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Greece

# What happens next after the successful strike against poverty in Greece?

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**Wednesday 17 April saw one of the biggest strikes in Greece in recent years: 100% in transport, 70% in construction, big numbers in businesses and two-wheeler deliveries. But virtually nothing in the supermarkets, which are at the heart of the accusations of exploitation of misery. It has to be said that recently, trade union repression, which also affects the public sector, has been stronger than ever, with threats to contract renewals.**

The reason the turnout was so high is that Greece is almost the most expensive country in Europe. The figures given by GSEE, the single private sector confederation behind the strike, are edifying: in three years, the price of olive oil, a basic product in Greece, has risen by 87%, dairy products by 34% and electricity by 39%. In the face of poverty, the KEPE Centre is proposing the introduction of free school meals for all children. Evictions of indebted homeowners are on the increase, despite frequent opposition from neighbours. For 6 out of 10 households, the monthly income is enough for just 19 days, and the various forms of "aid", despite the staging, are a bluff, and even a scandal: the Minister of Health is introducing a "special service" for operations in the public sector... for which a charge is made. And while the government rejoices in the country's attractiveness as a tourist destination, the revenue generated (20 billion over the first 11 months of 2023) is not being used in any way to combat this terrible impoverishment.

## Union divisions

GSEE had been absent from the recent mobilizations, although the public sector federation ADEDY joined in, and ended up calling for mobilization - although ADEDY did not! - to demand decent wages and the restoration of collective agreements. While the strike was successful - particularly in certain branches of the public sector - the demonstrations were less so! One of the reasons was division: on one side, PAME, the trade union current of the KKE (Greek Communist Party) with an anti-GSEE as well as anti-Right stance; on the other, the rank-and-file unions and part of the radical left; and finally GSEE, with its radical accents strictly for show, and with it part of the radical and reformist left.

## All together!

As Prin, the newspaper of the NAR group, says of the demonstrations in Thessaloniki, "the rallies had their lowest turnout for many years, and this proves the crisis of the current trade union movement and the absence of a militant project and a framework that make workers want to fight". This observation applies to the whole country, even if we can see once again that the call from the GSEE bureaucrats led to a successful strike. Thanks to the massive student assemblies and the "All Together" demonstrations, it was able to overcome the divisions to last and, even if it has not yet won, it has shown the way.

20 April 2024

Translated by *International Viewpoint* from [l'Anticapitaliste](#).

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