

'Violence is breaking out as the protesters get more emotional'

AS protests on the streets of Athens turned violent, eyewitness STEVE GRIFFITHS principal lecturer in economics at Swansea Metropolitan University looked on.



THE anti-austerity demonstration in Athens continues with renewed vigour.

It has never gone away. Visitors can give witness to the incessant drumming, marching and the community of tents camped in the boulevards in the heart of the city and outside Parliament, in Syntagma Square. The central district is at a standstill.

While the "usual suspects" of left wing groups, alternative lifestyle activists and demo voyeurs are here, one cannot help but be impressed by the huge turnout of ordinary workers and citizens.

Men, women and children seem united against a feared future. There is also an impressive entrepreneurial spirit shown by street vendors of whistles, flags and campaign T-shirts!

The demonstration at heart organised by the labour movement and radical parties, some of whom display daunting flag poles as thick as baseball bats, perhaps in anticipation of trouble, appears to have widespread popular support, hence the numbers and longevity of the campaign.

They are attempting to stop the debate by Prime Minister George Papandreu, who seeks to implement deep cuts to comply with IMF instructions.

The atmosphere started in a carnival-like and good humoured manner. Folk songs, patriotic anthems and political chants mingle with stylish



POLICE CHALLENGED Demonstrators confront riot police at Syntagma Square in front of the Greek Parliament in central Athens during a rally against plans for new austerity measures.

Greeks looking cool even when protesting. The numbers are significant. I waited 40 minutes for one group to march past before being able to cross a major road.

Stalemate seems to be the short-term outcome. The PM is unlikely to back down, unlike some Socialist MPs who are wavering. The resignation of one was greeted by loud cheers by the crowd. The government faces choosing unpopular policies or possible economic meltdown.

The protesters feel betrayed by politicians for past policies and practices. The emotions are intense and shared by Greeks across the political spectrum. Perhaps inevitably with such a charged atmosphere, violence is breaking out in Athens at 2pm. The crowd has nowhere to go and is getting increasingly emotional.

The police are being challenged to restore order to the streets. There is confusion over the cause, but police threw tear gas canisters into the crowd which was pressing on the Parliament building entry gates.

Some allege no provocation. Others that stones were thrown by radical

elements in the crowd. Most in the crowd were unprepared, resorting to makeshift protection.

There were few serious injuries, but I witnessed an ambulance being driven into the main square. It took on two minor injuries and one serious. The most serious was taken on board in a fixed stretcher in case of spinal/neck injuries. It seemed the main injuries were caused by the crowd fleeing from the gas.

Later small skirmishes are breaking out in side streets off the main square.

I witnessed young men digging up road stone cobbles to throw at police. Small dramas are being played out. A small group of riot police were trapped in a side street. Some groups in the crowd outnumbering them ten to one started throwing stones. A group of peaceful protesters linked arms and stopped the attack.

Later police charged to restore order, using tear gas and thunder flashes, but were driven back by stone and firework throwing protestors.

It looks like a stormy night in prospect in Athens.

Four schools win their way to playground makeovers

FOUR Port Talbot schools are to get a playground makeover after winning an eco-competition with the company which is building the new Harbour Way link road into the town.

Costain asked pupils to devise a plan on how best to enhance the environment of their schools.

Groups from St Joseph's Primary, Tywyn Primary, Eastern Primary and Central Junior School had to present their pitch to a panel from Costain and explain why their project should be supported by the Harbour Way contractors.

Due to the high standard of all entries, Costain said it had decided to help all four schools.

Ieuan Davies, community relations manager, said: "The schools really did put everything into their pitches."

"We saw singing, dancing, acrobatics and even had a musical performance."

Michael Daley, head teacher of St Joseph's Primary, said: "It was a terrific opportunity for members of our school council to have the opportunity to make a presentation to professionals in a business/industrial setting."

1ST CHOICE WEDDING EXHIBITIONS



Sun 26th June 2011

Glyn Clydach Hotel, Longford, Neath

Open 11am - 4pm

Free Admission * Free Goodie Bag

More events taking place in South Wales for Sept/Oct

Contact us for more information

Tel: 01639 642439

www.1stchoice-exhibitions.co.uk

NOW AT SLATERS

ONESIXFIVE
ONE BUTTON
SLIMFIT SUIT

£75

FREE
ALTERATIONS

slaters

MENSWEAR WOMENSWEAR FORMAL HIRE

OPEN 7 DAYS

SLATERS SWANSEA

1 CASTLE GARDENS,

SWANSEA SA1 1JE

T: 01792 645072

www.slaters.co.uk



Maths week boosts skills

A SWANSEA Council-supported scheme is helping young pupils boost their maths skills by making learning the subject more fun.

As part of maths week children will see how what they learn in the classroom can be used in the real world as they grow up.

Among the events this week is an activity where pupils will get a small sum of money and challenged to turn it into a profit.

They will be aiming to make money by creating and selling crafts, games and cookery and the winning team will be able to choose a treat for their class.

Lynwen Barnsley, council mathematics advisor to schools, said: "It is vitally important children are engaged with maths from an early age and learn not to fear it."

"Maths weeks are just one of the initiatives happening around Swansea to engage pupils and help parents play a role in giving youngsters the skills they need for their future lives and careers."

EXCLUSIVE CITY BREAKS

Flying from Bristol Airport

FROM JUST £149PP

Barcelona

3 nights

B&B Acta Mimic

from

£199pp

Prague

3 nights

B&B Prague Centre

from

£189pp

Jersey

3 nights B&B

Apollo Hotel

from

£179pp

Rome

3 nights

B&B Giglio

from

£169pp

Krakow

3 nights

B&B RT Monopol

from

£159pp

Dublin

3 nights

B&B Dublin City

from

£159pp

C.Del Sol

3 nights B&B,

Ball Hotel

from

£149pp

FREE HALF BOARD UPGRADE

Majorca

3 nights

B&B Sol Magaluf Park

from

£149pp

FREE HALF BOARD UPGRADE



All based on 3 nights. Limited availability - please book early to avoid disappointment

Call now for details

01792 482415

www.thgholidays.co.uk

or call in any branch of Travel House

THG
HOLIDAYS.CO.UK