



GREECE SOLIDARITY CAMPAIGN UPDATE 1 (30 May 2012)

This is the first of a new series of Updates on the situation in Greece and Greek Solidarity in the UK. Please use the form attached and send it to us if you or others wish to join the Greece Solidarity Campaign (GSC) as a supporter (free) or member (£1 per month). Obviously we prefer the latter and welcome any donations to fund our solidarity work. As a number of national unions and the South East Regional TUC have already, you can also affiliate as an organisation.

If you can get to London and wish to volunteer to work with the Greece Solidarity Campaign, come along at 6.30 on Wed 6 June to the Discus Room of the UNITE Offices, 128 Theobalds Road, Holborn for an informal meeting of GSC supporters and volunteers to discuss actions which we can take 'between and after the elections' in solidarity with the people of Greece. We hope to have up-to-date reports from Greece.

1. The GSC organised a delegation (including representatives of UNITE, TSSA, FBU, CWU and National Pensioners Convention) to Athens (19/20 March) and some of the 20 or so meetings are captured on this **exciting DVD** - http://www.youtube.com/watch?feature=player_embedded&v=G2WcC3y3RN4. A GSC protest at the British Museum calling for the return of the Parthenon marbles and involving two archaeologist on a short speaking tour to the UK (Despina Koutsoumba and Fotis Giorgiadis) was item number one on **Greek News** <http://www.megatv.com/megagegonota/summary.asp?catid=22163&subid=2&pubid=29255949>.
2. **STOP PRESS:** Jeremy Corbyn MP is in Athens on a solidarity/investigative trip supported by GSC. We have been told Jeremy will accompany Alexis Tsipras to a meeting in Keratea in Athens tonight (Wed 30 June) and he will do the opening speech. Keratea residents have been very active fighting for 2 years against a waste dump the state want to create there, putting the residents' life in danger. The meeting should be packed and we are expecting the BBC World Radio Service to do a broadcast on it later this week.
3. There are **local solidarity meetings** supported by GSC, including:

Wed 30 May, 7.30 pm 'Greece and EU Crisis', Feedback Films, Plough Yard, off Shoreditch High St, London

Thurs 31 May, 7pm 'Resisting Austerity in Greece and Norfolk' at the Friends Meeting House, Lower Goat Lane, Norwich.

Wed 6 June, 6.30pm for volunteers and supporters in the greater London area –see 2 above - Discus Room, UNITE HQ, Theobalds Road

Thurs 7 June, 7 pm North London Greece Solidarity Meeting with some film clips - Greek Cypriot Centre, Britannia Road N12 9RU

Sun 17 June, Solidarity demonstration on Greek election day against the treatment of people of Greece by the Troika (EU, European Central Bank and IMF) at a venue to be announced nearer the date.

Tues 19 June, 6.30 pm Greater London CoR Rally Against Cuts, to Defend Services and to build the TUC's Autumn Demo – Friends Meeting House Euston with Tony Benn, Len McCluskey (UNITE), Christine Blower (NUT), Owen Jones (author of 'Chavs'), Katy Clark MP (visiting Greece soon), Wendy Savage (Keep our NHS public) etc + Greek speaker.

Thurs 28 June, 7 pm 'Greece: Our Present is Your Future' - Film Night Chestnut Community Centre, 280 St Ann's Road London N15 5BN

4. The **latest opinion poll for 17 June election** (from Economic University of Athens) covering the *Attiki region of greater Athens*, which comprises approx 40% of electorate, shows Syriza (the radical left party) with almost 32% well ahead of New Democracy (Conservatives) on almost 14%:

