



Newsletter June 2014

Dear friends and comrades,

The results of last week's European elections created a loud echo by bringing a message of illegitimacy to the political elite of the European Union. Nevertheless, the number of votes allocated to the systemic parties still ensures that they retain the majority in the newly elected parliament. In order to cope with the systemic crisis of capitalism, all these bourgeoisie parties have introduced austerity and disastrous politics during the last five years that are leading to the pauperization of the people of Europe, demolition of social state, abolishment of labor rights, criminalization of social struggles and movements.

While the gates of Europe are opening for neoliberalism, the capital has placed its thugs across the continent. Europe is experiencing an immense rise of far right parties; from neo-Nazi Golden Dawn, the Right Sector in Ukraine and the NPD in Germany, to the Front National and the Austrian FPÖ, fascism and nationalism became again, seventy years after its massive defeat, a real threat to the continent. All of them have found fertile ground for their propaganda of hatred and intolerance, in a "Union" already handicapped and plagued by austerity politics.

Nevertheless, Greece sent a clear message to the European parliament by condemning the austerity politics and fascist agenda of the current neoliberal government and bringing SYRIZA, the left-wing major opposition party to the first position. The fact that in the current historical juncture, the country that has become effectively the lab rat of austerity politics is the only country to point clearly to the left is a first hopeful sign of victory against the dictatorship of the capital.

Back to the Greek Statistics! Hurray!!

About one month ago ELSTAT (the Greek statistical service) announced that Greece had a primary surplus of 0.8% of GDP (1.5 billion) for 2013. Before we join the celebration of this success with the Greek government, the bankers and the constitutional media, let's point out a couple of things:

- The surplus seems to have been more or less the outcome of another “cooking” of the books, a “recipe” already efficiently used so as Greece to enter the Eurozone in the first place.
- For instance, government arrears of €4 billion to the private sector (which were to be paid in 2013, but – guess! – they were not!) was decided not to be included in the calculation of the deficit.
- On the other hand, they were generous enough to add the profit from the Greek Bonds, which was given back to Greece from the Eurosystem Central Banks (1.5% GDP). Before we applaud their generosity, keep in mind that this money should NOT be calculated, according to the programme definition.
- An additional trick was used in order to hide the already high deficit and present a primary surplus: they have totally excluded the cost coming from the support of the Greek banks in 2013 (10.8% GDP).
- Last but not least: the notorious “white holes”! The Greek government took part of the money that the State borrowed from Europe (aka “debt”), put it in the accounts of local authorities and the state pension funds (which were in deficit – “black holes” – in 2012) and presented it as assets!!

After all these, EUROSTAT approved the “primary surplus” and the general government deficit, which at the same time reached the level of 12.7% GDP. Let's close this topic with the answer of the commission to Matina Stevis and Charles Forelle (WSJ) who asked if this methodology was followed for any other EU member: **“No, the definition is country-specific”**. Hurray!!

References:

<http://yanisvaroufakis.eu/2014/04/24/greek-statistics-are-back-primary-deficit-presented-as-surplus-with-eurostats-seal-of-approval/>

<http://yanisvaroufakis.eu/2014/04/27/greek-finmin-confesses-to-having-dressed-up-a-primary-deficit-as-a-surplus-and-seeks-to-claim-the-glory/>

<http://blogs.wsj.com/brussels/2014/04/23/greek-primary-surplus-statistics-troika-edition/>

<http://www.avgi.gr/article/2388541/protogenes-pleonasma-montazieras>

<http://www.enetenglish.gr/?i=news.en.article&id=1882>

Back to the markets!

Nevertheless the Greek financial “success” had begun a few days later. The Greek State, after four years of seclusion from the markets, made a glorious comeback!

With a current national debt of about 170% GDP, the government decided to go to the markets and ask them if they are willing to help raise the debt a bit more (3 billion in this case)! The markets were skeptical, but after the guarantee and protection of ECB, the quite high rate (4,95%) and the 100% security offered to the potential gamblers through the English law under which the new Greek Bonds were issued, the excitement dominated and participation exceeded every expectation.

Moreover the government decided to give a small present (they don't tell us how much, some say 2.4 million, but for sure some millions is an optimistic guess) to Bank of America Merrill Lynch, Deutsche Bank, Goldman Sachs, HSBC, JP Morgan and Morgan Stanley, which were hired to conduct the auction.

