

# O.L.M.E.

## **MOBILISATIONS OF TEACHERS IN GREECE**

The educational federations of all levels in Greece (DOE-primary school teachers, OLME-secondary school teachers, POSDEP-Higher Education Institutions, OSEP-TEI Polytechnic colleges and Vocational Institutions) are moving to common mobilisations in order to claim for further support of public education, for an increase of the expenses on education, for teacher's support etc

We are going on a 48-hour strike on 10<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup> November 2005 and we are organising demonstrations in the big cities on 10th November.

On Saturday 3<sup>rd</sup> December a Pan-Hellenic demonstration is organised with the support of parents, school pupils and university students as well as workers' trade unions.

The text that follows is the decision on the framework of the mobilisations of OLME.

## **Decision of General Meetings of the chairmen of ELME (Our local unions)**

### *(Extensive summary)*

#### **The international political and economic – social developments**

The modern economic and social developments, which are realised in the frame of the capitalistic reconstruction, shape a different setting for the structure and the function of public education, but also for the character of the educational trade-union movement. The basic characteristics of these developments are: **enlargement of inequalities** in all the levels, **inflation of unemployment, poverty, deprivation and social exclusion** for larger groups of people, strengthening of the established forms of power and their connection with big economic interests, control of information and media, downgrading of the quality and the conditions of life and often **irreparable destructions of the natural environment**.

The liberalisation that is promoted on the economic basis of the modern societies and the constantly strengthened privatisation continuously threaten public education as a social good and an obligation of the state, and they still create more obstacles towards the achievement of the main objective for sufficient education for all the young people without barriers and discrimination.

In the course of accordance of the educational policy in our country with the negative international tendencies and developments (**GATS agreement**, the decisions of the Ministers of Education in Bologna and Bergen), it is attempted to found in Greece the perception that the major issue today is to **adapt education to the doctrine "each one for himself and the market for all"** (see **Bolkenstein directive**). The whirlwind of privatisations threatens rights and conquests of workers that were ensured after long-term fights and sacrifices and, amongst them, public education.

#### **Economic and social developments in our country**

We, workers, live in a particularly difficult period, with big and serious problems concerning our income, our work and insurance, while at the same time our labour and social rights are disputed or even suppressed.

Nowadays, **the Government is escalating the application of an antiworkers' policy** by suppressing labour and insurance rights, and is slandering not only the trade-union movement but also the workers themselves!

Under this frame, the government, by consistently applying its neoliberal politics, privatisations and conservative reformations in the frame of wider planning, voted the law on the "cooperation of public and private sector". It is a **strategic choice** that leads to surrender the competences and obligations of the state even for the basic public goods, such as education and health, to the power of the money, through dim processes, in order to increase further their profits to the expense of the needs of the socially weak.

These neoliberal and antisocial policies will lead to the further scorn of the public services, to the shrinking of the state of welfare for the profit of private individuals, to the further burdening of citizens, and particularly of the economically weak, to the suppression of the rights of the workers. With the above mentioned choices, permanence and working relations as well as insurance and retirement rights of public workers are under attack, since competences and places of work in the public sector are handed over to private individuals.

### **General governmental policy**

After the recent announcements of the government, it is evident that **the situation will inevitably worsen** for the workers, the socially weak, the pensioners and the unemployed. **The Prime Minister, while opening the International Fair of Salonica, also opened the new circle of the famous conservative- reactionary restructures and "reforms"**. The government - in a national environment of apparent economic recession and under the pressure of the IMF and the European Union (reduction of the budgetary deficit under 3% of the GNP in 2006) - are **already escalating their attack**.

The **new government budget for the year 2006** will be set under this frame (more drastic restriction of social expenses for Education –Health - Pensions, more taxes for the persons with small or medium income, and further shrinking for the Program of Public Investments with the excuse of the modernisation of the tax system etc).

### **Serious problems of Education**

The new school year has already started with a lot of problems. So, this year also **thousands of empty places for teachers continue to exist in schools all over the country**. The result is that thousands of teaching hours are lost, with harmful consequences for school work.

