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Greece

# Thousands protest Greek government in Thessaloniki march

- News from around the world -

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**About 20,000 people demonstrated on September the 10th in Thessalonika against the neoliberal politics of the Greek right-wing government. It was the biggest national demonstration in Thessaloniki since June 2003 (EU summit).**

The Greek prime minister Kostas Karamanlis went to Thessaloniki in order to inaugurate the National Trade Fair (the biggest EXPO in the country) announcing his economic plans for the near future.

Over the last summer, the government imposed three laws that challenged the labour standards concerning working hours (legalising flexible jobs), permanency in the broad public sector and the pension system of the bank employees.

[[https://internationalviewpoint.org/IMG/jpg/Greek\\_protest.jpg](https://internationalviewpoint.org/IMG/jpg/Greek_protest.jpg)]

Unfortunately these attacks did not meet the appropriate resistance from the unions. The only serious response was a one-month strike of the bank employees but without any success since it remained isolated. All this took place in a period which is characterized by the lack of any political or social opposition from the social democrats (PASOK) who have been completely integrated into neoliberalism.

The demonstration in Thessaloniki was the first massive mobilization of the trade unions against the politics of the right-wing government. Thousands of workers took to the streets spontaneously in order to demand a more social policy. Hundreds of trade unions and social movements, mainly from the Northern Part of Greece, were present with their banners.

[[https://internationalviewpoint.org/IMG/jpg/okde\\_deth\\_05.jpg](https://internationalviewpoint.org/IMG/jpg/okde_deth_05.jpg)]

Demo poster by OKDE Spartakos, Greek section of the FI

The demo was dominated by slogans against the government, for the first time after its election. The demands of the demo were against the abolition of the 8-hours working time, the new wave of privatizations in the public sector, poverty and massive unemployment. Of course, one demonstration cannot change the situation itself, but we all hope this successful event to be a turning point for the working class movement in Greece.

One important factor of this mobilization was the Greek Social Forum, which is a broad front of left organizations, unions and social movements. The Greek Social Forum has undertaken a critical role for the preparatory of Athens Social Forum next spring and its main objective is to concentrate and develop all these experiences of the social movements.