Why all these? The answer is limited to only two words: European Elections! The coalition parties were seeing with terror their percentages shrinking and their power sliding from their greedy hands. They needed desperately an injection of “stability”, a spark in the dark tunnel, a good word from Merkel, something to cover up the disaster and fill the voters' mind with deceptive optimism.

But as mentioned before, the yields of the newborn bonds were 4.95%, which of course will be mounted up to the existing interests that the public has to pay through increasing taxes and cuts. Not to mention that the whole amount from these bonds went directly to serve liabilities which ended – what an irony – the days of the European Elections! Victory! Success!

References:

<http://www.theguardian.com/business/2014/apr/09/greek-return-financial-markets-attracts-investors>

<http://www.bloomberg.com/news/2014-04-23/samaras-met-dimon-for-greek-bonds-on-way-to-a-400-return.html>

<http://pando.com/2014/04/10/greek-bonds-trade-pacts-and-who-gets-to-be-the-law/>

<https://www.efsyn.gr/?p=192407>

<http://sotosblog.com/2014/04/11/%CE%B7-%CE%AD%CE%BE%CE%BF%CE%B4%CE%BF%CF%82-%CF%83%CF%84%CE%B9%CF%82-%CE%B1%CE%B3%CE%BF%CF%81%CE%AD%CF%82-%CE%BC%CE%B5-%CE%B1%CF%80%CE%BB%CE%AC-%CE%BB%CF%8C%CE%B3%CE%B9%CE%B1/>

http://iskra.gr/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=15922:ejodos-agores-lhstrikos-daneismos&catid=58:oikonomiki-politiki&Itemid=182

http://www.freepen.gr/2014/04/blog-post_8062.html

<http://tvxs.gr/news/ellada/me-oroy-s-apoikias-tis-goldman-sachs-i-%C2%ABeksodos%C2%BB-stis-agores>

Back... to black...

At the same time the situation in the country is getting worse and worse.

So as to better understand the impact of the implemented policies on the society, the following graphic from JoDi sums up the most important contribution of the governments that were/are in power in Greece during the crisis [1]. This is the so-called “success story” of PM Samaras, of which he is so proud.

Though before the European Elections, the system played its last cards so as to gather as many votes as possible. Do you remember the “primary surplus”? Sooo... 30% of this money will go straight away to the Greek lenders. The rest 70% was to be given to the people as a pre-election “present” of the government, in order to bribe people and get their votes. Till now let’s say, that it’s not surprising for a government-marionette of the financial and political predators to treat its people like primitive and savage indigenous by offering them “gifts”. But it does not stop there. It was revealed that a large part of this money would go to people specifically working in Security Services (police etc.), putting also a limit of a €1500 month salary (!), when thousands of people are struggling to survive with €300/400 (or even zero) per month. So we are talking about not only a neoliberal political system which is trying not to extinct, but also about a dangerous extreme-right, authoritarian regime, which supports by all means its allies who will happily suppress violently every attempt of resistance and change in order to pull through the austerity agenda successfully.

In the end SYRIZA won the Elections for the European Parliament [2], with an difference of almost 4%, but the ruling parties of ND and PASOK, having achieved 22,71 % and 8,02 % respectively, continue to govern, without any legitimacy. Just ignoring the elections’ results, they struggle to remain in power as long as possible, in order to finish any “unfinished business”.



The scandals also continue to come to light in a steady pace.

Recently, for example, it was announced that the Greek State sold 14 State Buildings (including ones housing Ministries) to Eurobank Properties. The Greek Privatization Fund sold this property for €145 million for 20 years, while the State will have to pay for leasing of the exact same buildings €14.05 million per year [3]. Anyone with basic mathematical skills, could realize that by the end of this period, the State will have paid double the amount received in this transaction. Just for completing the frame, it's worth mentioning the long-lasting and shady relationship that Eurobank has with the Greek Governments [4].



