

University of Warwick institutional repository: <http://go.warwick.ac.uk/wrap>

**A Thesis Submitted for the Degree of PhD at the University of Warwick**

<http://go.warwick.ac.uk/wrap/66498>

This thesis is made available online and is protected by original copyright.

Please scroll down to view the document itself.

Please refer to the repository record for this item for information to help you to cite it. Our policy information is available from the repository home page.

Paraskevi Gikopoulou (Student ID 0453064)

Supervisor Emeritus Professor Robert Fine

Thesis Title:

**The Holocaust in Greece: Occupation, Nationalism and Legacy**

*Thesis submission for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy in Sociology*

1 corrected soft-bound copy and one corrected electronic copy

12 November 2014

Department of Sociology

University of Warwick

## Contents

|  |           |
|--|-----------|
| <b>Contents .....</b>  | <b>2</b>  |
| <b>Acknowledgements .....</b>  | <b>5</b>  |
| List of Abbreviations .....  | 9         |
| List of Terms .....  | 10        |
| <b>Abstract.....</b>   | <b>12</b> |
| <b>Introduction.....</b>   | <b>13</b> |
| <b>PART I: THEORETICAL PERSPECTIVES .....</b>                                      | <b>23</b> |
| <b>Chapter 1. Hannah Arendt on Nationalism, Nation-States and Citizenship.....</b> | <b>24</b> |
| Introduction.....  | 24        |
| Nationalism, Minority Status and Statelessness.....                                | 24        |
| Totalitarian Domination.....   | 27        |
| Radical and Banal Evil.....  | 29        |
| Conclusion .....   | 38        |
| <b>PART II: HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVES.....</b>                                       | <b>39</b> |
| <b>Chapter 2. The Greek Holocaust 1: The Historical Background .....</b>           | <b>40</b> |
| Introduction.....  | 40        |
| Salonika from the Ottoman Empire to the Nation-States.....                         | 43        |
| Anti-Jewish Propaganda in Greece .....   | 59        |
| The Jewish Question in Greece.....   | 62        |
| Deportations and the Destruction of Greek Jewry .....                              | 68        |
| <i>The Bulgarian Zone</i> .....  | 68        |
| <i>The German Zone</i> .....   | 72        |
| <i>The Italian Zone</i> .....  | 74        |
| Resistance in the streets and the formation of EAM/ELAS.....                       | 78        |
| The Jewish Partisans in the Anti-Nazi resistance of ELAS .....                     | 82        |
| Conclusion .....   | 92        |
| <b>Chapter 3. The Greek Holocaust 2: Inside the Death Camps.....</b>               | <b>94</b> |
| Introduction.....  | 94        |
| From the Ghettos to the Trains .....   | 95        |
| Percentage of Greek Jewish Loss.....   | 97        |
| The Death camps.....   | 105       |
| The Participation of Greek Jews in the Crematorium IV rebellion .....              | 114       |
| Conclusion .....   | 126       |

|   |     |
|---|-----|
| <b>Chapter 4. The Massacre of Distomo 10 June 1944, an Episode.</b>   | 128 |
| Introduction.....   | 128 |
| Methodological Design, Purpose and the Usefulness of the Survivors' Voices .....  | 131 |
| A Chronicle of the Slaughter .....  | 136 |
| The Anti-Nazi Resistance in the Battle of Stiri.....  | 138 |
| Survivors' Memoirs .....  | 141 |
| Investigation of the Massacre .....   | 148 |
| The Nazi Perpetrators .....   | 153 |
| The Legal Prosecutions.....   | 159 |
| Conclusion .....  | 161 |
| <b>PART III: POLITICAL PERSPECTIVES</b>   | 163 |
| <b>Chapter 5. Collaboration in Greek Politics, 1940-1945</b>  | 164 |
| Introduction.....   | 164 |
| Prolegomena .....   | 165 |
| Political and Armed Collaboration .....   | 172 |
| The ELAS – EDES conflict and the British Foreign Policy .....   | 180 |
| Collaboration in the Resistance: the Zervas-German Liaison.....   | 196 |
| The Prelude to the Legal Aftermath.....   | 200 |
| December Events 1944: the Beginning of the Authoritarian State .....  | 204 |
| Conclusion .....  | 210 |
| <b>Chapter 6. The Legal Aftermath in Greece: The Parody of the Courts</b>   | 211 |
| Introduction.....   | 211 |
| Prolegomena .....   | 211 |
| The Legal Prosecutions: Nazi Perpetrators and Greek Collaborators.....  | 213 |
| Criticism: Greece at the 'centre' of the Cold War .....   | 226 |
| The "Merten Affair": The trial and release of the Nazi Maximilian Merten, a systematic study from diplomatic papers. .... | 232 |
| Conclusion .....  | 248 |
| <b>Conclusion</b>   | 250 |
| The Greek Jews are Back.....  | 251 |
| Restitution .....   | 255 |
| Memory and History in Greece.....   | 260 |
| Reassessing the relevance of Hannah Arendt's thought .....  | 266 |
| Final Thoughts .....  | 267 |

|   |            |
|---|------------|
| <b>REFERENCES.....</b>                  | <b>269</b> |
| PRIMARY UNPUBLISHED ARCHIVES.....       | 269        |
| PRIMARY AND SECONDARY BIBLIOGRAPHY..... | 274        |
| APPENDIX 1: THE JEWS OF GREECE .....    | 295        |
| APPENDIX 2.....                         | 299        |
| APPENDIX 3.....                         | 306        |
| APPENDIX 4.....                         | 311        |

### **Acknowledgements**

For the completion of my thesis I would like to thank first of all my supervisor Professor Robert Fine for his remarkable guidance and inspiration, his careful examination and thoughts upon my work, for showing genuine interest on my research topic, for his psychological support and above all his great humanism; I feel eternally obliged for you showed great patience and understanding all these years. I would like to thank all the staff in the department of Sociology at the University of Warwick for enabling this thesis in one way or another and of course Professor Steve Fuller for his guidance in the early years of my studies. I would also like to thank the examiners of my thesis, Professor Philip Spencer and Dr Charles Turner for their comments on my work and for suggesting ways to include the Greek Jewry within an overall European context and discussion. As far as my research is concerned, I would like to thank the people in the library of the Jewish Museum of Athens for letting me gather substantial material concerning Greek Jewry; the archivist Dr Eleftheria Daneziou for allowing me to look at rare collections and archives in architectural jewel of Gennadius Library in Athens; the academics and staff in the Academy of Athens for giving me absolute freedom to look at the British Foreign Office files, and letting me work in their offices outside working hours. I would also like to thank the staff at the National Library of Athens who guided me a lot on my research and for having together fruitful political discussions during breaks for cigarettes together with the student unions who were demonstrating almost every day. Concerning my case study on the Distomo Massacre, I have no words to thank the survivors who agreed without hesitation to talk to me and of course the Mayor of Distomo and good friend of mine Athanasios Panourgias who gave me books and old newspapers and who ultimately mobilized the people of the town in order to meet the survivors.

I kept a few people at the end who hold a special place in my heart. I want to thank my wild best friends Athina Dimitrakopoulou and Myrto Xanthopoulou for being close to me all the time and although they are struggling to cope with the austerity measures, they still hold on and demonstrate in the streets in order to achieve a life with dignity. Special thanks to my dear beloved Sachiko Nakada and Stephen Norrie, for you are like a family to me here; Ivan Girina, Ali Saqer, Nike Jung, Marge O'Leary, Nadia Frangou, Nektarios Kastρινakis, and Stella Hart for their wonderful support and friendship.

I cannot forget the indispensable support of Iris Kay especially in my most difficult years; Anne Lambrou and Mary Kommata for their remarkable financial support in the early years of my study; My sister Effie who always believes in me and for boosting my research financially and my survival in the UK when I was penniless; My sister Penny and Eugenios Kontaxakis who always helped me over the phone when I had problems. I would also like to thank my partner Sotirios Skandalis for his support, our long lasting political discussions, and for maturing together in Britain for almost a decade. To this end, I would like to thank my parents Dimitrios and Foteini not only for their emotional and financial support but for understanding what *solidarity* and mutual support mean in praxis especially in times of socio-political turmoil and financial stagnation when everyone seems despaired, yet you were always holding us together.

Father, this thesis is dedicated to you, for I know you didn't see me completing my PhD, but you will always be my motivating force. Thank you for inspiring me over the years and for reminding me in my early 20s, that in order to understand better Sociology as a discipline and the questions I seek to answer, I must also investigate seriously the political and historical contexts of each subject matter. Although you were coming from a different scientific background - you were an economist - your excellent knowledge of civil law, history and world politics, made you an inspiring man. I am sorry I didn't finish on time and I am sorry I arrived in Athens late. The thousand miles I had to cross seemed an eternity and you were already anxious to leave. Thank you for everything you did for me, and I never regret the minutes, the hours and years I spent talking to you and taking care of you, for you fought your coronary disease 22 years with guts and dignity, exceeding *by far* all clinical expectations. Everything I am, I owe it to you.

*In memory of my father Dimitris Gikopoulos*

15 Aug 1945 – 15 Jan 2012

Σε είδα εκείνο το απόγευμα.

Παραπάτησα και έπεσα στο βλέμμα σου το κουρασμένο,

στον ήχο σου το διστακτικό, στο γέλιο σου το σταθερό.

Τούτη την ώρα τη παγερή, ζεσταίνεις το μαρμάρινο τοίχο.

Αιώνια γήινος, αιώνια υλιστής, αιώνια πανανθρώπινος,

Επιστρέφεις στο χώμα που ξεκίνησες.

Αιώνιες οι σκέψεις μου, αιώνιες οι ματιές σου

Βιβή, Αγγλία

30.01.12

I saw you that afternoon.

I stumbled and fell into your tired gaze,

your hesitant sound, your frozen smile.

This hour of coldness, you are warming up the marbled wall.

Eternally earthly, eternally materialist, eternally panhuman,

You are returning to the soil where you started.

Eternal are my thoughts, eternal are your looks

Vivi, England

30.01.12

## **Declaration**

I hereby declare that the PhD thesis is my own work and has not been submitted for a degree in another University.

## List of Abbreviations

|                 |  |
|-----------------|--|
| <b>CAB</b>      | Cabinet Papers (London)  |
| <b>EAM</b>      | Ethniko Apeleftherotiko Metopo (National Liberation Front, Left-wing Band)   |
| <b>EDA</b>      | Eniaia Dimokratiki Aristera (United Democratic Left, parliamentary party)  |
| <b>EDES</b>     | Ethnikos Dimokratikos Ellinikos Sindesmos (National Republican Greek League, Nationalist/Royalist Resistance Band) |
| <b>EEE</b>      | Ethniki Enosis Ellados (National Union of Greece, Nazi/Anti-Semitic Party)   |
| <b>EKKA</b>     | Ethniki kai Koinoniki Apeleftherosi (National and Social Liberation, Republican Resistance Band)                   |
| <b>ELAS</b>     | Ethnikos Laikos Apeleftherotikos Stratos (National People's Liberation Army, armed force of EAM Resistance)        |
| <b>EPON</b>     | Eniaia Panelladiki Organosis Neon (United Panhellenic Organisation of Youth, Communist Youth of Greece)            |
| <b>FO</b>       | Foreign Office (London)  |
| <b>HS</b>       | History of Security Section (Record of Special Operation Executives)   |
| <b>KKE</b>      | Kommounistiko Komma Ellados (Communist Party of Greece)  |
| <b>PAO</b>      | Panelladiki Apeleftherotiki Organosis (National Greek Liberation Organisation- a nationalist/anti-communist group) |
| <b>PRO (FO)</b> | Public Record Office (London)  |
| <b>SOE</b>      | Special Operation Executives (British Wartime Intelligence)  |
| <b>“X”</b>      | Organosis “X” (X organisation, a terrorist ultra right-wing group held by Colonel Georgios Grivas)                 |

## List of Terms

|                              |  |
|------------------------------|--|
| <b>“First Round”</b>         | 1943: First round of civil conflict between ELAS and EDES/British forces. Accusations develop as to whether ELAS would seize the power by force after the war.   |
| <b>“Second Round”</b>        | 1944: “ <i>Dekemvriana</i> ” (December Events). Second round of conflict in Athens between ELAS and the British troops/the Greek Police/“X” organisation. The speculations concerning ELAS seizing power by force re-appear.   |
| <b>“Security Battalions”</b> | Nazi collaboration army formed by the “quisling” Prime Minister Ioannis Rallis in order to fight the Greek resistance. The Battalions remained on duty after the war was over, chasing and killing leftists. They are known in Greek as “ <i>dosilogoi</i> ”, “ <i>Tagmata Asfaleias</i> ”, or “ <i>Germano-tsoliades</i> ”. |
| <b>“Third Round”</b>         | 1946-1949: Greek Civil War between the left and the right wing resistance bands. Officially it was the war between the Left and Nationalist/Royal Army.  |
| <b>“White Terror”</b>        | Known as the period when the nationalists, royalists and fascists and Nazi collaborators under the cooperation of the Greek Police started a street-war against the left-wing partisans  |
| <b>Varkiza Agreement</b>     | 1945: Peace Treaty that promised disbandment and amnesty for the crimes committed in the <i>December events</i> . The Varkiza Treaty   |

also foresaw that the Nazi collaborators and the Security Battalions will be legally prosecuted and sent to prison.

The Treaty was betrayed and failed to be implemented as the Security Battalions were not legally charged and amnesty was suspended. The Leftist Guerrillas gave up their arms as the Treaty foresaw but the Battalions imprisoned 80.000 left-wing partisans and the civil war broke in 1946 until 1949. The Security Battalions were transferred into the national army, Greek police and in administrative positions. The authoritarian and ultranationalist regime establishes itself for the next decade.

## Abstract

This thesis analyses the Holocaust in occupied Greece and its effects on Greek political life. It is undertaken through a socio-political and historical interpretation of texts and archival sources. It draws especially from the political philosophy of Hannah Arendt and her understanding of totalitarianism, nationalism, statelessness and 'evil'. I aim to understand the changed position of Jews in Greek society from the fall of the empires, through the emergence of nation-states, to the period of deportations and extermination. I do so to comprehend the rise of nationalism in Greece. I examine a mix of primary and secondary materials – histories, memoirs and unpublished archives of Nazi rule – to cast light on the anti-Semitic laws implemented in Greece during the Nazi occupation and on the relationship of the Holocaust to the political regime that emerged in Greece after the war. I place particular emphasis on Jewish participation in the Greek Resistance, the political conflicts that emerged within the larger resistance movement, and the sensitive issue of collaboration, which was to shape much of the political agenda in Greece after the war. Through the use of diplomatic papers and Foreign Office files, I show how democratic anti-Nazi resistance movements were suppressed after the war by fascist forces and through the reluctance of the Greek bourgeois politicians and British officials to intervene. The politics of collaboration, underplayed in the current literature, also casts light on why perpetrators of the Greek Holocaust generally escaped legal prosecution in Greece and why resistance fighters were prosecuted through the implementation of martial laws and emergency decrees. Finally this thesis explores the ties that bind repression of the memory of the Greek Holocaust, to the development in post-war Greece of nationalist values.

Keywords: Arendt, Greek Holocaust, resistance, collaboration, nationalism, memory, crimes against humanity

## Introduction

This thesis examines the Holocaust in Nazi Occupied Greece. The rise of totalitarianism affected all the Jewish communities in Europe, but the Greek Holocaust has been largely neglected in modern Greek and European historiography. I emphasize the importance of Jews in Greek history, but also how after the fall of the Ottoman Empire Jews were turned into a ‘stateless’ people through the introduction of nationalism and how these nationalist trends continued after the war - not least by excluding the Holocaust from national collective memory.

There are three key scholars who have investigated the Holocaust of Greek Jews; Mark Mazower (1993), Hagen Fleischer (1995), and Steven Bowman (2006). They have provided valuable collections of essays and books, which enable us to understand for the first time the experience of Jews during Nazi Occupation in Greece. Mazower’s expertise on Greek affairs in the 20th century not only covers the experience of occupation but also reviews the Holocaust from the introduction of anti-Semitic measures until the final solution. Hagen Fleischer addresses the experience of life in the mountains, resistance and collaboration. Steven Bowman provides for the first time a comprehensive work on Jewish resistance in the mountains of Free Greece and explains major socio-political events that led to the destruction of the Greek Jewry, but he does not discuss “local politics” in the city of Thessaloniki that contributed to the destruction of the Jewish community, including that of local collaborators, central governors and quisling prime ministers that approved the Nazi decisions. The contribution of this thesis to knowledge is that it addresses *Greek responsibility* for approving the deportations as part of the political trends that shaped Greece and Greek theory during the occupation.

Most chapters of this volume have a historical architecture, but the analysis is social and political. I do not seek to explain simply why the Holocaust occurred in Greece or to

identify who was responsible, but to understand the nature of a society that excluded and discriminated against Jews. If the first is the work of the historian and the second is the work of the sociologist, this thesis brings them together to unravel the multiple threads that led to the most horrific event of the twentieth century. As Fine and Turner suggest,

“social theory’s licence to speak of sequences and epochs and inaugurating events is much broader. The events which social theory might then allow itself to be affected by include not only the framing of constitutions or social revolutions, but events which are held to alter an entire mode of collective perception or awareness” (Fine and Turner, 2000b:3).

Greece developed powerful resistance forces against the occupation. In this effort, thousands of Jews joined their fellow Greeks in the country to fight against Italian fascism in 1940-1941, and against Nazi and Bulgarian Occupation in 1941-1944 (Bowman, 2006). The participation of the Jews in the Greek resistance is a forgotten part of Greek history and deserves further elaboration. We also need to consider how Greece developed socio-politically after the war and the impact it had upon surviving Jews as well as on the memory of the Holocaust. The movement of the people was suppressed and Greece entered a new period of terrorism by right-wing forces, royalists and collaborators who aimed at integrating nationalism and conformity with pre-war bourgeois values.<sup>1</sup> The horrific events that marked the decades of Cold War affected the memory of the Holocaust in Greece. The Jews, Greeks, indeed everyone who fought against Nazism, were chased, murdered, exiled and imprisoned due to their political convictions. In this context the Greek legal system failed to bring the perpetrators to justice – a failure that had parallels elsewhere in Europe.

---

<sup>1</sup> For example the come-back of monarchy and the value system of Metaxas Dictatorship.

## Organisation of the Thesis

### *Chapter 1*

The thesis is divided into three parts. The first part “Theoretical Perspectives” introduces the reader to Hannah Arendt’s (1968) thought with particular emphasis on her understanding of totalitarianism and the radical forces that led to the Holocaust. In *The Origins of Totalitarianism* (1968) Arendt seeks to understand the origins of totalitarianism, especially through the effects of the rise of nationalism on minorities. Her study helps us grasp how Jews became ‘stateless’ people and lost their rights across Europe, a process exemplified in the case of Greek Jews. Arendt saw the Holocaust as a case of ‘radical evil’, but her efforts in her book *Eichmann in Jerusalem: A report on the Banality of Evil* (2006) to understand the perpetrators of the Holocaust in terms of ‘banality of evil’ emphasize that they were ‘normal’ human beings, who yet committed unimaginable deeds. This problematic leads me to investigate further issues of personal judgement, blind obedience and rational thinking. Later it informs my analysis of how both Nazis and Greek collaborators tried to escape justice and excuse their actions. Despite the controversy the surrounded the use of the term ‘banality of evil’, Robert Fine argues that it came out of a need to show that the “unprecedented violence” was “not...a sign of something beyond human understanding” (Fine, 2000c: 35).

### *Chapter 2*

The second part of the thesis “Historical Perspectives” is divided into chapters 2, 3 and 4. Chapter 2 introduces the reader to the historical background of the Jewish community in Greece. The Jewish community lived in Greece for more than four centuries, and the city of Salonika was host to a great number of different religious communities, including Jews (Mazower, 1993). I introduce the reader to the political and social changes that occurred in

the twentieth century in the Balkans, which had a tremendous impact on Greek Jews who came face to face with discrimination, anti-Semitism and finally deportation. With the fall of the Ottoman Empire, the Hellenization of the city of Salonika brought significant changes to Jews, who were constantly threatened as a result of the Balkan Wars (1912-1913), World War I (1914-18), the Dictatorship of Metaxas (1936), the Italian Occupation (1940-1941), the Bulgarian Occupation in Greek Thrace (1941-1944), and the Nazi Occupation (1941-1944).

The fall of the Ottoman Empire signalled constant wars in the name of nationalist irredentist movements that discriminated against Jews, who suddenly became 'rootless' and deprived of political and civil rights. I show how on the eve of the Nazi Occupation of Greece anti-Jewish propaganda paved the way for anti-Jewish policies and the destruction of Greek Jewry in the death camps. I discuss the fate of Jews in different parts of Greece, the different policies pursued against Jews in different occupation zones, and the political mechanisms that led to either collaboration with or resistance to Nazi antisemitic laws. The emergence of a left-wing resistance (EAM/ELAS) in Athens during the Italian and Nazi occupations proved catalytic for saving almost the entire community of the capital. Finally, this chapter examines an unknown aspect of Greek history, the heroic participation of Jews in the Guerrilla War in the mountains of Free Greece against the Italian and Nazi occupations. This history is underplayed in both the Greek and the wider European literature and shows how Jews and Greeks fought side by side to eradicate fascism, anti-Semitism and Nazism (Chimbos, 1999: 259).

### *Chapter 3*

Chapter 3 explores Auschwitz through the experiences of the Greek Jews in the concentration camps. This chapter seeks to bring together the stories of Greek Jews with those of other European communities inside the death camps. It tells the story of the

participation of Greek Jews in the crematoria of Birkenau, their strong sense of survival, and how they fought together to remain alive by building a strong common cause.

#### *Chapter 4*

Chapter 4 describes and narrates a massacre that occurred in 10 June 1944 in the small village of Distomo, Central Greece. The massacre occurred in two hours of ‘door-to-door’ slaughter in which the Nazis killed 218 non-Jewish Greek people (Mazower, 1993: 212). This chapter does not seek to compare Jewish and Greek experiences, but relate the destruction of Jews to what occurred in the mountains of Greece as the war progressed. The divisions that arose out of resistance, collaboration and political rivalry affected the 10,000 Jewish partisans and 2000 Auschwitz survivors, and became central to the postwar memory of Jews who stayed on in Greece (see Lewkowicz, 2000; see also Bourlas, 2000). My account of this episode is based on primary and secondary data with 5 unstructured interviews, primary documents and a collection of books and newspapers that reported on the massacre. Survivors welcomed me in their houses – with the support of the former Mayor of Distomo, Athanasios Panourgias – and I am grateful for their consent to be interviewed. In accordance with ethical standards of academic research, I agreed that their names will not be published and I am using pseudonyms. The interviews, which took place in a relaxed and friendly environment, were based on unstructured and infrequent questions.

#### *Chapter 5*

Part III of this thesis is on “Political Perspectives” and includes chapters 5 and 6. This chapter is about collaboration in Greece, the socio-political mechanisms that enabled collaboration, and the forces that sought to destroy democratic resistance. Through the use of diplomatic papers and files of the British Foreign Office, I explore political controversies that developed between left and right wing resistance movements in occupied Greece, and how they played out in postwar political developments. This chapter explains the “*December*

*Events 1944*” and the *Varkiza Agreement* that helped collaborators destroy left-wing resistance movements and rule the country in the postwar period with the support of British policies designed to keep Greece in the western sphere of influence. At the same time I provide comparative analysis as to analogous trends in Europe.

## *Chapter 6*

This chapter entitled ‘The Legal Aftermath in Greece: The Parody of the Courts’, aims at linking the socio-political consequences of Right-wing politics with legal decisions not to prosecute Nazi collaborators. Greece was one of those countries that did not deliver justice for the victims of the Holocaust and for those who fought against fascism. After the war collaborators and right-wing bourgeois circles established an oppressive regime that overshadowed Greece for decades suppressing democratic thought. Under the shadows of the Cold War, the Greek government treated the major left-wing anti-Nazi resistance, including many partisans who fought against Nazism, as enemies of the state and subjected them to legal prosecution. I examine these events, to bring to light a legal system that went hand in hand with nationalist politics – a failure to prosecute collaborators that was not unique to Greece but which, as Tony Judt recognised, was especially marked in Greece (Judt, 2000:48; see also Pendas, 2009). Forces of the far-Right employed dictatorial laws, torture and exile not only to safeguard collaborators, but to enable their later participation in the political arena, as was the case with former Dictator, Georgios Papadopoulos (Kostopoulos, 2005:146). Finally I examine a little known legal case concerning the Nazi criminal, Maximilian Merten, who was one of the three main perpetrators in the destruction of Greek Jewry in Salonika. This study is undertaken via exclusive investigation of diplomatic papers of the Foreign Office that not only bring to light the case of Max Merten and the reasons he was set free, but also the political mechanisms that led Greece and other European countries to set free many Nazis for financial and political reasons (see FO 371/153018).

## *Conclusion*

In these concluding remarks I consider the stories of Jews who came back to the cities, the important issue of restitution (namely how the modern Greek state failed to return property to survivors), and collective memory.

## *Methodology*

Taking off from Arendt's (1968) analysis of the origins of totalitarianism, I link the fate of Jews in Greek society to related developments at the European level. This approach enables me to understand how the Jews were deprived of legal rights or moral personhood prior to their extermination. The works of Mark Mazower (1993), Hagen Fleischer (1995) and Steven Bowman (2006) have helped me present a comprehensive analysis of the fate of Greek Jewry, to understand the dynamics of anti-Semitism, collaboration and nationalism, and to see the importance of collective memory in post-war Greece. This exploration aims at highlighting in particular the question of Greek responsibility for the Jewish deportations. In addition, the use of archival materials has contributed valuable elements to the study of collaboration and resistance: political documents of Greek and British politicians, files of the UK Foreign Office, Cabinet papers from London, files of British Wartime Intelligence (SOE), and old newspapers. I have been able to use primary books from British officials and members of SOE who were responsible for Greek Affairs during the occupation, such as the works of Brigadier Eddie Myers (1975; 1985), British agent Christopher Monty Woodhouse (1976), agent Wallace (1982), agent Stevens (1982), memoirs of partisans and books of the 'quisling' Prime Ministers during Occupied Greece.

I need to inform the reader the conditions under which the archival as well as the overall research in Greece took place. I must honestly admit that the time I spent in Athens doing my research has been an adventure. Few things I need to mention which perhaps help

the reader to understand better the shape and logic of my thesis and why I decided to put the historical events the way I did. First of all there is a severe poverty of archival materials concerning Greek Jewry. If I exclude the library of the Jewish Museum of Athens, where there is a serious but still small Jewish bibliography, the remaining research centres seem outdated. Starting with the National Library of Greece, there is a medium size of bibliography concerning the Jews of Greece, but new publications in the last decade are not on the shelves. The library is independent but belongs to the Greek State University, is poor due to the financial crisis, and its organisation is badly managed. This creates substantial obstacles to the researcher. Surprisingly, the Archives of the Greek State (*GAK*) do not have any files on Greek Jewry. A massive volume of archives was destroyed in 1953 under the Karamanlis administration, part of a general ‘mashing’ of old documents. An example of this poor archival availability concerns the postwar trials in Greece. John Laughland has pointed out that the records of crucial trials (like those of the quisling PMs) disappeared six months after convictions were issued and no one until now has studied them. Laughland rightly comments that in the Law School of Athens (*Nomiki Athinon*) there is “not a single transcript... article or book about the trial of these three prime ministers to be found anywhere in any of the court libraries” (Laughland, 2008:161). Under these conditions, the primary and secondary materials I collected are only available due to persistent research and personal funding.

The reason I decided to look at Foreign Office Files at the Academy of Athens was because I was searching for primary archives concerning the issue of collaboration. The biggest volume of the FO files was collected in Athens, while the rest were accessed online through the portal of the Public Record Office. I was trying to find documents that would reveal the collaboration of Greek authorities with the Nazis concerning Jewish deportations, but I did not find anything. The Head of the archival collections at the Academy of Athens informed me that there are no archives available of this kind and that collaboration as a single

research topic can only be found in the FO files via the exclusive examination of resistance. The files are poorly managed and the digital machine has not been renewed since the 1980s.<sup>2</sup> Trying to read and take pictures through a half broken machine was a real struggle. The materials I found do reveal collaboration among some resistance groups (i.e. the right wing movement of EDES). However, I kept a distance between what I found and what I knew prior to my research, since there is a lot of propaganda in the FO files. The FO files are indispensable for the researcher, but many documents contradict one another as the same events were written by different persons who viewed them in different ways. They can be confusing and misleading for the researcher. By contrast, the political and historical analysis present in the secondary material is far more serious, sophisticated and enlightening than the FO files. There were politicians both in Greece and in Britain who were trying to shape opinion in a heavily polarised society. I did not take seriously, for example, the files that reveal collaboration between the left wing resistance and Nazis since they were written by politicians who favoured fascism and established right-wing dictatorships after liberation.

To be able to tell whether a political file has validity or not, I had to dig deep into the politics of Greece and how they impacted on attempts to save the Jews. Hagen Fleischer (1995), for instance, declares that some files were ‘fabricated’, and many officials spread accusations against the major resistance movement, ELAS, to shape opinion and influence officials in Egypt and Britain (see chapter 5). I have drawn attention to similar events in other European countries to see how resistance was understood after the war was over. This analysis enabled me to examine the trials of collaborators in Greece, compare them with

---

<sup>2</sup> The Greek State in the eighties bought all FO and SOE files from the Public Record Office (London). Until today the archives are housed in the offices of Greek academics in the Academy of Athens (K. E. I. N.E research centre). There is neither a building to house the archives separately, nor money to preserve the condition of the archives and the micro-film machines. The archives are in a terrible condition and difficult to read. There are only two micro-film machines for everyone who wishes to study the archives of FO and SOE. The academics were extremely helpful to enable my research in their offices as there is no other space available. That means that they also go and fetch the archives for everyone who wants to see the files.

other countries of East and West Europe, and see that the failure of legal justice came along with a parallel failure to address the memory of the Holocaust (see Pendas, 2009). The methodology I used to explore the massacre of Distomo is through the use of unstructured interviews of survivors. This approach enabled me to analyse this massacre in “depth” and let the interviewees “lead” the discussion (see Gillham, 2000: 3). In the section on “Methodological Design, Purpose and the Usefulness of the Survivor’s Voices” in chapter 4, I pursue the purpose of this methodological choice.

## PART I: THEORETICAL PERSPECTIVES

## **Chapter 1. Hannah Arendt on Nationalism, Nation-States and Citizenship**

### **Introduction**

Hannah Arendt's analysis of totalitarianism focuses on the human consequences of the disintegration of European polities, the death of values and the negation of rights. It is above all her work that informs my study of the eradication of the Jews in the Greek Holocaust. First, I draw from her monograph *The Origins of Totalitarianism* the changing shape of Europe as it emerged from the collapse of multi-cultural empires and rise of nation states, which closed borders, raised national flags and excluded those who were not part of the new national rhetoric. Among the socio-political side effects of this transition Jews lost their civil and political rights and became 'stateless'. Second, this chapter discusses Arendt's analysis of the anti-Semitic agenda of Hitlerite doctrine as a point of theoretical departure for my own study of antisemitism directed at Greek Jewry. Third, it explains Arendt's notion of 'radical evil' to describe the sense of unlimited possibilities behind Nazi efforts to eradicate European Jewry: "when the impossible was made possible" (Arendt, 1968:459). Fourth, it focuses on Arendt's use of the concept of 'banality of evil' (after witnessing the testimony of Eichmann in Jerusalem) to argue that top Nazi bureaucrats who committed murders of unprecedented scale did so without 'thinking' (Arendt, 2006:288). Finally, this chapter emphasizes the influence of work of Kant in Arendt's thought in setting the scene for a secular conception of evil.

### **Nationalism, Minority Status and Statelessness**

Arendt wrote in *Origins* of the "atmosphere of disintegration" (Arendt, 1968:268) that accompanied the fall of multi-cultural empires over Europe: Russian, Austro-Hungarian

and Ottoman. Hatred and racism spread rapidly; the rights of minorities were severely threatened; a way was paved for the rise of totalitarianism:

“Denationalization became a powerful weapon of totalitarian politics, and the constitutional inability of European nation-states to guarantee human rights to those who had lost nationally guaranteed rights, made it possible for the persecuting governments to impose their standard of values even upon their opponents: those whom the persecutor had singled out as scum on earth – Jews, Trotskyites, etc.” (Arendt, 1968: 269).

Once the empires evaporated, expansionism, irredentism and authoritarianism prevailed, as new flags and borders were sketched all over the continent. As Robert Fine writes, “everybody was against everybody else and most of all against their closest neighbours: Slovaks against Czechs, Croats against Serbs, Ukrainians against Poles, all against Jews” (Fine, 2001:117). No European government safeguarded the rights of minorities, some of whom were recognised as such and some made stateless: “neither the country of origin nor any other agreed to accept the stateless person” (Arendt, 1968:283). In *Origins*, Arendt wrote that,

“... the loss of citizenship deprived people not only of protection, but also of all clearly established, recognised identity, a fact for which their eternal feverish efforts to obtain at least birth certificates from the country that denationalised them was a very exact symbol; one of the problems was solved when they achieved the degree of distinction that will rescue a man from the huge and nameless crowd” (Arendt, 1968:287).

The “conquest of the state by the nation” (Arendt, 1968:230) was the marker of a new nationalism in which all rights were guaranteed by the nation and only for those who were deemed to belong to the nation:

“The secret conflict between state and nation came to light at the very birth of the modern nation-state, when the French Revolution combined the declaration

of the Rights of Man with the demand for national sovereignty. The same essential rights were at once claimed as the inalienable heritage of all human beings *and* as the specific heritage of specific nations, the same nation was at once declared to be subject to laws, which supposedly would flow from the Rights of Man, and sovereign, that is, bound by no universal law and acknowledging nothing superior to itself. The practical outcome of this contradiction was that from then on human rights were protected and enforced only as national rights and that the very institution of a state, whose supreme task was to protect and guarantee man his rights as man, as citizen and as national, lost its legal, rational appearance [...]" (Arendt, 1968:230-231).

The aftermath of the First World War witnessed mass poverty and unemployment, financial crisis and civil wars all over Europe. It also witnessed a new wave of terror and insecurity for those who were not considered part of the new nation states: "once they had left their homeland they remained homeless, once they had left their state they became stateless; once they had been deprived of their human rights they were rightless, the scum of the earth" (Arendt, 1968:268). The efforts of those who sought peace failed as their efforts clashed with the definition of the new nation-states: "homogeneity of population and rootedness in the soil" (Arendt, 1968:270). Jews were treated either as 'minorities' or as entirely 'stateless' and without any national representation:

"Both in the history of the 'nation of minorities' and in the formation of a stateless people, Jews have played a significant role. They were at the head of the so-called minority movement because of their great need for protection [...] but above all because they formed a majority in no country and therefore could be regarded as the *minorité par excellence*, i.e., the only minority whose interests could be defended only by internationally guaranteed protection. The special needs of the Jewish people were the best possible pretext for denying that the Treaties were a compromise between the new nations' tendency forcefully to assimilate alien peoples *and* nationalities who for reasons of expediency could not be granted the right to national self-determination" (Arendt, 1968:289).

## Totalitarian Domination

Along with the loss of the rights of minorities, the rise of totalitarian regimes on the continent enabled the creation of “state machines” that ruled in “absolute” terms (Arendt, 1968:389). Nazi ideology developed along with the collapse of moral and political values in Europe and targeted first and foremost ‘the Jews’. It aimed at eradicating all aspects of a pluralistic society, for this is the very essence of “total domination”. Everyone could be “exchanged at random for any other”, because differentiation itself was stripped of value (Arendt, 1968:438). As Adorno wrote in *Negative Dialectics*:

“[...] in the concentration camps it was no longer an individual who died, but a specimen – this is a fact bound to affect the dying of those who escaped the administrative measure. Genocide is the absolute integration. It is on its way wherever men are levelled off- ‘polished off’ [...] until one exterminates them literally, as deviations from the concept of their total nullity [...] What the sadists in the camps foretold their victims, ‘Tomorrow you’ll be wiggling skyward as smoke from this chimney,’ bespeaks the indifference of each individual life that is the direction of history. Even in his formal freedom, the individual is as fungible and replaceable as he will be under the liquidators’ boots” (Adorno, 1973:362).

Nazi terror was delivered with systematic efficiency and gave “credibility” to the notion that everything was allowed; the motto “everything is possible” became a dreadful reality (Villa, 1999:16). The socio-political changes that occurred in the twentieth century in Europe brought about crises in all aspects of social and political life: “‘crisis of capitalism’, the emergence of imperialism and the growth of race – thinking and anti-Semitism” (Hansen, 1993:142). They opened a new chapter of violence built upon ideology, terror and loss of “a common world” (ibid). Totalitarianism sprung from these symptoms. Its doctrines were based on a “ruthlessness” that “corrupts absolutely” because the only criterion is that of domination

at all costs (Villa, 1999:14). Arendt wrote that there was nothing new in violence or terror or even concentration camps:

“There have almost always been wars of aggression; the massacre of hostile populations after a victory went unchecked until the Romans mitigated it by introducing the *parcere subjectis*; through centuries the extermination of native peoples went hand in hand with the colonization of the Americas, Australian and Africa; slavery is one of the oldest institutions of mankind and all empires of antiquity were based on the labor of state-owned slaves who erected their public buildings. Not even concentration camps are an invention of totalitarian movements. They emerge for the first time during the Boer War, at the beginning of the century, and continued to be used in South Africa as well as India for “undesirable elements”; here, too, we first find the term “protective custody” which was later adopted by the Third Reich. These camps correspond in many respects to the concentration camps at the beginning of totalitarian rule; they were used for “suspects” whose offences could not be proved and who could not be sentenced by ordinary process of law” (Arendt, 1968:440).

What was new was the emergence of totalitarian methods of domination based on the credo that “everything is possible” (Arendt, 1968: 440-441). The impossible occurred in the concentration camps. What Arendt describes as “dwelling on horrors” meant facing up to the reality of concentration camps as the most “consequential institution of totalitarian rule” (Arendt, 1968: 441). What is difficult to understand, as Richard Bernstein argues, is that this machinery of death was operated by “normal” human beings that “this demands a new thinking about evil” (Bernstein, 2002:225-6).

The possibility of a totalitarian regime gaining power and creating “a new form of government” has proven all too real (Adams, 1989:33). Totalitarian movements do not have the characteristics of normal political parties; they grow within a rationale of the homogenised masses teaching hostility towards a world of inherent differences and plurality

(ibid). Multi-ethnicity and pluralism were not only negated but persecuted by means of terror: it was the absolute negation of freedom and its “possibility” (Adams, 1989:33-34).

### **Radical and Banal Evil**

In *Origins* Arendt identified radical evil with “total domination”, that is, an irrational system of rule aimed at destroying cultural difference and spontaneity as indispensable characteristics of human freedom (Arendt, 1968:438). Totalitarian terror took away these pre-conditions of the human condition, isolated masses of people, degraded them, and finally destroyed through a variety of means innocent human beings like the Jews (Arendt, 1968:438). Radical evil can be understood as indifference to the identity of the people in the camps, as if they had no name or individual existence. Its practitioners treated people “as if they had never existed” and aimed at erasing them “in the literal sense” (Arendt, 1968:442).

Robert Fine argues in *Political Investigations: Hegel, Marx, Arendt*,

“The camps were the laboratories in which the experiment of total domination, impossible to accomplish under normal circumstances, could be actualised. The process of admitting people into the camps was a process of stripping people of any notion of personality or possession of right: first rights of political participation, then rights of property, then even rights of survival” (Fine, 2001:113).

The negation of one’s existence in its totality is what Arendt explains in *Origins* as “uprootedness”, namely, the condition under which a man has “no place in the world, recognized and guaranteed by others” (Arendt, 1968: 475). Radical evil can be understood if one considers that death became not only a cruel numerical accomplishment for Nazis, but something like a routine, blind, and impersonal, on the part of technical killers (Arendt, 1968: 443). The extermination camps signified something unprecedented, something not seen in the past, something no previous set of moral beliefs could understand. At this point, we receive a

clearer idea of what *radical evil* is; namely, “death at any price” (Arendt, 1968:443). Arendt writes:

“It is the appearance of some radical evil, previously unknown to us, that puts an end to the notion of developments and transformation of qualities. Here, there are neither political nor historical nor simply moral standards but, at the most, the realization that something seems to be involved in the politics as we used to understand it, namely all or nothing –” (Arendt, 1968: 443).

Phillip Hansen argues that the enigma behind this form of evil was that of totalitarianism as a “movement” (Hansen, 1993:144). This totalitarian regime was breeding a mechanical world of hate and murder through propaganda; it constructed a new reality that had nothing to do with the existing one: it had an “arbitrary existence” (ibid). This utopia created a “bridge to normalcy”. Death became acceptable, technical and “normal” without thinking or personal judgment, breeding anaesthesia and cynicism (Hansen, 1993:145).

Cynical behaviour on the part of the “leader”, as Hansen suggests, provided the basis of avoiding “responsibility”, for killing masses of prisoners in the death camps was also considered normal (Hansen, 1993:145- 146). Hansen describes the difficulty of understanding the death camps, arguing that although they existed in real time, yet the very idea of it cannot be explained in real time: it was a “surrealistic inferno” that could be comprehended only in a “phantom” cosmos, a world outside our thinking (Hansen, 1993:148). Only in such a phantom reality could death camps make their appearance, since all decisions of the Nazi regime were outside “the normal penal system” and “judicial procedure”, and erased all sense of responsibility (ibid).

The identification of Führer’s order as the only true and just law was meant to guide not only the judgment of the Führer but also the actions of SS officials and indeed the whole

German nation. In an essay “Organised Guilt and Universal Responsibility” written just after the war in January 1945, Arendt criticised the totalitarian control of all human faculties that Germans possessed by virtue of their “complicity in crimes” (Arendt, 1978:228). She argued that it was almost impossible to tell who was a Nazi follower and who not, given apparent popular support for the Nazi regime; an anti-Nazi personality could only be revealed “when the Nazis have hanged him” (ibid). Most Germans, or so it seemed if one considers how many served the Nazi bureaucracy, to a lesser or great extent contributed to the promotion of this death machine (Arendt, 1978:229-230):

“There are many who share responsibility without any visible proof of guilt. There are many more who have become guilty without being in the least responsible. Among the responsible in a broader sense must be included all those who continued sympathetic to Hitler as long as it was possible, who aided his rise to power, and who applauded him in Germany and in other European countries. Who would dare to brand all these ladies and gentlemen of high society as war criminals?... That everyone, whether or not he is directly active in a murder camp, is forced to take part in one way or another in the workings of this machine of mass murder – that is the horrible thing” (Arendt, 1978:229-230).

Radical Evil in *Origins* describes the conditions under which innocent people were systematically exterminated by technical means with “an apparent lack of purpose” (Arendt, 1968: 445). Arendt’s theory of evil was grounded, as Villa suggests, on the “normality” of death, that is, on absence of thought and critical judgement on the part of the doers (Villa, 1999:44). It was the idea of a new era of human action guided by “thoughtlessness” that led Arendt to make use of Karl Jaspers’ term, the ‘banality of evil’ (Villa, 1999:42). The idea of radical evil lost its significance and became *banal*, but the latter term is not so different from the former. As Bernstein argues in *Hannah Arendt and the Jewish Question*, radical evil for Arendt meant “making human beings superfluous”, so the meaning of this evil was geared

towards “eradicating the very conditions required for living a human life”, while *banality of evil* focuses on “thoughtlessness”, the inability to think and judge, while attempting to ask in what sense it was possible to account for the “monstrous deeds” practised by people who were otherwise so “normal” and “ordinary” (Bernstein, 1996:152).

The idea of “radical evil” emphasized the horrible tragedy and suffering of people through extreme violence and barbaric methods, denying human life. The idea “banality of evil” was meant to highlight the inability of Eichmann to “think and to judge” what he was doing while carrying out the Final Solution (Bernstein, 1996:152). It revealed that even such murderous acts had “no motives” on the part of technical killers such as Eichmann (Bernstein, 1996:152-153). Both terms explore “motives” behind the genocide, but Arendt resists any attempt to explain totalitarian regimes in a closed system that will inevitably “aestheticise” the whole problematic (Bernstein, 1996:152). Why? On the one hand, because of the danger of being trapped in the logic of seeking “alternative” answers as to why the SS officers behaved in such horrific ways; and on the other because of the danger of following the path of *theological* explanation, that there was something “satanic” that led the Nazis to behave in this way (Bernstein, 1996:150). The term “banality of evil” highlights the opposite of anything satanic. Eichmann was in fact “human – all too human” (ibid).<sup>3</sup> In *Eichmann in Jerusalem* Arendt writes:

“Except for an extraordinary diligence in looking for his personal advancement, he had no motives at all. And this diligence in itself was in no way criminal; he certainly would never have murdered his superior in order to inherit his post. He *merely*, to put the matter colloquially, *never realized what he was doing*... He was not stupid. It was sheer thoughtlessness- something by no means identical with stupidity- that predisposed him to become one of the

---

<sup>3</sup> We will see later on how this rejection of “satanic greatness” can be fully understood in relation to the rejection of the idea of ‘demonic will’ in both Arendtian and Kantian theory and how it is analyzed in Allison’s (1996) chapter “Reflections on the Banality (radical) of Evil: A Kantian Analysis” in *Idealism and Freedom* .

greatest criminals of that period. And if this is “banal” and even funny, if with the best will in the world one cannot extract any diabolical or demonic profundity from Eichmann, that is still far from calling it commonplace... That such remoteness from reality and such thoughtlessness can wreak more havoc than all the evil instincts taken together which, perhaps, are inherent in man – that was, in fact, the lesson one could learn in Jerusalem” (Arendt, 2006: 288).

Arendt drew her thinking on evil from Kant’s ethical and moral theory. Arendt shared Kant’s effort to rationalise “radical evil” and ground it within society. Kant, as Bernstein suggests, did not consider evil as a theological category but as the result of a “perverted ill will” (Bernstein, 2002:12). In *Religion within the Limits of Reason Alone* Kant argued that evil is to be found *in* society and Arendt agreed with Kant that evil comes out of a will that is perverted and immoral. For Kant this meant that the will has abandoned the lawful way to live and has incorporated into its own “maxims” evil thoughts (Kant, 1960:24). In other words, for Kant evil is present when the human being *deviates* from laws and maxims that are binding and universal and when this human being is aware of the fact that he is breaking the law (Kant, 1960:27). In other words, the human being has the “capacity for respect for the moral law as *in itself a sufficient incentive of the will*” (Kant, 1960:22-23). Kant maintains that the relation between *will* and *action* is given freely too (Kant, 1960:23). Action and will are interrelated, guided always by laws and rational *maxims* that man has embodied within him. This idea of man’s relation to the moral law is provided in Kant’s definition of the “categorical imperative” in the *Groundwork of the Metaphysics of Morals*. The *categorical imperative* for Kant, is an absolute and binding condition for the actions of one who is driven by a *will* that is free and has autonomy; it presupposes that the will agrees with the “universal

laws” (Kant, 1964:98). As he explains: “A will which by all its maxims enacts universal laws” (Kant, 1964:28).<sup>4</sup>

Arendt’s logic behind “banality of evil” resembles Kant’s problematic, for as Allison suggests, she shared Kant’s theory of the social foundations of evil. She saw Eichmann as “a product of a society in which mendacity had become an ingredient of the national character” (Allison, 2001:95), and in which cruelty signified orthodox reasoning for any Nazi member as long as they thought they were doing the right thing. The emphasis of both Arendt and Kant on social pathologies seem to reject the possibility of a *diabolical* force ( “a diabolical will”) as an explanation behind evil (Allison, 2001:94-95). For Kant, the existence of a “diabolical will” denies rationality of the will; for Arendt, Eichmann seemed to have “no motives” at all (Allison, 1996:174, 176). Kant’s thesis, as Allison suggests, was rejected by Arendt, for rationalising evil and attributing to it “comprehensible motives” deriving from “self-interest” (Allison, 1996:176).

---

<sup>4</sup> Paul Guyer in *Kant’s System of Nature and Freedom* argues that what Kant sees in the *categorical imperative* is that the “universal laws” are actually the evidence that man has actualized (i.e. put in praxis) his will accordingly, and his will has been identified with the laws of universality. According to Kant, man needs always to be aware of his binding commitment to the categorical imperative. Furthermore, this “universal practical principle cannot be depended upon any *contingent* object of the will”- and this constitutes the very essence of a “good will”; a will in other words that must always seek to minimize his or her own “contingent effects of inclination” (Guyer, 2005:150-151). Given the fact that Kant understands action within a system of laws that are morally embedded in man’s will, so too, he understands a man who is evil and has withdrawn from society’s let’s say expectations and moral laws. Therefore he simultaneously seeks to “trace the causes of evil”, and he searches within society (Kant, 1960:27). The tendency to become evil (i.e. “the propensity to evil”) as he names it, cannot be found anywhere but within the social reality. It is to be found within the “free-acting being” that has become degenerated and it is he, who is responsible for escaping from laws, and becomes “accountable as the offender”, because man is acting always freely (Kant, 1960:30). Analytically in part IV. *Concerning the Origin of Evil in Human Nature*, in *Religion* book, Kant emphatically writes that the root of radical evil is to be found within the “laws of freedom” and within a framework that satisfies ironically freedom; it is an “*origin in reason or an origin in time*” and it is grounded in “rational representation” (Kant, 1960:34, 35). Allen W. Wood, in *Kant’s Ethical Thought*, echoes Kant’s need to find a rational basis to understand radical evil: it is when men act in egotistic way and when human reason is guided by “human competitiveness”, “social comparisons” and “antagonisms” (Wood, 1999:288). In other words, Kant gives an “anthropological” justification for evil action, especially when people live and co-operate close to one another. It is there where feelings of resentment and antagonism arise, for it is the “*social condition*” of men that breeds “corruption” in human mind and human nature as a whole (ibid). Hence it is through “the use of its freedom” as Wood argues in *Kant’s Moral Religion*, that man chooses between good and evil actions (Wood, 1970:211).

