

FactCheck:HELLAS

Solidarity with the greek population

June 2015

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The true troika and the truth about austerity

Greece faces national bankruptcy. It could slide out of the Euro-zone in the coming days. Then a cash check will be needed in any case. But even if the country manages to stay in for now as part of a compromise agreement the threat of bankruptcy remains.

The troika, both old and new, is responsible for the destruction caused in this EU-country. This troika in reality consists of the International Monetary Fund IMF and the EU as the representatives of European big business and the Berlin government. In the months between June and September alone Greece has to pay the creditors more than the maximum amount it can expect to get (13,1 billion Euro) — even if the full tranche of agreed credits is paid out by the creditors (7,5 billion Euro). During the last few weeks those responsible in Athens ordered the last remaining Euros to be scraped together — even out of a disaster relief fund. The media reacted with indignation: “Accounts plundered” *Sueddeutsche Zeitung* from Mai 13th). Who is plundering whom? The drastic measures in Greece come about because IMF, EU and the Berlin government have plundered the country for the last five years. Because these three have been strengthening their stranglehold since the end of January 2015. And because they cloud our senses with their screams for the alleged necessity of “austerity” whilst they are at it.

Since 2010 strict austerity policies have been forced on Greece. “Austeritas” is usually translated to mean “severity” — but also as “drastic treatment”. This sounds like Swabian housewife. But in Latin this word also means: the dark, sinister being. This is closer to the mark.



Montage: Joachim Römer / Holger Deilke

A dark, sinister policy of cuts is being enforced on the backs of the poor, the unemployed and average wage earners. This way real wages and pensions have been shrunk by 30 per cent since 2009, state expenditure has been reduced by 40 per cent and the number of public sector employees has been drastically reduced from 952 000 to 573 900 — also a reduction of just about 40 per cent. Unemployment has increased by more than 25 per cent to three times its previous level. Youth unemployment forced up by more than 60 per cent. Even if we leave aside moral and social aspects one thing is clear: This economic policy creates dark, sinister results for the whole economy. Mrs. Aikaterini Savvaidou, the “general secretary for public income” — put into office by Samaras by the way — makes the point: “I urgently need more staff to collect taxes. Especially: tax inspectors!” What an absurd result of “austeritas”: Insufficient tax income.

But does this form of economic policy create progress elsewhere? Do the social and humanitarian sacrifices at least lead to a more balanced budget? In reality Greek debt has risen since 2010 — despite haircut and so called rescue packages. They have risen drastically especially as the share of Greek GDP. From a 110 percent share of GDP before the crisis to around 180 per

cent. What a sinister result of “austeritas” — continuously growing debt!

Maybe Greece is the exception? Aren't there all these shining examples periphery countries “who made it”, about whom it is said Ireland (Spain, Portugal, Cyprus etc.) is “not Greece!” In these countries, say IMF, EU and the Berlin government, it can be seen: Austerity works! The results look like this: Before the austerity treatment Ireland had a debt quota of 43 per cent — 2014 it was 110 per cent. In Spain this decisive indicator climbed from 53 to 100 per cent. And in Portugal from 84 to 130 per cent! Even within the whole economic Eurozone the debt level is rising since the adoption of the austerity line. Generally contagious debt is a very dark result of austerity.

But why, one can ask, is the recipe austeritas being used if it — apart from catastrophic social results — also brings with it wide scale drawbacks for the whole economy? As it happens the drawbacks in the periphery and for the people in these regions turn into advantages elsewhere. To only name three: (1) The balance of payments deficits of the periphery countries mentioned above has been more than 500 billion Euro since 2009. Mainly number three of the true troika profits from this: The German

balance of payments increased by 1000 billion Euro since 2009.

(2) The financial sector is blossoming because of the accumulation of debt in the periphery. Example: Greece. Since 2009 the country received officially new loans worth 227 billion Euro whilst paying off 194 billion for interest and repayment. Since 1991 Greece paid debt repayment and interest worth 664 billion Euro to financial institutions — double the amount of the whole debt mountain. Mainly the IMF, number one in the true troika, profits from this as the representative of the international finance sector. (3) Austerity policies lead to a drastic lowering of labour costs (or employees income) throughout the EU. Wages are shrinking locally. Cheap, highly educated workers (doctors! Engineers!) are being “exported” from the periphery to booming centres. The shrinking wage level in the periphery is felt across the board as wage dumping. Which is where those forming number two of the real troika profit from: These are big business and the banks in the whole EU.

The austeritas recipe only serves speculation, profiteering from interests and the maximisation of profits. It poisons Europe — socially, morally and throughout society. Solidarity with the people of Greece also means defending social and democratic standards

True words from Financial Times

On June 15th one could read the following in a contribution for the *Financial Times* written by Wolfgang Münchau: “By accepting the [final] offer [of the creditors] Tsipras would have to agree to a fiscal adjustment of 1.7 per cent of gross domestic product within six months. My colleague Martin Sanbu calculated how an adjustment of such a scale would affect the Greek growth rate. I have now extended that calculation to incorporate the entire four-year fiscal adjustment programme, as demanded by the creditors. [...] I come to a figure of a cumulative hit on the level of GDP of 12.6 per cent over four years. The Greek debt-to-GDP ratio would start approaching 200 per cent. My conclusion is that the acceptance of the troika's programme constitute a dual suicide — for the Greek economy and for the Greek prime minister.”

Stop thief!

This saying is true for those exited people who accused the Greek finance minister Janis Varoufakis of secretly recording a Euro-group meeting in Riga with his smartphone. “Outrageous! An impertinence!” screamed the German daily newspaper *Die Welt* on May 22nd. The *Handelsblatt* led with the story in a not much more polite way: “The impossible minister”. A German government representative let himself to be quoted with: “An absolute absurdity.”

Did Varoufakis report on the meeting? Did he quote colleagues? Did he breach “confidentiality” which, according to Euro-group boss Dijsselbloem is “the basis for all these meetings”? None of the above. The opposite is the case. In reality several participants from other Euro countries were freely gossiping about internal details from the meeting — among them finance ministers from Slovenia, Slovakia and Austria. And most of them were directed against Varoufakis. He apparently was called an “amateur”, “gambler” or “time waster” at the meeting. Events as such may be unimportant. But a complete recording of the meeting would be in the democratic, public interest. But the way the mainstream media react with new Greek bashing is typical of

A word from us

This is the third edition of the new FCH magazine founded in April as a German paper. This edition will be published in Greek, English and French too. FCH is printed in Greece as part of the daily paper EFSYN. Publishers and supporters — see page 2. We ask for generous donations, massive support and optimal distribution.

Your FCH editors.

Claims and answers

Reparations and financial compensation for Nazi war crimes in Greece

When the issue of “German crimes in Greece during the Nazi occupation” is mentioned in Germany the response in pubs and the media — most German media outlets are on pub talk level themselves — are markedly aggressive. Even SPD leader and German Vice Chancellor Sigmar Gabriel said that demands for reparations were “stupid, to be honest”.

