

An interview

Nikos Maziotis

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First Interview of Nikos Maziotis after his arrest published in the Greek newspaper “Efimerida ton Sintaktion”:

You are a member of Revolutionary Struggle, an armed anarchist organization. Why did you choose armed struggle as a method of action?

Armed struggle is an integral part of the struggle for social revolution. It is an integral part of a revolutionary movement that seeks the overthrow of capital and the state. There is an inseparable connection between the movement and armed struggle to such an extent that a movement to be truly revolutionary needs to include armed struggle in its targets. Throughout history there has never been a victorious revolution that was not armed. Armed struggle or in other words, armed propaganda, is a very powerful tool for the fight and its political messages can be very powerful, as long as there is an overall political conception and analysis about where we act, what we want and what we aim for. In Revolutionary Struggle we believe that armed action aims at dissipating to the greatest possible social and folk classes the necessity of social revolution and of the overthrow of capital and the state. Today, especially in Greece but not only, during the fiercest attack of the imperialist capital, while the Troika and the Greek state implement a policy of social genocide, armed struggle is as necessary and timely as ever. In 2009, at the beginning of the crisis, when it still had the characteristics of a crisis of the financial system and before it became a debt crisis, we had expressed the view that a great opportunity for a revolutionary era had dawned for Greece, because the consequence of the crisis was the end of neoliberal consensus and the de-legitimization of the economic and political system in the eyes of the social majority. Under these circumstances, targeted armed action against the regime may result in a cascade for a system with advanced interdependence in all areas and activities and

acts as a proliferation risk of destabilization. Since the economic and political globalization has advanced significantly, and with it the conditions of interdependence have increased, our view has been reinforced that armed struggle is now more than ever, not only politically necessary and feasible, but also crucial for the incitement of systemic problems and conflicts that will effectively undermine the system, to its final fall. But this requires a revolutionary movement that will resort to arms.

When arrested in 2010 you assumed the political responsibility of your participation in Revolutionary Struggle. What does political responsibility mean?

As a fighter and as a member of an armed group I did what I see as self-evident. I defended the organization to which I belong, I defended the attacks committed by the organization, I defended Lambros Foundas a member of the organization who was killed in an armed clash with police preparing a hit answer to the regime in order to block the Greek government, the International Monetary Fund, the European Commission and the European Central Bank from taking possession of the country and to end the current junta of capital and State, the new totalitarianism that the supranational economic and political elite want to impose on the entire planet taking advantage of the occasion of the global economic crisis. This stance we adopted was a matter of integrity for us. We were not looking to save ourselves. Taking political responsibility for us who chose to do this was a collective decision, and not an individual choice, and so after our arrests we managed to keep intact our collectivity and the imprisoned members of Revolutionary Struggle fought back, and we continued to talk about the necessity of modern proletarian counterattack and social revolution intervening with statements in major strikes and popular protests against the Memorandum of 2010–2011. We had the same attitude in the trial. Any other attitude than taking political responsibility would be a betrayal of our principles and our ideals and disrespectful to the dead, like Lambros Foundas. How do you respond to those who claim that armed action causes repression? For example, after Christodoulos Xiros fled prison, the government expedited the bill for type C prisons, intended for members of armed revolutionary organizations. It is stupid to believe that the struggle for freedom will not meet the response of the state and that it will not have serious repercussions. The struggle has as a compass the social revolution and the overthrow of capital and the state and it is obvious that it is not governed by the Criminal Code and the laws of the enemy and so it will necessarily adopt illegal forms of action, such as armed struggle, beyond the legal forms of action that it adopts. In the struggle for freedom and revolution, class and social war, there will be bloodshed, we will be deaths, there will be imprisonment, there will be special anti-terrorist laws and special prisons for members of armed organizations. Christos Kassimis, Christos Tsoutsouvis, Christopher Marino, Lambros Fountas paid with their lives the price of fighting guns in hand, in the struggle for overthrow and revolution. As in other historical eras, the guerrillas of ELAS and

the Democratic Army in Greece and members of armed organizations in Europe and Latin America, such as the Tupamaros, the Red Brigade, the members of RAF, the Action Direct members or members of armed organizations in Turkey. The price they paid was deaths in armed clashes, deaths from hunger strikes in prison and years of convictions. As a member of the Revolutionary Struggle I always had in mind that the price of my choices would either be one long heavy sentence in prison, which I have already received, or death in a fight with the dogs of the state. I could have been killed at Monastiraki. It was something that I knew could happen. The costs and consequences of the struggle for the overthrow and revolution do not mean that we should give up. The only lost cause is one that was never fought for. It should however be borne in mind that the price of such an option has a second side: For example, the enemy has paid a heavy toll since many cops have been killed by armed rebel groups, paying for their choice to be the dogs of the bosses. The same goes for politicians, judges, and for businessmen. This is what I argued in trial defending the attack Revolutionary Struggle realized with Kalashnikovs against the three riot policemen in Eksarhia in January 2009, which was in retaliation for the murder of Alexandros Grigoropoulos, and resulted in the heavy injury of Adamantios Mantzounis. Mantzounis paid the price of becoming a riot policeman and since then has not been in the police. Therefore in contrast to the claims that armed action exacerbates the suppression I answer that attacks by armed rebel groups against the forces of repression act as a deterrent to the intensity of police violence. On the contrary to popular belief the lack of armed action and thus the absence of the threat of retaliation frees more repressive action of the forces. Anyone who thinks that he is a fighter or an anarchist and believes that he must act within the limits of legality is best to join a legitimate parliamentary party, to join the system and to stop pretending to be a militant or revolutionary or anarchist. To provoke the state when fighting it is normal. One should be more worried about not inducing reaction since it indicates we are not on track if the enemy does not consider us dangerous.

