

World famous artist and anti-fascist

The FIR congratulates the legendary Greek composer and anti-fascist Mikis Theodorakis, who could celebrate his 95th birthday at the end of July 2020.

Theodorakis is considered as the most famous Greek composer of the 20th century. Unforgotten are his compositions for the films "Alexis Sorbas" and "Z" as well as the magnificent setting of the "Canto General" to verses by Pablo Neruda. Among his more than 1000 compositions are symphonies and a multitude of folk songs.

The FIR reminds particularly of the anti-fascist fighter.

During the occupation of Greece 1941 to 1944, the young Theodorakis joined the resistance. With 18 years, he was imprisoned and tortured for the first time. In the liberation struggle of Athens, he joined the Left and became a member of the National Liberation Front EAM in the ranks of the Greek People's Liberation Army.

As a communist fighter, Theodorakis was arrested again in July 1947 during the civil war and banished several times, in December 1948 to the camp island of Makronisos.

After his release, he went to Paris, where he studied music. As early as 1957, he received his first awards for his compositions. In 1960, he returned to Athens, where he worked as a composer and politician. In 1963, he founded the Lambrakis Youth in reaction to the assassination of a left-wing member of parliament. One year later, he published the Mauthausen song cycle with the singer Maria Farantouri, a homage to former concentration camp prisoners.

With the fascist coup of the colonels in 1967, Theodorakis had to go underground again. As co-founder of the Patriotic Front PAM, he called for resistance. The putschists banned his music; even singing and listening to his songs were punished with imprisonment. At the end of August 1967, he was arrested, tortured and later - despite serious illness - deported to the Oropos concentration camp. Only an international solidarity movement succeeded in his release

in 1970. Theodorakis again went into exile in France. Internationally, he became a symbol of unbroken resistance against the Greek dictatorship.

In 1972, he met Pablo Neruda and Salvador Allende and promised them to set Neruda's "Canto General" to music. After the coup against Allende in September 1973, this composition also became a hymn of resistance of the Chilean people.

As an independent leftist, he was elected to the Greek parliament several times after the end of the fascist coup, and in 1990 he was even appointed to the government of Konstantinos Mitsotakis as a minister without portfolio with the prime minister. Since he withdrew from day-to-day politics, Theodorakis has made public statements, some of them very clear, on current issues, especially when in his eyes the anti-fascist legacy and peace are in danger.

In June 2013, he published a flaming appeal against a Holocaust denier, a member of parliament from the "Golden Dawn" party. Such an appearance of a deputy discredited the country in the eyes of the world public, "considering that our people is one of those who suffered the heaviest casualties of the cruel Hitler barbarism. ... Firstly because they totally destroyed our country and killed thousands of Greeks, and secondly because among the six million Jews who were murdered there were 70,000 Jewish compatriots from Thessaloniki. ... To this day Thessaloniki suffers from this wound, and it is an intolerable affair when a young person so cruelly mocks the collective memory of a martyred and friendly people and in particular, the memories of these Greek Jewish victims of Hitler's barbarism - who were once part of our lives."

The FIR wishes Mikis Theodorakis health and much strength for his further years of life.

FIR (Fédération Internationale des Résistantes - Association des Antifascistes)