



# International New York Times

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## Greeks, low on patience, cut out the middlemen

ALONIA, GREECE

Moribund economy inspires a challenge to traditional capitalism

BY ANDREW HIGGINS

The feisty owner of a small family business that makes detergents had never had time for anticapitalist firebrands. So he was "suspicious and skeptical" when he was approached by left-leaning activists campaigning to purge "profiteers" from the market.

But, struggling to keep his business afloat under the weight of unpaid invoices and constant demands for bribes, the owner, Savvas Mavromatis, decided to give their proposal a shot. He started selling his products directly to Greeks for cash at fixed prices through a non-profit collective, instead of to shops and traders as he had always done.

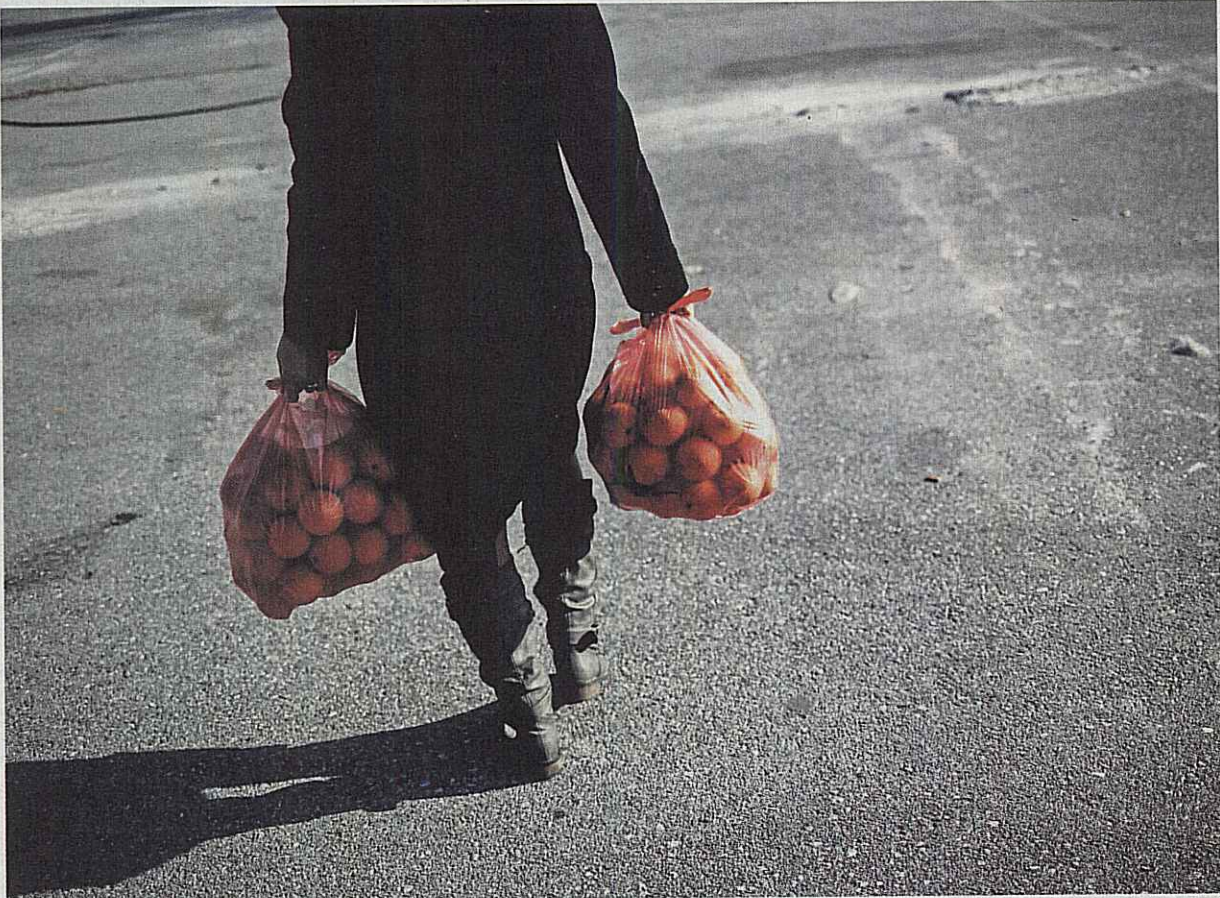
Fourteen months later, he credits the group with saving his enterprise from a Greek economic meltdown that rivals the Great Depression.

"We are in the middle of a terrible crisis and are just looking for solutions," said Elias Tsolakidis, the driving force behind the so-called no-middlemen movement here in northern Greece, a small, quixotic but surprisingly successful effort to redefine the terms of commerce. "We don't have a magic wand. We are not communists and we are not capitalists, but we are trying to help people survive."

