

Greek unrest continues



Two bomb attacks in March 2010, one against the *Chrisi Avgi* (Neo-Nazi Golden Dawn group) and one against the Police Directorship for Immigrants in Athens mark an escalation of disruption across Greece in the face of economic collapse and ongoing police brutality. *Chrisi Avgi* have been implicated in murder attempts and arson attacks on immigrants, leftists and anarchists while the Police Directorship for Immigrants (*Allodapon*) located at Petrou Ralli Avenue in Athens is the "notorious camp-like place where all immigrants have to stand in line for endless hours waiting for papers applications while cops brutalise them indiscriminately." Meanwhile a wave of strikes and protest marches continue to hit Greece against severe austerity measures ushered in by the Karolos Papoulias administration to bail out the economy at the expense of workers, once again providing another clear example of the supreme failure that is capitalism. It is thought State negotiations are ongoing with the IMF which could see further cuts in social spending and further inroads for corporate interests. In the current wave of strikes to hit the country GPs have begun withdrawing their services while the DEH union (National Electricity) has declared that failure at talks will see a series of rolling 48 hour strikes which will plunge the country into darkness. Telecommunications, rail and post workers and others from both the private and public sectors are also out in protest.

Strikes grounded flights, idled cargo ships and ferries, and left commuters in Athens without most public transportation. State-run schools, tax offices and municipalities all shut down and public hospitals limped by using emergency staff. The Greek state has already imposed broad spending cuts arguing it is under pressure from the EU to cut salaries in the civil service. Unions say cutting Greeks' so-called 14th salary - part of annual pay held back as a holiday bonus - for public workers would be taken as "an act of war."

"If all these measures are enforced,

unemployment will skyrocket. Our country will enter a massive recession and unemployment will reach a Europe-wide record," union spokesman Stathis Anestis said.

"This will be tragic because it will provoke social (unrest) and clashes." Examining the latest general strike, the third in the last few weeks alone, anarchist magazine *Last Hours* commented:

"What could be framed as simply the acts of reformist trade unions now appears as serious social upheaval. Greek authorities have reacted with an iron fist. Another anarchist Lambros Foundas, lies dead after police fired upon a group in the suburb of Dafni, south Athens. Thousands of police fired tear gas and attacked crowds of protesters. Police snatch squads roam the streets making violent arrests." Tension has been mounting in Greece for years since the December 2008 murder of 15 year old anarchist Alexandros Grigoropoulos by cops in central Athens with ensuing demonstrations escalating into street confrontation and major rioting, eventually spreading across Greece with solidarity actions occurring across Europe, including Dublin. One Greek tabloid declared it was the worst rioting since the 1974 restoration of democracy. In December of 2009 on

the 1st anniversary of Alexi's death Greece was once again the scene of intense street battles. But as recession gripped Greece unrest also continued to spread among workers. Propaganda claiming that the Grigoropoulos murder and resulting riots were the work of agents provocateurs fell largely on deaf ears, while the increasingly authoritarian nature of the Greek state along with reinforcement of suppressive "Euro Terror" legislation, anti-immigration laws (rushed through in July 2009) and crippling austerity measures are largely considered to be responsible for mounting tension, and with the Greek government now considering deploying a 7000 strong multinational EU police force to quash unrest, sparks are expected to fly. Fear and panic also spread among economists across the Euro zone as Greek financial instability threatened other European economies also still firmly in the grip of recession. One German economist noted it could have 'fatal effects' on the rest of Europe According to *The Economist*: "2010 could be a year the sparks unrest in the Global Tinderbox: if the world appears to have escaped relatively unscathed by social unrest in 2009, despite suffering the worst recession since the 1930s, it might just prove the lull before the storm. Despite a tentative global recovery, for many people around the world economic and social conditions will continue to deteriorate in 2010. An estimated 60m people worldwide will lose their jobs. Poverty rates will continue to rise, with 200m people at risk of joining the ranks of those living on less than \$2 a day. But poverty alone does not spark unrest—exaggerated income inequalities, poor governance, lack of social provision and ethnic tensions are all elements of the brew that foments unrest."

Anger is building in Athens and tensions are expected to escalate in the event that an EU multi-national force descends in the city, if not before...

The events in Greece continue to unfold, and as similar reaction to austerity measures in other countries continue to bite, we live in very interesting times...

danny (back2front zine)



Assessment as control

Continued from page 7

At this stage, each mark can then be flagged as 'on', 'below' or 'above' target. And here is where the managers come in – they have access to this data for every member of staff and can use it in their 'performance management'. In some schools, such data has been used to 'get rid of dead wood'.

"Driving Licence for Teachers"

So this overt form of easily-quantifiable assessment can be used as a stick to poke both students and staff with. Teachers have some of the highest stress levels in any sector. The already excessive demands of many performance management procedures and Ofsted inspections are potentially to be made worse with the government's proposed 'licence to teach'. This means teachers would have to 'renew' their 'teaching licence' every five years or face the sack. Speaking to experienced classroom teachers, it's clear that most view the proposal as nothing short of cretinous and an insult to their integrity. Teachers are already subject to an ever-mounting degree of invasion into the professional life and with the prospect of more of this it's no wonder that retention of workers in the sector has been so difficult.

The prospects

Education is a mess at the minute. Higher education is facing a total collapse, with £900m to be cut from the university budgets and 14,000 jobs to be cut, despite 20,000 more university places being announced - less staff, less money.... but more students – I'm no mathematician but something doesn't add up. The examples of a fightback in the form university occupations at Sussex, London Met, Westminster, and the London College of Communications, and proposed strikes at Leeds are encouraging, but workers in the secondary and primary sectors need to wake up.

Quantification and the growing meddling in our working lives, both from micro-managers and bureaucrats is just one problem we face. The march of Ofsted, as well as the growth of

academies and the increasing involvement of private investors in schools should be of grave concern to us all. Workers in schools need to stand in solidarity with the counterparts in universities, and to learn from their experiences. The attacks facing higher education at the minute are unlikely to stop there, and workers in schools need to be ready to fight back.

By a member of the London Education Workers Group

Further reading:

NUT's campaign against 'Licence to Teach' - <http://www.nut.org.uk/notolicencetopractise>

