose of the few strikes called by these leaders. Decisions to strike are made outside of the workers, without organization, without propaganda, far from the danger of creating conditions for mass resistance, fragmented, announced either at the last minute or so early that they resemble more a program of established operation than a strike aimed at achieving demands. These moves are even more clearly against the people, the more acute the class struggle is. The radio silence on the coronavirus, the cancellation of the strike ahead of the vote on the "Hatzidakis law," the avoidance of creating a unified movement and solidarity with farmers and teachers, the "firefighting" approach to the crime in Tempi, the avoidance of anti-war movements at a time when the working class is bearing the brunt of war preparations and

is preparing to become cannon fodder, are some of the latest elements of this picture.

Important elements that also paint a picture of the unions are those that reveal and describe their relationship with the state. They cannot conceive of functioning independently of the state. If the history of the labor and union movement is filled with stories of sacrifice by working-class leaders who, being outside the law, experienced the blows of the mechanisms and the state, the leadership of third-level bodies, imbued with the idea of compromise, sees itself as part of the state rather than part of the workers. The vast majority of unions, dominated by the bourgeois view of the neutrality of the state, rely financially on state subsidies and, to a much lesser extent, on workers' contributions. It is not worth mentioning here what financial opportunities this type of operation opens up for the personal use of this layer, as everyone can more or less understand this. Of course, it is not just financial dependence, but the overall relationship between the unions and the state apparatus.

The anxiety not to lose this relationship, which "legitimizes" the existence of unions and their leadership, is reflected in the respect for the legal requirements imposed by the state regarding their establishment, conditions, electoral procedures, strike decisions, and jurisdiction. This is miles away from a perception that understands the state as a tool of the bourgeoisie for the suppression of the "lower classes." Miles away from a logic that understands that the bourgeoisie never legitimized workers' demands and never recognized the right of the working class to organize. The strike-breaking laws controlling union procedures and labeling unions did not move these leaders, who adopt the entire framework of attacking unionism.

With an eye on third-level, the secondary structure of union bodies, federations, and labor centers has similar characteristics. The main common element, of course, is the distance from the workers. The main function of federations and labor centers has become the process of holding a conference every few years. A process which, although it may appear to be progressive, remains outside and distant from the workers. The main issue at stake for almost all forces is the formation of electoral alliances and mechanisms for third-level organisation.

The first-level organization of workers is crucial

As can be understood from the above, our assessment of the political situation and union expression is that, at this stage and in the coming period, what will determine significant developments in the labor movement will basically be decided at the first level of workers' organization. Not because there is a better balance of power in first-level bodies, with the filters of representation of enhanced proportionality favoring dominant bourgeois views, but mainly because it is the field where the most progressive workers have the opportunity to make contact and intervene. Because it is the step that workers can climb. Not without difficulty, as there are many obstacles. However, direct contact with the problems of the workplace and the possibility of criticising the leadership of administrative councils can be approached in terms of mass mobilisation of workers.

In first-level unions, based on the political views that influence the labor movement, but also based on the type of work (i.e., the position of workers in production), there are quite different conditions and terms. Nevertheless, we could describe basic categories and distinctions in the private sector, while in the public sector the picture remains more stable and consistent with the central issues.

There are first-level associations that clearly represent the interests of employers. These unions operate with the primary aim of the control of the employers, with representatives who take care of the pending issues of the sector they represent, as superiors, with a role of communication with the employers. Especially in company unions, they shape the direction, make sure the hierarchy and divisions among workers are maintained (e.g., locals vs. immigrants, permanent vs. contract workers, positions and schedules, etc.). They ensure that nothing outside the union's control is activated, to the point of cooperating with employers even on issues of dismissals, so that they are directed "where they should be" and "when they should be." A more conscious expression of this is government unionism. In private and public sector company and industry unions, unions controlled by views directly linked to bourgeois parties take on more serious and antagonistic tasks.

It would not be an exaggeration to say that these unions address workers once a year through a meeting or "New Year's pita cutting" ceremony, together with the employers, and during elections—whenever they take place. Any participation in general or sectoral strikes is always, regardless of whether they participate or not, integrated into the plans and directives of second- and third-level bodies and up to the level of expressing a "protest."

However, there are also cases where the attack itself sometimes even leads to conflict with employers. Unions operating under the conditions described above are forced to organize resistance, with workers showing determination and militancy. Even in these situations, however, what remains unchanged is the logic of delegation. For the dominant forces of every shade, the goal is to recognize management as the competent body for negotiation, rather than to strengthen the mass struggle of workers so that any negotiation has the best possible outcome as a product of struggle and confrontation.

The first-level unions controlled by PAME, as well as the federations and labor centers, are an important category because, due to their number—and the limited potential of more progressive views—they present themselves as the alternative left-wing proposal. They act as a counterweight to GSEE.

These are unions whose administrations address workers by talking about struggle, rallying around tactics and strategy. None of this is reflected in practice. They address workers to ratify decisions that have already been made regarding movements, actions, and strikes. Their actions are fully integrated into the parliamentary direction of KKE.