The policy of freezing of the educational expenses also leads to another negative phenomenon, the maintenance of double shift for many schools, while some of them, functioning in rented buildings, are already in threat of eviction. A lot of necessary educational measures are cancelled or downgraded, like support teaching, the tutorial sessions for foreigner students etc, because of the sharing of lodgings of schools, while the effectiveness of educational work is totally downgraded. The Ministry of Education owes **a total of 80 million euros to around 40.000 teachers**, who worked for the Programme of Additional Supportive Teaching, who worked overtime or on an hourly basis payment contract etc. The sovereign economic policy of the Government, which is a continuation and extension of older choices, is the root to many problems. At the same time, the strategic objective of the applied neoliberal policies is to move towards private education, a development which, combined with the unacceptably low expenses for Education, leads to further scorn of public school

and to the enlargement of inequalities in education. **However, the government will meet the powerful resistance of educational world in achieving these objectives.**

With regard to **secondary technical-vocational education**, it is a fact that the general scorn, in which it has been diachronically condemned by the applied educational policies, combined with the uncertainty that prevails today create an explosive mixture that dissolves the educational process and alienates the students from this educational choice. **Our educational system and secondary technical-vocational education cannot stand any further experimentation.** What is required immediately is for the Ministry of Education to **promote positive solutions for the problems of secondary technical-vocational institutions (TEE).**

At the same time, immediate **measures to support TEE for the next year should be taken**, so much for the improvement of the material and technical and laboratorial function, as for the support of teachers. **Immediate improvements of the unfair university entrance exams system should be promoted** that would extend the choices of students and increase the places that are available for the students of TEE.

**We will not accept, with the excuse of abolishing orientations of studies, to decrease the places of work and to place our colleagues under uncertainty.** In any case, no matter what changes will be made, **the public and free character of technical-vocational education and training should be guaranteed**, as well as **the permanent places of work for the teachers of TEE.**

The Minister of Education has recently modified the timetable for Gymnasium, **Lyceum and Musical Schools**. We expressed our disagreement with the arbitrary, fragmentary and non-scientific decision of the Ministry of Education to increase the hours of teaching of Ancient Greek language and at the same time decrease the hours of teaching of the second foreigner language and Arts, a decision that has bad effects on the ideological content of education but also on the working status of teachers. **OLME insists on the demand of total revision of the programme of study that is provided today in general education through essential dialogue.**

And while we should be working towards the enlargement of access to tertiary education – a direction supported by the necessity of the establishment of 12-hour compulsory education, a commitment already made by the government – a law was voted by the governmental majority in the Parliament on the establishment of **a lowest grade limit for the university entrance exams.** It is actually a measure of exclusion that leads precisely to the opposite direction, the decrease, that is to say, of the student population. **The results and the side effects of such a measure will be the urge of students to resort to all kinds of private tuition centres, the increase of students studying abroad and the increase of various private "centres of free studies", the closing of regional schools, as well as further changes of the examinations system. This fragmentary measure strengthens the class barriers in education and will affect the weak classes.** As long as the educational policy is guided by the doctrine of "it is the market that decides", education as social good will surrender to "money" and the fundamental right of access to knowledge for all will become merchandise.

### **Our economic and insurance claims and the politics of austerity**

As far as the effects of **the governmental politics on education** are concerned, we realise that the extended **austerity** has led our salary to unacceptable low levels. The maintenance of the incentive pay bonus is functioning as an immediate link of **the**

**salary connected with productivity and towards individualisation** opposed to collectiveness among workers.

Moreover, the budgetary politics for 2005 strengthen **the politics of austerity** at our expense. At the same time, the government, not only did not realise the pre-election announcement for the increase of teachers' salary, but "forgot" its explicit pre-election engagement with regard to the obvious **obligation of the state for "the 176 Euros that should be also paid to the teachers"**.

Our demand **to live with dignity from our salary**, a demand that dominated during the mobilisations in 1997, is becoming even more urgent.

Our sector has **always been against** politics that distribute money in favour of the high income social classes and at the expense of the workers, with politics that decrease the social expenses on education, health and insurance, that extend existing inequalities, a fact that is more evident from the comparison with the employees in other state – members of the European Union.

Regarding our **insurance and retirement rights, they continue to be in the foresight of neoliberal policies.** The International Monetary Fund, the European Union and the Association of Greek Industrialists press for new, unfavourable interventions for the employees. More concretely, they propose the further reduction of pensions, the reduction of complementary pension, the increase of the age limits, the downgrading of the public character of the insurance system and the further support of private insurance.

