

**NIKOS MARTIS**

**Former Hellenic Government Minister**

**President of «The Macedonian Hestia»**

**25 March 2010**

**Those who recognise the fact that Adolf Hitler has gone down in history at an unfortunate period, that caused an unprecedented human destruction, should be grateful to the Greeks who helped substantially in saving the world from his domination. In this respect, not only are the Greeks the founders of Western civilisation, but also its saviours. Remaining united, they sacrificed themselves so that even their present day harsh critics, would not have Hitler as their ruler.**

**It is not accidental that the French journalist Pierre Bourdan, talking to the BBC in 1942, said: «As time goes by, it will become more evident that, after England's decision in 1940, it was the bravery of the Greek people that contributed to the survival of the European civilisation, which was founded by them 2400 years earlier.**

***This should bear in mind, those who will set out to shape Europe. Any sign of ingratitude to Greece, would be equated with treachery to Europe».***

Characteristic is the confession made by Hitler on the 30th March 1944 in the course of a discussion with his friend, the well-known cinematographer Leni Riefenstahl, as it is noted in her Memoirs: *“Italy’s attack against Greece has been catastrophic for Germany. If the Italians had not attacked Greece and they did not need our help, the war would have taken a different course. We would have had time to capture Leningrad and Moscow before the Russian winter would have caught up with us.”*

Similarly, in his Political Will, which he dictated before his death in April 1945, Hitler attributes categorically his defeat to the Italian attack against Greece and the prolonged Greek defence.

Characteristic is also the statement made by the German Field Marshal Keitel at the Nuremberg trial: *“The unexpected and strong Greek defence, delayed by more than two months of vital importance, our attack against Russia. If we had not had this great delay, the outcome of the war would have been different in the Eastern Front and of the war in general; and the accused would have been different too.”*

**In 1942, on the anniversary of the invasion of Greece by Germany, Moscow radio transmitted: «*You, totally unarmed, fought those who were fully armed and won. It could not have been otherwise, because you are Greeks. We Russians gained time, thanks to your resistance. We thank you*»**

**Eden, Foreign Minister of Great Britain was stressing on the 24th September 1942: «*Irrespective of what future historians may say, we can already say, it was Greece that first gave an unforgettable lesson to Mussolini. It was Greece that motivated Yugoslavia to rise against the Axis. It was Greece that, with the little assistance we were able to give her at the time, fought the Germans on the mainland and on Crete and kept them there for six weeks. It was Greece that upset the chronological order of all the plans of the German Military Headquarters and thus brought about a radical change in their campaign and probably in the entire course of the war...*»**

**It should not be forgotten that in 1940-41 the Greeks were praised by all world leaders and media more than any other people had**

**ever been praised before.**

**The Greek people will continue today to give a lesson to their relentless critics, because even at this difficult period, like on other occasions in the past, the Greeks in Greece will unite with the Greeks abroad and will cope with their public debt, so that no one could have an excuse to denigrate their name and ignore their vast contribution to the world civilisation.**

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