

<https://www.internationalviewpoint.org/spip.php?article2547>



Greece

# **Women of Europe, Demonstrate Solidarity with Greek Women!**

- IV Online magazine - 2012 - IV446 - March 2012 -

Publication date: Thursday 22 March 2012

---

**Copyright © International Viewpoint - online socialist magazine - All rights reserved**

---

### **Interview with Sonia Mitralias, a founding member of the Initiative of Greek Women against the Debt and the Austerity Measures, as well as of the Greek Committee against the Debt.**

**The Initiative of Greek Women Against the Debt and the Austerity Measures made its first public appearance on March 8, 2011, on International Women's Day. What drove you to take this initiative?**

Sonia Mitralia – First of all, there is the fact that those who make up the sadly celebrated Troi<sup>ka</sup>, in other words the IMF, the European Central Bank and the European Commission, are imposing on us measures and policies which are not only impoverishing but also destroying Greek society. These measures, which were still completely unimaginable yesterday, constitute a historical turning point in the history of contemporary Europe. They now prefigure the destiny of everyone in Europe. With what consequences? A life of absolute poverty, unemployment, violence and of constantly being preoccupied with survival.

Some women, coming from the Greek component of the World March of Women, took the initiative after the shock treatment imposed by the Troika. In the beginning, we were thunderstruck, unable to react because we were feeling what women who have been raped feel when they are brought face to face with their attacker. By its "shock strategy", a technique of terror and violence, the Troika wants to impose its absolute power on us; it wants to use us as guinea-pigs to measure our resistance. In short, they have transformed Greece into a European laboratory of the application of their cruel policies.

But for us, women, there is worse. In addition to all that we share with the whole of the Greek population, the policies of the Troika are aimed at us in particular, at sucking our blood "as a top priority".

### **Why are women especially targeted by the austerity measures of the Troi<sup>ka</sup>?**

The destruction and the privatization of public services imposed by the Troika are today synonymous for millions of Greek women of taking on responsibility themselves for the social tasks for which the state was previously responsible. Concretely, Greek women are now obliged to substitute for practically all the public utility services, for the Welfare State forced to its knees and dismantled by the policies of the Troika. It is they who are responsible for the house, the family, the tasks formerly carried out by the kindergartens, the hospitals, the old people's homes, the unemployment funds, the psychiatric hospitals, and even by the Social Security. At a time when young and not-so-young people (even up to the age of 40 or 45!) are obliged to go back to live with their parents because they are unemployed (50 per cent, half of young people!) and can no longer pay their rent, their electricity bills, their food bills, it is their mothers and their sisters who have to feed them, to attend every day to their physical, but also psychological, condition. And all that is absolutely free! The enormous sums thus saved by the public authorities go directly to the payment of the debt. So you can imagine what this daily surplus of work represents for these millions of women in terms of physical and mental fatigue, of nervous tension and premature ageing.

It really is the "holdup of the century", which is never mentioned, about which nobody speaks.

That is moreover why they camouflage it under the ideological packaging of a return to so-called family solidarity and to the real "nature" of women, an ideology which wants to see them in the home, devoted to their role as mothers and wives!

In short, what we are seeing is a well organized offensive by the worst patriarchal reactionaries, sealing thus the marriage of neoliberal capitalism with medieval patriarchy!

### **What have you already done?**

In the beginning, we took part in mobilizations against the consequences of the austerity measures. We fought alongside parents against school closures and in support of their demands for schoolbooks and heating for their children. Today, it is this movement of parents which organizes the distribution of milk and sandwiches to schoolchildren who, suffering from malnutrition, faint in the classroom (10 per cent of schoolchildren suffer from nutritive deficiencies).

What marked the development of our Initiative was our active participation in the International Conference Against the Debt, organized successfully in Athens by the Greek Campaign for a Citizens' Audit of Public Debt (May 6, 2011). Just after that, there began the movement of the Greek "indignant ones" (Aganaktismeni) which swept over the whole country for three months. Our Initiative took part in it and our large banner floated for a long time over the heart of Syntagma Square, right in front of the Greek Parliament.

### **What are your activities now?**

Very recently, we led a large campaign against the decision of the government to make women pay (1,000 euros) to give birth and especially against the refusal of some hospitals to allow women who could not pay to give birth! Our campaign denounced the fact that the government gives priority to reimbursing the banks and other creditors and not to the satisfaction of the elementary needs of its population. In short, we explained that two thirds of the budget goes to the payment of the debt, and then there is nothing left for health, education, social services. It is no accident that our campaign – which continues – has had great success ...

Our fight will not be easy. But we no longer have a choice. Millions of Greek women must fight now for their survival. Your solidarity, the solidarity of all women, is invaluable and even vital for them. Demonstrate it now ...

This interview appeared in *Tout est Ã nous!* (weekly of the New Anti-capitalist Party, NPA), no. 139, March 8, 2012.