Their union activity is necessary so that KKE can claim, in its dealings with the system, that it represents the masses and that some kind of negotiation is acceptable. There have been countless cases in recent years where these unions have followed the beaten track. Decisions and declarations to "fight to the end," escalation meetings, activist

delegations, culminating in a one-day strike—ideally on the day an anti-labor law is passed so that it can be combined with a proposed law from KKE—with an announcement of the "success of the strike" and the assessment that the passed law "will not be implemented in practice."

This closed structure, which presents itself as militant, is the situation in the overwhelming majority of first-level unions controlled by PAME. Of course, in order to function, it must be completely controlled. Therefore, the non-functioning of general assemblies is a given, or, if they are forced to call assemblies, they choose a strict organizational method that prevents other left-wing views from being expressed. But mainly to discourage initiative, active participation, and responsibility-taking by workers, except from the position of observer, or at most participation in actions that are completely controlled. The construction workers' union is indicative, as it has been controlled for decades and is a model of militancy for PAME.

A useful tool in the hands of KKE in these unions is Law 1264/1982, which is referred to as "simple proportional representation" the system of reinforced proportional representation, which is guarded like the apple of their eye, since it ensures that in the electoral process (after the lengthy process of transferring ballot boxes) there will be another serious obstacle that will exclude "exogenous" opinions. The silent acceptance of GEMISOE's filing requirements shows the results of this strategy! The "democracy" in the functioning of these associations, if civil laws are not enough, is enforced with violence, reproducing the law of the powerful that the system itself promotes.

In order to better serve its reformist ideology and party orientation, PAME generally prefers to form first-level sectoral unions, even in sectors dominated by large workplaces and where there are often numerous company unions. It usually has absolute control over these sectoral unions, whose main mission is to elect delegates to secondary bodies. Only incidentally can they take any action, but their main goal is to gather members for the next elections and increase their own representatives. A special case is the few sectoral unions in which the extra-parliamentary left intervenes on upgraded terms. In these, general assemblies may be more frequent and electoral procedures more structured, but what is ultimately expressed is a following of both the ideas and practices of KKE, with similar results.

Another peculiarity is the (numerically small) so-called "base unions," which constitute forces of anarcho-autonomy and reject organization at the secondary and tertiary levels. Their actions highlight the problem and oppose the political organization of unions, with strong doses of anti-communism and statutes that are often more anti-democratic than the laws of the bourgeois state. They fail to understand that the organization of workers has primarily political and ideological demands. Their operation ultimately gets tangled up with the limits set by the state, and in their dead end, they trail behind PAME with the line "at least something is being done." A disastrous confirmation of futility.

How employees view unions

The effort to rebuild unions requires overturning the prevailing perception among workers about unions and their involvement with them.

Obviously, the picture describing how workers view unions is not and cannot be uniform. Nevertheless, a "general" picture necessarily bears the stamp of the negative political relationship between the working masses and the forces of capital and the bourgeoisie. In this sense, the victories of the system have largely succeeded in promoting systemic views of what unionism is. This is entirely understandable—in conditions of fierce attack and a rightward shift in the political scene, and the dominance of ideological narratives about the futility of unionism built on anti-communism—the lack of involvement of the broad masses of workers in unions is entirely understandable.

The majority of workers are not unionized.

A small minority (20%-25%) of employees are members of unions. The picture is different in public sector unions due to the smaller "current" impact on employees, the process of their formation, and the relationship between the unions and the state. However, the picture is the same for both sectors if we look not only at membership lists, but also at the real meaning of being a unionised worker. The majority of workers are not union members, and on the one hand, the conditions of capitalist exploitation push them to unite and organize, but on the other hand, they must overcome the views that disparage unions and consider them obstacles to the "settling down" of a worker's life. This is especially true for those who are taking their first steps and do not have the momentum to join due to their age and negative political circumstances. Young workers in particular, who are wandering from job to job in an effort to achieve better conditions in the medieval world of work, view unions and those who join them with great suspicion.

The more permanent and stable a workplace is, the easier it is to understand the need for workers to unite. It is logical that one's position in production and working conditions (precariousness, lack of permanence, part-time employment, etc.) have a catalytic effect on the way workers view their work and, consequently, the way they defend their right to it and fight to improve it. So even though workers with years of service have experience of struggle, the worsening conditions of survival for the working class create a sense of futility for any attempt at union organization and struggle.

Although the above are very negative facts, they should be supplemented by the following: Every employee, whether a union member or not, understands that employers view the establishment of a union where one does not exist with hostility. Even in some cases where employers contribute to the existence of employer unions, employees understand that the concept of a union is foreign to capital.

As mentioned above, the exploitation of the working class by capital, which is inherent in the capitalist system, and the attack on workers as a whole, is pushing them to seek ways to resist and fight back. An important feature of the current period is the intensity with which the government, on behalf of the system, is attacking the unions, tightening the noose of the state around them with constant laws and prosecutions aimed at

restricting the actions of the unions. This is something that is also evident in the eyes of the employees.

At a distance from the unions, their members

Nevertheless, there is a segment of workers who are registered with unions. They perceive their relationship with them as "quite distant" (with the exception of periods when they are mobilized). The relationship is so "distant" because of the very limited action taken by the unions. Action that employees do not learn about through their own participation, but through information provided by their management.