Richard Bernstein has suggested that, despite the Kantian influence on Arendt's thesis on evil, she did not agree with Kant's explanation that evil derives from human's "selfishness" and "self-love" (Bernstein, 2002:208). For Kant the most radical form of evil action is when man abandons the *categorical imperative* and acts selfishly, and when man exploits his fellow being's need to have "dignity" and act spontaneously as a distinct person. For Arendt, radical evil is something more significant: it is the death of *spontaneity* and what makes "human beings superfluous" that is in question (Bernstein, 2002:208-209). Bernstein suggests that Arendt's thesis does not devalue Kantian notion of *spontaneity* as a necessary ingredient for human freedom, but holds that totalitarianism's objective was geared towards eradicating "spontaneity" as the defining feature of human life (Bernstein, 2002:208-209). There is another important reason why Arendt negates Kant's view of "selfishness", inasmuch as he opposes morality to "self-interest" (Allison, 2001:93). In the case of Eichmann, his actions were not even driven by personal interest and in this sense were "motiveless" (Allison, 2001:93-94). Radical evil does seek to explain the brutality of the camps, the "industrialized" methods of death, or the objectives of "extermination as such", but expresses the extent to which the death machinery "was irreducible to any set of recognisable motivations" (Villa, 1999:32). On this issue, Arendt wrote to Karl Jaspers that something new, an unknown type of evil, has emerged that had nothing to do with personal interests or "selfishness":

"Evil has proved to be more radical than expected. In objective terms, modern crimes are not provided for in the Ten Commandments. Or: the Western Tradition is suffering from the preconception that the most evil things human beings can do arise from the vice of selfishness. Yet we know that the greatest evils or radical evil has nothing to do anymore with such humanly understandable motives. What radical evil is I don't know but it seems to me it somehow has to do with the following phenomenon: making human beings as human beings superfluous (not using them as a means to

an end, which leaves their essence as humans untouched and impinges only on their human dignity; rather, making them superfluous as human beings). This happens as soon as all unpredictability – which, in human beings, is the equivalent of spontaneity - is eliminated. And all this in turn from - or better, goes along with - the delusion of the omnipotence (not simply with the lust for power) of an individual man. If an individual qua man were omnipotent, then there is in fact no reason why men should exist at all...” (Quoted in Villa, 1999: 32-33).

If Nazis were evil by nature however, then we would be in no position to criticize Nazi ideology. As Bernstein suggests, Kant’s thesis that “man is evil by nature” may be extreme, but his primary concern was to reasons human beings deviate from laws: there must be something evil that is “innate” in man to act in an evil way. If the “radicalness of radical evil” is so present in human freedom, as Rogozinski suggests, then in fact it cannot be eradicated (Rogozinski, 1996:33). It is “sealed” and in our “fate”. Kant himself believed that there is still a door open for overcoming evil (Rogozinski, 1996: 34, 35), but if evil is in our destiny, there will be no reflexivity as to man’s evil actions and no *responsibility*, for such a conclusive thesis would render “all ethical judgement impossible” (Rogozinski, 1996:35).<sup>5</sup>

Categories such as *judgement* and *thinking* became central to Arendt’s analysis of evil precisely to explain how these faculties affect one’s actions. Arendt poses important questions as to how the faculty of thinking relates to evil actions, and whether Eichmann’s inability to think had to do with his deeds. As she writes,

“Is evil-doing, not just the sins of omission but the sins of commission, possible in the absence of not merely ‘base motives’ (as the law calls it) but of any motives at all, any particular prompting of interest or

---

<sup>5</sup> However we see that Kant’s moral theory does include criteria and presuppositions for judgment. He fully explains these criteria by using the category of “taste” in his book *Critique of Judgment*. He writes that despite any “cultural diversity” as to one’s taste, there must be “a claim to the necessary agreement of others with this judgment” (Kant, 1952: 206).

volition? Is wickedness, however we may define it, this being ‘determined to prove a villain’, *not* a necessary condition for evil doing? Is our ability to judge, to tell right from wrong, beautiful from ugly, dependent upon our faculty of thought? Do the inability to think and a disastrous failure of what we commonly call conscience coincide? (Arendt, 2003:160).

Arendt considers ‘thinking’ an important criterion for someone to act morally in any given situation. She recognises that everyone can be thoughtless from time to time and this inability to think does not necessarily mean “stupidity” (Arendt, 2003:164). Being unable to think can be a symptom among even the most intelligent people, yet the question remains: can the “faculty of thought” prevent evil? Arendt’s case is that this kind of reflection never took place in Eichmann’s case. He never understood what he was doing (ibid).

D’ Entreves suggests that *thinking* creates the presuppositions for man to stand outside himself and divorce himself from “fixed habits of thought”, in order to give room for judgement, without the need for any outside aid (D’ Entreves, 1994:109). D’Entreves further suggests, that Arendt uses “imagination” as a condition of judgement, for the Nazi regime destroyed all “accepted standards of judgement” in the here and now (D’Entreves, 1994:106). *Imagination* therefore, stands as an appropriate “distance” from mere facticity and creates a “dialogue” between me and my understanding (ibid). This comes close to Kant’s thought of “enlarged mentality”, for he too places criteria in order to judge. For Kant, “enlarged mentality” is precisely the ability to distance yourself from certain beliefs and think in a representative way, and when “representative thinking” takes place, it automatically means that thinking and judgment are working together in times of “emergency” when all morals and canons fall apart under totalitarian regimes (D’Entreves, 1994:111).

## Conclusion

In *Essays in Understanding: 1930- 1954* Arendt argues that “Nazis were men like ourselves” and that it was the totalitarian system that built the methods of destruction that turned them into perpetrators (Arendt, 1994:134). Crimes of that scale revealed that human beings are “capable of being cannibals”:

“It was not very pleasant even when we had to bury our false illusions about the “noble savage”, having discovered that men are capable of being cannibals. Since then people have learned to know one another better and learned more and more about the evil potentialities in men. The result has been that they have recoiled more and more from the idea of humanity and become more susceptible to the doctrine of race, which denies the possibility of a common humanity” (Arendt, 1994:131).

Arendt’s argument concerning the banality of evil does not seek to give a final explanation on the problem of evil in the persona of Eichmann. It is a mistake, as Villa argues, that many authors make, when they argue that Arendt reduced the problem of evil to one factor (Villa, 1999:40). Some authors have tried to explain evil in terms of “economically rational motivations”, or alternatively have taken Arendt’s idea of the ‘banality of evil’ as a claim that a new type of murderer was coming out of the totalitarian system driven by “extraordinary shallowness” (Villa, 1999:40-41). Elisabeth Young-Bruehl in *Why Arendt Matters* argues that Eichmann was not the mirror image of all perpetrators during the Nazi Era, and emphasized the “new form of criminal acting as the agent of a criminal state by carrying out this new form of crime against humanity...” (Bruehl, 2006:108-109). However, Arendt maintains that in using the term ‘banality of evil’ she does not wish to impose on the empirical materials a new type of “theory” (Arendt, 2003:159).

## PART II: HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVES

## Chapter 2. The Greek Holocaust 1: The Historical Background

### Introduction

This chapter explores the horror and tragedy of the Jewish community during Nazi occupation in Greece. It seeks to reveal and understand the memories of those who resisted, suffered, died from famine and stagnation, those who were arrested and executed by a totalitarian regime that left behind bitter memories but also an urge for socio-political thinking and critique. I have addressed the Greek Jewish Holocaust in my research as I feel it is very important not only to welcome the Greek Jewry within history but within a unified socio-political and historical exegesis of the European Holocaust. Such an attempt will bring new elements to the study of the Jewish population during the Nazi Occupation in Greece which is still not widely known and very often neglected. The Jewish community of Salonika for instance was considered as one of the oldest and biggest communities in Europe and it was known for its long tradition, while for many it was widely known as the “Mother of Israel” (Mazower, 1993). Greek Jewry deserves closer attention as it faced like the rest of European Jewry the most barbaric monstrosities of the twentieth century, such as the anti-Jewish laws, deportations, expulsions and extermination. The first section of this chapter focuses on the history of the Jewish population in Greece and the difficulties it faced under the Nazi regime, while the second and the third sections reveal stories of survivors of the deportations. The remaining sections, examine the role of the resistance during wartime Greece, the anti-Nazi sentiments of the majority of the Greek population and the guerrillas of EAM/ELAS in particular, as well as the role of Jews in the Greek resistance.<sup>6</sup> Steven Bowman in his book *Jewish Resistance in Wartime Greece* provides first time systematic study of the role of the Jews in the Greek “andartiko” (partisan activity) of ELAS as he provides accounts from many Jewish partisans who fought the Germans in the mountains of Greece, revealing at the same

---

<sup>6</sup> EAM stands for *Ethniko Apeleftherotiko Metopo* (National Liberation Front), while ELAS (which was the armed band of EAM) stands for *Ethnikos Laikos Apeftherotikos Stratos* (Greek People’s Liberation Army).

time the unity and solidarity between the members of EAM/ELAS and the Jews who escaped the Nazi terror. It is a neglected aspect of Jewish history that has been neglected, which yet, provides a more holistic view of the “Greek experience during the war” (Bowman, 2006:6).

As Bowman declares,

“To date no researcher has integrated the Jewish story into any aspect of the general Greek experience during the war. Such an approach does not serve well the Jews of Greece. Those who fought or went to serve with the *andartiko* did so as Greeks. Those who sought refuge did so as Greeks, but most as Jews who were being hunted by the Nazis to fuel their death factories, although too few Jews were aware of the tragic fate awaiting them. As Kapetan Kitsos told me, ‘All men knew I was a Jew, and I was proud to let it be known that a Jew was fighting for Greece’. He was responding to a long tradition of denigration of the Jews by certain segments of the Greek military (both regular and irregular). But then Greece was not alone in evidencing this attitude; most of the European nationalist militaries were even more blatant if not overtly anti-Semitic, and this attitude carried over into the many partisan movements in Europe during the war” (Bowman, 2006:6).

This argument drives us to explore the reasons why the Jewish participation both in the resistance and within Greek national consciousness remains unknown. Issues of memory that were blocked by nationalism must be addressed to understand how post war Greece came out of the war and in what ways this forgetfulness addresses also post war indifference and exclusion of the Jewish community from the Greek experience.

In this chapter I first examine the changed position of the Jews from the fall of the Ottoman Empire until the introduction of the nation-states in order to understand how the Jewry lost socio-political representation as well as the right to be part of the Greek state by becoming *stateless*. Certain aspects that are theoretically addressed in Hannah Arendt’s (1968) critique of the nation-states and *statelessness* with special emphasis in *The Origins of*

*Totalitarianism* in the first chapter are developed here in the Greek context and become meaningful and fruitful for further discussion. The rise of anti-Semitism, propaganda and exclusion from the Greek society are addressed in this chapter to see how anti-Jewish sentiments cultivated in the first period of the formation of the Greek State evolved under Nazi Occupation when anti-Semitic propaganda reached its zenith. I discuss the determination of Jews both to survive and resist Nazi ferocity by becoming part of the resistance movement in the mountains of Free Greece, as well as the mechanisms that enabled or disabled rescue and assistance. In doing so, I am informing the reader as to the political trends of Greece during Nazi occupation, the nature, scope and rivalries within resistance. Last but not least, I discuss the nature and scope of the Greek elite and the politics of collaboration in Greece. Although the latter issues are addressed in chapter 5 along with the legal aftermath in Greece in chapter 6, here, we are giving the first hints of the ideological agenda behind the Quisling Governments during the Axis Occupation, the role of the National Union of Greece (EEE), the Greek Police, the Security Battalions and the ambivalent character of the nationalist/monarchist guerrilla group of EDES under the leadership of Napoleon Zervas, which led to many years of conflict with the EAM/ELAS and a civil war straight after the Germans left the country.<sup>7</sup> The latter is discussed peripherally in this chapter, but it will give us a first solid prologue to comprehend the political controversies and antinomies behind the most crucial decade of the twentieth century in Greece and of course Europe and the impact on the fate of Greek Jewry (see Clogg, 1979: 133-165). This chapter in other words analyses the historical, political and social developments of Greece during Nazi Occupation and how these affected the Greek Jewry during and after the war was over. It is the last chapter of this volume that these developments will be appreciated in order to see how post-war memory of the Greek Jewry was pushed away from the Greek national consciousness.

---

<sup>7</sup> EDES stands for *Ethnikos Apeleutherotikos Ellinikos Syndesmos* (National Republican Greek League), while EEE stands for *Ethniki Enosis Ellados* (National Union of Greece).

## Salonika from the Ottoman Empire to the Nation-States

It is important to have a brief overview of the changes under which the city of Salonika<sup>8</sup> went through over the last two centuries in order to understand the fate of Salonikan Jews. The Jewish population went through a number of socio-political changes over the last two centuries; from the Ottoman Rule onwards. To view these alterations we need briefly to go back in Greek history and see that the multicultural character of the city changed after the fall of the Ottomans. As Steven Bowman argues, Salonika was the host of many different populations; it had an especially cosmopolitan atmosphere. It started to change after the Balkan Wars in 1912-1913, through the process of the so called “Hellenization” (during the formation of the Greek State) that started to erase the rich cultural mosaic (Bowman, 2006:18). It was a “polyglot” hub that “routinely spoke six or seven languages: 70,000 Jews as well as Greeks, Armenians, Turks, Albanians and Bulgarians”, sharing characteristics with the city of Habsburg that allowed Germans, Ukrainians, Poles, communities of Rumania and Hungary to co-exist (Mazower, 1998a:43). Despite similarities between the multi-ethnic empires, Salonika unlike other European cities hosted also Muslims groups in concert with Judeo-Christian communities. Nowhere else did the Ottoman Muslims survived for so many centuries along with the Christians and Jews, when at the same time other European empires were treating this trend with great scepticism and “fear” (Levy, 1994:13). Despite the national antagonisms that prevailed during the Balkan Wars<sup>9</sup>, for let us not forget that Salonika and the

---

<sup>8</sup> Salonika derives from the Greek sort name *Saloniki*. It was named *Selanik* during the Ottoman Empire (French *Salonique*, English *Salonika*), and recovered its ancient Greek name Thessaloniki after the Balkan Wars (1912-1913). The city was first named in the ancient times after the princess (*Thessalonike*), the daughter of the Greek king *Philip the Macedon*. Thessaloniki literally means Nike of Thessaly, Victory of Thessaly (Mazower, 2005: 16).

<sup>9</sup> To summarise in a couple of sentences the Balkan Wars, the two-year fast events went as follows: In the First Balkan War (1912), the Ottomans were ready to collapse, thus the Balkan countries formed the “Balkan League” to defeat them. The League under Bulgaria, Greece, Serbia, Montenegro and Rumania destroyed the territories of the Ottoman Empire. The result was that Bulgaria got the biggest piece in the pie, thus in 1913 (Second Balkan War) Greece, Serbia, Rumania and Montenegro were now against Bulgaria. They declared war against the latter and took some of the territories it gained in the First Balkan War. Then all other countries fought against each other to divide the new pieces. By the end of 1913 the war would end and the borders would be finalised (MacMillan, 2013: 199, 462).

entire Greek Macedonia was occupied by “six different armies” as Greece, Turkey, Bulgaria, Serbia, Austria and Montenegro tried to claim the city, yet in 1913 and after the two Balkan Wars, the city was still hosting 61,439 Jews, 45,364 Muslims, 39,956 Greeks, 6,263 Bulgarians, and “4.364” other smaller communities (Bowman, 2006:18; Halevi, 2012: xxviii).

Mark Mazower declares in *Inside Hitler's Greece*, that the Jewish community in Greece before the war was approximately 70,000 - 80,000 who came from many parts of the country, and of mixed origin, such as the *Romaniote*<sup>10</sup> Jews who were well integrated into Greek life and spoke the language. These were very small communities who settled in the Ionian Islands (Mazower, 1993:235). Romaniote Jews were also found in Athens as well as in the province of Epirus especially in the city of Ioannina. These communities existed there since the ages of Byzantine Empire speaking Judeo-Greek which was a “form of demotic Greek, with few Hebrew and Aramaic words and phrases” (Wasserstein, 2013:240). On the other hand, the Sephardic Jews who appear in Greece in the beginning of the Ottoman Period were large populations that faced expulsion from Spain in 1492 and settled in the north periphery of Greece and particularly in Thessalonica (Mazower, 1993:235). Along with the Spanish Jews, Italian and Portuguese Jews followed them the same century (15<sup>th</sup> century) as these populations faced constant persecution from the former countries. Two centuries later (17<sup>th</sup>), Salonika hosted more Jews that faced persecution; this time from central Europe, while the total number of Sephardic Jews that settled in Salonika was approximately 80,000 by the 18<sup>th</sup> century. It was however in the twentieth century that their numbers started to drop. Certain socio-political reasons affected these changes, such as the birth of nationalism in Greece and all over Europe, poverty and antisemitism. However, it was after the Greco-Turkish war in the 20s that Greek Jews started to emigrate, especially the year 1923-1924.

---

<sup>10</sup> The word *Romaniotes* derives from the word *Romaioi* or *Romioi* (Romans, Turkish *Rum*), meaning Greeks; it was a word that was first introduced by the Romans to label the Greeks (Mazower, 2001:50). Hence, the synonym of Byzantine Empire which was part of the Roman Empire was also called Eastern Romelia or Rumelia. Central Greece is also historically known as *Roumeli*.

From 1912 until 1941, the number of Jews in Salonika fell from 80,000 to 49,000; 10,000 of which died from hunger during the *1941 Great Famine* (Hondros, 1981: 90-91, see also, Hall, 2000: 61). The total number of Jewish loss in Greece during the Nazi occupation was 59,000-60,000 in a population of over 70,000 Jews<sup>11</sup>, while only 10,226 unfortunately survived the destruction (Aksiopoulou, 1998: 16; Hondros, 1981:92; Hilberg, 1985:321).

The city continued to confront significant changes on the social and political level as the First World War occurred, since the city of Thessaloniki was under occupation by “six different armies” of the Balkan countries (Bowman, 2006:18). Although the process of Hellenization started to change the composition of the city (especially after the Balkan Wars in 1912-1913) and Salonika was gradually incorporated to the Greek State, however the Prime Minister of Greece Eleftherios Venizelos in the beginning did not discriminate the Jewish community. Rena Molho declares, that since Salonika was claimed by the Bulgarians, the Austrians and the Turks, Venizelos feared that the Jews will support the *Austrian*<sup>12</sup> plan to open financial links with Salonika as an attempt to neutralise or internationalise the city. For his own irredentist ends, the Greek Prime Minister Venizelos, supported their rights, informing them that the Hellenization of the city will not affect their status in the city, however his promise did not last (Molho, 1988:392-393). The Greek Government issued an official statement via the Prefect of the town declaring that:

---

<sup>11</sup> There is an inconsistency concerning the actual number of the Jews who lived in Greece before they faced the Nazi laws. For example some authors argue that the total number was 73, 000, 75,477 or 77, 377. Fleischer (1995b) declares that it is not certain whether the Jews of the Dodecanese Islands (numbered 2.000) were included in these numbers. The official “census” of 1940 however numbered them 67,591 without the Dodecanesean Jews, since this complex of islands in 1940 was still under Italian possession. If we include this community in the official numbers, then there must have been “more than 70,000” (301-302). The Jewish Central Board of Athens declared that the total number of Jews in Greece was 77,377 therefore we accept this number as the official one (Bowman and Benmayor, 2002:170-171).

<sup>12</sup> The *Austrian Plan* can be summarised as follows: “Concerning the future of Salonika, the internationalisation or neutralisation of the city would best serve the interests of the Jews. However, it is too soon to take action towards that end. When it becomes clear that Salonika is to be annexed to some particular state or that it is to be neutralised and internationalized, it will be incumbent upon the Zionist Organization, in conjunction with other Jewish organisations, to secure for the Jews full equal rights and consideration for their cultural claims” (see Gelber, Florentin, Friedman and Korot, 1955:110).

“I am trying with all my heart to prevent all anti-Semitic incidents that unfortunately blackened our glorious entry to Salonika. The Jews can rest assured that in me they will find a firm protector. I also declare, even at the risk of being criticized, that, were discrimination to be operated, it should be done in favour of Israelites, and should it be necessary for their benefit to commit an injustice, I would do it because I feel that we owe them sort of indemnity” (quoted in Molho, 1988:393-394).

Molho argues that both Jewish and Greek communities managed to sustain their national and religious identity after common agreements and “though it may seem strange”, the integration “of the Jews into the Greek State was not accomplished until they themselves reached the point of expressing and asserting their national differentiation” (Molho, 1988: 398). What seemed paradoxical in Greece before the Greco-Turkish War in the 20s was that Salonika successfully managed to unite the Greek and Jewish communities without abandoning their cultural and religious identities. The simultaneous growth of “Turkish Nationalism” in the region united the Greek and Jewish communities against the former’s expansion more than ever (Molho, 1988:398-399).<sup>13</sup>

However things started to change after the Greco-Turkish war as we shall see, and the Jewish community undeniably was excluded and discriminated. The Jewish community although felt certain with Venizelos’s decision to support their political, religious and civil rights, however anti-Semitic sentiments increased in the city as the process of Hellenization started to spread and Greek nationalism prevailed (Molho, 1988:394). An earlier catastrophe in the city of Salonika which was caused by a fire in 1917, mainly affected the Jewish district which was based in the centre of the town and was destroyed almost entirely. Along with this dreadful disaster, the Greek expansion was moving rapidly especially after the end of WWI, when the British encouraged the then Greek Prime Minister Eleftherios Venizelos to enter

---

<sup>13</sup> On the same issue, see also Molho, 1986: 113-123.

Turkey and break the monopoly of the Ottoman Market. As a result, the Turks burned Smyrna (Izmir since 1923) “and avenged Greek excesses with a slaughter of their own”. The resulting peace treaty (known as the *Treaty of Sèvres* in 1920, which was later replaced by the *Treaty of Lausanne*<sup>14</sup> in 1923) forced the two countries to make an “exchange” of populations. In 1923, The Greeks of Smyrna and of Asia Minor moved to Greece, and the Turks of Greece moved to Turkey (Bowman, 2006: 18, see also Aksakal, 2008:44). This forced population exchange that resulted from the above treaty, caused approximately two million people to uproot themselves; more than 1.2 million Greeks of Anatolia (including the “45,000 Armenian refugees”<sup>15</sup> that survived the Armenian Genocide) and 400,000 Turks of Greece abandoned their lives in a day as the nationalist crusades of *Venizelism* and *Ataturkism* clashed (Clark, 2006: xii; Mazower, 1998a:61).

The reason why we are referring to these historical events is because that Treaty changed the map of Salonika which was previously characterised by Jewish, Greek, and Muslim communities, for the Greek Prime Minister Eleftherios Venizelos relocated the Greek population who lived in Smyrna in the city of Salonika as a part of Greek “irredentist” plan (Bowman, 2006:18-19). As Bowman argues,

“Venizelos took the opportunity to direct the overflow of Anatolian Greeks to Salonika. His aim was to Hellenize the city whose prewar economy had been dominated by the Jews, who constituted the majority of its population. Salonika, ravaged by the great fire of 1917, was being rebuilt as a modern Greek metropolis by the Greek government. Its economy, already crippled by the exodus of its middle - class entrepreneurs (many of them Jews) and by the influx of refugees during the war, now had to cope with tens of thousands of destitute but commercially astute Anatolian Greeks. Salonika had literally exploded into the twentieth century, but who would govern her and reap the

---

<sup>14</sup> Gewehr, 1967:103.

<sup>15</sup> See Arendt, 1968:277.

profits of the entrepôt of the Balkans and which recently independent Balkan nationality would succeed in capturing this cosmopolitan prize emerging like a phoenix from the detritus of the Ottoman Balkans? And would its Jewish majority support Greek control, work for a return of Ottoman sovereignty and their long- standing autonomy, or opt for the Austrian and French plan for a free port, perhaps similar to the status later awarded to Danzig?” (Bowman, 2006:18-19).

It was a difficult moment for the Jewish communities in Salonika who soon faced the social consequences of drastic geo-political changes; the spreading of Anatolian Greeks in a city which after the fall of Ottoman Empire started to erase the Jewish life that was dominant for four centuries. One of the first side-effects of this geographical transformation of the city of Salonika, were felt on the basis of working relations. The Jews became victims of exploitation as it was difficult to hold on to their jobs and businesses in concert with the process of Hellenization. Greece recovered Greek Macedonia (previously part of the Ottoman Empire) after winning the two Balkan Wars, giving priority to the Greek cultural element (affecting language and history), challenging many socio-political, as well as cultural elements of this cosmopolitan city. For instance, the Jewish companies were highly pressured to change their Jewish labels otherwise that had to pay extra taxes, and they had to work on Saturdays. Furthermore, since the educational system gave strong focus on the Greek history in order for the city to adopt a new “cultural identity”, the cultural and historical heritage of the Jewish community was severely suppressed (Bowman, 2006:19; see also Stavroulakis, 1997:54).

These socio-political changes paved the way to discriminate the Jews on a financial, social, political as well as educational level. In fact as early as 1932 the local Jewish newspapers were criticising the economic hardship of the Jews as the result of the new wave of refugees. The Jewish businesses had to compete with those of the refugees while the

newspaper *El Pueblo*, was commenting upon the great financial crisis that had hit the Greek nation. It wrote in an article that “it is impossible for three hundred thousand souls to live like this” accusing the Greek State of neglecting and discriminating the Jewish people of Salonika: they were living in great misery, “with poor hygiene, and only with bread and water, without the right to have a name, without joy, or sun”. The Jewish Press was reporting that “all the communities in Greece are suffering but the Jews are suffering the most”. As the process of Hellenization begun, the Christians started to have more privileges, gaining access in every institution, such as the government, the “army” and the “Demos” (council).<sup>16</sup>

Out of this new reality, a great number of Jews immigrated, while the remaining population struggled to survive with under-paid jobs along with the Greeks who lost their fortunes after the *Asia Minor Catastrophe*. Furthermore, and apart from the city’s gradual transformation, the political situation in Greece in the 30s already made a nation full of antitheses and divisions. On the one hand, the country imposed nationalistic policies and sentiments, while on the other, the extreme polarisations between fascism and communism, as well as republicanism versus monarchism, paved the way for the disintegration of the socio-political fabric of the country (Bowman, 2006:20). All these political polarisations along with famine and financial insecurity of the working class, created the fertile ground for ethnic and national antagonisms. Salonika especially, was one of these cities to confront this frenzy of antitheses during the interwar period, which was “a contributing, albeit not a determining factor in the subsequent destruction of the Jewish community during the war” (Bowman, 2006:21). What Bowman argues, here is that there was a certain degree of antisemitism and discrimination against the Jews, but the geo-political changes that occurred in Salonika (that resulted from the Balkan wars) undeniably exacerbated them.

---

<sup>16</sup> Press Office of Thessaloniki, 9 December 1932, *Filippos Dragoumis File*: 68.3: “*Ai Oikonomikai Kakouchiai ton Evraion tes Thessalonikis*” [The Economic Sorrow of Salonikan Jews] page 1, *Gennadius Library*, Athens.

Furthermore, the city of Salonika welcomed a new wave of refugees from Anatolia in 1923, suffered from the Greek Dictatorship of Metaxas in '36 and the Italian Occupation in 1940-41. The city hosted a significant wave of new refugees as a result of occupation by the Bulgarians in Greek Thrace, the same period the Nazis and Italians entered Greece. In fact, the combination of complicated and dramatic events would last half a century, leading to the transformation of the city and of course the whole country (Bowman, 2006:21). These were also changes that reflected the gradual shift of “multi-religious societies of Ottoman Empire” to a more “homogenous national society of modern nation-state” and undeniably these changes affected the life of the Jewish communities in Greece as well (Mazower, 1998b:59).

Before explaining how the shift from empires to nation states affected the Jews and all minorities under a single state, we need first to establish some boundaries as well as distinctions between the different political systems. Despite the fact that the empires seemed more multicultural and tolerant to minorities, this does not imply that the minorities enjoyed full political and civil rights. If we take the case of the Ottoman Empire for example, one could argue that its success (it lasted for four centuries) lay solely in its religious tolerance, autonomy and “indifference to nationalist categories” (Mazower, 2001:51). Mark Mazower in *The Dark Continent* writes of the “religious” and “ethnic” diversity of the empires such as the Ottoman and the Austro-Hungarian, yet, when he takes a closer look at the Ottoman Empire in his book *The Balkans*, he argues that the communities in Salonika were characterised by their religious rather than ethnic specificity. They were not perceived for instance as Greeks, Turks, Bulgarians, Armenians, or Albanians but as Christians, Muslims and Jews (Mazower, 1998a:43; 2001:50-51, same in Clark, 2006:18).

It is one thing to be religiously tolerant, and quite another to recognise a community for its equal ethnic, political, cultural as well as religious characteristics. What the Sultans found as a clever solution to expand their imperialism in Balkan Europe, was to allow the

different communities to exist (i.e. practice their customs, religious systems, and preserve their language<sup>17</sup>), but all “non-Muslims” were “second-class” citizens (Mazower, 2001:57). This distinction made the Ottoman Muslims superior to the Jews, the Greeks, the Armenians, the Albanians, the Vlachs, the Slavs, and so on. All aforementioned communities and in order to exist in the empire, were subjects both to discrimination and to a much “heavier” taxation (i.e. *Millet System*) than the Muslim communities. This induced some people to convert to Islam as they could no longer survive the tyrannical head-tax, even though the empire “did not insist upon conversion” (Mazower, 2001:57, 58).

In other words diversity and plurality was conditioned to religion and to religion only, and this alone is not enough for political emancipation and for self-expression. We are making this distinction, so as to build a critical distance between what the Ottoman Empire meant for the communities, and what it represents clearly today as a political system in its own merit; namely an authoritarian and anachronistic regime, in the same way Mazower would have said: the nation-states were “anachronism in the modern world”<sup>18</sup> (Mazower, 1998a:45). My aim here is to see the changed position of the Jews from the Empires to the nation-states, not to take a positive view over the Ottoman Empire.

And yet what the Ottomans achieved compared to other empires of Europe which were more *Christian-centred*, was to minimise conflicts as the “majority-minority relations were more relaxed” (Levy, 1994:17). Thus we could summarise, that the empires prior to

---

<sup>17</sup> Despite the fact that these are indeed characteristics of ethnicity, the latter proved to be the symptom of religious freedom during the Ottoman Era, but these were not given to the communities through the exercise of their free political and ethnic rights. There were no Greek, Armenian, and Bulgarian schools during the Ottoman Rule, thus ethnicity was exercised and limited only to religion. Language for instance was preserved through religious scripts and not through free schools. As Mazower suggests: “The consciousness of most of the Sultan’s subjects was shaped neither by school nor by the army- the two key institutions through which the modern state propagates national identities. The Ottoman state had treated them on the basis of religion not language” (Mazower, 2001:52).

<sup>18</sup> Even though the nation-state was something new to the modern world that aimed to transform the empires and the feudal societies, yet, as Arendt would have argued, the nation-state failed to protect the minorities with legal means (Arendt, 1968:290). Thus one could argue that nation-state’s project was anachronistic to the modern world, for clearly the modern states failed to guarantee the rights of minorities.

their fall had a multicultural touch as they allowed religious toleration, thus made possible to all different communities to exist together in contrast with the nation-states which promoted the one-blood/one-nation/one-religion rhetoric. The Jewish communities suffered the worst as a result of these nationalist antagonisms. Robert Fine declared that:

“Nationalism is a fickle beast. In its best moods it liberates human beings from colonial oppression and unites people previously fragmented, but it also excludes those deemed not to belong and demands the active assent of its ‘own’ nationals. It attracts us through images of home, warmth and love, but it displaces emotions which belong to our personal lives onto political life, and thereby robs both of their value” (Fine, 1999: 154).

This new political reality led to unimaginable consequences to those who were not part of the new nation-states. In the *Origins of Totalitarianism*, Hannah Arendt describes the transition from the one regime to another and the ultimate consequences to the minorities of Europe. The fall of multi-religious empires and the introduction of the nation-states in Europe affected all minorities including the Jews. Any attempt to include all communities in a single nation failed as now the peoples of Europe were defined and recognized by their national identity. The minorities like the Jews fell out of this scheme and now they had no name, no identity, and no country to represent them. They became in Arendt’s words “the stateless people”, for not only they had no state, but Jewish expression to national differentiation was failed and denied. During the first stages of nation-states, both the process of *naturalisation* and *repatriation* of the refugees of Europe failed as “neither the country of origin nor any other agreed to accept the stateless person”, though two “clearly exceptional” cases were the *Greco-Turkish exchange of populations* in 1923 (for reasons we explained) and the analogous move of *Armenian refugees* from Turkey to Syria and Lebanon (Arendt, 1968:282-283, 285). But these were also symptoms present not only in the aftermath of the Ottoman Empire but also with the collapse of Austro- Hungarian Empire. As Misha Glenny argues:

“The relatively high incidence of such persecutions and massacres in the Balkans is the legacy of the Austro-Hungarian and Ottoman Empires. They left a complex demographic patchwork within which ‘ethnic’ violence became lethal. The Armenian case was soon followed by violence between Greeks and Turks: The Greco-Turkish war and the Great Population Exchange between the Greek Orthodox and Muslim populations of Greece and Turkey. Henceforth, murder and expulsion became the most overused instruments in dealing with nationality questions in the Balkans” (Glenny, 1999:326).

These political events on a European level along with the local Greek geo-political changes help us understand the peculiar situation under which Jewish people were living for decades in the city of Salonika, culminating (with Hitler’s politics) in the extermination of the population, and enable us to appreciate the political turmoil in Greece and its effect upon the Jewish communities. As Bowman argues,

“The question is far more complex than the complexity of urban politics or the theme of indifference that has characterised recent Holocaust writing. Salonika, during the 40 years between 1912 and 1952, went through ... catastrophic changes that completely changed the composition and structure of the city from an Ottoman market centre to a modern urban complex” (Bowman, 2006:21).

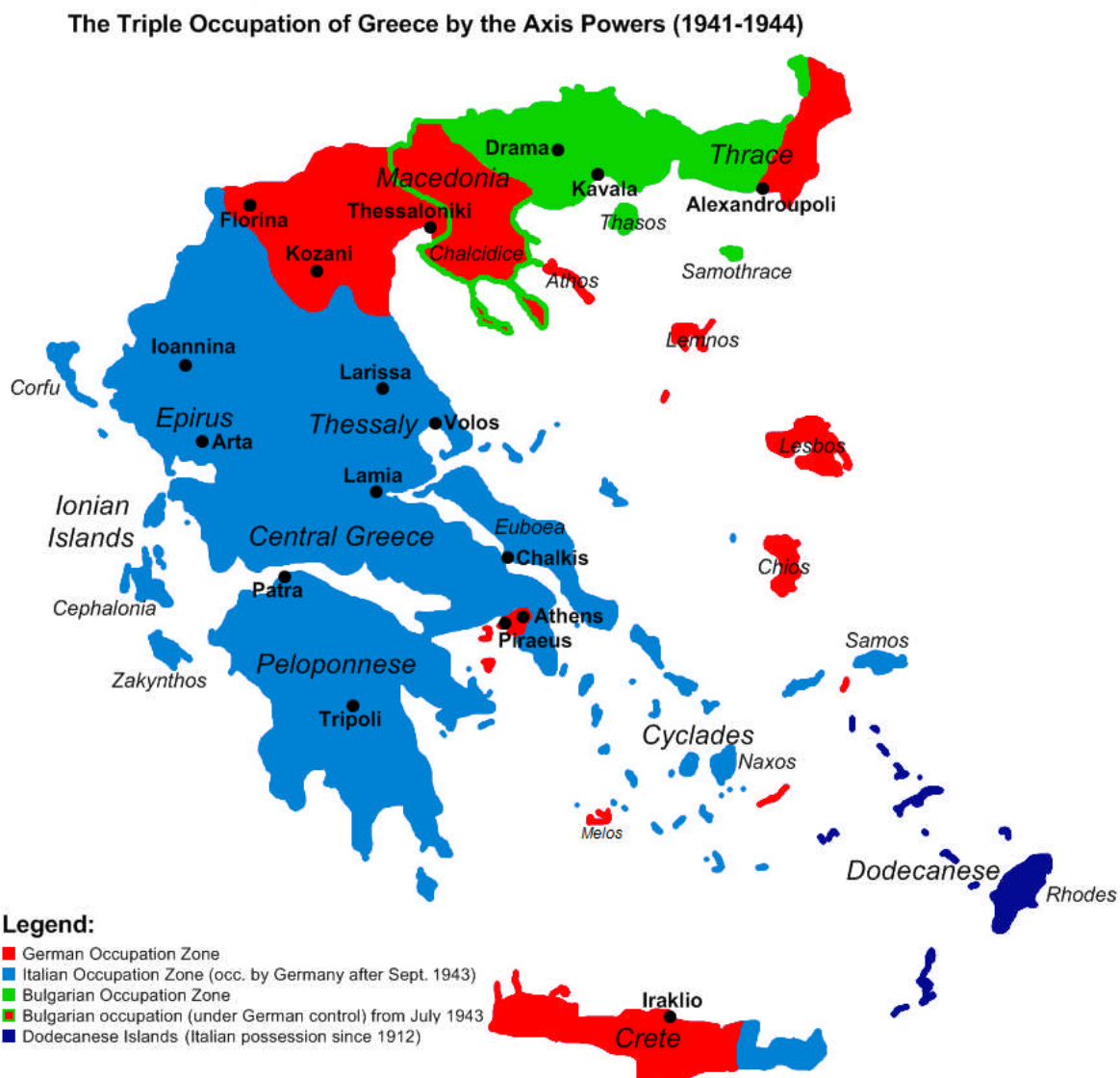
The above argument is powerful, for it challenges the belief that the problem of “indifference” among the rest of the Greek civilians was the most important or the catalytic factor for the fate of the Greek Jewry. The significant point here is that more research and in-depth analysis needs to be done on “local” and “regional” politics and the impact of Christian ethics, to understand why the city of Salonika responded differently from Athens as to the fate of Jews. But what Bowman highlights here is that the local civilians “had little to do with the decision” and that “those decisions were made in Berlin, Vienna and Auschwitz” (Bowman, 2006:22). Gerald Reitlinger in his book *The Final Solution*, seems to echo Bowman’s argument, declaring that although there was a “certain degree of anti-

Semitism” in Greece after the new wave of refugees that resulted after the Greco-Turkish exchange of populations, the Nazis did not feel confident to apply the Anti-Jewish laws in Salonika, for the local population was not a help for them (Reitlinger, 1953:370). As Reitlinger writes,

“On April 9<sup>th</sup>, 1941, Salonika had probably 260,000 inhabitants, only 46,000 of them Jews. Emigration had been forced by poverty and also by a certain degree of anti-Semitism, which became stronger, after the expulsion of the Turkish population in 1923-24. But Salonika was not a place where the Germans could count on the native population doing their work for them. This is shown by the fact that they hesitated to apply the Final Solution till a year after the first murderous Jewish deportation trains had left France and Slovakia” (Reitlinger, 1953:370).

The reason why the Germans were not certain at all about their methods in Greece was because occupation in Greece by the Nazis was not certain either. Hitler would not have intervened in Greece but he was astonished when in 28 October 1940, Mussolini was ridiculed inside Greece after the Greek Army did not surrender to the Axis and pushed the Italians back to the Albanian Front, which was “the first clear victory over Axis powers on the European Continent” (Lande, 2000:158). Hitler and before his invasion in Greece, felt certain that Mussolini will do the job for him throughout Greece without him intervening, as Mussolini did the same in Albania which was an Italian Protectorate during Axis Europe (Mazower, 1993:15). It was then, that Hitler decided to enter Thessalonica as he could not rely on Mussolini anymore, fearing that Winston Churchill will take the city as he did during the Balkan Wars, asking at the same time assistance from his Bulgarian ally to occupy the province of Greek Thrace from the east. Thus, a year later in 1941, and after the Italian defeat, all four Axis armies (Albanian, Italian, German and Bulgarian) occupied Greece (Lemkin, 1944:185). The same multi-axis occupation occurred in former Yugoslavia, where

not only the four aforementioned axis armies intervened but the Croatians as well (Lemkin, 1944:241).



Source: [http://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/a/a0/Triple\\_Occupation\\_of\\_Greece.png](http://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/a/a0/Triple_Occupation_of_Greece.png)



(Geographic Departments/Peripheries of Greece)

Source:

[http://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/6/69/GreeceRegionsEnglish\\_corrected2.png](http://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/6/69/GreeceRegionsEnglish_corrected2.png)

Anti-Semitism and racial hatred towards Jews increased with the formation of the National Union of Greece (EEE), which gained support by those who supported or viewed the deportations with indifference: “as just another element in the misery of the world”, while others directly supported these horrific decisions (Bowman, 2006:22). Although the National Union of Greece (EEE) in the 30s tried to exploit the conflicts and antagonisms between the different communities as a result of famine and poverty by spreading anti-Semitic propaganda<sup>19</sup>, it was “lacking any massive scale” of support (Fleischer, 1995b: 298). At the same time, there was a strong resistance movement that fought the Nazi Germans, were sympathetic towards their Jewish neighbours and friends, and strongly opposed the expulsions; among them, there was a great number of Jews who took part in the resistance (Bowman, 2006:22).<sup>20</sup>

This history does not fully support Hannah Arendt’s argument in *Eichmann in Jerusalem*, that the Greek population was “indifferent at best” and that “even some of the partisan groups” as far as the deportations are concerned “looked upon the operations with approval” (Arendt, 2006:189). During the same period, Salonikan Jews sought to find ways to escape to safer parts of Greece such as central Greece and the Peloponnese peninsula. These peripheries were still under Italian Occupation (and no Jewish persecutions or deportations were allowed, see Arendt, 2006:189). Arendt is right that there were indeed some partisan groups who collaborated as well as a significant number of Greek politicians, but she fails to name these groups and their background political ideology. In doing so, we

---

<sup>19</sup> Hagen Fleischer in his book *Crown and Swastika* declares that the National Union of Greece (EEE) in the 30s spread to the people of Thessaloniki the following motto: “Greeks, Annihilate the Jews”. The anti-Semitic party tried to exploit the Anatolian Greeks who arrived in the city the previous decade and blame the Jews for their economic sorrows. The offices of EEE closed down, but a decade later and after the death of Metaxas in 1941, EEE was re-formed (Fleischer, 1995b:298).

<sup>20</sup> I believe that Jewish Resistance during the Axis Occupation so far is not very researched or widely known (especially as far as the Greek Jewry is concerned). My objective in this chapter not only gears towards describing and analysing the horror and suffering of the Greek Jewry, but I wish to highlight the courageous stance of those Jews who really risked their lives and joined the left partisans at all costs in the mountains of Greece.

could argue that she underestimated the effort of the overall resistance against the Nazi Regime and specifically the major left partisan group EAM/ELAS. The latter, not only welcomed the Jews with their support and protection, but without them resistance *as such* would have been far more difficult.<sup>21</sup>

According to John Louis Hondros in *Occupation and Resistance: the Greek Agony*, the cities and villages that EAM/ELAS *controlled*<sup>22</sup> in Thessaly and Central Greece prefectures, such as the cities of Volos, Lamia, and Trikala “450 of 2,727 were deported” (Hondros, 1983:93). Arendt’s argument was true of the small nationalist, anticommunist and pro-royalist partisan group EDES under the leadership of Napoleon Zervas, which controlled Epirus (the north-west prefecture of Greece). According to a report written by “a German *GFP*”<sup>23</sup>, “one could hear only full approval of the action” in the city of Ioannina, where collaboration between German and Greek police, led to the concentration of “90 percent” of that region (Hondros, 1983:93-94). There were in other words, parts of Greece where the local authorities and civilians approved the Nazi actions and worked together to deport the Jews, but there were other parts that prevented these actions, with the help of partisans and the local authorities.

Indeed, the Nazis had suspicions that the Jews of Epirus had secret connections and affiliations with the guerrillas and were preparing for some kind of sabotage. Given that the SS were also suspicious of underground “communist elements” in the area, the police along with the local authorities worked together with a common “hostile attitude” (Safrian, 2010:183-185). Let us not forget that Epirus was controlled by the resistance movement of Napoleon Zervas, whose region was not only nationalist and royalist in terms of its political

---

<sup>21</sup> The relation between the Jews and the EAM/ELAS will be analysed further in this chapter under the sub-section: “The Jewish Partisans in the anti-Nazi Resistance of EAM/ELAS”.

<sup>22</sup> Here the word “control” is used to indicate that EAM/ELAS liberated vast areas of Greece and thus controlled regions with arms against the Nazi and Italian Occupier.

<sup>23</sup> John Louis Hondros does not name the Nazi who wrote the report; see Hondros, 1983:94.

ideology but also anticommunist, and treated any hypothetical revolt either by the left or by the Jews as a product of a *communist* agenda (Amyntor, 1942-1943: 66).

Furthermore, there were many organisations who collaborated with the Nazis such as the Security Battalions (known in Greek as “*Tagmata Asfaleias*”, “*Germano-tsoliades*”, “*Dosilogoι*” or simply traitors), the Greek police as well as many politicians and “former ministers of the quisling governments”, Greek Nazis, informers, people who worked in Gestapo, and many other criminals that formed an illegal “parastate” (Iatrides, 1981:173-174,175, for full exploration see also chapter 5 and chapter 6). But before analysing resistance and collaboration, we should stay focused on the Greek Jewry and their fate during the Nazi Occupation in Greece.

### **Anti-Jewish Propaganda in Greece**

The first anti-Semitic laws came straight after the Germans arrived in the country. Anti-Jewish sentiments came up in the surface and the National Union of Greece (EΕΕ) which was previously disallowed was “reformed”, while all the members of the Jewish council in Salonika (including the head of the synagogue Rabbi Koretz), faced arrests, attacks and persecutions (Mazower, 2005:423). One of the first anti-Semitic measures was to force all the Jews by law to report and give all their assets including their “house pets” to the German authorities; they were forbidden to go through any kind of transaction with the remaining Greek populations on pain of being severely “punished” (Fleischer, 1995b:312).

On 23<sup>rd</sup> of April 1941 anti-Jewish measures came into effect in the country. The next period was characterised by threats, attacks and lootings of Jewish buildings such as synagogues, banks, schools, newspapers, and many associations. Nevertheless, the destiny of the Greek Jewry seemed to vary depending on which part of the country they were living in, for the country was divided into three occupational zones (German, Bulgarian, and Italian).

The Italians did not approve of the deportations,<sup>24</sup> and in Athens blocked them until it fell under the Nazis. Thessaloniki, by contrast, was under the influence of Nazi Germany. It was a place which, even after the fall of Ottoman Rule, and Hellenization during the Greek War of Independence, remained as one of the “leading centres of European Jewry” and the “Mother of Israel”; a cosmopolitan city with four thousand years of Jewish history (Mazower, 1993: 235, 237-238).<sup>25</sup>

The fact that the Italians did not allow deportations of Jews does not reveal Mussolini’s philosemitism. If we take the case of Jews of the Dodecanese Islands, which were under Italian occupation and possession until 1943, one can see that the treatment of the Jews went hand in hand with the racist laws of Italy. The community in Rhodes island for instance during the 30s faced systematic discrimination, as Jewish workers were excluded from the teaching sector, and were forbidden to marry civilians who were “non-Jews” (Gilbert, 1986:706).

According to Browning, in *The Final Solution and the German Foreign Office*, Mussolini’s foreign policy differed in his zones of occupation and in countries such as Greece, Yugoslavia, south France and parts of Croatia, since some countries were used as “satellite” zones for his own geo-political interests (Browning, 1978:109). However, we do not wish to give the reader the impression that Mussolini was sympathetic to the Jews of Greece (and in the aforementioned zones). But what Browning observes here is that although there was a growing antisemitism in Occupied Europe, nevertheless in countries such as Italy,

---

<sup>24</sup> During World War II Greece was occupied by three different armies. Germany occupied western Greek Macedonia and eastern Thrace; the Bulgarians occupied western Thrace, while the rest of the country was under Fascist Italy before Hitler took over the entire country in 1943 (Mazower, 1993:21).

<sup>25</sup> According to Sevilias (1983), in his book *Athens – Auschwitz*, the history of Jewish existence in Greece is so ancient that it dates back to 85 B.C.E. The first populations could be found in the Eastern Mediterranean. Later in 170 and 161 BC, small communities could be traced in Thessaloniki, Crete, Smyrna, and Ephesus. From 1095 until 1154, Jewish communities could be found in Thebes (known for their silk industry); while in 1204 Jews were exports and producers of agricultural goods (vii).

although it was allied with Hitler among Italian citizens was not “widespread” (Browning, 1978:110). Of course that was the early attitude of Mussolini. As the war progressed, he fell under pressure from the German Foreign Office and started to play a “double game”, on the one hand satisfying the Nazis, on the other, aware of people’s revulsion at the Jewish deportations. In other words, “he was promising the Germans his cooperation while tolerating the sabotage of these promises by his army, police, and diplomats” (ibid).

Browning, observes further differences among occupied countries of Europe. In some Balkan and Eastern countries, such as Hungary, Rumania and Bulgaria, although antisemitism was on the rise, it differed from the antisemitism of Germany; “it was predominantly nationalistic rather than racist”. During the axis occupation, certain countries of Eastern and Balkan Europe were still managing to create their borders and their ethno-synthesis by promoting forced assimilations so as to enable national homogeneity. However, the groups of people who did not fit this promotional and nationalist agenda were discriminated against. Whoever assimilated had a chance of survival. According to Browning, these countries in contrast with Germany had rather “selective” criteria concerning the fate of the Jews. They discriminated against or exempted Jewish communities for strategic reasons (Browning, 1978:110).

“A selective, nationalistically oriented anti-Semitism was the major factor in Eastern Europe and ultimately determined which groups of Jews would be killed, either massacred locally or turned over to the Germans, and which would be protected from extermination though not from persecution. While the Nazis wished to murder all the Jews, their east European Allies were eager to kill only certain groups of Jews. [...] Political expediency was also a major factor in determining the response of Germany’s southeast Allies to the Jewish question [...] As German domination and influence grew, the radicalisation of Old Right anti-Semitism continued. In order to deter excessive German interference in internal politics, especially outright support of the New Right,

the conservative regimes adopted anti-Jewish legislation based on the German model” (Browning, 1978:110-111).

### **The Jewish Question in Greece**

Prior to the Nazi occupation was there any “Jewish Question” in Greece? Mazower argues that when the Nazis started to investigate the “world Jewry”, they found no evidence that “there existed at any time a ghetto in Salonika” and that even the quisling PM Ioannis Rallis, openly declared that the Greek majority did not consider the Jews as “political danger” and that “there is no Jewish Question in Greece” (Mazower, 1993: 423-424). A rare report in the research centre of *Gennadius Library* in Athens by a Jewish representative in Cairo (named A. L. Molho), wrote that from 12 October 1943 until February 1943, there were no measures against the Jews and that the people of Greece opposed racial discriminations as a whole (Greek Characters, 1945: 1).

