

# “Fascism Inc.”: Greece and the Rise of the Extreme Right in Europe

By [Aris Chatzistenaou](#)

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by The independent newscast Kontext TV

With

Aris Chatzistenaou, journalist and filmmaker from Athens, director of “Debtocracy”, “Catastroika” and “Fascism Inc.)

*In Greece and other European countries, economic elites have been supporting fascist parties in order to enforce a radical neoliberal agenda in the crisis, says filmmaker Aris Chatzistefanou.*

*In his new documentary “Fascism Inc.” he shows how industrials and bankers in the 1920s and 30s supported fascists in order to destroy socialist movements and trade unions. Today – again in times of crisis – this pattern reoccurs at the periphery of Europe: In Greece, extreme right wing parties like “Golden Dawn” and “LAOS” have been supported by big ship-owners and media corporations. Meanwhile in Ukraine the EU, US and IMF support a government with the participation of the neo-Nazi party Svoboda in order to enforce their economic and geopolitical agenda.*

The broadcast is online under: <http://www.kontext-tv.de/node/428>

German version: <http://www.kontext-tv.de/node/423>

*In his new documentary „Fascism Inc.“, Aris Chatzistefanou shows how industrials and bankers supported fascism in the 1920s and 30s in order to destroy socialist movements and trade unions. Today – again in times of crisis – this pattern reoccurs at the periphery of Europe: In Greece extreme right wing parties like “Golden Dawn” and “LAOS” have been supported by parts of the economic elites and media corporations. “LAOS” was even welcomed by the EU and the IMF as part of the non-elected government of Lucas Papadimos. In the Ukraine as well the EU, the US and the IMF have supported a government with the participation of the Neonazi party Svoboda in order to enforce their economic and geopolitical agenda – a risky game that can easily get out of control.*

Aris Chatzistenaou, journalist and filmmaker from Athens, director of “Debtocracy”, “Catastroika” and “Fascism Inc.)

Transcript:

Fabian Scheidler: Welcome to Kontext TV. Greece, we often here nowadays, is recovering. Prime minister Samarás speaks of a „success story“, Angela Merkel talks about a „much more optimistic climate“. The austerity measures, forced on Greece by the EU and the IMF and pushed especially by the German government, were, it is often claimed – in spite of all hardships – the only way to get out of the crisis. But what is the actual situation in Greece? With a youth unemployment rate of more than 60 per cent, can we really speak of a „success“? Which effects do the austerity measures have on public health, education, workers' rights and the environment? Our first guest is Aris Chatzistefanou from Athens. He is a journalist and documentary filmmaker. His films „Debtocracy“ and „Catastroika“ have reached large audiences worldwide. Now his latest film „Fascism Incorporated“ has been released. Welcome to Kontext TV, Aris Chatzistefanou

Aris Chatzistefanou: Thank you for having me.

Fabian Scheidler: Talk about your new film. What is it about and why did you choose to treat this subject now?

Aris Chatzistefanou: In one way fascism Inc. is a continuation of our previous documentaries „Debtocracy“ and „Catastroika“. We are always trying to understand economics and politics – world politics, world economics – by taking the example of Greece that we believe is an experimental case for what is coming. And our motto is: What happens in Greece never stays in Greece. And I'm afraid that these rise of far right and neo-Nazi movements that we have seen in the past few years in Greece we will see in other European countries where austerity was imposed in the same way and where there was a direct attack against democracy in order to impose this economic policy. We start our story from the early 20s and 30s in Germany and Italy and we are trying to make the connection between the rise of fascism and economical elites. We take the example of big industrialists like the Krupp family in Germany or the Agnelli or others in Italy – Alfa Romeo or Pirelli. The way that they supported directly fascism the way that they supported blackshirts in order to attack big strikes in factories. And then we are coming to Greece. We are talking about the German occupation of the country, the civil war after the occupation and then we go to the dictatorship and to what is going on today. And every single time we find the same background to the crisis. It's always the economical leads who fear that when the political establishment cannot play its role any more, cannot support them in a way, they are eager to play even with fascism. Even though it's not what they would like to do. It's the last resort or choice for them in order to control the situation. And I'm afraid that they've tried to do that in Greece even though right now Golden Dawn members – the Neo-Nazi party members – are in prison they managed to impose their agenda to the mainstream political parties and that's the real danger.

Fabian Scheidler: You already mentioned the 20s and 30s in Italy and Germany and industry and banks supporting fascism. In which ways did they support fascism?