In public spaces, workers in non-kinetic periods treat administrations as secretariats providing information on laws and regulations concerning pensions and various other labor rights. Of course, this translates into the way they participate in and observe the infrequent assemblies, but also into the way they participate in the basic union function, which is the same in the public and private sectors: elections.

The decline of the political approach translates into a vote-relationship that, at best, the worker sees the union as an opportunity to express themselves through representatives who will keep an eye on things and keep them informed, who will try to improve conditions, and who will take it upon themselves to express the aspirations of the other workers. With an analogy in the private sector, where involvement is often even more "remote," unions are often treated as labor offices.

An important reminder regarding the above image is that these elements are by no means idiosyncrasies of the working class seeking to have others solve its problems, but rather reflections of the dominance of bourgeois ideology that is transferred to the workplace either "directly" through government and employer unionism, or "indirectly" through the stamp of reformism mainly (PAME).

An indicative factor of how this relationship between workers and unions is reflected is the financial contribution of members. The financing of unions shows the degree of autonomy from the state, but what basically concerns us here is that there are almost no unions that survive on their members' contributions. Membership fees are treated as a "formality" that, at best, is dealt with during union elections or, at worst, never at all.

The organs of the workers are built in the struggles

In unions that are mobilized, workers change their image of them. Furthermore, even in times of recession, a progressive workforce strives to activate and revitalize processes, to change the meaning of the union and, by extension, the way it is perceived by other workers. The power of collective mass mobilization in workplaces improves engagement, organization, and the functioning of unions, and even changes the image that crystallizes in management. Cosco, efood, Malamatina, and many other struggles, large and small, prove the above.

The important political point is that even in all these struggles, some serious negative factors, such as the logic of delegation, survive and reproduce even within mass and militant struggles, as a result of the

chronic dominance of the reformist and bourgeois orientation and content of the struggle.

All of the above shows that the concept of union membership is linked to prevailing political views. These views determine the union's goals and the way it operates and functions. The "distance" relationship that prevails both among workers who are members of a union and (even more so) among those who are not, is perpetuated on the basis of the dominance of bourgeois and reformist ideas, which want union bodies to serve the system and their political-partisan agendas, not instruments for organizing and fighting for workers. It is indicative of the state of disintegration that even in elections, which are the ultimate point of contact between someone and their union, it remains unclear who is a member, until when they remain a member when they are dismissed, and so on.

The outlook for workers is exactly the opposite. In order to overturn the prevailing perception of unions among workers, these unions must become their own instruments, functioning effectively and aiming to defend their rights and organize their struggles. But conversely, for a union to function and serve the needs of workers, it needs their active participation. A process that can only develop on the basis of the struggle against employers and anti-labor policies.

The dominance of reformist views and token unionism comes from the past.

The current state of decline and disintegration of the labor movement has deep roots and a long history. The forces of reformism in the country have played a decisive role in spreading defeatism and disillusionment. Always playing a complementary role to the official bourgeois and government forces, in the name of "workers' demands" and with a lot of "noise," they have contributed greatly to the retreat, disintegration, and generalized distancing of the masses from their organs of struggle.

Over the last 10-15 years, capital and anti-labor government policies have brought about enormous upheavals in labor relations. In order to be implemented, modern labor barbarism required the unconditional assistance of all kinds of false friends. The official union leaderships (GSEE-ADEDY) and bourgeois unionism, acting as the government's official interlocutor, were the main accomplices in the anti-labor offensive. "Labor peace," the direction of "class cooperation/co-management/consensus," was and continues to be the basic line of integration of labor resistance and demands. It has been and continues to be the main vehicle for subjugating the working masses to the choices of capital and the anti-labor offensive.

The forces of KKE/PAME, during these turbulent years of fierce class struggle, have chosen and continue to choose to operate within the framework of the above logic of class integration. The attempt to balance on the tightrope of attack is practically impossible and is reflected in the systematic avoidance of confrontation and conflict with bourgeois policies and the bowing to legitimacy and parliamentary illusions. This is reflected in the investment in virtual competitiveness, the creation of impressions, the "fuss" and the "intense competitive crowning" in periods of calm. On the contrary, in periods when local or central outbreaks are looming or brewing, reluctance, disdain, and distrust/fear of the power of the working masses prevail. In cases where developments escape their control, mudslinging, open undermining, and even bullying come into full effect.

Apotheosis of bourgeois legitimacy

No matter how hard they try to pass off meat as fish, it is difficult to forget the despicable stance taken by the forces of PAME regarding the passing and implementation of the anti-labor Hatzidakis law (4808/2021), which continues to this day. It was the forces of PAME, together with the officially subservient ADEDY, which, following the instructions of GSEE, withdrew and canceled the planned mass strike on June 3, 2021, before the law was passed. It was these same forces that, after the law was passed, spearheaded the integration of militant attitudes, imposing labor peace through the slogan "the law will remain on paper." Today, the government and capital are rapidly implementing and expanding aspects of the law related to union rights, state control of collective bodies, and the criminalization of union activity. The forces of PAME/KKE either whistle indifferently and choose not to get involved in movements they cannot control (see persecution of teachers and evaluation) or, in some cases, choose to be the main enforcers of legality (see implementation of electronic voting). If some people find the imaginative statement by ESAK in SMT Macedonia that the use of electronic voting in the recent union elections is a "counterattack maneuver" laughable, in reality it shows how blatantly cynical they can be when they HAVE to enforce the law.