“The measures which have been adopted from the above date on against the Jews of Salonika and entire Macedonia were originated exclusively by the German occupation authorities. They acted, according to their own admission, in conformity with very precise orders received by them from high quarters. [...] The pressure of Greek public opinion has been so mighty that the Quisling Prime Minister Mr. Joannis Rhallis, has been obliged to declare that he was going to intervene on behalf of the Jewish element. It is not known whether he had kept his promise. In any case, it hasn’t manifested itself officially”.<sup>26</sup>

A number of Greeks may have opposed these measures. However, the Prime Minister, and other politicians who collaborated with the Nazis wanted to introduce racial laws against the Jews (Mazower, 1993:423). A number of Jews started to join the guerrillas of EAM/ELAS to save themselves but also to fight against anti-Semitism. In particular, 650 Jews joined their fellow Greeks in the mountains of *Free Greece*, while 450 of them were

---

<sup>26</sup> “Notes on the Present Situation of Greek Jewry, by A. L. Molho, Cairo, October 12, 1943”, in *Greek Characters*, 1945, *Gennadius Library*, Athens, pp. 1-2.

Salonika Jews who fought in the area of Greek Macedonia. Many guerrillas for instance remember the active presence of Jews such as the Jewish partisan Yitzhak Mosheh (Issac Moissis). From Thessaloniki; “Jews participated in every action with him” and many died “having fought to the last bullet”. More than 3,000 escaped to Palestine with the help of the Left-wing partisans of EAM/ELAS (Bowman, 2006:22; Kouzinopoulos, 2005:33). By the end of the war approximately 10,000 Jewish members of ELAS were ready to get involved in a long term civil war with the nationalists of EDES (Bowman, 2006: 25-26).

In fact, Jewish resistance can be traced back to as 1930 when the political atmosphere started to shift towards fascism throughout Europe. When Hitlerism was on the rise in the continent, the Jewish community in Salonika in 1933 organised a number of demonstrations and a boycott of German products. And their protest did not stop only there, but they organised a number of public protests against acts of discrimination for other communities in Europe, such as the expulsion of Jews from Bulgaria.<sup>27</sup>

In Athens, from the beginning of Nazi control (September 1943 until the end of occupation October 1944) 10,000 Jews were saved (as we shall see in the forthcoming sections), as a result of the actions of ELAS. Those who remained in the capital and registered did so “because personal reasons made flight impossible”, such as when people refused to leave behind their relatives. Other Jews were revealed by the intelligence and the police, and still others were excluded from the Greek society and had poor access to information (Mazower, 1993:252). According to the Athenian Jew Errikos Sevilias who survived Auschwitz, a number of Jews in the beginning of the war (and given they were socially excluded) were not informed about the “danger threatening them as they had little information

---

<sup>27</sup> See Filippos Dragoumis File 39, sub-file 39-2 “*Dia tou Boikotaz tha Syntrivei o Hitler, Ek tou Pouevlo*” (Hitler will be Crashed by Boycott, From ‘Pueblo’) Thessaloniki 30 March 1933, see also Press Office of Thessaloniki, “*Ai Diamartyriai ton En Boulgaria Evreon, Ek tis ‘Pravda’*”, (The Protest of Bulgarian Jews, From ‘Pravda’) Sofia 28.3.33.

about the horrors perpetrated on the Jews in the countries of Europe”. The only thing they learned was that Salonika Jews were sent to Nazi-Occupied Poland by the SS (Sevillias, 1983:5). Apart from the limited information the Jews of Salonika had and the social exclusion they faced in the city, there is another parameter that is often forgotten and throws light on the Salonikan situation. Saul Friedlander suggests that this lack of alertness from the part of the Jews, did not result from any difficulty in understanding the imminent danger; on the contrary, the Jewish community in Greek Macedonia already knew what danger meant, as they saw with their own eyes dramatic scenes during the first stages of the nation-states in Greece as well as the impact of the “Turkish atrocities”, and the “expulsions” of Greek refugees of Anatolia, thus no one believed the Nazi policies would be any different. In other words, they were all too familiar with what the newly states did to each other and the impact on the communities (Friedlander, 2007:488). As Friedlander declares,

“They had direct experience or detailed knowledge of Turkish atrocities, of expulsions from Asia Minor, in short of the misery, discrimination, massacres, and resettlements of the World War I years and their immediate aftermath. Many of these Jews probably imagined their fate at the hands of the Germans in somewhat similar terms. Whether this was a significant factor in their attitudes is less certain, however: No Jew in occupied Europe imagined what the German measures would be” (Friedlander, 2007:488).<sup>28</sup>

But going back to these Nazi measures and in relation to the Greek authorities, the attitude of the latter in concert with the anti-Semitic laws became tougher in July 1942. Nazi propaganda started to poison the social, political and bureaucratic fabric of the city. For instance the “German controlled” newspaper *Apogevmatini* was characterizing Greek Jews as

---

<sup>28</sup> Hagen Fleischer explains that the Jews in Greece and the whole “Christian” Europe, from the medieval times until the twentieth century, experienced a chain of dramatic events, such as pogroms and racial hate. However, and until the period of Nazism, there was something “missing”; namely the bureaucracy of the Nazi machine and the systematic extermination of Jews that led to the genocide. Prior to that period, the Jews were all too aware what persecution meant, but the Nazi methods were unique in history (Fleischer, 1995b:313). Thus, one could argue here that no Jewish community was prepared to face the extent of Nazi ferocity.

“parasites... who would now be put to productive use”, and in another headline the same newspaper wrote on the front page “Get rid of them” (Mazower, 2005:424; Mazower, 1993:242). As *Embros* wrote in an article on 27 October 1912:

“The reason why most of our fellow-citizen Israelites have, due to the corruption of their souls, tried to sabotage our national aspirations and have diligently tried to poison our joy caused by the arrival of our Greek brothers is their self interest [...] It is for this reason that we request our fellow Greek citizens not to seek revenge on account of the contemptible behaviour of our fellow Israelites citizens. Instead they should look down upon them, since they are only worthy of disdain. Greeks, known for their pride, should not belittle themselves in remembering these deceits by the Jews, who will undoubtedly become aware, under the new government, that they have made a bad appraisal of the situation, having feared the subjugation of Salonika to the Greeks” (quoted in Molho, 1988-1993:255).

In fact, attacks upon the Jewish populations came as early as 1932. The London Jewish Chronicle in 26 November 1932 criticised the anti-Jewish statement of the *then* Greek Prime Minister Tsaldaris who argued that the “Jews of Thessaloniki must stay quiet while he is in his cabinet, if they want to enjoy peace and order”.<sup>29</sup> Eleven years later and in 1943, the Nazi Germans closed down many Jewish businesses and shops, newspapers, destroyed properties, looted valuable items from the community, while encouraging local Nazi sympathisers and Anti-Semites to distribute anti-Jewish flyers on various Greek shops (Mazower, 1993:238). Philip Spencer argues that during Nazi Occupation in Europe, the systematic attack on Jewish culture whether it targeted their religious identity or their intellect (through lootings and burnings of buildings, museums, synagogues, schools and so on), aimed at destroying the “core elements of the Judeo-Christian tradition of the West before, in and

---

<sup>29</sup> See *Filippos Dragoumis*: sub-file 38.2, “*Diloseis tou K. Tsaldari dia tous Evraious tis Thessalonikis*” (Statement of M. Tsaldaris to the Salonika Jews, from Jewish Chronicle, 26 November 1932) *Gennadius Library*, Athens.

after the Enlightenment”. After Nazism destroyed the traces of their cultural heritage, it then erased the physical existence of Jewish life in Europe through methods of deportation and extermination (Spencer, 2006:530). As Spencer writes:

“There was, for instance, the famous burning of the books, the purging of museums and exhibitions, the expulsion of academics and teachers, the hunting down of intellectual dissent. If this was not an attack on culture *tout court* (though this too can be argued), it was certainly on any aspect of culture associated with the Jews, a sustained effort to attack the core elements of the Judeo-Christian tradition of the West <sup>30</sup>before, in and after the Enlightenment. There was, secondly, a systematic policy of depopulation. Jewish communities were removed from places where they had lived for centuries, transported across Europe first into mass ghettos and then to the extermination camps” (Spencer, 2006:530).

One example of the destruction of cultural identity reoccurred in the city of Thessaloniki, in December 1942, when the Germans destroyed the Jewish cemetery in Salonika by pulling up everything from the graves in order to build roads. Many witnesses declared that the city for many weeks looked like a “vast necropolis, scattered with fragments of stone and rubbish”, that it “resembled a city that had been bombed, or destroyed by a volcanic eruption” (Mazower, 1993:240). That was only the start, for the next months there was a number of arrests and executions, as many Jews were “shot as communists” (Mazower, 1993:238). Few months before December, on 11<sup>th</sup> July 1942, the German Wehrmacht commander ordered all male Jews – around 10,000 - to present themselves in Eleftheria Square in the centre of Thessaloniki and register for “civilian labour”( Mazower, 1993:238-239).

---

<sup>30</sup> The Christians and Jews were living together in Europe for centuries. Thus one could argue that Europe had a long Judeo-Christian tradition. However, by pushing away the Jews from that European heritage and coexistence, the Nazis Christianised Europe. By destroying everything that was Jewish in Europe, the Nazis attacked also that particular heritage that was shared with the Christians (see Spencer, 2006:530).

“At dawn on the appointed day, the men went to receive their work cards. It turned out that they were to be deliberately humiliated. Crowds gathered to watch the spectacle. Surrounded by armed soldiers, almost 10,000 men were kept standing in the sun for hours. They were forbidden to wear hats – forcing them to contravene religious custom (it was a Saturday) – and some eventually collapsed in the heat. German soldiers kicked and beat them or doused them in cold water. Some were forced to do physical exercises until they were exhausted. Military personnel snapped photos of the scene while Greek civilians watched them from their balconies. Actors and actresses visiting the city with the army’s theatrical agency, ‘Strength through Joy’, applauded the entertainment the army had laid on” (Mazower, 1993:238-239).

However, the Salonikan survivor Dr I. A. Matarasso argued that the passive people who watched from their house balconies and hotels in Eleftheria Square were actually German officials and troops as well as young German actresses of the military theatre “Kraft Durch” (Matarasso, 1948:23-24). Many hours however after the events in Eleftheria Square, the Jews were released and ordered to continue with further work on roads and buildings although none of them were able to do so, after the physical and psychological abuse (Mazower, 1993: 239). The picture of the scene is well known and it is exhibited in museums in Greece and abroad.



(The Jews are been forced to do humiliating exercises in the middle of a boiling noon in Eleftheria Square by the SS, Thessaloniki, 11 July 1942).

<http://www.holocaustresearchproject.org/othercamps/greekjewry.html>

## Deportations and the Destruction of Greek Jewry

### *The Bulgarian Zone*

According to the survivor Dr. Marco Nahon, the first Greek Jews that were deported and sent to the death camps were the Jews of Greek Thrace. These people already had experience of harassment from 1911 to 1918, the “early years of Greek Occupation” (Nahon, 1989:6). When Greek Thrace fell under Bulgarian occupation, Adolf Eichmann<sup>31</sup> (a key SS official for the implementation and organisation of deportations in Europe) made a murderous deal with Alexander Belov (a “commissar” for Jewish Matters) in February 1943 to deport 20,000 Jews from Bulgaria and send them east for forced labour; yet, these Jews were ultimately destined to be exterminated in the camp of Treblinka (ibid). Out of this tragic

<sup>31</sup> Adolf Eichmann’s department was ‘IVB4 of the Reichsicherheitshauptamt RSHA’ (Nahon, 1989:6). Adolf Eichmann turned out to assume a key role in the Final Solution during the *Wannsee Conference*, and organise the transfer of Jews to ghettos and extermination camps (Arendt, 2006).

number, around 4,000 were Jews from Greek Thrace, while the official Jewish Documents in Greece recorded later that the number of Jewish losses in Thrace was even higher (Nahon, 1989:7).<sup>32</sup>

According to Leni Yahl, the Jews in the Bulgarian occupied areas were totally “abandoned” at the latter’s hands. There were no attempts to be rescued by anyone, namely, neither from an organised resistance, nor from the local authorities, since Bulgaria annexed parts of Greece (Greek Thrace and Greek Macedonia) and there was literally no Greek element present (Yahl, 1977:622). The Bulgarian Occupation in Greece is considered as brutal as the Nazi Occupation, for this zone had also colonial characteristics. Raphael Lemkin declares that prior to the implementation of Jewish deportation in Greek Thrace and Greek eastern Macedonia, the Bulgarian occupants made their zone “free” from Greek populations. When Hitler asked assistance from his Bulgarian ally in 1941 to invade north-eastern Greece (as Italians proved ineffective to occupy Greece alone), the former seized the opportunity to annex parts they did not conquer during the Balkan Wars. They annexed this particular periphery, abolished every Greek element (the local people, administration, and bureaucracy), colonized it and brought Bulgarian citizens to inhabit the zone, while practicing a “real genocide policy” to the Greeks of north east Aegean (Lemkin, 1944:187-188; see also Macdonald, 1993:56). As Lemkin declares:

“The policy pursued by the Bulgarian occupant in Eastern Macedonia was entirely different from the one adopted in the Aegean region. Whereas in Macedonia a policy of rehabilitation was followed, the Macedonians being considered by the occupant as of Bulgarian origin, ‘freed from Greeks’, a real genocide policy was applied to the Greeks in the Aegean region. Greek

---

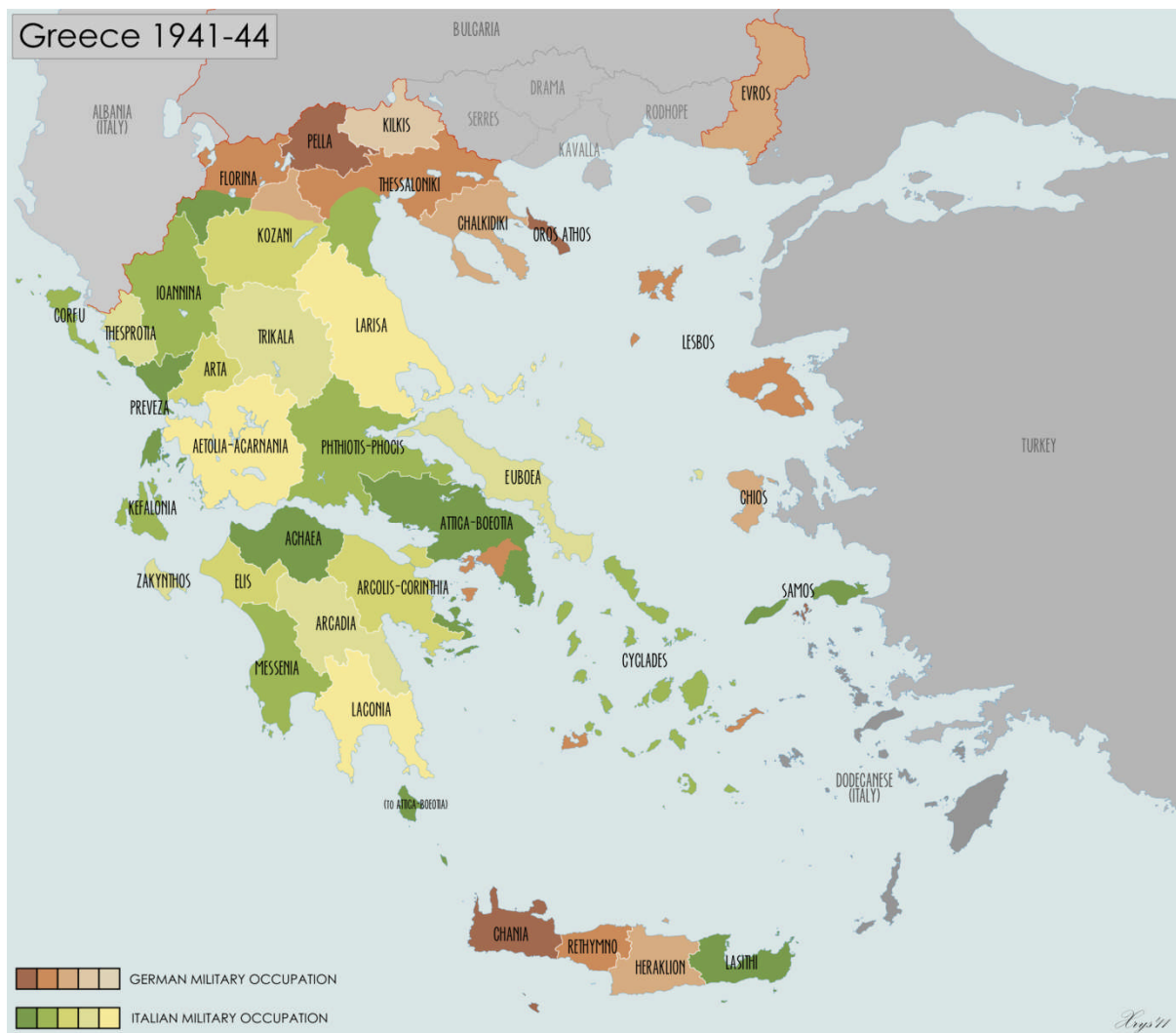
<sup>32</sup> Based on the official numbers of the Greek Jewish Community, the Jewish losses from the following Thracian cities are: Serres (597), Drama (1,161), Kavala (2,058), Alexandroupolis (136), Xanthi (544), Komotini (791). On the eastern part of Thrace on the other hand, which was occupied by the Germans, the number of deaths from the following cities is: Dhidhimoteichon (970), Souflion (32), and Orestiada (160). These Jews were included in the “Salonika’s fifty thousand Jews” (Nahon, 1989:8).

churches and schools were closed and the Bulgarian language was made the official language. These measures aimed at changes in the composition of the population in accordance with the German pattern. First of all, the Greeks who had come as immigrants from Anatolia and settled in Greece after the exchange of populations in 1922-23 were expelled from Thrace into that part of the Greek territory which was left under a Greek puppet<sup>33</sup> government” (Lemkin, 1944:188).

What was to follow two years later was the total eradication of the Greek Jewry from the Bulgarian zone. The reason why we are making this analogy is to support what has been previously argued by Christopher Browning concerning the turmoil of Balkan Peninsula: there were some regions in occupied Europe that combined anti-Jewish legislation with policies of annexation and colonization, forced assimilation or ethnic cleansing due to their multi-ethnic composition (Browning, 1978:110-111).

---

<sup>33</sup> The term ‘puppet government’ is explained in chapter 5, in the subsection “Political and Armed Collaboration”.



(Light Grey colour next to the German Occupation zone in north east Greece and opposite Bulgaria, indicates annexation policy of Bulgarians in Greek eastern Macedonia and Western Thrace. The light grey reveals the disappearance of these geographic regions from the Greek map due to annexation and colonization. Serres, Drama, Kavalla, Rhodope, and the islands of north-eastern Aegean such as Samothrace and Thasos were not part of Greece during Bulgarian Occupation. This map does not paint the Bulgarian zone in contrast with the Nazi and Italian zone, in order to see which peripheries belonged to Greece and which were annexed by the Bulgarians. Same grey colour in Dodecanese islands indicates Italian possession though not annexation. The islands of Dodecanese were under Italian occupation and possession until 1943. Re-unification of the latter with Greece occurred in 1948).

Source: [http://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/a/ae/Greece\\_Prefectures\\_1941-44.png](http://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/a/ae/Greece_Prefectures_1941-44.png)

Mazower observes that:

“The Nazi Occupation triggered off ethnic civil war more widely in the Balkans. Serb Chetniks talked of their intention ‘to cleanse Bosnia of everything that is not Serb’, and killed tens of thousands of Non-Serbs.

Bulgarian troops annexed parts of Greek Thrace, killed thousands of civilians, banned the use of Greek, and tried to resettle the province with Bulgarian settlers. A similar policy was attempted in former Yugoslav Macedonia, though in both cases, wartime colonisation was a failure” (Mazower, 2001:124).

### *The German Zone*

Adolf Eichmann and towards the “last months of 1942” was anxious to make “the German zone free of Jews” (Mazower, 1993:240). The same period he visited Salonika and told Dieter Wicliceny (the second of the three architects of Salonika destruction) to proceed with the Final Solution. Eichmann wanted to deport 50,000 Jews within “six to eight weeks” and Wicliceny to his eyes was the most reliable person to carry out the brutal acts: he had organised the destruction of Slovakian Jews, the “first to be gassed” in the camps (Mazower, 1993: 240).

Few months later, in February 1943, Dieter Wicliceny and Alois Brunner<sup>34</sup> arrived in the city of Thessaloniki and forced 6,000 Jewish families to abandon their properties and give them to the Germans. The SS created ghettos in the city and banned non-Jews from speaking to their Jewish neighbours (Mazower, 1993:241). Dr Max Merten, organised fast-speed procedures in order to implement the deportations (Steinberg, 2002:99). According to Dr Nahon the political situation in Salonika was very brutal as the city was the “seat of Wehrmacht Occupation Forces” (Nahon, 1989:9). The first phase of the war was so ferocious, for between the spring of 1941 and the summer of 1942, the SS carried out executions and arrests on a daily basis irrespective of whether the victims were Jews. The latter were “not singled out from any special treatment” during the first and a half year of occupation; Greek Christians, communists, Jews and everyone actively or not actively opposed to the Nazi

---

<sup>34</sup> Both Dieter Wicliceny and Alois Brunner were “representatives” of Adolf Eichmann who carried out the deportation policy in Greek Macedonia. Both were SS and under the “head” of Max Merten, who was the chief of Thessalonikis’ “military administration” (Mazower, 1993:241).

regime was persecuted. Nahon declares that during the first phase of occupation, Greek Jews suffered and arrested “not as Jews but as Greeks” since they supported the guerrillas’ actions against the Nazi regime (Nahon, 1989:9).

In March 1943 Eichmann decided that he “wanted the entire community to be deported”. The chief Rabbi of Salonika, Koretz, tried to convince and “begged” Wisliceny to reconsider and perhaps use the Jews as labourers within Greece instead of deporting them. But Eichmann was not convinced, and proceeded with the first orderings of the trains, confirming back to German Head Quarters that the first train with 2, 600 Greek Jews was already heading towards Auschwitz on 15 March 1943. In the mean time, Rabbi Koretz was struggling to find ways to stop the deportations, and asked the quisling PM Ioannis Rallis to negotiate with the Germans, but he replied to him that “he was in no position to help” (Mazower, 1993:242-243).

Dr Nahon suggests that Eichmann and Wisliceny’s presence in Thessaloniki signified the “final stage” of the holocaust. They created three ghettos in three different areas of the city; the “Baron Hirsh”, the “Suburb 151”, and the “Hagia Paraskevi” camps. From the second half of the same month (March 1943) and for three months, 20 trains left from Salonika to Auschwitz carrying approximately 48,000 to 50,000 Jews, while the train that left on 9<sup>th</sup> of May to Auschwitz carried Jews from Greek Eastern Thrace (Nahon, 1989:10-11). However, there are other sources which suggest that apart from Wisliceny and Brunner, General Loehr was also responsible for the deportation of the Jews in Salonika, as he as well collaborated with the SS in the city during the same period (Rosenbaum and Hoffer, 1993: 54-55). According to Mazower, 48,974 Jews left Salonika, while 37,386 were sent straight to the gas chambers of Auschwitz II (Mazower, 1993:244; see also Steinberg, 2002: 100). The Salonika transports included also elderly people with serious health problems as well as young boys and girls. Some locals who witnessed the deportations remembered horrific

stories. The Greek novelist Giorgos Ioannou was a young school boy during the Salonika transportations and described the emotions of his father, who drove one of these deadly trains to Serbia (Mazower, 1993: 245).

“Late one night we heard sobbing in the kitchen. My father had returned...He was depressed and exhausted, but more than anything else, miserable. He asked to see my young brother, who was then 3 or 4. We woke him up and carried him into the kitchen. He had been asked to drive a train with Jews right into Serbia and had seen terrible things with his own eyes. The Jews had already begun to die. The Germans stopped the train at a quiet spot – they had their plan. From inside, the Jews shouted and beat the wooden sides. Packed in as they were, they could not breathe, and they had no water. The Germans, guns in hand, began opening the wagons, not however for the benefit of the Jews, but to steal their hidden jewellery, watches and coins. There was much crying. From one wagon they threw out a young boy dead, and laid him – without of course burying him – in the ditch alongside the trucks. It seems he looked like my brother. As my father looked out from the engine, they threw him a handful of watches” (Mazower, 1993:245-246).

### *The Italian Zone*

According to the survivor Dr Nahon, the Jews of the Italian zone were “relatively safe from the ravages of the Gestapo”, as the Italians wanted to control Greece and were “antagonistic” towards Germany, giving them no “free hand until September 1943”. However, they surrendered (Nahon, 1989:11). It is estimated that 140,000 Italian soldiers gave up their arms in Greece after fighting the Nazis in the Ionian Islands. Among those Italians who surrendered, some joined the Nazis; others went with the Greek guerrillas of ELAS, while the majority was sent to the Nazi camps for forced labour (ibid). When the whole country fell into the hands of Nazi Germany in 1943, Adolf Eichmann proceeded with

deportations in all parts of the country. On 20 September 1943, Jurgen Stroop and Walter Blume arrived in Athens, while Wisliceny was transferred to the capital to be in charge of the Jewish policy under the supervision of Blume. He received specific directives from Eichmann to hasten the registration process “as he wanted all the Jews in Athens and the rest of Greece to be rounded up and sent to Auschwitz immediately” (Mazower, 1993:250). Eichmann’s plans were interrupted, for when Wisliceny threatened the Athenian Rabbi Elias Barzilai to give him the names and addresses of his community, “he was spirited out of Athens by EAM/ELAS” and before escaping to the mountains, he destroyed the name list of the Athenian Jews. In this way, many were saved (Mazower, 1993:250, see also Nahon, 1989:12). According to Hilberg, the Jewish escape was so successful with the assistance of the partisans that “no council came into being in Athens” (Hilberg, 1992:106).

With the help of Jewish activists, ELAS organised an escape plan (held by EAM’s member Kostas Vidalis) to save the Rabbi who seized to inform his community about the deportations. Indeed, “hidden in a truck”, the Rabbi and his family successfully escaped in the mountains of Central Greece and stayed there until the end of the war with the guerrillas. The plan was so successful that not only ELAS’s plan saved thousands of Jews with Barzilai’s disappearance, but they sabotaged Eichmann’s plan as well. Jurgen Stroop was so furious that Eichmann’s plan did not prosper that he ordered all the Athenian Jews to register “within 5 days on pain of being shot”. The order failed again as many Jews refused to register and a great number escaped into the mountains to join EAM/ELAS. Even though the registration deadline was extended for 17 September 1943, only 1,200 listed out of 8,000 Athenian Jews were registered (Mazower, 1993:250-251).

Other Jews were able to hide in friends’ houses while, Mazower provides an important information, namely that the authorities in Greece wanted to intervene on behalf of “Greek-speaking Romaniot Jews”, showing their objection to the German authorities (to

Altenburg in particular) and their “displeasure at the prospect of future deportations” (Mazower, 1993:251). Fearing that the Greek objection will result to a similar incident that took place in Denmark, leading to an escape of many Jews there, “the German Foreign Office recommended proceeding cautiously in Greece” (ibid). Eichmann was so angry with the successful escape of many Jews and the limited registrations, that he gave an order to invade Jewish properties and confiscate everything (ibid).

A horrific tragedy occurred in Athens when Tony Burger (a top Nazi official) visited without a notice on March 23<sup>rd</sup> 1944 the central synagogue. Burger, who took over Wisliceny’s position after Eichmann realised that the latter was incapable of handling the Jewish Question in Athens, informed the Jewish attendants that were about to be sent to Germany for forced labour “due to their Anglophile sentiments” and that they would return to Greece after the war was over. The SS locked the synagogue doors and ordered 20 Jews to terrorise their inmates with weapons: they were forced to “round up the women and children and bring them to the Centre” (Mazower, 1993: 252). Approximately one thousand terrified Jews were kept rounded up like that for many hours, and when the doors finally opened, the SS arrested them, sending them to the Haidari Camp (a few kilometres away from the centre of Athens), where they were held for 10 days before being sent on to Auschwitz. There, Josef Mengele selected 648 for his experiments, while the rest were immediately killed (ibid). Further concentration camps were established not only in Salonika, but in Athens too. Because of the strong presence of left-wing guerrilla activity in Attica, there were many prisons in *Haidari*, *Averoff*, *Tatoi*, *Kallithea*, and in many other districts supervised by the Greek police (Kouzinopoulos, 2005:126-127).

Whenever the locals and the authorities tried to save them, they successfully did so, whereas other areas (such as the cities of Epirus) approved the Nazi actions. Jews who remained in the cities or joined the partisans of ELAS in the mountains of Free Greece felt

more “protected” as they had friends and relatives close to them as well as an organised armed resistance by their side (Nahon, 1989: 13). As we already stated, in areas with strong left wing resistance such as Thessaly and Central Greece, the Jews felt safer as the majority of them received assistance from the local residents and the resistance of EAM/ELAS (Kitroeff, 1985:8-9).

According to Dr Nahon, the train that carried the Athenian Jews in April 1944 included deportees from other cities of Greece such as Arta (352), Patra (12 families), Preveza (272), Chalkida (90), Volos (130), Larissa (255), Trikala (50), Ioannina (1,860), and Kastoria (763). The 300 arrested Cretan Jews had a dreadful end as “their ship sank mysteriously” between the islands of Thera (Santorini) and Milos “somewhere of the coast of Sounion”, while 1,800 to 2,000 Jews from Corfu Island, and 2,000 Jews from the islands of Kos and Rhodes were deported in July of the same year (Nahon, 1989:12). As Mazower declares, Burger, who was responsible for the Jews of Corfu, convinced the local shipping to offer him three transports in order to transfer the Jews to the neighbouring island of Lefkada. Many escaped in the hills of the island while others were unwilling to leave their families. Those however who were captured, were kept “locked” in a fort (a “former prison”) for many days under barbaric conditions (Mazower, 1993:254).

When the prisoners of Corfu reached Lefkada Island, they were detained in the town square of the island. It is suggested that the local population showed “sympathy for the detainees” by giving them food, while Burger and the Nazi authorities threatened to kill the local civilians in case they showed solidarity towards the Jews. In one incident, a local priest offered a cigarette to a Jew once the first transport arrived in the island, and Burger, furious, shot the Jewish man and looked towards the priest who was to be shot as well. This act was prevented only by the Greek police (Mazower, 1993:254-255).

At the same time, the author explains how difficult it was for the Jews to escape given the danger of arrest and death, by giving us an example of a Jewish man named Aaron. Once the boat arrived at the harbour, Aaron, and by mistake queued along with the Jews who were about to be sent to Patras (Peloponnese). As a young spontaneous boy, he saw an old friend and rushed in to talk to him. The young Jew realised the mistake he made and did not know what to do. He was aware that his action would result to severe punishment or that his family would be punished for their son's action. But the young boy was lucky as he was saved by a stranger called (George Mitsialis). The latter let him stay at his house over the night, while the next day he walked through the mountains outside the city of Patras hoping he will reach Athens at some point and meet his family. However in the mountains, "he met partisans of ELAS, and spent the rest of the war with them", returning back safe to the island of Corfu without his family after the war was over (Mazower, 1993:255).

### **Resistance in the streets and the formation of EAM/ELAS**

According to Hondros in *Occupation and Resistance: The Greek Agony 1941-44*, the first informal and "spontaneous" forms of resistance occurred in Athens in the beginning of May 1941, when Greek civilians protested against the German decision to imprison British soldiers who arrived in the country the same year. Although the penalty for trying to save the British was death, many individuals acted on their own, and tried to help them escape. Acts of resistance included sabotage on various ships (especially in the port of Piraeus), occupation in universities by professors and students, and open demonstrations in the streets of Athens (Hondros, 1983:95-96). One of the most important and "spectacular" to this day acts of resistance was, when the famous and current left-wing politician Manolis Glezos and his friend Apostolos Santas, the night of 30 May 1941, accessed illegally the ancient area of Acropolis and literally took down the swastika flag from the top of the hill and stole it without been caught (Mazower, 1993: 86).

It is argued that Greece and former Yugoslavia used similar methods of uprising throughout the war, but in the former case and at least in the beginning of the occupation started mainly from the people. Many spontaneous acts like the one we just described occurred in occupied Greece. As a consequence, the Nazis constantly threatened the Greek people ordering them to show “obedience” without much success though (Podinus, 1943: 9). In fact the Nazis issued a proclamation stating the following:

“Because German military flags have been pulled down and torn from public buildings, because the Greek people are hoarding foodstuffs and preventing them reaching the German soldiers, because of the Greek population’s sympathy with British prisoners, and because the Greek press refuses to conform to the new order, the German authorities have decided that in the future those found guilty of the above-mentioned offences will be shot” (Podinus, 1943: 9).

However, anti-Nazi acts continued in many cities apart from Athens such as the city of Salonika by those unemployed citizens who were deprived from the public sector. The act of theft of swastika and the continuous acts of solidarity towards the British detainees, led to the increase of numerous police units in areas of Athens, and the introduction of concentration camps for those who were revolting. The growth of anti-fascist and anti-authoritarian behaviour, made the local Nazi authorities and the quisling government to establish the first courts that would handle cases of “anti-national offenses”. This led to the arrest of many Athenians the next following months, sending them to the islands of exile. Despite the arrests and persecutions, the tension between the civilians and the Nazis grew fast in concert with the increase of hunger and deprivation (“*Great Famine*”) especially during the summer months of 1941 (Hondros, 1983:96-97).

Acts of provocation and sabotage from the Greek population continued in many cities apart from Thessaloniki and Athens, and on 5<sup>th</sup> July 1941, the first partisans emerged in the

village of Kozani (province of Western Greek Macedonia). The Nazis burned a number of villages, killing civilians as a form of reply to the revolutionary behaviour, while leftist partisans attempted to destroy the offices of the National Union of Greece (EEE) in Salonika on 31<sup>st</sup> of August, but without success, as the partisans were arrested and executed (Hondros, 1983:97). Mazower declares that the impressive revolt that was prevailing in Greece was something like a natural phenomenon as it originated from the Italian Occupation in the country. A number of “Italian observers” suggested that the “revolt psychosis” among the populations was something to be expected; it was “enough” and “straightforward” (Mazower, 1993: 89).

On the other hand, organised resistance emerged in the winter of 1941 and 1942 with the appearance of armed bands of ELAS that sprang from the Greek Communist Party. The Communist Party which was illegal at that time continued to grow from the 30s onwards, when the fascist dictatorship of Metaxas ruled the country for a decade. It had ten percent of the vote. EAM matured in concert with the growth of many other political conflicts. The rivalries occurred between the royalists who wanted to keep alive the spirit of king George II and the supporters of Venizelos (the Venizelists); between the anti-Venizelists and anti-royalists, and all together against communism (Mazower, 1993:98). In the middle of the thirties, the ideological conflicts reached their apogee, when former king George II abolished democracy, destroyed the parliament in 1936, and tried at the same time to establish some kind of coalition or “national unity” with the Venizelists, causing severe reactions from the opposite camps who opted to get rid of pro-Metaxas and pro-king political influences (ibid).

The conservatism of the political elite grew in concert with the proletarianisation of Greece. The latter formed a strong organised movement among itself and fellow citizens. It started as EA (National Solidarity), and rapidly flourished because it attracted victims of famine, forming later the EAM (*Ethniko Apeleftherotiko Metopo*, National Liberation Front).

The latter did not wish communists members “play their dominant role in EAM”, and they welcomed people from many other groups to enter their resistance, keeping it open, without excluding the possibility of co-operation with members of the “political mainstream”(Mazower, 1993:100). Nevertheless, their political opponents not only rejected their offer, but they were treating resistance with great scepticism. Among the sceptics were not only those who supported the king, but also Georgios Papandreou (the eldest, who was in Cairo during the Axis Occupation) who thought that this resistance group had an “impersonal form of political organization”<sup>35</sup> that could not fit their ideological platform (ibid). From the beginning of the war, the bourgeois parties feared that Greece’s *National Resistance*<sup>36</sup> would increase so much in numbers that their left-wing representatives would win the elections as well as the support of the people who would jointly work together to take their “freedoms” back, seeing the prospect of the king’s return with great hostility (Mazower, 1993:101).

Nevertheless, ELAS (the armed force of EAM) successfully managed to dominate as the main resistance group in the country in contrast with the nationalist guerrilla group of EDES for 3 distinct reasons. According to Iatrides, the first reason was the fact that the guerrillas of ELAS supported the majority of the Greek population who was hostile towards the regency and the government – in – exile. The second reason was “the failure of SOE<sup>37</sup> and

---

<sup>35</sup> Mazower explains that the “political elite” of Greece, namely Papandreou, Venizelos and the royalists had the illusion that they were representing the popular will of the Greek people forgetting that Greece was a peasant country. EAM/ELAS understood the conditions under which the majority of the population were living. Their scheme did not pay attention on political canons such as leadership and guidance. The political elite on the other hand, insisted that the populations needed guidance and monitoring with respect to “unstable and wavering public opinion” of the Greek people. Top MPs and Papandreou himself thought that even the name of EAM (national liberation front) was “childish” to the European eyes and that the “political world would lose all credibility” if they followed them (Mazower, 1993:100). In other words, this impersonality of EAM or the absence of clear party characteristics of the movement threatened the liberal brush of Greek politics which all the aforementioned wanted to promote.

<sup>36</sup> Traditionally, when we talk about the “*National Resistance*” in Greece as a whole during occupation, we refer to EAM/ELAS, because it was the largest and the majority of the Greek land was under its protection.

<sup>37</sup> SOE stands for “Special Operations Executives”; SOE was responsible to instigate “subversion, sabotage, and guerrilla warfare against the Axis in cooperation with the resistance forces of occupied Europe”. They were working under-cover and in strict secrecy, giving information and special reports to Britain as to the nature of the resistance of the EAM/ELAS. Their intervention in Greece, although secret, was recognised by many partisans as a burden, since the SOE was “committed” to support the return of the king and the government- in-

the British Foreign Office to agree on a coordinated military – policy toward Greece”, and last but not least EAM/ELAS managed to unite the Greek civilians in urban and rural areas quite early. Indeed, as we shall see in chapter 5, the SOE and British Foreign Office struggled to reconcile their interests, as the latter was following the instructions of Churchill in order to monitor the resistance bands, while the SOE wished (at least in the beginning) to recognise the post-war representation of EAM/ELAS, though it succumbed to the pressures of Churchill in the end. It is also argued that ELAS was more popular to the people, since it had a humanitarian mission in areas of Greece that were deeply affected by the *Great Famine* (Iatrides, 1981:39, 42).

### **The Jewish Partisans in the Anti-Nazi resistance of ELAS**

The story of Jewish resistance in occupied Greece is still not widely known. Joseph Matsas who was born in the city of Ioannina, was a member of the Jewish community and an active partisan in the resistance of ELAS. He argues, that what is most known about the participation of Jews in the Greek war against Nazism and Fascism covers mainly the first part of the war (from 1940 until 1941) when the war broke out between the Italians and the Greeks in the Albanian front. Of course there is a lot to say about the second half of the war, but Matsas explains to us that given that there were numerous Jewish persecutions and deportations in the second half of the war – once the Germans took over the whole country - and because a civil war broke out officially in December 1944 in Greece (unofficially it sprung in 1943) along with the Cold War throughout Europe, there was an “official silence” that “prevented any references to the events that took place during the German occupation” (Matsas, 1991: 55) .

---

exile after the war was over, while EAM/ELAS was hostile to such a prospect, for it was genuinely “anti-monarchical” and “politically left-wing” (for full exploration of the SOE activities in Greece, see Andre Gerolymatos, “The Development of Guerrilla Warfare and British Policy Toward Greece 1943-1944”, *Journal of the Hellenic Diaspora*, pages 97-114, September 1991, Vol. 17.1, published by Pella Publishing Company; see also Stevens, J.M, C.M. Woodhouse and D.J. Wallace (1982) in *British Reports on Greece 1943-44* on the political conflicts in Greece, pp 4-24).

It is worth mentioning that 4,000 Jews took part in the armed resistance of the Greco-Italian war in Albania which was an Italian Protectorate (Matsas, 1991:56, on the Jewish contribution to the war effort see also, Stavroulakis, 1997:55). As the former Jewish partisan declares:

“Jewish soldiers had a highly patriotic spirit and fought the invaders fiercely, fighting as Greeks for their country’s defence and as Jews for the defeat of fascism and antisemitism. Their fighting spirit and participation in dangerous missions earned them the admiration of their officers and shot down the myth, created by antisemites and fanatical bigots, that Jews were cowards in the face of the war. One battalion of the 50<sup>th</sup> Regiment was called ‘the Cohen Battalion’ because of the numerous Jewish fighters who served in its ranks” (Matsas, 1991:56).

Many Jewish women fought on the side of ELAS, such as Dora Bourla who fought against the Nazis in Greek Macedonia with a unit of 30 armed women. The participation of women in the resistance had a socio-political significance as well, since in the mountains of Greece the provisional Government granted all men and women irrespective of age or profession the same rights. This was a first step towards challenging the hard-core male-dominated society prevalent in the cities (Bowman, 2006: 33-34).<sup>38</sup>

The movement of EAM and especially EPON (EAM’s Youth) in Salonika tried to help the Jewish students to escape by issuing flyers and newspapers illegally in the Aristotle University, informing the imminent dangers of staying in the city (Matsas, 1991:58). They were calling them to join the resistance, not surrender to the Germans and escape in the

---

<sup>38</sup> Not to mention that recruiting women in general in the forces of EAM/ELAS and in the Youth Organisation of EPON was extremely difficult, for many girls in their mid-teens found systematic disapproval from their parents, as the latter feared for their lives. Many young women wanted to join the resistance of EAM/ELAS for irrespective of one’s political background or family’s disapproval, it was the biggest and most organised movement, paying also attention to female rights and to the rights of the most destitute. Thus a great number of women and girls did not remain inactive during the war and wait for the men and the Allies to liberate them (Hart, 1996:164-166).

mountains or hide in territories that were still under Italian control.<sup>39</sup> According to Matsas, 252 young Jewish students successfully escaped the Nazi terror of arrest, while the conditions under which the students escaped were brutally adventurous. They had to follow routes of extreme altitude and with low temperatures as these were areas that were controlled by the Nazis (Matsas, 1991:58; see also Bowman, 2006: 49-53). In Athens, the close cooperation between the chief Rabbi Elias Brazilai and EAM proved catalytic for the protection of the Jews. The former through announcements via the left-wing newspapers of EAM/ ELAS such as *Eleftheri Ellada* and *Rizospastis* on 14<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> of October 1943 respectively, was sending messages to the Jews to unite with the resistance and show full “trust” on them (Greek Characters, 1945a: 6). Brazilai through his links with EAM was sending new updates about the situation in Greece and the fate of his community. A rare article called “The Jews and the Liberation Struggle: A Report of the Central Committee of the EAM on the Jews of Greece and the liberation Struggle” now stored in Gennadius Library of Athens, consists a collection of old documents that were published by the EAM Committee and includes letters and proclamations of the Athenian Rabbi aiming to increase the confidence of his community and follow EAM/ELAS (Greek Character, 1945a:6-8). An excerpt of one of his letters shows his great dynamism and fighting spirit on the side of the partisans:

“[...] I am happy to note that from this inferno, created by the Germans, about 10,000 Jews were able to escape. This miracle is due without question to the organisations of the EAM. This highly patriotic organisation showed its interest in the persecuted Jews from the first moment [...] From some information reaching me, at least 1,000 Jews are in Free Greece, among them 100-200 guerrillas, 50 working actively in affiliate organisations such as the National Solidarity and EPON (Panhellenic Union of Youth) and the rest are dispersed in various cities and villages of Free Greece [...] Since the EAM is so well disposed towards the Jews, it would be a good thing to find the means to

---

<sup>39</sup> See “The Jews and the Liberation Struggle: A Report of the Central Committee of the EAM on the Jews of Greece and the liberation Struggle” in *Greek Characters*, 1945:p.2, Gennadius Library, Athens, Greece.

help those who are hungry and without clothing. Before I finish this report, I deem it my duty to express on behalf of all the Jews who have been saved from Hitlerite barbarism, my deep gratitude to the EAM/ELAS organisations which gave material proof of their real patriotism, humanitarianism and pro-Semitism. Somewhere in Free Greece, June 14 1944, Chief Rabbi of Athens, Elias Barzilai” (Greek Characters, 1945a:7-8)

Martin Gilbert suggests that while the Athenian Rabbi was hiding in the province of Thessaly, he along with the partisans of ELAS successfully saved 600 more Jews. The headquarters of ELAS (in Lamia, Central Greece) in concert with the Rabbi arranged boats to carry safely the Jews by sea to Turkey, and as a form of gratitude, “the Jewish Federation in Palestine smuggled boots and money by sea to the Greek resistance” (Gilbert, 1986: 625). There were areas in Greece such as the city of Volos, where the chief Rabbi welcomed the offer of EAM/ELAS to take the Jewish community to the mountains. Indeed with this initiative, the majority of Jews in Volos, Larisa, and Trikala were saved, while in the city of Patras (Peloponnese), and after the Nazis issued the registration warnings, the Jews literally “disappeared” in the Guerrilla Mountains (Gilbert, 1986:625-626).

Nina Matathias was a Salonikan Jew who escaped terror during occupation. She left Thessaloniki and resided in the city of Volos that was under Italian occupation until 1943. She and her husband were hearing rumors about the tragic situation in Salonika. She too remembers the close cooperation between the Rabbi and the partisans. Once the Italians fell and the Germans took over the city of Volos, the Rabbi Mosheh Pessah was threatened by the Nazis to give the names of his community. Nina and her husband left prior to the Nazi invasion and escaped to the mountains. But those Jews who remained in the city were informed by the Rabbi that if they stayed they had no chance of survival, thus the majority followed his advice and were saved. Nina remembers that the Rabbi spread the following

message to his community: “Leave Volos because I’m leaving too. If you stay, you’re going to be caught by the Germans” (Gurewitsch, 1998:27-28).

The situation in Salonika was evidently different. Many Jews who were prisoners in the ghettos of the city did not know where they were going and what the future awaited them. We referred earlier to the differences between the Jews of Salonika and Athens: the former were eradicated almost entirely; the latter found support from local organisations of EAM as well Archbishop Damaskinos’s contribution in issuing false identification cards and in attacking the Quisling government for their indifference on Jewish deportations (Tomai, 2009:35; Enepekidi, 1969:47-52; *Chronika*, 2006:100-101). We also noted earlier in this chapter, and based on Steven Bowman’s argument, that there must be more adequate analysis and research concerning the reasons why Salonika Jewry met with total destruction and why it differed from Athens (Bowman, 2006:22).

In this volume, therefore, we are here to reveal these “local” politics of Thessaloniki and see whether they had an impact on the measures against the Jews. Andrew Apostolou for suggests that the Greek bureaucrat Vasilis Simonides in Salonika, who had a central position in the administration, was totally “indifferent to the fate of the Jews” and kept in darkness the Athenian administration about the Nazi measures in Salonika. For the Nazis he was the “perfect example of a collaborator” (Apostolou, 2000:179, see also chapter 5). This cannot be the whole truth. Minna Rozen demonstrates that people in Athens were aware about the Jewish measures of Salonika and that the quisling PM Logothetopoulos knew very well what was happening in the north but he “did not really mind” (Rozen, 2005:127).

There is little information about the decisions taken by Greek bureaucrats in Salonika, as many archives have been destroyed. Another aspect that perhaps throws light to the Salonika Jewry is the role of the chief Rabbi of the town, who received a lot of criticism from

the Jewish survivors. In fact, there is a growing debate among Greek authors as well as many Jewish survivors who wrote their autobiography and their experience in the camps, as to the role of the Rabbi Koretz. Most of them seem to criticise the latter and openly declare that he was a German collaborator. L. S. Stavrianos in his article “The Jews of Greece” declared that the full responsibility as to the fate of Salonika Jewry lay with tactics of Rabbi Koretz (Stavrianos, 1948:262). He argued that although the members of EAM urged Koretz to collaborate with them, not to succumb to the Germans and escape into the mountains, he followed the Nazi orders and the community “followed the advice of its Rabbi” (ibid). In the same tone, the *Jewish Chronicle* of London of 29 November 1946 criticized Koretz’s actions: it was on “the most charitable interpretation a deplorable and almost criminal subservience” (ibid).

The survivor Yacoel in his book *Apomnemonemata 1941-1944* (Memoirs 1941-1944) argues that prior to the EPON mission in 1942 to issue illegal flyers in the Aristotle University and mobilise the Jewish community, two members of the central committee of EAM (D. Maragos and the lawyer Elias Kefalidis), met with the chief Rabbi and warned him about the Nazi tendencies, asking him to join the resistance in order to protect the Jewish community. Koretz rejected their proposal (Yacoel, 1993: 30). Other Jewish survivors such as Joseph Ben in “Jewish Leadership in Greece during the Holocaust”, have argued that when Brunner, Wisliceny and Dr Max Merten arrived in Salonika to impose the anti-Semitic laws, Koretz wanted “six other Jews, who had been appointed together with him, to bear collective responsibility” for the German laws (Ben, 1979:339). When the Germans left Greece, Rabbi’s wife was questioned concerning Koretz’s role, admitting that there was indeed a lot of pressure on the part of the Germans to obey and that there was an opportunity to escape much

earlier in Egypt and once the Nazis invaded Greece. Koretz decided to stay in Salonika (Ben, 1979:340).<sup>40</sup>

There is more information that throws light to the Jewish community of Salonika, namely, that a number of Jews were excluded from the Greek Society, not all spoke the language, did not have contacts, and could not easily hide in a small city such as Salonika: “their Jewish identity could easily be revealed” (Yacoel: 1993:30). Apart from the role of Salonikan Rabbi, there were other mechanisms that did not help at all the Jewish community, such as the role of the local Greek authorities and in particular of the bureaucrat Simmonides who collaborated with the Germans.

Nevertheless, the role of the Rabbi Koretz has been criticized by Jewish survivors, arguing that he must have known about the existence of the death camps in Nazi occupied-Poland. For instance, the Jewish survivor Dr. I. A. Matarraso argued in his memoir that the Rabbi of Salonika was trying to comfort the community by telling them not to worry about the deportations and that their families would eventually “re-unite in Cracow” (Mattaraso, 1948:76). Mattaraso questioned Koretz’s honesty: “Did he believe the Cracow fairytale” and were “his orders and speeches ... dictated by the Germans”? (Mattarasso, 1948:76-77; same in Handeli, 1992:48). Some tactics were tried, such as bribing Wisliceny with 2.5 million drachma in order for some Jews to remain in the city, but whether this was an act of collaboration remain a subject of controversy among authors and survivors (Ben, 1979:342-344).