Another case follows, characteristic of the role the government plays against the interests of the people. The owners of two private energy companies were accused of having embezzled €250 million (money coming from tax payers and never given back to the State). New Democracy's Parliamentary Representative Makis Voridis, is the defense attorney of the accused, namely against the Greek State!! And this was not over. Both the Finance Minister and the Athens Mayor did not appear to bring a civil action in court, refusing with their absence to support the rights of the State and the people! [5]

And these are just two cases in just two days. If we add the new legislation that the government drafted, with which the entire seashore and coastal regions could be privatized for the sake of the financial growth and increasing of private investment, everyone can understand the level of permanent destruction that the country is facing.

References:

[1] it's worth having a look at his work: <http://jodi.graphics/>

[2] <http://www.results-elections2014.eu/en/country-results-el-2014.html>

[3] <http://www.thetoc.gr/eng/news/article/eurobank-properties-bought-14-state-buildings>

[4] <http://www.thepressproject.net/article/61225/EUROBANK-Another-scandal-re-packaged-as-part-of-the-Greek-Success-Story>

[5] <http://www.avgi.gr/article/2591957/o-kaminis-zitaei-kai-ta-resta-gia-to-skandalo-ton-energa-kai-hellas-power>

Demolition of the health care system.

While the EU governance elites glamorously celebrated the Greek EU presidency Zappeion, in Greece 40% of people have no access to the public health care system. In addition to the enormous unemployment and the constant impoverishment, Greeks are now confronted with circumstances that were unimaginable for a European country. Hospital funding is being reduced since 2010. By 2011, reductions reached 40 %, while the demand for hospital care had increased by 24%. The austerity measures led to a radical reduction of staff and often to the default of the existing infrastructure. Public hospitals and clinics, especially in rural areas were merged or even closed, which often has fatal consequences for this part of the population and especially the islanders. Although the workers union of nurses plagues since 2010 on enormous shortages of staff (then 15000-30000), in "Evangelismos ", for example, one of the largest hospitals of Athens, one nurse is responsible for at least 50 patients. There are shortages in medicine. The number of hospital infections rises constantly. Malaria, tuberculosis and other infectious diseases, which were almost forgotten in Europe, are now death causes. Suicides are reported on a daily basis. Depression is wide spread. 2012 "the Guardian" reported that the number of HIV infections amongst consumers of intravenously applied drugs has increased by 1250 %, and this is due to the drastic reductions of funds for prevention programs. Pensioners and chronically ill persons often have to choose between buying medicine or nutrition.

The criminalization of labor struggles and the disregard of the Constitution were not enough, in order to enforce such unbearable austerity measures in the health sector. The government assigned the job to the perfect "executor". Adonis Georgiadis, once an MP for LAOS (right-wing Populist Party), now prominent member of ND, is also one of the strongest supporters of austerity and privatizations in Greece. He took over his office last summer. Previously, he was selling far-right-wing populist literature in his own television show. So you could ask yourselves: Why was such a difficult task, assigned to someone who has no expertise on health issues, especially when the situation of the health system is so critical. After all, the Troika governments seem to love technocrats. The answer is simple. Adonis Georgiadis has no problem to publicly justify his politics. Just a couple weeks ago, he told the "Washington Post", who led a report on uninsured cancer patients in Greece, that *"emergency cases are still treated in public hospitals, regardless of insurance status - but diseases such as cancer are not urgent to treat, if not in the final stages"*.

The Georgiadis era is marked by new austerity measures, privatizations, closures of clinics and hospitals as well as layoffs. After opening up the gates of the pharmaceutical market for 6000 generic drugs from non EU countries, that sometimes even lack certification from the EU, last September, all this followed: the introduction of entrance fees in public hospitals (namely € 25 - the minimum wage in Greece is currently € 470) , prescription charges in the amount of 10 € , the deregulation of labor relations for all health staff, the dismissal of 8,500 workers in the health sector and 1,200 doctors of EOPYY and last but not least the closure of all public polyclinics.

Last February all public clinics were closed overnight, and would remain close for a month, in order to reform the public health insurance provider. The new health-care provider will now only employ administrative staff and all services will be acquired from the private sector...

