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SOLIDARITY ASSEMBLY FOR KONSTANTINA KUNEVA

When they mess with one of us they mess with all of us

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An updated short presentation of the recent riots in Athens and Thessaloniki through the eyes of some proletarian participants

On the 27th of December we occupied the headquarters of ISAP (Athens Piraeus Electric Railway) as a first response to the murderous attack against Konstantina Kuneva on the 23-12-2008. Sulphuric acid was thrown at her face as she was returning home from work.

Konstantina is in the intensive care ward of Evangelismos hospital suffering serious sight and respiratory system problems.

Who was Konstantina ? Why was she attacked ?

Konstantina is one among the hundreds of female immigrant workers who have been working for years as cleaners. She is general secretary of the Panattic Union of Cleaners and Domestic Personnel. She is a militant union organizer, well known for her stance against various bosses. Just last week she had a clash with the employer company "OIKOMET" when she demanded for herself and the rest of her colleagues to get paid the whole amount of money of her Christmas bonus. She also denounced illegal procedures in payments. Just a short while ago the same company fired her mother in an act of revenge against her and she got herself an unfavourable transfer to Marousi station. There is also a case of a three-part meeting in the Labour Inspection Office still pending on the 5-1-2009 concerning a denouncement of hers. Situations like these are not at all rare in the field of cleaning and employee subcontracting companies. It's exactly the opposite.

This is the rule when it comes to cleaning company contractors : delayed contracts, stolen wages, stolen overtime payments, differences between contract assets and what the employee actually gets paid, selection of almost exclusively immigrant male and female workers with green card status (legal residency in Greece ranging from 1 to 5 years – in most cases only 1 year) so they can be held in a state of hostageship, social security benefits that are never attributed. All these under the support of the public sector and enterprises which are aware, incite and support working conditions reminiscent of the middle ages.

OIKOMET in particular, a cleaning company with enterprises all over Greece and owned by Nikitas Oikonomakis who is a member of PASOK (Greek Socialist Party), "officially" employs 800 workers – on the other hand, workers say that their number is at least twice as much and during the last 3 years the turnover amounts to 3000). Illegal procedures on the part of the employer company are on the everyday list. To be more specific, employees sign "blank page contracts" and they are never given a copy of them. They work 6 hours a day but get paid for 4,5 (including stamp) because in this way they appear to be working less than 30 hours per week on paper and the boss is not forced to include them in the "higher stamp category". Employees get terrorized, they get unfavourable transfers, they get fired and blackmailed into resigning voluntarily (a female employee was threatened by her employer into signing her resignation after being held for 4 hours in a space owned by the company). The boss organised a "yellow" (company) union in order to manipulate employees while he fires and hires people as he wishes, ruling out any prospect of communication inside the workplace or collective action.

What is the connection between OIKOMET and ISAP ?

OIKOMET has been assigned as a contractor the cleaning of ISAP (as well as the cleaning of other public sector and corporations) because it can "provide" the cheapest deal that includes the highest level of exploitation and devaluation of work. This "regime" of "offer and demand" is based on public sector organisations such as ISAP. ISAP is an accomplice in maintaining this regime of crude exploitation despite repeated denouncements by the

un-ion.

The murderous attack against our colleague was an act of revenge and had the intent to serve as an example. The target was not coincidental. Female, immigrant, militant union organizer, mother of an underage child, she was the most vulnerable for the bosses.

The method was not coincidental. It resembles "dark" ages and aims to "brand", to serve as an example and terrorize us.

The time chosen was not coincidental. The media, the political parties, the Church, businessmen and union bosses have been trying to ridicule the social movement that has taken the form of an explosion and talk about the cold-blooded murder of 15-year-old Alex-andros as the result of a bullet getting redirected. In this pretext, the attack on Konstantina is lost in the everyday news.

This murderous attack on the part of the employers was well-planned.
Konstantina is one of us. Her struggle for DIGNITY and SOLIDARITY is also our struggle.

The attack on Konstantina has left a mark in all our hearts. It has left a mark in our memory as have done the racist pogroms, the concentration camps for immigrants, the attacks by thugs working for the state, the workplace accidents, the people murdered by the state, the working conditions that resemble galleys, the purges, the lay-offs and the terror. All these show the long way ahead for the social and class struggle.

Our hearts are filled with sorrow and rage and one sentence comes to our lips :

**MURDERERS, YOUR TIME WILL COME
THE EMPLOYERS TERROR SHALL NOT PASS**

SOLIDARITY ASSEMBLY
FOR KONSTANTINA KUNEVA