---

<sup>40</sup> Joseph Ben cites a part from Koretz’s testimony where his wife argues exactly: “It is true; we were extremely unhappy when we saw how the Germans were gaining control, and we did not know what would happen. We had no idea of what was to be, and had we known we ourselves might have escaped. We had sufficient opportunity to do so. Immediately after the occupation, we had the chance to flee to Cairo, where the government- in-exile was located. Kodases, the mayor of Athens at that time, phoned my husband and asked him to go to Cairo, but my husband replied: ‘No thank you, my place is here, and I cannot consider leaving for a moment’” (testimony of Koretz, YVA 0-3/3875 as in Ben’s (1979) “Jewish Leadership in Greece during the Holocaust”, published in *Patterns of Jewish Leadership in Nazi Europe, 1933-1945; Proceedings of the Third Yad Vashem International Historical Conference*, Jerusalem, April 1979, p340.

There were examples in Occupied Europe in which Jewish leadership proved sometimes effective and sometimes ineffective. We have seen the clear contrasting cases of Athens and Thessaloniki in terms of their Jewish leadership, and other cases such as those of Volos, Larisa and Trikala. There were similar examples in other parts of Europe. One of these cases concerns the Jewish leadership of Adam Czerniakow in the city of Warsaw and Hayim (Chaim) Rumkowski in the city of Lodz. Once the Polish state fell and the Germans took over, the *General Gouvernement* changed the Jewish leadership and appointed new chiefs in key cities (Friedlander, 2007:61). The case of Czerniakow is significantly different from Rumkowski's, for despite the fact that both men were appointed by the Nazis, the former seems to have done everything he could to alter decisions, mobilize his community, and resist the deportations, whereas the latter was a clear case of an "ambitious" man "whom the Germans chose to lead the Jews of Lodz" (Friedlander, 2007:61-63). Dr Chaim Kaplan wrote about Czerniakow that his ethos and resisting spirit to clash with the Nazis made him in fact the "first victim of the expulsion decree" (Tushnet, 1972: 131). Confronted with everyday terror and fear of his compatriots in the Warsaw ghetto, he could not see a way out. He ended his life as he could no longer bear the weight of the situation: "he had refused to sign the expulsion order, preferring to die himself rather than assist the enemy by sending others to death" (Hilberg, Staron, and Kermisz, 1999:23). There was a lot of pressure from all angles, and here Czerniakow too (like the Salonikan Rabbi) perhaps underestimated or "did not pay attention to the rumors in the ghetto and to the serious portents concerning the ghetto's fate" (Hilberg, Staron, and Kermisz, 1999:22). However, the case of Rumkowski in Lodz is different. The latter never initiated any resistance activity in the ghetto unlike the ghettos of Warsaw and Vilna, for Rumkowski believed that by obeying the Germans, the Jews would have better chances of survival (Tushnet, 1972: 64, 62). Tushnet declares in the *Pavement of Hell*, that his collaboration with the Germans was so clear that not only he did not support any

resistance activity but tried to erase any desire to resist by using “their hunger and ration cards to break down morale”. Thus, resistance was denied and any individual activity was severely suppressed on pain of arrest or death (Tushnet, 1972:64). The author furthermore, provides important information concerning the situation in Lodz, arguing that the ghetto was so isolated that the organised Polish movement could not provide any help or information to the prisoners, in concert with the heavy anti-Semitic propaganda that was prevalent outside the ghetto (Tushnet, 1972:64-65).

This is a significant argument for it sets new questions to many issues concerning the enabling or disabling ground for Jewish resistance in occupied Europe. There must be a critique on the conditions under which Jewish resistance in many cases was negated from the part of leaders, civilians and collaborators. This “low morale” that Rumkowski spread to the Jews in Lodz as we just saw, not only played a significant role as to the way in which the Jews understood their chances of survival, but also these chances of survival were also downplayed by the heavy censorship and anti-Semitic propaganda throughout Europe. To make the argument simpler: when the whole world is against you there are few to help you; hence the situation inside the ghettos and in the camps was not the same as elsewhere in Europe. Smnuel Krakowski explains that a *high morale* was indispensable during WWII, but not *adequate* when someone attempts to describe the “depressed and suppressed” conditions of the camps or ghettos. For this *morale* is enough as a category when we explain moments of “war and peace under normal circumstances”, but the ghettos were outside this frame of discussion or normality<sup>41</sup> (Krakowski, [1977]-1979: 197). As he declares,

“A minimal degree of military knowledge is sufficient for understanding the importance of the psychological element in war. A fighting spirit and a readiness for self-sacrifice are worth many divisions, tanks, or planes. The low

---

<sup>41</sup> Of course as normal a war can be.

morale in the French army- and not the luck of supplies – was the principal reason for the debacle of the summer of 1940. In contrast, a superior fighting spirit made possible the victory of a tiny Greece over the Italian army in 1940; but the fighting spirit alone cannot replace weapons and the conditions necessary for the organisation and equipment of an army and its training. Concepts which provide the basis for analysing events in time of war and peace under normal circumstances are totally inadequate for the comprehension of the Jewish ghetto during the time of the Nazi Occupation” (Krakowski, [1977] - 1979: 197).

In other words there must be a thorough analysis concerning the conditions under which resistance was undermined and place responsibility to those people who had the upper hand outside the camps or ghettos. This leads us back to the Greek case. For even if the accusations concerning the Rabbi of Salonika are indeed true (and since many Salonika Jews questioned his role), what we see again is a systematic tendency to avoid the Greek responsibility by emphasizing always on the *other* side. Roni Stauber in his introduction of the book of essays *Collaboration with the Nazis: Public Discourse after the Holocaust*, argues that the above argument portrays the poverty of the Greek society to take responsibility over the issue of the Holocaust, the responsible Greek partners for the Jewish deportations and why there is little attention to the memory of the Jewish events. Perhaps it also explains the limited information the researchers have on the responsibility of the “Christian collaboration” and why we know little on the role of the Orthodox Church in Greek Macedonia, and why the emphasis is given only to Athens, where the escape was successful. By paying attention only to the collaboration of the Rabbi of Salonika we fall into the trap of discriminating them once again, accusing them for being responsible for “their own destruction” (Stauder, 2011:11).

Indeed, the limited number of archives available to us concerning the Holocaust in Greece especially in the period 1941-1943 testifies precisely this problematic. The General

Archives of the State in Athens (*GAK-Genika Archeia tou Kratous*) for instance do not have a single file on the Jewish Holocaust, while the research Archival Centre of *Gennadius Library* has two well collected files (Files 38 and 39 in *Filippos Dragoumis* Collection) but only for the period 1931-33 in Greek Macedonia.

## **Conclusion**

This chapter aimed first to give an overall view of the Jewish community in Greece. Particular emphasis was placed upon the changed position of the Jews into the Greek society and the drastic socio-political side-effects of the transition from the fall of the empires to the nation-states. By understanding these rapid European developments we also understood the analogous nationalist trends and developments in Greece. From the fall of the Ottoman Empire until Greece became a nation- state, the Jews lost their political, social and national representation. Furthermore, we incorporated the Jewish participation into the Greek resistance, and described the political mechanisms under which the Jews were either rescued or persecuted. Concerning the latter, we can conclude that whenever the Greek authorities wanted to rescue the Jews they did so successfully, but in other parts of the country they did not mobilise the Jewish communities and they passively or actively approved the measures against the Jews. At the same time we also revealed the differences of occupation zones of Greece by looking also at the local politics of Salonika, such as the Greek collaboration with the Nazis, the nationalist groups that prevailed in the region, the role of the local Greek governors, and their indifference to the fate of the Jews. Further aspects that disabled Jewish rescue have been also discussed, namely the weaknesses of Jewish Leadership in Salonika and we viewed similarities and differences with those of Nazi-Occupied Poland. We referred at the same time on the impact of nationalism that went hand in hand with processes of ethnic-cleansing in particular zones of Greece, such as the Bulgarian zone. Last but not least, we gave a first account as to the role of the Greek resistance in shaping the politics of

Occupied Greece. Although the latter issues are discussed in chapter 5, we aimed to show so far the political tone of the time in order to comprehend better the objectives of the following chapters, namely to discuss and criticize the politics of collaboration. In doing so, we threw light in a much neglected part of Greek history, which is the Jewish Holocaust by incorporating it to the sociological examination of the European Holocaust. This incorporation helps us to move to the next chapter and see how the Greek Jews along with their European inmates experienced, survived and succumbed to the horrors of extermination camps.

### **Chapter 3. The Greek Holocaust 2: Inside the Death Camps**

“During the halts, no one tried anymore to communicate with the outside world: we felt ourselves by now ‘on the other side’. There was a long halt in open country. The train started up with extreme slowness, and the convoy stopped for the last time, in the dead of night, in the middle of a dark silent plain” (Levi, 1987:24).

#### **Introduction**

This chapter explores the structure and logic of the extermination camps, and the conditions under which the Jews of Europe struggled to remain alive and perished. Particular emphasis is placed on the experiences of the Greek Jewish community, through survivors’ stories and written memoirs. Almost the entire community of Greece was eradicated in the concentration camps. It is a part of history during Occupied Greece which as we already stated many times before is relatively unknown; however the voices of the victims who survived or succumbed to death must be heard and respected. The primary objective in this chapter is to bring together the Jewish stories of south Europe closer to the western, central and eastern ones and understand how all prisoners struggled to preserve their dignity, hope and will of survival. I seek to narrate the stories of Greek Jews who lived in the ghettos and the concentration camps through a collection of works such as those of Abatzopoulou (2007), Sevilias (1983) Salvador Kounio (1981), Menasche (1974), Tomai (2009), Matarasso (1948), as well as primary documents that give us valuable information concerning their survival in Auschwitz. This methodological approach is coupled with major works of Saul Friedlander (2007), Christopher Browning (2004) and Martin Gilbert (1986) that describe the Jewish persecution and extermination on a European and comparative level, as well as including several European memoirs and stories of survivors such as those of Garlinski (1976), Lengyel (1959) and Pawelczynska (1979) in order to see differences but most importantly similarities

between the various groups and how they worked together. Moving from chapter 2 which aimed to show the mechanisms under which the Jews experienced racial discrimination, humiliation and absolute negation of human rights, by explaining how the transformation of the nation-states created stateless people, as well as their participation in the resistance of Greece, we are now shifting our focus, to view people's experience in the camps. The first section includes stories of Greek Jews who experienced the trains, and attempt to explain the high percentage of Greek Jewish loss in the camps by providing a comparative approach. The second and third part of the chapter provide narratives of survivors who witnessed the atrocities of the camps, their first and last attempts to escape, their will to survive, and cooperation. In doing so, I seek to include the Greek Jewish experience within the literature of the European Holocaust.

### **From the Ghettos to the Trains**

Deportations occurred throughout Europe. Eichmann and his Austrian colleague Novak designed the implementation of continental transportations, with the highest number of trains (260) leaving from Germany and Austria to the *General Gouvernement* and 147 from major Hungarian cities. Numerous other transports left from the rest of Occupied Europe with 23 trains from Greece (Browning, 2004: 381-382). Analytically the trains that departed from other major European cities were:

“87 from Holland, 76 from France, 63 from Slovakia, 27 from Belgium, 23 from Greece, 11 from Italy, 7 from Bulgaria, and 6 from Croatia – more than 707 from western and southern Europe. In the fall of 1941, therefore, Novak was just beginning a process that was to become as routine as it was deadly” (Browning, 2004: 382).

Alberto Menasche, a survivor from Thessaloniki remembers his terrifying days prior to the deportations. At the end of February 1943 and on the 25<sup>th</sup> the Jews were informed that

those who were held in the “Baron Hirsch” camp would be deported to Cracow. In this camp many communists were held. The Rabbi of Salonika Koretz informed his fellow Jews that there was nothing to be worried about, but soon people started to have suspicions (Menasche, 1974:13). A few days later, many Jews were transferred in the Baron Hirsch camp under cramped conditions. 3,000 extra prisoners arrived, destined to be deported to Nazi-Occupied Poland as well. The chief Rabbi was told by the Germans that the working class was poisoned by the “communist virus” therefore the masses according to the Nazis had to be “cleaned” via a forced “exodus” to the *General Gouvernement* (Menasche, 1974:14). In the first day of June, Menasche remembers that he along with his compatriots had to stand outside the wagons and were forced to embark. They were all treated like animals (Menasche, 1974:16). The trip lasted for about eight days, without food, water, or space to rest or sleep. They were all locked in a train and the only thing that mattered was to arrive to their destination and remain alive (ibid).

The survivor Salvador Kounio remembers that prior to their deportation from Salonika, the community did not know how to react or what to think for this unknown trip, for any kind of information that was reaching their ears was ambivalent, incoherent and uncertain. They were all ordered to gather in the main square of the “Baron Hirsch” camp after hearing the sounds of the sirens and the frenzy of shootings. He and his compatriots took nothing in this trip. The only thing they possessed was their clothes hoping it will be sufficient to cope with the unbearable conditions of the north. Kounio declared that the Nazis looted everything from their properties; they even confiscated their shoes (Kounio, 1981:22). The following day, and prior to their departure, the communities stood in queues for many hours. The journey was about to begin.

Each time the train stopped at a border, border guards demanded money or other valuable items. The survivor Dr Nahon was in the train that left for Birkenau on 10 May 1943

from Salonika which carried Jews from Dimotika and Orestiada (villages of Greek Thrace). The Jews of Salonika travelled together with the Thracians and all the travellers, packed as they were, “attended” all their needs in front of everyone. The Nazis with “sarcasm” and petty smiles were saying: “It’s certainly obvious why they call you dirty Jews” (Nahon, 1989:33-34). Despite cruel Nazi ironies, the deportees were extremely cooperative and very respectful to one another. Dr Nahon was in the same overcrowded wagon when a pregnant lady was giving birth under these unimaginable and dangerous conditions. Despite the harsh context under which the labour took place, she managed to deliver her baby safely, however she and her newborn child were about to be burned in the crematoria once they reached the death camps (Nahon, 1989:35). The Athenian Jew, Errikos Sevillias summed up the feelings of his fellow deportees:

“Now we appreciated how great these simple things were: air, a small place to sleep, clean food, clean clothes, water. I tried to comprehend in what way I had harmed these people who had taken away my humanity and locked me in a freight car running endlessly into the unknown. Thoughts like these didn’t remain long with me as I was seized by apathy as was everyone else in that little space. We had so many immediate problems and yet we talked about the most improbable things and everybody had something to say about his life” (Sevillias: 1983: 17).

### **Percentage of Greek Jewish Loss**

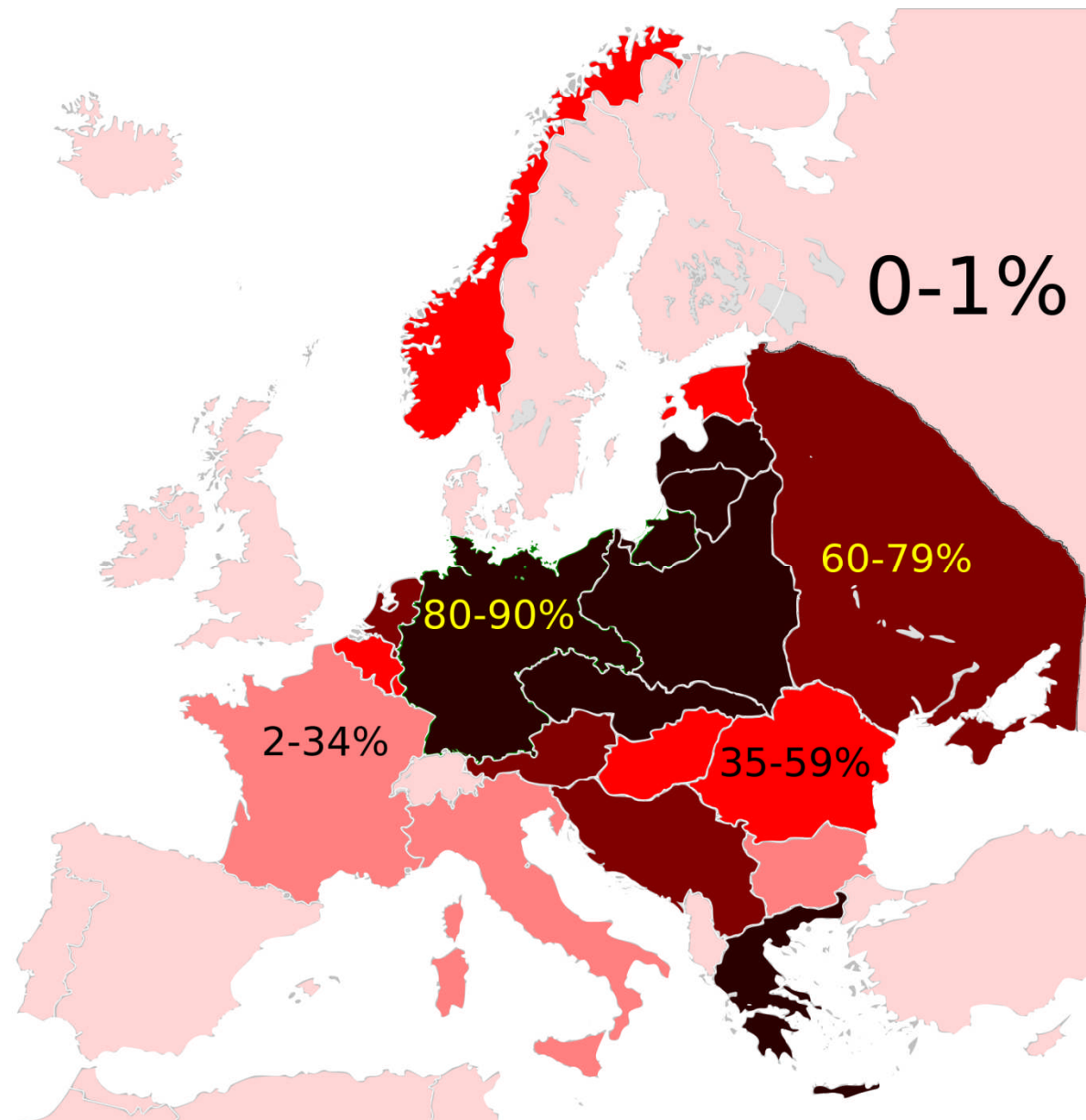
87% of Greek Jews perished in the concentration camps (Ikonomopoulos, 2003: 92; Vasar, 2007:77). According to the Jewish Council of Greece, this tragic number which is one of the highest in Europe can be explained if one takes into account some important yet quite unexamined factors. Reasons such as the issue of Greek collaboration (i.e. quisling

governments, administration, local nationalist and resistance<sup>42</sup> groups), the exclusion of Jewish communities from the Greek society, the poor access of information, collaboration of the local authorities, as well as the weaknesses of the Jewish leadership in Salonika are examined in chapter 2 and chapter 5.

However, we should examine the factors that led to the destruction of the Greek Jewish community *inside* Auschwitz and why Greece had one of the highest percentages of loss here. The percentage of Greek loss comes closer to the Polish, Latvian and Lithuanian percentages. According to Philip Spencer, the Polish loss was “85 per cent”; the Latvian “89 per cent” while Lithuania lost “90 per cent” of its Jewish population when at the same time most European countries lost “over 70 per cent” of their Jewish populations (Spencer, 2012:3). Belgium and France had one of the smallest percentages of loss with 37 % and 30% respectively (Vasar, 2007:77).

---

<sup>42</sup> As we are arguing in chapter 5, collaboration with the Germans occurred also within some sections of resistance bands, such as EDES and EKKA (Fleischer, 2006:92). In areas for example such as Epirus, as we have argued in chapter 2, the local authorities approved the deportations (Hondros, 1983:93-94). However, there is no source so far that supports the argument that the periodic collaboration of EDES with the Germans had to do with the Jewish deportations. What is evident in that region (and supported by references) is collaboration with the Germans so as to weaken the rival resistance of EAM/ELAS. There is no source so far that suggests that Zervas (EDES) himself approved the Jewish deportations, but only references that suggest that the local authorities in Epirus approved the deportations. We suspect that ‘local authorities’ back in rural Epirus could have been from the mayor to the church, from local generals to local governors and police officers and from the milkman to the shepherd. But there is no correlation so far between the deportations and the leadership of EDES. According to Vasar, the department of EDES in Athens did save a number of Jews (Vasar, 2007:82). What targets Zervas per se, is when Mazower declares that his name was mentioned at the Nuremberg Trials (Mazower, 2000:216). That alone is very important but what was mentioned about Zervas during the Nuremberg Trials is still unknown. Concerning his explicit moves with the Germans please refer to chapter 5 particularly the section: “Collaboration in the Resistance: The Zervas-German Liaison”.



(Average Jewish loss per country)

Source: <http://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/7/70/Holocaustdeath toll%25.png>

One factor that determined the high percentage of Greek loss was the chronological period the Greek Jews arrived in Birkenau. They were among the last groups that entered the camps and the death machine of Auschwitz was running without interruptions, in contrast with other communities of western and central Europe that arrived earlier and certain death methods (i.e. crematoria) were yet absent. The majority of Greek Jews were deported during

the last stage of the final solution in Birkenau (like the Yugoslav Jewry) and upon arrival the majority (78%) were “immediately” killed (Ikonomopoulos, 2003:95). Concerning the operation of the crematoria, it has been suggested that for some time the furnaces did not operate until they were used again, for “after the liquidation of the Jews from Krakow, crematorium II remained inactive until March 20, when 2,191 Greek Jews from Salonika were gassed” (Pressac and Pelt, 1994:232).

Another decisive factor was the time of the journeys. For instance, the Jews of Salonika travelled at least “5 days”, while other transports from other parts of Greece travelled approximately for “7-8 days”, when “the average time for arrival at Auschwitz from other points in Europe (Germany, the Netherlands, France, Italy, Czechoslovakia and Poland) was one to three days” (Ikonomopoulos, 2003:96). The same argument is suggested by Saul Friedlander who declares that “generally the travel from Western Europe, Italy, or even from Germany, appears to have been less lethal than the transports within Eastern Europe or from the Balkans to Auschwitz or Treblinka” (Friedlander, 2007:493). This factor proved catalytic to determine the life expectancy of the prisoners inside the wagons, especially during the cold month of March when the first Greek transport took place. The case of Jews from the Greek islands is the most extreme on a European level, as a great number of deportees never made it to Auschwitz. The journey from these parts of the country (i.e. south-eastern Aegean) lasted for about twenty four days, and those who survived without food and water and made it to Auschwitz were unable to avoid selections as all prisoners looked physically exhausted (Ikonomopoulos, 2003:96). As the author argues,

“The Jews of Rhodes were taken off the island on July 23: they did not arrive at Auschwitz until August 16, a journey of 24 days. Simply put, by the time the Jews of Greece arrived at the train station at Auschwitz- Birkenau, the young looked old beyond their years and many were too feeble to even walk, let alone appear fit for work. As reported by eyewitness, when the Jews of Corfu arrived

in July of 1944 and the doors to the cattlecars [sic] opened, there was dead silence” (Ikonomopoulos, 2003:96).

Similarly Martin Gilbert writes about the experience of a Jewish prisoner Violette Fintz who travelled from the island of Rhodes, arguing that in this almost a - month – trip, people were dying of exhaustion and “dehydration” as food and water was barely supplied during the stops in neighbouring islands (Gilbert, 1986:708).

“On the afternoon of July 23 the three boats set off across the eastern Aegean, within sight of the Turkish coast. On the first night a Jew died. On the following morning the boat stopped at a deserted little island, and two men were allowed off with the dead man to bury him. After a second night at sea the boats arrived at the island of Kos, where ninety-four Jews were brought on board. The boats reached the Greek island of Leros. There, the captain, an Austrian, refused to continue the journey unless food was brought on board. Only after bread and water were produced did he agree to continue the voyage. For ten days, the boats continued on their way, without any further stops. Forty years later Violette Fintz recalled ‘the very cold, very rough seas, all the water on top of us; we were soaking wet. Everyone was seasick’. During the journey across the Aegean, five Jews died” (Gilbert, 1986:708).

Another decisive parameter that determined the high percentage of Jewish loss of Greece, which of course affected all prisoners from all over Europe but mostly southerners, was the climate. The first Salonikan Jews arrived at Birkenau in the cold month of March 1943, however not all Europeans could endure the same way the freezing conditions. Mediterranean Jews such as the Italians and the Greeks unlike Poles or Germans (who were better trained in the Polish climate), found it harder to adjust, and were among the first victims to die from typhus. Many Greek survivors for instance did not “remember the sun ever shining at Auschwitz and that even the Polish spring and summers were harsh for them” (Ikonomopoulos, 2003:104). Similarly, Saul Friedlander declares, that the first Salonikan Jews who arrived in Auschwitz could not endure the brutal temperatures, and upon arrival

they carried a “typhus epidemic” that spread rapidly in the camps, making the Nazis to “divert” the next transports from Birkenau to Sobibor (Friedlander, 2007: 486). Pawelczynska too, writes about the inability of the Mediterranean communities to endure the weather, when she declares that “prisoners from countries in southern Europe (e.g., Greece) could not stand the cold, and their chances of surviving were minimal compared to prisoners whose previous environment had endured them to such climatic conditions” (Pawelczynska, 1979: 53-54). While Olga Lengyel remembers that once the Greek Jews arrived in the death camps, the majority were gassed, while the remainder who survived the selections died the following period with remarkable speed along with the Italians as they were “unable to adapt themselves to the climate” (Lengyel, 1957:81). As the survivor declared: “Indeed the Greeks and the Italians, probably because they were most poorly nourished before they came, bore up the poorest under the cold and the privations” (ibid).

SS Dieter Wisliceny testified in 1946 at the Nuremberg Trials, that the majority of Jews from Greece were immediately annihilated upon arrival for they were unable to work. During the hearing the Judge Lt. Col. Brookhart asked him:

B: “In connection with the Jews about whom you have personal knowledge, how many were subjected to the final solution, that is, to be killed?”

W: “The exact number is extremely hard for me to determine. I have only one basis for a possible estimate, that is a conversation between Eichmann and Hoess in Vienna, in which he said that only a very few of those sent from Greece to Auschwitz had been fit for work. Of the Slovakian and Hungarian Jews about 20 to 30 percent had been able to work. It is very hard for me to give a reliable total”.<sup>43</sup>

---

<sup>43</sup> Complete Testimony of Dieter Wisliceny, *Nuremberg Trial Proceedings Volume 4, Twenty-Sixth Day, Thursday 3 January 1946*, The Avalon Project: Documents in Law, History and Diplomacy, Yale Law School: <http://avalon.law.yale.edu/imt/01-03-46.asp>

Last but not least, one could argue that the percentage of Jewish loss in Greece was also affected by the high percentage of Greek prisoners who worked as *Sonderkommando*. Like all Jews of Europe, every time a train arrived in Auschwitz, a number of prisoners were immediately selected to perform this macabre task, but a greater number of Greek Jews was chosen in relation to their percentage and compared to other communities (Ikonopoulou, 2003:104-105). As Ikonopoulou suggests:

“Greek-Jewish men were chosen disproportionately to their percentage in the camp population. Many had worked as hamales [sic] at the ports (especially in Salonika and Corfu) and were able to withstand the heavy physical labor involved [...] Therefore, young able-bodied Greek-Jewish men, who otherwise could have possibly withstood the hardships of the camp, were systematically exterminated. Among the last group of *Sonderkommando* (involved in the uprising at Auschwitz in October of 1944 known as the Revolt of the *Sonderkommando*) some survived to tell the gruesome story of their ordeal” (Ikonopoulou, 2003:105).

Of course one should note here, that the number of Greek Jews that was immediately selected upon arrival either as *Sonderkommando* or to be murdered in the gas chambers was purely a contingent number for the Nazis. For as we already mentioned, the Jews of Greece like the Jews of Yugoslavia and Bulgaria were the last groups to arrive in the death camps, therefore their selection coincided with the last stage of the Final Solution and had minimum chances of survival as all methods of extermination were in full operation as we already mentioned. By summarizing all the aforementioned factors, namely, the period they arrived in the camps (that coincided with the full efficiency of all the death methods), the long distance of the journey, the climatic component, the high percentage of Greek Jews who worked as *Sonderkommando*, one can suggest that all these parameters though by no means exclusive, pushed the percentage of Greek Jewish loss even higher. Approximately 55,000 Greek Jews were sent to Auschwitz and 42,509 (approximately 80%) were immediately murdered, while

the remaining 12,987 who worked as forced labourers only 2,000 remained alive, thus “over 85% of Greek Jewry would succumb to the hardships of the camp compared to 70% of Jews from other countries” (Ikonomopoulos, 2003:105).

However, we should note here, that we are comparing percentages of human loss and not actual numbers, and certainly we do not take into account the actual population size of each country. If we compare the number of Polish prisoners for instance with the number of Greek prisoners, one will evidently find an impressive gap, as more than 3 million Polish Jews perished in the camps out of 6 million Polish citizens who died throughout Nazi-Occupied Poland, excluding the remaining 3 million Jewish prisoners from the rest of Europe (Gilbert, 2000:746). The comparison between Greece and Nazi- Occupied Poland is provided to the reader to show that the number of Polish Jews in the camps of the *General Gouvernement* sometimes outnumbered even the total Jewish population of other European cities. As Christopher Browning suggests:

“The Warsaw ghetto contained more Jews than all of France; The Lodz ghetto more Jews than all of the Netherlands. More Jews lived in the city of Cracow than in all of Italy, and virtually any medium – sized town in Poland had a larger Jewish population than all of Scandinavia. All of south – east Europe- Hungary, Romania, Bulgaria, Yugoslavia and Greece- had fewer Jews than the original four districts of the General Government” (Browning,2004:194).

However, the above argument does not aim to minimize the importance of loss of other Jewish communities which were smaller, for the terrifying number of 6 million murdered Polish citizens (Jews and non-Jews) was approximately the total number of Greek population during the 40s (around 6 million), thus the percentage of Jewish loss in Greece is

equally significant for a small country of the time.<sup>44</sup> Analytically, there were cities in Greece that the Jewish loss reached almost 100%, such as the cities that were under Bulgarian and Nazi Occupation (i.e. peripheries of Greek Macedonia and Thrace). The Thracian cities such as Serres and Xanthi saw 99% loss, in Kavala, Orestiada and Souflion was 98%, in Alexandroupolis and Drama was 97%, while the city of Thessaloniki that was under Nazi control lost 96% of its Jewish population (Vasar, 2007:79). According to Vasar, there is an evident “geographic” topography of the Jewish loss in Greece. As we already discussed in chapter 2, the cities under Italian Occupation (until 1943) in concert with a larger resistance activity in the aforementioned zone, saw a smaller percentage of Jewish loss. These examples include Athens that had less than 40-50% loss, while the “smallest percentage” of Jewish loss can be found in the periphery of Thessaly and in the cities of Volos (26%), Trikala (31%), Larisa (35%), while “the small community of Karditsa was saved in its entirety, as its members escaped in the nearby villages, where they found protection from the residents” (Vasar, 2007:81-82).

### **The Death camps**

After mapping and sketching the death toll of the Jewish community of Greece inside and outside the camps in relation to other European communities, we need to see the experiences of the prisoners inside the death camps. First of all the Nazi Ideology was epitomized with the implementation of the camps. The system of terror was designed not only to “suppress” anything that went against the totalitarian doctrine but to “educate SS men in the spirit of the National-Socialist ideology” (Weiss, 1984:117). This occurred prior to the beginning of the war around Europe, and after its introduction, the terror gained rationality, structure and purpose. The Nazis created camps based on ethnicity, class and political

---

<sup>44</sup> Mazower declares that the total population of Greece until the period in question was “just over six million” including the one and half million Greek refugees of Asia Minor (Mazower, 2001:103). Until the end of WWII Greece would lose 10% of its population; approximately a million citizens.

conviction. The prisoners were detached from one another, as there were camps only for Poles, for prisoners of war, for hostages, camps for labor, concentration camps, and of course the extermination camps (Weiss, 1984:121-126). The first prisoners who arrived in the camps were the Poles. Garlinski declares that the “Poles, apart from being the most numerous, differed from the others in that on the whole they were a compact group” and yet surrounded by people of “at least thirty nations” (Garlinski, 1976:170). The prisoners went through painful experimental programs, such as sterilization, narcotic use, organ removals and euthanasia (Lifton, 1984: 218-223). The most horrible experiments took place in the extermination camps using deadly chemicals. The gas chambers and crematoria signified the last stage of the final solution. The first victims were “600 Soviet prisoners of war” while in 1943 the Nazis created a new series of crematoria aiming to kill thousands of Jewish prisoners from all around Europe (Piper, 1994:157-159). From 1943, five separate crematoria functioned along with the gas chambers. Jewish prisoners were selected to perform the macabre task of transferring the bodies from the gas chambers to the furnaces (Piper, 1994:164). The death methods were in full operation all day. Suffocation inside the gas chambers was taking place at night and in the morning the Sonderkommando were emptying the spaces. The Nazis dictated the Sonderkommando to open the gas chambers at least thirty minutes after the victims inhaled the poisonous gas so as “to ensure there were no survivors” (Piper, 1994:163). Piper graphically wrote that:

“About a half hour after the induction of the gas, the ventilation was turned on, the door was opened, and Sonderkommando prisoners wearing gas masks began dragging the corpses out of the chamber. In cases of great congestion, many of the dead were found half-squatting, their skin colored pink with occasional red or green spots. Some foamed at the mouth, others bled from the ears. In the gas chamber’s anteroom, the bodies were relieved of spectacles and artificial limbs, and the women’s hair was cut off. Thereupon the corpses were loaded on the elevator platform and lifted to the ground floor. Some of the

corpses were dragged directly to the oven area. Others were moved to the corpse storage room opposite the elevator, which also served as a site of executions by shooting. Just before incineration, Sonderkommando prisoners removed jewellery, which they tossed into a special numbered crate” (Piper, 1994:170-171).

The Nazi ferocity aimed first and by 1943 to cremate 4,756 bodies per day in all five crematoria, while later the SS maximized the “capacity” of the furnaces, aiming at cremating three bodies per oven in less than twenty minutes; “as a result, the capacity of the crematoria almost doubled, reaching about 8,000 bodies in 24 hours” (Piper, 1994:165-166). Outside the structure of death, the SS designed a system of hierarchy among the prisoners in order to divide them, and discourage cooperation by exposing their political, social, and national differences. In this social ladder destined to fit the Nazi model, Jewish prisoners “no matter their nationality, were at the bottom”, while “Slavs toward the bottom, Russians below the Slavs” while the German prisoners were always “at the top” (Czech, 1994:364). Further divisions were based on their political convictions, their mental well - being, their nationality and their “criminal record” as a different colour of triangle aimed at stigmatizing each prisoner individually (ibid). Last but not least all prisoners now had different and multiple tasks. Apart from the presence of *Sonderkommando* at Birkenau, thousands of prisoners worked as police enforcers (*Kapos*), as clerks, women as *Canada Commandos* who were responsible for collecting valuable items, the skeleton bodies or else the “human shadows”, labourers, medical doctors, cooks, and musicians (Czech, 1994:368-370).

After giving an overall description of the death camps and how the groups worked together, we are now passing on the experiences of Greek Jews and read a few of their stories inside the death camps. What happened once the Greek Jews arrived in Auschwitz? The survivor Dr Nahon witnessed the following:

“When they arrived at Auschwitz, 85 percent of them were immediately gassed and cremated. Thus, of the approximately fifty-five thousand who were deported, about forty-two thousand never even knew that they had not reached the Kingdom of Krakovia, where the new Jewish reserve was supposedly located. Of the 12,757 selected for labour upon arrival, fewer than 2,000 returned to Greece after the war. Greek Jews were to be found in many camps, where they worked and died alongside the Ashkenazi Jews, with whom they could not generally communicate. Among the Greek Jews, men and women alike were subjected to medical experiments at Auschwitz, Majdanek, and other camps...One of the early published memoirs from Auschwitz, Olga Lengyel’s *Five Chimneys*, praised the bravery of some four hundred young Greek Jews who refused to serve in the crematoria Sonderkommando even under the threat of death. They were immediately killed. During the Warsaw Uprising of August 1944, hundreds, if not thousands, of Greek Jews who had since September 1943 been transported to the ruins of the ghetto to recycle its debris and treasures were able to join forces with the beleaguered Polish forces. These Greek Jews died as free men. And the following month, during the revolt of the crematorium Sonderkommando in Auschwitz, most of the Greek contingent chose to die fighting rather than to be sent to the gas chamber, as obsolete commandos normally were” (Nahon, 1989:12-13).

Berry Nahmia, a woman from Salonika remembers her suffering and feelings of terror when she and her compatriots entered the gates of Birkenau, as all stood in lines under the Nazi arms. She saw many fellow Jews who were already working as forced labourers, but she could not believe the transformation of their bodies: “they looked like weird beings. They did not look like humans” (Abatzopoulou, 2007: 151). She confronted skinny female and male bodies with destroyed clothes and no hair, tired and dislocated faces in a place which was “lonely” and with no destination. In this barbaric environment, surrealism and irrationality co-existed as she viewed on the one hand the fires emerging from the chimneys, and on the other heard the music of the forced labourers ordered to entertain the SS (Abatzopoulou, 2007:151-152). Olga Lengyel, remembers a Greek girl who looked seriously ill, anorexic, and

dislocated. She did not speak at all and could not move either. When they brought her in the camp hospital nobody knew what was going on, only when the medical prisoners realised she was “mentally ill” and that she was in the wrong department (Legyel, 1957:76-77). Olga Lengyel remembered that,

“She sat nearly all the time, initiating the precision-like gestures of a spinning-mill worker. From time to time, as if worn out by her work, she lost consciousness. Nor could she be revived for an hour or two. Then she shook her head, opened her eyes, and threw her arms up, as though to shield her head from a beating. A day later we found her dead. During the night she had emptied her straw mattress to ‘spin’ the straw. She had also torn her blouse into tiny shreds to make more raw material for her imaginary spindle. I have seen many dead, but few faces upset me as much as that of the young Greek girl. She had probably been employed somewhere as a forced labourer in a spinning mill. Her efforts had brought her nothing but beatings. She succumbed, and the desperate animal fear had finally destroyed the equilibrium of her mind” (Legyel, 1957:77).

The women in the camps were tortured every morning with terroristic warnings and physical abuse. They were forced to swallow pills in order to stop their hormones, while they were dictated to perform hard male duties such as carrying “heavy rocks” in long distances for no reason at all. The Nazis who supervised these physical drills were humiliating the women by laughing and “clapping”. The Greek Jewish survivor Berry Nahmia, who revealed her horror in the camps, argued that she and her friend Dora were struggling not to lose their sanity and the one tried to comfort the other. But most of the time it was extremely difficult to preserve their rationality, for thoughts of escaping this barbaric and “primitive” situation was limited. They were witnessing unprecedented scenes of murder every day. Both women for instance became eye witness of a raw murder such as when the Nazis killed newborn babies by drowning them in “boiling water” or in a “pile of excrement” (Abatzopoulou, 2007: 154-156).

The women and children were the most tragic crowds. The former were subjected not only to physical drills, but were constantly harassed, beaten, and sexually abused. After the implementation of “women’s penal squat” in 1942, the SS sought to suppress any female desire to escape or revolt. With this act many courageous French Jewish women died as ninety of them attempted to escape (Strzelecka, 1994:406-407). On the other hand, the case of children is even more tragic as the majority were immediately gassed upon arrival along with pregnant women. There are no complete records available to determine how many children throughout Europe perished in the camps (Kubica, 1994: 412-414). However in some countries such as France the picture is clearer, for among the 71 trains that reached the death camps between 1941 and 1944, some 9,820 children registered. In Belgium it is estimated that around 4,654 children were deported, 2,500 from Germany, 4,300 from Holland, 1,040 from Czechoslovakia, 12,000 children from Greece were all gassed immediately once they reached destination along with the “80 percent” of the Greek Jewry, while in Italy the few and disperse documents that are available can only estimate that 296 children were deported. There is no clear picture concerning the children of Nazi-Occupied Poland and Hungary, as all documents have been destroyed, but there is no doubt that these countries had the highest percentage of registered children given the high number of Polish and Hungarian prisoners. Furthermore, in former Yugoslavia, the few available records indicate that possibly 63 children registered and only 12 survived to see the end of the war, while from the Gypsy community 6,000 children registered, 363 of which “were born in the camp” (Kubica,1994: 414-416, 418). According to Kubica, most new-born babies from all over Europe were immediately gassed, while older children and teenagers not only suffered from severe illnesses due to malnutrition but were subjected to unimaginable experiments, such as invasive procedures in the eyes causing permanent damage or “complete loss of sight”,

castration, sterilization, and deadly heart damage caused by “phenol injections” that attacked instantly the myocardium (Kubica, 1994:423-424).

It is difficult to conceptualise these events and it is extremely difficult to comprehend that this kind barbarism was possible. On the issue of *incomprehensibility*, Hannah Arendt in the *Origins of Totalitarianism*, declared that what is actually “difficult” to conceptualise is not so much the systematic organisation of death through the use of most sadistic and bestial deeds accepting them as “a normal measure”, but the fact that no one outside had any idea what was going inside the concentration camps. Such a reality, gave impetus to create a sort of secret mystery behind bestiality and everything that was occurring in Auschwitz was considered as an “absurd dream”, a “reality” that was more than real and yet secret (Arendt, 1968: 445-446). On these grounds all the prisoners in the death camps including the Jews from Greece, were experiencing torture and punishment in total secrecy, creating a world of ghosts and as Arendt would put it, a “world of perverse, malignant fantasies” (Arendt, 1968:445). As Arendt declares,

“It is not so much the barbed wire as the skilfully manufactured unreality of those whom it fences in that it provokes such enormous cruelties and ultimately makes extermination look like a perfectly human measure. Everything that was done in the camps is known to us from the world of perverse, malignant fantasies. The difficult thing to understand is that, like such fantasies, these gruesome crimes took place in a phantom world, which however, has materialised, as it were, into a world which is complete with all sensual data of reality but lacks that structure of consequence and responsibility without which reality remains for us a mass of incomprehensible data. The result is that a place has been established where men can be tortured and slaughtered, and yet neither the tormentors nor the tormented, and least all the outsider, can be aware that what is happening is anything more than a cruel game or an absurd dream” (Arendt, 1968: 445-446).

Arendt captures this *unrealism* of the *real* in the camps, and it is reflected in the style and tone of Jewish memoirs. The Athenian Jew Sevilias as well speaks of this reality which became a routine to all prisoners. A routine, for being alive – *this or that day*- was a matter of contingency and a pure luck. In *Athens- Auschwitz*, he considered himself lucky as he survived “three selections”. However, he and his fellow inmates were living in constant mental panic, as they feared they would be in the next round of victims who would end up in the furnaces (Sevilias, 1983:46). However, as the process of selection continued and new prisoners came from all parts of Europe, he was always desperate and anxious to hear news from fellow Greeks concerning his family in Athens. In one of the trains that arrived, Athenian Jews informed him that his wife, child and parents “were safe in Christian homes” (Sevilias, 1983:48).

Like many communities in the camps, a number of survivors such as Olga Lengyel remember the courage and unity of the small community of Greece (Lengyel, 1959:123). The same issue has been also explained by other authors such as Fleming, who argue that this unity may have resulted from the exclusion they experienced in Greece. Despite serving in the Greco-Italian War and later in the partisan war against the Nazis, they were still deprived and discriminated by certain sections of the Greek Society, who refused not only their Jewish but their Greek identity. Although in the 20s and 30s the Jewish community of Greece for the first time gained full Greek citizenship (during the formation of the Greek State), however it was in the camps that they could really and freely exhibit it for the first time (Fleming, 2007:19). Sephardic Jews of Salonika although in Greece for four centuries, they really struggled to convince the Christian society that they were also Greek. They felt discrimination in their city, and far away from the Romaniote Jews of Athens. When Greek Macedonia and Greek Thrace alike were incorporated to Greece in 1913, the communities from these two regions came closer to the Romaniote Jews of the south, as all tried to hide and escape in the Italian

controlled zone. This sense of unity came into shape in Auschwitz, as now for the first time they felt they were all from Greece, since a number of people in their own country questioned their identity. Inside the death camps, the tragic truth was that the Greek Jew felt more “Greek than he had ever been in Greece” and yet different from the customs and habits of Ashkenazi Jews that characterised the “majority” of European Jews (Fleming, 2007:36). This cultural differentiation was present in all communities, and here Friedlander compares the Jewish communities of Eastern and Western Europe. He argues that the Sephardic Jewry was a tiny community compared to the Western Ashkenazi, and they were mainly located in Greece, as well as in areas within Yugoslavia and Bulgaria (Friedlander, 2007:6).

Despite differences among the groups, year after year the prisoners attempted successfully to overcome them. This successful attempt was epitomised in the birth of the underground movement in the concentration camps. Garlinski declared that “naturally at the beginning people of the same nationality, speaking the same language, got together; but later, as time passed, these differences lessened, and when men began to trust each other the closest ties were between those of similar character and attitude” (Garlinski, 1975: 253). This is a very important aspect in the nature of the camps, for it shows how all prisoners gradually and irrespective of their class, nationality and cultural background began to relate to one another in order to form a common goal, namely to build a resistance front. The latter attempted and even bypassed political rivalries sometimes between the left-wing and right-wing groups in the barracks. Unity of this kind proved catalytic to assist the other, provide food for the most needed, as well as leaking information to the outside world as to the condition of their existence, bringing for the first time optimism in “the darkest of days” (Garlinski, 1975:252-254).

### **The Participation of Greek Jews in the Crematorium IV rebellion**

Outside the organised resistance movement in the camps, there were numerous attempts to organise spontaneous uprisings. The revolt of 7 October 1944 is considered as the only recorded rebellious act in the history of Auschwitz, consisting of Greeks, Polish, French and Hungarians. The Greek participation in the resistance in the crematoria however remains largely unknown (Bowman, 1986: 53). The Greek literature includes testimonies of the Greek Jewry in the camps who testify their active participation (see Kounio, 1981:351-353; Tomai, 2009:149-159; Menasch, 1974; Kouzinopoulos, 2005:139-146). It is estimated that “135 out of 400” Greeks took part in the rebellious act (Bowman, 1986: 53). Greek scholarship speaks of a collective effort to organise a rebellious act and in that effort Greeks were also included, whereas Polish scholarship speaks of a Polish revolt. For example Anna Pawelczynska does not mention any other group taking part in the revolt apart from Poles, though she leaves some room open that others might have taken part, when she declares that “the decisive role in the resistance movement at Auschwitz was played by Poles” given that they were the majority, that “Auschwitz was situated on Polish territory”, thus these prisoners had the best connections (Pawelczynska, 1979:113-114). Another similar example is Halvini’s article “The Birkenau Revolt: Poles Prevent a Timely Insurrection”, where the author describes only the Polish participation, and yet only in a short footnote at the end of her work argues that the Greek assistance cannot be disputed since survivors verify it, but she does not discuss their participation and denies that two Greek prisoners were the leading figures of the revolt (Halvini, 1979:153).

“In an account with numerous mistakes, Issak Kabeli lists the Greek Jews, Former Colonel Yosef Baruch and Yom Tom Yakoel as leaders of the

conspiracy. The participation of Greek Jews is corroborated by survivors, not the particular names, however” (Halvini, 1979:153).

However, there are other European Jews who also speak of a collective effort in the rebellion between Hungarian and Greek prisoners. Filip Müller, a Slovakian Jew who survived Auschwitz argued that the *Sonderkommando* selected by the Kapos “were mainly Hungarian and Greek Jews”. These prisoners were responsible not only for the organisation of the revolt but for mobilizing the rest of the camp, however, the organised Polish resistance did not respond to their call (Müller, 1979:154). He further wrote that:

“...some of these selected prisoners contacted our Resistance leaders and declared that not one of the 300 was prepared to let himself be slaughtered without resistance. They thought the time for the planned rebellion was now and requested the entire *Sonderkommando* to throw in their lot with them, and to do so whether or not the rest of the camps were to join in. They went on to say that they were determined to go it alone if nobody was prepared to support them. [...] Their answer was waiting for them when they returned to fetch the evening meal. Any uprising, the message went, was to be avoided at all costs because it might have disastrous consequences for the whole camp. In turn our Resistance leaders explained the situation to the men on the selection list, namely, that we all appreciated their position but could not participate in any violent measure and that the Resistance in the camp shared this view” (Müller, 1979: 154-155).

Historians also discuss the Greek participation in the crematorium rebellion. Martin Gilbert in *The Holocaust: The History of the Jews of Europe during the Second World War*, declares that “more than three hundred Greek Jews were among the *Sonderkommando* preparing for revolt, among them Errera de Larissa, a former lieutenant in the Greek army” (Gilbert, 1986:743). Alberto Errera (known as “Alex”) not only did actively participate in the revolt, but took pictures from the scenes that survived and now are exhibited in the Yad Vashem Museum in Israel (Chare, 2011:144; Stone, 2001: 134-136; see next page the

pictures of Alex Errera). The names of the 59 Greek Jews who survived and took part in the revolt were published by the Hellenic Ministry of Foreign Affairs via Photini Tomai's book *Greeks in Auschwitz – Birkenau* (Tomai, 2009: 152-153).<sup>45</sup>

---

<sup>45</sup> The names of Jews that are published are: Maurice Aron, Baruch Baruch, Issac Barouch, Joseph Barouch, Aaron Barzilai, Matys Bitali, Jacob Broudo, Henri Nehama Capon, Leon Cohen, Raoul Djahon, Alberto Moiss Errera, Dario Gabai, Albert Gani, Joseph Gani, Moise Gani, Pepo Gani, Albert Jachon, Haim Cohen, Joseph Levy, Samuel Levi, Sabetay Levis, Mois Levy, Michael Matsas,, Elia Mazza, Menasche, Mechoulam Eliezer, Abroum Meli, Haim Misan, Moissis Misan, Albertos Misrachi, Mois Misrahis, Moissis Negrin, Dani Marc Nachmias, Yossif Namer, Marcel Nadjary, Eugen Nakamoulis, David Persiadis, Salomone Pinhas, Issac Samuel Rouso, Erikos Sevilias, Selomo brothers, Moissis Serris, Samuel Sidis, Issac Soussis, Jacques Soussis, Moissis Sabetai, Giosepos Sabas, Pesos Sabas, Savas Sabetai, Albert Salvado, Alberto Tzachon, Joseph Varouch, Hugo Barouch Venezia, Issak Venezia, Mois Venezia, Salomone Venezia, Menahem Zakar, Yozef Zakar (Tomai, 2009:152-153).



