

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

RALLY AT UNITED NATIONS IN SOLIDARITY WITH GREECE AND EUROPEAN WORKERS' GENERAL STRIKE – WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 14

AGAINST AUSTERITY IN GREECE AND THE EU; AGAINST THE GREEK GOVERNMENT'S HUMAN RIGHTS VIOLATIONS AND PROTECTION OF THE NEO-NAZI "GOLDEN DAWN"

NEW YORK CITY, November 2, 2012 –Harsh austerity measures have created an economic and social disaster that affects tens of millions across Europe. Greece, Portugal and Spain are particularly hard-hit. A coalition of New York Greek-Americans, groups in solidarity with Greece and working people across Europe have called for a rally at the United Nations Missions of Greece and the European Union on Wednesday, November 14, 2012.

The Greek government is to be condemned for passing vicious cuts in living standards, anti-labor laws, giving away public land and property to private speculators and for human rights violations, including the torture of protesters (as documented by the *Guardian*, BBC and investigated by the European Human Rights Watch) and for its protection of the violent neo-Nazi "Golden Dawn" party.

What happens in Greece and Europe today is of concern to all of us as we face the prospect of further austerity, inequality, unemployment and budget cuts here in the US as well.

November 14 has been chosen in solidarity with the calls for international labor actions in Europe on the same day. Simultaneous general strikes have been called for that day in Greece, Spain, Portugal and Cyprus, a sign of the increasing resistance against neoliberal austerity. The actions appear set to spread to other countries in what may become the first pan-European general strike.

The November 14th action at the United Nations will run from 2 to 7 pm and include:

2 pm – PRESS CONFERENCE in front of Greek Mission to the UN, 866 Second Avenue (Corner of 46th Street), with representatives of the Greek-American community, labor groups, Campaign for Peace and Democracy, the Greek-American Left Movement/Aristeri Kinisi, and Occupy Astoria /LIC.

3-5pm – SPEAKOUT at Dag Hammarskjold Plaza, 47th Street between First and Second Avenues. Picketing and peaceful protest actions are planned at the European Union Mission (666 Third Avenue) and the UN missions of Spain (245 East 47th St.) and Portugal (also 866 Second Ave.)

5:30 pm – RALLY at Dag Hammarskjold Plaza, in solidarity with general strike actions in Greece, Spain, Portugal, and Cyprus against austerity.

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Solidarity Rally at United Nations in New York, Wed. Nov. 14

The organizers of this action – the Campaign for Peace and Democracy, Greek-American Left Movement (Aristeri Kinisi) of New York, educators, labor and immigrant rights groups – invite U.S., Greek, international, alternative and local Greek-language media to break the silence on the allegations of torture of protesters by the Greek police and on the Greek government's evident protection of the neo-Nazi "Golden Dawn" who continue their violent attacks on immigrants and democratic freedoms, including freedom of speech.

We are inviting and encouraging the participation of the labor movement, human-rights groups, the Occupy and immigrant-rights movement, and all people concerned with human dignity and democratic rights who are willing to stand up and say: No to torture! No to Fascism and Racism! No to austerity in Europe! No to bailing out the bankers and the rich! No to the devastating, odious, debt and profiteering at the expense of the mass of the population! No to the neo-Nazi threat in Greece!

In Greece the official unemployment rate is 25% and rising, while youth unemployment is more than 50%. There is a huge humanitarian crisis as hunger, social dislocation, mass poverty, shortages of medicine and fuel are now commonplace. This situation is the consequence of the EU-driven austerity policy, and it has created the opening for the likes of the neo-Nazi "Golden Dawn" party.

November 14 Solidarity Coalition (in formation)

Nicholas Alexiou, Professor, Queens College/Greek American Left Movement/Aristeri Kinisi/SYRIZA NY

Joanne Landy, Co-Director, Campaign for Peace and Democracy

Sean Sweeney, Director, Cornell Global Labor Institute (personal capacity)

Costas Panayotakis, Associate Professor NY City College of Technology, Executive Council Member, PSC-CUNY Nicholas Levis, Occupy Astoria/LIC

Marina Sitrin, Member, 'Stop Golden Dawn'

Mike Filippou, Trade unionist, BCTGM /Aristeri Kinisi

Eric Poulos, Brecht Forum, National Lawyers Guild

Peter Bratsis, Professor, BMCC-CUNY, SYRIZA NY

Eljeer Hawkins, Queens Socialist Alternative

Eleanor Rodgers, Occupy Kensington

Natassa Romanou, Research Faculty, Columbia University, SYRIZA NY

Alan Akrivos, Co-chair, Greek American Left Movement/Aristeri Kinisi

(NOTE: Organizational affiliations are for identification purposes and do not necessarily imply an endorsement by the organization in question.)

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(Please see Attachment: Background & Demands)

Solidarity Rally at United Nations in New York, Wed. November 14

Background and Demands

From New York City – where the global financial crisis originated on Wall Street – we have watched with dismay as the austerity measures demanded by the European Union have created a social disaster in Greece and in many other nations hit by the global crisis. The recent award of the Nobel Peace Prize to the political authorities in the European Union makes a mockery of the conditions the EU has imposed on those hardest-hit by the crisis.

We have heard terrible stories of hardship and even hunger from friends and families in Greece, where unemployment for young workers now stands at 50 percent, and where often meager pensions are being cut to the level of starvation and social degradation.

An increasingly organized resistance to such EU-driven measures is being waged in all of the hardest-hit countries by workers, students and pensioners. On November 14, we shall show our solidarity with their struggles.

People from across the globe, as well as the Greek diaspora, have also watched with concern the neo-Nazi "Golden Dawn" profit from the huge social crisis by posing as an "anti-austerity" party – even as they scapegoat the most helpless, the immigrants and refugees in Greece-many of them victims of the US wars and economic crises in Asia. We have seen the Greek government fail to prosecute public and even fatal acts of violence by "Golden Dawn" members against immigrants and Greeks alike and attack basic democratic freedoms.

We have seen the Greek government itself employ brutal state violence and even torture against protesters and activists and the massive use of tear gas, and violence to attack peaceful demonstrations.

We call upon the Greek government to end immediately and to investigate and prosecute all acts of torture committed by Greek authorities; to end police protection of "Golden Dawn" and to prosecute all known acts of violence by "Golden Dawn" members; and to stop implementing the austerity package that is literally starving our people;

We call upon the European Union to suspend the forced austerity regime that has brought such hardship; to allow a full audit of the Greek (and Portuguese and Spanish) debt, and to cancel all debt payments. We call for a Europe that serves the interests of working people not the banks and the stock exchanges;

We call for an international committee of investigation of torture of protesters by the Greek police as well as its tolerance and protection of "Golden Dawn";

We call upon the people of Europe to work toward a comprehensive immigration policy for Europe and to stop making Greece responsible for the hundreds of thousands of refugees coming from countries plunged into misery by war and by the same kind of neoliberal austerity policies that are ruining Greece today. The Dublin Regulation needs to be changed; the Regulation decrees that the European country that a person first arrived in is responsible for dealing with their application for asylum. This puts excessive pressure on border areas, where states are often least able to offer asylum seekers support and protection.

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Europe as a whole, including its wealthier countries, needs to provide refuge for people fleeing oppression and economic catastrophe. Moreover, Europe as a whole, along with the U.S. needs to end its failed neoliberal policies at home and abroad.

Finally, we call upon the Greek, American and international media to investigate and report on the true origins of the debt and of the crisis in Greece and internationally; and to widely expose allegations of state-sponsored torture of prisoners and Greek government protection of "Golden Dawn."

November 14 Solidarity Coalition (in formation)

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