



GSC UPDATE 8 (early October 2012)

1. If you are in London, please come to the German Embassy (23 Belgrave Square, London SW1 8PZ) at 5pm on Wednesday 10 October in solidarity with many thousands of Greek people on the streets resisting the extreme austerity measures imposed by the Troika (EU+IMF+ECB).
http://www.london.diplo.de/Vertretung/london/en/02/Directions_opening_times/Ma_p_Hours.html

2. **Statement by Manolis Glezos* on the occasion of German Chancellor Angela Merkel's visit to Greece**

*(90-year-old Manolis Glezos is the living embodiment of resistance to the Nazi occupation. On 30 May 1941 he was one of two young men who took down the enormous Nazi flag fluttering over the Acropolis. Sentenced to death on several occasions during and after the civil war, M. Glezos has spent altogether 11 years in prison. Today he is an MP for SYRIZA (Radical Left Coalition.)

“On the occasion of the visit to Greece by the German Chancellor Angel Merke, we consider it our duty to remind both her and the Greek Prime Minister that:

- Great and powerful Germany has no right to set aside her obligations and thus deprive Greece of what is due to her on the basis of international law, any more that Greece may abdicate her rights.
- Violations of international law and the human principles of honour and morality carry within themselves the danger of a repetition of phenomena which brought fire and blood to Europe. Acknowledgement of Nazi crimes constitutes an elementary guarantee that such monstrosities are never repeated in future.

Our people have not forgotten, nor should they forget. Today they demand not vengeance but justice. We do not want Germans to forget either. Peoples who reject their historical memory are condemned to repeat the same mistakes. It appears that Angela Merkel is leading her country and especially that most vulnerable part of the people, the youth, onto a slippery slope when, addressing the youth section of her party, she makes no bones about stating that “aid to Greece should be linked to Greece acting responsibly”. And what about Germany's responsibilities?

One would have expected the Chancellor to demonstrate a similar attitude to that shown by the allies towards Germany in 1953, when they suspended the payment of the debts and offered economic aid, thus contributing to German development and reconstruction. At the time Greece was not absent from this effort.

We have no intention of inviting the Chancellor to dinner, but we do invite her to join us at the killing fields of Kaisariani to see that even today, 67 years after the end of the war, the grass still will not grow where so much blood was spilt. The land does not forget, nor do men have the right to forget.

It is time to join our voice to that of the president of the German Left party (Die Linke), B. Rixinger, who, as Angela Merkel arrived in Greece, asked her to listen to the voices of those resisting the brutal cuts which threaten to deepen the polarisation in the country and who warns that Greece is threatened by a humanitarian catastrophe.

We are already paying for this polarisation in my country through the emergence of Golden Dawn. Shall we wait with folded arms to see what the consequences of this humanitarian catastrophe are? By then it would be too late, not just for Greece, but for the whole of Europe.”

- 3. Background information on the respective treatment of German and Greek debts is** complex. GSC Co-chair, Cllr Isidoros Diakides was on Radio 2 on Tuesday 9 October debating the issue. As most Greeks can tell you, Germany, strategically located in the cold war division between ‘east’ and ‘west’, was treated leniently by the 1953 London Debt Agreement, in the spirit of rebuilding Europe after world war two. There was little compensation for the Greece whose war losses included: demolition of a quarter of all buildings; annihilation of 2,000 villages; destruction of 66% of motor transport, 75% of the merchant fleet, 90% of railway rolling stock and all main road bridges; and deportation, slaughter or starvation of around 700,000 people, including the murder of 60,000 Jews. More information can be found at <http://www.coalitionofresistance.org.uk/2012/10/greece-germany-who-owes-who-greece-germany-who-owes-who/>.

4. The Greek message for Angela Merkel from Syriza leader, Alexis Tsipras (Guardian 8 October 2012)

“Europe can survive this austerity-induced crisis, but only if it is reshaped for and by the people.

As Angela Merkel visits Athens on Tuesday, she will find a Greece in its fifth consecutive year of recession. In 2008 and 2009, the recession was a spillover from the global financial crisis. Since then it has been caused and deepened by the austerity policies imposed on Greece by the troika – of the International Monetary Fund, the European Union, the European Central Bank – and the Greek government. These policies are devastating the Greek people, especially workers, pensioners, small businessmen and women, and of course young people. The Greek economy has contracted by more than 22%, workers and pensioners have lost 32% of their income, and unemployment has reached an unprecedented 24% with youth unemployment at 55%. Austerity policies have led to cuts in benefits, the deregulation of the labour market and the further deterioration of the limited welfare state that had survived a neoliberal onslaught.