On page 8 we publish a map documenting damages caused by German occupying forces in Greece. Below we answer the most common claims made in German pubs and elsewhere when the issue of reparations for Greece and financial compensation for Nazi victims is brought up.

Claim What happened in Greece during WW2 was a typical side effect of war in general. It is sad but normal.

Answer FCH This is absolutely false. Nazi crimes committed during WW2 were unparalleled and cannot be compared with “classic” events during wartime. Established international law was systematically broken (Hague Land Warfare Convention; Geneva Convention). No comparable crimes were committed by enemies of the Nazi regime. To a small degree such a comparison can be made with Japan. This does not change anything about the scale of German war crimes though.

Claim But all of these things happened a long time ago?

Answer FCH Cases of genocide and crimes against humanity are brought before courts of law even decades after they happened. And rightly so. In 2015 one court decision in the Netherlands caught the public eye. A court of law in Den Haag accepted the validity of rela-



tives of Indonesian freedom fighters who got murdered by the then colonial power Holland between 1946 and 1949. More recently a number of former Nazis were brought to justice for crimes committed between 1940 and 1945. One has to ask the return question: How can it be that Germany failed to look at these crimes for 70 years without bringing those responsible to justice?

Claim Germany has paid compensation and reparations a long time ago. Greece also received a lot of money.

Answer FCH Not true. Germany should have paid a huge sum of reparations to Greece on the basis of the inter-allied reparations conference which took place in Paris between the years of 1945/46. There, the Greek side underlined its demands amongst other things with the document published in this FCH edition on page 8. But only a fraction of the estimated sum got paid. The largest amount of 115 billion Deutsche Mark (DM) got paid in 1961. There was a fatal context to this: Max Merten, convicted

to a long term prison sentence in Greece

for being the leading organiser of the deportation of Greek Jewish people into the extermination camps, was bought free this way by the Bonn government. In February 1953 Germany signed the London debt agreement alongside the western powers (USA, UK and France). This postponed the question of reparations until such a time when German re-unification was to take place at a later stage with a peace supposed to be signed in such a case. In contrast to this no peace-treaty was signed when re-unification happened rather unexpectedly in 1990. This was deliberate. Since then German governments claim rather one-sidedly that the reparations issue “is barred by the statute of limitations”. Greece never agreed with this.

Claim But if we give in to Greek demands other countries might get the same idea...

Answer FCH This observation is justified. Nazi-Germany had occupied that largest part of Europe. Huge demands for reparations resulted from this. Some countries received partial reparations as a settlement for damages caused

debt with the supposed reparations.

Answer FCH Not true. Official Greek government statements point to another direction. In May Greek Foreign Minister Nikos Kotzias stated in an interview that it is not about demands for a concrete sum of money. Instead he argued for a “council of the wise” consisting of German and Greek personalities who in a fair exchange should work towards a solution. Most Greeks mainly want the German government to accept its moral obligation and guilt. But German Foreign Minister Steinmeier brusquely rejected this conciliatory proposal.

Claim But why to the Greek raise these demands NOW?

Answer CFH Firstly it is not true that the Greek government is raising these demands “now”. Several Greek governments repeatedly raised this issue, including the previous Samaras government. It created the parliamentary commission whose results were published in recent weeks. But there is of course a reason why this is being debated so strongly since the beginning of 2015. This reason is the German government’s attitude towards the newly elected government in Greece and the Greek debt question in particular. Germany is giving no quarter in this situation. Especially Schaeuble seems to be without mercy and full of cynicism. Considering the background of German history it is understandable that people feel bitter about the German government’s attitude and the arrogance of power which is seen as a continuity.

during the war. France for example received reparations in south-west Germany and the Saar-area. The Soviet Union and Poland received reparations in the GDR. In some cases there were legally binding agreements. There were usually no such agreements concerning the issue of compensation for Nazi crimes. As brutal as the Nazi regime was in Greece — it was even more brutal in Poland, in Belarus and the entire Soviet Union. The Jewish population was at the receiving hand of the most brutal treatment. Including in Greece, by the way. See the deportation of the Jewish population in Thessaloniki (page 7). To note that the issue of reparations and compensation for Nazi crimes has not been solved in a number of countries should not lead to a position of not raising the issue in Greece though.

Claim With its demands the Greek government only wants to “offset” its own

A mass murderer with homecoming compensation —

The case of Max Merten

Athens, 5th March 1959. On this day a Greek court sentences Max Merten to 25 years in prison. He was the chief of the German Wehrmacht administration in Thessaloniki and one of the organisers of the deportation of 50 000 Jews to Auschwitz extermination camp. In 1957 he carelessly returned to the places of his criminal actions and got arrested there. Before he was sentenced the German parliament (Bundestag) postponed the ratification of a finance treaty with Greece in order to enforce a waiver of sentence.

Merten was released on November 5th 1959. In reality his release was forced by blackmail. The convicted war criminal Merten received homecoming compensation in western Germany for his “Passiontide in Greece”, as *Der Spiegel* (32/1961) formulated it. He died unblemished in 1971.



Merten in Greece (left) and as reputable citizen in FRG (right)

Publishing- and order-information

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“SYRIZA is in government. It is not in power!”

An interview with Marina Karastergiou, activist in the coordination group of associations Ierissos, Chalkidiki

Alexis J. Passadakis, Attac

Greece is supposed to become the largest producer of gold in Europe. At least that is the plan of the Hellas Gold company which is to 95% controlled by the Canadian company Eldorado Gold. On the northern Greek peninsula Chalkidi to the southeast of Thessaloniki a new 200m deep open cast mine is being planned. Work has started already. The mine is based in a mountainous region, dominated to 90% by forests, some of them primeval forests. The region is also a water reservoir for surrounding areas. Massive protests are building up against the mine. Local initiatives campaign against the widespread destruction of the landscape and especially against the dangers for people resulting from water poisoning through cyanide. This chemical is used to separate the gold from the scree. Apart from anti-austerity protests, no other issue brings so many people onto the streets of Greece as this foreseeable catastrophe for humans and nature.

How has your anti gold mining protest changed since the electoral victory of Syriza?

Firstly: We have decided to carry on. At end of March we had a demo with 10 000 people in Thessaloniki. Our aim is to permanently stop gold mining with cyanide. I am one of those thinking that we have to build very, very strong pressure on the government to be successful. We cannot allow ourselves to believe that we can rescue our health and our future by sitting on the couch. However, others are arguing that we have to give the new government more time, that we should not make life difficult for them. Many currently put their hopes into legal battles. My hope is that this patience will not last long. In any case there will be further demos in the mountains.

Has SYRIZA taken any concrete steps since coming into government?