All three macabre pictures were captured by the Greek Jew Alberto “Alex” Errera

Source: <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sonderkommando>



Despite the differences between opinions concerning the revolt in Birkenau, we do not wish to dispute any side, since on the one hand the Greek scholarship speaks of a collective effort as we already stated, and on the other, the organised Polish underground movement was massive and well known inside and outside the death camps. Anna Pawelczynska attempts to bridge this gap arguing that:

“It is very hard to draw the line between the spontaneous and the organised resistance movement in Auschwitz, even for those who belonged to the conspiratorial organisation. For a member at the lowest level in one of the camp organisations, it was hard to say on whose behalf he was carrying out his particular instructions. Memory and the very fragmentary documents distort these past events. Doubtless, they will never enable all the phenomena of conspiratorial work in the camp to be established with complete precision, much less the phenomena of spontaneous resistance among people loyally working together in response to specific situations” (Pawelczynska 1979:114-115).

However, Fleming declares that some communities were never heard. The only Greek voice during the trial of Eichmann for example was Itzhak Nehama, who was speaking “only of his hometown, Salonika” and was the only person representing the entire Sephardic community of Europe, excluding the Romaniot community of south Greece where no survivor or representative testified. Similarly, other Jewish survivors from countries such as Bulgaria and North Africa never testified what they witnessed in their own country (Fleming, 2007:35). But then again, this absence portrays another problematic, namely the overall silence of Greek Jewish experience in the European literature, the popular media, and documentaries in Western Europe. It was only after the effort of a small number of Greek survivors who started to write about their experience in Israel after the 80s, that their presence started to become visible, since as the son of a survivor noted once: “there weren’t many articles or stories about the Jews of Greece” (Fleming, 2007: 33).

Moreover, and apart from the successful rebellion which took place in the crematoria, there were other moments as well where the Greek Jews tried to resist. Some of the Jews from Corfu for instance in the summer of 1944, refused to kill their fellow inmates as they were selected as forced labourers in the crematoria. For their refusal to perform these actions they were executed (Tomai, 2009:149). Another example concerns the Greek Jew, Joseph Barouch, who was working in the crematoria in July 1944. While transferring the bodies to the furnaces, he recognised his own parents. He was possessed by such sorrow that he started organising a rescue plan despite having no means to resist. He along with Jews from Greece, France, Hungary and Nazi-Occupied Poland were about to revolt in August 15<sup>th</sup>, unfortunately though, their plan was changed, for new Polish prisoners arrived in the camps that day, and many SS officials were present upon their arrival, and any attempt of uprising was extremely difficult (Tomai, 2009:154-155).

Before exploring the participation of the Greek Jews in the uprising, it is wise to understand the difficulties of resisting in Auschwitz, not only because the punishment for revolt was death, but because the mental and physical “exhaustion” of the prisoners made resistance difficult. The Nazis were selecting Jews to burn their own fellows, epitomizing the most “humiliating” and destructive means of Nazi ferocity. The Jews who worked as *Sonderkommando* and after fulfilling the macabre tasks, they were dictated to be thrown to the ovens as well in order to keep this destructive method in total secrecy (Tomai, 2009:150). Despite oppression and suppression, a number of Jews were about to give a counterattack. Some prisoners by singing Greek songs and by changing the lyrics were giving valuable information to other prisoners regarding the existence of the crematoria. They were passing information to the women of “Kanada Kommando”; lay next to crematorium IV (Tomai, 2009:150).

Salvador Kounio remembers that in September 1944, the total number of the Jews working as Sonderkommando was approximately 630. However from this number, 200 were selected and were informed to another camp (“Gleiwitz”) outside Auschwitz. The prisoners were deceived, for the Nazi guards forced them to enter the gas chambers. Many prisoners identified members of Sonderkommando while being transferred to the furnaces and all understood what the future awaited them (Kounio, 1981: 350-351). The prisoners decided to take action. According to Tomai, a Greek Jew from Larissa, Alberto (Alex) Errera, was one of the leading figures of the uprising. With two more Greek fellows they were responsible for throwing the remaining ashes of the ovens in the river Vistula nearby. Errera and while on duty, attacked two SS guards with “his spade” and killed them, and although he received a bullet in his head, he escaped by hiding in the forest (Tomai, 2009: 155).

Errikos Sevillias remembers the above event quite vividly, arguing that the Nazis were outraged when they found out that two SS guards were killed and that Errera was still in the woods hiding until the next day. Sevillias remembered the sirens and the barking of dogs the next morning when the guards found him. Unfortunately Errera could not go further. He was beaten “without mercy” and the Nazis killed him along with other prisoners who tried to escape too. Although he accepted “full responsibility” to save his fellow inmates, none of them survived as they were burned in the furnaces (Sevillias, 1983: 41-42). However, Erreras’s brave stance was about to be discussed and remembered for a very long time. Sevillias wrote that “if someone wanted to escape, he first had to decide to sacrifice his life, and then make the attempt” (Sevillias, 1983:42).

The most organised form of resistance occurred a few days later on the 7<sup>th</sup>. There was a new selection that day in the division of “Sonderkommando” consisting 200 prisoners from Greece and Hungary. When the guards started to call their names, no Greek responded. According to Photini Tomai, someone “possibly Josef Varouch” said loudly and in “Greek”:

“Will we make our attack, or not?” (Tomai, 2009: 158). The name Varouch was also verified by Kouzinopoulos, arguing that he was determined to take action despite efforts from fellow prisoners to warn him that they could be killed. Varouch could not stand watching the crematoria and he could not accept that his father and mother were burned in such a bestial way (Kouzinopoulos, 2005:144).<sup>46</sup> Therefore, the prisoners attacked once again the SS guards but this time inside the Crematorium III. Equipped with some weapons they tried to take action and “signalled” to their fellow prisoners to join, but they were late in responding their call, while the prisoners of the second crematorium received the call on time and they attacked on more SS guard and successfully blew up the crematorium IV with dynamite that was supplied by women who worked in the “Kanada Kommando” (Tomai, 2009:158-159). It has been witnessed that,

“Only the crematorium II commando division responded instinctively to the sounds of the shootings. The chief of the kapos – ‘a beastly criminal’, as the survivors remembered him- and an SS soldier that served that shift were thrown, alive, into the ovens. Another soldier was beaten to death. In a short period of time, however, a large military squad, complete with dogs and machine-guns, had enriched the building, and a heroic but desperate and uneven battle began. The inmates tried cutting the barbed wirers in order to move the uprising to the central camp. However, realising quickly that this was a doomed effort, the inmates blew up Crematorium IV with dynamite, and tried escaping into the nearby woods. Most fell heroically under the fire of machine-guns, while the rest, who eventually surrendered, were executed on the spot. Among them were Mois Aaron, Iakov (Viko) Broudo, Isaak Barouch (part of Crematorium IV), and Sam Karasso” (Tomai, 2009: 158-159).

The whole area around the crematoria resembled scenes from the apocalypse as there were fires coming out of the explosions. They were dead bodies everywhere and few prisoners survived. It is estimated that around 100 prisoners survived, while the four women

---

<sup>46</sup> See more on the Jewish revolt in Kouzinopoulos (2005) especially in pages 139-146.

of “Kanada Kommando” who supplied the rebels with explosives were arrested and imprisoned “for betrayal” for several weeks. They were brutally abused and tortured, and after their release they were hanged in front of the rest of the prisoners (Kouzinopoulos, 2005: 145-146). The woman who was sent to the gallows was the only “reported” case in Auschwitz, for usually the “Germans did not hang women” (Tomai, 2009:159). By estimating the casualties of the revolt, around “450 prisoners” were killed, out of which “200” were executed by the Germans, while “only 26 Greeks had survived” the Nazi brutality (ibid).

As we stated earlier, the revolt in the crematoria was significant for resistance as such under physical and emotional pain was difficult. Fotini Abatzopoulou in this respect argues that since the prisoners in the camps did not share the same language, culture or habits, could not communicate well in order to form a common goal or sustain a strong sense of “identity” (Abatzopoulou, 2007:20). She argues that prisoners who have a strong level of “solidarity”, a sense of identity within a community, and who are politically active happen to be in a more “privileged position” than other prisoners, as the former characteristics make them stronger and the feelings of survival more attainable. In the same line of thought, Abatzopoulou declares that the Greek Jews stood really close to one another as many testimonies reveal, keeping the spirit of survival alive (Abatzopoulou, 2007:21). Primo Levi in *Survival in Auschwitz* echoes Abatzopoulou’s thought concerning the unity, integration and solidarity of the Greek Jewry in the concentration camps, and how they helped one another so as to keep the spirit of survival alive (Levi, 1996:73).

However, the political element alone cannot explain or determine necessarily the relationship between the sense of unity, assistance and survival. According to Gutman, the political element for instance among the “political criminals” served indeed as a means to assist the weaker, older, younger and in general more fragile prisoners as well as coping with

the “years of hardships and suffering” (Gutman, 1984:166). Yet the previous argument cannot serve as a general theory for all political prisoners in the same way that not all “criminal” prisoners were immune to assistance (ibid). For, other authors like Eugen Kogon, may well suggest the opposite concerning the political prisoner; namely, that some sections of communist prisoners were often reluctant to collaborate with prisoners who did not share the same political convictions, despite the fact that the author acknowledges their indispensable contribution in the camps (Kogon, 1950:231-232). Kogon declared that:

“The positive achievement of the Communists on behalf of the concentration-camp prisoners can hardly be overrated. In many cases the whole camp literally owed them its life, even though their motives seldom sprang from pure altruism but rather from the collective instinct for self-preservation in which the whole camp joined because of its positive results” (Kogon, 1950:232).

Despite the importance of the political element, that alone cannot determine the reasons why the “spontaneous” revolt in the crematoria took place either. There are alternative reasons that enabled this uprising. Yisrael Gutman declares that the *Sonderkommando* “knew their days were numbered” and after they failed to agree with the organised resistance, they “decided to revolt alone in October 1944” by paying with their lives (Gutman, 1984:175-176). However, there were other numerous attempts to revolt. These attempts many times failed not only because it was difficult to revolt without weapons (as we already suggested) but as Garlinski remembers, the Nazis “increased” their methods of “terror” as the war progressed, as they were winning ground in Occupied Europe, and as the prisoners themselves systematically tried to escape. In every individual or collective attempt to escape there was severe punishment from the part of the Nazis, systematic processes of “retaliation”, as well as leaving many prisoners to starve by setting paradigmatic examples to the rest of the camp (Garlinski, 1976: 67-68). Furthermore, the conditions under which either a revolt or a planned escape took place were incredibly difficult. Here, we are not talking

about any kind of escape plan (like an organised plan in the mountains of an occupied European territory, though that alone was extremely dangerous given the multiple risks), but inside the camps, the prisoners had to pass “high-voltage barbed-wire fences”, numerous towers, fences and guards every “fifty” meters (Kulka, 1984:402). Not to mention, that the prisoners (and once successfully out of the camps) had to bypass a new set of guards who were situated “between the rivers Sola and Vistula” (Kulka, 1984:403).

But the everyday will to survive among all prisoners was in itself a form of resistance whether someone was a member of the organised movement, of an unorganised group or whether someone was acting on his or her own. According to Pawelczynska, one’s ability to resist the everyday brutality of the camps was in itself a form of resistance, as the latter “was expressed in the constant effort to maintain inner freedom while outwardly adapting” (Pawelczynska 1973:127). And that was a hard duty every day, for survival in the camps meant facing with conflicting and harsh “choices about how to live”. And how this could be accomplished Homer asks in his book *Primo Levi and the Politics of Survival*? “Do we steal from one another? Do we collaborate with others for another piece of bread?” (Homer, 2001:17). Yisrael Gutman goes through the painful process to understand the logic of prisoners behind the death camps and how the groups worked together, arguing that:

“The prisoner’s physical and mental capacities are unceasingly employed in a never-ending effort to get through all the tortuous stages that constitute an ordinary day- walking at dawn, straightening one’s pallet, morning roll-call, the journey to work, hours of hard labor, standing in line for a meal, the return to camp, block inspection and evening roll-call” (Gutman, 1984:155).

Survival also meant detaching from your previous lifestyle and finding means (any means) to survive. Not all prisoners passed this test. Gutman provides a truly sad example of two sisters from Holland who tried to learn ways to access food. They were gazing other

prisoners who were returning in the camp blocks with food. One of the two sisters tried to do the same and returned with a small portion of “rotten potatoes”, but the other along with her Dutch friends “were not prepared to eat from the ‘stolen potatoes’”. Both girls and unable to adapt to this everyday cruel reality walked together to the end point: they “threw themselves on the electric fence” (Gutman, 1984:154). The need to revolt and to resist, the will to live and the weakness of adaptability, were all moments of the same dignified personality. All actions of the prisoners were signs of genuine need to continue to exist, and to preserve one’s humanity. As Martin Gilbert writes:

“In every ghetto, in every deportation train, in every labor camp, even in the death camps, the will to resist was strong, and took many forms: fighting with those few weapons that could be found, fighting with sticks and knives, individual acts of defiance and protest, the courage of obtaining food under the threat of death, the nobility of refusing to allow the Germans their final wish to gloat over panic and despair. Even passivity was a form of courage [...] To die with dignity was itself courageous. To resist the dehumanising, brutalising force of evil, to refuse to be abased to the level of animals, to live through the torment, to outlive the tormentors, these too were courageous. Merely to give witness by one’s own testimony was, in the end, to contribute to a moral victory. Simply to survive was a victory of the human spirit” (Gilbert, 1986:828).

## **Conclusion**

This chapter looked at the system of horror in the extermination camps. The camps served as a laboratory for the Nazi Ideology. We reviewed stories of Greek Jews during their imprisonment at the ghettos and in the extermination camps. We also explained the factors that contributed to the high percentage of Greek Jewish loss inside the death camps in a comparative approach. We have argued that certain parameters such as the climate, the long journeys to Birkenau in contrast with other European communities, the period they arrived in Auschwitz that coincided with the full implementation of all death methods, as well as the

high percentage of Greek Jews who worked as Sonderkommando affected the high percentage of their loss. Furthermore, we analysed the conditions under which all communities in the concentration camps struggled to remain alive; how the Nazi order was set up, the structure of terror, the divisions and statuses among the groups but most importantly how all worked together to overcome barbarity, assist one another and remain alive. At the same time we reviewed differences among the prisoners. Yet, there was a successful effort to overcome these differences by building the organised resistance movement, supporting a common cause. Under this context, we also understood the difficulties of the prisoners to resist on pain of been killed, abused and deprived from food, and how this systematic terrorism gave birth to some spontaneous revolts such as the Crematorium IV revolt, by examining also the reasons that enabled it, and the contribution of the Greek Jewry in that effort. We also viewed the systematic empowerment and abuse of the most fragile groups of the camps such as the women and the children, and concluded in this chapter, that every single effort to resist, living, to assist, as well as the inability of a prisoner to adapt, were all sides of the same civilised personality. Last but not least, the experience of the Jewish prisoners in the death camps which was our main inquiry in this chapter will enable us to establish connections with the next chapter that deals with a single case of a massacre that occurred in small village in Greece. In doing so, we will view how as the war progressed throughout Europe, Nazi atrocities systematically committed against local populations in Greece and all over Europe, as a form of retaliation, and as a means to suppress guerrilla activity and individual resistance. Certain questions will then come out in the surface to establish clear distinctions between the conditions under which the genocide was committed upon the European Jewry, and massacres throughout Europe.

## Chapter 4. The Massacre of Distomo 10 June 1944, an Episode.

*"...The cannons and the bullets,  
 rusted fires,  
 which are falling in love  
 at the snowed of our eyes.  
 The bullets, unwashed screams of darkness,  
 they look like funeral songs  
 at the crossroads of the world,  
 at the time that the heroes pray  
 and the war chiefs  
 Repentant cyclamens,  
 Forgive the afternoon sadness  
 of thirst..."*

(Andreas S. Tsouras, *"Distomo, Bleeding humanity"*)<sup>47</sup>

### Introduction

So far I have emphasised the changed position of the Jews in the Greek society and their fate in the extermination camps, in order to comprehend how racial discrimination, socio-political exclusion and annihilation was implemented. Greece numbered thousands of casualties during the Second World War while only in the first year of the occupation, between 1941 until 1942 around 450,000 civilians died from hunger and malnutrition, and 80 percent of children suffered from tuberculosis, while the BBC reported that more than 500,000 Greeks died in the first year of occupation (Kessel, 1944: 21, Fleischer, 1995a: 195). Apart from the tragic loss of the Jewish communities in the country, there have been catastrophic consequences for the civilians who either directly or indirectly fought the Nazis; executions, rapes, setting fire to entire villages, and massacres.<sup>48</sup> The massacres in the villages of Kommeno, Kalavryta and Distomo are one of those cases where Nazi horror

---

<sup>47</sup> An excerpt from the poetic drama of Andreas S. Tsouras's *Distomo, Bleeding Humanity*, Municipality of Distomo Edition, 1999: 29.

<sup>48</sup> According to *Life Magazine*, "more than 2,000 Greek villages have been destroyed" (see *Life*, November 27, 1944, Vol. 17, No. 22: p 21).

showed its unlimited possibilities in unequal battles between civilians who stood side by side with the guerrillas against the Nazis. However, little effort has been made by Greek and international authors to throw light to these atrocities and only recently -after many decades- there has been a more adequate research and coherent presentation of the events (Mayer, 2010:15).

In this chapter I provide an in depth investigation of the massacre via unstructured interviews of the very few survivors that are still alive today. By including this episode in my thesis I do not seek to compare the two events; namely the experience of the Greek Jewry in the camps with the massacre of Distomo for that would be unequal. It would be unequal because the persecution of Jews was massive, and it was based on anti-Semitic and racist laws. The non Jews for instance, who were tortured in the camps, were held as “political prisoners” with charges for resisting and for being enemies of the German State. These political prisoners were not imprisoned on the grounds of race or because they were considered as “sub- humans”, and therefore one can argue that they were in a different and perhaps more “privileged” position than their fellow Jewish prisoners who were charged for all the ills and pathologies of the world. Hence the crematoria as well as the gas chambers were used exclusively for the Jews and on the grounds of being “racially dirty” (Abatzopoulou, 2007: 24-25). The latter stands as a clear distinction between the Genocide and the motives of vengeance for political reasons, either in a form of a massacre, or in a form of a mass killing during guerrilla warfare. According to Lemkin, “Genocide is directed against the national group as an entity, and the actions involved are directed against individuals, not in their individual capacity, but as members of the national group” (Lemkin, 1944:79). As Lemkin suggests,

“It is intended rather to signify a coordinated plan of different actions aiming at the destruction of essential foundations of the life of national groups, with the

aim of annihilating the groups themselves. The objectives of such a plan would be disintegration of the political and social institutions, of culture, language, national feelings, religion, and the economic existence of national groups, and the destruction of the personal security, liberty, health, dignity, and even the lives of the individuals belonging to these groups” (Lemkin, 1944:79).

The inclusion of the massacre of Distomo in my thesis has one clear purpose. There were approximately 2000 Greek Jews who returned from the death camps, but there were also 10,000 Jewish survivors who returned from the Guerrilla Mountains fighting the Nazis (Lewkowitz, 2000:247). All the Jewish survivors in their histories and memoirs, not only talk about their experience before and during persecution, or in the death camps, but share with us their memories after they returned from the mountains in the disintegrated and politically divided country. If we have to hear the Jewish voices, we are obliged to hear them from the beginning until the end. The Jewish survivors highlight the political rivalries in occupied and aftermath Greece, and rationally understand that the political situation affected them (see, Lewkowitz, 2000; see also Bourlas, 2000). These issues of course are highlighted in the last chapter where themes of collective memory and restitution are coupled, but the massacre of Distomo stands as a mediation between the genocide of the Jews and the description of what was happening up in the mountains, and how the political rivalries developed gradually throughout the war that had an immediate effect on the rescued Jews. For example, Bea Lewkowitz (2000), in her essay “After the War We Were All Together”: Jewish Memories of Postwar Thessaloniki”, has collected interviews in a 10-year period from Jewish survivors. Now, as we shall see in the final chapter, these survivors were pre-occupied with political themes of post-war Greece. Thus, if their analysis is valuable we must explain what the victims describe in this and remaining chapters until we close our discussion on themes of restitution and collective memory in the final chapter. The account of the Massacre of Distomo aims to inform the reader as to the conditions in which the Jews and non-Jews

perished, survived or struggled to survive in the mountains of Greece. Last but not least, the account aims at describing the growth of systematic terror of the Nazi ideology as the war progressed.

### **Methodological Design, Purpose and the Usefulness of the Survivors' Voices**

As seen in chapter 3, whereby we described the conditions of the death camps through the narratives of the victims; the usefulness of survivors has been indispensable to understand gaps and questions that histories do not always address or answer. Concerning the accuracy of the survivor's stories and its historical usefulness, Lawrence Langer, suggests that even if the passage of time may erase or cause trouble to remember some details, the memory of a dreadful event such as the Holocaust never sleeps; it is in a constant "insomniac" condition and always adds to the historical richness (Langer, 1991: xv). Because as the author writes: "testimonies are human documents rather than merely historical ones, the troubled interaction between past and present achieves a gravity that surpasses the concern with accuracy. Factual errors do occur from time to time, as do simple lapses; but they seem trivial in comparison to the complex layers of memory..." (ibid). Similarly, when I took interviews from men and women who survived the massacre of Distomo, I did not pay attention to some lapses that are not verified by the literature. I was listening with the same curiosity, respect and unawareness, without thinking about my pre-judgements and pre-knowledge. The latter simply collapsed once I heard the stories of the survivors, and the personal strength these people had so as to recollect their thoughts for me after 70 years. Driven from the previous argument, the case study gives you both the freedom and the spontaneous information that comes out from the testimonies of the survivors. According to Gary Thomas, case studies leave an anarchic liberty to the researcher to set her own "boundary", namely design and interpret a meaningful content and context, but at the same time enrich her own knowledge

about a situation that is already significant in its own merit (Thomas, 2011:21). The choice of a case study as a research method, for the present purpose, the Distomo massacre, has enabled me to see “something in its completeness, looking at it from many angles. This is good science. In fact it is the essence of good science” (Thomas, 2011:23). This case study would not have been successful without primary and secondary data. I collected a small but meaningful secondary literature, such as newspapers, books, personal memoirs, valuable primary archives and documents, such as official reports from the International Red Cross, a list of primary documents that were sent to Washington Embassy, and of course the collection of five comprehensive interviews.

The reason I decided to do interviews was because I sought to “achieve a depth of understanding” of an event, namely the massacre (Gillham, 2005:3). I collected five interviews, four of which were recorded, lasting from one to two hours respectively, and one written interview that lasted about 30 minutes. The interview questions were unstructured, as my initial inquiry was to hear the stories of the victims. According to Gillham, the “strengths” of this approach, namely the unstructured questions, aim at leaving the survivor “to lead the way”, make his or her own narrative, without me interfering. This is the best approach especially when I had to interview victims of a massacre, for otherwise a more structured technique, “may lose the thread of a narrative” (Gillham, 2005:45). At the same time, I was aware of the difficulty of this approach. An unstructured interview, may lead a researcher to a set of questions or answers that are not so relevant. However, even at this risk, there is always a set of “focused topics” that enable specificity (Gillham, 2005:47-49).

The latter was achieved by researching first the massacre of Distomo and the issues that were involved around it, namely, life in the mountains during the war, partisan activity, political rivalries, and collaboration. All new information that springs from an interview may bring forth elements to the study of an event such as a massacre. According to Yin,

“interviews are an essential source of case study evidence because most case studies are about human affairs. These human affairs should be reported and interpreted through the eyes of specific interviewees, and well-informed respondents can provide important insights into a situation” (Yin, 2003: 92). At the same time I recognise the limitations of a single case study, namely the inability to “generalise” after a specific investigation (Wellington and Szczerbinski, 2007: 93). However, I do not seek to generalise with the massacre of Distomo, rather I seek to understand, interpret and analyse a phenomenon; an all too real phenomenon, that is “vivid” and “insightful”, and has a value in its own (Wellington and Szczerbinski, 2007: 94). It is a substantial effort to understand what was happening in the mountains of Greece when the war was progressing and I seek to engage this experience with the Nazi ferocity throughout Europe. A case study that is “explanatory” can be applied to other similar cases studies and events (Thomas, 2011: 95). This approach will enable me to draw awareness to similar developments elsewhere, namely other massacres, ethnic cleansings and mass atrocities that occurred throughout Occupied Europe. Despite using this approach, the account of Distomo stands as an episode between the Jews during occupation and after the war, so as to see as we argued what was happening up in the mountains.

Distomo is a small village 130 kilometres outside Athens between Parnassus Mountains and Delphi, in the prefecture of Boeotia (Veotia/ Viotia) in Central Greece, and around 15 kilometres outside Veotia’s capital Levadia (Livadeia). I travelled there in autumn 2009.



(Memorial Museum of Distomo, Distomo, September 2009)



(Woman in the picture: Maria Padiska, entrance of Distomo Memorial Museum, picture captured in September 2009).

I was happy to know that Distomo survivors were willing to tell their stories since they revealed to me that for many years journalists and documentary film makers travelled from many parts of Europe apart from Greece in order to record the massacre and felt psychologically exhausted by frequent questions of journalists. However, they were extremely willing to talk to me for as they told me off the record, they prefer to talk about the war and their experiences in younger generations in an informal way and without cameras.

## A Chronicle of the Slaughter

In the morning of 10 June 1944, a heavily armed SS unit of eighteen men left Levadia for Distomo, with two Greek private cars. On the way, five more SS cars followed (Lappas, 2001:14). Before arriving at the village they killed everyone they found on their way; from animals to local farmers, while at the same time, they took 12 hostages from the nearby fields outside the village of Distomo. Once they entered the town, in two hours they killed 218 people in a “door-to-door” slaughter. According to the official document of the Red Cross Committee which arrived from Athens two days after the massacre, around 600 people were killed from the areas in and around Distomo. The massacre occurred after a heavy battle that occurred a few kilometres outside Distomo between the bands of ELAS and the SS, in the town of Stiri.<sup>49</sup>

The chief of the Red Cross delegate G. Wehrly and his Swedish colleague Callmer approached the bishop of the town to get a first description of the events. The Nazis had executed everyone they saw on their way with bayonets and machine guns. A small committee supervised by the Red Cross was formed in order to provide aid to the survivors. The team recorded some informal testimonies by locals while they walked through the town to see by themselves the traces of the atrocity. Outside the houses of the victims they saw many bullets in the streets and dead animals in the fields. According to Callmer’s official report even “within a distance of approximately 5 kilometres away from the village, the stench was highly prevalent because of the sepsis of the dead animals caused by the sun. They were around 100 slaughtered horses and donkeys” (see *Archives of the International Committee of Red Cross: A Report on aid to Distomo, Veotias, D.E.E.S*, Athens, 23 June 1944: p 4-5). He reported the following:

---

<sup>49</sup> *Archeia tes Diethnous Epitropis tou Erythrou Stavrou: Ekthesis stes Metaferomenes voethies sto Distomo Boeotias*, D.E.E.S (Archives of the International Committee of Red Cross: A Report on aid to Distomo, Veotias, D.E.E.S), Athens, 23 June 1944: page 2.

“.... I visited the houses of the slaughtered. In these houses, I found traces of blood some of which were prevalent, in some there was female hair crawling, blood in some shoes, torn clothes, pieces of blanket. The testimonies reveal that the soldiers chased from room to room the residents and they did not leave anyone alive. From the massacre they got away only people who managed to escape or hide. In one room I found a very thick pile of blood which prevented the door to open. There I found pellets, but it seems that the massacre was mainly committed with bayonets, for this can be proven by the very large numbers of victims, because the villagers did not realise what kind of acts were taking place inside the houses. I was astonished by the extent of bayonet use. The children until five years old were all murdered, many young women were raped and afterwards they were disembowelled. No woman made it, except from those who managed to escape from the village”.<sup>50</sup>

One of the first victims of the massacre was the local priest of the town Sotirios Zissis. He along with the mayor of the town was questioned whether there were partisans of ELAS in the area (Manolopoulou, 2007:14). The priest refused to give them any information and told them that there were no Elasitas in the town or in the wider area and as a result he was decapitated in his house. According to some people’s testimonies, ten more victims were slaughtered in Father’s Zissis’s house; five of which were children below the age of five. His wife was also found dead with her murdered little daughter in her hands and her little “head cut in her mother’s knees” (Archives of the International Committee of Red Cross: A Report on aid to Distomo, Veotias, D.E.E.S, Athens, 23 June 1944: p. 6).<sup>51</sup> Based on other people’s accounts who talked to the team of the Red Cross, they found whole families brutally killed, as well as many young children such as that of a three month baby. The survivors found a

---

<sup>50</sup> *Archeia tes Diethnous Epitropis tou Erythrou Stavrou: Ekthesis stes Metaferomenes voethies sto Distomo Boeotias , D.E.E.S* (Archives of the International Committee of Red Cross: A Report on aid to Distomo, Veotias, D.E.E.S), Athens, 23 June 1944: p 5.

<sup>51</sup> Other sources suggest that they were 12 or 14 people locked in Father’s Sotirios Zissi’s house, some of which finally escaped death (Theoharis, 2010: 331).

new born child with “his carotid cut and a part of his intestines wrapped around his neck” , while his “mother’s breast was cut and was put into her baby’s mouth” (ibid).

### **The Anti-Nazi Resistance in the Battle of Stiri**

Before we start discussing the stories of the survivors and hear from their own words what they viewed and experienced, we need first to explain what happened before the massacre; how and why the Germans went to the village after an intense battle with the partisans of ELAS. I therefore met Giannis whose father was a guerrilla of the ELAS and who took part in the battle of Stiri. His father was 20 years old when he joined the partisans in the mountains of Parnassus. He became a member of the 11<sup>th</sup> Unit, of the 3<sup>rd</sup> Battalion, of the 34<sup>th</sup> Regiment of ELAS, which had its base in the Mount Elicon (Elikonas) and near the town of Stiri. He left his home to live in the icy mountains of Parnassus to fight the Italians and the Nazis from 1942 until the end of the war, and specifically “he along with his partisan group attacked the last German convoy that was leaving Athens, crushing them in the district of Aghia Sotira, where the Germans experienced the last defeat” (Giannis, Distomo, 29 September, 2009).



(Driving 20 kilometres outside the village of Distomo, near the village of Thourio and towards reaching the Guerrilla Mountains of Parnassus, Boeotia, Central Greece. Picture captured in December 2008).

I asked him to give me more information concerning the battle of Stiri that led the Germans to go back to Distomo and commit the massacre. Giannis unfolded his father's story with great detail:

“In June 1944, the unit Chief took permission from the 3<sup>rd</sup> Battalion of ELAS to go to a small area of Aghios Panteleimonas near the town of Stiri in order to do some routine cleaning work. Men from the nearby Stiri helped them to patch the boots, for the partisans were always coming back from the mountains with destroyed boots, and the women of the town helped them to boil the clothes in order to kill the lice. Therefore they decided to stay there. But since that area was near the road, they had to take some extra measures precisely because they were partisans. And a partisan was always in danger since the Germans could have attacked them any time. For that reason, the military

captain and his assistant sent the partisans to an even higher area so as to be able to inspect both Distomo and the route that connects Levadia town with Distomo, signalling them about possible German convoys coming towards them. At the same time, the military captain ordered two more seniors and my father who at that time was a Sergeant major to move north-west, towards Distomo, in order to inspect the route Distomo- Stiri and set up an ambush in case German convoys were coming near the area. They determined the location in a hill close to Stiri” (Giannis, Distomo, 29 September 2008).

It was very early in the morning when they started their cleaning work. After 5 hours and around eight in the morning the cleaning soon had to be stopped, when they saw from the ambush a large German convoy of around 40 men coming from Levadia and towards Arachova. The senior gave a signal to the partisans and warned them to go straight to the ambush, and be ready for a possible attack. They took all the ammunition and waited for orders. The location of the ambush was chosen very carefully in a spot where the old road was extremely narrow and thus it would be impossible for a convoy to make a turn and retreat. While waiting however, they already heard gun fire coming from the village of Distomo. On their way, the Nazis killed everyone they saw; “they killed villagers and farmers who were working in the fields for no reason at all. Everyone they saw, they killed them! They also killed many Distomites on their way to Distomo and took 12 hostages who had nothing to do with the resistance” (Giannis, Distomo, 29 September 2009, see also Manolopoulou, 1994:15). When the Germans approached the ambush, the partisans fired towards the Nazi convoy. The first two SS cars were caught by surprise immobilizing the rest of the convoy (Giannis, Distomo, 29 September, 2008, see also Lappas, 2001:17). Giannis declared that:

“The first rows of German cars were disguised. The Germans who came from the city of Levadia were dressed with civil clothes that took from prisoners at a local prison. They disguised the first two cars in order to fool the locals and

look like black marketers. But the guerrilla attack on the first cars was deadly, for imagine: a unit of 100 partisans to shoot non-stop towards one direction! [...] the German casualties were enormous, for the partisans were shooting the immobilised convoy non-stop! The battle lasted for some time, while the Germans tried to retreat by moving towards the hills. But while moving into the hills, they were even more exposed [...] The andarte<sup>52</sup> used all their ammunition, for this is the very purpose of setting up an ambush, which is to astonish the enemy, have a short fight, kill as much as possible and use all your weapons. The Germans eventually retreated. The Elasitas had one wounded who unfortunately died, but it was the only casualty” (Giannis, 29 September 2009).

### **Survivors’ Memoirs**

When the Germans retreated as we just heard, they took their casualties and hostages and went to Distomo for retaliation. I met Dimitris whose family and relatives were all murdered. He was six years old when the massacre occurred, while his sister Katerina was four, and his little brother Makis was 2 years old.<sup>53</sup> The day of the massacre, his father told his children to go to their grandmother’s house and hide. On the way however, they met their mother who took their little brother Maki, and she returned to their house. Dimitris and his sister heard a lot of shootings while at their grandmother’s house and very soon had to leave this house as well and go straight to the next one which was their aunt’s house. Dimitris told me that back in those days, most relatives in every village of Greece used to live in close proximity, and thus it was easy to move and hide. So that house as he argued, hosted many relatives at that time. They hid there for a long time. From the windows of the house one could see the town square and the public school and they were actually very close to the massacre scene (Dimitris, Distomo, 29 September, 2009). His sister Katerina described to me her mother’s fear when she saw the Nazis and started speculating that something is going on:

---

<sup>52</sup> Andarte(s) is the name for Greek partisan (literally a rebel).

<sup>53</sup> In my presentation of the interviews I use pseudonyms for all my interviewees.

“My mother, sad as she was, feared they would take her husband. Once we reached the other house we went to my mother’s cousin. Our aunt said to my mother: ‘Angeliki something is happening and we must hide. What should we do?’ My mother said to her: ‘take the kids and I will stay with Makis’ and she took him to her shoulders. She took him and went back to her house to find her husband as he had just returned from work” (Katerina, Distomo, 29 September 2009).

In the mean time, the two siblings who hid at their grandmother’s house could see from the window what was happening. The Germans arrived at the village square and they executed the 12 hostages in the school’s wall which was used as a firing squad. Katerina’s brother, Dimitris, who was two years older, remembered that one of the hostages named Pavlos resisted to the Germans. The Nazis beat him without mercy and then shot him along with the other hostages. Their grandmother was gripped by terror as she tried to close the eyes of the kids, but Dimitris said: “I was very curious as a child and I sat next to her and I saw them standing against the wall as they shot them” (Dimitris, Distomo, 29 September 2009).

After the Germans left the firing squad, the time stopped for Distomo. In two hours approximately, the SS murdered 218 people, almost the entire population of the village. The Nazis disembowelled pregnant women, raped many girls of early teens, and then they slaughtered them with bayonets. They decapitated babies, took people’s eyes out and executed the men of the town, while everyone else who survived the atrocity totally “lost their reasoning”, for they could not believe it was true what they saw (Theocharis, 2010: 346-347).<sup>54</sup>

Dimitris’ grand-grandfather was sitting outside the house in a step, and beneath a tent in order to protect from the sun and from possible shootings. His wife and daughter were “kneading the bread while they saw that actually the Germans entered their house and killed

---

<sup>54</sup> Similarly the description of the events were vividly described by many local newspapers of the time, see *Mahi* 9.6.1946, *Mahi*, 7.7.1944, *Embros*, 12.6.1945, *Asyrmatos*, 9.6.1945.

them both". His grand-grandfather tried to resist but he and his cousin were executed. Dimitris, Katerina and their aunt saw this horrific scene and the latter screamed: "they killed my mother Athina!" (Dimitris, Distomo, 29 September, 2009). The two siblings were very lucky as their aunt helped them to hide. The house was on the ground floor and had a trap door beneath the cement. Although it was very small and narrow, the one after the other managed to get in. Their aunt Vicki helped her sister first, and then the two siblings and she closed the trap door and covered it with a rug (Katerina, Distomo, 29 September, 2009). Katerina's brother Dimitris, remembers that the trap door was so narrow and small – only a meter long- and he wondered as he was chatting with me, how was it possible for his grandmother to get into the trap-door, given that she was very old and overweight. He told me: "how did she get in? It was God's will!" (Dimitris, Distomo, 29 September, 2009).

While the siblings and their relatives stayed underground, Dimitris, was hurt but he didn't notice. The Germans entered their house through the kitchen door and they left through the main door as they did not find anyone. They could hear however the Nazi boots as they passed above the trap door, and Katerina told me: "now that I am thinking..., if they had burned the house, after finding no one in the house, we would be burned like mice trapped in the cage" (Katerina, Distomo, 29 September, 2009). When the Germans stopped firing she declared that:

"We opened the trap door and came out. Now imagine..., a child staying in this tiny basement for an hour or two...was it for a year? I didn't realise. We stayed there and we didn't cry or cough at all, but deep inside us we were really frightened. Then, we left and went back to our parent's house. We were the first children and actually the first people who walked in the streets after the massacre. We started screaming: "Mum, Dad, Maki!" We found our mum sitting next to the fireplace of the room and as we touched her, she fell down. Little Makis was on the floor! When my brother Dimitris – who was older than me- tried to lift him up, his little stomach and inner organs fell on the floor! We

were screaming and shouting, hoping we will hear a response from our parents. But we realised they were no longer alive! We went to the balcony and started shouting” (Katerina, Distomo, 29 September, 2009).

When their aunt Vicki told them to go back to their parent’s house, the children said to her that everyone was killed. Dimitris told me that her sister screamed over the balcony: “Grandma, Vicki! They killed mum, dad and little Makis!” They were told to go to their other grandma’s house which was on the other side of the village. Soon the massacre stopped as the night was falling. When the siblings left, they saw their grand- grandfather and their second cousin executed outside the house along with many other villagers in the streets. Dimitris declared that they found specifically a man on the street covered in blood begging for help. Dimitris told me: “*You understand now huh? I was 6 years old and my sister 4! What do you expect...and those days my girl ...what could one expect?*” (Dimitris, Distomo, 29 September, 2009).

Once they arrived to the other side of the town, they were bombarded with questions by many villagers who escaped murder. They heard the shootings but did not know what was happening on the other side of the town. It has been suggested that the massacre lasted approximately two hours as the Germans rushed to leave before the nightfall. Katerina argued, that “if there was still daylight had the Germans arrived earlier, they would have killed by far more civilians” (Katerina, Distomo, 29 September, 2009). Indeed as Lappas argues, the nightfall made the Nazis to abandon their bestial deeds. However and apart from the horrific murders they committed the previous hours, they looted everything from the houses; they took money, jewellery, destroyed furniture and ripped clothes (Lappas, 2001:42, see also Manolopoulou, 1994: 14-15).

The survivor Alexandra was 12 years old and described to me her own experience. She told me that some of the 12 hostages that the Germans took after the battle of Stiri were distant relatives. She asked me: “Why did they do this to us? From which bitch’s body they came out? ” For a moment she stopped and cried. She told me that the Germans were extremely “anticommunist” and were keeping an eye on the partisans all the time. But the guerrillas were always alert and ready for a possible attack as if they “knew what would happen”. They were always around the villages protecting the civilians and in their spare time she could hear them relaxing with songs and marches (Alexandra, Distomo, 29 September, 2009). Her siblings were six and three years old respectively, while her mother was twenty nine. Once the Germans entered their house her father was really scared. They “came into our house with anger and they were looking everywhere like demons, I guess for weapons or whether they were partisans hiding somewhere”. When they found her father they tortured and beat him severely. Alexandra was “gripped by terror” when she saw her father in that condition. But suddenly, emotions of survival came back to her reason. She wanted to save herself. She was too young to safely jump from the window, and her father prevented her to make the attempt (Alexandra, Distomo, 29 September, 2009).<sup>55</sup> She said:

“I wanted to jump out of the window, even though it was very high, in order to enter the next house, where my friend was staying. My friend was very strong, she did not fear. She stayed still. I fell after all in to a trap door! And inside my mind, my instinct, was telling me that there will be death here! I entered the house next by, and the Germans came in with weapons. I was torn to shreds! The Germans told us not to go out, otherwise ‘kaput’! [...] My mother, who was 29 years old at that time, was killed with a machine-gun. Her brains came out! In general, there was a lot of killing with bayonets and disembowelment. [...] My grandfather, 65, came out of the house to see what happened. But he was executed! [...]My grandmother saw her parents on the street dead! All of

---

<sup>55</sup> See also Alexandra’s experience of the massacre in Miltiadi N. Nikolaou’s book *Emerologio Apo to Metopo (Diary from the Front)*, 2007:137-157.

my relatives were executed with machine guns. Afterwards, I was running like crazy out in the streets without shoes. My sorrow could not be described. My grandmother, 56, was waiting in order to bury them. But who would bury them? There was no priest anymore!” (Alexandra, Distomo, 29 September 2009).

After the massacre, Alexandra received aid from international organisations such as the Red Cross. She left Distomo however after the massacre to stay with her uncle for some time in Athens who was “a left-wing idealist”. She told me she was “lucky twice” in her life as she nearly escaped death again during the “*December Events*” in 1944, once the Germans left the country (during liberation). That month she argued, the British bombarded Athens and started a war against the Greek left.<sup>56</sup> She was present during the events and that her uncle was “arrested by the British”, but she told me: “I don’t know why” (Alexandra, Distomo, 29 September, 2009).

Very soon the news of the massacre reached the radio stations all over Europe and in the U.S, commenting on the act of “barbarity” and the inconceivable extent of “anthropo-slaughter” (Lappas, 2001: 81). But the worst was yet to come for this small village in central

---

<sup>56</sup> The *December Events* in Athens 1944 known in Greece as the “*Dekemvriana*” or the “Battle for Athens” refer to the events that followed after the Germans left the country, when British troops arrived in Athens and announced that the city was liberated. The battle that lasted 32 days refers to the conflict created by Winston Churchill’s policy to prevail in the Athenian capital against the Greek left and destroy the resistance of EAM/ELAS that was winning public support (see Churchill’s letter to General Scobie instructing him to occupy Athens “with bloodshed if necessary” on the 5<sup>th</sup> of December 1944: FO 954/11B, image ref: 154). The first two days of *Dekemvriana* marked with bombings, arrests and “28 deaths and over a hundred wounded” of unarmed demonstrators from the shootings of the collaborators (Security Battalions) and the nationalist / far-right group “X”, along with the presence of British troops in Athens’s central square, Syntagma Square (Tsoucalas, 1969:85). The events lasted for many weeks with thousands of dead people, marking the beginning of the civil war between the left and the right as the politics of Downing Street insisted in bringing king George II back in Greece from Britain and govern the country, satisfying in this way British interests in Greece and in the wider Mediterranean region (Gerolymatos, 2005: 54-55). However, George II was a political figure extremely unpopular in Greece since he was a fascist and a great supporter of Metaxas’s dictatorship (Myers, 1985:104). Some authors consider the December Events of 1944 as “the first major counterinsurgency” and foreign interference on domestic affairs in post war Europe along with the U.S intervention following the *Truman Doctrine* in 1947(Chomsky, 1997:192-193). We will come back to these events properly in the next chapter and understand a little bit more the “Anglo-Greek affair” that shaped Greece’s post war politics but most importantly its legal aftermath, since many Greek collaborators were hired in prestigious positions in the political arena, in the army and the police while many royalists and fascists remained in power fighting the left until the early 50s. As a political consequence, proper legal prosecution of the Greek Nazis and collaborators came really late in Greece and only for a few.

Greece. For a long time and after the massacre, Distomites were sleeping at night in the caves of nearby mountains. All the survivors hid the night after the massacre, as the Nazis came back the next day to take revenge by burning many houses. Dimitris, remembers that when the Germans returned to the town they also burned his uncle's shop (Dimitris, Distomo, 29 September, 2009). His sister Katerina shared with me her memories of the next day and once the Germans left the town for good. It was very difficult for the remaining residents to really conceptualise the events as well as finding the psychological strength to search for the bodies of their relatives "since they didn't know who was present and who was absent". She declared that many victims were buried in the same grave, while other survivors buried their relatives in their gardens as there was no empty space available in the cemetery (Katerina, Distomo, 29 September, 2009). She burst into tears when she told me that:

"During the burial, my brother's clothes smelt really badly as the previous day tried to hold his little brother Makis. He had little Makis's blood in his clothes! When my grandmother realised that Dimitris smelt she said: 'We should bring clean clothes for Dimitris!' My grandma's grief was horrific during the burial! Her mourning, cry and sorrow were so strong that her navel burst open! She said to me: 'I don't know if you are aware that this can happen actually'. I said: 'I am afraid I didn't know that this is possible'. She took her black headscarf and tried to roll it over her waist to ease the pain. And yet, she kept walking towards the house in order to find new clothes for my brother Dimitris. When she arrived at the house, she screamed to her daughter: 'Vicky, the child will go crazy with this dirt in his body!' " (Katerina, Distomo, 29 September, 2009).

The events of the massacre had such a deadly psychological effect upon its people that it marked the village for many years. The current Mayor of Distomo, Thanasis Panourgias, argued that as a child who was born after the deadly events and until the age of twelve, did not know that women wear any other colour apart from black, for they were mourning for their relatives for years (Theocharis, 2009:206). Katerina too, remembers the constant grief

that prevailed in the town for many years. After the burials for instance, she returned to her parent's house to collect a few items from her mother in order to remember her. She found a red bracelet, but when her grandmother saw her wearing it she said: "my child, this bracelet is red, you must not wear it. From now on you will only wear black!" (Katerina, Distomo, 29 September, 2009). These words as she revealed to me really "stigmatised" her not only as a child but also during her adulthood for she never really enjoyed her life and it was very difficult for her to wear anything else apart from the mourning colours of black and purple. The villagers started to recover the following years, however soon the question rose over who was responsible and why the massacre happened in the first place.

### **Investigation of the Massacre**

There is a growing debate among the residents of Distomo over who was responsible and whether the massacre committed as an act of revenge or not. Some seem to blame the partisans, for if they did not fight with the Nazis none of this would have happened. During my interview with Dimitris, he argued that it was a "wrong tactic" at the wrong time for the partisans of ELAS to get involved to that specific battle with the Nazis and that the deadly massacre was ultimately an "act of revenge". He declared that the Germans wouldn't hurt them had the partisans "remained quiet", and that the 12 hostages who were caught in the fields and later killed were members of "Psarros's organisation" (EKKA).<sup>57</sup> The latter Dimitris said, was a resistance organisation ordered by the Allies to fight the Germans and Psarros was "trained in the German Academy of Germany" after Dictator Metaxas threw him

---

<sup>57</sup> EKKA stands for *Ethniki kai Koinoniki Apeleftherosis* (National and Social Liberation). It was the third and smallest resistance group in Greece, closely tight to EDES group as they were both anti-left, but the latter's politics came closer to republicanism under the leadership of Dimitrios Psarros, contra to EDES which was nationalist and loyal to the Greek crown (Woodhouse, 1968:246). Dimitrios Psarros's main co-chief was Georgios Kartalis; both were about to be accused of collaboration, for they were holding contacts with members of the Security Battalions in order to fight communism (Fleischer, 2006: 92). Stefanos Sarafis (previously an EKKA member) and Gikopoulos (no relation at all with the last, previously an EDES member), abandoned their groups in order to join the bands of ELAS. In fact, Sarafis would be the co-chief of ELAS later along with Ares Velouchiotis.

away from the party.<sup>58</sup> But soon, Dimitris said, Psarros' movement would be destroyed by Ares Velouchiotis's leader of ELAS for they did not "want them in their feet" and that "they did not get along with Zervas's EDES either", while he believes that Ares' actions were driven by his tactic to eradicate all other resistance bands in the area and that is why they attacked the Nazis at Stiri, so as to attack basically the partisans of EKKA (Dimitris, Distomo, 29 September, 2009). However, we found no evidence from any source that gives us this information, that is, that the hostages were members of EKKA, but only that they were farmers who were not members of any resistance, but caught while working in the fields (see, Lappas, 2001, Mazower, 1993, Manolopoulou, 1994, Red Cross Report 23 June 1944, *Life Magazine* November 27 1994, *Asyrmatos* 9/10/45, *Embros* 12/10/45, *Mahi* 7/7/44). Alexandra did not mention anything either concerning the hostages, since she knew many of them for they "were distant relatives" (Alexandra, Distomo, 29 September, 2009).

The nationalist and Nazi-controlled newspapers of the time accused the partisan activity for the massacre without giving credit to the partisans who killed many SS. It is significant to refer and analyse some excerpts of the articles for they reflect the political spirit of the time, the early signs of civil conflict and the ideological motives of those newspapers, since they were serving the interests of the Quisling Governments of the time. It was therefore, quite revealing to read for instance in the newspaper *Embros* that the only explanation for the barbarity of the Nazis was their hatred of communists (*Embros*, 7/7/44).

"[...] all this terror that the German soldier feels for the speedy Russian advance has been expressed with the most repulsive way and with the massacre of Distomo. It is impossible to explain it otherwise why the Germans acted beyond themselves [...] Despite the fact that in the periphery of Levadia during spring there were some clashes between the Germans and the partisans,

---

<sup>58</sup> Indeed Metaxas "rejected" Psarros's offer to join resistance against the Italians in the Albanian Front. He was previously chased and found by the officers of Metaxas, sending him to exile for 3 years (see Fleischer, 1995:238).

Distomo did not suffer for it did not involve in to the war. The Germans themselves lifted a plate in the entrance of the village which said: ‘Do not touch this village for it is quiet and law-abiding’” (*Embros*, 7/7/44 underline my emphasis, strict translation mine).