The government argues that only the austerity agenda can make the Greek public debt viable again. But the opposite is true. Austerity policies prevent the economy from returning to growth. Austerity creates a vicious spiral of recession and an increase in debt that in turn leads both Greece and its lenders to calamity. All this is known to the European and Greek policymakers and elites, including Merkel, who aim to implement similar programmes in all European countries facing debt problems, such as Spain, Portugal and Italy. Why do they insist so dogmatically on this disastrous political and economic path? We believe that their aim is not to solve the debt crisis but to create a new regulatory framework throughout Europe that is based on cheap labour, deregulation of the labour market, low public spending and tax exemptions for capital. To succeed, this strategy uses a form of political and financial blackmail that aims to convince or coerce

Europeans to accept austerity packages without resistance. The politics of fear and blackmail used in Greece is the best illustration of this strategy.

My party, Syriza – United Social Front, respects the ordinary European taxpayer who is asked to shoulder loans to countries in distress, including Greece. The European citizens should know, however, that loans to Greece are paid into an "escrow" account and are used exclusively to repay past loans and to re-capitalise near bankrupt private banks. The money cannot be used to pay salaries and pensions, or to buy basic medicine for hospitals and milk for schools. The precondition for these loans is even more austerity, paralysing the Greek economy and increasing the possibility of default. If there is a risk of European taxpayers losing their money, it is created by austerity.

This has to stop now. Europe needs a new plan to deepen European integration. Such a plan must challenge neoliberalism and lead European economies back to recovery. It should prioritise the needs of workers, pensioners and the unemployed, not the interests of multinational companies and bankrupt bankers. Syriza-USF has committed itself to this road. We know it is a difficult one. But it is the only plan that can restore the European vision of social justice, peace and solidarity. This plan will succeed only if popular struggles radically change the balance of forces. These struggles have started already and have led to the rise of left and resistance movements throughout Europe. They keep alive democracy, equality, freedom and solidarity, the most important values of the European political tradition. These values must prevail. Otherwise Europe will regress to a dark past we thought gone for ever."

5. **Yiannis Tasoulas, member of the Executive Committee of the militant trade unionists in PAME** stressed at the demonstration of PAME in Omonia: "No barricade and no water cannon can frighten us! The moment when the workers rise up makes them tremble. Our demonstration is a first answer. [...] The government of ND-PASOK-Democratic Left, the industrialists, the bankers are hosting a lady who is one of them, the representative of the German industrialists and bankers, of the German monopolies. [...] Merkel does not shed tears for any people. She rubs her hands, as the other capitalists do, for the chance they have to buy infrastructure at very low prices as well as the prime cuts of our beautiful country. She fights with the other vultures over the loot and not over the lives and the future of our children."
6. **Next Organising Meeting of the Greece Solidarity Campaign** will be (as ever on third Wed of month) 6.30 - 7.30 on Wed 17 October. Unless you hear to the contrary, it will be at the Lucas Arms (upstairs room) 245 Grays Inn Road on corner of Cromer Street, opposite Swinton Street - 5 minutes walk from Kings Cross.
7. **'Greece: Our Present is your Future' REEL News film** extracts, 1030 for 1100, Sunday 15 October - London Socialist Film Co-op showing at the Renoir Cinema, Brunswick Square WC1N 1AW (nearest tube Russell Square).
8. **TUC March and Rally of 20 October, 1100**, Victoria Embankment to Hyde Park - <http://afuturethatworks.org/>. Come and demonstrate against austerity and for 'a future that works'. Comrades from Greece are coming on the march and to the International Conference at UNITE the next day - Sunday 21 October.

9. **Video of the Greek General Strike 26 September 2012.**

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2ntROSNBsjo&feature=player_embedded

Join or affiliate your organisation to the Greece Solidarity Campaign:

you can run off an information leaflet using the membership form at

<http://www.greecesolidarity.org/wp-content/uploads/2012/04/Greece-Solidarity-Leaflet.pdf>

αλληλεγγύη και φιλία - solidarity and friendship – Paul Mackney – Co-Chair, Greece Solidarity Campaign www.Greecesolidarity.org<<http://www.Greecesolidarity.org>