

*Greece, Turkey, Portugal, Spain, Italy, Britain, Ireland,
France, Germany, Rumania, USA, Japan, China...*

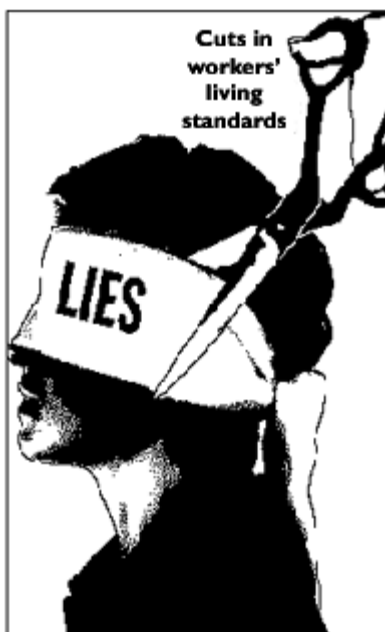
Against the ‘medicine’ of austerity The class struggle!

In Greece, there is immense anger and the social situation in explosive. Right now the Greek state is raining blows on the working class. All generations, all sectors of the class are being hit hard. Workers in the private sector, in the public sector, the unemployed, pensioners, students working on temporary contracts... No one is being spared. The working class as a whole is threatened with dire poverty.

In the face of these attacks, the working class is beginning to react. In Greece, as elsewhere, it is coming out onto the streets, going on strike, showing that it is not prepared to put up with the sacrifices demanded by capitalism.

But for the moment, the struggle has not yet become really massive. The workers of Greece are going through a difficult period. What to do when all the media and all the politicians insist that there is no alternative but to pull in your belt and save the country from bankruptcy? How to stand up to the monster of the state? What methods of struggle are needed to establish a balance of force in favour of the exploited?

All these questions are faced not just by the workers of Greece, but by workers all over the world. There can be no illusion: the “Greek tragedy” is just a foretaste of what’s waiting for the working class all over the planet. Thus “Greek style austerity packages” have already been officially announced in Portugal, Rumania, Japan and Spain (where the government has just cut public sector workers’ pay by 5%!) In Britain, the new coalition government has only just started to reveal the extent of the cuts it’s aiming to make. All these attacks, carried out simultaneously, show once again that the workers, whatever their nationality, are part of one and the same class which everywhere has the same interests and the same enemies. Capitalism forces the proletariat to endure the heavy chains of wage labour, but these same chains also link together the workers of all countries, across all frontiers.



In Greece, it's our class brothers and sisters who are under attack and who have begun to fight back. Their struggle is our struggle.

**Solidarity with the workers of Greece!
One class, one struggle!**

We have to reject all the divisions the bourgeoisie tries to impose on us. Against the old principle of all ruling classes – “divide and rule” – we have to raise the rallying cry of the exploited: “workers of all countries, unite!”

In Europe, the different national bourgeoisies are trying to make us believe that it's all down to Greece that we are going to have to pull in our belts. The dishonesty of the

people in charge of Greece, who have allowed the country to live on credit for decades and have fiddled the public accounts, they are the main cause of the “international crisis of confidence” in the euro. One after the other, governments are using this false pretext to explain the need to reduce deficits and bring in draconian austerity measures.

In Greece, all the official parties, with the Communist Party at the forefront, are whipping up nationalist feelings, blaming “foreign powers” for the attacks. “Down with the IMF and the European Union!” “Down with Germany!” – these are the slogans raised in the demonstrations by the left and the extreme left, doing their

best to defend Greek national capitalism.

In the USA, if the stock markets are taking a dive, it's all down to the instability in the EU; if companies are closing down, it's a result of the weakness of the euro, which is a handicap for the dollar and US exports...

In short: each national bourgeoisie is accusing its neighbour and blackmailing the workers it exploits: “accept sacrifices, otherwise the country will be weakened, and our competitors will take advantage of us”. In this way the ruling class is trying to inject us with nationalism, which is a

dangerous poison for the class struggle.

This world of division into competing nations is not ours. The working class has nothing to gain from being chained up to the capital of the country it lives in. To accept sacrifices today in the name of “defending the national economy” is just a way of preparing the ground for further and harder sacrifices tomorrow.

If Greece is on the edge of the abyss; if Spain, Italy, Ireland and Portugal are close behind; if Britain, France, Germany, the US are also in deep trouble, it's because capitalism is a dying system. All countries are doomed to sink deeper and deeper into this mess. For the last 40 years the **world** economy has been in crisis. Recessions have succeeded each other one after the other. Only a desperate flight into debt has up till now enabled capitalism to achieve any degree of growth. But the result of this today is that households, companies, banks and states are now weighed down with debt. The bankruptcy of Greece is just a caricature of the general and historical bankruptcy of this system of exploitation.

**The ruling class needs to divide us: we need solidarity!
The strength of the working class is its unity!**

The austerity plans now being announced are a frontal, generalised attack on our living conditions. The only possible response is therefore a massive movement from the workers. It's impossible to respond to these attacks by fighting in your own corner, in your own factory, school or office, isolated and alone. Fighting back on a massive scale is a necessity. It's the only alternative to being crushed separately and reduced to poverty.

But what is being done by the trade unions, those official 'specialists' of the struggle? They organise strikes in numerous workplaces... without ever trying to unite them. They actively encourage sectional divisions, especially between private and public sector workers. They march the workers out on sterile 'days of action'. They are in fact specialists in dividing the working class. The unions are equally adept at instilling nationalism. One example: the most common slogan of the Greek trade unions since the middle of March has been “buy Greek!”

Following the trade unions always means following the road to division and defeat. Workers need to take the struggle into their own hands, by organising in general assemblies and deciding on the demands and slogans to raise, by electing delegates who can be recalled at any moment and by sending massive delegations to discuss with other groups of workers, in the nearest factories, offices, schools and hospitals, with the aim of encouraging them to join the movement.

Going outside the trade unions, daring to take control of

the struggle, taking the step of going to see other sectors of workers... all that seems very difficult. This is one of the obstacles to the development of the struggle today: the working class lacks confidence in itself. It is not yet aware of the enormous power it holds in its hands. For the moment, the violence of the attacks being mounted by capitalism, the brutality of the economic crisis, the proletariat's lack of self-confidence – all this tends to have a paralysing effect. The workers' response, even in Greece, is still well below what the gravity of the situation demands. And still the future belongs to the class struggle. Against the attacks, the only way forward is the development of increasingly massive movements.

Some people ask: “why wage such struggles? Where can they lead? Since capitalism is bankrupt, and no reform is really possible, doesn't that mean that there's no way out?” And indeed, inside this system of exploitation, there is no way out. But refusing to be treated like dogs and fighting back collectively means standing up for our dignity. It means realising that solidarity **does** exist in this world of competition and exploitation and that the working class is really capable of bringing this priceless human feeling to life. And then the possibility of another world can start to appear, a world without exploitation, nations or frontiers, a world made for human beings and not for profit. The working class can and must have confidence in itself. It alone is capable of building this new society and reconciling humanity with itself by taking what Marx called “the leap from the realm of necessity to the realm of freedom”.

***Capitalism is bankrupt, but another world is possible:
communism!***

International Communist Current, 24 May 2010

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please visit our website:
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Birmingham

Saturday 12 June, 2pm

Friends of the Earth Warehouse

Allison Street, Digbeth

Birmingham B1

London

Saturday 3 July, 2pm,

Conway Hall, Red Lion Square

Holborn, London WC1