The false accusations are quite evident in the previous excerpt of the propagandistic newspaper, since the partisans had indeed contacts with all the nearby villages and the village of Distomo was not an exception. The way in which the journalist expressed his astonishment concerning the Nazi ferocity suggested that it was impossible for an armed Nazi unit to behave this way. This argument reveals the pro-Nazi sentiments of a large section of the press during occupation. In the same way Lappas criticizes the whole report that was written by the *then* Prefect of Veotia, Ioannis Georgopoulos, when a few days after the atrocities, he defended the Germans accusing ELAS, arguing that the communists were “naughty” and that “they fuel severely the German anger” (Lappas, 2001:78). Lappas further said that although the events of the massacre were very fresh and therefore nobody had a clear picture, yet this telegram that was sent to the Ministry of Domestic Affairs in Athens, was soon leaked to the “secret nationalist organisations” and the latter distributed it everywhere, finding the best opportunity to provoke the partisans (Lappas, 2001:80).

Although the news of the massacre in a few days reached many parts in and outside Greece, many Nazi officials as well as Greek collaborators sought to cover it or partly excuse it. The quisling PM Ioannis Rallis for instance, although protested against the massacre to a German General, the latter excused himself arguing that he did not have any official report in his hands and that the events seemed “excessive and imaginative” (Lappas, 2001:82). While other German officials, hoped to cover their acts by arguing that it was the work of “mercenaries”. They published a written report in the Nazi controlled Athenian press,

declaring that the “communists” were trying to shape opinion by giving false information to the Greek people that the Germans committed ferocious deeds (Lappas, 2001: 83-84).

The full report fell to my hands while researching in *Gennadius Library* in Athens. The document gives an analytical account of the Distomo events, providing a full list of the victims as well as a summary of the German controlled Athenian Press. And as Lappas indeed argued, the press sought to cover the Nazis by blaming the partisans of EAM/ELAS for spreading rumours about the German atrocities. The published report called on all Greeks to refuse to believe that the Nazis committed these terrible crimes, dictating them to remain quiet and stay out of the resistance. The proclamation is eighteen pages long and the same report was sent a few months later to the Washington Embassy. As we read an excerpt from the official report:

“GREEK KINGDOM

MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS

DEPARTMENT OF INVESTIGATION

Protocol Number 21630

Athens 18 November 1944

#### SUMMARY

About the catastrophe of Distomo

To Washington B' Embassy

Today's telegram 21294 of 18/11/44

We have the honour to announce that in 9 July the then German controlled Athenian Press published under the title ‘The buncombe concerning the bestiality of Distomo’ the following announcement:

The communist buncombe which always tried to disturb the public opinion of Athens by inventing false news regarding raw bestial deeds, has issued a new recent story. Communist buncombe spreads the rumours that, in the peaceful village of Distomo (between Levadia and Arachova, province of Boeotia) more than a thousand of people were slaughtered with bestiality by a German Military Unit. And they claim that even the Mayor, the priest and the pharmacist were murdered after their families. The remaining few survivors were transferred into a safe place by the International Red Cross.

For all nationally minded Greeks, who know the methods of false propaganda of EAM, it is evident its communist origin and motives for spreading this. According to the actual events of Distomo we have been informed by the responsible authorities the following:

In 10 June 1944 one German military unit while on route from Levadia to Arachova was attacked with weapons and machine guns. This unit suffered casualties, deaths and many wounded due to an unmanly attack of EAM. There followed a battle against the gangs who retreated in Distomo using all their means. After using all their heavy weapons, the village, this gang nest was occupied. There were some 350 deaths from the part of the gangs. The deaths of women and children were inevitable after using all the machine guns against this village. Then there was an order to burn the village, whose residents collaborated with the gangs.

These are the facts.

If the gangs of EAM did not go against the German military unit, they would not have attacked and burned the village.

[...] For all the populations of the provinces in Greece this is a new warning that is not to collaborate with the gangs. It depends exclusively on the position of the populations how they will behave or not according to the laws against the gangs. The populations ought to stay away from any political or military action [...]”<sup>59</sup>

Perhaps the above document gives us a vivid example of the Nazi propaganda and the ideological tendencies behind the Nazi controlled press, which was to issue terroristic warnings, along with giving false information to the events. After all, there was no battle between the partisans and the Nazis inside Distomo, but in Stiri, and the propaganda in those cases was to cover up Nazi deeds and abuse the public with false accusations. Not to mention that there is no single critique from the part of the authorities concerning the atrocities that were committed in the village, but instead they criticized heavily the resistance for provoking the SS. Giannis, whose father was a member of ELAS and took part in the battle of Stiri, argued that although the Nazis murdered the victims, it was not an act of revenge (Giannis, 29 September 2009).

We will stay a bit more on this issue as we need to focus on the Nazi perpetrators of the Distomo Massacre and throw more light to the debate.

---

<sup>59</sup> *Filippos Dragoumis* sub-file 62.4: “About the Catastrophe of Distomo”, 18 November 1944, To Washington B’ Embassy, *Gennadius Library*, Athens. Please note that the excerpt which has been used here was carefully translated from the original Greek. However, some words have been modified or excluded to fit modern text, since the original was written in “*Katharevousa Greek*” (“pure” or “clean” Greek), meaning a combination of modern (*demotiki*) and ancient Greek which was used at that time and until 1974, therefore a *strict* translation into English would have been impossible.

## The Nazi Perpetrators

Giannis declared, that everything was “predetermined” from the part of the SS units and argued that it is “not what I think, but there are German documents that prove this”. Giannis said, that according to the German Historian Dieter Begemann who examined the atrocity of Distomo and “searched the military archives of Germany”, traced the real perpetrators who revealed to him that they were planning to attack the nearby villages anyway (Giannis, Distomo, 29 September, 2009). Dieter Begemann’s investigation into the massacre appear in the Greek book of Giorgos H. Theocharis (2010) *Distomo 10 Iouniou 1944, To Olokautoma*, as well as in a recent documentary of Greek *Skai Channel* which was broadcasted by the journalistic group of “*Skai Folders*”.<sup>60</sup>

Giannis, furthermore declared that the historian found that the SS left Levadia in the morning of 10 June already with wild and “aggressive intentions” and that they “were specific orders and central planning” prior to any battle with the partisans. They knew in other words that the villages in the mountains were well organised in the Anti-Nazi war and wanted to suppress the resistance by spreading terror to the civilians. Furthermore, the Nazi Occupation was coming to an end and the Nazi troops had to find a way to leave the occupied zones of Greece and Europe as a whole without resistance, securing in this way that the “road-exits” were open and free from any partisan activity (Giannis, Distomo, 29 September 2009). As Giannis told me:

“[...] the German goal in those circumstances was precisely to spread terror and commit crimes against local unarmed people. Why? Because we have to connect the story with the time it happened (i.e. 10 June 1944); the landing at Normandy had been already decided, the Red Army had entered Hungary, and the Germans therefore knew they were losing the war. Hence as far as Greece

---

<sup>60</sup> see the documentary on the official site of Skai Folders where Dieter Begemann is providing new insights on the perpetrators and their intentions, <http://folders.skai.gr/main/theme?id=97&locale=en>

is concerned and towards the end of the war, the Nazis had to make sure that the exit-roads were open in order to retreat easily, for after all they knew that within two to three months they had to leave the country<sup>61</sup> [...] for example, while leaving the country, the Germans paid a heavy price in some parts of Greece when the guerrillas set them many ambushes. So that was their goal, and this can be understood by many other events. First of all, the German units in the area of Levadia and around were very specific; they were not part of the Wehrmacht but they were SS. They were in other words, Grenadier Armoured of the 4<sup>th</sup> German Police Division, whose main goal in Greece was to do an anti-partisan war in the mountains, and destroy the resistance all together. Therefore and as you imagine, such a division had a specific method such as slaughtering, spreading horror and executing, for otherwise you cannot terrify a whole population that is anti-Nazi and part of the resistance movement. [...] They were deliberately located in the most difficult parts of Greece (such as areas of extreme altitude) in order to ‘clean’ them and retreat easily” (Giannis, Distomo, 29 September, 2009).

Of course Gianni’s argument is strong and convincing; however, the SS appeared in Greece and specifically in Salonika not in 1944 but a year earlier, when they practiced anti-Semitic laws. However, Gianni’s argument has indeed a historical and political validity and we would agree that the SS had a strong anti-resistance mission, but it was of secondary importance which became primary after they deported the Jews from the major cities of the country, or we can argue that these two Nazi missions co-existed, for while Jews were persecuted in Greece and throughout Europe, the partisan war was continuing in the continent. But for now we will stay on the previous argument, for the Nazi ferocity did not stop at Distomo, but there was the battle in the village of Stiri that numbered many deaths of

---

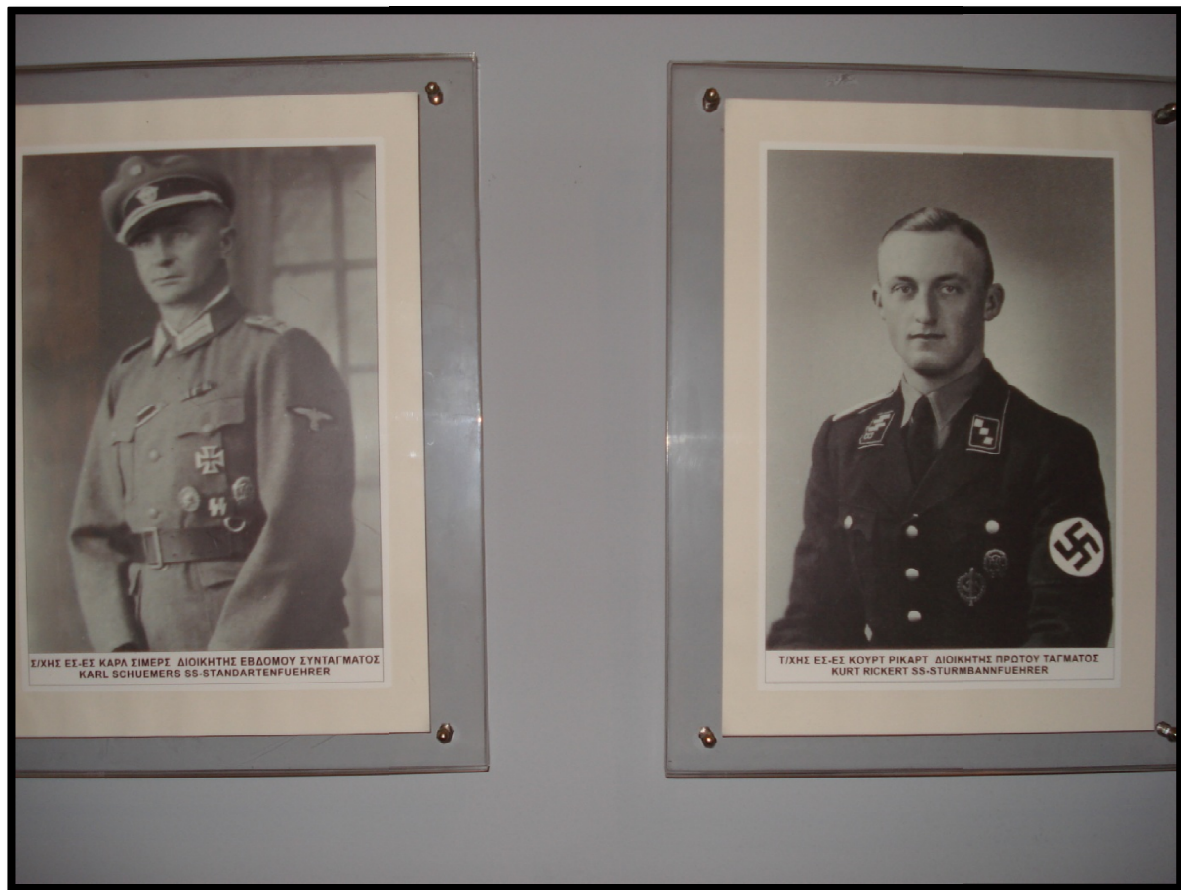
<sup>61</sup> What Gianni argues here, is that the Germans increased the methods of terror as resistance activity was everywhere in Greece. Towards the end of the war all roads were closed and destroyed and the mountains were full of partisans. There was no way out for the Germans. In order to leave the mountains and go to the nearest cities, they had to face ambushes. Their methods of terror and slaughter increased so as to get away from the country as they were losing the war. “Cleaning” the roads so as to leave meant killing the populations on their way out.

unarmed people, as well the catastrophe of another nearby village, Kyriaki. The latter was set on fire and 110 people were executed. Specifically, in the slaughter of Kyriaki, ELAS partisans killed two more SS officers along with the chief commander of the Greek Security Battalions who “ordered the execution of 110 communists and the total catastrophe of the village Kyriaki” as an act of “retaliation” (*Vima*, 2/5/1944). In this small geographical region that covered three small towns, more than 750 were killed (Theocharis, 2010:87). That also explains the fact that the Germans had a well planned strategy and they wanted to search and destroy the resistance in the mountains of Central Greece.

However, we left deliberately towards the end of our discussion the issue of perpetrators for there was confusion in the beginning among some residents of the town as well as many officials as to why the massacre happened and who was involved. Some residents for instance, believed that the one who ordered the massacre was an officer named *Theo* who left Levadia with the SS cars towards Arachova. Once he came to Distomo he died deeply wounded (see Lappas, 2001:14-15). The survivors who spoke to me saw him indeed that day. However, Giannis does not deny that he was wounded or that he was not involved from the beginning when the tracks left Levadia, but he was not the one who ordered the massacre. In fact the one who ordered this atrocity was the company commander of SS Fritz Lautenbach, Karl Schuemers (commander of the 7<sup>th</sup> Regiment of SS) and Kurt Rickert (commander of the 1<sup>st</sup> Band of SS) who were based in Levadia and were under the supervision of the chief Kopfner who escorted those tracks (Giannis, Distomo, 29 September, 2009; see also Mazower, 1993:209, 212-215; see also Theocharis, 2010:345).

Giannis declared that “based on documents and pictures that I have” *Theo* was not a German official but a “Greek collaborator” who knew the German language very well (“possibly his mother was German”) and the SS were using him as an “interpreter”. His real name was Theodoros but “some German officers were calling him Theo for convenience, and

in fact Fritz Lautenbach did not even know Theo”, yet he was one of the track drivers in the first rows who died at Stiri. (Giannis, Distomo, 29 September, 2009). Hence, Theo was the one who approached the priest Sotirios Zissis along with Kofner and questioned him before he was murdered (Theocharis, 2010: 102).



(Pictures were taken at the Distomo Museum: from left, SS Karl Schuemers and Kurt Rickert were among those responsible for the massacre)



(Picture from the Distomo Museum: The Nazi who ordered the massacre was SS Fritz Lautenbach)

Upon further investigation, there were other Nazis as well who were involved in the central planning of the massacre such as *Georg Koch* who was a sergeant of the secret military police of GFP of Levadia, *Willy Janis*, a commander of the GFP, along with two more who were charged later for similar crimes in the wider region of Veotia, such as *Karl Pahr* and a female interpreter named Joanna (see Theocharis, 2010:343-345). Furthermore,

Fritz Lautenbach and in order to excuse himself, declared that the German convoy was actually attacked “from the direction of Distomo” and not at Stiri during the battle with the ELAS (Mazower, 1993: 212; see also Theocharis, 2010:376). He lied in other words for there was no battle inside the town of Distomo, not only because our literature supports this or because Gianni’s father was present in the events, but because the historian Dieter Begemman found Georg Koch himself after the massacre who escorted the German convoys, refuting Lautenbach’s version. Georg Koch claimed that the Nazis were attacked by ELAS few kilometres away from Distomo near Stiri as a result of an ambush and that the massacre committed for no reason at all, while Lautenbach argued that they were attacked inside Distomo (see Dieter Begemann’s analysis in Theocharis, 2010: 374-375; see also Mazower, 1993:212; see also Begemann’s interview at *Skai Folders* on <http://folders.skai.gr/main/theme?id=97&locale=en>).

According to Mazower, Fritz Lautenbach “admitted that he had gone beyond standing orders” and that the surprised attack by the partisans of ELAS would not have been successfully implemented without the close cooperation of the civilians of Distomo and the nearby villages (Mazower, 1993: 212). Based on the interview of Dieter Begemann at *Skai Folders* where he gave for the first time new insights regarding the perpetrators, declared that no member of the SS would have been legally charged had the then Prefect of Veotia not sent a “desperate letter” to the German military commander asking for help and talking about “unprecedented catastrophe” in Distomo. That urgent letter made the chiefs of the SS in the province of Veotia “succumb to general pressures” and start questioning their division. There were two reports; one for the events of Stiri and one for Distomo. The latter was highly “controversial” as the SS Division tried to manipulate the events (<http://folders.skai.gr/main/theme?id=97&locale=en>). When Dieter Begemann interviewed Georg

Koch in prison a few days before he died and in a rare audio report, revealed to him the deeds of the SS Division inside Distomo. In his own words Georg Koch said:

“The Germans took position. They set houses on fire, killing everyone they saw. It was horrific. There is a scene which I cannot forget. There was a woman with her baby in her arms begging for her life. But they killed her and her baby. This scene I will never forget”.<sup>62</sup>

The newspapers of the time published the names of the perpetrators calling them to stand in court and bring them in front of justice. The newspaper *Eleftheria* for instance wrote that the SS Kurt Rickert along with five more officials were charged for war crimes and that the “ordinance will be send to the martial court as well as to London” where the central committee for war crimes was based (*Eleftheria*, 13/12/1945).

### **The Legal Prosecutions**

The whole legal procedure against the Nazi perpetrators in the case of Distomo was a parody and so disappointing to the point of suspicion. Since Georg Koch and Lautenbach wrote two different reports to the chief commander of the SS Police Division in Athens as to the events of Distomo, and Lautenbach lied in his report, Germany argued a month after the events, that since he “wrote a false report”, he was not officially in charge for ordering these “retaliation operations”, therefore he could not be found guilty without further supporting documentation (Theocharis, 2009:376-377). The remaining perpetrators escaped justice, however some of them such as Karl Schuemers died in the fall of 1944 after “falling into a mine” in Northern Greece, while Lautenbach died a month later “following a retreat from Hungary”. The only SS officer who was charged for the massacre was Helmut Felmy (a commander based in Levadia) who was accused of “war crimes” during the Nuremberg Trials. He was imprisoned for 15 years (later reduced), while the same court found

---

<sup>62</sup> <http://folders.skai.gr/main/theme?id=97&locale=en>

Lautenbach innocent on the basis of his “false report” (Theoharis, 2009: 375-376, 378). The only SS that the Greek Authorities found and sent to the prisons of Averoff in Athens was Heinz Zabel. The latter and according to the documents of the Historian Dieter Begemann was a “local commander in Levadia” in the summer of 1944 and although nobody knew him, “his name appeared in all public announcements and staff documents”, and according to the Greek authorities he was highly involved in the case of the massacre (Theoharis, 2009: 378). However, in 1953 Germany struggled with the Greek Authorities to release him from prison on the grounds that the “procedure against him would be continued in Germany” (ibid). Although further substantial information about the Distomo massacre was found after the events in order to re-open the case in 1969, the Local Court of Munich decided that the case was already closed in 1944, thus they could not proceed further (Theoharis, 2009:379).

The case of Distomo closed for good without further investigation. Costas, who was 4 years old when his parents were murdered by the Nazis, revealed to me his great disappointment concerning not only the escape of the perpetrators, but also the failure of the German Government to give compensation to the victims. Costas was active for more than 10 years in the Greek, Italian and German courts, fighting for compensating the victims, and although the Greek and Italian courts approved their case, the “Supreme Court of Germany did not dare to search for laws that would justify the victims” and that the only case reaching the German courts was the massacre of Kommeno in the province of Epirus, “nevertheless no Nazi was charged” for their crimes (Costas, 30 September 2009, Athens).

Finally the case of Distomo stands as an example to refer to other dreadful events that occurred throughout Occupied Europe. It is very difficult to list all the massacres, mass crimes, and revengeful acts that were committed against numerous unarmed communities all over the continent during but also after the war. Nazi occupation ended in most countries with brutal replies as numerous slaughters committed in the name of revenge without always

resistance. A tragic coincidence was that the same day and year Distomo lost almost its entire population, another massacre occurred some thousand miles away. In 10 June 1944, SS men slaughtered 642 civilians in Oradour-sur-Glane in France. The civilians were not part of the resistance, yet the remnants were 80 survivors who counted numerous corpses and burned homes (Farmer, 1999:1-2, 25; see also Kruuse, 1967:8). Further south in Italy and close to Tuscany, in 12 August 1944, 300 SS massacred approximately 560 civilians in Sant' Anna di Stazemma, 116 of which were children. (Pezzino, 2012: xiv).

A recent and remarkable study by Jan Gross, *Neighbours*, describes the horrific massacre that occurred in Jedwabne in Nazi-Occupied Poland in 10 July 1941. This study caused seismic waves to the modern public opinion in Poland, as the pogrom was committed against the Polish Jews by their Polish neighbours; hence, the massacre was to be silent and un-reported for decades (Gross, 2001: 73, 22). This study was remarkable because Gross observed that many atrocities occurred on Polish soil, as a result of Nazi and Soviet advances; however the latter historiography overshadowed “the reality of autonomous dynamics in the relationships between Poles and Jews within the constraints imposed by the occupiers” (Gross, 2001:9). This unreported and undocumented massacre that counted hundreds of Jewish victims came along with further pogroms that occurred before the Jedwabne massacre in the nearby village of Radzilow (Gross, 2001: 57). Furthermore, there were numerous killings, rapes, massacres and ethnic cleansings throughout the war in Europe. In most cases, these dreadful events occurred with no resistance (Lowe, 2012).

## **Conclusion**

Revenge, purge, retaliation was the everyday vocabulary in most European cities and villages during Nazi Occupation. Imperialism, irredentism, intervention, culminated during and after the war was over, as Western and Eastern Allies, European political parties and nationalist factions would assume new roles, dividing Europe into dynamic seismic geo-

plates. This chapter through the account of Distomo aimed at addressing these aspects of the war and connect the memories of the Jews with the memories of non-Jews. We established first clear distinctions between the Genocide of the Jews during Occupation and massacres that committed upon other populations on the basis of ethnic and political rivalries. We examined the massacre, the chronicle of the slaughter and the anti-Nazi resistance in the Battle of Stiri. We sought to narrate the atrocity through the testimonies of the survivors' interviews and we further analysed the motives of the Nazi perpetrators and the legal response in the aftermath. We have concluded that there were many atrocities, mass rapes, massacres and ethnic cleansings throughout the war in the European continent without always resistance and yet in the name of vengeance and retaliation. Many dreadful events went unreported for a long time throughout Europe, whereby victims did not receive compensation in the aftermath, and a number of perpetrators escaped the judiciary as in the case of many massacres in Greece. Last but not least, the massacre of Distomo aimed to understand what was happening in the Greek mountains during occupation, how collaborators worked with the Nazi authorities, how political rivalries emerged in the resistance and how atrocities committed upon local populations. The Greek Jewish survivors who returned both from the camps and the mountains were constantly pre-occupied with political themes during and after the war, and understand that the political turmoil affected them. This episode therefore, stood as a mediator between the Jews during the war and the Jews in the years of post-war memory and restitution (see final chapter).

### PART III: POLITICAL PERSPECTIVES

## Chapter 5. Collaboration in Greek Politics, 1940-1945

### Introduction

This chapter deals with the politics that prevailed in Greece throughout the war and the mechanisms of collaboration. *First*, it deals with the political agenda of Greece throughout the 40s, and second it challenges the issue of collaboration in Greece by exploring the socio – political mechanisms under which the country found itself. The Greek political elite kept alive the forces of monarchy (politics of old Greece) to shape the future political agenda by destroying the revolutionary resistance that was winning public support. The aforementioned political issues paved the way to shape Nazi legal decisions in Greece as a whole that we shall discuss in the next chapter.

The section on collaboration gives an account on the political agenda of the Quisling Governments during Axis Occupation, the role of the Security Battalions, para-statists, paramilitarists, fascists, and the politics of former king George II who was a great supporter of the dictatorship of Metaxas. All aforementioned remained in the Greek air after the war was over assuming post-war posts in the government and the army (Close, 1995a:153-154). At the same time, the conflict between the Left and the Right-wing resistance groups during the Nazi war paved the way for a new political entanglement to blow up (and since based on new findings the nationalist right-wing EDES made truce with the Germans in many cases in order to fight ELAS), discussing also the British policy which *had* a role on the latter issue as well as shaping Greece's political future (Stevens, 1982:44). In doing so, we do not seek to criticize British politics during the Nazi Occupation as a whole, for no one can deny their effort as a great ally and their contribution to the war against Nazism, but our analysis will stay on their direct responsibility for releasing collaborators from Greek prisons to fight the Left, and for supporting and funding post-war governments with uniquely fascistic characteristics. These developments did not enable Greece to eradicate the *fascistoid*

atmosphere after the war was over (Richter, 2006:298, 301-303). The politics of Churchill pressured at all costs the Greek politicians in Cairo to support the Greek monarchy, despite going against some of his party members, against much of British public opinion, against the British Press and against “an overwhelming majority of Greek people”.<sup>63</sup> In doing so, we will appreciate better the mechanisms under which Greece was one of those countries in Europe that did not prosecute the Nazis accordingly but instead, they murdered, tried, and exiled the people who fought Nazism, accusing them for being *enemies of the state*. As a result, Greece from the second part of the war and until 1950, the nationalist politics of the Right were more concerned to eradicate leftism than Nazism, and they showed indifference towards punishing the Nazi perpetrators (see Iatrides, 1995:9). Chapter 5 is crucial to understand the logic of the next chapter, which will focus on the legal prosecutions. At the same time, I am raising awareness towards analogous trends in other parts of Europe, namely civil conflicts, collaboration, Allied intervention to fit post-war strategy, so as to address the military, strategic and economic priorities of Allied Europe at the expense of punishment. This discussion is part of an overall dialogue between collaboration and post-war appropriation, in order to understand the poverty of legal aftermath in Greece in the following chapter.

## **Prolegomena**

We are beginning our discussion with one of the most crucial parts in the history of Greece during Axis occupation, namely our critique on the Greek politics that prevailed in the 40s that led also to the conflict between the left and the right while they were still fighting the Nazis. What concerns us in this chapter is that Greece fell really soon into the logic of cold war, even before entering into the logic of civil war. Of course these two go hand in hand since both achieved polarisations, but we need to bear in mind that countries with

---

<sup>63</sup> Debate in the House of Commons, Independent member Driberg’s speech, 12/12/44 London, copy of summary to the Greek Information Office, see *Filippos Dragoumis* Subfile:62.5 “*Dekemvriana 1944*” (December Events 1944), *Gennadius Library*, Athens.

massive resistance such as former Yugoslavia and Greece suffered the worst and experienced the war and its aftermath much differently than the rest of the European family (Judt, 2010:35). Very soon, a question in Greece had to be answered; namely, what the Allies should do with the unexpected growing size of resistance as well as the revolutionary population after the war was over. For clearly, the politicians wanted to go back to the old political agenda (i.e. crown), attack the political forces that were going against their values, fighting any attempt of social revolution. We would agree here with Tony Judt, that Greece and Yugoslavia's war struggle and resistance was so enormous that cannot be compared with any other country even though Greece's resistance is less known. He declared that "there is no doubt that the Greek resistance to the Italians and the Germans was more effective than the better known resistance movements in France or Italy – in 1943-44 alone it killed or wounded over 6,000 German soldiers" (Judt, 2010: 35). There are other reasons however that enabled effective resistance in the above countries, including many parts of France and Nazi-Occupied Poland. These geographical positions were extremely mountainous unlike most north western countries such as the Netherlands and Denmark. The extreme altitudes in some parts of the European continent favoured the birth of resistance activity as it was easy to hide, surprise the enemy, and make the Nazi operations difficult to implement (Lande, 2000:10). Greece's terrain therefore contributed to the birth of an effective resistance activity as "over three-fourths of Greece's land area is mountainous – a roller coaster of almost abysmal gorges and mile-high mountain peaks" (Lande, 2000:159). As Lande declares:

"Of all the occupied countries in Europe, only a few regions had terrain conducive to guerrilla warfare. In east central Europe there were Carpathian Poland, Yugoslavia, and Greece. But in the north west, only Norway north of Oslo provided the mountainous and wooded terrain needed" (Lande, 2000:73).

Moreover, in countries such as former Yugoslavia and Greece, the brutal war never really ended in 1944, but extended for many years resulting to too many human losses due to

internal and external political involvements (Judt, 2010:35). Perhaps we could argue here, that Greece's resistance is less known because, in order to know it, one must look at the same time the tacit and toxic political manoeuvres that were imposed in Greece by the Greek politicians and their Allies. The war in Greece extended for many years and although the country numbered several thousand victims from the Nazi brutalities, the casualties resulting from internal conflicts between the right which was loyal to king George II and the left which was against the old political guard (i.e. crown), were even higher (ibid). The fragmented political atmosphere that occurred in Greece for decades was described quite vividly by one of the former prime ministers of the Greek government - in - exile, Emmanuel Tsouderos, arguing that:

“Since the occupation a terrible civil war has been the symptom or consequence of national disunity and has divided us into slaughterers and slaughtered. And what is worse, this costly clash occurs at internationally critical moment, when post-war political and economic antagonism between the Great Powers of West and East, Allies of the last war, tends to develop into a new world war. The differences between the supporters of the monarchy and the republic, of communism and anti-communism, of the rebels and anti-rebels, of pre-Anglo-Americans and pro-Russians, constitute the facets of the country's complex and most serious internal problem...”<sup>64</sup>

The key reason for the political anomaly that prevailed in Greece throughout the 40s was the fear from the part of the Allies and the Greek politicians that after Hitler's fall, the country would pass in to the hands of a possible communist dictatorship, and that EAM/ELAS would seize power by force.<sup>65</sup> This speculation came along with Churchill's decision to support the old politics of Greece (i.e. crown), enabling at the same time his strategic post war policy to open the links between the West and the East (i.e. Suez Canal,

<sup>64</sup> See “Translation of a series of five articles by M. Emm. Tsouderos, former prime minister, published in ‘Vima’ of 22<sup>nd</sup> to 26<sup>th</sup> April on the internal situation of Greece”, single page file number: xiv-1, in Tsouderos File:14 “*Exthrikai Thiriodiai*” (Enemy's Ferocities), *Gennadius Library*, Athens.

<sup>65</sup> CAB 101/250, Churchill to General Wilson [Italy] and Mr Leeper [Athens], 08/11/44.

Indonesia, Egypt), establishing therefore “routes to the vital oil supplies” in the region, as well as strengthening Britain’s position worldwide. Greece, for that matter – and given its crucial geopolitical location – was the guarantee of the above interests, and the latter could never have been achieved without a “friendly regime” for Britain established in Greece. Hence, Britain sought to establish this “friendly” regime in the face of Greek king George II who was yet a dictator and an open advocate of Hitler and Mussolini<sup>66</sup> (Sfikas, 1991:310, same in Hondros, 1988:33). SOE wrote in their Memorandum: “hooligans were freely used by the ‘Royalist Club’ who threatened people with death whilst lots of others were victims of aggression” (HS 5/242, Image: 00088, Memorandum).

The fact that the movement of EAM/ELAS was thriving towards the end of the Nazi war in Greece enjoying overwhelming public support, made British and Greek elite’s future plans difficult, for the emerging leftist phenomenon in Greece was translated into an obsession as to whether the country would fall in to the hands of a possible left-wing dictatorship (Alexander, 1982: 245-246). This hypothesis however, overshadowed what actually *did* occur, namely not a left-wing *but* a right-wing dictatorship. Political figures both in Greece and Britain such as Winston Churchill and Georgios Papandreou (prime minister of the Government-in-exile) as well as Emmanuel Tsouderos (former Greek prime minister in Cairo), stated many times in public and written speeches about the possibility of the Left to seize power after the Nazis left the country.<sup>67</sup> There are also numerous telegrams between the first two leaders expressing their anxiety as to how they will prevail in Greece against the left, where Papandreou and the coalition government in Cairo wrote to Churchill asking him

---

<sup>66</sup> In fact, Greek crown was so openly fascistic and dictatorial, not only because there was a “dual dictatorship of King and Metaxas”, but because the king recruited in a “compulsory” way in his ranks young boys by poisoning them with “principles of Nazism and Fascism into them” (HS 5/242, Image: 000091, Memorandum).

<sup>67</sup> See for example Tsouderos’s views concerning the future politics of Greece after the German departure in Tsouderos File, 14: “*Exthrikai Thiriodiai*” (Enemy’s Ferocities), single file number: xiv-1, *Gennadius Library*, Athens. See also Churchill’s views against a leftish prospect in Greece in *Churchill: Press Conference, December 27<sup>th</sup> 1944* in *Filippos Dragoumis* File Sub-file:62.5 “*Dekemvriana*”, *Gennadius Library*, Athens.

for help in order to avoid the Greek left to seize power, maintaining in this way Georgios Papandreou's position (the eldest) as a future Prime Minister in post-war Greece, as well as preventing an imminent civil war.<sup>68</sup>

As we mentioned earlier, although the Greek and British authorities feared that the Left would win the political elections after liberation, nothing of the above happened and certainly the civil war was not prevented. On the contrary, it was carefully preserved by both Greek and British policies in order for monarchy to return in the country and the terrorism of right-wing gangs and collaborators to thrive throughout, as they were used as mediators to return to the old regime. We can see from the above personal letters of Churchill how the democratic right of the people to choose their own politicians in the after-math Greece was deeply suppressed. Although the State Department informed the Allies and in particular Churchill and Roosevelt that their insistence in bringing the king back (given that he was unwanted) would automatically mean "political upheaval and even civil war", they insisted and clashed with the major anti-Nazi resistance of EAM/ELAS (Sfikas, 1991:314).

What worries us in this chapter in particular is that the political obsession concerning a possible communist takeover in Greece overshadowed the alternative politics they suggested and actually ruled the country which were based on fascism, authoritarianism, nationalism and far-rightism. As a result, the system of collaboration which was supported by royalists and right-wingers during Nazi occupation was preserved so as to return back to monarchy after liberation. The need to establish order in Greece especially in the years 1945-1950 was given in the hands of the extreme right wing groups (known as the period of "White Terror") who were in fact funded by people who "profited from economic collaboration". These policies not only suppressed the population as well as all forms of

---

<sup>68</sup> Confidential telegram to the British Embassy: 10/12/44, in *Filippos Dragoumis* sub-file: 62.3 "*Politika-Politiaka*" (Political-Civic), *Gennadius Library*, Athens.

political opposition, but the preservation of monarchy was seeing precisely as a key to preserve “traditional values and practices” which were shaken by the Left during the war (Close, 1995b: 125-126).<sup>69</sup>

King George II after all, not only supported the fascist dictatorship of Metaxas in 1936 but returned to his seat a year after with a cooked referendum. However, the majority of the Greek population (around “80-90 per cent”- a number which was estimated by royalists themselves) was negative towards the monarchy (Sfikas, 1991:312). Sfikas suggests that it was 80-90 % of the population that did not want the king. The official statement of SOE gave a 70% antipathy, while arguing at the same time that all political parties in Greece were unanimous against the crown by signing a “United Declaration Front Declaration against the King” in the summer of 1943 (SOE, HS5/ 242, Image: 00059, 18 July 1943, Most Secret: “Formation of Shadow Government”). People’s fear and hostility towards the crown was justified on the grounds that the latter would restore a new right-wing dictatorship, and these were realistic fears and imminent possibilities that the Foreign Office and Churchill knew very well, but they carried out their policies anyway (Sfikas, 1991:312).

It is not difficult therefore to start guessing why the collaborators were never chased or charged in Greece after the war was over, for these were the enabling factor for the old monarchical agenda to continue in Greece suppressing all opposition. There are many things to explore here that we will see later on in order to explain the poverty of legal prosecution in the next chapter (chapter 6). But still we need to always remind ourselves why we will be giving emphasis to these events; and that is because all these political tactics, provided the ground for nationalism and authoritarian ideology to prevail in Greece. It was a regime that was built on military grounds in the late 40s and 50s allowing nothing else but what we know

---

<sup>69</sup> See here David Close’s explicit analysis of the right-wing politics in Greece as they were re-established in the post war years, in his essay “The Changing Structure of the Right, 1945-1950” in *Greece at the Crossroads: The Civil War and its Legacy*, 1995, pp 122-156.

in Greece as *ethnikofrosini* (Greek “National Mindedness”) “establishing a repressive, anti-communist post-civil war state” (Karakatsanis, 2001: 30). The left and its supporters were seen as the enemy in the emerging political agenda of Greece and since the bourgeois agenda was pro-fascist, consequences of Nazism, fascism and of the Greek Holocaust as an integral part of the Greek history that had to be re-visited were totally ignored. All the aforementioned were considered as an anathema to the new Greek nation that was emerging, and the political and military authorities in Greece did not care about the collaborators at all (ibid). The years and decades that followed came with persecutions, tortures, exiles, “martial laws” and “emergency decrees” for those who resisted not only the Nazi ideology but the so-called *old Greece*. Anything new and progressive was forbidden for it was considered by definition communistic and anarchic. Mazower in this way reflects upon the post-war Greek phenomenon with excellent understanding and transparency, arguing that “nationalism and anti-communism went hand in hand” in order to secure *order* as well as saving the Christian/Nationalist values of the state (Mazower, 2000:216).<sup>70</sup>

This political trend was not new in Greece. It existed before the war when monarchy and the dictatorship of Metaxas in the 30s promoted “a fascist ideology, corresponding to the nationalist chauvinism of the petty bourgeoisie to which Metaxas himself belonged” but undoubtedly without social approval (Tsoucalas, 1969:54-55). The fascistic regime of Metaxas had a tremendous impact on the Greek Jews. The political turmoil that prevailed in the 30s changed dramatically the way in which the people saw the Jews. The dictatorship along with the fascistic ideology of the Greek palace served to spread anti-Jewish sentiments and propaganda in an agenda of “heavy censorship and control” (Dawidowicz, 1990: 469).

---

<sup>70</sup> See here Mazower’s powerful analysis of the political and national trends in Greece after the war in his essay “The Cold War and the Appropriation of Memory: Greece after liberation” in *The Politics of Retribution in Europe : World War and its Aftermath*, 2000: 212-232.

The Dictator Ioannis Metaxas rushed to externalise his unconditional love towards the Nazi regime. The fascist leader stated:

“Since August 4<sup>th</sup> Greece has become anti-communist anti-parliamentary, totalitarian State. Its agrarian and labour foundations make it plutocratic. Thus, if Hitler and Mussolini were really fighting for the ideology they preach, *they should be supporting Greece with all their forces*” (quoted in Tsoucalas, 1969:55).<sup>71</sup>

In order to summarize some of the aforementioned arguments, we could argue here that there was a pressure to create a new society based on a strong nationalist identity that supported the current political and social status quo. This trend was supported before and after the war, thus the poverty of a just legal prosecution of the collaborators as well as the mechanisms that preserved the agenda of Nazism was seeing as a seat-belt against any other political movement. Since many Greek politicians and their Allies supported this political development in Greece, responsibility was carefully suspended, and a number of collaborators assumed power the following decades, as we shall see.

### **Political and Armed Collaboration**

The collaborationist governments in Greece are classified as *puppet governments* (Lemkin, 1944:191). The term “puppet” does not aim to reduce the responsibility of collaboration among the quisling prime ministers, for all countries had the famous *Vichy Syndrome*<sup>72</sup> to a greater or lesser degree (Judt, 2010:808). Here, the use of the term *puppet* aims at describing the nature as well as strength of sovereignty that these governments had in relation to the Nazi decisions on a military as well as administrative level. In countries such

---

<sup>71</sup> The coup of “4<sup>th</sup> August” 1936 refers to the collaboration of Metaxas with king George II. Both suspended democracy by destroying the parliament and imposed barbaric laws. Metaxas sought to excuse his action arguing that he wanted to change the course of history which was heading towards “anarchy” (Woodhouse, 1976:185, see also, Clogg, 2002:26-27).

<sup>72</sup> Rousso, 1991.

as France, Norway, Greece, Yugoslavia, Luxemburg and the Netherlands, the Nazis appointed or else “installed occupation administrations” and “quasi-independent governments” in order to implement their totalitarian laws. In contrast, countries that officially allied with Hitler, such as Bulgaria, Italy, Albania (Italian Protectorate), Hungary and Romania we can no longer speak of puppet governments for they are classified as axis countries or axis governments, while Czechoslovakia, Austria, and the *General Gouvernement* were annexed to the Reich (Heberer, 2011:41-42). Raphael Lemkin gives a precise definition of the “puppet government” and differentiates it with the “puppet state” during occupation in Europe. He argues that:

“The puppet government is organised as a cabinet with a prime minister or a president as the head. Its activities are controlled by the occupant. The puppet governments have essentially retained the local authorities (with the exception of agencies whose members are elected by the population) and are using them for the administration of the country. Puppet governments now function in Norway, in the part of Yugoslavia organised by the occupant as Serbia, in Greece, in France (Pétain and Laval) and, with certain special restriction, in the Protectorate of Bohemia and Moravia. Puppet states are to be distinguished from puppet governments. A puppet state is an entirely new organism created by the occupant, whereas in a puppet government only the governmental functions are a creation of the occupant, the original state having been in existence before the occupation. Slovakia and Croatia are examples of puppet states” (Lemkin, 1944:11).<sup>73</sup>

However, even among the puppet governments we can see substantial differences and those between France and Greece are quite enlightening. Despite the fact that both countries have been classified as puppet governments and undeniably the quisling prime ministers collaborated, yet the conditions under which these governments were installed are different.

---

<sup>73</sup> Another example of a “puppet state” was the small fascist republic of Salò in Italy. Here, the puppet state of Salò did not show any sympathy to the Jews, despite the fact that in some Italian occupied regions deportation was not allowed. Salò “adopted a charter which deprived Jews of citizenship and declared the Jews to be an ‘enemy nationality’” (Steinberg, 1990: 7).

In France we cannot speak exactly of *installation* of a puppet government, for the *Vichy Government* sprung from the *Third Republic* which was supported by the French people prior to the occupation, gaining constitutional legitimacy. Once the country fell, the French cabinet did not resign and capitulated with some loud exceptions such as that of Reynaud's who issued his resignation informing Churchill that "many members of the government were inclining towards an armistice" (Jackson, 2003:104). In fact Reynaud's resignation not only ensured Pétain's leading wheel, but confirmed the growing opposition against the former's politics as more and more governmental figures – "the majority" – were ready for armistice with the Nazis (Jackson, 2003:138-139; see also Greene, 1970:127). This political majority (now a Pétain majority) was *authorized* with French votes, as the "deputies voted for Laval's proposal giving all powers to Pétain by a vote of 569 to 80" (Dank, 1974:31).

The opposite occurred in Greece. Once the Axis troops invaded, the country was left literally ungoverned as the royal family, the government of Papandreou, and the remaining parties fled to Cairo (Lande, 2000:162). The Government of Papandreou did not recognise the authority of the Nazi administration unlike the majority of the French administration that chose to remain in France and follow Pétain and Hitler.<sup>74</sup> Chris Woodhouse wrote in the *Apple of Discord* the following: "The Rallis Government had no constitutional standing; its leader had been formally deprived of his Greek citizenship by the legitimate government in Egypt; the members of the Security Battalions had been publicly warned by the Greek and Allied authorities..." (Woodhouse, 1948: 96). Unlike Greece, Milton Dank declares in his opening remarks of his book *The French against the French*, that "France was not the only defeated and occupied country, but it was the only one in which collaboration with Hitler was

---

<sup>74</sup> Of course there were some exceptions. Some political figures from the collapsed Third Republic abandoned France to avoid treason decrees from Pétain (Lemkin, 1944:180). However the majority as previously stated sided with Pétain and Hitler.

official policy and in which tens of thousands of the occupied eagerly served the conqueror against their fellow country-men” (Dank, 1974:5).

The people of ungoverned Greece found representation in the *Provisional Government* or else the “*Mountain Government*” of EAM/ELAS that was set up to represent the will of the people (Lande, 2000:162). It was then, that the Nazis appointed the three collaborationist governments in Greece as we shall see in the next section, for there was no legitimate political body to represent the official Nazi policy. Despite the fact that in this chapter we attack the Greek royal family for its genuine dictatorial agenda, and the Papandreou Government for provoking the Greek resistance and for using the collaborators after liberation so as the former to come back in power and destroy the political influence of the resistance, the comparison between the political leadership of Greece and France during occupation is provided to show how both responded once the Nazis invaded their territories.

On the first level of Greek collaboration there were three governments who signed the agreement of capitulation with the Nazis. The first quisling prime minister was Georgios Tsolakoglou and his cabinet along with the bureaucratic mechanism that supported it. He signed an agreement of national obedience with the Germans on the 26<sup>th</sup> April 1941, hoping that in this way he will save the “national” and “ethnological” character of his nation (Fleischer, 1995a: 353-354). A few days before, on the 20<sup>th</sup> April, he ordered all the forces of the Greek Army to give up their arms and go home, after signing a letter with the German Commander Dietrich an unconditional surrender. In the book he wrote while at prison, Georgios Tsolakoglou sought to excuse his collaboration with the Nazis on the grounds of saving the young generations of Greece from a “certain slaughter” and from a war that was already lost. He even dared to say that his “decision to capitulate was the bravest of all man’s acts” (Tsolakoglou, 1956: 140-141, 131,134). His government contained a small group of seven politicians, some of which were Konstantinos Logothetopoulos (Professor of

Gynaecology) and Nikolaos Louvaris (the Dean of Theological School). His government soon weakened and many resignations were issued. One of the chief Nazi personnel in Greece, Altenburg, considered Tsolakoglou a weak card that would not be able to fulfil his responsibilities and soon was replaced by Logothetopoulos. Within a year there were three replacements, with the last one that of Ioannis Rallis in 1942. The latter was considered more capable for the Nazi machine as he wanted to restore the “collaborationist regime” in Greece and destroy the massive resistance (Fleischer, 1995a: 354-355, 360, see also Woodhouse, 1976a:51). For that reason, Ioannis Rallis in 1943 formed the “Security Battalions”, which was a brutal army force also known as “Germano-tsoliades” that was under German control. This Nazi collaboration army was designed to provoke and destroy the Greek resistance.<sup>75</sup> They were considered part of the *Evzones* (the royal guard of the palace), heavily equipped with a nationalist agenda and a rhetoric of an anti-communist crusade, using exclusively Nazi arms to fight people’s movement. Many nationalists volunteered and entered the Security Battalions as their size was boosted by the fanatic support and collaboration of the police force (Kostopoulos, 2005:16-17).

Again, like Tsolakoglou, Ioannis Rallis tried to excuse his collaboration with the Germans on the basis of saving the Greek population from a worldwide war which was impossible to be won by a small destitute population like the Greeks and the latter would not make a difference by building a resistance (Rallis, 1947:21). One of the most brutal members of Security Battalions was Dionysios Papadogonas, who had in his possession by 1943 “1000 trusty national-minded men” in order to fight EAM/ELAS. The Security Battalions were stationed in numerous parts of Greece apart from Athens, such as Salonika, Tripoli, Meligala, Crete, and in many other regions, spreading terror to local populations (Kostopoulos, 2005: 18-23). Another well known figure of the Security Battalions was Georgios Papadopoulos

---

<sup>75</sup> Woodhouse here suggests that Rallis’s Security Battalions were invented first by the dictator Pangalos (1976a: 52).

who appeared in the Nazi units in the city of Patras (Peloponnese). The former fascist Dictator who ruled Greece in 1967-1974, not only survived the judiciary but the Greek political system kept him alive deliberately throughout the decades in order to fight the left-wing resistance, and later with the help of CIA, the Greek royal family and the Greek intelligence formed a double coup d'état (royal and military) on the grounds of saving the country from the Greek Left (Kostopoulos, 2005:146-147).

Furthermore, other armed forces with a highly nationalist and Nazi agenda were the units of Georgios Poulos. Georgios Poulos was the leader of the anti-Semitic *EEE* whose forces targeted communists and Jews. As we already mentioned in chapter 2, this Nazi party was formed in the late 20s; they were destroyed and later re-formed with the rise of Hitlerism (Dordanas, 2006:117-120). Poulos's Nazi beliefs were so fanatic, that he volunteered to work as a German spy and as a "Sonderkommando 2000". Although *EEE* was not popular in Greece, yet, Poulos with his support from the *Wermacht* units committed murders "of unpredictable savagery" in Salonika and in other parts of Northern Greece. His unit was attacked many times by the arms of EAM/ELAS destroying more than a third of his power (Mazower, 1993:338-339).

Poulos is also known for his collaboration with Max Merten who was one of the three architects of the destruction of Salonika Jewry. Poulos helped Max Merten to carry out bestial deeds against Greek and Jewish civilians and confiscated numerous Jewish properties and stores who took them as a gift from Max Merten (Dordanas, 2011:402-404). He collaborated with members of the Security Battalions who in turn worked for Nazi officials in order to build "an anti-communist front" in Greece and attack the resistance (Dordanas, 2006:129). We will come back later to Georgios Poulos and Max Merten in the next chapter.

Another known collaborator who was involved in the destruction of Greek Jewry in Salonika was Vasilis Simonides. According to Andrew Apostolou, not much attention has been given to this figure. Vasilis Simonides was one of the two administrative chiefs and central governors of Salonika who was not charged for collaboration. He played the bureaucratic key role for the decisions made against Salonika Jews and although did not take decisions for himself, yet his name and signature was present in every paper work in the city of Thessaloniki. His name and “stamp” gives undeniable evidence that he formally accepted and approved the Anti-Semitic decisions in the town (Apostolou, 2000:176; same in Rozen, 2005:127). In chapter 6 we will see that he escaped the judiciary.

Furthermore and concerning collaboration, there were also other small (supposedly independent) groups that were on the side of the Nazis. For instance, in northern areas of the country such as the periphery of Greek Macedonia, many small organisations stationed in Salonika collaborated with the Germans. Their excuse was that they were fighting the communists; a danger which was thought to last longer than the Nazi occupier. The communist party in Greece accused them of collaboration, and in particular they accused the organisation of PAO (an ultra-nationalist/ anti-communist group)<sup>76</sup> of turning a blind eye to the Germans and not attacking them (Woodhouse, 1976a: 146-147). In fact Woodhouse argues that the region of Greek Macedonia was hostile to the minorities who were situated there, and so hosted many nationalist and collaborationist organisations. Woodhouse furthermore declared that the Nazi authorities exploited the “Slavo-Macedonians”, the “Vlachs” and “Tsams” who lived there, and used them to provoke the Greek population, while the latter minority (the Tsams) was slaughtered and almost eradicated by the resistance of EDES, after Zervas openly accused them of collaborating with the Germans in order to secure their privileges in the region (Woodhouse, 1976a:148-149).

---

<sup>76</sup> PAO stands for “*Panellinos Apeleftherotiki Organosis*” (National Greek Liberation Organisation).