{1. ΣΥΡΙΖΑ (Radical Left): *31.9%* 2. ΝΔ (New Democracy – conservatives): 13,8% 3. ΑΝΕΞΑΡΤΗΤΟΙ ΕΛΛΗΝΕΣ (Independent Greeks - UKIPish): 12,8% 4. ΠΑΣΟΚ (new Labour equivalent): 8,7% 5. ΚΚΕ Gk Communist Party): 6,8% 6. ΧΡΥΣΗ ΑΥΓΗ (Golden Dawn Fascists): 5,8% 7. ΔΗΜΟΚΡΑΤΙΚΗ ΑΡΙΣΤΕΡΑ (Democratic Left): 5,5% 8. ΔΗΜΙΟΥΡΓΙΑ ΞΑΝΑ: 3,5% (Rebuild Party) 9. ΟΙΚΟΛΟΓΟΙ ΠΡΑΣΙΝΟΙ (Economic Greens): 3,4% 10. ΛΑΟΣ (far right People's Party): 3% 11. ΔΡΑΣΗ (Action): 2,5% 12. ΔΗΜΟΚΡΑΤΙΚΗ ΣΥΜΜΑΧΙΑ (Democratic Alliance): 1,2% 13. ΑΝΤΑΡΣΕΥΑ (far left): 0,6% 14. ΚΟΙΝΩΝΙΚΗ ΣΥΜΦΩΝΙΑ (Social Agreement?): 0,4%}

However, the latest *national* poll has New Democracy just ahead with 23.4 % compared with Syriza's 22.1% (with a survey margin of error of 2.6%). Both parties would still need to team up with others to form a majority and govern (though the top party is given 50 extra seats). Pasok trails with 13.5%. (<http://www.bloomberg.com/news/2012-05-29/greek-opinion-poll-shows-majority-want-revised-terms.html>)

5. For those who missed it, Christine Lagarde, IMF Chief, has trumped even David Cameron's smug hectoring of the Greek people. She managed to insult almost every Greek last weekend. To quote the Guardian (Sat 26 May 2012): "[In an uncompromising interview with the Guardian](#), Lagarde insists it is payback time for Greece and makes it clear that the IMF has no intention of softening the terms of the country's austerity package. Using some of the bluntest language of the two-and-a-half-year debt crisis, she says Greek parents have to take responsibility if their children are being affected by spending cuts. "Parents have to pay their tax," she says. Greece, which has seen its economy shrink by a fifth since the recession began, has been told to cut wages, pensions and public spending in return for financial help from the IMF, the European Union and the European Central Bank. Asked whether she is able to block out of her mind the mothers unable to get access to midwives or patients unable to obtain life-saving drugs, Lagarde replies: "I think more of the little kids from a school in a little village in Niger who get teaching two hours a day, sharing one chair for three of them, and who are very keen to get an education. I have them in my mind all the time. Because I think they need even more help than the people in Athens."

It is disgraceful for Lagarde to use the poverty of African children to justify the IMF's immiseration of the people of Greece. But it is also totally hypocritical because she earns more than the President of the USA and, it turns out, doesn't pay taxes herself! See: <http://www.guardian.co.uk/business/2012/may/29/christine-lagarde-pays-no-tax> Save us from saviours, smiling assassins, looters posing as Good Samaritans. They don't call the IMF

International Mother Fxxkers without good cause. In return for the loaned money (the bulk of which goes back to foreign banks) they impose conditions (for cuts in public expenditure, privatisation and removal of workers' rights) which prevent the very socialist (or even Keynesian) state solutions which might bring countries out of their crises.

6. Greece Solidarity Campaign pro-tem officers were elected at the Executive Committee on 9 May: Secretary – Rachel Newton; Chair – Paul Mackney; Treasurer – James Youd; Vice-Chairs – Nancy Kiousi and Eleni Stasinopolou; Assist Sec – Andrew Burgin; Delegation Co-ordination: Clare Solomon & Kate Hudson; Trade Union Liaison – Bob Archer.
7. For a very useful **Greek Listings newsletter**, subscribe to:
<http://www.eugreeka.com/subscribe>.
8. **Learn Greek in 35 years: The 5 syllable Greek word for Solidarity** is pronounced Ali-Len-GHEE-ee. It is spelt in Greek letters αλληλεγγύη! Ali (as in Mohammed) + Len (as in McCluskey) + GHEE (as in clarified butter used in curry) + ee (as in name for fifth letter in alphabet). The stress is on the 4th syllable (GHEE). All together = Ali-Len-GHEE-ee!

αλληλεγγύη και φιλία - solidarity and friendship –

Paul Mackney – Chair, Greece Solidarity Campaign www.Greecesolidarity.org -