Since January there are two SYRIZA: There is the SYRIZA which has been fighting alongside us for years — in our local initiatives and on the streets. And there is the new SYRIZA as a party of government. Off course SYRIZA is still on our side. But on the other hand SYRIZA as a governing party is bound up in different ways. In practice SYRIZA has withdrawn Hellas Gold’s licence for metal processing. But this doesn’t stop them creating facts on the ground. The destruction of the forests is speeding up drastically and is a real disaster. Hellas Gold also want to sue over the withdrawal of their licence. Then there is the treaty with the troika institutions from February 20th. In this the Greek government agreed not to take any “one sided measures” without consent from the creditors. Because of this a real licence withdrawal from Hellas Gold will be hardly possible.

But we will not let ourselves to be stopped just because SYRIZA is in government now and because we apparently have to help a minister now like some are saying. We know that SYRIZA

would like to shut down the mine and that they are fighting on our side. But I think SYRIZA have to guard against losing the government again. The movements have to carry on pursuing their issues but at the same time have to take care to ensure that SYRIZA stays in government. We won’t have any options left should we get the right wing prime minister Samaras again. We have a goal and we will carry on pursuing it without doubt. We cannot make allowances for SYRIZA’s problems. We have our own problems. This open cast mine is the biggest problem in our region.

Has police reaction to your protests changed since January?

On April 5th we demonstrated in the mountains. And the police response was very hard: Tear gas. The counter demo of mining workers was shielded off by the police and we got all the repression. But this is not hard to understand. SYRIZA are in government in this state but not in power. SYRIZA neither have control over the police nor over the justice system, where the old governing parties have got their people everywhere. I also do not believe that the path through the justice system will in the final analysis help us stop the open cast mine.

What are your next steps?

In June we will go to Athens to do actions and demonstrations in front of the environment ministry. We are also kept busy by trials. Hundreds of us have court appearances pending because of earlier protest actions. We are also starting to inform people about the CETA trade agreement between the EU and Canada. The aggressive protection of investors including rights for companies to sue enshrined in this treaty make CETA a real problem for us as Hellas Gold is mainly Canadian owned.

Wehrmacht crimes in front of German courts

Norman Paech (1999)

When mass crimes committed by the German Wehrmacht are being talked about the names Lidice, Oradour, Babi Jar are mentioned. But few others. The places Kragujevac in Serbia, Kortelisy in the Ukraine or Distomo, Kalavrita, Kandanos, Klissoura and Kommemo are not even mentioned in the “Enzyklopädie des Holocaust”. But they are only a few examples of countless places in eastern and central Europe where similar war crimes took place. This lack of knowledge is not due to a lack of sources. One of the twelve Nuremberg follow up trials, case seven against the “south-east generals”, overwhelmingly dealt with the murder of hostages and “expiatory- and revenge-measures” against partisans in the Balkan region. But the history of these trials was subject to a similar process of suppression and myth making as was done with the whole history of crimes committed by the Wehrmacht. The German post war justice system played a decisive part in this.

Despite hundreds of judicial inquiries only one case about war crimes in Greece actually came before a court at the Landgericht Augsburg. It was about the shooting of six civilians in Crete. The court took the view of the Wehrmacht, “that the term partisans (...) describes all civilian persons in the occupied territory who are even vaguely suspicious of

committing hostile acts.” Thus the Landgericht qualified the executions as “self-defence according to international law” and acquitted the captain (Hauptmann).

This legal point of view was responsible for the winding up of all other judicial inquiries. The prosecution service in Bochum justified the winding up of an inquiry against a battle-group leader who had participated in “operation Kalavrita”, one of the biggest massacres in Greece with the necessity of such reprisals. These had been “permissible measures according to international law to (...) force partisans to comply with international law.”

The justification of such mass crimes against the civilian population as “repression in accordance with international law” is still playing a role today in the refusal of the German government to even enter a dialogue with Greece about compensation claims.

Norman Paech is a professor emeritus and politician. The FCH editorial-board took the text above from an extensive article published by N. Peach in the *Kritische Justiz* 1999 (Heft 3, S.380ff) magazine. It is equally sad and astonishing: For sixteen years almost nothing has changed in the situation.

It’s time: The fear of exit from the Euro should no longer cripple us.

By Stathis Kouvelakis

The Syriza government’s decision to transfer all available public sector funds to the Bank of Greece marks a political turning point. This high-risk move exposes in the clearest possible way the nature of the situation as it has evolved in the two and a half months since the February 20 agreement.

The argument that was put forward then in favour of that accord was that it “bought time,” at however painful a price, so as to prepare the ground for key summer negotiations.

The claim was that for a four-month period the European Central Bank would call a halt to the torture it had been imposing on the country’s economy since February 5, when it decided to terminate the most important mechanism for funding the Greek banks. As it is now generally recognised, the government was dragged into signing that unbalanced agreement through pressure from an accelerating outflow of bank deposits and the threat of bank collapse.

Now, with public coffers emptying to forestall a cut off of debt servicing and inescapable state obligations, it is evident that the only time that has been bought is time that works to the advantage of the Europe institutions and that the Greek side is exposed to an intensifying blackmail as its position deteriorates. [...]

The Greek side did not take into account what was obvious from the outset, namely that the European Central Bank and EU were not going to sit twiddling their thumbs when faced by a government of the radical left. The biggest gun in their arsenal is liquidity and it was entirely logical and predictable that they would resort to it immediately. And naturally the lenders have every reason to continue “tightening the noose” (as Prime Minister Alexis Tsipras puts it) until they have forced the Greek side into total capitulation.

To put it differently, if with the February 20 agreement the lenders had agreed to “ensure liquidity,” if they had de-linked its provision from the specific austerity plans they seek to impose, they would simply have deprived themselves of the most significant means of exerting pressure they have at their disposal. That Tsakalotos believed they would do this smacks of extreme political naivety, if not willful blindness [...].

So the “mistake” results from a fundamentally wrong working hypothesis, on which the government’s whole strategy has been based from the outset: that “we will finally reach an agreement with the lenders” allowing Syriza to implement its program while staying the Euro-zone. This is the doomed logic of “left Europeanism.” [...] The only escape route from the threatened confinement in the cage of the Memoranda, and derailment of the govern-

ment’s project, lies in the activation of the popular mobilization, recapturing the combative and hopeful climate that prevailed prior to the February 20 agreement.

It is not too late. Now is precisely the time for straight talk, the only that can have an impact and activate the people, precisely because it treats them with due respect, as adults and the agents of their own destiny.

What is at stake in Greece is the possibility of a radical change and the opening of a route towards a political overturn and emancipation of its people, its working classes, but also the future of workers across Europe.

The fear of Grexit should cripple us no longer. The time has come to make it clear for a start that whatever funds are channelled under the new legislation into the public coffers are earmarked for coverage of public and social needs and not for payments to lenders.

The time has come to put an end to the soporific waffle about “negotiations going well” and “agreements on the way.”

