

Communist Organization of Greece (KOE)

10 years since the foundation of the Communist Organization of Greece

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The Communist Organization of Greece (KOE) was founded 10 years ago, in the **1st Congress** that took place in January 2003, after a long period of multiform preparation since the '80s.

During this decade major social and political movements, national and international, but also popular revolts, have taken place all over the world. Huge political, economic and social changes occurred not only in the international matrix but also in our country itself. These changes altered the international balance of power and the political map of our country. The main focus of these changes has been the degree to which **the Greek people have become a major factor of political change** through a complex process of social struggle and political self-awareness.

All these years KOE's approach has been to rationalize the political undergoing and the underlying causes that shape the people's movement, and at the same time to articulate a course of political action that unifies the people's struggle under a common perspective.

- For our organization, this has been a decade of ideological and social fermentation through participating in all new forms of struggle and the major political mobilizations of our people:
- KOE became active in the Greek and European Social Forum, the anti-globalization movement and a multitude of international meetings.
- At the same time, our organization has forged strong relations with major international movements and parties in an effort, on the one hand to make known their original characteristics in our country, and on the other to advance internationalist solidarity.
- KOE has also taken part in many solidarity missions in Palestine and elsewhere. Its members were on the first ship that defied the Israeli blockade of Gaza in 2008.

- Since 2008 KOE organizes annually the internationalist *Resistance Festival*, a meeting place for the ideas and the struggles represented by movements, collectives and militants.
- Recently it has strengthened its ties with various movements of the Arab Spring and has worked to enhance its position within the European Left.

A significant benefit for KOE is that through this process allowed itself to be influenced into reaching political insight and experience.

In 2007, following a resolution of its **2nd Congress**, KOE joined forces with the **Coalition of Radical Left (SYRIZA)** in a unique, for the Greek political culture, effort towards the Greek Left's unity of action. After all KOE has been an active member, as early as 2003, of the Initiative for the Common Action of the Left, which subsequently led to the formation of SYRIZA.

Since 2010 KOE plays a decisive role in the publication of the **weekly newspaper "DROMOS tis Aristeras"** ("ROAD of the Left"), an example of a pluralist and broad-minded left journalism, which at the same time promotes a concrete line in the service of the Greek people's interest.

In our way of thinking, the unification of the popular resistances into a joined, articulated movement has been a top priority. In this respect our organization has played a decisive role in the creation and development of the **"NO PAY" movement** since 2008, among others mobilizing and inspiring broad popular initiatives against paying toll fees in the privatized highways. We have also unconditionally supported the **Greek youth's revolt in December 2008**, which was a fresh start for political struggle in Greece in a moment that the economic crisis started affecting our country.

Through this course, KOE established itself as a contributing force within the left movement. The road map to this has been a careful analysis of the contemporary world, the selfless and wholehearted participation of its members and sympathizers in the social and political struggles, the solidarity with the popular and left movements on international scale and, last but not least, the reinforcement of unifying and front-type initiatives within the Greek Left.

KOE avoided the pitfall of self-reference and complacency. Its political compass has not been an "all's well" attitude. On the contrary, we have followed persistently a "think out of the box" mentality in an effort to rid ourselves of introspective habits that have no other result than limit the potential of the left and communist movement. We have been determined to draw firm conclusions based on both the positive and negative experience of the Greek and international left movement, always taking into account the present situation and the needs of our people. This has been a pursuit far from a stereotypic mindset. Currently our goal is to **identify the programmatic features that constitute the identity of the left and communist movement in the 21st century** through a sincere scrutiny of the Left and of its various ideological currents and models. Our ultimate goal remains to contribute to the refoundation of the Left on ideological, political and organizational level.

KOE's history up today has been relatively short but nonetheless turbulent. It has been a history of multiple tests both within the society and the movement itself. We acknowledge the fact that trials walk hand in hand with errors, but we have never dug our heads in the sand; on the contrary, we see our mistakes as a source of knowledge. In this respect, our **3rd**

Congress in March 2012 has been an important moment in terms of deep and self-critical assessment, while at the same time it opened the debate on the issues of ideology and mutual relations within a communist organization.

During the last three years we have witnessed swift and radical changes in our country. Among them the major ones are:

- the hovering threat of the destruction of the country through the Memoranda and the policies dictated by the IMF-EU-ECB Troika and applied by its servile local lackeys,
- the collapse of the two-party political system,
- the emergence of novel political formations,
- the power shift within the Left and the subsequent rise of SYRIZA and,
- last but not least, major shifts in the social conscience of broad and radicalized popular masses.

Since the early stages of this difficult period we have highlighted the need to rid ourselves of the “special regime” which has been enforced upon our people and our country by the Troika, the Memoranda and the rotten bourgeois political establishment. In May 2011, shortly before the explosion of the *Squares movement*, we formulated the line for the urgent need of a **Political, Economic and Social Way Out for the Country**. This line proposes a transitional course that will be marked by a deep political change, the building of a new, genuine democracy, and the productive reconstruction of the country. This is how we instantly met with the aspirations and the expectations of hundreds of thousands indignant citizens, who demonstrated against the “junta” imposed by the Troika and the widely and rapidly spreading misery provoked by the Memoranda. KOE has taken part in all the strikes and demonstrations during these last 3 years, **in constant touch with this growing popular radicalization** against the special regime of a modern-type protectorate within the EU. We also fought the critical election battles in May-June 2012 alongside with SYRIZA and managed to have 5 of our members elected MPs of SYRIZA.

Today we are witnessing the need, but also our growing experience and ability, to work urgently for the building of a **broad popular political current** that will bring a deep change and will open up the path towards a way out for the country. The line for a *Political, Economic and Social Way Out for the Country*, recently enriched by the orientation underlining the need for a *Political Current* that will be able to answer the pressing demands of the Greek society, is our weapon in the **struggle for the transition towards a country free of Troika and Memoranda, free of foreign domination, free of this rotten bourgeois political system.**

- *To our members, who worked selflessly and contributed to all the movements and the resistances, who were present in the first lines during all the critical struggles and historic moments of the Greek people during these last years...*
- *And to all our friends, who fought alongside KOE in the streets and also helped to shape our organization and our identity...*

...we address an appeal, knowing very well the harsh conditions we all live and struggle in:

Let's keep on fighting!

Let's throw out of our country the barbaric Troika regime!

Let's build a truly democratic Greece, without foreign rulers and local tyrants!

For an emancipated society, free of oppression, alienation and exploitation!

Athens, 8 February 2013