The size of armed collaboration in Occupied Greece which included many groups that we already mentioned along with smaller independent groups numbered “between 25,000 and 30,000 men”. It was a size which yet could not be compared with the anti-Nazi force of ELAS which alone started with 35,000 arms excluding the size of the remaining anti-Nazi groups such as EDES and EKKA (Kalyvas, 2008: 132). In 1944 and towards the end of the war, ELAS had 100,000 arms in its possession (Stafford, 1980:196) Last but not least; another collaboration scheme that was independent but developed mainly after the war was the organisation “X”. This organisation was headed by the anti-communist, ultra-nationalist and para-statist Colonel Georgios Grivas. He was a para-statist as he had connections with the political world of Greece flirting with other collaborators and the police. He was also responsible for the killings of many people during the events of Cyprus, before Archbishop Makarios II fell (as he attempted to overthrow him) and the Turkish troops occupied illegally the north side of the island (Byford, 1959:39-40).

The action of “x” will be understood better in the forthcoming sections of this chapter. However, we tried to give to the reader at this stage a first taste of the mechanism of collaboration in Greece, so as to be able to follow the rationale in the remaining sections, where we will come back to these issues. To be able to understand the politics of collaboration as well as the legal aftermath in Greece, we need to understand the political dynamics that prevailed within the resistance and see how the latter shaped both the future politics as well as the legal aftermath.

## The ELAS – EDES conflict and the British Foreign Policy

Perhaps we need to see first closely the everyday atmosphere that marked Greece's aftermath. In order to do so, we will continue exactly where we stopped in chapter 4, namely the Distomo Massacre. We left deliberately unattached in the previous chapter, a small part of our interview with Giannis, whose father was a member of the ELAS and who fought the Nazis outside Distomo (in the village of Stiri). In doing so, we wish to give to the reader a first taste of the political terrorism that was prevailing in Greece. When I asked Giannis to describe to me what happened to his father after the tragic events of Distomo in 10 June 1944 and once the Nazis left the country, he said that the “worst consequences” for the partisans came precisely after the war was over.<sup>77</sup> He argued that the partisans were betrayed many times by locals in the villages who worked together with the collaborators and the “parastatists” in order to find and arrest the partisans of ELAS. A number of locals provoked the partisans with questions: “*why do you resist? Stay here and be quite! Germans are friends and won't hurt us if we remain quite!*” Giannis told me that his house was set on fire two times as an “act of revenge”, and once the civil war broke out “literally everyone who took part in the resistance was considered an enemy of the state” (Giannis, Distomo, 29 September 2009). He declared that:

“[...] after the war, the State was consisted mainly by Greek Collaborators with the help of the British and the Americans of course. Those who should have been prosecuted in the first place, such as the Nazis and their collaborators, as it happened throughout Europe; here in fact, the State gave these people badges. [...] The severe consequences for the families who fought Nazism

---

<sup>77</sup> The “worst” came for the partisans after the war, not because the conditions of the war were better before the end of the war, but because after the Varkiza Agreement, the partisans gave up their arms to the British. Since the Greek and British authorities disarmed only the leftists, the right-wingers and the collaborators now chased them unarmed. Thus, without arms the partisans suffered the “worst”. Keith Lowe argues that one of the most serious mistakes ELAS made was to give up their arms as well as to sign the Varkiza Agreement, for “once disarmed, former *andartes* were no longer in a position to defend themselves, and were often mercilessly pursued by their enemies” (Lowe, 2012:310).

came afterwards in the civil war. For example, my father after the famous events of December 1944 in Athens, he disarmed after the Varkiza Agreement and received a diploma. Disarmed as he was, he returned back to his home in Arachova, where a group of “*dosilogoi*”<sup>78</sup> (collaborators) were waiting for him and beat him severely. They broke his teeth and he was nearly in coma. They took his war diary, his military diploma of ELAS and everything else! And all these happened to my father who had no idea what the KKE or Soviet Union were. So basically my father fought the Nazis, left his house, risked everything, came back home with holes in his boots, hungry to death, and the reward was that he was considered an enemy of the Greek State. At least, this is what happened in Greece” (Giannis, Distomo, 29 September 2009).

So why all these things happened in Greece and why there was no legal prosecution?

It is important to mention the political developments within the resistance forces as well as the nature of the politics inside and outside Greece. EAM/ ELAS resistance was winning public support from very early in the war and the culminating point was October 1943 when ELAS and nationalist EDES officially started open conflicts in many parts of the country (Fleischer, 1995b:224-25; see also Sarafis, 1946:139). The sudden and severe clash between the armed bands of resistance made Leeper send a telegram to the Greek Government in Cairo and the British Foreign Office in 16<sup>th</sup> October 1943 that the ELAS/EDES were officially in open civil war, urging the political forces to support the right wing resistance of EDES (FO 371/37206 R: 10268 ). The first conflict in the years 1943-1944 known as the “first round” between the ELAS and EDES bands occurred in a poisoned political atmosphere that one can easily detect the early signs of the civil war. The leaders of ELAS were informed about the hostility of EDES and called their guerrillas to be ready for a counterattack, while Zervas from the other camp was sending many letters and reports to the

---

<sup>78</sup> *Dosilogoi* (plural) or *dosilogismos* (adjective) is the official word in Greek language for collaboration which does not only imply collaboration, but literally means “giving” people to the hands of the enemy.

Greek government in Cairo accusing ELAS's leader, Ares Velouchiotis<sup>79</sup>, for preparing Greece for the "dictatorship of the proletariat" (Fleischer, 1995b: 225-226).

However, in the beginning of the partisan war against the Germans both groups were working very well together against the Nazi regime, although coming from different ideological backgrounds.<sup>80</sup> EDES was right-wing/ nationalist and loyal to the king whereas the political body of the ELAS, that is EAM, was communistic in its core but very centrist in its majority as it attracted people from various political parties of the left and centre (Woodhouse, 1982:50).

Both Napoleon Zervas (leader of EDES) and Ares Velouchiotis (leader of ELAS) agreed from the very beginning of the war not to recruit people from territories that the one or the other were controlling and therefore their relations until 1942 remained extremely "warm" (Fleischer, 1995a:246). Zervas was controlling a small part of Epirus (North West of Greece), while the rest of north, central, and south Greece was controlled by Velouchiotis. In October 1<sup>st</sup> of the same year, British saboteurs of (SOE) fell in Greece to support military aid and food, and in order to help the resistance against Nazism. Among the chiefs of the British Mission were Christopher Montague Woodhouse (known as "Chris"), Brigadier Eddie Myers (chief of the allied mission in Central Greece), Wallace (political advisor of Myers) and J.M. Stevens. All worked together remarkably well and one of the most successful operations in Greece was to blow up Gorgopotamos Bridge in 25 October 1942 (Fleischer, 1995a: 245-247). Apart from the Gorgopotamos Bridge operation ( "*Operation Harling*"), the most successful anti-Nazi sabotage occurred two years later, when the Greeks and British attacked the Germans in Penios River (in the province of Thessaly), resulting to 950 Nazi casualties

---

<sup>79</sup> Ares Velouchiotis (war name). Ares' real name was Athanasios Klaras.

<sup>80</sup> It was after all one of Churchill's callings, that is, all resistance bands irrespective of their political beliefs should unite together against the Nazi occupier (Gerolymatos, 2005:117).

among which 450 were dead. In this successful operation, Germans themselves argued that it “was the greatest disaster in Greece since the occupation”.<sup>81</sup>

The early signs of conflict however between the ELAS and EDES came when the British Generals decided to go on together with EDES in the war. Ares Velouchiotis in his attempt to establish connections with the British, asked Brigadier Eddie Myers (SOE) to leave an open “link” with them in case they wanted extra food and ammunition. Myers gave him “an abstract” answer, arguing that most British had to leave Greece and station in Cairo and only Woodhouse would supervise Greece following EDES. The discomfort of ELAS increased when BBC emphatically reported the sophisticated and highly successful operation of the British and EDES in Gorgopotamos Bridge, without mentioning anything about ELAS’s men who took part in the operation and were greater in numbers (Fleischer, 1995a: 246-247).

Furthermore, and concerning ELAS’s disappointment towards the British, General Sarafis (chief of ELAS, who preceded Ares Velouchiotis) in his book *ELAS: Greek Resistance Army*, criticized Chris Woodhouse for taking the initiative in October 1943 to send more men of EDES in some parts of Epirus which were controlled by ELAS in order to strengthen their power there, breaching territorial agreements and without the consent of ELAS. In fact Sarafis did not understand why the British operated in this way since all resistance bands along with the Allies were working efficiently against the occupiers in different regions, and all together when necessary. However the aforementioned operations were catalytic for starting a war between EDES and ELAS (Sarafis, 1946:139). It was catalytic, for securing and not entering the territories of each partisan band - as Brigadier Myers argued - was a pre-condition and a “formal agreement” between the different guerrilla

---

<sup>81</sup> HS 8/899: image 6, S.O.E. Activities, Summary for the Prime Minister, Quarter: January to March 1944.

bands and the Middle East (Myers, 1985:130). As ELAS's chief Stefanos Sarafis wrote in his wartime memoirs:

“In my opinion it was really from political motives that major Chris and Miller had ordered these operations: they were trying to establish Zervas throughout Epirus so that when he had built up strength they could use him against ELAS. These endeavours on the part of the British and Zervas caused continual friction, and this eventually led to the clash between ELAS and EDES in October 1943. It is remarkable that they chose the very moment when ELAS was involved in operations against the Italians and Germans throughout Greece” (Sarafis, 1946:139).

From the very beginning of the war, the British showed exceptional interest in Napoleon Zervas and his EDES unit, although they were aware that the Greek population found support on ELAS. However, Zervas himself did not wish in the beginning to join mountain resistance, as he preferred to stay in Athens. In fact Chris Woodhouse in his book *The Struggle for Greece 1941-1949*, argues that the Foreign Office and the SOE literally struggled to convince Zervas to form a resistance organisation. They had to employ methods of bribing in order for Zervas to go to the mountains, such as when they offered him “twenty-four thousand gold sovereigns”, but still he refused (Woodhouse, 1976b:29; same in Lande, 2000:165). On the same matter, Fleischer argues that not only Zervas was bribed to organise a resistance, but there was a general tendency men from the right-wing bloc to be hesitant to organise themselves against the Nazis, and in fact many collaborated with the Nazis, as we shall see (Fleischer, 1995a:317).

The profile of Zervas was very controversial to the eyes of many, as he was involved in many *coup d'états* before the war<sup>82</sup>, and the final ultimatum from SOE came when they

---

<sup>82</sup> In fact, many officers around “900” joined EDES organisation but who were involved in coups in the previous decade, and who later were “replaced” by pro-royal figures since Zervas was gradually altering his political profile in order to become clearly a pro-monarchist (see Veremis, T and Gerolymatos, A, 1991:112).

threatened to accuse him of collaborating with the Germans unless he went to the mountains (Woodhouse, 1976b:29). British Major Stevens in one of his reports to London made an analogous remark concerning Zervas's ambivalent past, arguing that apart from his war effort, he was an opportunist and concerned more about his political profile later as a prospective minister in the cabinet. Stevens from SOE reported to London that his suspicious pre-war persona and "murky past is not forgotten by the Greeks", and although he fought to re-establish himself as a royalist and a hard opponent of the dictatorship, these attempts "made people laugh" (Stevens, 1982:24).

Moreover and concerning British attitudes towards the guerrilla development in Greece, Brigadier Chris Woodhouse himself argued in a very rare documentary (called "Greece: The Hidden War") which was banned in the United Kingdom after the copy was destroyed in 1986 following revelations about the role of the British in Greece, that the Foreign Office and the SOE preferred to have really small resistance bands in the Greek region and all under British control. Such a policy however, created problems to ELAS which was massive and "self-organised". In fact Woodhouse in the same interview admitted that a member from the Foreign Office at that time expressed his worries concerning the growing size of anti-Nazi resistance, arguing that it would have been better if there was no resistance at all in Greece and "that the best level of sabotage in Greece would be no sabotage at all".<sup>83</sup>

---

<sup>83</sup> See Woodhouse's interview in the British political documentary "Greece: The Hidden War". This very rare documentary was first broadcasted in 06/01/1986 in the British Television and only once. The documentary includes exclusive interviews from British Officers for the first time, revealing many hidden aspects of the Greek resistance and the extent of British intervention in the Greek civil war. As a result the documentary was not allowed to be shown again and the copy was destroyed. The remaining copy was found and bought by the Greek Television (ERT), and was last broadcasted in April 2006 by the Greek Journalist Stelios Kouloglou and his TV programme "Thematiki Vradia" (Thematic Night), see: <http://web.archive.org/web/20080229103239/http://thematikivradia.ert.gr/details.asp?id=2610&catid=3469>. The copy is in English with Greek subtitles and is now available to watch on you tube: (PART 1) <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tXb5YkQeDM&feature=related>, and (PART 2): <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=U3J4v4KNDQI&feature=related>

The growing size of the resistance in Greece scared the British as they feared that their geo-political strategy would not be implemented in Greece. They had to find ways to support an organisation (such as EDES) that could fit their agenda. D. J. Wallace's report to the Foreign Office in 4<sup>th</sup> September 1944 showed his reassurance that despite difficulties, the British strategy will be fully implemented and that EDES was a safeguard of British interests after the war was over in Greece. In this sense, Zervas and his resistance, was seen as a "British creation" and an "instrument in our hands" (Wallace, 1982: 120). He further wrote to London about Zervas that:

"He is holding securely a beach-head and an area, in which Allied troops might be landed any time we wished or in which the Royal Greek Government would be able, if need be when the time comes, to set itself up in Greece. All this is an immense change from the time when we decided on this policy. Zervas has in fact long ceased to be a liability; he has become an asset and is capable of being a major factor in any general policy we wish to pursue in Greece" (Wallace, 1982:121).

Although the British Officers recognised ELAS as catalytic for the anti-Nazi war since it was massive and very well organised, it was the only way in which the British foreign policy could be implemented, that is, by supporting EDES (Woodhouse, 1982: 80). Woodhouse started to worry a lot when he understood that ELAS was winning the support of the people for their anti-Nazi war and because towards the end of occupation it was controlling the majority of the Greek land. Such a prospect would have gone against British plans who wanted to bring the Greek king back and establish Right-wing politics, and therefore their relationship with the Elasitas started to break.<sup>84</sup> Woodhouse understood

---

<sup>84</sup> J.M. Stevens in one of his reports to London, argued that the British plans were difficult to be implemented since there was "not one Right-wing organisation in Free Greece" or in the major cities, and that such a reality would make it difficult for Britain to bring the king back. The alternative choice that could have been proved as a "strong card" was the "pro-British" sentiments of the Greek civilians. To do so nevertheless, would require very careful manoeuvres, for the British had to avoid being seen as the protagonists for bringing the king back "against the will of the people" (Stevens, 1982:44-45).

ELAS's suspicions, knowing that they were operating against the partisans, and as the former wrote: British "efforts were made in our interests and not theirs" (Woodhouse, 1982:92).

The clash between the two resistance bands continued for years, so too the British policy. The only solution to sustain the above foreign strategy was to strengthen EDES with ammunition against ELAS. And by minimising the strength of ELAS they would enable the British troops to occupy later Athens and bring king George II in Greece. However, there was a chain of misunderstandings between the British Government, the Greek Government in Cairo and the SOE of how to do this. For instance, the Foreign Office suggested on the one hand, to prepare Greeks for a referendum concerning king's return to Greece, on the other hand, they were aware that this could be accomplished with great difficulty given that Athens would be under British occupation, and that therefore a clear and "fair" election or plebiscite would be rendered impossible. In any case, the majority of the resistance would openly oppose the return of the king as well as the Government-in-exile (FO: 371/37206 R: 10177, 11 October 1943).

On the other hand, the British Foreign Office was also puzzled as to how to deal with the guerrilla bands of ELAS. They had two choices, that is either to decrease the ammunition of ELAS in favour of EDES, or they even dared to think to preserve further Nazi forces in Greece as well as Yugoslavia in a unified Balkan plan and "make things as uncomfortable for them" as possible, even though they knew that the Left resistance in Greece was more efficient against the Nazis than the Right (FO 371/37206 R: 10177, 11 October 1943). As we read from the original copy of the British Foreign Office,

"6. As regards our policy towards the guerrillas, the Chiefs of Staff consider that on military grounds we should not relax our efforts to contain as many German divisions in Greece and Yugoslavia and to make things as uncomfortable for them as we can. This conflicts with the suggestion that we

should decrease our aid to the E.A.M., in favour of the E.D.E.S. From the military point of view there should be no weakening of any group. Raising the strength of the right wing groups at the expense of not increasing supplies to the E.A.M would not be satisfactory from the immediate military point of view, since material in the hands of the better organised left wing groups produces better results". [8...] They do not, however, consider the fact that we will be providing relief for Greece will prove in the event either to be a considerable factor in preventing disorders or a strong incentive to accept the authority of the Central Administration. Every Greek would know that we would never incur the odium of the civilised world by cutting off relief supplies solely because of civil disturbances or of violent opposition to an unpopular Government which we choose to support" (FO 371/37206 R: 10177, 11 October 1943).

The Foreign Office decided in the end that ELAS aid should be "discontinued", and that Britain should provide more arms to EDES, encouraging the Archbishop Damaskinos, Napoleon Zervas and the Government-in-exile to sit down together and work towards establishing a governmental scheme that would support the crown of king George (FO 371/37206 R: 10450; see also FO 371/37206 R: 10295).

Similar developments occurred in most European countries but not all had the same postwar geo-political significance. However, Greece, postwar Poland and former Yugoslavia would be three volcanic spots. First of all, with respect to Yugoslavia and Greece, it is very interesting to see the similarities as well as differences. The previous two excerpts show not only the militaristic and strategic policy of Britain towards the two countries, but it clearly indicates that the development of guerrilla warfare in both countries was provoked. It is often argued that Britain on the one hand supported the Left in Yugoslavia and on the other the Right in Greece. The British Premier in the Parliament argued that "in one place we support a King, in another a Communist – there is no attempt by us to enforce particular ideologies" (Woodhouse, 1975: 118; see also Foot, 1999: 341; Foot, 1966: 129).

But this was not so until October 1943. SOE heavily supplied with arms both Mihailović and Tito (mainly the first) in Yugoslavia the first two years of the war, like Velouchiotis and Zervas in Greece and that the policy of both countries was “roughly the same” (Woodhouse, 1975:17). The policy started to change in Yugoslavia and Greece from October 1943. With respect to the former country as Brigadier Woodhouse argued, the sudden change came as follows: “from being friendly towards Mihailović and negative towards Tito into the exact opposite” (ibid). But this change did not occur because Mihailović collaborated (for the British were well aware of the latter since 1941 and that alone caused serious concerns<sup>85</sup>) but because Eden and Stalin already started secretly to talk about “spheres of influence” way before the Yalta Conference in February 1945 and the Moscow Peace Conference in October 1944. It was a year prior to that decisive conference that Eden struggled to convince Stalin he wants Greece and in return Britain would pass Romania to the hands of the Soviet Union as well as dividing 50% – 50% the influence of the Yugoslav territory. The previous suggestions were finalised a year later in Moscow in 1944. The latter agreement made Churchill not only to proceed carefully in Yugoslavia but to support only Tito with arms because this is what he agreed with Stalin (Stafford, 1980: 178, Resis, 1978: 368). In contrast with Yugoslavia, Britain now had 90% of influence in Greece whereas Moscow had the remaining 10% (Resis, 1978:368).<sup>86</sup> The Balkan *Percentages Agreement* or else the secret “naughty document” as Churchill named it, not only determined the military and geopolitical strategy of the above Balkan countries, but the political ideology in the aftermath (Lowe, 2012:295). That eventually gave absolute freedom to the British to pursue any military policy they wished in Greece unlike Yugoslavia (since they shared it with

---

<sup>85</sup> Barker, 1975:30, 34.

<sup>86</sup> The Balkan “Percentages Agreement” was secretly signed between Churchill and Stalin during Moscow Conference in October 1944. Written in a napkin, the “percentages” went as follows: Rumania 90% Stalin, 10% others, Greece: 90% Churchill, 10% others, Yugoslavia: 50% -50%, Hungary: 50%-50%, Bulgaria: 75% Stalin, 25% others (Resis, 1978:368).

USSR) so as to fit their post-war strategy. Thus, these contradictions in British foreign policy between the two countries served Britain and USSR's post-war strategy based on agreements.

Yugoslavia and Greece were not the only countries whose fate was negotiated at the table. David Stafford declares that the SOE in 1944 relaxed their military and strategic efforts in Nazi-Occupied Poland and Czechoslovakia as well, for "it was clear that both countries would be liberated by the Red Army" and that they would be under Soviet influence after the war was over, thus Britain stepped aside (Stafford, 1980:182). With regards to the Mediterranean region and apart from Greece, SOE had also post war concerns over Italy's "Sovietisation". However, the Allies and in particular the SOE received categorical instructions from the British Foreign Office that it should "not be permitted to follow the pattern of Yugoslavia and Greece" (Stafford, 1980:193). Thus by 1944, most SOE efforts were put on Greece in contrast with the aforementioned countries, as Churchill's visit to Athens in 24 December 1944 indicated that Greece "was of a greater significance than Alexander's directive in confirming and furthering the British (and American) interest in preventing the emergence of a postwar communist Italy" (Stafford, 1980:196). Yet, the British were not happy at all with the previous decision concerning Italy. They feared that the latter's arms would reach the analogous Greek size of EAM/ELAS (100,000 arms) and that alone would produce post-war revolution (*ibid*). Despite relaxing their scope in Italy, Eden wrote to Churchill that: "there is much in this story which reminds me of Greece. We must watch it carefully" (Davidson, 1981: 236).

SOE's anxiety over Greece's growing size of resistance is clearly contrasted with France. SOE was really puzzled as to *how* and *when* to increase the arms of the French Resistance, for in the first three years of the occupation, the French people did not show enthusiasm on the resistance front and the latter was of a "doubtful value" (Cookridge, 1966:307). The SOE expressed worries that many "had accepted the Vichy regime, while

others acquiesced in collaboration with the enemy” and although Charles de Gaulle was a key military and political figure in the resistance to serve post-war interests of the Allies (the right-wing bloc) he was a “one-man show, for a very long time” (ibid). However, in the “last two years” of the war, the French resistance would grow substantially to present a “real” subversive activity like Belgium and Norway (Judt, 2010:33).

What we see however in all countries, is that the Allies (West and East alike) and the SOE tried not only to couple military and strategic interests but shaped political influence in the post-war arena. And although the FO and SOE met challenges throughout Occupied Europe, it was however in Greece and Yugoslavia that reconciliation of these multiple interests became an unsolvable puzzle, because “elsewhere in Europe the problems of aligning foreign policy objectives and the needs of strategy were much less severe” (Stafford, 1980:209). Because as Foot argued “the basic problem in Greece was far from simple - Greek politics are notoriously complicated” (Foot, 1999: 340). By the end of the war however, and after Yalta, Europe and the whole world would be clearly divided into spheres of influence, as further agreements between Roosevelt, Eden, Churchill, Molotov and Stalin would ensure their victories: from the West, “anti-communist”, “Christian- democracies” and from the East, “communist People’s democracies” (Mazower, 1998a:231, 217). At the end of these negotiations, Nazi-Occupied Poland and Greece would share one similar and yet opposite characteristic; if Greece was the most crucial geo-strategic spot for the West, Poland would be the most valuable geo-dynamic country for the Russians. No other communist country under Stalin’s umbrella resisted the Soviets the same way as postwar Poland. Like in Greece, when the Poles screamed for help, “there was no Western response....perhaps because Churchill was not behaving very differently in Greece at about the same time” (Mazower, 1998a:261).

The situation in Greece was critical, because the opposition was growing as we saw, and because Churchill's insistence to bring the king unconditionally put everyone into difficult position, since political circles in Cairo, in Foreign Office and the SOE were more aware of the internal political frictions in Greece than Churchill. In other words, they knew more about the bitter feelings of Greeks towards the crown than anybody else. However, they were indifferent as to what the people wanted. As regards to the Greek sentiments towards monarchy and its bourgeois circles, J.M. Stevens reported to London that:

“87. Officially, the King is the most hated man in Greece except Metaxas. All outward signs of monarchy have been removed by the EAM and EDES alike, crowns on flags, uniforms etc [...] Their great justification for interfering in the future of the Greek State is the maladministration of the past, and in particular they concentrate on two instances: the manipulation of elections whereby the King returned and the founding of the Metaxas dictatorship.

88. Their accusations against the King are that he came to Greece uninvited; that he came pretending to be the friend of democracy and, in fact, intending to rule dictatorially; that he intended to continue dictatorship after the war and is preparing the Army in Egypt for that purpose” (Stevens, 1982:27).

These predictions came indeed true and the hostile feelings of the Greek people towards a *come-back* of the old fascist agenda were disregarded. For Churchill's “conviction” that after the war “Europe had to return to the pre-war political status”, forced the British to choose between either Churchill's policy to support the monarchy “unconditionally” or SOE's initial plan, which was to recognize the demands and political rights of the guerrillas of EAM/ELAS; the latter as we shall see was suppressed (Gerolymatos, 1991:104). These post-war policies were problematic for apparently not all countries could go back to the old agendas, since Greece was one of these countries whose old politics were openly fascistic and dictatorial.

All these on-going negotiations between the political elites as to how Greece would develop politically after the war really marked the period between 1943-1944, for there was an evident determination to bring the Greek monarchy back at all costs irrespective of the hostility. One of the reasons why we are referring to these events is because king's return was seen with hatred not only among the people, but also among members of the coalition government in Cairo as well as large sections of the Greek army in Cairo.<sup>87</sup> King's return meant in clear political terms, the re-establishment of monarchy and the exercise of dictatorial politics in the country, although the Left was winning the war as well as the opinion of the people. In the crucial months of spring 1944 and before political unrest reached its apogee in the autumn and winter of the same year, there was a serious uprising among the forces of the army in Cairo as well who resented king's return without a plebiscite.

<sup>88</sup> Archbishop Damaskinos was suggested as an "interim" regent before king returned to Greece. It was a choice that was more acceptable to the Greek public opinion given king's fascist past, yet a solution that Winston Churchill hated, although he accepted it in the end and in 1945 Damaskinos was sworn as an interim regent (Iatrides, 1995: 9).

Along with the exhaustive exchange of letters between the political elite to decide the future of Greece, the bitter civil war between ELAS and EDES was continuing in the mountains but also in the cities. EAM/ELAS extended their disagreements with the British as they were convinced that the referendum in Greece would not take place. EAM's demands were to give the right to the people to have a plebiscite and then to have fair elections deciding democratically the future politics of Greece.<sup>89</sup> The central committee of EAM was

---

<sup>87</sup> FO 954/11B image ref: 195 (9<sup>th</sup> December 1944, From Foreign Office to Athens), many ministers from the coalition of the Papandreou Government did not want the regency at all.

<sup>88</sup> CAB 66/49/47, image ref: 0001: 6<sup>th</sup> April 1944, Telegram No. 215

<sup>89</sup> "Aide Memoire", The ELAS Central Committee 14 December 44 [Certified true Copy, Athens 15/12/44 (SD)], *Filippos Dragoumis* Sub-File 62.5: "*Dekemvriana 1944*" (December Events 1944), *Gennadius Library*, Athens.

not convinced that the above would be implemented as they had information that “paramilitarist activities” were now in full cooperation with the Middle East, wishing to take control over the situation and attack the members of resistance. Therefore, they suggested sending representatives to Cairo to discuss “their mutual plans for the future”; a demand which was accepted by Brigadier Eddie Myers despite Greek Government’s disapproval (Myers, 1985:119-120). This meeting would be a good chance for EAM to dissolve conspiracy theories as to whether they would seize the power by force in the period of liberation, for they expressed openly many times that they had “no political aims” after the war was over and that it was always a band formed only for one purpose; that is to liberate the country from all forces, and that is why it was a multi-party resistance including anyone who wished to fight against the Nazis and Italians. Although Brigadier Myers was sharing this belief too, he yet stated that its members were unaware and “ignorant” about the “core” of the band which was communist and whose intentions were different (Myers, 1985:127, 129).

Apart from his belief, Myers knew at the same time that the whole issue of guerrillas was much more complicated. His concern about the political peculiarities in Greece was expressed many times in written reports to the Foreign Office and to Churchill, as he was aware that many members of the resistance of EAM/ELAS were representing the political life of Greece and many were employed in governmental positions. His decision therefore, to bring a delegation to Cairo (consisting of Greek guerrillas) in order to decide how to reach unity in post war politics was received with great disappointment among the political circles of Britain too. Myers knew very well why it was important to bring the partisans into a common table to discuss future decisions, since EAM was representing the will of the people. However, he could not convince Churchill that EAM/ELAS was a progressive multi-party scheme that could not easily be excluded from future politics, and that this exclusion, along

with the reluctant British support to the Greek king would bring civil war (Myers, 1975: 160,162). As Myers wrote:

“One point I could not get into Churchill’s head was that the andartes were not just ‘bandits’, but that they represented all types of Greeks, as well as many Republican leaders. Sarafis had been Military Attaché in Paris. Tzimas had been a Communist Deputy. Kartalis had been Finance Minister in more than one Greek Government. Colonel Psaros was one of the most capable soldiers I have ever met. There were many such others. They were not just ‘Tom Wintringhams’, which Churchill had more than once called them. I could not convince him that I was in touch not only with the andartes and the mostly poor people in the mountains, but with virtually every element and every thinking body inside Greece, including those in all big towns” (Myers, 1975:62).<sup>90</sup>

The anxiety concerning EAM/ELAS’s prospective role in the future politics of Greece, overshadowed everything else. The debate as to whether the Left would have formed a dictatorship or not after the war continues until today among the Greek political circles and international scholars. Of course if EAM/ELAS had indeed seized the power by force we would be here to criticize it, however we are here to reveal and criticize the mechanisms in which the Right seized the power by force, and we cannot do so without mentioning specific political decisions that occurred during and after Nazi Occupation. Brigadier Chris Woodhouse admitted that fears regarding the role of the Left were exaggerated both by the British and the Greek Government- in – exile. There was a general tendency to blame EAM/ELAS for everything that was occurring in the Greek political scene, such as when within the Greek Army in Cairo (which was later moved to Greece) a small faction formed an “anti-fascist” movement. Every time however, this agenda was undermined they were accusing the Left, hence the resistance (in politicians’ point of view) would have spoiled their

---

<sup>90</sup> See here Myer’s essay “The Andarte Delegation to Cairo: August 1943” in *British Policy towards Wartime Resistance in Yugoslavia and Greece*, eds., Auty, P, and Clogg, R., 1975, pp. 147-166.

future political plans (Woodhouse, 1976b:35). Although he was deeply involved in the strategic attacks against the Left, Woodhouse admitted that:

“When mutinies occurred in the Greek forces, it was usual to blame the KKE, although at least once royalist officers were the culprits. Communism was also blamed for other causes of anxiety, such as the determination of the Bulgarians to annexe Greek Macedonia, the provocation of German reprisals, and the threat of anarchy in Greece. As rumours from the mountains seemed to confirm the worst fears of patriotic conservatives, both republican and monarchist leaders intervened against the Resistance. Two of Greece’s most senior Generals, the republican Pangalos and the royalist Papagos, both discouraged army officers from fighting in the mountains. The attitude of the Greek Government in exile was similar: their earliest emissaries to occupied Greece gave no hint of contemplating the guerrilla activities” (Woodhouse, 1976b:35).

### **Collaboration in the Resistance: the Zervas-German Liaison**

Along with the political disagreements within and outside resistance, there have been many recorded instances where the resistance band of EDES collaborated with the Nazis so as to weaken ELAS. There were new conflicts between the bands of ELAS and EDES while the former accused the latter of collaborating with the Germans. Indeed the character of the royalist/nationalist EDES had been challenged and criticised many times throughout their anti-Nazi War and the Foreign Office recorded many times some spurious moves of Zervas with the Germans ( FO 371/37207 R: 11673, see also FO 371/37210 R:13842). The mysterious moves of Zervas remain a taboo today and a subject of controversy as there are not many sources available to us. Yet, what is most certain is that Zervas made some secret truces throughout the war with the Germans in order to fight ELAS, although he was warned by the SOE not to deviate from the rules and in fact “forbidden” because that

would have resulted into tremendous casualties “from unarmed population with severe consequences” (Fleischer, 2006: 98-99; same in Alexander, 1982:13).

According to Hagen Fleischer who has mastered the German archives on the issue of collaboration in Greece within resistance, Zervas not only made a truce with the Germans for 10 days in the “first round” of civil conflict with ELAS in the fall of 1943, but the Nazis as well were extremely careful “not to attack EDES” as both forces joined under a united idea; the “anti-Bolshevik war” (Fleischer, 2006: 99). Other authors such as D. A. Lande declare that for Zervas “it was no longer clear even which was the greater enemy – ELAS or the German occupiers” (Lande, 2000:169). In fact what was to follow between the Germans and Zervas was a secret pact where both camps exchanged information regarding the moves of ELAS, under the supervision of Huber Lanz who was the General Commander in the province of Epirus (Fleischer, 2006: 100-101).

A British Official in charge of Greece confirmed his knowledge about the secret collaboration between Zervas and the Germans. In a rare released interview, Nigel Clive (member of SOE) argued that:

“Zervas certainly had a means of contact with the Germans. He had at least a couple of officers, who were members of EDES stationed quietly in Ioannina, which was General Lanz’s Head Quarters; General Lanz being the General Commander, and these officers were certainly in irregular contact with Lanz and with Lanz’s stuff”.<sup>91</sup>

Woodhouse as well, confirmed that the relationship between Zervas and Lanz is undisputed. There are German archives revealing Zervas’s connection with the authority of

---

<sup>91</sup> Nigel Clive’s (SOE) interview in the British political documentary “Greece: The Hidden War”, see information about the documentary:

<http://web.archive.org/web/20080229103239/http://thematikivradia.ert.gr/details.asp?id=2610&catid=3469>  
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-tXb5YkQeDM&feature=related>

Lanz in Epirus and in particular in the city of Ioannina (the city that approved the Jewish deportations and collaborated with the Germans, see chapter 2), which was more than a matter of truce in order to fight ELAS. On the contrary, it was a clear agreement of “general armistice” with the Germans in the winter of 1944 until mid-summer the following year. The bands of ELAS were aware of the *Zervas- German* affair and it was one more catalytic factor to fuel the brutal civil war between ELAS and EDES. Woodhouse furthermore, declared that ELAS too, although did not collaborate they had their own days where they stopped fighting the Germans in order to preserve arms and attack EDES, but according to archives found in Germany these incidents were “isolated and strictly local”. Given that there was a civil war while Greece was occupied both resistance organisations attempted “cease-fires” with the enemy in order to save arms and fire them against each other (Woodhouse, 1976b: 90-91).

On the other hand, the historian Hagen Fleischer points out that ELAS’s rivals tried to invent stories about the latter’s possible contacts with the enemy. He argues that every accusation made against ELAS was the product of the “propaganda of the Greek Right” and many reports that were published were “fabricated” lacking any authenticity (Fleischer, 2006:102). However, he argues that ELAS too, in the region of Epirus where the unarmed people suffered greatly, they stopped fighting the Germans in order for ELAS and EDES to decide together what to do next. Another occasion where Fleischer reports incidents of cease-fire between ELAS and the Germans, was when the Government of National Unity in Cairo as well as British Lieut. Scobie “ordered” ELAS to stop fighting the Germans during the transitional period when Athens was about to be liberated and Germans had to leave the country, but this cannot be considered as collaboration since ELAS received orders from the Allies. In order to prevent further bloodshed and acts of “retaliation” ELAS was ordered to suspend further attacks. But apart from these limited strategic truces Fleischer argues, further “accusations against ELAS are at least groundless” (Fleischer, 2006:103-104).

Zervas's case on the other hand was substantially different. The exegesis that Fleischer gives is more serious than Woodhouse's. He declares that Zervas exploited the "card" of anti-communism that prevailed within the political circles of Britain and Cairo (Greek Government). And by creating ambitious connections with all the camps, Zervas successfully managed to strengthen his influence among Cairo and Britain in concert with the Germans (Fleischer, 2006: 106-107). When EDES disbanded after the war, Napoleon Zervas became a Minister of Public Order in 1947, exercising authoritarian and nationalist policies in concert with the "white terror" of Right-wing gangs that was prevalent in the cities. Zervas however, very soon had to resign after his name was mentioned in the Nuremberg Trials (Mazower, 2000:216). Almost nothing has been written about this. It seems that many archives have been destroyed, and there is still no proper file on Napoleon Zervas stored in Greece.<sup>92</sup> But there is no doubt that even diplomats from Moscow who although did not interfere at all with the Greek Affairs since Britain was in charge of the latter, noticed and criticized the stance of Zervas.<sup>93</sup> The previous point was discussed among the circles of Britain and the latter via Cairo sent the following to the Foreign Office:

"In conversation with members of my staff on 4<sup>th</sup> April, the Soviet Counsellor spoke in favour of E.A.M. – E.L.A.S. and said that Zervas had wrongly provoked civil war and had prevented agreement at recent negotiations. [...] As E.L.A.S. was by far the largest body, he considered that it was up to Zervas to fit in with its requirements. Zervas had not fought the Germans at all; all the fighting was done by E.L.A.S. Zervas was compromised with the Germans by the activities of E.D.E.S. in Athens".<sup>94</sup>

---

<sup>92</sup> Although there is a file on Zervas stored in the General Archives of the State in Athens (GAK), however it lacks any research interest, (see GAK, K 202 [ABE 806] Archive of N. Zervas). The Archivist on the other hand, Dr. Eleftheria Daneziou in *Gennadius Library* in Athens, informed me personally in September 2011 that the library already undertook the project of making a complete file on Napoleon Zervas, and it will be ready possibly in a year's time, so we will know more about Zervas's connections, if any such relevant files survived.

<sup>93</sup> CAB 66/49/47, Image ref 0001 (6<sup>th</sup> April 1944, No. 218, most secret – His Majesty's Ambassador to the Greek Government, Cairo to FO).

<sup>94</sup> Ibid.

Although Britain knew very well Zervas's actions, the SOE and FO kept on supporting him even though, his persona was also challenged by many MPs in the British Parliament in December 1944. In the famous debate at the House of Commons in 11 December, members of the House such as Labour Acland accused Zervas for being a "professional coudetatiste" and for having *give and takes* with former dictators such as Marshal Pangalos. He further accused Winston Churchill of supporting a fascist regency in Greece, not letting Greek people decide their own political future, attacking EAM/ELAS, and giving arms to EDES and to a man like Zervas who was "in good terms with Nazi and Quisling Authorities".<sup>95</sup>

We will talk more about Churchill in the next section. In the next section we give a brief account to the political and social events that paved the way for the collaborators to remain in power after Greece was liberated, for these events are crucial to understand the legal aftermath and why there were not many legal prosecutions against collaborators. Last but not least, and concerning the issue of collaboration within resistance, some of the officers of Psarros (leader of EKKA), were accused of collaboration too, as these soldiers were incorporated in to the Nazi Security Battalions in order to fight ELAS (Fleischer, 2006:92). They had connections with many organisations and under the full support of the Nazis. There are other sources that reveal also connections between Zervas and the Security Battalions (see Apostolou, 2005:284-285). And as we shall see in the following sections many men of EDES and EKKA were merged in the Security Battalions to fight the EAM/ELAS during civil war.

### **The Prelude to the Legal Aftermath**

Political tensions escalated in Greece during the liberation months (autumn 1944). There were many attempts to bring peace and reconciliation between the opposing forces of

---

<sup>95</sup> Filippos Dragoumis sub-file 62.5 "*Dekemvriana 1944*", 11-12-44, Debate in the House of Commons, copy of summary to the Greek Information Office (Gennadius Library, Athens).

the resistance and the Greek Government in the transitional period under Georgios Papandreou. The new government constituted a multi-party scheme aiming at reaching some kind of unity between the different political voices that occurred throughout the war. In Lebanon, on 20 May 1944, delegates from all Greek parties along with the British mission, tried to form a new government. They decided that the new scheme should cover twenty four members out of “fourteen parties”, without the presence of those who supported the monarchy and those who collaborated because they “refused to sit down with Communists” (Close, 1995a:108).

Although the leaders of EAM and KKE did not wish to join the new scheme, they were pressured from all angles and accepted in the end to include six members in the new Papandreou government. They were left without alternative, since the accusations made against them (i.e. they accused Ares Velouchiotis of being responsible for the murder of Dimitrios Psarros, leader of EKKA), in concert with a prospective refusal to join the government would have fuelled the British voices who wanted EAM/ELAS to follow their own road after liberation (Close, 1995a:109).<sup>96</sup> Following Lebanon, there was another agreement reached in Caserta (Italy) in 26 September 1944 in order to implement a stronger operating mechanism against the Nazis. The agreement known as the *Caserta Agreement*, foresaw that both EDES and ELAS were now under the command of British Lieut. Scobie and the government of National Unity of Papandreou, and all bands should cooperate and stop fighting each other. Moreover the agreement foresaw that the Security Battalions should be disbanded -and until surrender- the resistance should keep on “harassing” them since they were considered “instruments of the enemy”. Last but not least the agreement guaranteed that no party should deviate and exploit their power while Greece was ungoverned in the fall of

---

<sup>96</sup> Regarding the events at Lebanon Conference, Prokopis Papastratis in his essay “Papandreou and the Lebanon Conference” argues that the conference aimed at including EAM leaders in Papandreou’s government in order to minimize their “power” and influence (Papastratis, 2006:205).

1944. In accordance with the agreement, General Scobie also attached a signed plan that concerned the specific operational orders for each resistance band and their territories.<sup>97</sup>

So there was a need to reach some kind of unity, after the Germans left the country avoiding a civil war. However, the problems did not only concern the civil conflict between ELAS and EDES, but also the unresolved political anxieties of the Allies, regarding EAM/ELAS's prospective seizure of power by force in the period before the referendum and the new elections. Although there was a pressure from the Greek public opinion and the members of EAM/ELAS to have immediate elections and a plebiscite for the issue of monarchy, the Foreign Office wanted to postpone both procedures until they controlled the situation in Athens. They feared that the Papandreou Government would not last as it was a temporary "service Government", and that the elections and plebiscite should not take place on November 1944; instead they wished to extend the period for another "seven months". The Foreign Office wanted to make sure that this decision was widely known as a Greek decision and not British, thus to "counter the criticism that the Regent and the Greek Government were determined to delay the plebiscite indefinitely in order to suit their own ends" (FO/954/11C Image Ref: 121).

And this is where the serious political tensions appeared in Greece, as the democratic procedures were postponed systematically. EAM/ELAS already had suspicions that the plebiscite would not take place and as a matter of fact the elections took place two years later in 1946. They were not willing to lose their power, as they knew that paramilitarist Right wing groups such as the "x" and the Security Battalions were in full operation, spreading terror in the streets of Athens and other major cities and villages in

---

<sup>97</sup> Copy of Caserta Agreement attached in appendix. See also attached to Caserta the "Précis of Operational Orders Issued by G.O.C. Forces in Greece" (Filippos Dragoumis sub-file 62-5 "*Dekemvriana 1944*"), *Gennadius Library*, Athens; see also Churchill, 1985:248-249.

Greece. Every day – and between October and December 1944- the communist newspaper *Rizospastis* was publishing reports and pictures of murdered people by far-right groups and collaborators. Anti-fascist and anti-Nazi demonstrations were organised every day by the committee of EAM with slogans “*People’s power! Death to the Traitors! Revenge! Athens of EAM is Celebrating the Big National Anti-Fascist Day*” (*Rizospastis*, Sunday 29/10/1944). The KKE and the Committee of EAM were demanding from the Greek Government to clear the streets from fascists and arrest all the collaborators, for they were slaughtering unarmed men and women in every neighbourhood that was organised by EAM/ELAS (*Rizospastis*, Thursday 12/10/1944; Sunday 5/11/1944).

The western fears about a potential socialist government in Greece, which started to develop in 1943 when EAM/ELAS was winning the war against the Nazi Germans, reached its apogee in November and December 1944. The Foreign Office speculated that the country would fall under Stalin’s influence, and they had to make sure that Greece remained within the Western orbit.<sup>98</sup> In fact Greece was to remain with this slogan (or conspiracy) amid cold war until the fascist colonels fell in 1974, and one can see the tragic similarities between the Greek and Spanish development after the war where both countries fell into civil war and both fell victims “of draconian measures against the Left” (Sfikas, 1997: 88). Greece however, never received help from Stalin, and the latter based on negotiations, gave his word to Winston Churchill that he would not interfere in the Greek affairs (and indeed he did not). The Soviet Union confirmed “there is no contact between Moscow and E.A.M.”<sup>99</sup> thus, there was no possibility to receive arms from them and strengthen their position in the cities or in the mountains.<sup>100</sup> However, Churchill’s policy on EAM/ELAS did not soften. Although

<sup>98</sup> CAB/65/47/7 Image Ref: 0001, 9th August 1944, the Secretary of Foreign Affairs [W.M. (44) 103 RD CONCLUSIONS], MINUTE 1, CONFIDENTIAL ANNEX.

<sup>99</sup> CAB 101/250 Image Ref: 20, To Mr. Macmillan (Caserta), T.2134/4, 19.11.44.

<sup>100</sup> In fact the communist movement in Greece was largely supported by the communist Balkan states especially Tito’s Yugoslavia, from which ELAS received arms, see Woodhouse, 1961:18.

Greece did not cooperate with the Soviets, Churchill feared that a potential socialist government approved by the people would have spoiled his future strategic plans, and he had to make sure as he stated, that once the Germans left the country “there should be no political vacuum in Greece” and therefore “*it is most desirable to strike out of the blue without preliminary crisis. It is the best way to forestall the E.A.M*” (Churchill, 1985: 247-248, italics mine).

### **December Events 1944: the Beginning of the Authoritarian State**

In order to make sure that Athens remained under his control, Churchill ordered an increase in the strength of British troops (between 8,000 -10,000) in Athens and strengthened in this way the army of Papandreou. Churchill was aware that by increasing the British arms in Athens automatically meant for EAM an act of provocation and an “imminent” uprising (Churchill, 1985:250). He wrote to Foreign Secretary on 4 November:

“In my opinion, having paid the price we have to Russia for freedom of action in Greece, we should not hesitate to use British troops to support the Royal Hellenic Government under M. Papandreou. 2. This implies that British troops should certainly intervene to check acts of lawlessness. Surely M. Papandreou can close down E.A.M. newspapers if they call a newspaper strike. 3. I hope the Greek Brigade will soon, and will not hesitate to shoot when necessary. Why is the only one Indian brigade of the Indian Division to be sent in? We need another eight or ten thousand foot-soldiers to hold the capital and Salonika for the present Government. Later on we must consider extending the Greek authority. I fully expect a clash with E.A.M., and we must not shrink from it, provided the ground is well chosen” (Churchill, 1985:250).

In order to dominate Athens with royal and British troops without initiating a civil war, Churchill and Papandreou called to disarm all resistance bands except however the “Mountain Brigade and the Sacred Squadron” (Churchill, 1985:251). The EAM protested

against the decision not to disband the royal troops (because as we have explained earlier the royal army now consisted men of Security Battalions), and proposed that if these bands were to remain, a small power of ELAS and EDES had to remain too. The proposal was not accepted after all <sup>101</sup>, and the six ministers of EAM who were part of the National Unity Government issued their resignation. What followed was a called demonstration from the central committee of EAM to its supporters as an act of protest on the 3<sup>rd</sup> December, which was forbidden by Papandreou. The EAM feared that keeping the royal troops in action would automatically mean a forced transition to an unwanted monarchy in the face of pro-fascist king George II (Churchill, 1985:251; Gerolymatos, 2005:149).

Despite banning the demonstration it went on any way, and thousands of women, men and children from all ages gathered outside the Greek parliament in Constitution Square (Syntagma) in central Athens to protest but also to celebrate for their liberation. Let us not forget that Greece supposedly was liberated at that time. People's slogans in this otherwise festive day were "*Down with Papandreou, Down with Intervention, the Collaborators must be judged...*" (Gerolymatos, 2005:147-151). The police tried to leave Syntagma Square clean from protesters, but thousands of demonstrators were coming from every corner of Athens. The area was now full of policemen and unarmed protesters, while the British troops remained armed in the corners. The police started to fire "whenever demonstrators tried to get up and escape" while the British troops remained there watching (Baerentzen, and Close, 1993:85). The result was "24 deaths and more than 100 badly injured citizens", while the next day the para-statist ultranationalist group "X" joined the police to continue the attacks against the ELAS supporters. The next day (4<sup>th</sup>), EAM supporters called a general strike in Athens and Piraeus that brought Attica to a standstill and many people attacked police

---

<sup>101</sup> Papandreou and Lieut. Scobie wanted to keep these two bands armed and disband all the rest in order to incorporate the former to the regular army. EAM was against such decision for that would have destroyed the political balance of the arms, although later EAM/ELAS was compromised and one of the ELAS's chiefs, Siantos signed an agreement to give up their arms (Baerentzen, L., and Close, D. H, 1993:83).

departments as a form of reply to the killings. The two-day demonstrations marked the beginning of the official war between ELAS and the British troops as General Scobie ordered “ELAS to evacuate Athens within two days” (Tsoucalas, 1969:85; Stavrianos, 1949:250).<sup>102</sup>

Churchill wrote to General Scobie on the 5<sup>th</sup> December 1944:

“[...] 2. You are responsible for maintaining order in Athens and for neutralising or destroying E.A.M.-E.L.A.S. bands approaching the city. You may make any regulations you like for the strict control of the streets or for the rounding up of any number of truculent persons [...] But do not hesitate to fire at any armed male in Athens who assails the British authority or Greek authority with which we are working [...] Do not however hesitate to act as if you were in a conquered city where a local rebellion was in progress [...] We have to hold and dominate Athens. It would be a great thing for you to succeed in this without bloodshed if possible, but also with bloodshed if necessary”.<sup>103</sup>

Churchill wrote in his book that the nature of the letter was “strident in tone”, and he had to make sure that General Scobie will not hesitate to act fiercely and keep Athens clean from the leftists (Churchill, 1985:252). In Downing Street, some officials wanted to keep the events out of the British public eye, however they panicked after journalists from British newspapers who witnessed the killings during the demonstrations on the 3<sup>rd</sup> December, attacked openly British and Papandreou’s decision to support unconditionally the right wingers. Although they tried to hide the events in Britain, yet British reporters’ accounts could not be easily undermined.<sup>104</sup> What followed was weeks of terror in the streets of Athens as both camps were firing at each other. In our point of view it was a fatal mistake from the part of Papandreou and Churchill not to disarm all bodies and especially the Security Battalions. As we mentioned, the Greek Government wanted to create a new national army

<sup>102</sup> Because of the dramatic casualties that occurred in the first days of December 1944, Georgios Papandreou issued his resignation, but Churchill instructed Leeper to convince Papandreou for the opposite even if he had to “tight him in a chair” (Gerolymatos, 2005:162).