The time has come to put an immediate end to the surrealistic references to “mutually beneficial solutions” and the “partners” with whom we are supposedly “joint proprietors of the EU.”

The time has come to reveal to Greek and international public opinion the data that would expose the relentless war being waged against this government.

And the time has come, above all, to prepare at long last, politically, technically and culturally, for the only honourable solution, the parting of the ways with this implacable neo-liberal cabal.

The time has come to make concrete the content, and explain the viability, of the alternative proposal, starting with the twofold initiative of a suspension of payments to the lenders and the nationalization of the banks and progressing, if necessary, to the choice of a national currency, approved by the public through a popular referendum.

The time has come for serious thought but also for decisiveness. This is the time when disaster and redemption stand next to each other.

This is the time to fight back.

Stathis Kouvelakis teaches political theory at King’s College London and serves on the central committee of Syriza, where he is a member of the left wing faction. He has consistently argued for defaulting on the debt and leaving the Euro. The article is a shortened version of the contribution first published by the American Jacobin magazine 5th of June 2015: <https://www.jacobinmag.com/2015/05/kouvelakis-syriza-ecb-grexit/>

Greece: expensive NATO forward post, even now.

Werner Rügemer

After 1945 US-American and British forces destroyed the strong anti-fascist resistance: It was not allowed to form a government. The UK and the USA supported Greek Nazi-collaborators and together with them installed the monarchy in 1949.

The USA developed western-Europe into an anti-communist economic and political block of states. The most important instruments for this were the Marshall-Plan and NATO. Greece became a NATO-member in 1952. It was to become a southern forward post against the new socialist states and Tito's Yugoslavia. Marshall-Plan money (1947-1952) was only handed over to the Greek government under the provision that the party system, trade unions and the civil service was cleansed of communists, socialists and such like.

But democratic resistance could not be suppressed forever. 1967 posed the "threat" of an electoral victory for the moderate left wing alliance Centre Union. CIA and NATO ("Prometheus Plan") supported Greek officers and generals in a military coup and the installation of a fascist regime. It acted in a Christian-nationalistic fashion as the "saviour of the Hellenic way of life". Oppositionists were tortured and jailed on the concentration camp island of Jaros. Taxi-licences were only handed out if drivers acted as police spies.¹

With CIA and NATO came US big business. US tycoon Tom Pappas — the Greek expatriate was originally called Papadopoulos but later americanised his family name — was friends with US-presidents Eisenhower, Nixon and Johnson. At the same time he was a CIA agent. Even before the coup he built up a tax-free tanker fleet and installed big business company Standard Oil of California off the Rockefeller-Group in the Greek market. With the help of the military government he then constructed Coca-Cola bottling plants in Greece, with licences for the Middle East.²

After the coup the British Labour-government demanded the exclusion of Greece from NATO and the Council of Europe. British companies lost business. But the German

federal government under Kiesinger/Brandt together with defence minister Strauß supported west German companies to replace the British ones: Siemens, AEG, Dornier, Demag, German shipyards and the Henninger-Bräu brewing company received contracts and were allowed to establish branches.³ The resulting system of corruption was discovered mainly at Siemens: It regularly bribed both "socialist" PASOK and "Christian" Nea Demokratia, even when only one of both parties was in power — it was clear that the next government would and should be formed by the other party.⁴

Leading members of the military, politicians and big business set up a tight corruption network here. In 2013 defence minister Akis Tsochatzopoulos together with 16 relatives and members of his staff were convicted for receiving bribes worth 55 million Euro whilst buying German submarines — He had distributed parts of these bribes to hundreds of Greek officers. In 2014 Rheinmetall Defence Electronics (air defence missiles) had to pay a fine worth 37 million for paying out bribes in Greece.⁵

But only under the Syriza government is the Greek justice system really picking up speed. Old cases with several defendants are being looked into again.⁶ The aim is not only to achieve convictions but to also enforce compensation payments.⁷ Investigations are under way among others against Eurocopter (helicopters), STB Atlas Electronics, Krauss-Maffei Wegmann. Managers of some companies like Siemens or Ferrostaal have already been convicted in Germany, but Greek justice looking at these cases again regarding Greek collaborators.

Greek defence spending has nothing to do with Greek interests. It is being dictated from outside. Buying arms is expensive anyway because the market is neutralised. Bribes for Greek officials and "kickbacks" to German managers made it even more expensive: In total three times more. And it turned it into another reason for rising state owned debt levels.

In all their demands for "reforms" and "cuts programmes" the Troika of IMF, European Central Bank and European Commission

never mentioned a reform of the military or cutting the defence budget!

³ Griechenland. Handelsrepressalien, Rache für Rüge, Der Spiegel 32/1968

⁴ Transparency International: Der Korruptionsfall Siemens, Baden-Baden 2009

⁵ Rheinmetall zahlt 37 Millionen Euro Strafe, Handelsblatt 10.3.2015

⁶ Ex-Siemens-Manager müssen in Athen vor Gericht, Handelsblatt 10.3.2015

⁷ Griechische Regierung fordert hunderte Millionen von deutschen Rüstungsfirmen, Huffington Post 23.3.2015

German Christian-Party on the side of the fascists

A few days after the military coup on April 21st 1967 when a fascist regime of colonels took power in Greece, Fatis Gouras, a CSU-member¹ and personal friend of CSU-leader Franz-Josef Strauß set up the "National Movement of Greeks in the Federal Republic of Germany — E.K.E." This organisation adorned itself with the fascist emblem, a phoenix with a soldier bearing a bayonet. E.K.E cadres spied on Greek migrant workers in western Germany and terrorised Greek students in Germany who protested against the junta. Strauß declared shortly after the coup: "The Drachma now is the most stable currency in the world." The colonels used this statement to lure investors into their country.

Soon after the coup, Marcell Hepp, personal adviser to Strauß, travelled to Greece for "political consultations" with the fascist rulers. Shortly after, Franz Stackmann, state secretary in the Bavarian Ministry of Economy and Traffic turned up and promised economic help. In 1968 Gouras went to Athens as an adviser for Vice-Prime Minister Nikolaos Maskarezos. From then on he developed a tight network between Athens and Munich. Shortly after, Franz-Josef Strauß himself came for a state visit to Athens.

Increasingly positive reports about the torture regime in Athens began to appear in the German media. Articles to that effect appeared in the *Nürnberger Zeitung*, *Regensburger Bistumsblatt*, in the *Stuttgarter Nachrichten*, *Die Welt* and of course in the CSU organ *Bayern-Kurier*. The TV-Programme *Report* broadcast documentaries in rosy colours.

After the fall of the Junta the following became clear: The Athens regime certainly splashed out the cash to bribe German newspapers and those responsible in TV. In the mid-1970s the Greek audit court published invoices documenting payments to German media or rather media people from the newspapers and the TV-magazine mentioned above. Money was paid out by the press attaché at the Greek embassy in Bonn. Every date for each invoice was painstakingly noted, mentioning title, media and concrete details about published pro-Junta articles and programmes. Prominent German journalists were among those who received payment.