In their search for solutions, Greeks are tinkering with a new kind of economy with little precedent in modern Europe. The collapse of the Greek economy is challenging not only the survival of Greeks but also of some of the basic mechanisms of capitalism itself in a nation where the economy has shrunk by about 25 percent since 2008.

In the view of widening numbers here, Greece's market-driven system has broken down, a victim of endemic corruption, budgetary mismanagement by the state and the overbearing demands of global financial markets.

In response, experimental ventures like the one Mr. Mavromatis joined have sprung up on the margins in towns and cities across Greece. While they may not offer a long-term solution, and are too small to alter the overall shape of the GREECE, PAGE 3



Oranges were among the produce sold at a monthly market organized by the "no middlemen" movement in northern Greece.



Christos Kalaitzis, 53, a farmer, was initially skeptical, but he grew weary of wholesalers who took his goods and then went bust.

## Frozen foie gras? The battle to keep French menus fresh

PARIS

BY LIZ ALDERMAN

Sit down at a cute Parisian bistro and the chances are the onion soup, paté and boudin blanc set before you were not prepared from fresh ingredients delivered that morning.

Even though France is renowned as a world capital of gastronomy, the odds have grown that a savory-looking entree or dessert — especially at estab-

lishments near tourist attractions like the Eiffel Tower, Notre-Dame or Montmartre — may have been at least partly prepared by an industrial food giant, frozen, then reheated in a kitchen. Even the bread, the French bread, may have been made in an industrial bakery.

While this practice is taken for granted in the rest of the industrialized world, to many French it is an astonishing affront to their very culture.

The solution is just as French: Lawmakers in the coming months are ex-

pected to approve a consumer protection law requiring restaurants to designate fresh dishes with a "fait maison," or "homemade," logo on their menus. If a dish is unlabeled, some or all of it is presumed to have come from an assembly line.

"The use of industrial foods in restaurants is a growing global phenomenon," said Daniel Fasquelle, a National Assembly lawmaker among those pushing for the label. "But for France, we're talking about our heritage. If we don't

do anything, in 10 years, real restaurants will be the exception."

As is often the case in France, however, resolving the issue is not so simple. Restaurant owners behind a fresh-food movement say the government has not gone far enough. They want menus to note every frozen item, citing a consumer right to know, after a European food scandal last year in which frozen beef products were found to contain horse meat.

FRANCE, PAGE 15

## Putin gets cool greeting in Brussels amid tension

BRUSSELS

Summit is shortened, with turmoil in Kiev overshadowing talks

BY ANDREW HIGGINS

President Vladimir V. Putin has for years trumpeted grand ambitions for Russia's relations with the European Union. He not only pushed to break down visa barriers across an expanse of territory covering more than 6,000 miles but also urged the creation of what he calls a "harmonious economic community stretching from Lisbon to Vladivostok."

On a visit on Tuesday to the Brussels headquarters of the 28-nation bloc, however, Mr. Putin did not even get dinner, a customary courtesy was removed from a sharply truncated program. The move was a small sign of how escalating tensions over Ukraine have upended even basic rituals of diplomacy, chilled relations between Moscow and Brussels, and knocked some of the shine off Mr. Putin's image as a leader who can turn any crisis, even the mayhem in Syria, to his advantage.

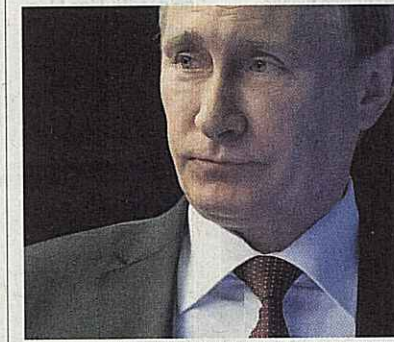
As the European Union hosted Mr. Putin for a summit meeting that lasted just three hours instead of the usual two days, an abbreviation designed to signal Europe's displeasure, the Kremlin's favored partner in Ukraine, President Viktor F. Yanukovich, began to look very wobbly in the face of unrest that has spread to Russian-speaking areas previously rock solid in their support of the authorities and their pro-Russia tilt.

Tuesday's resignation Mykola Azarov as Ukraine's prime minister, a staunch ally of Mr. Yanukovich, signaled further gains by the opposition, which first took to the streets last November after the Ukrainian president abruptly spurned a sweeping trade and political deal with Brussels under heavy pressure from Moscow.

"This is a crucial moment," said Michael Emerson, a former European Union envoy to Moscow. "A few weeks ago, it looked as if Putin was winning. Now Putin is losing. This should be the setting for a thorough rethink by both parties, particularly Russia."