### **Labour rights and our own responsibility**

We are **decided to defend**, united with the entire educational community, Democracy in schools and our conquered labour rights. We will not allow them to turn the school to a place of guidance and compulsion for teachers and students.

We demand the abolishment of the Ministerial Decision, referring to the duties and the competences of education administrators. We require respect **in** our labour rights and complete **pedagogical freedom** and democracy in schools with the abolishment **of the complete framework** that has been built up to now, attempting to manipulate all teachers. We are opposite to the social categorisation of schools through the evaluation of school units. **We say no to the evaluation - guidance of teachers.**

**We organise our collective resistance in all levels – OLME (federation), ELME (local unions) and individual teachers, cancelling in the practice each effort of its application to the extend that it was attempted.**

**We resist against the authoritarian framework** that has been created during the last years in education, in the process of choice of education administrators and the placement of "temporary" headmasters and heads of education offices. We are opposed **to the indefinite extension of service for "temporary" staff**, as it is promoted by the Ministry of Education with the recent law.

We have been demanding the **direct configuration and application of an institutional framework for the choice of education administrators that will be in accordance with our demands and the needs of education.**

### **WE CLAIM:**

#### **FINANCIAL CLAIMS: TO LIVE WITH DIGNITY WITH OUR SALARY**

- **A collective agreement on all matters for teachers that will cover the increase of our salaries at 25%, the direct issuing of the sum of 176 euros,**

the incorporation of our benefits in the basic salary, the doubling of family benefits, the hourly compensation and the compensation for the university entrance exams. The relation of the initial salary to the final salary should be 1:2, 5. Free wage development - not to connect the salary with productivity. Indexing of the tax scale with a tax-free limit reaching the initial salary of teachers.

#### **RETIREMENT-INSURANCE CLAIMS: FOR A FAIR RETIREMENT**

- Complete retirement after 30 years of work. The main retirement should be calculated at 80% of the total salary during the actual month of a teacher asking for retirement. Complete medical insurance and health care (dental care, opticians etc.)
- Abolishment of the existing retirement-insurance framework and, more specifically, abolishment of any division regarding the age limit for those appointed before and after ' 83 and before and after ' 93.

#### **WORKING CONDITIONS - APPOINTMENTS - TRAINING: FOR PEDAGOGIC FREEDOM, MASSIVE APPOINTMENTS, AND SUPPORT OF OUR WORK**

- Respect of our working rights and complete pedagogic freedom and democracy in schools with the abolishment of the entire framework that has been built up to now, with which the manipulation of the teacher is attempted. No to evaluation – manipulation of teachers and the social categorisation of schools through their evaluation.
- Massive appointments based on the real needs of education. Immediate appointment of all substitute teachers with 18 months of teaching experience until 30-6-2004. Abolishment of the institution of hiring substitute teachers paid on an hourly basis. Complete work, insurance and retirement rights for substitute teachers with a 12-month contract.
- Annual training for at least 4.000 teachers providing for their exemption from their teaching duties.

#### **EDUCATIONAL CLAIMS: FOR PUBLIC FREE 12-YEAR COMPULSORY EDUCATION FOR ALL CHILDREN**

- Immediate increase of governmental expenses for education at 5% of GNP.
- Immediate establishment of 12-year compulsory, Public and Free education for all, providing for a 12-year united school and with compensatory, economic and educational measures. Educational Priority Zones, in order to help all students to complete 12-year education. Support of Special Education.
- Immediate and essential upgrading of TEE (vocational education) aiming at its equivalent integration to Upper Secondary school (lyceum), based on OLME's proposals. In any case, the public and free character of technical vocational education and training should be guaranteed, as well as the permanent work places of teachers of TEE. Establishment of a maximum limit of 25 students per class in gymnasium-lyceum, 20 students in the university entrance exams preparatory classes of Lyceum and in the TEE, and 10 students per teachers in the laboratories of TEE, Gymnasium and Lyceum.

- **Abolishment of the university entrance exams and the third class of Lyceum. The certificate of lyceum should be granted after school exams. The university entrance exams should take place after graduation from Lyceum under the responsibility of secondary education.**

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