



GSC UPDATE 6 - (September 2012)

1. GSC Update is back after an August break. The need for a robust solidarity campaign is more essential than ever. If you haven't already, join or affiliate your organisation to the Greece Solidarity Campaign: see application form <http://www.greecesolidarity.org/wp-content/uploads/2012/04/Greece-Solidarity-Leaflet.pdf>

2. **The situation in Greece remains volatile and under-reported.**

We learn from our correspondent, Vangelis, that doctors have occupied the CEO Office in Axepa hospital because they are owed pay. The police have marched against 50% cuts in their force. Shipyard workers from Skarakaga blockaded the street after meeting the minister regarding back pay. University lecturers have decided to start the new year with strikes. Someone in the riot police announced on the T.V. they will not stand against the people.

In a crackdown on immigration, police have detained 17,000 and arrested 2,144 people in the greater Athens area in the last month. These measures have been condemned by Syriza as a 'pogrom', 'an insult to justice and humanity', making immigrants scapegoats for bankers. But they have given succour to the fascist Χρυσή Αυγή (so-called 'Golden Dawn') party, In scenes reminiscent of Hitler's Kristallnacht (7 November 1938), Golden Dawn thugs smashed the stalls of non-Greek sellers outside a church in Athens on Friday 7 September (http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dhJntEn4ddA&feature=player_embedded).

From 2009 to 2011, Greek governments have slashed spending (not counting interest payments) by 20 billion euros, or 18 percent — a feat even Greece's financial critics concede would be challenging for any government. It is expected there will be a reduction of 100,000 civil servants by the end of 2012 (from the 874,000 Greece had in 2009). Thirty (out of 140) hospitals are closing. Cuts in medical provision in Greece have led to a sharp increase in HIV. Unemployment is pushing 25%.

The last few days have seen the Prime Minister of the Greek coalition government gaining no concessions from his trips to Germany and France, and the return to Athens of the enforcers from the Troika (EU, IMF and European Central Bank) to decide whether Greece has done (or suffered) enough to release E31bn 'bailout'. After 5 years of recession, it is already clear that austerity measures are going to be tightened further or, as one commentator put it, that "the beatings will continue until morale improves".

The Greek Communist Party (KKE) leader, Bogiopoulos, has stated the cuts required by the Troika are E23b (11% of GDP) not E11.5b (5.5% of GDP). There are rumours that the smallest government party, Dimar, may not vote for new austerity measures because of severe internal divisions.

Meanwhile, Germany's economy minister, Philipp Rösler, said on television last weekend that "for me, a Greek exit from the euro zone has long since ceased to be a frightening prospect." Costas Lapavitsas, writing in the Guardian, has said: "Greece's ruling elite fear a

euro exit and so will acquiesce to the troika's demands, hoping to buy time until an overall eurozone settlement is reached. But the balmy days of credit-driven eurozone growth are gone for good. Even if a eurozone collapse is avoided, it will be too late for Greece. To put its economy and society together again, the country must default and exit the monetary union." (07.09.12 <http://www.greecesolidarity.org/?p=384>)

Helena Smith, Guardian correspondent in Athens is predicting Greece's 'hottest autumn yet' (09.08.12). The right wing Economist (11.08.12) predicts: "Recession will eat away at the centre parties in Greece and at the nation's institutions. Syriza, an opposition hard left alliance, stands every chance of gaining support. So does the far right Golden Dawn which has sympathisers among the police." It envisages "the grim prospect of a hard-left government vying against hard-right law-enforcement".

Elsewhere sees the 12 September Dutch elections when the anti-austerity Socialist Party may match Syriza's performance. On the same day Germany's senior court will rule on whether a euro-zone rescue fund is constitutional. Another important date is 18 October, when Europe's Heads of State gather to discuss Franco-German plans for reform of economic governance in the Eurozone. For recent articles on Greece, see <http://www.greecesolidarity.org/?cat=11>.

3. **Public Meeting in London 28 September:** The Greece Solidarity Campaign, together with the Cypriot Party AKEL and Haringey Trades Council, are organising a meeting and social evening at the Cypriot Community Centre, Earlham Grove, (in Haringey N22) at 6.30 on Friday 28 September (nearest tube Wood Green). Speakers include Jeremy Corbyn MP, Bambos Charalambos (AKEL), Kate Hudson (Chair CND and author of 'The New European Left'), Stathis Kouvalakis (Syriza), Paul Mackney (Co-Chair GSC). It will be chaired by Rachel Newton (People's Charter) and has been organised largely by Cllr Isidoros Diakides.
4. **Local events** – if you wish to organise a local meeting, get in touch with GSC and we will try to help you.
5. **In a leaked letter to the Greek ministries of Finance and Labour**, the Troika is insisting that Greek workers should work six days a week and longer hours as a condition of the latest bailout. Anyone who can show how these measures can reduce the 25% unemployment and kick-start the Greek economy, should put their reasons on the back of a postage stamp and send it to Chancellor Angela Merkel or Mario Draghi, chief of the European Central Bank.
6. **A third delegation supported by GSC**, comprising Katy Clarke, Linda Riordan MP, and Councillor Isidoros Diakides was in Athens at the end of July. A report of the visit will be available on the GSC website – www.greecesolidarity.org. The video of the first GSC delegation to Athens is available on YouTube on http://www.youtube.com/watch?feature=player_embedded&v=G2WcC3y3RN4.
7. There will be a **Greek contingent on the TUC mass march and rally on Saturday 20 October** who will stay on for an international conference the next day. Posters from <http://www.coalitionofresistance.org.uk/2012/08/order-publicity-for-the-tuc-demonstration/>.
8. **The new Greece Solidarity Campaign Banner**, carried by Andrew Burgin and Isidoros Diakides (see attachment), was clapped and cheered through **Tolpuddle** at the annual labour

movement march and rally in July. **Metal badges** based on the banner design will be available soon price £1.50.

9. **The Fire Brigades Union** is the latest union to affiliate. There is evidence of more engagement with the victimisation of Greece by UK trade unions, e.g. Bob Crow, RMT General Secretary, sent a message of solidarity to Greek steelworkers fighting “against the repression of the employer and the state”.
10. **The following GSC letter has been sent to organisations including trades councils and union branches:** “Greece is the test-bed for the most extreme measures imposed to “sort out” the current ‘domino’ economic crisis in the European Union. The Greek people, however, have shown mass resistance to the horrendous cuts in wages, pensions, jobs and privatisations they face. The Greece Solidarity Campaign (GSC) is an independent campaign and non-party political organisation. It was set up in response to an appeal by Tony Benn in February 2011 for solidarity with the people resisting extreme Austerity in Greece. His letter was signed by a large number of TU General Secretaries, including Len McLuskey (UNITE) and Matt Wrack (FBU). ASLEF, TSSA and SERTUC are amongst those who have joined them since. We have sent delegations to Greece to see for themselves what’s happening and the creative forms of resistance Greeks are developing. Meanwhile, the economic dominoes are falling fast now in Spain, Cyprus and throughout the rest of Europe. We are writing now as you are developing your own campaigns against Austerity in this country, to ask your Trades Council/TU Branch to seriously consider supporting the Greece Solidarity Campaign. If you prefer, we can send you a short film (20 mins) and a speaker as well as our leaflet.”
11. You can subscribe to a very useful **free Greek Listings Newsletter** at <http://www.eugreeka.com/subscribe>.

[αλληλεγγύη και φιλία - solidarity and friendship – Paul Mackney – Co-Chair, Greece Solidarity Campaign](http://www.Greecesolidarity.org) www.Greecesolidarity.org