

Greece: Interview with Voula Taki



1. Our readers are very interested in the mood of the people in Greece. What is your opinion on the blackmailing by the EU?

In recent weeks we are seeing in progress a “financial coup” in Greece by the EU, ECB and IMF . Especially after the decision of the Greek government to move to a referendum asking the Greek people to vote “NO” or “YES” in the agreement proposed by the troika. Due to this decision the past few days we receive a hard, barbaric and non-negotiable attitudes of capital and EU who believe that they can behave and to order as colonizers (read the declarations of Juncker, Schäuble, Merkel etc). They organized this terrorist attack using of their “servants / guardians’ – the local capital, the dominant economic classes and the media (banks closed, limiting the cash withdrawals in the amount of EUR 60 daily, has started defaulting employer to their employees under the pretext of the referendum, intimidation of people constantly of the private media, organizing counter-demonstrations etc). It’s like a class war.

Against their terrorism attack, the social movements, initiatives (like us) and political parties of SYRIZA and ANTARSYA organize everyday big demonstrations and marches. The dominant slogan are against EU, ECB, IMF, like: “ NO to blackmail EU / ECB / IMF – NO Euro / EU / Debt – NO to new memorandum !!” , “Forward 0 people not bend head – the only way is resistance and struggle”

and Some requests:

“- Stop the government now any negotiation with the extortionists – lenders

– Immediate cessation of payments and cancellation of debt

– Unilateral cancellation of laws of memorandum and fully restore all labor and popular rights

– Nationalization of the banking system and business strategies

- Capital tax measures and wealth rather than employee
- Rupture against the euro and the EU

NO to blackmail – NOT a new memorandum.

Big struggle Now!”

2. How has the situation of especially the families and women been developing during the last months?

Everyone know what Greek-people have faced at the last five years under the violent attack of an economic crisis. The previous governments of our country under the orders from IMF CEB and the EU was destroying all our rights in one night in the name of debt.

Especially women are hit harder by the austerity measures because we are always:

- the first ones to be dismissed and the last ones to be hired
- the ones with the highest percentage of unemployment (in young women it is over 67%)
- the ones who, due to unequal payment all through the previous years, cannot get a decent pension to get by
- a big number of women work without insurance.
- the first victims of street violence, sexual harassment at work, and domestic violence (We know from the SOS line that the last three years they had received 18000 calls about incidents concerning gender violence)
- The ones to carry the burden of the destruction of public welfare in healthcare and education (by sustaining the care of the elderly, the sick, the children..)
- The ones who cannot give birth for free anymore at the public hospitals and whose newborn babies are kept as “mortgage”
- Those who often do not have food or clothes for our

children (according to data provided by the UNISEF in 2011-2012:

- Doubled child poverty and 322,000 children are deprived of food.)
- 44% of households indicating weakness for the infant.
- 32,000 pupils are facing food insecurity (this is how they call officially the hunger)

3. What are the struggles that your initiative/organization are leading against the crisis dictate of the EU?

Under this attack of IMF, CEB and the EU we created at 2011 an Initiative, the "Women's Initiative against debt and austerity measures". Our aim was to form together with other movements a front which will resist the neo-liberal attack on our society.

The WOMEN'S INITIATIVE has developed various actions so far, concerning all the above mentioned matters, as they were "created" by the memorandum policies of our governments and Troica.

We organized events in the neighborhoods of Thessaloniki by showing the documentary "Debtocracy" concerning the debt. Our aim was to explain that the debt is not a responsibility of the people therefore we should not pay it. We participated in all major demonstrations and marches organized by trade unions. We organized a big campaign against austerity measures which dissolved the public healthcare system. Our slogan was "FREE HEALTH CARE FOR ALL". We participated in antiracist and antifascist movement which have been recently developed enormously.

Under these circumstances and as the crisis is getting deeper, we the women, are living in depravation and poverty, not even

having the substantial means to live and bring up our children (food, heating, health checks, vaccination, medicines etc.)

In these conditions, WOMEN'S INITIATIVE set up a solidarity venue, a women's venue, addressing all women and especially single parent families and single women. It is an "open" place where all of us can have our own voice heard, so that via our self-organization we will be able to resist to the changes imposed by the IMF and hope we find answer to our problems in a collective way. The "Women's solidarity venue" (it's like women's house) it's open from 10 am to late in the evening, providing:

- legal advice on matters of domestic violence, health issues etc.
- evenings of collective cooking and eating
- classes, talks and discussions, film screenings
- direct actions concerning upcoming problems we faced by the policies of memorandum of our government (electricity cuts, house foreclosures, diminishing or no health care...)

With our slogan " No woman alone in crisis!" against the anachronistic culture of assault, barbarism, we answer back using another kind of culture, that of SOLIDARITY, SELF-ORGANISATION, COOPERATION, MUTUAL AID and DIRECT ACTION together with other movements (such as helping people to get access to what is left of the public healthcare system, immigrants' social centers, doctors of the world, citizens' initiatives etc)

We succeeded as "Women's solidarity venue" to have small victories!! Specifically: In Greece we have a serious problem with the electricity cuts because people – especially single mothers and unemployed women – can't pay the extra taxes which the government has lately combined with the electricity bills. So, we invited the initiatives neighborhood groups and organized a protest under the slogan "No house without

electricity” at the central office of Electricity. After our meeting with the director we achieved to reconnect the electricity in the houses of two women, to enter the social tariff 28 and we can only pay bills for electricity – no taxes – in several installments for example 30 euros per month.

Also, we were able to go to public hospitals and demand that women in need be examined without paying.

And lately with our intervention, we succeeded to get the child of a woman who is an immigrant to kindergarten without paying the money and for her to get the necessary documents in order to be legal in our country.

Particularly at this time of the most barbaric attack by capital and the EU we are trying to cultivate the fear of using their “servants / guardians’ and the media, we as “Women’s Solidarity Venue” trying – by staying next to each other – to answer against this terrorism by taking part in large demonstrations and marches that take place every day in Greece.