

Greek Elder Statesmen Issue Appeal To Save Their Nation

Feb. 18—On Feb. 15, a young woman, the mother of a disabled child, stood on the ledge of a building in Athens, intending to jump to her death. Two weeks before, the perfidious “Troika”—the European Commission, European Central Bank, and the IMF—demanded that 150,000 public sector workers be fired, in addition to those thousands who have already lost their jobs. That same week, two of those fired workers killed themselves. Since 2009, when Greece’s neck came under the boot of the financial empire, suicides have risen by 22%.

But tens of thousands more Greeks have taken to the streets in protests against the crushing austerity measures, in the face of intolerable conditions imposed by the bankers.

The new Memorandum of Understanding imposed on Greece by the European Financial Stability Facility on Feb. 8, and passed by the Greek Parliament, if carried out, ensures that the nation will, in short order, be fully devoured by the insatiable hunger of the collapsing imperial financial order headquartered in London. Under its terms, an additional EU3.3 billion in cuts, over and above those made before, will be imposed. The new Memorandum specifies which civil service jobs are to be eliminated, and how the privatization of almost all public assets should be carried out; it calls for cuts in private sector wages, including the minimum wage, the elimination of collective bargaining rights of unions, and much more. The dictatorship of the financial bloodsuckers, if allowed to continue, will spell the

end of the Greek nation.

Is it any wonder then, that the tyranny of the Troika is being compared to the Nazi occupation of Greece in World War II?

Now, two highly respected elder statesmen and war heroes, the world-famous composer, 87-year old Mikis Theodorakis, and the writer-politician Manolis Glezos, who turns 90 in September, have come forward to rally their compatriots, once again, as they did in the Resistance against the Nazis, to defend the nation, against the “Empire of Money.” When, at a mass demonstration Feb. 13 outside the parliament in Athens, the two Resistance fighters were tear-gassed by police, Theodorakis challenged, “I am going inside to look into the eyes of those who are preparing to sign the death of Greece.”

This new Empire, writes Glezos, “now requires a fast, violent, brutal transformation of a Eurozone country, Greece, into a country of the third world, with a so-called program of ‘rescue,’ in fact, the ‘rescue’ of banks who lent to the country.”

While German Finance Minister Wolfgang Schäuble issued derogatory statements, referring to Greece as a “bottomless pit,” in fact, of the EU130 billion “bail-out” which is the “reward” for Greece’s submission to the Troika, EU93.7 billion, or roughly 70%, goes directly to the bondholder banks.

Under the Nazi occupation, 1941-44, Theodorakis points out, 1 million Greeks perished, murdered or starved to death. “When the SS and hunger killed one million citizens, and the Wehrmacht was systematically

destroying the country, and stealing all its agricultural production and the gold from the banks, Greeks saved the people from hunger by creating the National Solidarity Movement and a partisan army of 100,000, which tied down 20 German divisions in our country.

“...Greece chose the path of self-sacrifice for the sake of freedom and simultaneously of survival.”

“Now,” he added: “we are doing exactly the same thing, with the certainty that the Greek people will be the ultimate victors.”

Here, then, are substantial excerpts from the statements by Theodorakis and Glezos.

Mikos Theodorakis: The Truth about Greece

The following is excerpted from “An Open Letter to International Public Opinion,” signed by composer Mikis Theodorakis, from Athens, on Feb. 12, 2012.

There is an international conspiracy whose target is the complete destruction of my country. They began in 1975 aiming at modern Greek civilization, continued with the distortion of our modern history and

our national identity, and they are now trying to eliminate us biologically as well, through unemployment, hunger, and impoverishment. If the Greek people don’t rise as one in order to prevent them, the danger of Greece becoming extinct is evident. I place it within the next ten years. There will be nothing left of us but the memory of our civilization and our battles for freedom.

... In 2008 came the big financial crisis in Europe. It was therefore only logical that the Greek economy should be affected. However, our living standards, high enough for Greece to be ranked among the 30 richest countries in the world, remained unaffected. There was an increase, though, in public debt. But public debt doesn’t necessarily lead to financial crisis. There are big countries, like the U.S. and Germany, with debts amounting to trillions of euros. The key is in economic growth and production. In that case, one can borrow from large banks with an interest rate of up to 5%, until the crisis ends.

