

The Appeal of the Hundred  
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SPEECH OF ELLI PEONIDOU

CYPRUS.

Dear friends,

The great french poet and friend of peace Louis Aragon whose name is found at the head of the Appeal of the Hundred' said of my country, Cyprus, when he visited it a short while before his death. " Cyprus occupies but a very small space in the Mediterranean just as the heart does in the body, yet it beats fast, full of force". It is true, Dear friends, Cyprus appears as a small dot on the world map. If ~~you~~ place your finger on it it disappears. Yet, this tiny dot could, at some fatal moment, become the spark needed to blow the world to pieces.

And I ask you. How many such dots, how many sparks are there on our planet? if ~~we~~ were to count them we would have to count all the small and big places where war or local conflicts break out, all ~~the~~ military bases, every nuclear arms installation on every square kilometer of land, sea or airspace.

And if we were to take a globe and mark with a pin all these danger points which threaten mankind I am afraid that our globe would soon be turned into something resembling a horrifying sea-urchin, a monster carrying in every millimetre of its body the means for its self-destruction.

When my son was five years old he wanted to become an inventor and build a time machene. Now he is eighteen and it is I who would like to invent the time machine. My daughter is fifteen and she has said to me: " Let there be no war until I have finished my piano studies". For our children the time limits have diminished considerably. The threat hangs over their heads as surely as the moon did in previous generations.

And what about art? Where does its power lie, what is its effectiveness in this schizop<sup>h</sup>enic reality of facts and figures? I shall give only one example, the film " The Day after " which portrays the aftermath of a nuclear hor<sup>o</sup>caust.

The average American viewer, who watched the film in the warmth and

security of his living room, certain that any dangers are for others, not for him and convinced that the two oceans around him provide him with eternal bliss was badly shaken. No political statement no newspaper article, no scientific statement has ever had the immediate and mass effect that this film has had. There, then, is the power of art. Need we, also, mention Picasso's Guernica or Tolstoy's <sup>W</sup> War and Peace".

Let us not forget dear friends that Art itself is ~~struggling~~ <sup>struggling</sup> for survival. We are talking about the human species about how it could perish after a total nuclear war. We could carry on and say that mankind will disappear and leave no trace behind. For, in the middle of the frenzy and madness of Destruction who would think of preserving <sup>and</sup> protecting immortal works of art, the Louvre, the Hermitage, the Parthenon, Aeschylus' tragedies, Homer's epics, Shakespeare's plays, the works of Dante of Beethoven, Chinese porcelain, the monuments of the Incas or the Pharaohs all those works big or small which make up human civilization in all this wonderful multifaceted uniqueness? It has taken the toil and the wisdom of thousands of years for all those things to reach us.

So art ~~itself~~ <sup>itself</sup> is ~~struggling~~ <sup>struggling</sup> for survival. And its soldiers, volunteers or professionals are all of us who serve art whether in a big or small way. We are not on an equal footing with war. Our weapons cannot compare with nuclear ones. Let us remember, however, that in this fight we are not alone. Next to Art fights science itself watching with honor and awe as all its achievements are ~~th~~ threatened. And next to science. Mother Nature herself-is struggling with her infallible instincts. In this struggle there are no boundaries of language, religion, race or sex. There is only life on one hand with all the wonders which accompany it and on the other hand there is death and eternal darkness.

I should like to take this opportunity to praise this fine initiative of the Appeal of the Hundred to bring together in the eternal city

all  
of Paris intellectuals from over the world to declare their opposition to nuclear weapons their opposition to seeing Europe the cradle of civilization, being turned into a field a thousand times more destructive than ever before. I believe that such meetings help activate masses of people and become sources of inspiration and struggle for those who create.

Allow me to conclude this brief <sup>intervention</sup> ~~interoperation~~ by recalling once more the great Aragon and a phrase he wrote as soon as he learned about the coup d'etat and the invasion of Cyprus in 1974, but which has a universal application.

" Whatever is great and beautiful in this world can never be vanquished."