



GSC UPDATE 7 - (24 September 2012)

*Your solidarity is needed. Greece's economy is in free fall. Finance Minister, Stournaris, predicts a 25% fall in GDP (2008-2015). There's a growing wave of strikes leading to a General Strike on Wednesday 26th September. Official Unemployment is 23% - for youth under 25 it is **53%**, for women under 25 it's 60%. Greece's coalition government (of New Democracy, PASOK and Democratic Left) has failed again to agree on details of a cuts package. There are rumours of some DL MPs withdrawing support. The Government could fall which would lead to a general election before Christmas. You can help ...*

1. **This Wednesday, 26 September, stand in solidarity with the workers of Greece on General Strike - 5.30, outside the Greek Embassy, 1A Holland Park, Notting Hill, London W11 3TP** (nearest tube Holland Park on the central line). Bring your banners.
2. **London Greece Solidarity Campaign Public Meeting and social evening - at 6.30 Friday 28 September at the Cypriot Community Centre, Earlam Grove, Haringey N22 – nearest tube Wood Green on Piccadilly line):** organised together with the Cypriot Party AKEL and Haringey Trades Council - chaired by Rachel Newton (People's Charter) - speakers include Jeremy Corbyn MP, Bambos Charalambos (AKEL), Kate Hudson (Chair CND and author of 'The New European Left'), Marina Prentoulis (Syriza), Paul Mackney and Cllr Isidoros Diakides (GSC Co-Chairs).
3. **The TUC March and Rally of 20 October and the International Conference on 21 October called by the Coalition of Resistance and sponsored by GSC** will be attended by a contingent from Greece including delegates from Syriza, the Greek Primary Teachers' Federation (D.O.E.) and another Greek teachers union (OLME).
4. **Possible speaking Tour of Syriza and other Greek anti-austerity activists in November:** please contact us if you are interested in organising an event (especially if you have some finance to help with travel costs etc).
5. **When Greece sneezes Europe catches cold:** Portugal saw the biggest demonstration since the 1974 revolution on 15 September <http://occupynewsnetwork.co.uk/portugal-stage-biggest-protest-since-1974-revolution-while-international-mainstream-media-ignores-it/> Hundreds of thousands of people came to the streets to protest the new package of austerity measures being imposed by the troika.
6. **Greece Solidarity Campaign Metal Badges** - £1.50 + 50p postage (10 for £12.50 including post) from Sam Fairburn GSC, 5 Caledonian Road, London N1 9DX
7. **Copies of a report from our first delegation to Greece 18-20 March** are available free from Rachel Newton, GSC, 5 Caledonian Road, London N1 9DX

8. **In the House of Commons from 6.30 p.m. on Monday 22 October there will be a report back from third solidarity delegation to Greece** by Katy Clark MP, Linda Riordan MP and Cllr Isidoros Diakides and speaker from Greece.
9. **Solidarity Petition** - sign the New-York based Campaign for Peace and Democracy's statement "We Stand with the Greek People Fighting Austerity -- For Their Sake and Ours." (<http://www.cpdweb.org/stmts/1022/stmt.shtml>)
10. **A personal account of how austerity measures are hitting the island of Samos** - <http://www.redpepper.org.uk/greek-crisis-samos-chronicles/> and <http://www.socialistreview.org.uk/article.php?articlenumber=12078> – by Chris Jones who runs the blog Samos Diary which details the changing times of austerity in Samos and can be found at www.zcommunications.org/blog/Chris%20Jones
11. **Sonia Mitralia ‘Women of Europe stand up against the illegitimate debt and the austerity policies’** Superb article from perspective of women in Greece - <http://www.coalitionofresistance.org.uk/2012/09/women-of-europe-stand-up-against-the-illegitimate-debt-and-austerity-policies/>. Extract: “These austerity measures, taken in order to bring down the public debt, are absurd: their result is the exact opposite. The debt becomes bigger and bigger while the country sinks in a monstrous recession for the fifth consecutive year, something unique in human history! The consequences are already more than tragic: unemployment rate has reached 24% and specialists expect it to rise up to 34% next year. 55% of youngsters are unemployed while salaries and pensions are cut up to 50% or even 60%. No doubt about the real aim of such barbarous policies: answering a question by a Greek left wing euro deputy in the European Parliament in Strasburg, the head of the Troika admitted cynically that the final objective of all this is “to harmonize Greek salaries and pensions with the ones in Bulgaria and Romania”. That is 150 to 200 Euros!... But there is more and worst than that. The whole Greek welfare state is destroyed and dead. The result is that all services assumed previously by the State, from kindergartens to hospices for the elderly or even health care are now taken in charge by...women in family. And all that for free, not paid, in what could be called... the hold up of the century!”
12. **‘The Legend of the Riot Dog’** - video of Loukanikos*, the dog famous for attending all the demonstrations in Syntagma Square in Athens - <http://www.zougla.gr/webtv/greece/656454/view?mid=0&pn=1>. *(Loukanikos - Λουκανικος – means sausage!)
13. **Petition calling for an investigation into Golden Dawn:** Whilst it is important not to over-emphasise the antics of the fascist thugs in GD which got under 7% of the votes, it is at least as great an error to ignore them. You can sign at http://www.avaaz.org/en/petition/Investigate_the_Golden_Dawn_neoNazi_Party_of_Greece/?tyFIIMab The statement says: “80 years after the rise of Hitler, Greece is slowly slipping into the grip of Nazism – first time ever a neo-nazi party gains 18 seats in the Parliament, immigrants are chased and stabbed, leftists and gays are being beaten by attack squads with