In 2012, while still on trial for Revolutionary Struggle you and Paula Roupa violated their bail and chose to go underground. Why did you chose this?

To go underground was something we had decided since our release due to the passage of 18 months without a conclusive conviction. We knew we would be convicted to 25 years imprisonment, and we were not willing to accept this passively. At the time we chose to go underground the stage of the proceedings where indictment witnesses are examined in connection with the operations of the organization was over. During this period we gave many months-long battle defending the actions of the organization, one by one, staying there to turn our trial into a forum for the defense of Revolutionary Struggle, of armed action and social revolution. We were not content to take a stand politically at the end of the trial, at the stage

where the defense of the accused allows a statement in the form of the “apology”, so we took a stance politically regarding all our actions from the start. We chose to go underground for the obvious reasons: To be free, to continue the armed struggle, to continue to fight for the necessity of social revolution, the necessity of armed proletarian and popular counter-attack against the regime of memoranda, Troika, the IMF, the European Commission and the European Central Bank, against the fiercest attack of imperialist capital. We chose to go underground in order to continue the struggle for the overthrow of capital and the state, for Libertarian Communism and Anarchy. An important role in our choice to go underground was that we wanted to bring our child up without it seeing us behind bars. Within this framework was the reactivation of the Revolutionary Struggle with the attack on April 10, 2014 against the building of the Directorate for the Supervision of the Bank of Greece in Americis Street, which houses the resident representative of the IMF in Greece. As a member of Revolutionary Struggle I assume political responsibility for this action.

In Monastiraki, to avoid arrest you opened fire in a crowd of unsuspecting citizens. The result was the minor wounding of two tourists. What do you have to say about this?

First of all I am sorry that the two tourists were even slightly injured. The suffering of unrelated citizens in any way was something that we carefully avoid in the Revolutionary Struggle and this was made clear during the trial of the organization in which we were accused that the bombings risked human lives indiscriminately. After a long battle in court it was largely accepted that several of our claims such as the fact that most homicides accusations fell and only those involving the three riot policemen in Eksarhia in 2009, shot by the organization as a bloody retaliation for Grigoropoulos murder. In the case of Voulgarakis it was accepted that attempted execution of this scoundrel was cancelled because there was a risk that someone might discover the bomb which was detonated at a time no danger was posed to transit citizens, not even to the police officer who was near TEEM. In the case of the attack on the Ministry of Economy in Sintagma Square where there were minor injuries to civilians, the court took into account that the police despite two warning calls had not isolated the space and ad therefore put lives at risk. Revealingly a woman who was injured received compensation from the government for this, while some policemen from the central police force were fined for blunders in this matter, since the police finally admitted that their wrong reactions put lives at risk. There are reports of the American Embassy in Greece that said members of Revolutionary Struggle risk much in their actions in order not to hurt civilians. History itself proves that we always take action and do care about the lives of citizens regardless of the target. In Monastiraki, as is stated in the police report, the injuries of the two tourists were from fragments and not

direct shots by the bullets of the gun. The wounds of both these people were in the leg, which means that the shooting was low. This shows that I did not even aim at these people. How is it that now I am charged with attempted homicide of these people on the ground that I accepted the possibility of killing people? Here hypocrisy is surplus. In three cases of our actions the police put lives at risk. Once in Sintagma, at the Ministry of Finance, where their stupidity went as far as not roping off the space. Once at the Ministry of Employment where the special guard ordered a homeless citizen to carry the backpack with a bomb from the entrance to the Ministry a few steps further. The third event was at the Stock Exchange Market where the police did not advise some guards to leave neighbouring buildings. But there is another case where police have killed the wrong man during a hunt of an outlaw and there was no consequence for the police. In February 2010 during an arrest operation of Marian Kola in Byron, 9 police bullets killed an innocent passer, Nikola Todi. Nobody was charged with attempted murder. And the then Minister of Public Order Chryssochoidis declared that a human life was lost, but the important thing is that two criminals were arrested. Overflowing excess hypocrisy for the value of human life. The police primarily interested in the life of their masters and to protect their colleagues. The same goes for politicians, government officials and capitalists who are only interested in the lives of similar class, while they could not care less for life in general. They have the audacity to accuse me of attempted murder the same people who with the social policy of genocide that they are applying are responsible for mass deaths, 4000 suicides, deaths of people from shortages in hospitals, who are responsible for people searching the garbage to eat, responsible for millions unemployed, who are responsible for the impoverishment of an entire people.