The issue of "legality/lawfulness," in all its manifestations, for the forces of reformism, PAME/KKE, was and remains perhaps one of the most important red lines that CANNOT be crossed. The whole debate around legality, its limits, and the stance of each political and union force takes on new dimensions as anti-labor policies expand and labor brutality becomes increasingly "legal." For PAME/KKE, things are becoming even more "complicated" or, more accurately, more pressing, as the official union forces within the workplace retreat and reformism claims for itself an upgraded role as the "new" official interlocutor.

In such a context, the line of class peace imposes guidelines and limits on demands, just as is the case with the rise of legal battles and the courts, where unions and workers' struggles act as complementary extras. To the point where the forces of reformism are the main guardians of legitimacy in the workplace. The uncompromising alignment behind the implementation of the reactionary framework for controlling unions under Law 1264/1982 (open defense of the manipulative provisions) is gradually giving way to the renewed control framework of Hatzidakis Law 4808/2021.

Parliamentary delusions, avoiding confrontation, and seeking "opportunities"

A decisive role in the policy pursued by PAME/KKE is played by its stance as a "responsible parliamentary opposition." Its "comprehensive" and "responsible" proposals, the programmatic positions of "alternative" management and an "alternative" economy, which, according to the KKE, could be implemented immediately by another government, relegate the labor movement to the role of a supporting actor, a cheerleader for the official parliamentary struggle. What other features could the recent (December 2024) bill proposed by the Communist Party of Greece (KKE) on collective labor agreements, which was supported and signed by 627

unions in the public and private sectors, have? The bill "abolishes all anti-labor provisions" in labor laws from the memoranda to the present day, "fully guarantees collective bargaining," "the 13th and 14th salaries in the public sector are restored" and other similar provisions. While PAME/KKE abolished the attack "with one law and one article," the government pushed through the minimum wage bill without any real opposition, "without raising a fuss."

Following the same logic, and given that in recent years the government and capital have been promoting the dismantling of working hours, the abolition of the eight-hour day, and the extension of working hours to up to 13 hours a day, the forces of PAME/KKE, as well as all the forces of the extra-parliamentary left, are promoting as a central demand the reduction of working hours to 7 hours a day and 35 hours a week. In workplaces such as those in construction, where employers in the sector have long established 10-12 hour days and 6-day weeks, the builders' federation is demanding a 7-hour, 35-hour week. How far can this "demand" be from the actual bargaining power of a sector? What is the real aim of this political acrobatics? We would say that such tactics serve to ferment and propagate generally just demands without specific and immediate tasks. Demands that are "skirt-blouse" in nature, avoiding conflict and the parliamentary illusions of bills that abolish aggression and labor brutality.

Ideological references to the issue of "selecting" demands could not be absent, both in relation to the demand itself and its origin (see the relationship between the reduction of working hours and the theory of productive forces), as well as in relation to how each demand contributes or not to the intensification of contradictions but also to the strengthening, activation, and massification of the struggle bloc in the present tense.

The case of the collective bargaining agreements and the nature of the struggle waged by the unions in recent years to regain them strongly reflects the above assumption. The forces of PAME/KKE, which appear to be leading this struggle, are once again acting in a manner characteristic of general agitation and propaganda, without actually seeking or being able to create conditions for confrontation that could at least lead to the signing of collective agreements with with wage increases and expanded rights. It is certain that the coordinated resurgence of the issue of collective bargaining agreements in recent years by forces such as PAME/KKE, following the huge upheavals of the memoranda, did not coincide by chance with the initiative of the EU and, consequently, the government to reshuffle the deck. The European directive on collective bargaining agreements, which formed the basis for the minimum wage law and the bill being prepared on the basis of the "social agreement" on collective agreements in order to once again serve the anti-labor offensive, created expectations of "opportunity" and even illusions about possible positive aspects.

Virtual struggles and virtual overturns

We often write that the forces of PAME/KKE invest in "noise" in an attempt to create a virtual militancy that is often far removed from reality. In our opinion, it is completely different to view events with optimism and emphasize the dynamics of each movement or initiative than to promote a completely virtual reality that will sooner or later collide with the real

correlation with very negative consequences for everyone involved . The main problem with the above tactic, however, is not how half-empty or half-full each person sees the glass. It lies in the fact that "noise" and "virtual militancy" are the "risk exits" of a direction that does not want to clash with either the real balance of power or the anti-labor offensive.

Recent developments surrounding the promotion of the new anti-labor law by Kerameos, which was passed once again with little or no opposition, emphatically demonstrate the truth of this statement. The two strikes and one afternoon rally in more than six months, during which the government announced its anti-labor intentions, are far from the real demands of what is generally acknowledged to be a difficult battle. However, the responses of the period, the grandiose announcements of victory and militant intransigence, when not accompanied by real organization and action by workers using their tools of struggle, can only produce delusions and disappointment.