Privatization of water and DEH

In the privatization frenzy that accompanies the demands of the Troika basic human rights are considered commodities. Plans to privatize the public Water and Sewage Companies of Thessaloniki (EYATH) and Athens (EYDAP) are being forwarded by the neoliberal government, with the main interested investor groups for the former being the French SUEZ and the Israeli Mekorot. The privatization plans are going ahead despite the fact that the Council of State (the supreme administrative court of Greece) has ruled against them based on the fact that water is a common good and access to drinking water and sanitation is a basic human right as recognized by the UN (2010). Experience from former cases in Europe, Latin America and elsewhere shows that the main consequences of water supply privatization always involve extortionate price increases, mass contaminations due to inefficient network maintenance and negligence of safety regulations, and corruption and massive profits for the owners. The privatization plans are opposed not only by the citizens, the workers and the municipalities of Thessaloniki, but also by a European-wide network of support. Despite governmental attempts to sabotage it, a referendum on the matter was organized by the municipalities of Thessaloniki and took place in parallel with the local elections. A staggering 95% of the participants voted against privatization, leaving no question as to the legitimization of the governmental plans.

For more information refer to: www.savegreekwater.org

Here also a link to an Austrian solidarity campaign: <https://www.facebook.com/pages/NEIN-zur-Wasserprivatisierung-in-Thessaloniki/242962535891994>

As a first step towards the total privatization of the power sector, the government is arranging the privatization of the electricity grid operator (ADMIE, subsidiary of Greek Public Power Corporation DEH), an entity of great strategic importance also for national security. This sale is being pushed forward as part of the memorandum obligations, and under the outrageous pretext that the nation cannot afford to invest the 2.5 billion euros needed to extend the grid to isolated islands. ADMIE is a profitable company with an estimated market value of over 8 billion euros, which is about to be auctioned off for a mere fraction of this (about 400 million) to the interested local oligarchs and foreign collaborators (e.g. the Italian TERNA, the German RWE etc.). Needless to say, apart from certain profits, the buyer will obtain absolute control over the distribution of electrical energy in Greece, without facing any competition. In the same vein, Greece late last year agreed to sell its natural gas grid operator DESFA on similar terms to Azeri company SOCAR for 400 million euros.



Vio.Me.

Occupy, Resist, Produce!

Solidarity to the struggle of the workers of the Vio.Me. factory in Thessaloniki, Greece, for self-management!

The example of VIOME

At the moment those lines were written, the industrial factory VIO.ME has been **operating on the principles of self-management and under full workers control for about 1 year 4 months**. Of course the government in cooperation with the employers cannot tolerate a successful alternative to the capitalistic way of organizing the production at the aftermath of the worst austerity measures that brought the very same capitalistic production to its knees. Successive lawsuits have been evoked on the workers initiative, but the strong supporting movement responds with the most powerful weapon: Solidarity!



A couple of weeks ago a two-day solidarity action took place in the squatted factory. The workers assembly acknowledged the success of the project and was bound to keep up with the struggle. Realizing the difficulties, the need for active help is apparent and should be every active person's concern. At their blog it reads:

Workers of the Workers Cooperative of VIO.ME. (S.E.VIO.ME.) are calling for the improvement of some products and the expansion of their variety. **They are asking for chemical engineers experienced in producing cleaning products.**

Email: viomesynergatiki@yahoo.gr
<http://www.viome.org/>

Past events

9.11: International Action Day against gold mines in Halkidiki

In November, Solidarity4all.vienna organized a protest and participated in the International Call for action against gold mining in Halkidiki. In the same month, we organized an informative event regarding the gold mines in Skouries. We screened the documentary “Golden Times-Cassandra’s treasure” and after the screening, an open discussion followed. The audience delivered very interesting inputs on successful strategies in order to fight back the environmental exploitation of natural resources, which takes place against the interests of the great majority of the local societies. Friends from the Romanian Rosia Montana movement supported us.



This discussion continued at the February Precarity Office session, with a broader panel about gold mining projects in Spain, Romania and Greece. Main topic of this session was the parallel development of gold mining projects around Europe and the rather similar strategies that state authorities and gold mining corporations use, to force them onto local communities. The exploitation of nature over profit is the part of the new "success story" of the European governments of the countries most affected by the economic crisis. They do not hesitate to endanger human lives, ignore freedom of speech and basic human democratic rights. In this context, the struggle to defend the commons and democratic rights of the people takes on a special meaning: it cuts across economic, political, and cultural divides and makes people from all walks of life engage in a struggle for dignified life on this planet. The three short presentations on gold mining projects in Romania, Greece and Spain were followed by an open Q+A session, as well as food and drink. Brigitte Reisenberger, writer of the book *The Black Book on Gold: The Winners and Losers in the New Gold Rush* gave also her input regarding the gold mines in Latin America, describing the state repression that the movement suffered there as well as different tactics to cope with the problem.



