

PAPOU AND YIAYIA WHAT DID YOU DO DURING THE GREEK FINANCIAL CRISIS TO HELP GREECE?



The Voice from the Pavement - Peter Adamis 31 March 2013

The sale and retention of Greek land. Have we done our bit to keep Hellas Greek? One day we as we grow old and our memories dim, we face our grand children and are asked a myriad of questions. A time will come, and it will, be sure of that, when you may be sitting in your chair and your children and/or grandchildren come up to you and say. Papou or Yiayia, what can you tell us about Greece. Do we still have any links to Greece, Can I go back there one day, Do we have any assets that we can call our own, What did you do to help Greece out when it needed support. How can I go to Greece when there is no connection for me? What are you going to say and how will you respond when those innocent eyes look at you pleading and /or at least waiting for you to respond.

In 2007, a friend who had returned back to Greece had approached me to put him in touch with some merchant banker friends to ascertain what their financial advice was on the merits of funding a business venture in Greece. My banker mates advised my friend to get into real estate. An idea which my friend scoffed at the time. He had sold his assets in Australia and had made the decision that Greece was the place to be to raise his children. Suffice to say, the family was not long in the country when the Global Financial Crisis struck Europe like a thunderbolt from "Thor" himself. Thor being a Viking God of thunder, lightning and of war.

Six years later my friend is still in Greece still surviving under the austerity measures and each time we correspond, the picture he paints bleaker by the day. He tells me of people starving, of people looking in garbage bins, scraps left on the roadside, children running around unsupervised and uncontrolled, of the crime rate increasing on a daily basis, of people waiting in line for a hand out at welfare stations and of people frustrated with the harsh austerity measures and high unemployment. Then he goes on to say that people are not paying their rent because they have no money, shops being shut down, people not buying homes or apartments and a few leaving for their ancestral homes which if they are still standing at least offers some shelter from the elements and the harsh realities of life itself.

Now we hear of foreign elements, the vultures that prey on nations that have declined as a result of financial mismanagement or a loss of resources again through mismanagement or lack of foreign investment and are too much government red tape. We hear of villages and town houses on the beach or near the sea being purchased by outsiders or by those who can afford a holiday house in Greece away from their cold and wintery place of origins.

We heard recently from the mayor of one of the regions in Mani who on a visit to Australia admitted that there was a village in the Mani area that had been sold EXCEPT for one home that the woman refused to sell. (Bless her soul) This reminds of that lone old woman on an island located near the coast of Turkey where every day she hoists the Greek flag up without fail. (Bless her soul as well)

We heard late last year of Greece selling its overseas holdings such as Ambassadorial homes and other government owned assets to raise funds to meet their commitments back home and to supplement the budget in the face of austerity measures. Now islands are being sold off to wealthy Middle Eastern buyers, the banks to foreign investors, parcels of land being auctioned off at Corfu and other exotic places of interest and historical value. Then Greece is attempting to raise further funds by squeezing those Greeks who live in the Diaspora and have homes in Greece by raising taxes and applying additional red tape to existing ones.



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When will it stop and when will those responsible for the austerity measures say that ENOUGH IS ENOUGH. Is it any wonder that the people of Greece are venting their anger and frustration at their government and against those who control the purse strings like a puppet master? Is not a wonder that Greece has spawned extremist groups from both ends of the political spectrum, each vying for the hearts and minds of the people? These extremist groups well know the passions of their people and will pander to their interests to gain a greater foothold in the arena of government and thus take control of the country through the democratic process.

This brings the author back to the beginning. What are we in the Diaspora doing o assist Hellas regain its rightful place amongst the nations. Greece is not abrogating or running away from its financial responsibilities and may not like the austerity measures but they are struggling to make ends meet. Greeks are well known for their passion, love of life, freedom, free speech and a pride that transcends all barriers known to mankind. They area also a tough, no nonsense, resilient race that does not buckle easily under oppression or hardship and one wonders whether those who are the financial control puppeteers are aware of this trait in the Greeks and using it to their advantage. Whatever the case may be, a time will arrive when even they will come to realise the futility of the austerity measures longevity being successful without some respite in the foreseeable future.

What we can do, one may well ask. Return back home to the country we once called home and buy the land of our ancestors. It does not have to be much, even its only a small parcel of land, a pile of rocks, a small hill, paddock or a dilapidated home. It could be an apartment in one of the cities or by the seaside, whatever it may be, go and buy or do it through a third party well versed in the real-estate of Greece and its properties. If you don't buy, then at least retain what is rightfully yours and enquire what is required so that it remains in your hands, Hellenic hands. Whose ancestors built up over many years of struggle to provide a better quality of life for future generations?

Do not let the land of Greece to be purchased cheaply if to be sold at all to foreign investments. Especially when we have all been brought up to remembers the struggles of the Greeks who fought for the freedom we take for granted. Get off your backside, leave aside the apron strings, drop you mobile phone for one moment, sit up from your lap top or nay other mobile device you have with you and take notice, Greece is being sold and you sit there quietly asking yourself how will you spend your day. My advice to all of you who have a Hellenic heritage, origins, ancestry or links to Greece is to make enquires about purchasing Greece before it is overwhelmed by those who are not of Hellenic origins.

As for this author, he will ensure that whatever is in the his family's name will remain in his family and if possible; will try to emulate other good friends who have returned to purchase apartments from Greeks rather than see them be sold to foreign investors. If not then try gathering some friends who can all chip in and create a shared holiday home similar to shared accommodation like a home away from home. Keep the Hellenic fires of passion alive with the flying and do your bit for a place our ancestors once called home, Ellada. (Hellas). Peter Adamis