

## **A call for support of the struggle of Vio.Me**

Dear solidarity supporters,

We would like to inform you about the latest developments in the struggle of the workers of Vio.Me.

As you know, for four years we have been fighting for our life and dignity. We, the workers, have chosen to establish social alliances. We have rejected the proposals made by various political organizations to have an “exclusive” relationship with our struggle and to direct it on narrow partisan criteria. Nevertheless, we have always all accepted invitations to speak and communicate.

When large parts of society decided to stand by us and support us with whatever means they had available, a large solidarity network was created. Consequently we managed to build relationships of trust, through common assemblies where the wider community can participate, where together we make decisions on the political course of the struggle, as well as on many other issues.

Many political organizations agreed with the political framework that we, together with the wider community, have set. To this day they support our effort to operate the factory with workers’ control of production and self-management by the workers’ assembly.



Among the political forces that supported our struggle was SYRIZA, through statements and commitments for an immediate solution to the issue of operation of the factory, made by the current prime-minister himself.

Of course, after SYRIZA came to power, the statements and the commitments became more and more vague. The determination they demonstrated when they were in opposition was replaced by timidity, and by proposals that we make compromises in a different framework than what we had previously agreed upon.

Their great “achievement” after eight months in government is to abandon the struggle of Vio.Me to the machinations of the judicial system. The same judicial system that, despite having condemned former owner of Vio.Me Christina Philippou to dozens of months in prison, allows her to walk free,

supposedly to do community service at a municipality where she has strong “connections”. To this day, she has never showed up at the place where she is supposed to do community work.

We are faced with a judicial system that allows those who have abused and destroyed the Greek society for five years now to walk free, never taking any action to punish them. The “first ever left-wing government” leaves us in the hands of this judicial system.

The political standpoint of the judges is evident through the decisions they have made up to this moment: they have gone as far as saying that we have no legitimate right to demand the money owed by our former employers! In all our attempts to claim our money, both by intervention of the property of Philkeram, and by demanding to operate the factory again, we have received the same answers.

And of course, they do not take any action to find a solution for the operation of the factory, so we, the workers who have decided to stay on, can escape unemployment.



According to the court decisions, the unified plot of land where the Vio.Me premises are located is auctioned on Thursday 26 November, 2015, and for three consecutive Thursdays thereafter. If no interested buyer is found, they will continue with the process until they achieve to sell the land, therefore evicting us from the factory.

This land consists of fourteen separate plots, some of which were directly or indirectly donated by the Greek government to former owner Phillipou in recognition of the “social contribution” of job creation. Now they are put to auction to satisfy the creditors of Vio.Me’s parent company Philkeram: the Inland Revenue Office, the Social Insurance Service, former workers of Philkeram, banks and suppliers.

The premises of Vio.Me represent about 1/7 of the total land, and the area in which it lies could easily be separated from the rest of Philkeram’s real estate. But the employees of Vio.Me are never mentioned in the bankruptcy proceedings, although Vio.Me was a subsidiary of Philkeram, driven to destruction by the parent company’s bankruptcy. Vio.Me is completely neglected, although the mismanagement of the Phillipou family, who transferred funds from Vio.Me and overburdened it with debt for their personal gain, was largely responsible for the bankruptcy. This is a proven fact,

since a study by consultants DELOIT concluded there was capacity for normal operation for both companies.



The judicial system once again sides with the forces of capital and makes rulings against the workers who assert the right to work. And of course, the state does not stand up to the challenge of providing solutions.

For this reason, we, the workers of Vio.Me, invite all of you, who have been standing beside us during all this time of struggle, to be present on Thursday 26 November at the auction of the land, to abort their plan to evict us from the Vio.Me factory. A space that we have, for two years now, managed to turn into a place of work and a place of freedom.

We invite you to stand beside us, to support every effort of the workers to make the forces of production autonomous from the capitalist class, a class which anyway has relocated all production abroad.

We invite you to support the operation of the factory, since we, the workers, have declared that we are not leaving, that our lives are now linked to this factory.

We invite you to stand beside us, so we can affirm all together that a solution exists beyond the advice of the “experts”: this time around, the solution lies with those who are directly involved in the struggle, not with the luminaries.

In solidarity,

The general assembly of the workers at Vio.Me