In such a climate, a new question hangs over the labor movement: Do PAME's successes in ADEDY, EKA, EKP, and other labor centers or federations indicate positive qualitative changes in the labor movement, or not? If we were to measure the momentum of the labor movement in terms of delegates and representatives, not that this is unimportant, we would say that something may be changing. However, a more grounded reading would reveal that the significant retreat of bourgeois forces within the workplace has left gaps that need to be filled. These gaps basically concern the balance of "labor peace" and mediation between employers and the working masses. Similarly, at the central level, GSEE's absolute alignment with government policy and the attack has left similar gaps in mediation that are looking for ways to be filled. The forces of PAME/KKE, focusing on their organizational capabilities, have seized the "opportunity" and are moving forward. However, the day after the first strike without a strike rally in ADEDY sets the tone for what is to come.

The fundamental issues of the labor movement, which lie at its core—the working masses, the tools of struggle, and the prospect of reversing decline, devaluation, and disintegration—remain unanswered. The forces of PAME/KKE neither want nor are able to move in this direction. They are the main agents of delegation within the unions, supporting and promoting the logic of rubber-stamp unions, without general assemblies or political functioning, with the focus on the boards of directors and elected unionists in the best of cases, and the rank and file in the corner, observing developments and decisions. They are agents that block important militant initiatives. Any movement that does not fit into the organizational and political framework of PAME is considered confrontational and alien. This isolationism and hegemony is not due to a sense of organizational superiority, but is an expression of fear in the face of what cannot be controlled.

The influence of reformist views

At the same time, one can find similar or even identical views on both organizational and political issues among all the forces of the extra-parliamentary left that intervene in the workplace. Hegemonies within the

framework of various "coordinations" and joint action continue to prevail despite the significant decline in their ability to produce political events. At the same time as the tone of confrontation with the forces of PAME is rising, there is also an obvious awe, which is often reflected in political and organizational hetero-determination.

At the level of direction, the "overall" frameworks of struggle, which reproduce the entire program of the respective political force, continue to be a prerequisite for any action. Transitional programs and transitional governments may have collided head-on with the reality of the "first time left," but the elements that compose them (nationalizations, workers' control, less work for all) continue to sow illusions about the role of the state and the characteristics of the struggle to overturn the offensive.

Submission to bourgeois legality or class struggle?

...The capitalist takes advantage of his right as a buyer when he tries to make the working day as long as possible and, if possible, to turn one working day into two. On the other hand, the specific nature of the commodity sold imposes a limit on its consumption by the buyer, and the worker takes advantage of his right as a seller when he tries to limit the working day to a fixed normal length. Therefore, we have here a

contradiction, right against right, both equally enshrined in the law of commodity exchange. And between two equal rights, violence decides. That is why, in the history of capitalist production, the regulation of the working day is presented as a struggle over the limits of the working day—a struggle between the total capitalist, that is, the capitalist class, and the total worker, that is, the working class...

Karl Marx: Capital, Vol. I, p. 246

The rights of the bourgeoisie, capitalists, and the middle class are enshrined in capitalist society. They are enforced by bourgeois laws and carried out by the state's enforcement agencies. In today's society and given the current class relations, bourgeois law has taken steps to enforce its class domination and exploitation of the working class. At the same time, the same class relations and the decline of the labor movement are unleashing all the "greed" of capital to strike even harder at the organization of the working class and workers. Having secured its dominance in the state, the bourgeoisie uses it as a force to suppress the working class, workers, pioneering activists, and unions that insist on fighting back. In our country, the anti-labor laws that have been passed are successive and aim at subjugating the organized struggle, subjugating and suffocating control of the unions.

There are many recent examples. From the SYRIZA-ANEL law of 2016, which established employer lockouts and changed the decision-making process for strikes by unions (50%+1), to the Hatzidakis-Georgiadis laws that complemented each other by attacking union action, forcing unions to join GEMISOE in order to be legal, imposing electronic voting, legalizing and facilitating strike-breaking, etc. In addition to these laws, we must add Law 4703/2020 by Chrysochoidis on the prohibition of demonstrations, which was passed in the midst of the Covid-19 pandemic. Special mention must be made of the law on public sector evaluation and the new disciplinary law that will come into force in the new year. With teachers as its primary target, followed by workers in the broader public sector, the government is promoting a suffocating and authoritarian framework of alignment and submission to the dictates of capital. Disciplinary penalties, fines, pay cuts, and, of course, dismissals await workers who do not align themselves and disagree with the assessment. Having spent the entire previous period trying to build the myth of meritocracy and denigrating public servants as lazy and highly paid, it is using this as an ideological cover to attack the right to work and a decent life. On this basis, it has proceeded with a pogrom of prosecutions and dismissals, with the union leaders in the sector "whistling indifferently" and failing to assume their responsibilities towards workers.