That was exactly our position in 2009, when the government shift took place in November, and G. Papandreou took over as prime minister [October 2009-November 2011]...

Mr. Papandreou could have dealt with the financial crisis (which as I have said reflected the European one) by borrowing from foreign banks under the usual interest rate of under 5%. If he had done that, there wouldn’t have been the slightest problem for our country. In fact, the opposite would have occurred; because we were on an economic growth path, our standard of living would certainly have risen.

However, Mr. Papandreou had already begun his conspiracy against the Greek people since the summer of 2009, when he secretly met with [IMF managing director Dominique] Strauss-Kahn, with the objective of driving Greece under the domination of the IMF...

In May 2010, a single



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“There is an international conspiracy whose target is the complete destruction of my country,” wrote anti-Nazi Resistance hero Mikis Theodorakis, in his appeal. But, he added, “Greeks will not only survive, they will be reborn....”

Minister signed the notorious Memorandum, our complete subservience to our lenders. Greek law stipulates, in such situations, that the adoption of such an important agreement must be decided by three fifths of the Parliament. Therefore, in essence, the Memorandum and the Troika that essentially govern us today, operate illegally not only under Greek, but also under European law.

By now, if the steps leading us to our death are twenty, we are already more than half way there. Imagine that with this Memorandum we concede to foreigners our National Independence and our National Property. That is, our harbours, airports, road networks, electricity, water supply, subterranean and underwater wealth, etc., etc. Add to that our historical monuments, like the Acropolis, Delphi, Olympia, Epidauros, and such sites, since we have waived all our legal defenses.

Production has come to a standstill, the unemployment rate has reached 18%, 80,000 shops have closed down, along with thousands of small businesses and hundreds of industries. In total, 432,000 enterprises have shut down. Tens of thousands of young scientists are abandoning the country, which is every day sinking into medieval darkness. Thousands of formerly wealthy citizens are scavenging on rubbish heaps and sleeping on the pavement.

In the meantime, we are supposed to be surviving thanks to the magnanimity of our lenders, the Europe of the Banks and the IMF. In reality, every package deal which charges Greece with tens of billions of euros is repaid in full, while we are burdened with new unbearable interest rates. And since it is necessary to maintain the State, the hospitals and the schools, the Troika is burdening the middle and lower economic strata of society with excessive taxes, leading directly to starvation. A famine took place at the beginning of the German occupation in 1941, with 300,000 people dead in a period of 6 months. Since then, the ghost of hunger is now returning to our defamed and unfortunate country.

If one considers that the German occupation cost us one million people dead and the total destruction of our country, how is it possible for us Greeks to accept Ms. [German Chancellor Angela] Merkel's threats and the Germans' intention to impose on us a new Gauleiter... This time wearing a tie...?

And to prove just how rich a country is Greece and how hard working and conscious the Greek people are (conscious of their debt to Freedom and love of their country), I cite as an example the time of the German occupation from 1941 until October of 1944.

When the SS and hunger killed one million citizens, and the Wehrmacht was systematically destroying the country, and stealing all its agricultural production and the gold from the banks, Greeks saved the people from hunger by creating the National Solidarity Movement and a partisan army of 100,000, which tied down 20 German divisions in our country.

At the same time not only did Greeks manage to survive thanks to their hard work, but there was also a large growth in modern Greek art—especially in literature and music—under the terrible conditions of the occupation. Greece chose the path of self-sacrifice for the sake of freedom and simultaneously of survival.

That is when we were unnecessarily punished, and we responded with Solidarity and Resistance and we survived. Now we are doing exactly the same thing, with the certainty that the Greek people will be the ultimate victors. This is the message I am sending to Ms. Merkel and Mr. [German Finance Minister Wolfgang] Schäuble, declaring that I remain always a friend to the German people and a fan of their great contribution to Science, Philosophy, Art, and especially Music!...

Today, Sunday, February 12, 2012, I am about to take part in the demonstrations, along with Manolis Glezos, the hero who, in the past, took the swastika down from the Acropolis, signaling the beginning of resistance against Hitler, not only in Greece but throughout Europe. Today, our streets and our squares will be flooded with hundreds of thousands of citizens who will demonstrate their rage against the government and against the Troika...