Aris Chatzistefanou: At the first stages they just support gangs of blackshirts as we describe in the documentary. They attack unionists; they attack the big strikes in factories. After that if they see that the political establishment, the police forces or even the judiciary cannot play anymore their roles they are ready to accept fascists coming to power. But then the game changes. It's not any more a small gang of blackshirts that work as an instrument of

this big capital. Because fascism at the end of the day is a massive movement and that's the real problem. Not only for all of us but also for the people who support fascism, these economic elites. It's not like a game that you push a button and create fascism and then you can push again the same button and stop it. As a massive movement it can lead to very dangerous directions And that's what happened in Italy that's what happened in Germany and we were on the brink in Greece if you think that Golden Dawn took around 7 % in the last elections and that even when they killed a hip-hop artist we received the first polls showing that they still have 7 to 10 % you realized that it has gained some characteristics of a massive movement. People who know that this is a Nazi party, they know that they are murderers, but they still support it because there is now other alternative for them at the point. In that sense we see a combination of political and economic elites supporting the first stages of fascism and then losing control and we are in this very delicate position right now in Europe not only in Greece.

Fabian Scheidler: Which role do European crisis policies and austerity measures play in the context of the rise of fascism especially in Greece?

Aris Chatzistefanou: First of all fascism always finds fertile ground in times of Crisis. Not only when there is poverty but when left wing parties don't have concrete alternatives for the exit of this crisis and that's exactly what happened in Greece in the past few years. The Greek left even though it managed to predict the crisis and it made the right analyses, when people where asking what should we do now there is no one strong voice coming from the left with some specific proposal and as Wittgenstein was saying every fascism is a lost revolution and I'm afraid that we've lost one revolution in Greece because of the crisis. Now it's not only what happens from below it's also happens from the European Union don't forget that a few years ago when they wanted to impose a dictatorship. I call it a dictatorship. It was a technocratic government of Mr. Lucas papdemos who was a banker and a non-elected prime minister. The EU came and said we want a big coalition government in which LA O.S. party will participate LA O.S. is a far right party, its members love the dictatorship some of them are neo-Nazis. They are anti-Semites but he EU hat no problem whatsoever to bring this party in power in order to impose their economic policy and in order to save big financial institutions in France Germany and other countries of the European core. In that way they indirectly opened the gates for the neo-Nazis in Greece and I'm afraid that the same thing happens right now in the Ukraine or even in Norway. In countries where fare right parties have started playing a big role in the government. Or don't forget Italy with Gianfranco Fini. He was accepted as a member of Berlusconi government for many years and the Europeans were happy with that. So we have a problem also coming from Brussels.

Fabian Scheidler: You already mentioned Ukraine. We can see an alarming rise of fascist parties in the Ukraine right now. The EU and the US closely cooperate with the government in Kiev in which the extreme right wing even neo-Nazi party Svoboda plays a big role. How do you judge European and western policies in the Ukraine crisis and do you see parallels to Greece?

Aris Chatzistefanou: We have many parallels in Greece, starting from the second world war because don't forget that there was quite big part of population in the Ukraine that collaborated with the Nazis and after the win of the Soviet union these people, these hardcore fascists had to leave and go to the U.S. and Canada where they started rewriting history. They were trying to find excuses for the way that they collaborated with the Nazis in

a way the same thing happened in Greece in the 90s there was a new movement in Greek universities trying to find excuses for Greek collaborators. And don't forget that Greece was the only country where the collaborators in a way won the Second World War. They weren't the losers, they weren't punished in any way but on the contrary because of the civil war they became the state apparatus and at the same time they became the economic elites. In Ukraine it took some more time but these people and these theories came back after the orange revolution. And the European Union and United states played a crucial role in accepting parties like Svoboda which don't forget that until a few years ago it was characterised as a national socialist party. It was its official name they never hide that aspect. So they accept not only far right parties they accept Neo-Nazis in Government in order to play their games which is not only the geostrategic game against Russia it's also an economic game because we see again in Ukraine the IMF imposing its rule on the people giving some loans and then actually taking control of the government. And again and again the neo-Nazis play the role of an instrument of the economic elites. To give you an example in Greece the neo-Nazis if you see their economic agenda it's a neoliberal agenda. When they were members of parliament they supported the ship owners they supported privatisation they supported whatever the government and the extreme neoliberals in Greece wanted to do and I'm afraid the same thing happens in Ukraine. So it's not only politics it's not only history it's the economy, stupid, as they used to say in the U.S.

European austerity policies are laying the ground for the rise of fascism in Europe. Greece is on its way to become a "Third World country", says Chatzistefanou. Public health and the education system have already been largely destroyed while public debt has risen from 120 per cent of GDP to 180 per cent since the beginning of "rescue measures". At the same time Greek parties like "PASOK" and "Nea Dimokratia" have adopted positions from the far right especially concerning migration policies. As Yunous Mohammadi from the Greek Forum of Refugees reports more and more asylum seekers are arrested and detained in prison camps under inhuman conditions. According to Aris Chatzistefanou there is a real danger that Greece could become the blueprint for other European countries

The broadcast has two parts:

1. *Fascism Inc.: How Economic Elites Support Fascist Parties in Europe - Today and in the Past:* <http://www.kontext-tv.de/node/429>

2. *The Reality of the Greek "Success story": Greece on Its Way to Become a Third World Country:* <http://www.kontext-tv.de/node/430>

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