Russia, Mr. Emerson said, needs to show that "all its talk about a 'common European house' from Lisbon to Vladivostok is not just a slogan and that Ukraine can be comfortable with both the E.U. and Russia."

PUTIN, PAGE 4



Ukraine presents a challenge to Vladimir V. Putin, who was in Brussels on Tuesday.

## Resignation of premier lifts Ukraine opposition

KIEV, UKRAINE

Step comes as Parliament repeals restrictions on speech and assembly

BY ANDREW E. KRAMER

Prime Minister Mykola Azarov of Ukraine resigned on Tuesday, a clear sign of the building momentum of opposition to President Viktor F. Yanukovich's rule.

The resignation, hours before a planned vote of no confidence by Parliament, came shortly after the pro-government Party of Regions joined with opposition lawmakers on Tuesday to repeal most of the legislation restricting freedom of speech and assembly that was enacted last week.

The resignation and repeals were significant concessions by Mr. Yanukovich. In a statement on his website, he said he had accepted Mr. Azarov's resignation and had signed a decree dismissing the rest of the cabinet of ministers. But he said Mr. Azarov and the ministers would stay until a new cabinet was approved by Parliament.

"All of the current members of the cabinet of ministers of Ukraine continue to work in their posts and exercise the powers entrusted to them," Mr. Yanukovich said.

He has promised other concessions, including an amnesty for protesters



Prime Minister Mykola Azarov has been a staunch ally of Ukraine's president.

who were arrested and a revision of the Constitution to weaken presidential powers. Lawmakers were expected to take up those matters later on Tuesday.

Mr. Azarov had been a staunch ally of Mr. Yanukovich through the two months of protests roiling Ukraine. But neither his resignation nor the repeal of the restrictive legislation, which the opposition calls the "dictatorship laws," was seen as likely to appease the protesters.

In Independence Square, the central plaza that has been occupied since November by demonstrators, with tents, field kitchens and a stage, reactions to Tuesday's developments were mixed.

One elderly woman in a kerchief giddily told the Ukrainian Channel 5 television station.

UKRAINE, PAGE 4

GRASPING FOR A FINANCIAL LIFELINE Even if Ukraine once again tilts to the West, there is no financial package ready to replace Russian aid. PAGE 14

ONLINE AT NYT.COM



STATE OF THE UNION President Obama, in the Oval Office on Monday. Find complete coverage of his address to Congress, which he was to deliver on Tuesday night (Page 5), at nytimes.com

### The reaction from Congress

Mr. Obama may use his powers for an end run around Congress, but there is little he can do without its help.

### The links, the tweets and more

From Republicans preparing advance videos to Democrats' counterplans of their own, how it played in social media.

### Investors await Fed decision

The Federal Reserve's policy-making committee, which meets Tuesday and Wednesday, is widely expected to continue scaling back its stimulus campaign. nytimes.com/business

### Trash a byproduct of Lebanon woes

Since the government resigned 10 months ago, no major laws have been passed and garbage is overflowing in Beirut, forcing residents to live with the stench. nytimes.com/mideast

### Republicans' immigration stance

The Republican leadership's ideas for immigration laws include a path to legal status, but not citizenship, for many of the 11 million adult immigrants in the United States illegally. nytimes.com/us

### The sloth's busy inner life

Scientists are discovering that a sloth is not so much an animal as a walking ecosystem. nytimes.com/science

### INSIDE TODAY'S PAPER

#### Egypt court tries to mute ex-leader

The soundproof enclosure, unheard-of in Egyptian courts, showed the measures that the government is using to silence the deposed President Mohamed Morsi. WORLD NEWS, 5

#### Pete Seeger, champion of folk music

The singer and songwriter who recorded more than 100 albums and spent his career seeking social change, died Monday in New York. OBITUARY, 2

#### Turkey pressured to defend lira

As the nation's central bank prepared for an emergency meeting, investors worried that it might not do enough to shore up the currency. BUSINESS, 14

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With the release of thousands of gruesome photographs, the Syrian civil war has turned photojournalism on its head, Susie Linfield writes. OPINION, 8

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### CURRENCIES NEW YORK, TUESDAY 12:30PM

			PREVIOUS
▼ Euro	€1=	\$1.3660	\$1.3670
— Pound	£1=	\$1.6580	\$1.6580
▼ Yen	¥1=	¥102.810	¥102.540
▼ S. Franc	₣1=	SF0.8980	SF0.8960

Full currency rates Page 17

### STOCK INDEXES TUESDAY

▲ The Dow 12:30pm	15,881.93	+0.28%
▲ FTSE 100 close	6,572.33	+0.33%
▼ Nikkei 225 close	14,980.16	-0.17%

OIL NEW YORK, TUESDAY 12:30PM

▲ Light sweet crude \$97.35 +\$1.76



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