

Police attack factory of striking Greek steel workers



(Aspropyrgos, 20.07.12)

International working-class solidarity is now demanded!

At daybreak on July 20th, civil war units of the Greek police (MAT) violently attacked the steel mill Helliniki Halivourgia in Aspropirgos near Athens, where workers have been on strike for more than 260 days. They attacked the picket-line using clubs and tear gas, arrested nine workers, including several strike leaders. The striking workers were denied access to the plant. Since the morning hours, more and more people have been gathering in front of the factory. They demand the immediate withdrawal of the police units and the release of all those who have been arrested. The same evening more than 15000 people took part in a solidarity demonstration and rally in front of the plant.

The Marxist-Leninist KOE (Communist Organization of Greece), member of ICOR, writes: „The government parties ND, Pasok and Dimap...wanted to break the morale of the striking workers, the morale of the fighting workers, the morale of the entire Greek people who are resisting. But this time they are mistaken... The hearts and minds of us all are in Aspropirgos. It is our struggle. Yesterday it was the people in Madrid and the miners in Spain. Today it is about us.”

The torch of the Spanish mineros

It is no coincidence that the attempt to violently suppress the strike of the Greek steel workers is made only one day after the nationwide mass protests in Spain. In 80 cities several million people protested against the crisis program passed in parliament which contains cutbacks of 65 billion euros. 800 000 people were demonstrating in Madrid alone.

Police and firemen were marching in uniform in the front rows to protect the demonstration from paramilitary forces trained in combating uprisings. Red flags were waving everywhere and people were singing the “Internationale” together. After security forces brutally attacked the demonstration and injured 39 of them, ten thousands set up barricades in the city center.

Since the Spanish miners went on strike at the end of May against EU plans for prematurely shutting down the mining industry and they conducted their “March on Madrid”, the political wind in Spain has turned. They took the lead of people’s resistance against the crisis program dictated by the EU on the instructions of the solely ruling international finance capital. Since July 11th, when the miners were enthusiastically welcomed in Madrid by 100 000 people, mass struggles with industrial workers at the lead have been shaking the entire country. Fear is spreading in European government centers that this could trigger a wildfire and that the spirit of class struggle could be spreading throughout Europe.

What is behind the attack at the steel mill?

The nine-month-long strike of the Greek steel workers is a main symbol for the cross-border transition to the working-class offensive on a broad front. It has strong links to the struggle of the miners in Spain. The ICOR organizes solidarity with this struggle in Europe. That is why it is now being attacked by the state apparatus.

The Greek minister president Antonis Samaras boasts that he himself personally had ordered the deployment of the special police unit. This obviously occurred after consultation with the Troika of EU, ECB and IMF, which dictates policy in Greece, or on their instructions. In any case, no word of criticism about police terror was heard from German Chancellor Merkel, who otherwise pretends to be a “defender of human rights”.

Samaras threatens that he will „*no longer tolerate anyone who breaks the law*” . While it is completely legal to condemn entire peoples to mass unemployment and poverty in order to “rescue” the international banking system, workers who oppose mass lay-offs and wage cuts are being criminalized as “law-breakers”! This only shows whom the ruling laws and the bourgeois state are serving.

Deceit, lies, blackmailing

Media in Greece are maintaining that people have gone back to work in the plant. On the evening of July 20th, actually only ten people of 400 were in the plant, most of them white-collar workers. It is also being maintained that “radical striking workers” are endangering jobs. Actually it is the steel capitalist Manesis who is threatening to shut down the plant in order to put an end to the strike. He had already fired 120 workers and wants to lower wages by 40 percent in order to raise his profits.

It is not the workers who are responsible for the deepening world economic and financial crisis! It is the capitalist system which constantly brings forth more and deeper crises. In Germany too, sooner or later, the ruling powers will turn to shift the burdens of the crisis more openly.

International working-class unity is demanded!

Now, active solidarity is demanded in the factories, trade unions and on the streets! Organize protest and solidarity declarations, as well as activities! Participate in the Monday demonstrations in more than one hundred cities.

(www.bundesweite-montagsdemo.comwww.bundesweite-montagsdemo.comwww.bundesweite-montagsdemo.comwww.bundesweite-montagsdemo.com)

For the immediate withdrawal of all police units from the steel mill and Aspropirgos!

For the immediate release of all those who were arrested!
Reinstatement of the dismissed steel workers!
For the exposure, withdrawal and punishment of those responsible for the police action in Greece and the EU!
For the 6-hour day with full wage compensation – internationally!
For a full and legal right to strike in all matters!
The banks and companies should pay the burdens of the crisis themselves! For a joint European-wide struggle against the shifting of the crisis burdens!
Workers of all countries, unite!
Workers of all countries and all oppressed, unite!
International working-class unity for work, peace and the protection of the natural environment, genuine socialism!

Addresses for solidarity and protest statements:

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