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Greece

# **Eleftherotypia's Workers are back with their own newspaper !**

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**Here it is ! Done ! The workers at Eleftherotypia, one of the biggest and most prestigious Greek daily newspapers, go forward undertaking the great endeavour of editing their own newspaper *Workers at Eleftherotypia!***

From Wednesday, Feb. 15th, kiosks all over the country are displaying one more newspaper next to the usual ones, a newspaper written by its own workers. This is a newspaper which not only aims at bringing the fight of Eleftherotypia's workers to the fore, but also seeks to be a newspaper giving real information, especially at such critical times for Greece.

The 800 men and women workers at the firm H.K. Tegopoulos, which edits the Eleftherotypia newspaper, from journalists to technician staff, from cleaners to clerks and caretakers, have gone on continuous strike since 2011, Dec. 22th as their employer stopped paying their salaries in August 2011

Eleftherotypia workers, seeing that their employer has requested application of section nr. 99 of the Bankruptcy Act, in order to protect himself against his creditors, i.e. in reality his workers to whom he owes a total of approximately 7 million euro in unpaid salaries (!) have decided to have their own newspaper published, at the same time as continuing mobilisations and taking legal action. A newspaper distributed by news agencies all over the country, at the price of 1 euro (against the usual 1.30 euro for the other newspapers), in order to provide financial support to the strike fund.

As they haven't been paid for the last seven months, the female and male workers at Eleftherotypia are being subsidised by a solidarity movement from various collectivities or even isolated citizens who donate money or make donations in kind (foodstuffs, blankets, etc.). By publishing their own newspaper and thanks to the money collected through its sales, they will be able to support their strike financially without any kind of mediation. In other words, they are making progress towards some kind of self-management.

The newspaper has been produced in a friendly workshop, in an ambiance that is reminiscent of clandestine newspaper editing, since the management, as soon as they found out that the journalists were going ahead with their publishing enterprise, first cut off the heating, then the system used by the sub-editors to write their articles, and last, shut down the workshop itself, even though access to the newspaper's offices still remains free for the time being. Worker's Eleftherotypia was printed at printing works that do not belong to the company, with the support of the press workers' unions, because the staff of its own printing works felt reluctant to occupy their work place.

The management, afraid of the possible impact of the self-managed publication of the newspaper, have threatened to take legal action; they are using intimidation by threatening to fire the editorial committee who were democratically elected by the general meeting of strikers.

However, Greek public opinion, and not only Eleftherotypia readers, had been eagerly waiting for its publication – we were overwhelmed by messages cheering the journalists for publishing the newspaper themselves - since dictatorship of the markets is coupled with media dictatorship that makes Greek reality difficult to read and interpret. Had it not been for the general consensus that was maintained by most media in 2010, based on the argument that there was no alternative to Papandreou government signing the first Memorandum, whose patent failure has now been acknowledged by everyone, we might have seen the Greek people rising up much earlier in order to overturn a policy that has proven disastrous for all Europe.

The case of Eletherotypia is not unique. Tens of private sector enterprises have long ceased paying their employees,

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and their stockholder have virtually abandoned them waiting for better times... In the press, the situation is even worse. Because of the crisis, the banks have stopped lending to companies while employers refuse to pay for it out of their pockets and choose to call on section 99 – at least 100 listed on the stock exchange companies have already done so – trying to save time in view of a possible bankruptcy of Greece and a probable exit of the euro zone.

Eleftherotypia was created in 1975 as “its sub-editors’ newspaper” during the period of radicalization that followed the fall of dictatorship in 1974. Today, in times marked by the new “dictatorship of international creditors”, Eleftherotypia’s women and men workers have the ambition to become the bright example of a totally different way of information, resisting against “terror” from the employers as well as the press lords, who would not like at all to see workers take in their hands the fate of information.