Contacts between the CSU and the Greek fascists did not stop at all after the fall of the regime in 1974. As soon as early summer 1975 Strauß was in Athens again. He demanded from the new government under Konstatin Karamanlis that former Junta members were "not to be prosecuted in the interest of peace". CSU-man Gouras set up a "Christian Democratic Party of Greece" (Chrike) with which the CSU tried to influence Greek politics. As late as March 13th 1976 Strauß hurried to Athens to meet ex-ministers of the former fascist regime. The Karamalis government protested against this "interference in the internal affairs of our country".

All quotes from: Der Spiegel 39/1976

¹ Translators note: The term CSU is short for Christian Socialist Union. This is the Bavarian sister party of the CDU, the Christian Democratic Union, which is Angela Merkels party and currently in power and in coalition with the German Social Democrats. Concerning the time when in Athens the fascists ruled: Between 1966 and 1969 CDU/SCU and SPD had been in power (Chancellor K.G. Kiesinger; Vice: Willy Brandt) and in coalition too. Between 1969 and 1982 SPD and FDG (German Liberal Party) had been in power and in coalition (Chancellor: Helmut Schmidt, Vice mostly: Dietrich Genscher).

Waterboarding in Greek

After the coup in 1967 the Greek fascist regime arrested more than 10 000 people — leftists, trade-unionists and democrats. For years thousands had to live in prisons and on islands with concentration camps. Among them celebrities like Mikis Theodorakis. The regime developed a broad scale of torture methods which were used regularly. Among them "Falanga" ("beating the sole of the foot with a metal bar or a wire"); "torture through hanging" ("prisoner is hanged at wrists, feet or ears using string or handcuffs"); "torture using electric shocks" ("electrodes are attached to some parts of the body through which high voltage electric shocks are sent. Usually both male and female genitals are used for this torture technique.") And: "Water treatment: Water is poured into a prisoner's mouth and nose, soap is smeared into his eyes, mouth and nose. Meanwhile his head gets battered onto the torture bench on which he is fastened."

Quoted from: Schwarzbuch der Diktatur in Griechenland, Rowohlt, Hamburg 1970, S. 134; based on reports handed to the European Council

¹ Griechenland. Sieben Jahre Jucken, Der Spiegel 13/1974; Griechenland — Anatomie einer Diktatur, Der Spiegel 40/1968

² Griechenland. Pappas: Prost auf P & P, Der Spiegel 38/1968



Montage: Joachim Römer

Where to now?

The different crisis solutions in a cockleshell called “Hellas”

Sebastian Gerhardt



Montage: Joachim Römer / Holger Deilke

Capital flight from Greece continues. Deposits of households and non-financial companies shrank by only 2 billion Euro in March but 5 billion in April. After the great breakdown — from December till February it was 24 billion, half of it in the election month January — high panic changed into on-going distrust of Greek banks.

None of the other economic data not look good for Greece. Economic performance is stagnating. Tax revenues until March were significantly lower than in the previous year. The tourist season which could compensate for the trade imbalance with foreign countries only starts in June.

In reality what is happening with deposits is only the tip of the iceberg. The monthly statements issued by the Greek Central Bank, the Bank of Greece, give a real impression of the tense economic situation in Greece. The Central Bank currently has to massively increase its overall balance sheet, as was the case between spring 2010 until the end of 2012, in order to compensate for the drop in private and public creditworthiness: From 91 billion in November 2014 to 160 billion Euro in April 2015. The liabilities side of this balance sheet shows the Greek banking system's dependence on the Euro: The whole increase in business for the Central Bank was financed by a rise in borrowing from the Euro system. Speaking in terms of national economics, it is not true that Greece has been servicing its debt “without help from outside” since last autumn as is claimed by some Syriza colleagues.

However only a small amount goes into “hidden state financing” as German Central Bank boss Jens Weidmann publicly both claims and condemns. Yannis Varoufakis wouldn't have any liquidity problems if the newly borrowed money went into the state budget. It flows into the private economy instead. This makes capital flight possible through which pressure on the Syriza-government increases daily. This outcome is deliberate and not being criticised by Mr. Weidmann. In early February the

ECB made liquidity supply for Greek banks massively more expensive. At the same time it ensured Greece stays within the Euro-zone network by allowing the Greek Central Bank to gradually extend the “Emergency Liquidity Assistance” (ELA). The ECB could force a Greek state bankruptcy within a few days simply by stopping ELA. It doesn't. Here is one reason why the Eurogroup is still negotiating with the Tsipras government: It has interests in Greece.

The other reason was somewhat reluctantly admitted by Euro Safety Mechanism (ESM) boss Klaus Regling before the EU-summit in Riga. Questioned about a possible Greek default in payment he said: “Greek officials have repeatedly been able to mobilise solvency, more than they had indicated to us before...” Whilst the mass media like to speculate about the supposed amateurs in Athens the liquidity management by the Greek Ministry of Finance seems to

work in a highly professional manner. Despite the tense situation wages, salaries and pensions are being paid out as well as debt repayments. This does not only say something about the quality of the personnel on the top floor, it especially says a lot about the loyalty of civil servants and therefore the political stability of the Syriza-government. Left wing radicals may find this eerie. Because this also means that there is not “destruction of the bourgeois state apparatus” in Greece. But not only reformists after an electoral victory, every revolutionary was happy to rely on public administration clerks on the “day after”. The result however is only self organised austerity with just a minimal social or political room for manoeuvre.

Further developments only partly depend on the Greeks, given the situation. Because of this extensive considerations about the quality of the reform policies conducted in Athens are only part of the

story, as are reports about first demonstrations and social protests under the new left wing government. The ones with the big pockets are the ladies and gentlemen of the Euro-group. These pockets are well filled despite everything. The Euroland economy has picked up speed. This does not mean that the situation is improving for everyone. It means that profits are rising and the scope for governments and the Euro-group to in the final analysis maybe give tiny concessions to Greece is increasing. A strong bourgeois family can humour its black sheep as long as there are only a few of them. From the point of view of the Berlin, Paris, Rome and Madrid governments this is precisely what Greece is: A, but only one, black sheep.

The Euro-group is likely to offer Greece a not very honourable compromise: A partial payout from the last 7,2 billion package or a further rise of the upper limit of the ELA programme. Syriza will take this and will have to give concessions in return. The Greek government is completely politically isolated in Europe. Those criticising its decisions as insufficiently left-wing should first convince their colleagues, friends, neighbours and relatives of the dire need for a different German Greek policy. They can carry on criticising the Syriza government afterwards.

