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Obituary

# Death of a magnificent figure of the Greek antifascist left, Manolis Glezos

- Features - In Memoriam - Obituaries and appreciations -

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**Manolis Glezos was born on 9 September 1922 in Apiranthos, Naxos and died on 30 March 2020 in Athens. [1]**

The death of Manolis Glezos was expected. Since last autumn, the health of this formidable activist of all just causes had become fragile and his 98 years of resistance were no longer enough to cope with the exhaustion of the body.

## An anti-Nazi fighter

However, this death, coming at a time when the immense popular homage expected cannot be organized in the streets, is rather unjust. Manolis, the anti-Nazi resistance fighter who tore the Nazi flag off the Acropolis with his comrade Santas, was unable to see the entire clique of *Chryssi Avgi* (Golden Dawn) assassins sent to prison. The trial of these Nazis nostalgic for Hitler has been enormously delayed as the accused used every pretext to demand adjournments.

Nor will he be able to know the epilogue of a fight that was close to his heart: to see the war reparations due by Germany to Greece. Greece was one of the countries most ravaged by Nazi barbarism, causing hundreds of thousands of deaths in the winter of 1941, massacres of small towns and villages – the most terrible horrors being those of the Kalavryta and Distomo massacres –, and convoys of tens of thousands of Jews to the death camps. Faced with the relentlessness of the German Minister Schaüble in wanting to reduce Greece to the depths of misery, Glezos at the time recalled the incredible gift offered by capitalism to the German economy on its knees to rebuild itself at the expense of martyred Greece. The debt then represented a good part of the debt recently inflicted on Greece by the memoranda and the troika. Glezos never gave up this fight against German imperialism, which was supported by the entire European bourgeoisie, particularly French and Greek. [2]

## A fighter against social injustice

But the saddest thing is certainly that Manolis Glezos will not have been able to see what corresponded to his lifelong commitment, for which he had paid in terms of multiple arrests, exile and even death sentences - De Gaulle had intervened on behalf of Europe's "leading supporter". For Glezos' life was a constant battle for socialism, against all social injustices, for progress, which led him to militate in the KKE (Greek CP), alongside the Pasok (Greek PS), in Syriza, and each time to leave these parties when he felt that they were abandoning the socialist or even progressive ideal. However, far from having made him a spirit of sorrow, this trajectory strengthened the tireless Resistance fighter in an optimism without illusion, and especially in an open-mindedness that makes Glezos a very rare figure in Greece among the leaders of the left: a militant opposed to any sectarianism, who could discuss as well with his former comrades of Pasok as with our comrade Yannis Felekis. In the current situation of the Greek left, which is seeking itself after the trauma of the Syriza experience and the inability of the anti-capitalist left to carry weight on the left, these are political traits of the first order, regardless of any disagreement one might have had with Manolis Glezos about his partisan commitments.

## An ecosocialist fighter

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And what should also be remembered of this radiant figure of the left is also his almost ecosocialist will before the time to refuse the very polluting hyper-concentration of administrative and cultural life in Athens. For a long time mayor of the rocky village of Apeiranthos, isolated on the east coast of the island of Naxos, he had ensured that an associative (association of women producing and selling their handicrafts) and cultural life developed there, with among other achievements a geological museum and a natural history museum created in 1996 and whose message was already to do everything to preserve the fauna and flora against the barbarity of profit.

As the homage of the Synantisi (Meeting for an anti-capitalist and internationalist left) group proclaims to this old comrade who remained so simple and energetic after such an intense militant life: "Bon voyage, comrade Manolis, you leave us as you lived, upright! You will always be alive in our hearts and in our struggles!"

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[1] *The Guardian* 30 March 2020 "[Former anti-Nazi Greek resistance fighter and MEP Manolis Glezos dies aged 97](#)".

[2] See Wikipedia "[World War II reparations#Greece](#)".