the complicity of the police and under the tolerance of the government. Their leader openly boasts that "If need be, we get our hands dirty. If need be we are not democratic. For the sake of our country because above everything is our country; not institution not anything else". All these activities are dangerously multiplying by the day. Thus, we need your help convincing the Council of Europe to take action. We are calling for a judicial investigation into the workings of Golden Dawn. Their activities are racist, anti-democratic and illegal and their speech is spreading hate; their leader has been jailed for extreme-rightwing terrorism in the 70s, the party spokesperson and MP has attacked two female left-wing MPs and was never arrested while having a trial pending for participating in a stabbing; other candidates and members of Golden Dawn are also accused of crimes as serious as deadly assault and murder. Their fascist activity continues and is escalating under the tolerance of the Greek government and the EU. Every day there are allegations and reports in the media of hate crimes against immigrants that are never investigated; intimidation and hate speech are an everyday reality for us. We need their actions investigated."

14. **'Milking Greece', an excellent article by Nick Malkoutzis -**

<http://insidegreece.wordpress.com/2012/09/15/milking-greece/> - shows how disabled people Greece (as in the UK) are resisting punishing cuts: *"When there are riot police in full gear standing in front of the Finance Ministry to protect it from disabled protesters riding wheelchairs and using walking frames, you can be pretty sure your country is heading in a worrying direction. The protest by disabled Greeks, including Paralympians, who face cuts to their benefits as part of the latest austerity package, was just an entrée ahead of the main course of protests and strikes expected over the next couple of weeks as the governments gets closer to sealing the 11.5 billion euros of spending cuts the troika has demanded. The fact that Greece's disabled – who live in a country that already does everything it can to lay obstacles in their path – will soon have to survive on lower benefits speaks of the growing social cost of the crisis."* (15.09.2012)

15. **What's Going on in Greece?** these snippets, including many tweeted to us by Vangelis, give a flavour of the consequences of relentless austerity:

10 Sept: Troika wants tax threshold which was reduced to €5k to become ZERO ... Riot by 'illegal immigrants' in Corinth canal camp, riot police called in to quell it ... Syriza MP Vangelis injured in protests against proposed Goldmine diggers ... Golden Dawn (fascist) central headquarters surrounded by riot police ... talk of Govt moving towards a ban ... Public prosecutor seeks removal of diplomatic immunity for GD MPs for their violence in Rafina and Mesolloghi with immigrant street hawkers University and college lecturers started a 5 day strike right in the middle of exam periods.

12 Sept: Strike wave hits Greece, teachers, doctors, military personnel, post office workers, town hall workers ... Cancer patients marching in central Athens for lack of medicine Town halls don't have money to pay council workers ... Issue of Greek War Reparations against Germany by Greece emerges again ... Troika seeks 10% pension cuts in Cyprus ... KKE

(Communist Party) stated GD acting like labour inspectors in Kalamata demanding jobs for Greeks ... paraplegics on demo.

13 Sept: Another general strike announced for 26th September

17 Sept: All Greek courts are going to be on strike tomorrow ... Military personnel are going to increase their resistance to announced cuts in pay ... Self-proclaimed 'anarchists' attacked union of small shopkeepers headquarters in central Athens ... Weather wars? Massive hailstorms destroys agricultural production;

19 Sept: Finance Minister Stournaris predicts a 25% fall in GDP by 2015 (since 2008)

20 Sept: public transport workers join strikes – Athens metro, tram and trolley-bus service stop for 24 hours; judges and doctors turning away cases; Guardian reports on Greek government's intentions to sell off "Islands, palaces and embassies... prime real estate, marinas, airports, roads, the state-owned gas company, lottery and post office."

21 Sept: Giscard d'Estaing (ex French PM) says Greece should never have been accepted into the EU because it's 'basically an Asian country' ... Troika wants 67 as new pension age ... Tax inspectors occupy the entrance to Economics building during strike - riot police called in ... The 'Deadly Duo', Samaras (PM) and Stournaras (Minister of Finance), said a Cuts Package must be agreed by Sunday- if it fails elections will be called in 6 weeks hence = 1st week Nov ... Mikis Theodorakis, on behalf of Spitha Movement suggests the Left should leave this Parliament ... Ex-PASOK MP K Koulouris almost lynched at Electricity headquarters when he tried to jump the queue and raised his hand against a pensioner... Hunger strike by striking bank workers outside bank, which had been a coop and forcefully closed by the government ... Minister of Interior, Dendias, is closing Greek Army bases and filling them up with 'illegal immigrants' ... All self-employed Greeks to be on a zero tax threshold as opposed to current 5,000 euros tax free ... IMF ups demands for cuts.

16. **'Syriza Shines a light', Red Pepper Article by Hilary Wainwright',**

{<http://www.redpepper.org.uk/greece-syriza-shines-a-light/>} concludes: "The most effective form of solidarity across Europe would be to learn from Syriza how to build in our own countries new kinds of political organisation that are sufficiently open and loose to enable all those people who desire an alternative to capitalism based on values that many of us describe as socialist, but without a precise model in mind, to become a powerful and popular political force. Syriza has shown how this movement-style politics can be combined with a disciplined intervention in the political system to defend – and regain – the basic social and political rights that mainstream parties now treat as dispensable. Its example, which was necessarily forged in the heat of the most extreme manifestation of neoliberal austerity, can be taken up by the rest of us."

17. **KKE** statement on the crisis can be found at <http://inter.kke.gr/News/news2012/2012-09-3-apofasi-pg/> (Athens 29/8/2012).

18. 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>

19. **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 www.Greecesolidarity.org