We have survived very difficult situations throughout the centuries, and it is certain that if they lead us to the brink of death by force, Greeks will not only survive, but they will be reborn...

I am totally dedicated, body and soul, to this cause (the unification of the people in one Front), and I believe that I will be proved right in the end. I have fought, gun in hand, against Hitler's occupation. I have experienced the Gestapo's dungeons. I have been sentenced to death by Germans and have miraculously survived. In 1967 I founded PAF (The Patriotic Anti-dictatorial Front), the first resistance organization against the military junta. I fought underground, was caught and imprisoned in the junta's slaughterhouse. Once again I survived.

I am today 87 years old, and it is very possible that I will not live to see the salvation of my beloved country. But I will die with a clear conscience, because I will continue doing my duty towards the ideals of Freedom and Justice until the end.

An Appeal to the Peoples of Europe

Mikis Theodorakis and Manolis Glezos issued this joint call from Athens, on Oct. 22, 2011. It has been excerpted for publication here, with minimal editing.

65 years after the defeat of Nazism and Fascism, the European people are today confronting a dramatic threat, this time not military, but a financial, social, and political one.

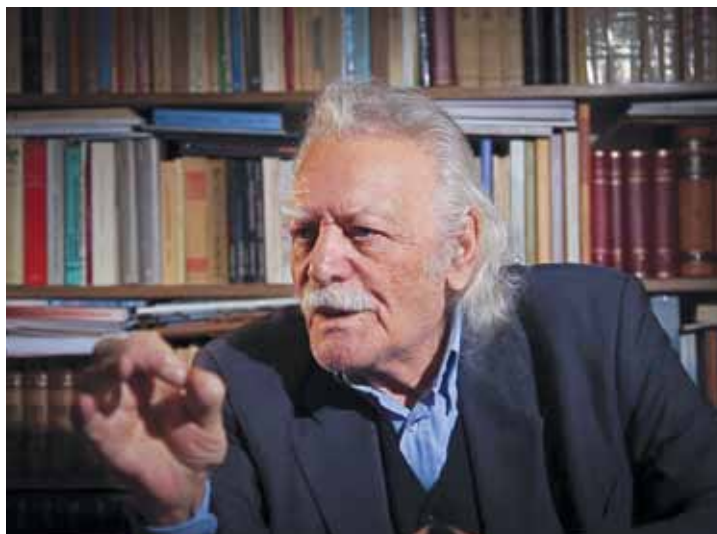
A new “Empire of Money” has been systematically attacking one European country after another in the last 18 months, without facing any substantial resistance.

European governments not only fail to organize a collective defense of European people against the markets, but, instead, try to “calm” the markets by imposing policies that remind us of the way governments tried to confront Nazism in the ’30s.

They organize “debt wars” between the peoples of Europe, just like when they were driven from the *belle époque* to World War I. The offensive of the markets initiated a war against Greece, an EU member-state, whose people played a decisive role in the resistance against barbarity and the liberation of Europe during World War II. In the beginning, this war was a communications war, which reminded us of the campaigns against hostile, outcast countries, like Iraq or Yugoslavia. This campaign presented Greece as a country of lazy and corrupted citizens, while attempting to blame the “PIIGS”¹ of Europe and not the international banks for the debt crisis.

Soon, this offensive evolved into a financial one, which caused the submission of Greece under a status of limited sovereignty and the intervention of the IMF into the internal affairs of the Eurozone.

When they got what they wanted from Greece, the markets targeted the other, smaller or larger countries of the European periphery. The aim is one and the same in all cases: the full guarantee of the



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“Europe can survive only if we promote a united response against the markets, a challenge bigger than theirs, a new European ‘New Deal,’” proposed Manolis Glezos, in his joint statement with Theodorakis.

interests of the banks against the states, the demolition of the European welfare state, which has been a cornerstone of European democracy and culture, the demolition of European states, and the submission of the remaining state structures to the new “International of Money.”

The EU, which was presented to its peoples as a means for collective progress and democracy, is tending to become the means for terminating prosperity and democracy. It was introduced as a means of resistance to globalization, but the markets wish it to be an instrument of this globalization. . . .