Without doubt one can and must criticise the policies of the Greek left-wing party. The naivety with which its representatives demanded an about-turn in Euro-policy points to a deep misunderstanding of modern capitalism. For one both Yanis Varoufakis and his critic Costas Lapavistas see the decisive motor for economic development in solvent demand not in daily labour, which alone enables reproduction of society. On the other hand they assume that solvent demand can be widely manipulated because apparently credit financing can lead to sales out of nothing. In reality the core of the modern money system is to ensure the existence of private property. There are no free gifts on the market, especially not for left wingers. But as can be seen easily with both mistakes: The

critics of the Syriza majority also share its economic outlook. Sadly.

Of course there are alternatives, even a number of them. Not all of them are better. The Greek government could try to limit the influence of the ECB in Greece by introducing capital controls and a parallel currency. But you cannot pay for foreign trade in domestic currency. And domestically the question would arise of what rate about this parallel currency would be traded. What would that look like? One example for equally self organised and sustainable austerity entirely outside the Euro is provided by the economic history of Poland since 1989. This, however, is not an example to follow for a crisis solution based on solidarity.

A Greek exit from the Euro would not be entirely inconvenient for plans for a neoliberal “core Europe”. Berlin also has a plan B. In order to stave off a financial crisis after a Greek exit a number of countries in the Euro-zone will be prepared to submit to wide scale controls over their state finances — in exchange for a partial socialisation of state debt in Euroland. Blueprints for this are on the table since a 2011 report by the German expert advisory council. On Mai 31st Alexis Tsipras remarked on this danger for the first time in a contribution to Le Monde. In it he writes about a possible “super finance minister” for the Euro-zone who could throw back budget plans of sovereign governments unless these are properly neoliberal.

Those looking for alternatives have to approach this conflict differently. Policies based on solidarity can be demanded by Athens but cannot be fought for there. The electoral victory of Syriza is a beginning only if further steps follow in other countries. And this takes time. Demanding too much from the Greek departure out of its depth is politically fatal.

In a fable written by Aesop a traveller boasts about his athletic achievements on Rhodos until his listeners demand that he confirms them before their eyes: “Hic Rhodes, hic salta! Here is Rhodes, dance here!” The same is true for political achievements.

A different Syriza position

Costas Lapavistas is a professor of economics in London and a Greek MP since the end of January, elected on the Syriza slate. He argues for a Greek Euro exit in the fastest way possible. A few excerpts from his position:

“As an economist I only see only one solution: Exit from the Euro. A negotiated exit would be best, rather than a contested one. Negotiated means: There would have to be a 50 per cent debt write off in return. The exit would be protected in the sense that the ECB would see to it that the devaluation of the new currency would not be more than 20 per cent and that the banks would survive. [...] In case of a contested exit the first thing that would immediately take place is a default on the debt. If Greece defaulted on its debt, it would open up a process of negotiated debt restructuring. [...] The IMF knows that the debt has to be restructured. The real force stopping restructuring in Greece is the European Union and the monetary union. Debt restructuring means: Servicing the debt can wait, other problems are more urgent. [...] In this case capital controls would have to be introduced immediately. Afterwards the issue would be about the exchange rate from old currency to new. [...] The banks would have to be nationalised immediately. The banking system, not just the Greek one, has failed and needs to be re-organised completely. [...] The bank employee unions are very active, and they want to contribute positively to what's happening. They would have a role in running the new banks and reorganizing them [...].

One result of the austerity policy during the last years has been the atomisation of society [...]. Exit along the lines that I've mentioned will create the opposite result. It will create the outlook of the lifeboat. An outlook of togetherness, social cohesion, and social solidarity to see that society gets through the difficulties. That is, off course, assuming that the exit is managed and operated by a left government that openly wishes to implement exit in the interests of working people and the poor in general.”

Interview excerpts from an interview with C.L., published in the left US-magazine Jacobin, March 2015.

A different thessalonichian letter

„The law shall stream like water and justice like an inexhaustible stream.“

(Prophet Amos 5, 24)

Written by theologians from Thessaloniki/Greece

THessaloniki May 2015. We aim this letter at everyone taking part in the Evangelischer Kirchentag 2015 and all those concerned about the economic crisis and its devastating effects on huge parts of the population in Greece. We seek a dialogue to counter both the propaganda and the insults directed against the people in our country and the newly elected government, and to promote forms of coverage about Greece and policies orientated towards justice and the common good.

“Den andechoume allo! ... We cannot cope anymore!” ... On 25th of January 2015 a majority of the Greek population voted out of great despair for a determined NO! Against the policies of the governing parties and the measures imposed on Greece by the IMF, the banks and the organs of the EU. The now governing coalition currently still enjoys unusually high levels of support amongst the population.

“Can you really trust this new, inexperienced and left wing government?” is a question we are being asked time and again. “What happened in Greece that led to this humanitarian crisis?” To these questions we wish to provide a few pointers.

Our assumption is that this crisis is the result of a brutal, world wide capitalism whose greatest principles are the greed for profits and the exploitation of humans and creation. Human rights and common good, preservation of creation and peace do not belong to this concept. Capitalism is a blasphemous form of economy at the cost of humanity, nature, society and state, and also a system increasingly engendering violence.

1: The situation of the churches

Since the foundation of our nation state in 1830 our history has been a tumultuous one. The influence of the major powers always played a big role in this. The population was influenced by an overwhelmingly mono-cultural, national-orthodox spirit. “To be Greek” has meant until recently “to be orthodox”. Since the 1990s our society has opened up and developed in a more pluralistic direction; migration and wider information played a part in this.

Government and the orthodox archbishop Hieronymus are acting with mutual trust in the face of the challenges posed by the economic crisis. Efforts are being undertaken to define the relationship between state and church anew and according to democratic criteria and to grant equal rights to minorities. The archbishop has pledged his support to help using church property for the purpose of debt reduction. With a high level of volunteering and donations, orthodox churches have, among many institutions of civil society, become important providers of food banks. “We cannot bear

another pensions cut!” says Metropolitan Varnavas. In his parishes in a social suburb of Thessaloniki more than 7000 people are provided with food every day. Minority churches cannot finance their priest’s pensions and running costs any more.

They also organise food banks and refugee projects. Together with people of theology and Christian engagement we urgently call on all churches to “fall into the spokes of the wheel” (Bonhoeffer).

Apart from their charity mission of “tending the victims under the wheel” they have to rediscover their prophetic task of fiercely criticising the unjust practices of the powerful in favour of the few today, just like the prophets of the old testament did. Christian people belong on the side of the exploited and suffering!