International Conference

FREEDOM OF INFORMATION UNDER PRESSURE

Control — Crisis — Culture



FEBRUARY 28 - MARCH 1 2014, VIENNA, AUSTRIA

In the frame of the International Conference “*Freedom of Information under Pressure. Control - Crisis – Culture*”, Solidarity4all Vienna organized the screening of the documentary “Ruins - Chronicle of a HIV witch-hunt”. RUIN discusses the problem of HIV criminalization in Greece and the prosecution and public humiliation of HIV positive women – a case study of severe violations of privacy and human rights. The documentary describes the shocking story of a group of HIV-positive women who were detained by the Greek police, forcibly tested, charged with a felony, imprisoned and publicly exposed, when their mug shots and personal data were published in the media, in the run-up to the country’s 2012 national elections. After the screening, a discussion followed with the input of some of the conference guests, such as Augustinos Zenakos and Mariniki Alevizopoulou (Journalists, UNFOLLOW magazine), George Katrougalos (Professor, Democritus University of Thrace, Greece) and Kostas Arvanitis (Journalist) talking about several examples of the oppression and antidemocratic policies that are nowadays applied in Greece in different aspects of the political and social life.

If you missed it you can watch the documentary here:

<http://ruins-documentary.com/en/>

The conference took place in Vienna on the 28th of February and the 1st of March and gathered more than 30 international speakers (academics, media practitioners, librarians, experts of open culture and public space, activists and policy makers) from Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Germany, Greece, Spain, Sweden and United Kingdom. It was a call for an open discussion on the challenges of freedom of information in the light of the recent surveillance revelations and the increase in censorship and prosecutions of media, journalists and whistle-blowers in Europe and beyond. There were dynamic panel debates and dialogue and various synergies were developed as an outcome of the event with interesting inputs from Gill Phillips (Director of Editorial Legal Service, The Guardian, United Kingdom), Christian Fuchs (Professor of Social Media, University of Westminster, United Kingdom), George Katrougalos (Professor, Democritus University of Thrace, Greece, newly elected MP in the European parliament for SYRIZA), Spideralex (Hactivist, Catalonia) and Harald Schumann (Investigative journalist, Germany).

Here you will find all video and photos from the conference:

<http://freedom-of-information.info/conference-photos-videos>

Upcoming events

- We would also like to invite you to the **screening of the documentary "Fascism Inc."** from the Greek journalist **Aris Hatzistefanou** on the **15th of June at 19.30** at Siebenstern. This documentary points out the connection of fascism with the capital in many European countries from the 1930's till now. (Flyer attached)

<https://www.facebook.com/events/442246562579301/>

You will find the flyer attached to this email, to share and send.

- On 11th of June – black day, as it is called in Greece - the workers all around the country are going to demonstrate again in solidarity to the struggle of the workers of the Hellenic Broadcasting Corporation (ERT S.A.), that was illegally and anti-constitutionally shut down over night, last summer. ERT workers occupied the premises of the stations around Greece, including the main building in Athens and continued to broadcast from there until the police stormed the building last November. ERTOpen still broadcasts and their struggle has set an example of determination and workers self-control.

<http://www.ertopen.com/>

In their fight to get back their jobs back, to reestablish an independent public radio/television and restate democracy in the country, we want to stand by their side. We are calling for a flash mob on the **11th of June at 19.30 at Resselpark – Karlsplatz** to show again our solidarity to their struggle.

When DEMOCRACY is invalidated, resistance is our DUTY!

We will meet in front of the fountain.

https://www.facebook.com/events/1429491910649258/?ref_newsfeed_story_type=regular

Here a video from last year's protest:

<http://youtu.be/mr4mw1WGhQc>

You will find a flyer attached in this email- share and print as you like.

- And before the summer break, we are organizing a barbeque party on the 5th of July. Infos are coming...

We are looking forward to see you all there!

Solidarity greetings,

solidarity4all.vienna

solidarity4all.vienna@gmail.com