The “Empire of Money” now requires a fast, violent, brutal transformation of a Eurozone country, Greece, into a country of the third world, with a so-called program of “rescue,” in fact, the “rescue” of banks who lent to the country. In Greece, the alliance of banks and the political leaderships imposed—through the EU, the ECB, and the IMF—a program that equals to “economic and social murder” of the country and its democracy, and organizes the looting of the country before the bankruptcy to which it leads, wishing to make it the scapegoat of the global financial crisis and use it as a “paradigm” to terrorize all European peoples.

The policy that is currently conducted in Greece and attempts to spread, is the same applied in Pinochet’s Chile, Yeltsin’s Russia, or Argentina, and will have the same results, if not discontinued immedi-

1. A slur by the Euro-tyrants against Portugal, Ireland, Italy, Greece, and Spain (PIIGS)—ed.

ately. As a result of a program that is supposedly intended to help the country, Greece is now on the verge of economic and social disaster; it is used as a guinea pig to study people's reactions to social Darwinism and terrify the entire European Union, with what can happen to one of its members.

The markets may also be pushing and using the leadership of Germany in actions of destruction of the European Union. But it constitutes an act of extreme political and historical blindness for the dominant forces of the EU and first of all, for Germany, to think that there can be any project of European integration or even simple cooperation, on the ruins of one or more members of the Eurozone.

The planned demolition of major, globally significant political and social achievements of the European peoples, cannot establish any kind of European Union. It will lead to chaos and disintegration and it will promote the emergence of fascist solutions in our continent. . . .

In ancient times, the abolition, by Solon, of the debts which forced the poor to be slaves of the rich, the so-called *Seisachtheia* reform, laid the foundations for the birth, in ancient Greece, of the ideas of democracy, citizenship, politics, and Europe, the foundations of European and world culture. . . .

A handful of international banks, rating agencies, investment funds, a global concentration of financial capital without historical precedent, claims power in Europe and the world and prepares to abolish the states and our democracy, using the weapon of debt to enslave the peoples of Europe, putting in place of the incomplete democracy we have, the dictatorship of Money and Banks; the power of a totalitarian empire of globalization, the political center of which is outside continental Europe, despite the presence of powerful European banks at the heart of the empire.

They started from Greece, using it as a guinea pig, to move then to the other countries of the European periphery, and gradually to the center. The hope of some European countries to eventually escape, just proves that today's European leaders face the threat of a new "financial fascism," not better than the way they faced the threat of Hitler during the inter-war period. . . .

There is an urgent need for an immediate, cross-border coordination of action by intellectuals, people of the arts and literature, spontaneous move-

ments, social forces and personalities who comprehend the importance of the stakes; we need to create a powerful front of resistance against the advancing "totalitarian empire of globalization," before it is too late.

Europe can survive only if we promote a united response against the markets, a challenge bigger than theirs, a new European "New Deal."

- We must immediately stop the attack against Greece and other countries of the EU periphery; we must stop the irresponsible and criminal policy of austerity and privatization, which leads directly to a crisis deeper than the one of 1929.

- Public debts must be radically restructured across the Eurozone, particularly at the expense of the private banking giants. Banks must be re-controlled and the financing of the European economy must be under national and European social control. It is not possible to leave the financial keys of Europe in the hands of banks like Goldman Sachs, JP Morgan, UBS, Deutsche Bank, etc. We must ban the uncontrolled financial derivatives, which are the spearhead of destructive financial capitalism, and create real economic development, instead of speculative profits.

- The present architecture, based on the Maasticht Treaty and the WTO rules, has established a debt production machine in Europe. We need a radical change of all Treaties, the submission of the ECB to political control by the European peoples, a "golden rule" for minimum social, fiscal, environmental standards in Europe. We urgently need a change of paradigm; a return to the stimulation of growth through the stimulation of demand, via new European investment programs, a new regulation, taxation and control of international capital and commodities flows; a new form of smart and reasonable protectionism in an independent Europe, which will be the protagonist in the fight for a multipolar, democratic, ecological, social planet.

We appeal to the forces and individuals who share these ideas, to converge into a broad, European front of action as soon as possible; to produce a European transitional program, to coordinate our international action, so as to mobilize the forces of the popular movement, to reverse the current balance of power and overthrow the current historically irresponsible leaderships of our countries, in order to save our people and our societies before it is too late for Europe.