2: Nazi-occupation of Greece

The troubled history of our country also includes the three and a half years of ongoing brutal occupation, plunder and destruction of our country by the Nazis. The wounds inflicted by this have up to now not really been treated and healed. Above all they have been played down and ignored for decades. People in Germany have been insufficiently informed about the countless atrocities committed by the Wehrmacht and SS-units everywhere across the whole country. [See page 8; — annotation by the FCH editors] And with diplomatic tricks and excluding the smaller partner Greece their governments have to this day successfully avoided a solution of the “reparation debt and war credits” issue. That Prof. Hagen Fleischer, a German historian, publicly called these



Poster / invitation poster:

Aristotle University of Thessaloniki // theology department
scientific conference — “the church and the left”
ceremonial hall of the old philosophical faculty AUTH
22nd — 23rd of January 2013

This conference took place under the patronage of the rector of the Aristotle University of Thessaloniki in cooperation with the holy synod of the Church of Greece.

German governments tactics “wholly indecent” has been greeted with relief by many people here. The Jewish community of Thessaloniki is fighting together with the “train of remembrance” (<http://www.zug-der-erinnerung.eu>) for the Deutsche Bahn AG, the legal successor of the Reichsbahn, to repay the costs for the train journey to the extermination camps which the 46.000 Jews had to pay for themselves. We fully support these demands.

We experience initiatives from Germany which passionately and energeti-

cally strive for reconciliation and healing of these old wounds. But we denounce the German government for continuing to deliberately prevaricate and avoid a moral and legal clarification. We criticise that Bundespräsident Joachim Gauck talks about compensation with the chancellor vaguely joining in, only to be scaled back to a non-committal level by the government spokesman. This approach hurts, especially those who have suffered these horrors themselves and in their families. This prevention of a solution poisons the climate between

the people of our countries. The new government is the first to pursue the questions of the war debts in open discourse, including through a parliamentary committee, wishing to contribute to finally getting the historical facts onto the table. We also advocate mutual agreements between our countries and a clean legal solution. We especially appeal to the church leaderships in Germany to support these demands.

3: Greek debt We consider the communiques from politicians and the media pointing with their finger at the high debt of our country to be arrogant and inappropriate. The German population must not be any longer given the impression that the Greek people alone are responsible for the Greek debt by living beyond their means. Yes, many have lived here with loans, with stock exchange winnings and subsidies. Many have been subject to consumer stress. But for one this does mostly not apply for ordinary people and the largest part of the population. On the other hand and especially the desire to have possessions is part of the ruling economic order and its mad desire to grow. It has been our experience that the austerity policies carried out everywhere with its Euro based common currency create an export surplus in a few rich countries and debt in the poor countries of the south. Through this ever greater inequality between individual countries and people is being created. Through these policies people in Greece are driven into extreme poverty (2014: 11%), below the poverty line (34%) and into unemployment (27%), school children (700.000) suffer from malnourishment and 60 per cent of the youth hang around without opportunities and without a job. More than 6000 men and women have committed suicide because of high debt. Doctors in state hospitals take to the streets because they cannot sustain care for the sick any more. There is lack of staff everywhere, a lack of the simplest things like dressing material, hygienic material and bedding. In these days the last state reserves for emergency care, pensions- and communal savings are being scraped together, not to bring relief to these emergencies but to fulfil the obligations towards the IMF and the banks!

Liberate the people in Germany from the widespread fear that their taxes have to pay for the debts of the Greeks! Explain that Germany up to now has profited immensely from the debts of others and its own export surplus! How many debt payments has Germany already received from numerous indebted countries? Whenever Germans had to pay for something up to now it was for these packages worth billions carried willingly by their

FCH editors statement

We are pleased to be able to publish in our paper the joint ecumenical letter by women and men from different churches in Greece, among them prominent professors, a faculty dean, a poet, a scholar of Islam, a priest and members of the World Council of Churches. It is aimed at the Evangelischer Kirchentag which took place in Stuttgart from 3rd to 6th of June with more than a hundred thousand visitors.

May this letter open doors and spark new discussions.

The FaktenCheck:Hellas editors

politicians to the banks who had lost money through speculation.

We support the audit of the state debt as currently carried out by the truth commission of the Greek parliament (www.GreekDebtTruthCommission.org). We call for an international debt conference for Greece, similar to the London debt conference 1953 at which the largest part of German debt was cancelled. Greece signed this treaty back then, thus playing its part in cancelling Germany's debt. By doing so all signatories enabled Germany, then razed to the ground, to start anew.

4: Right wing extremist and fascist danger A policy of inequality prepares the ground for nationalism and fascism. In Germany, we hear about the great demonstrations against Islam, foreigners and refugees. At home we are very concerned about the growth of the fascist party, the third largest in the Greek parliament, which also has sympathisers in the police, the military and also in the orthodox church. Since the 2nd world war these forces, who collaborated with the Nazis, have systematically developed their structures and cemented them during the 1967-74 dictatorship by state means, always also in a network with fascist forces in Germany. [See page 4; — FCH editors] We have to expose all undemocratic machinations until today in an attentive and determined manner and also to demand repeatedly a democratic culture and respect for the human dignity of all. Currently, a trial of the fascist party is being conducted which is accused of forming a criminal association. We are warning that these forces could, after a perceived breakdown of our state, use the anger of the population to incite violence and riots. These

would not be controllable and could put democracy in the whole of Europe in danger. The point that Greece is in a very sensitive geographic position was made justifiably time and again. We call for a pluralistic and peaceful society! **5: “Left government” and democracy** Only with the active participation and support of civil society and through continuous feedback can this new government successfully advance the construction of a just society based on solidarity in Greece. The main measures undertaken by this new government during the first weeks of its existence served to secure social livelihoods and the easement of the greatest suffering. A government sworn to Christian principles like the spirit of charity would hardly have acted differently. We see however how the money lenders — EU and IMF — steadily increase the immense pressure on government and society in order to carry on with the failed Troika policies of new pensions cuts, new VAT increases and reinforced privatisation measures. This way efforts for social justice are being destroyed at the same time and the fragile flower of hope for a democratic awakening is being trampled upon.

In our country a left wing government is not suspicious from the start. Time and again there have been connections between left wingers, communists and socialists on the one side and Christians on the other. During the Nazi-occupation priests fought on the side of the resistance. Priests, theologians and Christian people have been openly committed to a communism and socialism with a humane face. Although orthodox church representatives often allied themselves with the right wing

establishment, there are democratic and socialist minded people within and around it. In January 2013 the Theological Faculty of the University of Thessaloniki organised a big conference titled “the church and the left”. Almost half of the members of the holy synod of the orthodox church participated.

Christian initiatives meet with many in civil society in the spirit of “capitalist policies kill”¹

To promote these initiatives and to connect them beyond our borders is our aim. This is why we send you this letter. We cordially ask you to take up and think over our evidence and our pleas in your communities, synods, committees and academies! We look forward to your visits to Greece!

Let us work together for a solidary and people friendly Europe!