It is therefore clear that capital at this stage legislates and defends the exploitation of workers and criminalises any attempt they make to organise and assert their rights. It has at its disposal the entire legal and ideological arsenal it has unleashed against the working class. Thus, it tailors laws to its own needs so that workers' reactions can be rendered illegal at birth and it can promote its policies in the workplace unhindered. Its allies in this endeavor are the sell-out union leaders of GSEE and ADEDY, who pledge their allegiance to bourgeois legality every time they are called upon by the state and the government of the day, and have

often found themselves opposed to workers, invoking bourgeois legality and the bourgeois constitution. Alongside them are the forces of reformism, which, despite their occasional militant rhetoric against the government and capital, cultivate exactly the same subordination as the labor bosses. A clear example of this is the stance taken by all the systemic and reformist forces towards Hatzidakis law and its implementation. For the labor bosses and the unions they control, it was never an issue. They rushed, without even being asked (many times) to register the unions they control with GEMISOE, to set up electronic ballot boxes in them and in the federations and labor centers they control, and of course to justify it as something completely normal. Next to them were the reformists of PAME-KKE, who, after proclaiming in every tone that the Hatzidakis law "will remain on paper" and "will not be implemented," and denounced it as anti-labor, wrote to the unions they control in GEMISOE and found the bright idea of setting up electronic ballot boxes in any elections that arose but not to communicate them to the workers.

The situation is similar with the implementation of teacher evaluations. The union leadership of PASKE-DAKE -SYNEK has paved the way for the evaluation to go through (after all, they never really said they disagreed), leaving workers exposed, and PAME in education, along with part of Interventions, with the "Uniform Texts" (the equivalent "trick" of unannounced electronic ballots), accepting the evaluation and evading the real necessity of the struggle. In an anti-union-right-wing logic, PAME uses "Georgiadis" arguments, saying that we do not prevent evaluations for teachers who have said that they "want to be evaluated." We understand that in conditions of threats of dismissal and disciplinary action, this essentially means the dissolution of the struggle front. We mention these two characteristic examples (and we could mention others) to show that the situation in the public sector with the evaluation or the implementation of the Hatzidakis law is no exception. It is the prevailing situation that is reproduced at every opportunity and with every application of an anti-labor law or measure. On the one hand, the forces of the system and employer-friendly unions rush to implement the laws, and behind them are their henchmen (the forces of reformism) who implement them with various tricks and always with many militant and classist slogans.

The main problem and issue that arises is that none of them, in any of the cases, puts forward the line of central struggle-confrontation with the line of attack that is developing. Not only do they fail to do so, but they also sabotage and ridicule those who do in the worst possible way. We refer to the example of SETIP (Telecommunications and Information Technology Workers' Union), where the majority of the union (PAME) decided to implement electronic voting without announcing it and without even informing their colleagues at the General Assembly and the Board of Directors. In response to the announcement by Taxiki Poreia about abstaining from the ballot boxes that introduce the anti-labor Hatzidakis law into the union, it responded with intimidation, while the rest of the union forces (extra-parliamentary and autonomous) participated. Similarly, and with greater intensity, on the issue of teacher evaluation. The dismissed teacher and comrade H. Hotsoglou, who is being prosecuted for union action against evaluation, is a forgotten name, deleted from PAME's announcements on education. Not only that, but even within her own

union, the attitude is hostile and combative, and these forces are always looking for a way out... to escape, with the result that they appear in any representative procedures without actually supporting her reinstatement at the school.

The issues became clearer during the pandemic and lockdown. For capital, it was a golden opportunity to push through whatever anti-labor and anti-democratic measures it could at that time. Its main asset was the terror and fear that existed among the entire population regarding the spread of the virus. Although the measures taken were presented as measures to enhance safety, the reality was completely different. Repression in society was intensified, while in factories and other workplaces (call centers, supermarkets), quarantine and social distancing were a joke, personal protective equipment was non-existent, and working hours were vague and unlimited. The government took advantage of this and imposed bans, fines, and repression on anyone who resisted. The labor unions did not raise any issues, fully submitting to government measures and declaring a halt to the movement. Not only that, but they reinforced the terror and fearmongering and accused anyone who mobilized within the prohibitions of being reckless and opportunistic. On the other hand, faced with fierce attacks, the forces of PAME took the line of symbolic response, i.e., no response. Their stance at the May Day rally, the rallies outside hospitals, the strikes, and the rallies that took place during that period are indicative of this. The hundreds of associations and unions belonging to PAME and proclaiming the counterattack "closed shop" for months, and their place was taken by small delegations posing outside the Ministry of Labor and the symbolic May Day show in Syntagma Square, which received praise from the entire system for their "responsible attitude." This alignment with the dictates of bourgeois legality by the majority of the forces of the trade union movement, under the pretext of special circumstances, is proof that these forces, in one way or another, in "emergency" or "normal" circumstances, do not want to and cannot go against the laws and measures of the bourgeois state. We could say that they are forces of "all-weather" submission, which, instead of promoting the struggle of the workers, remind them openly or covertly that they cannot do much because the state and capital do not allow it.

