

Dear Rick,

This is to inform you that I was refused entry to the United States at JFK Airport on Thursday June 8 on political grounds!

I arrived to the US to participate in the How Class Works conference, at Stony Brook University. After being detained for a number of hours at the airport, I was then questioned by the FBI and ultimately sent back to Athens by the border police. They claimed that I was denied entry because of a visa irregularity despite the fact that I had travelled to the United States on exactly this visa several times in the past and had just checked with the U.S. Embassy in Athens before coming to confirm that the visa was valid even though it was in the final six months of its ten-year duration.

The interrogation by the FBI focussed on my political beliefs and affiliations, which I find totally repellent, an extravagant theatre of the absurd, and a clear clue of the extremist right-wing policy of the present-day US administration.

This refusal of entry was yesterday's front page news in nearly all newspapers in Athens and elsewhere in Greece, the conservatives included, and was also extensively discussed in today's papers. Most of the radio stations in Athens reported it for several hours on Friday afternoon as first piece of news. I have been giving dozens of interviews to radio stations and newspapers on Friday. I also gave a press conference soon after my arrival, parts of which were broadcasted by several TV stations. Below are the relevant links of two of the country's biggest newspapers. (One should understand Greek to be able to read them. However, we will probably translate some excerpts soon).

All Greek opposition political parties (i.e. The Socialist Party [PASOK], the Communist Party [KKE] and the Coalition of the Radical Left [SYRIZA]) drafted resolutions condemning the United States for this action; one party (SYRIZA, of which I am a member) has already presented such a resolution to the European Parliament. The Confederation of Greek University Teachers, the union representing academics in Greece, is joining in the protests. Human rights organizations have also taken stance.

Professor Michael Zweig, the How Class Works conference coordinator, has already applied to the leaders of Stony Brook University and United University Professions to alert them to the situation, in seeking some possible actions or measures.

Would it be worthwhile to think of some more alternatives?

Hasta siempre,

John

http://www.enet.gr/online/online_text/c=112.id=7731524

http://www.enet.gr/online/online_text/c=110.dt=10.06.2006.id=4338164

<http://www.ethnos.gr/article.asp?catid=5348&subid=2&pubid=48303>