Prof. Miltadis Konstantinou, Prof. Dimitra Koukoura, Prof. Christos Tsironis, Prof. Stylianos Tsompanidis, Dorothee Vakalis-Fölster Pfrin I.R., Sotiris Mpoukis M.Th., Prof. Nikolaos Maghioros, Prof. Niki Papa-georgiou, Prof. Angeliki Ziaka, Anastasia Gkitski M.Th., Dr. Fotios Diamantidis, Pater Prof. Ioannis Skiadaressis, Prof. Panagiotis Yfantis

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¹ See the documents of the World Council of Churches in Geneva like “Wirtschaft(en) im Dienst des Lebens” und “Pilgerweg der Gerechtigkeit und des Friedens”, as well as the apostolic letter “Evangelii Gaudium” by Papst Franziskus and the impressive but barely noted report about Greece by UN-expert Cephas Lumina, the independent UN-expert for the effect of state owned foreign debt on the full enjoyment of human rights.

One way tickets Thessaloniki —Auschwitz

Demands that the Deutsche Bahn AG repays travel costs from Thessaloniki to Auschwitz

In April 2015 the non-government organisation “Train of Commemoration” together with the Jewish Community of Thessaloniki sent a letter to the Deutsche Bahn AG which, amongst others, was sent to Dr. Rüdiger Grube. In this letter it says: “We are approaching “Deutsche Bahn AG”, the historical successor of the “Deutsche Reichsbahn”, with our demand to reimburse to heirs of Greek Holocaust victims of Thessaloniki for train fares that they were forced to pay for their deportation from Thessaloniki to Auschwitz and Treblinka between March and August 1943.” In the letter the logistical calculation is made that the Reichsbahn mostly charged 2 “Reichspfennig” per rail kilometer for transportation in goods wagons mainly designed to transport animals. This means the company charged 39 Reichsmark for every deported person for the 1.985 km long track from Thessaloniki to Auschwitz/Treblinka. In total it is assumed that the Deutsche Reichsbahn made around 2,3 million Reichsmark from these deportations alone.

The model of making deported people pay for transport towards their own deaths was used by the Reichsbahn with most holocaust transports. Sometimes Jewish Communities, where still in existence, paid for the transport fees. In a few cases where no one on the Jewish side could be found to collect the

transport blood money from, the Reichsbahn charged the SS. This terror organisation then duly paid up.

The letter explains in great detail that it was possible to achieve partial compensation for similar transport costs from the French state-owned railway company SNCF which was contracted by the Deutsche Reichsbahn to organise transports of Jewish people to the concentration camps. Polish holocaust survivors have also publicly accused the Deutsche Bahn AG because of similar transport costs. About this matter it says in the letter: “By diplomatic consultations between the German government and the Polish government it was agreed to allow Deutsche Bahn AG to offer 5 million Euros in exchange for a traffic licence for Deutsche Bahn AG in Poland.”

The letter ends with these sentences: “We are demanding full compensation from your company to the Jewish Community of Thessaloniki, which is the legal representative of the Holocaust victims of Thessaloniki Jews. Copies of the train tickets are available.” The letter is signed by Hans-Rüdiger Minow, board spokesperson of “Train of Commemoration” and David Saltiel, president of The Jewish Community Thessaloniki in the Hellenic Republic.

FactCheck:Hellas platform

Rescue Greece! Found Europe anew!

The so called rescue measures carried out by the troika of EU, ECB and IMF up to now have not saved Greece but dragged it deeper into catastrophe: even higher state debt, even worse downturn in economic activity, even higher unemployment and deeper poverty. The rescue was mainly about saving German and French banks. The former opposition party SYRIZA did warn the former governments of the minister presidents Papandreou and Samaras not to take on the poisoned credits. But the governments of the Greek parties Pasok and Nea Demokratia did take on the credits — in agreement with their sister parties in the European Union.

I
We welcome the fact that the new Greek government in a first step provides 200 million Euro as help for the poorest crisis victims — without asking for the consent of Schäuble or Juncker. We support further measures like this in correspondence with human rights of protection from poverty, homelessness and the protection of health and opportunities of education.

We support a debt cut. Every human being who can count to two realises: Greece, ravaged by the troika, will never be able to repay its debt. This destructive logic will not be turned around by further strangling Greece.

We demand for everyone responsible for the insolvency of Greece to be held accountable: Banks, rating agencies, European Commission, International Monetary Fund, former government members and their advisers. They are responsible for allowing Greece to enter the Euro-zone on false pretensions, the ratings, the credits handed out under duress and their catastrophic results.

II
We support the fact that possible repayments not of all but only of legitimate debts are bound to the economic upswing, the adherence to human- and workers rights, the norms of the International Labour Organisation ILO and the sovereignty of Greek parliamentary institutions.

We support the Greek government in revising practices of previous governments: Excessive appointment of private Anglo-American advisers, financial special rights for ministers and MPs (cars, opulent travel- and other expenses etc.). We see this as typical of the European Commission, the EU-parliament and most governments and parliaments of EU member states.

We demand that the EU and the EU-governments seize to provide means for tax evasion to the wealthy and big business. This is especially true for Luxembourg which was built up to become the second largest tax haven in the world under long term minister president and current EU-Commission president Juncker. And it is true for the UK which, under “non-dom” rules in reality guarantees tax freedom for 116.000 super rich foreigners with a UK passport — amongst them many Greek multimillionaires.

We support all measures leading to the decrease of the disproportionate Greek defence budget. These consequences from the US- and NATO backed 1967 military coup need to be removed.

We support all measures leading to the exposure of government corruption during previous decades and their consequences. We also support the demand that German and French arms companies should pay out damages to Greece as appropriate.

III
The EU lauds itself as a force for peace. But the reconciliation after the national socialist occupation of Europe was often only superficial — especially in the case of Greece. Especially the German government has deliberately sidelined the question of reparations. The German side has to commit to reparations. The Greek side has suggested the establishment of a “council of the wise” to further this cause.

Those responsible know how to re-build an economy that is insolvent and which has been driven into the ground. As the legal successor of the “Third Reich”, the Federal Republic of Germany was relieved from most of her pre-war and war debts at the debt conference in London in 1953. Investment was promoted, the welfare state was built up, trade unions were given rights again. Why should what was given to the legal successor of the Third Reich be refused to the victim Greece?

IV
Europe has to be founded anew. Economic development has to be based on an ecological and social direction and to be combined with justice, a deepening and installation of democratic procedures, with peace and international understanding. Hatred, humiliation and contempt towards Greece are incompatible with European values. We encourage all initiatives, movements and parties in the other European states who embarked on a similar path to Syriza in Greece. We support all forms of mutual communication, networking and demonstrative actions. The removal of those governments in other EU member states who carry on with the troika policies because they are convinced of them or because of blackmail, corruption or stupidity is on the agenda.

ΚΑΤΑΣΤΡΑΦΕΙΣΑΙ ΠΟΛΕΙΣ & ΧΩΡΙΑ ΞΥΝΕΠΕΙΑ ΤΟΥ ΠΟΛΕΜΟΥ 1940-1945
Α΄ ΕΚΔΟΣΙΣ ΑΘΗΝΑΙ 1945