For the state, unions must operate according to the rules it sets and under its control. However, the state and its mechanisms are not independent bodies, but bodies controlled by the bourgeoisie and capitalists. In each period, unions, federations, and labor centers have more or less "degrees of freedom" depending on the class correlation and the political forces and perceptions that prevail in them. Union bodies are governed by Union Law 1264/1982 and the changes brought about by more recent laws. These laws give the state a strong hand in controlling unions and keeping files on their members, supervising and validating their procedures, and directing their actions (in union elections, the judicial representative validates the results as a representative of the state and civil legality). For example, a first-level union cannot call a strike without giving advance notice, unless 50% of its members participate in the decision and unless it protects non-strikers (strike breakers). It is clear that, based on this and the rest of the current legislative framework, it is very difficult for a union to call a strike unless it is ratified by its class opponent. Furthermore, within the unions' own procedures, submission to bourgeois legality is a line and direction

that is unleashed against the forces of struggle. The elections of unions, labor centers, and federations are based on Law 1264, which is manipulative and excludes smaller forces and pluralism from boards of directors and other bodies. Based on reinforced proportional representation, the forces of DAKE, PASKE, SYRIZA, PAME, etc. exclude other forces from representation in union bodies and create a deeply submissive and controlled structure.

So, the line of submission to bourgeois legality is the dominant one. It blocks workers' struggles and targets anyone who fights and organizes. Does this mean that from now on, workers' struggles will be illegal and the system will deal with any reactions? Not at all. First and foremost, because unions, no matter how eroded by the forces and perceptions that dominate them, continue to represent the necessity of defending workers' interests and demands. In other words, they are an expression of the fact that workers have no other way to effectively oppose capital and employers than to unite, limit their competition, and stand together. However, in order for unions to be able to fight for the interests of workers, they must be tools in their hands. Within them, existing perceptions must be clarified and workers must align themselves with the line of class struggle and conflict (with the laws and directives of their bosses) and not with that of submission to bourgeois legality and class collaboration.

Can the terror of the system and the forces of subjugation, which accuse struggles and processes with which they disagree of being "illegal," be overcome? Yes, it can, and it has been done before. With the mass mobilization and broad solidarity of workers who are convinced that they must fight and that the only weapon they have is their unity and organization. Only faced with such a wave of resistance and demands, employer and bourgeois terrorism can only retreat, and victories can be achieved today. Furthermore, the fact that the attack on labor rights is advancing like a steamroller creates the very conditions for mass uprisings and resistance by workers. For this reason, whenever they are given the opportunity, workers take to the streets en masse. What prevents them from continuing is the lack of a real and mass, militant outlet in their workplaces and unions.

On the contrary, in order to prevent mass expression by workers, what comes to the fore is the line of compromise with capital and bourgeois legality. How many times have workers who started a struggle against layoffs (LARCO, Malamatina), for permanent employment (see OTA), or for their accrued benefits, have the union leaders (bourgeois or reformist) dragged them into endless legal battles, invoking the bourgeois courts as the... mother of all battles, putting aside the strike struggles and the organization of the fight? Is this or is this not the line of submission to bourgeois legality and marginalization of the class line of struggle and the creation of conditions for real struggle? How many times in key government laws has the line of "non-implementation" prevailed and the line of reversal been criticized as unrealistic and utopian by all of them (labor leaders and reformists)?

Are these two sides an expression of the "antagonism" and "two rights" that Marx refers to in the excerpt we quoted at the beginning? On the one

hand, the working class has the right to organize collectively and make demands, thereby selling its labor power on better terms for itself. On the other hand, the bourgeois state, as an expression of capital, legislates to increase the exploitation of workers, but also makes any attempt by workers to defend themselves illegal. What we need and what is missing today from the labor movement is a line of non-compliance and confrontation with anti-labor measures and bourgeois legality. This is the line that the labor movement must support today, to gain ground and create a mass bloc of resistance and struggle. We must serve this line if we want to win today and make things different for workers.

How can the working world be inspired once again in its struggle against the class enemy?

The process of re-establishing the prospect of collective struggle in the consciousness of workers must take into account the corresponding process of their alienation from unions and mass struggle. This process was long and multi-layered and took place on a global scale. Any attempt to answer this question in a fragmented way, focusing, for example, only on aspects of the Greek reality, is politically doomed. The main political issue that determined the change in the balance of power to the detriment of the labor movement was the retreat and eventual defeat of the communist movement, which had been the backbone of the development of political consciousness among the working class. This development has created specific conditions in terms of the vision for a different society, where the working class will play a leading role, and therefore also in terms of the working class's current ability to set political goals. We believe that this political reality will weigh heavily on our efforts for an entire historical phase that we have defined as "the phase of the reconstruction of the working class as a class for itself." This is a fundamental position that gives political substance to any observations we make below; otherwise, these observations would be meaningless.

The purpose of the labor movement, therefore, is not simply to "represent" workers within the exploitative system and "improve" their living conditions within it. After all, we have seen how much those who propagated depoliticization for the sake of "immediate improvement of living conditions" have ultimately improved the living conditions of workers, and where they have led them. The goal of the labor movement is "these things" (the improvement of living conditions), but "through

these things," the development of political consciousness about why there is exploitation of man by man, how this will be overturned, and what the position of the working class is in this process. Ultimately, the formation of the working class comes through the realization of its historical social mission.