You are accused of two armed bank robberies. Do you think that bank robberies are a revolutionary act?

Under certain conditions, the expropriation of predatory financial institutions can be considered as part of a policy of revolutionary activity. Such is the case of expropriation for financing the guerrilla war as has been the case throughout history. Historically all guerrilla organizations, the Tupamaros, the Red Brigades, RAF, Action Direct have resorted to bank robberies to finance their activities. Expropriation of banks have been done by Spanish anarchists and Bolsheviks, even in Greece rebels of the third division of the Democratic Army in the Peloponnese, who realized expropriations of branches of the National Bank in Kalavrita and Amaliada in 1948 during the civil war. But when expropriation is an individual choice, even if it is a conscious act, then it is nothing but a profession that is not related to political and revolutionary action, since by itself it is not a social policy proposal. In this category fall many of the social prisoners who have been convicted for this reason. Whether in one case or the other, since these acts are not against ordinary citizens

but against predatory financial institutions, which are armed with the legal right to rob people, taking homes and property from those who can not pay off, then there is nothing wrong with them. With the crisis we have banks, local and foreign, are responsible for the poverty and misery of the people. Responsible for the unemployment, with the social policy of genocide they apply. With the crisis it is increasingly the case that social wealth is redistributed from the social base to the vaults of banks. Lets not forget that multinational banks, some of which were holders of the majority of Greek debt also control the greater part of the global economy by controlling the bulk of industry and commerce. So I cannot find anything bad in the criminal expropriation of such criminal institutions in either case – either as part of revolutionary political action or as personal choice. Without wanting to go into detail regarding the categories against me regarding two robberies of predatory financial institutions, all I can say is that since I was underground I could not work as an employee. My survival depended necessarily on such expropriations.

Why did you want to leave in such a haste from the hospital “Evangelizmos”?

The conditions of hospitalization in Evangelizmos offend human dignity. I was 24 hours in a room with their hooded Counterterrorism unit around my bed, the light was lit 24 hours for “safety reasons”. For “safety reasons”, of course, when it came to removing the catheter they attempted, with orders from above as the police chief said, to tie me to the bed by putting my left hand in handcuffs. I reacted by tearing out the drip with antibiotics and told the doctors that I would not accept any medication and would begin a hunger strike. In order to pee they had the bathroom door wide open again for “safety reasons” of course to be able to monitor every move. And I need to add a course that tests operated on me before my arm was operated on were made with the hooded presence of EKAM, and just before the surgery when the anaesthesia was kicking in I noticed that police were dressed with medical uniforms and would attend the operation on the grounds of safety reasons. Under these circumstances I preferred to rush the transfer to the prison hospital Korydallos. Let me add that isolation was enforced in prison hospital too, applied in violation of the same prison code that supposedly they have an obligation to implement. For two days I was locked into a cell in isolation until the director of the prison and the board decided what status was kept under. Eventually, they decided that they I could go 4 hours a day out of the cell in a corridor that did not exceed 10 meters where I had access to a phone, but I was still in isolation since I could not come into contact with other prisoners, while I was forbidden to go into the prison court which every prisoner is entitled to.

Do you think that Revolutionary Struggle has a foothold in society?

I believe that if any armed revolutionary organization has such action that it targets the problems of the people and of society, and if its actions are against the oppressors and exploiters of the people, against those who rob, murder and make

them miserable it is then logical that despite the media brainwashing showing members of armed organizations as antisocial and criminal monsters, a large part of society supports the actions of rebel organizations. Thus, because the action of Revolutionary Struggle has these characteristics, I believe that yes, it has a foothold in society. I think that many would be willing in the present circumstances to take up arms to get Kalashnikovs and terminate the executioners of the people. But for this you need a revolutionary movement to organize them. The fact that Revolutionary Struggle has a foothold is also evident and demonstrated by the fact that the State has put a price on our heads for 2 million Euros. One for me and one for Paula Roupa my companion. If the state had universal consensus and had managed to convince all that our action is against the society and the workers then they would not have to resort to the dastardly measure of fatwa, i.e. paid reporting, but would rely on voluntary reporting due to the supposed sense of social responsibility. How vile and despicable it is to be a whistle-blower and even more so a paid one is evidenced by the fact that even the Germans before they departed in 1944 from Athens executed all interpreters and informants. Who is socially acceptable is demonstrated by the fact that I, Maziotis, as a member of the Revolutionary Struggle may roam the streets and live in society as I could when I was released in 2011. Everyone knew us. On the other hand Samaras, Venizelos, Papandreu, Ministers of Government, Members of Parliament who voted bills and all unpopular measures cannot walk the streets without armed escorts and bodyguards.

If you had the opportunity to send a message to Paula what would you say?

I would say that I am well and in high spirit, that she should remain free to raise our son, and that despite the losses, the struggle continues.

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