However, the above remains a dead letter if it degenerates into empty rhetoric, a meaningless lecture, if it is not translated into specific political and union tasks, into goals for struggle. The primary task that must be included in the workers' procedures is the recognition of the real situation, the real balance of power, ultimately reality itself, without distorting lenses. The workers themselves intuitively and empirically understand this issue very well. The leadership deliberately describes a virtual situation, where we go as a movement "from victory to victory," "leave the laws on paper," plan "grand proposals"... This opportunistic policy, which is easily understood by the working class, is deliberately implemented so that the movement does not recognize its basic tasks and so that the leadership does not have to apologize for them. "We showed our strength" (as if that were the goal of a struggle), and now we move on! This practice is entrenched throughout the labor movement, not just in one faction. The main task for the labor movement today is to resist the attack of capital and to reclaim the basic rights that have been lost. The description of a fictitious situation of a "counterattack" by workers in practice distances them from their goals and increases their distrust. Furthermore, the description by bourgeois union leaders of a reality in which workers have something to gain by entering into institutional dialogue with employers completely nullifies any process of struggle.

The second issue is the procedures and life of the unions, their democratic functioning. This issue is crucial. However, it is closely linked to the first. This is because a limited struggle or a strike "for show" requires a different kind of operation from the members of a union than the setting of a struggle goal and its implementation. That is why the goals of the struggle must be clear and understandable, and there must be accountability for what a union sets as its goal and the results it achieves. In procedures where the discussion degenerates, the main issue is lost, issues are often not even put to a vote, and employees do not understand what is ultimately decided, or even worse, the leadership bullies, excludes, and silences the "troublesome" minority, are deliberately designed that way. In order for employees to feel that their participation in the process is futile and to hand it over themselves to a mechanism of insiders.

Participation, initiative, grassroots organization, and even personal responsibility of members towards union decisions are crucial in order to break down delegation and retrain workers in collective processes. At the same time, it is a prerequisite for changing the balance of power within unions. And this is where our role comes in. We must not view unions and their mobilizations as immovable rocks. Many times, our comrades or friends ask us, "What is the point" of participating in a union with such a degenerate function? This is precisely the point: that the non-participation of class-conscious workers in these processes perpetuates this degeneration and "does the leaders a favor" by allowing them to "play ball on their own." Often, competitors and friends ask, "What's the point" of

participating in a mobilization that aims to de-escalate the situation? This is precisely the point: to rally forces that want to go one step further.

Therefore, regaining the cycle of "setting the goal of the struggle – deciding on the means of struggle and participating in the action – taking stock" is crucial in order for the employee to once again become the subject of organizing their struggle, rather than simply being a follower who raises their hand and confirms a predetermined plan with their presence.

The third level concerns the restoration of confidence in the means of struggle of the labor movement itself. This process is not one-sided. It goes hand in hand with the rejection of deeply entrenched illusions about the nature of the bourgeois state, its mechanisms, and its institutions. When the union leaders themselves promote the value of: "dialogue on the good points of the law," "good European directives that contain positive elements," "legislative proposals," "meetings with employers," "legal loopholes that we must exploit" (deliberately raising workers' expectations for court decisions)... Or even worse, when leaders deliberately conceal the content of civil laws and their implications, saying that "the form of struggle we have chosen is legal," or that "this law will not be enforced," or that "we should not talk about this issue so as not to scare people," or "we will open an electronic ballot box for 15 minutes as a counterattack maneuver"... What is the result? The demoralization of workers, the cultivation of self-delusion, the shift away from "traditional means of struggle" toward an easier and painless option, and then, in practice, disappointment and fatalism that "we can't do anything," terror from the "sudden" attack of the class enemy when the inevitable conflict comes. From the moment a struggle is prepared, and at every turn, there needs to be a systematic exposure of self-deception, a return to the basics of the discussion, and an argument that workers and capital are hostile classes in irreconcilable competition with each other.

The fourth issue is the reversal of power relations within the unions. Without challenging the dominant bourgeois and reformist leaderships in the unions, without shaking the control they exercise over them, the labor movement cannot produce the victories that will reestablish the collective organized struggle in the eyes of the masses. However, overturning the balance of power cannot be simply a matter of electoral results (although this will also be necessary at some point). It is all of the above. Without the greater and more systematic involvement of our own forces in every aspect of the unions' functioning, without winning over leading elements of the working class to our side, the dust from the mobilizations will settle and we will find ourselves back where we started. Our own forces must take responsibility. We are not a force that merely describes the situation. We are a force with a political- union line, which must raise issues concerning the goal of the struggle, the slogan of the struggle, the means of the struggle, and the assessment. We must be strict with ourselves, and we will set the goal of bringing sections of workers closer to our political and organizational views. And this must be taken into account in the assessment.

To sum up. The labor movement will strengthen its ranks and regain its role in the eyes of the broad working masses when it regains its ability to

achieve victories against the politics of the system, to overturn the attack of capital, win back rights, and improve the lives of workers. At this particular stage, the labor movement must respond to all the political, organizational, and ideological conditions required for such a course. ideological conditions required for such a course.