<sup>103</sup> FO/954/11B, Image Ref: 154, From Foreign Office to Athens, 5<sup>th</sup> December, 1944, see also appendix 4 the full copy.

<sup>104</sup> FO 954/11B image ref: 156, Downing Street, 5<sup>th</sup> December 1944.

(mainly consisting of royals) that would restore order in the capital and in the major cities. The fear from both sides was evident, for on the one hand the right-wingers believed that the great size of ELAS would be used to bring a communist regime of a Stalinist type, whereas the Left was aware that allowing to create a distinct body of troops in Athens would be used as a mediator for monarchy to be restored and impose once again authoritarian politics in the Greek political arena (Gerolymatos, 2005: 148-150).

Although in the beginning it seemed as a tactical mistake of EAM/ELAS to refuse to give up their arms, for they gave a good reason to the British to believe that they would seize the power by force, and their intervention would be justified in this ground alone, yet ELAS's suspicions were rational and indeed true.<sup>105</sup> That is, by disarming ELAS, the right-wingers would receive arms from the Greeks and British thus violating the *Caserta* and *Plaka* agreement which foresaw the end of civil strife and the disbandment of all bodies. The leftists accused the government of Papandreou of trying to impose a "right wing dictatorship supported by the British" and by not disbanding the "*Sacred Squadron*", the "*National Army*", the "*Mountain Brigade*" and the "*Security Battalions*", ELAS made clear they would not give up their guns either, demanding at the same time the British troops to leave the country.<sup>106</sup>

The fights between ELAS, the British and the Greek royalist army continued for weeks. ELAS proposed truce with the British on the 10<sup>th</sup> of December in order to ease the tensions and allow "the smooth and democratic development" of Greece but with certain conditions. We found the copy of the proposed truce ("Aide Memoire") which was sent to Scobie by the Central Committee of EAM/ELAS. The latter accepted to withdraw its forces

---

<sup>105</sup> A very good analysis of ELAS's tactical mistakes during the crisis of December 1944 and the disagreements with Papandreou is provided on Loulis's book *The Greek Communist Party 1940-1945*, especially the subsection on "The Outbreak of the Demobilization Crisis. The December Revolt", 1982:162-187.

<sup>106</sup> See Dragoumis's telegram to London Embassy, 27 December 1944, Protocol No. 22750, in *Filippos Dragoumis sub-file 62.3 (9-102) "Politika-Politiaka"* (Political-Civic), *Gennadius Library*, Athens.

provided that the Mountain Brigade and the Sacred Squadron will be withdrawn too, but most importantly that the Nazi Security Battalions will give up their arms (for they were still armed), and send them to prison “until tried by the Judiciary”. ELAS also accepted that the British should remain in Greece but only within the limits of Caserta Agreement, and allow the country to prepare itself for democratic elections, without external involvements.<sup>107</sup>

The truce seemed to be fair, but Scobie rejected their peace agreement as he wanted “unconditional surrender” from the ELAS and this led to a tougher stance from the part of the latter. The British policy by mid of December brought turmoil in the British public opinion as well as internationally, as a great number of British MPs voted against the intervention in Greece (Tsoucalas, 1969:87-88). The policies fuelled not only many MPs in the House of Commons as well as international media, but also a large faction of British troops in Athens who were ordered to fight what once were their allies. Many British soldiers in fact were working class citizens and members of the Trade Union in the UK and found it really difficult to carry out these policies. The British Union expressed their worry about the tragic situation in Greece, emphasising the importance of letting Greece have free elections and give armistice to “our generous and heroic Greek Allies” (Thorpe, 2006:1080-1081).

Indeed, Churchill’s decision to get involved in to a war with ELAS received an unimaginable criticism inside and outside the House of Commons and in particular as to the way in which he made an unconditional alliance with Zervas against ELAS, and the decision to disband only the latter. Throughout December, there was a constant bloodshed in Athens, as both camps carried out horrific crimes, and undoubtedly from the part of ELAS; while the total cost in the first two days alone was “40 more deaths and approximately 70 wounded”

---

<sup>107</sup> “Aide Memoire”, 14 Dec 1944, The ELAS Central Committee, Certified true copy, Athens 15/12/44, *Filippos Dragoumis* sub-file 62.5 “*Dekemvriana 1944*”, *Gennadius Library*, Athens (see also a copy in the appendix); see also FO 954/11/B Image ref: 160 (From Foreign Office to Athens, 9<sup>th</sup> December 1944).

(Gerolymatos, 2005: 157). Both sides took hostages while the British “imprisoned left-wing or republican officers and soldiers in various detention camps in Africa and the Middle East” (Mouzelis, 1976:59). A number of British MPs (during the vote of confidence for Churchill’s decision to intervene in Greece) such as Independent member Driberg, accused the former of not doing anything in the first days of the shootings, and for being indifferent to the presence of the fascist organisation “X” who tried to control the situation. Labour member Seymour Cocks on the *December Events* argued that the indifference of the British troops to the killings during EAM’s peaceful demonstration “served only to associate Britain with what everywhere condemned as fascist action”.<sup>108</sup> While Labour Acland challenged his party’s reluctant stance to take seriously what the Greek people found in their support to EAM/ELAS, arguing:

“...was EAM/ELAS effectively making resistance to enemy and working smoothly over all country showing considerable performance already and great promises for future? Now EAM has million members. Paris radio last week said two million and added ‘when organisation has two million in population smaller than Belgium it can’t be said that it’s something apart from people’. EAM/ELAS organised successful strikes against Germans, liberated vast areas, ran hospital workshops and military training colleges. They won support of bishops in Kozani and Achaia both of whom said it liberated areas...”<sup>109</sup>

While, Independent Member Driberg argued that even Papandreou (although highly responsible for these dreadful events) admitted that prior to any crisis, the ultra right-wing groups wanted to fuel a civil war with the Left, and Driberg accused the Greek Right, the royalists and the British for being equally responsible for the civil war, accusing Churchill’s vote of confidence on the Greek affairs as an “unworthy piece of blackmail”. Labour member Parker furthermore, accused the British government of supporting the Government of

---

<sup>108</sup> 11-12-44, Debate in the House of Commons, copy to the Greek Information Office, *Filippos Dragoumis* sub-file 62.5 “*Dekemvriana 1944*”, *Gennadius Library*, Athens.

<sup>109</sup> Ibid.

Papandreou which was however not constitutionally elected, postponing the elections, and spreading “propaganda” in the British media that their presence in Greece aimed at giving the “Greek people the right to choose their own government”, however, they were doing the opposite. In doing so, the British policies disappointed a large section of the British public opinion. Furthermore, Independent Member Harold Nicholson’s remarks were, that if one armed band had to disband then all should too, stressing that ELAS refused to give up their arms, knowing that all the right wing groups including the Nazi Security Battalions were in full armed operation.<sup>110</sup> Of course Georgios Papandreou and apart from the British policy, was highly responsible for all these events too. Haris Vlavianos rightly suggests that Papandreou provoked the demonstration of EAM a day before it went ahead in 3 December 1944, hoping in this way that the ministers of EAM would resign and go home. Thus Papandreou, was equally responsible for destroying the political unity of Greece, and his decision made the centrists and socialists “to back the communists” (Vlavianos, 1989:188).

## Conclusion

As these political issues were unfolding in Greece in the liberation months, the escalation of violence terror and extreme nationalism was ready to take place. The political decisions in Greece shaped the legal system, for as we shall see the residues of Nazi collaboration was not only supported by the Greek State, but they escaped the judiciary and of course they assumed new powers. Chapter 5 aimed at linking the Greek Holocaust, with the political issues that were developing in Greece. These issues go hand in hand, as the one cannot be detached from the other. We viewed the categories of collaborators who supported the Nazi brutalities, against the Jews but also against the resistance, in concert with the development of western interests in Greece that played catalytic role in destroying the unity of the resistance, and as we shall the political unity in the aftermath.

---

<sup>110</sup> Debate in the House of Commons, London 12/44, Copy to the Greek Information Office, Filippos Dragoumis sub-file 62.5 “*Dekemvriana 1944*”, Gennadius Library, Athens.

## **Chapter 6. The Legal Aftermath in Greece: The Parody of the Courts**

### **Introduction**

This chapter discusses critically the way in which Greece responded legally to the Nazis and their collaborators; it notes the small number of trials that occurred in Greece, and discusses the politico-diplomatic reasons for this. Last but not least, this chapter closes with an unknown file case of a Nazi official that was responsible for the destruction of Salonika Jewry, and yet escaped the penal system. Since the politics of far-right thrived the following decade and actually until 1974, with a few years break in the 50s and the 60s until a new coup d'état was set up, we can understand that there was little room for the Greek State as well as the Greek society to acknowledge its deeply imbedded problems; that is to prosecute the doers, give attention to the memory of the Jewish Holocaust, thus reflecting upon the political, historical and social consequences as a whole, since the regime left its traces for many decades in Greece. Post-war Greece did not deal seriously with the results and the consequences of Nazism, but was mainly preoccupied with how to deal with communism, at the cost of saving Nazi collaborators who in fact secured positions in the post-war political arena (Iatrides, 1995:10). At the same time however, we are providing a comparative analysis to understand how elsewhere in Europe legal justice responded in order to see similarities and differences.

### **Prolegomena**

As we have seen in chapter 5, the events in December 1944, practically prepared Greece for many years of authoritarian politics as the Right came to power and the collaborators remained in full operation. David H. Close was right to argue that from 1946 elections until the Junta fell in 1974, “a system of apartheid was in force which turned much

of the population into second-class citizens” (Close, 2002: 27).<sup>111</sup> The *battle for Athens* clearly set the tone of what was to follow. The brutal murders from both sides, the escalation of violence that was heading towards a civil war along with the imminent shadow of the cold war, gave the opportunity to the collaborators to “erase their traces” once and for all in Greece. The emphasis now shifted on communism and the collaborators secured their agenda as well as their survival in new and polished administrative positions (Dordanas, 2011:36).

The failure to impose legal prosecutions *en masse* on the collaborators became the norm after the betrayal of the *Varkiza Agreement*. Two months after the December events, there was a peace agreement in February 1945 that foresaw that all armed units in Greece should disband, ELAS would receive amnesty, and the collaborators/ Security Battalions would be legally charged for perpetrating murders and bestial slaughters (Tsoucalas, 1969:92). The ELAS fighters gave up their arms and were not allowed to take part in the new government.<sup>112</sup> The Varkiza Agreement was betrayed for although some leading figures of EAM secured amnesty, however the citizens who supported the movement and the guerrillas became victims of the Nazi Security Battalions and the gangs of “x”, introducing the well known period of Greece; the “White Terror”. The latter was the period where systematic terrorism became a routine in the cities of Greece, chasing and imprisoning followers of EAM/ELAS as both the Greek Nazis (Security Battalions) and the units of Grivas (“x”) formed an alliance against the Left (Tsoucalas, 1969:92-93). Knowing that the amnesty failed, a number of left guerrillas did not give up their guns and continued the civil war against the nationalists and royalists in the mountains until 1949. One of those was the chief

---

<sup>111</sup> These issues will be theorised in chapter 7, as we will look critically the post-war Greek state and how the politics of extreme right and nationalism, paved the way to educate the political consciousness of the people on the basis of national-*mindness* forgetting thus the Jewish Holocaust too; a historical element that referred to a multicultural Greece, which was seen as an anathema to the newly nationalistic state that was developing.

<sup>112</sup> Most of the ammunition was handed over to the British, but a small amount was secretly preserved, see Joes, 1992:21.

of ELAS, Ares Velouchiotis, who was expelled from the party for not signing the Varkiza Agreement and for having refused to give up his arms (Tsoucalas, 1969:93).<sup>113</sup>

From 1945 onwards, laws that were prevalent during the fascist dictatorship of Metaxas were re-introduced. For example, politicians from the Right Bloc suspended laws regarding freedom of speech and freedom of press, while journalists, editors and free-lance reporters from the progressive newspapers *Rizospastis* and *Eleftheri Ellada* were threatened, chased and beaten severely. Policies and legal codes that were imposed during Nazi Occupation by the collaborationist administrations of Tsolakoglou and Rallis in Greece “remained in force” until the official civil war ended, thus supporters and sympathisers of the Left were legally now prosecuted or murdered. The period of terror especially in 1945-1946, was as evident as now the citizens in Greece had to sign the famous “πιστοποιητικό κοινωνικών και πολιτικών φρονημάτων” (“Certificate of Unimpeachable Socio-political Convictions”), otherwise the punishment was jail or exile (Richter, 1986: 125-127).

### **The Legal Prosecutions: Nazi Perpetrators and Greek Collaborators**

Starting with the Nazi perpetrators, this section departs from the fate of Brunner and Wicliceny, who were the key perpetrators in the destruction of the Salonika Jewry and provides further information with respect to the Nazis who were stationed in Athens. It continues with an extensive analysis of the legal fate of local collaborators, and finishes in the last section of this chapter with the prosecution of Max Merten. As we saw in the second

---

<sup>113</sup> Concerning the events that followed as a result of the betrayal of the Varkiza Agreement, Nikos Zachariadis (General Secretary of KKE) said the following: “...we were passing from armed struggle to mass political struggle and also since the dual nature of the regime, which in essence was one of EAM and ELAS, had in the whole of Greece been checked, thanks to the armed intervention of the British on behalf of the Right, and thus our movement not only passed to the opposition, but fell under a regime of the most savage and scurrilously murderous terror” (quoted in Vukmanovic, 1985: 83)

chapter, Wisliceny and under the instruction of Eichmann travelled to Greece and settled in Thessaloniki to carry out the Jewish policy (Kouzinopoulos, 2005:92). During the Nuremberg Trials, in the *Morning Session of the Twenty-Sixth Day* (Thursday 3 January 1946) Dieter Wisliceny testified that he was responsible for carrying out the Jewish deportations in Slovakia and Hungary, and that in 1943, Eichmann sent him to Greece. Along with the newly arrived Brunner they managed to concentrate “about 50,000 of Spanish descent” in Salonika and 4,000 from the rest of Greek Macedonia.<sup>114</sup> He tried to pass the blame on Brunner, when Wisliceny told the Judge that he was not there when the “action” took place:

Lt. Col. Brookhart: “Altogether how many Jews were collected and deported from Greece?”

Wisliceny: “There were over 50,000 Jews. I believe that about 54,000 were evacuated from Salonika and Macedonia”.

B: “What is the basis for your figure?”

W: “I myself read a comprehensive report from Brunner to Eichmann on completion of the evacuation. Brunner left Salonika at the end of May 1943. I personally was not in Salonika from the beginning of April until the end of May, so that the action was carried out by Brunner alone”.<sup>115</sup>

Wisliceny confiscated all the belongings of the Jewish community, worth 280,000,000 Drachmas. He stored the amount in a “common account” at the National Bank of Greece, and after deporting and annihilating the majority of the victims at Auschwitz, the money was transferred to the account of the German Military Administration.<sup>116</sup> According to Kouzinopoulos, Brunner proved to be faster in implementing not only the deportations but also the processes of extermination. He sent to the crematoria with his “own initiative” groups of Jews not only from Greece but from other countries too in order to fill in the gaps

---

<sup>114</sup> This valuable information is part of the complete testimony of Dieter Wisliceny during *the Nuremberg Trials Proceedings Volume 4, Twenty-Sixth Day, Thursday 3 January 1946*, The Avalon Project: Documents in Law, History, and Diplomacy, Yale Law School : <http://avalon.law.yale.edu/imt/01-03-46.asp>. Some sections of the trial have been also translated in Greek by Kouzinopoulos, 2005.

<sup>115</sup> Ibid.

<sup>116</sup> Ibid.

or else the “numbers of transportation that were scheduled” (Kouzinopoulos, 2005:97). Overall, and under his own personal initiative as previously suggested, he deported and exterminated 44,000 Jews from Thessaloniki, 47,000 from Vienna, 23,500 from France, and 14,000 from Slovakia (Kouzinopoulos, 2005: 98). Unlike Wisliceny who “was arrested in Bratislava and executed in 1948”, Brunner escaped from postwar prosecution (Kouzinopoulos, 2005:92). From 1945 onwards the authorities all around the world tried to find him. There was another SS officer with the same surname (Anton Brunner responsible for the Jewry of Vienna), whom the authorities for a long time thought they were related. The latter was sent to the gallows but Alois Brunner escaped (Kouzinopoulos, 2005:100-101). He changed locations the following decades, from Vienna to the US, from Prague to Munich, when at some point he was arrested by the American authorities after been found by Czech partisans. He remained for some time imprisoned without however revealing his real identity (Kouzinopoulos, 2005:102).

Even since he was fugitive, but was found again in Damascus. The Syrian authorities arrested him in 1960 for selling narcotics, but as Kouzinopoulos declares, he was soon released after he revealed his identity, securing ever since the government’s protection. Despite being found by the Israeli Secret Service, he again escaped murder after two failed bomb attacks, and Brunner secured an even tighter governmental protection (Kouzinopoulos, 2005:105). The European Parliament in the early nineties accused the Assad regime of protecting a butcher of thousands victims and until now he is still wanted by the world wide authorities, while in 1980 sources indicated that he was still alive in Syria (Kouzinopoulos, 2005:110-111, 115). Other Nazis however who were involved in the destruction of many European Jews apart from the Greek Jewry, such as Walter Blume was found guilty for his crimes during the Nuremberg Trials, but the court did not investigate his role in Greece and in particular Athens . His sentence changed from “death”, to “life imprisonment”, serving in

the end only three years behind bars (Mazower, 1993:374). Other key Nazi perpetrators involved in Greece such as General Lohr were seized by the Yugoslav partisans, “tried in Belgrade”, and sent to the gallows in 1948. Furthermore, SS Lanz (Commander in Ioannina), Speidel and Felmy, “were tried at the so-called ‘Trial of the Southeastern Generals’ at Nuremberg, and served prison terms of seven to ten years”, while Waltern Schimana “committed suicide in prison in Salzburg in 1948” (ibid). As we have argued in chapter 4, no Nazi was held responsible for any massacre in Greece, and Distomo was not the only case, but the massacre in Kommeno in Epirus among many others. Last but not least, Nazi Herman Neubacher stayed behind bars only for a year despite receiving a twenty-year verdict, while “an ambitious young intelligence officer called Kurt Waldheim, stationed in Greece for the last eighteen months of the war, rose to become Secretary-General of the United Nations and President of Austria” (Mazower, 1993:375).

Regarding the sensitive subject of collaboration, although the Greek Parliament passed a law that guaranteed the implementation of prosecutions for those who collaborated, such as the quisling governments, Nazi spies, the Security Battalions, members of the police force and Greek Nazis, yet very few were prosecuted. The collaborators who fell under the last category were sentenced systematically “but very few” received death sentences. The argument behind the lenient treatment of the other categories was justified on the ground that collaborators were fighting against communism, which was considered “a crime worse than collaboration with the enemy” (Richter, 2006:294-295). As a result, the majority of the collaborators continued to live their lives without worrying about anything, since their anti-communist beliefs justified their murders (ibid). After the Varkiza Agreement, the Greek authorities instead of imprisoning the collaborators and the Security Battalions, they sent to jail at least 80,000 supporters of EAM/ELAS while the majority of collaborators escaped prosecution. In particular, during 1945, Mazower declares that “only 2,896 of 16,700 held in

September 1945 were convicted of collaboration; by January 1951 they numbered only 1,275 out of 28,000 prisoners” (Mazower, 2000:215).

One of the reasons for the slim number of imprisoned, lies partly from the fact that the British troops slowly and gradually were releasing numbers of Security Battalions from the prisons of *Averoff* and *Goudi* and re-baptised them members of the National Army or else “Regular Army”. The latter in turn remained in full operation to fight members of the ELAS in 1945 and 1946 (Gerolymatos, 2005: 258-259). Hondros in his essay “‘Too Weighty a Weapon’: Britain and the Greek Security Battalions, 1943-1944”, argues based on intelligence papers, that during the war, British officials were really puzzled as to how to deal with the Security Battalions. On the one hand they wanted to “denounce” them since they were Nazi groups but that would mean that they would support EAM/ELAS which was an anathema for their foreign policy, while on the other, they could secretly support the Battalions and “denounce EAM/ELAS as a terroristic minority”. However, British plans changed as EAM accepted to be part of the service government of Papandreou, thus made both British and Greek politicians to officially denounce the Nazi Battalions in October 1944 (Hondros, 1988: 38-39).

However after denunciation, the British incorporated a large section of Security Battalions in the Greek royalist army. During the revolt of December 1944, a number of Security Battalions were released from prisons to chase EAM/ELAS without discrimination. This argument in fact reveals how the legal system operated in general amid cold war. The latter’s conspiracy rhetoric along with the inability or “unwillingness” of the Greek authorities to handle the leftist prosecutions rationally, left open room to every kind of ultra-nationalist and fascist group to kill, persecute and exile every person who was considered a leftist. Of course, any progressive element in the Greek social life during the post war years was considered by definition communistic for the ultra-right wing politics that prevailed

during and after occupation (Gerolymatos, 2005:256-257). Another factor that contributed to the escape of many collaborators of the Security Battalions was that during the liberation months (October-December 1944), and in order to escape prosecution many former collaborators sought refuge to the army of EDES. During the war their relation with some sections of EDES was often “discreet” and “intimate”. These moves were frequent especially in the province of Epirus in contrast with Central Greece and Thessaly for the latter regions were controlled by ELAS (Kostopoulos, 2005:52-53).

A number of collaborators and members of the Security Battalions, who did not end up in the new national army or EDES, were captured by ELAS. One of the most famous battles between the partisans of ELAS and the Security Battalions occurred in south Peloponnese, after the partisans chased them in Tripoli and Kalamata, and cornered them in the small town of *Meligala* (Mazower, 1993:358). Until today, former relatives and members of the neo-Nazi party Golden Dawn pay annual tribute to the dead collaborators.<sup>117</sup> Mazower declares that prior to the events in Meligala, the collaborators executed thousands in Kalamata while Greece was still occupied. Thus local people and ELAS’ men took revenge by killing all collaborators in the region in September 1944 with every weapon they found (Mazower, 1993:358). As the author suggests,

“Numbers were exaggerated, but in the tense, excited, vengeful atmosphere the reality turned out to be violent enough. After all, up to 1,500 people had been executed in the Kalamata area during the German occupation, and thousands of homes had been burned. Battalionists had carried out a last round of reprisals only a few weeks earlier, and now the victims sought their revenge [...] As soon as they were marched into the main square, frenzy onlookers broke loose of the ELAS civil police and in ten minutes beat some of the prisoners to death, and strung the others up from lamp-posts” (Mazower, 1993:358).

---

<sup>117</sup> <http://www.enetenglish.gr/?i=news.en.article&id=1474>

Keith Lowe suggests that unlike Holland, Belgium, Norway and Denmark, in Greece, Italy, parts of France, and Eastern Europe as a whole, neither the resistance nor the local population invested upon the legitimacy or efficiency of the local authorities in purging the collaborators and the “reasons” were “political”, taking many times “the law in into their hands” (Lowe, 2012:149). Tony Judt would have agreed with Lowe on the issue of collaborators and the failure of purging them in the aftermath. Despite the fact that Judt recognised the inefficiency of post-war trials everywhere in Europe – and in the West - France, Italy and Greece were paradigmatic examples, yet he considers the latter as a “unique case” and “a revealing one” (Judt, 2010:48). He argued, that “despite a significant level of wartime collaboration among the bureaucratic and business elites, post-war purges were directed not at the Right but the Left” and that the “purges and trials in Greece were thus blatantly political” (Judt, 2010: 48-49).

Furthermore, in the province of Greek Macedonia and especially Salonika, the limited number of prosecuted collaborators was even more embarrassing, although in this particular region the Security Battalions committed perhaps the most terrible crimes on local populations. A great number survived the judiciary as they escaped with other Nazis in Germany, while others (about 26%) who faced severe accusations vanished from the earth. There was also another category of people who collaborated, namely those who worked in pro-Nazi Greek press. The majority of Greek journalists for instance who worked in the German controlled newspapers were accused of collaboration and many faced sentences. Many of these propagandists tried to excuse their capitulation with the enemy on the basis of “fear and not by any lack of patriotic feeling” (Haida, 2000: 52-53).

Furthermore, other cases escaped secretly the judiciary as they were frozen in 1946 due to the civil war and the coming elections, since the authorities feared it will taint the outcome of the vote. People who were charged for financial collaboration such as the

technocrats of the banks, only 20 of them were sentenced in 1945 and just 59 the following year. Hence, their sentences were changing all the time with the excuse that the jails lacked space, while many escaped by paying their sentence (Haida, 2000:50, 44). Other cases in Thessalonica that involved collaboration were ethnic minorities such as the Bulgarians. Given that there was a lot of antagonism between the Bulgarians and the Greeks (since Northern Greece during Axis was also occupied and illegally annexed by the Bulgarian Army) many people from these minorities collaborated with the enemy and murdered Greeks. The severity of these sentences increased as the Greek authorities feared that the Bulgarians will raise the issue of “Macedonian Autonomy” (Haida, 2000:49). As we have already discussed in chapter 2, Eastern Macedonia and Western Thrace (Greece) during occupation was illegally annexed to the Bulgarian Government and the Bulgarian citizens were acting in accordance with the Bulgarian Authorities. Yet, many accusations against some Bulgarians civilians were fabricated and “exaggerated”. These exaggerations one may suggest reflected Greece’s anxieties over its borders since they have been challenged during the Balkan Wars, thus “public opinion in Macedonia was quick to tar all Slavic-speakers with the same brush” (Haida, 2000:56; see also chapter 2). As Haida writes,

“Slavic- speakers were accused of a variety of offenses, often on the basis of rumour, conjecture, exaggeration, and even sheer malice, as the witnesses’ depositions reveal. Someone might be considered a “Bulgarian” because he was the butcher who provided the Bulgarians with their meat, because he happened to be related to a known collaborator with the Bulgarian authorities, or because he was having an affair with someone of Bulgarian descent” (Haida, 2000:56).

The small number of trials attracted Europe’s attention criticising the Greek judiciary for lack of transparency and flexibility towards collaboration. The British and U.S American authorities criticized the legal failure in Greece, attacking at the same time the

newly elected Government of Tsaldaris in 1946, for its “authoritarian and undemocratic” character, not prosecuting the Nazis and making prisons a left-wing concentration camp (Haida, 2000:54-55). Of course there is an irony here, for the British – and since they promoted their own agenda in post-war Greece- they were all too aware what their policies would bring about in the end, since legal justice was impossible via a far-right government which they chose to support. In fact, many British “representatives” accused the British government for supporting this Greek leniency towards the collaborators (Haida, 2000:56). As Haida declares:

“...the British parliament also took a particular interest in the progress of the trials, and MPs frequently submitted questions to government representatives criticizing them for supporting the Greek government in its attempts to secure light sentences for well-known collaborators. In a report to the British ambassador to Athens in later 1946, the consul general in Thessaloniki intimated that the British authorities were being strongly criticized by some of their compatriots for their attitude on the issue. The report also revealed that the inhabitants of northern Greece were unanimous in their support for the exemplary punishment of the collaborators; and it made no secret of the partiality of the judicial authorities” (Haida, 2000: 56).

Nevertheless, there were some groups who faced severe sentences. One of the Greek Nazis, who was tried along with his unit, was Georgios Poulos. As we already mentioned in the section of (“Political and Armed Collaboration” in chapter 5), Georgios Poulos was considered an extremely dangerous criminal and an open advocate of Nazism. He was known for his anti-Semitic sentiments, for his flirtatious support towards the National Union of Greece (EEE), and for slaughtering unarmed civilians. His nationalist Nazi unit carried out perhaps one of the most ferocious murders in occupied Greek Macedonia (Dordanas, 2006:190). He never hesitated to exhibit his pro-Nazi persona and was in contact with many agents in Cairo and the Wehrmacht units. While Greece was occupied, he travelled

to Germany giving propagandistic and raving speeches against the Greek resistance. He tried to attract as many people as possible in his unit to fight on the side of the Nazis during Occupied Greece (Dordanas, 2011: 151-152).

Poulos was hiding in Germany when the U.S army arrested him. He asked from the American and German authorities to be tried in Greece, hoping he would convince the Greek authorities he was fighting on the side of the national patriotic front and against communism and that his actions were driven by his need to serve his country; it was a motto that all traitors used in order to save themselves. His application was accepted and was sent to Greece to be tried in 1947 by the Military courts of Salonika. As one may suspect, he “denied all allegations” that were made against him arguing that he never attacked the “nationally-minded” Greeks but only the Greek communists (Dordanas, 2011:153-155). He was also accused of espionage by the court of Thessaloniki, but was “dropped”, and his case continued in the Special Courts of Collaborators. His file case was extremely long as he and his armed unit were involved in systematic murders against unarmed civilians such as Jews, Greeks and Bulgarians (ibid).

Stratos Dordanas examined his file case in Thessaloniki, and argued that the Greek authorities hesitated to charge all men of his unit, since many saw refuge in the National Army of Greece during the *December Events* and in the Civil War. In the beginning, the Greek court decided that all 206 men of Poulos had to be sentenced for collaborating with the Nazis, but the verdict changed (Dordanas, 2011:158-160). The court hearing started in 2 December 1947 and on the 11<sup>th</sup> the court gave the death sentence to Poulos, but only 20 of his men were sentenced. In 11 June 1949, Poulos was taken to *Goudi* Prison and was executed in the firing squad (Dordanas, 2011:167-169).

Others who faced strong sentences (though not all served them in full) were the Quisling Prime Ministers (Georgios Tsolakoglou, Konstantinos Logothetopoulos, and Ioannis Rallis). All three were sentenced to life imprisonment, although Tsolakoglou initially was sentenced to death. The second was set free in 1951, while the third (Rallis) died in prison in 1946 (Laughland, 2008:160). Laughland suggests, that up until now, no one has found any trace of documentation concerning the trials of the quisling prime ministers, as all files were “destroyed” “six months” after the end of the court proceedings and no author, historian or journalist ever studied these records (Laughland, 2008: 161). Two men who were part of the quisling government of Logothetopoulos but escaped the judiciary in Salonika were Vasillis Simonides and Athanassios Chrysochoou. These two men were highly involved in the destruction of Greek Jewry but the legal system treated them indifferently. As we discussed in chapter 2, Vasillis Simonides and Athanasios Chrysochoou, were the main bureaucrats in the administration of Salonika who however escaped legal prosecution. The quisling Prime Minister Logothetopoulos (in order to escape charges against the Jewish community of Salonika), declared that he was not informed by Vasillis Simonides and “did not keep his superiors in Athens fully informed as to what was happening to the Jews” (Apostolou, 2000:179). Apostolou declares that unfortunately not many archives and files exist so as to know, how much Simonides was in charge of the situation or whether he was there signing the German orders (ibid). Even if he took charge of things or he was just a bureaucrat, the responsibility remains. There were many bureaucrats in Occupied Europe who did not execute any Jew, but they approved these actions by certain bureaucratic decisions and certain signatures. The Eichmann case is a good example here, and Arendt’s analysis of his trial reveals that a normal citizen as Eichmann who did not touch a single Jew yet “had a key position in the whole process”, and thus was highly responsible (Arendt, 2006: 152). With this logic, many bureaucrats in Greece escaped the penal system and there are no archives

unfortunately that show what happened in other major cities where local authorities collaborated in one way or another to deport the Jews.

However, to go back to the case of Simonides in Salonika, Apostolou declares, that Wisliceny (and based on letters) informed the PM Logothetopoulos about the situation in Salonika, and that a representative signature or approval must have taken place. However, there are no sources available that explain what kinds of decisions were taken and what Simonides, Logothetopoulos, Altenburg and Wisliceny discussed about. But it leaves no doubt that Logothetopoulos was all “too aware of the atrocious conditions in the ghettos and on the first deportation trains” (Apostolou, 2000:182). Ironically, not only Simonides escaped the judiciary, but his fellow colleague in the central administration of Salonika, Athanassios Chrysochoou. The latter, became a member in the Greek Government of Papandreou before and after the December Events of 1944 (in the liberation period). As we saw in chapter 5, this Government was built with Greek and British encouragement so as to minimise the power of the left in the next coming elections (Apostolou, 2000:176).

These categories of collaborators that we just discussed, at least the majority escaped the penal system or faced soft sentences. What is important to highlight here, is that these categories of collaborators guarded the social and political machine in Greece and entered the following decade the political system of the country (i.e. bureaucracy, army, administration) in order to bring order and suppress the left; yet, what they achieved was a “national schism” (Karakatsanis, 2001:27). In order to make sure that Greece remains right-wing, the hard-core nationalist Tsaldaris Government entered the Greek Parliament in 1946 with a highly ambivalent outcome. The Greek sociologist Costas Tsoucalas criticised heavily the outcome of the vote but also the procedure as such, for the elections took place under terroristic warnings to those who would not support the Right in the ballots. Thus half of Greeks (both from the Centre and the Left) did not go to the polling stations for they knew

the result would be rigid and the whole electorate process a “farce” , while the members of KKE and the EAM committee decided to “abstain” from the elections. The decision of the Left not to go to the polls gave satisfaction to Bevin, who exercised “veto” to those leftists who reconsidered and applied for candidates. The same period, the referendum over the issue of the crown took place with an “expected result” as again approximately half of the electorate stayed home, while monarchy came back and George II returned from Britain (Tsoucalas, 1969:96-97).<sup>118</sup>

“Thus British policy had met with complete success. While the British found their military allies in the extreme Right and collaborationist groups, who they had carefully preserved, armed and used against the ELAS, the political allies were sought among the progressive and republican pre-war political circles, who would be able to pose as conciliators and moderates. Papandreou, Plastiras, and Sophoulis were successfully called upon to play this role [...] The double structure of power, democratic in the political facade but Royalist-fascist in the forces of coercion, which was gradually built up from 1943, was to be a crucial factor in the future. For the construction of the new Army as an autonomous entity, not subject to governmental authority, did not end with the termination of the civil war. Despite the fact that the right wing was in power between 1952 and 1963, the army remained ‘untouchable’” (Tsoucalas, 1969: 97-98).

Concerning the 1946 elections, it is widely known to many Greeks today that the whole process was based on “fraud” and that the conditions under which the elections took place were indeed terroristic. Sedgwick claims, that although they sent Western observers to monitor the procedure, it is widely believed that the outcome was rigid and that the abstain of the majority of the left and centrist voters was 9.3 % out of the overall 15% of the voters

---

<sup>118</sup> See analytically on the elections of 1946 the powerful essay of Mavrogordatos “the 1946 Elections and Plebiscite: Prelude to Civil War”, 2006:308-340.

which showed the “strength of the anti-national Left-Wing” movement in post-war Greece (Sedgwick, 1948: 490).

### **Criticism: Greece at the ‘centre’ of the Cold War**

Greece failed to deliver justice and bring into courts the Nazi-collaborators. The State used the slogan of the communist threat to divide the Greek population by covering at the same time the crimes of the collaborators. In the literature that is available and examines the post-war politics many authors fell into the same trap unfortunately. The anti-left syndrome that was developing amid cold war created a country with extreme “polarizations” (Close, 1993:156). Hence Nazi collaboration became an issue of secondary importance. In this sense, many sought to excuse their crimes as well as the presence of fascism within the administration in the post-war politics in the name of the *communist threat*. This thought however (in our point of view) created tolerance to Nazism and to the proper legal prosecution of the collaborators.

Thus we are confronted with a major ideological problem. Throughout our research concerning the politics of collaboration in Greece, we have observed two schools of historical explanation concerning the Greek affairs. The majority of authors and we are naming only few, such as Mark Mazower, Hagen Fleischer, Heinz Richter, Stratos Dordanas, Costas Tsoucalas and many others critically attacked the Greek and British policy in order to understand how Greece developed during but also after the war not only legally but socio-politically as well. Heinz Richter for instance (who in our point of view was perhaps the strictest in tone) attacked the British foreign policy for not providing the air and space in Greece to decide for their own politics and thus did not help to prosecute the collaborators, for “only with the help of the British could be accomplished”. While at the same time Richter deconstructed the “myth” that the Greek Left would have seized the power by force or that they were thirsty for the “third round” after the Varkiza Agreement (Richter, 2006:302-303).

The other camp sought to excuse the rise of fascism and authoritarianism in the socio-political infrastructure because the alternative choice to the Greek political scene was communism; and that their followers were extremists. William Hardy McNeil for instance, in his book *The Greek Dilemma*, seemed to favour the former as a choice, arguing that since the centrist politics were totally destroyed, the British politics had to choose a king who was fascist and a right-wing administration that was extreme (McNeil, 1947:223). As he argues:

“In real or imagined emergency, rather than go under the Communists, the men of the Right would try to establish a dictatorship such as the one Metaxas wielded before the war; and would employ the full power of the police and Army to repress the threat from the Left. Such an event would prove highly embarrassing to the British and American Governments. Both have preferred a Centre which does not exist; but between extremes have chosen to support the Right within certain limits. Should the Right, facing emergency, set up authoritarian government, the Western Powers would find themselves faced with the problem whether to support what would practically be a Fascist State. Only if communism fades away and becomes what it was before the war, an irritant but not a threat, will the probability of a dictatorship from the Right disappear” (McNeil, 1947:223).

At this point we wish to make a critical remark, namely, that the author forgets that the political *Centre* was never destroyed and in fact it *did* exist and that what the west considered as communism was actually something else; it was the people and political leaders from many progressive camps that sought to subvert the old political guard (i.e. monarchy) which went hand in hand with fascism. What McNeil failed to realize was that both the Left and the Centre were against the return of a fascist regime in the face of king George II. His book yet was written in the middle of the civil war in Greece (and hence on the eve of cold war), and clear understanding of the events was impossible. To be precise, the centre only got weak (but still alive), when the western politics supported at all cost a monarch who was unwanted among even the majority of centrist politicians. What remained

therefore as the only option was in fact to furnish the king with a fascist cabinet since no one else approved him. Not to mention that the real centrist politicians were now part of the coalition scheme of EAM. We must bear in mind again that the EAM was not communistic in its totality, but included also social-democrats, liberals, republicans, supporters of Venizelos, even some royalists who left the royalist bloc as we have stated already many times, and this left-wing coalition scheme was well known inside and outside Greece (Bowman, 2002:74).<sup>119</sup> Although there were ideological differences between the various political camps, however during the civil war that started in 1946, these differences vanished to some extent, given that the “officer corps” who took charge of the Greek politics, became a “homogenous body committed to authoritarianism and monarchism, anti-communism and anti-republicanism” (Gerolymatos, 2009: 7).

In other words, the military factor that entered all aspects of political life in post-war Greece considered dangerous all political trends apart from the Right and not just communism. While the Centre – and when we talk about the Centre we refer to the Greek political figures in Cairo and their coalition scheme while in exile - seemed to be divided precisely because the king was unwanted, even though the Cairo leaders provoked the Left at the same time since they feared they will lose their power, and they too spread accusations against EAM/ELAS (see for example the “Speech to the Nation” by Georgios Papandreou, in October 1944, where he accuses EAM/ELAS for all the ills of the Greek Society).<sup>120</sup>

However, it was the right-wing forces of the monarchy that weakened the centre, for every time the centrist politics were coming back in the Greek political scene, the monarchy

---

<sup>119</sup> The newspapers of United Kingdom of the time, from the most conservative to the most progressive and radical, were highlighting precisely the democratic and progressive character of the EAM and its political openness, see Filippou Dragoumis sub-file 62.5 “*Dekemvriana 1944*”, London 28 December 1944, No. 3706 (summary of the British Press, copy to the Greek Information Office), *Gennadius Library*, Athens.

<sup>120</sup> See “*O Logos pros to Ethnos*” (The Speech to the Nation) by Georgios Papandreou, October 1944, in Filippou Dragoumis Sub-file 62.2 “*Apeleftherosi Oct-Dec 1944*” (Liberation Oct-Dec 1944), *Gennadius Library*, Athens.

destroyed the unity of the political parties and always organised *coups* for the regency to keep its power. It was a scene that we saw during Metaxas dictatorship in the 30s when the king destroyed the unity of Venizelos and called the army to take hold, suspending the Greek constitution as we already mentioned before. And it was also a scene that was re-played in the mid 60s when the coalition scheme of the centre of Papandreou regained its power while the right was losing. During the mid sixties the new king Constantine II disagreed with Papandreou as to which ministers will take which office, creating many years of political instability, leading the king to collaborate with the Generals to form a coup in 1967. Of course this was one of the many reasons that led to the dictatorship, since Constantine also accused Georgios Papandreou's son, Andreas, for his left wing affiliations and beliefs that he developed while teaching at Harvard University. However, Constantine was undoubtedly one of the most responsible figures for the martial regime along with the support of some of Washington circles, the Greek Intelligence (KYP) and CIA from which Dictator Papadopoulos undoubtedly received a graduate degree (Tsarouhas, 2005: 7, 8-9; same in Close, 2002:152; same in Woodhouse, 1985:7-8).

It is not in the scope of this thesis to talk about the military dictatorship, but serves to show how the collaborators through the exercise of right-wing politics survived and in fact took decisions for the future of Greece, with the excuse that they wanted to save Greece from communism. A very good example to support our argument is that of General Markezinis who was appointed as an interim General in the last year of junta before democratic restoration. Markezinis entered the politics in the late 40s under the head of General Papagos. He had very good connections with the Greek royal family, and he was the personal and "trusted" advisor of Greek king Paul and very good friend with his wife queen Frederica (*Frederiki*), who undoubtedly was the most hated woman in Greece (Close, 1995b:149). All these personas sprung in the 40s and re-appeared in Greece the following decades, playing a

crucial role in the politics of Greece. Hence, as we saw in chapter 5, Dictator Papadopoulos too, collaborated with the Germans during 40s (as he was a member of the Security Battalions) and later suspended parliamentary democracy with king Constantine forming a coup in 1967 (see Kostopoulos, 2005: 146). The ground was cooked for many decades (under the shadows of cold war), and as Karakatsanis declares, from the late 40s until 1967 it was “a coup in the making” (Karakatsanis, 2001:29).

To go back however and based on the previous argument, we can see that the British support for monarchy during the Second World War created political disintegration inside Greece. For it was the hostility towards monarchy and vice versa that weakened the centre and this can be understood by the numerous resignations from the Papandreou government that occurred during the spring and autumn of 1944. The politicians in Athens and Cairo could not agree who would eventually fit the agenda of the king and who would bear the cost in working with the regency. The plethora of files from the Cabinet Papers of London that we examined, reveal precisely what has been previously said; namely that king’s prospective return made a whole dynasty of bourgeois politicians to fall into resignations such as that of Sofoulis and Tsouderos sending even telegrams to London declaring that the Greek king does not respect the political changes in Greece, accusing him of “playing with fire”.<sup>121</sup>

Whoever tried to reconcile his political career with his support to monarchy was labelled a “fascist”, as in the case of Georgios Papandreou (the eldest). The latter was openly accused by many British MPs in the debate at the House of Commons in 12 December 1944, as well as attacking Churchill’s handling of events during the battle of Athens. One of those MPs was Labour Seymour Cocks who argued that Papandreou was the ultimate “evil genius

---

<sup>121</sup> CAB/66/49/47 Image Ref: 0001, The Greek Crisis (April 1-25, 1944), see telegraphs No. 198 (3<sup>rd</sup> April 1944), No. 199 (4<sup>th</sup> April 1944), No. 215 (6<sup>th</sup> April 1944), No. 217 (6<sup>th</sup> April 1944).

of Modern Greece” as he refused to disarm the collaborators and fight ELAS, while at the same time, Labour John Dugdale openly labelled him a “fascist and reactionary”.<sup>122</sup>

There are many political peculiarities that are often ignored but must be seen as an integral part of the socio-political woes of Greece. The geo-political element played a dramatic role in understanding the motives of the cold war. People’s struggle within EAM did not only imply war against Nazism but years of agony to subvert fascism, nationalism, and to fight for freedom and civil rights which were totally ignored during occupation and amid cold war. Apart from the political antagonisms that prevailed in Greece, it is addressed by many authors that Greece’s people’s movement has been suppressed by politico-diplomatic interests. Greece’s crucial geopolitical location along with the intervention of the British policies and U.S policies (the latter took over after 1947), made the country one of the crucial epicentres of the cold war (Woodhouse: 1977:124).

But the ultimate consequence of western strategy was felt mostly on the social and political fabric of the country, as people’s need to turn a page in the Greek politics and bring social - democratic and progressive laws were translated as anti-Greek, anti-patriotic and thus communistic. This kind of polarisation that we discussed in the previous paragraph, escalated in Greece of course after the agreement of Churchill and Stalin to divide Europe into spheres of influence thus any attempt of revolting against the existing situation was “doomed” to fail (Eudes, 1972: 249).

Other authors however, such as Stathis Kalyvas in his essay “Armed Collaboration in Greece, 1941-1944”, give attention more to the anti-communist agenda of the collaborators than the Nazi one. He declared that if the leftists did not take such a hard line, the Security Battalions would never have been introduced into the armed life of Greece, and thus not

---

<sup>122</sup> *Filippos Dragoumis* Sub-file, 62.5 “*Dekemvriana 1944*”, Foreign Office, London 12-12-44, Copy of the debate in the House of Commons to the Greek Information Office.

many people would have followed them (Kalyvas, 2008:135). This argument is problematic, for Kalyvas fell under the same trap as many Greek politicians who excused collaboration. And this tolerance brought very few Nazis in the courts of justice. Irrespective of someone's personal political affiliations or whether someone during Occupied Europe was simply an anti-communist (which is perfectly accepted) this alone cannot explain or excuse the great number of participation of people in the Security Battalions. For us there is no question that the bands of ELAS followed many times an extremely hard line, but what Kalyvas forgets is that ELAS was not fighting only the Nazis, but the nationalists. Kalyvas argues, that many defeated forces of EDES and EKKA who joined the Battalions did it to protect themselves, to fight communism, and someone who fought on the side of collaborators did not necessarily mean that he/she was a Nazi sympathiser (Kalyvas, 2008: 134).<sup>123</sup>

With these generalisations Greek History was hidden for many decades, and this silence was preserved or helped to preserve fascism and nationalism in the decades that followed. In fact the nationalists, who fought the Left, were fighting against freedom because the latter was suppressed for decades as these nationalists issued dictatorial and oppressive laws for the majority of the population.

**The “Merten Affair”: The trial and release of the Nazi Maximilian Merten, a systematic study from diplomatic papers.**

We left at the end of this chapter the most sensitive file case that concerned a Nazi who was responsible for the Jewish destruction in Salonika, in order to understand how indeed the political atmosphere that we explained throughout this chapter shaped many legal decisions. One of the most peculiar trial cases that occurred in post war Greece, where a Nazi war criminal sentenced to 25 years in prison, but only after serving a few months of his

---

<sup>123</sup> The same argument is suggested also in Kalyvas's essay “The Paradox of Terrorism in Civil War”, 2004:117.

sentence was set free, was Maximilian Merten. Max Merten, a lawyer and member of the Wehrmacht Units, was one of the three responsible architects for the Jewish deportations in Salonika in 1943. Along with Wisliceny and Brunner, he designed to carry out the Jewish policy in the Greek northern region (Rosenbaum, and Hoffer, 1993: 146; see also chapter 2). The Merten case is really unknown in Greece although the former's case file is stored in Greece and in the Public Record Office with the number (FO 371/153018 RG1661/1, RG1661/2, and RG 1661/3). While carefully examining the file, one can suggest that it resembled more of a scandal between two countries than a legal case of a Nazi war criminal. It was considered as the most important war case in Greece, since Merten was the only German Nazi who tried by the judiciary inside the country and he was one of the three key perpetrators of Salonika Jewry. However, as we shall see, he was freed on the grounds of other socio-political and economic reasons that were cooked by the Greek and German political elite.

Straight after the war, Max Merten escaped prosecution and returned back to Germany, although he was arrested by the U.S. Americans in 1946. Both Greek and German authorities agreed to be freed and return back to his country, in an attempt to ease the tensions between the two countries and build a new relationship; this time based on good economic transactions. Greek elite for that matter was Germany's new post-war financial client. However, by bringing new Nazi criminals into publicity in Greece would have spoiled not only Germany's post war profile but also the need to forget the bitter chapter of collaboration and move on. On the other hand, the Greek government as well profited from this rhetoric, for not only the country needed economic stability after so many decades of severe poverty and hunger but in this way many ministers, officials and bureaucrats in Greece would escape the danger of possible allegations for "widespread collaboration" (Spiliotis, 2000: 293-294).

Constantine Karamanlis (the eldest) who became a Prime Minister in 1958 after his conservative party (ERE) won the elections, agreed with Germany to form new economic ties and suspend all Nazi war crime cases that were pending and give them all to Germany. The latter wanted to forget its Nazi past, while in Greece, the political atmosphere of the cold war that was emerging made Karamanlis very worried that possible officials and political figures from his Right bloc would be accused for dark transactions with the Germans during Occupation and that would give the impetus for the leftist party (EDA, post war EAM sympathisers who escaped prison) to win the majority of the seats in the next political round. What was agreed between the two countries was the following: Germany gave a loan to Greece in order to boost its economy, and in return Greece agreed to stop further charges upon Nazi war criminals with a new legislative law (Spiliotis, 2000:296-297).

Two years before the implementation of the new legislative law, in 26 April 1957, Max Merten was accidentally arrested by the Greek Authorities when he travelled to Athens to testify for another court case. He was questioned for his position in Salonika, admitting for being responsible for the murder of many Greek anti-Nazi fighters, for concentrating 9,000 Jews in Eleftheria Square in 11 July 1942 and for sending thousands of innocent souls to the death camps of Auschwitz (see also chapter 2). He was found guilty of his crimes and was sent to *Averoff* prison for 25 years; however he was set free after staying behind bars only for a short period of time (*Der Spiegel*, No.40/1960). A report of British Embassy in Athens arguing that Merten was set free after staying in prison for a few months and after “a considerable pressure from the German Embassy in Athens and was expected to remove a possible source of friction between the two countries and to pave the way for the further economic penetration of Greece by the Federal German Republic” (FO 371/153018 RG: 1661/1 B).

Upon his release, he travelled to Germany giving an interview to the German magazine *Hamburger Echo* which was also published in *Der Spiegel* in September 1959. Max Merten openly accused ministers of Karamanlis Government for collaborating with the Germans. He declared in particular that while Merten was in Occupied Salonika, he had a secretary named Mrs Doxoula Leontidou, who was in fact the niece of Constantine Karamanlis, and his niece was “then engaged to and is now married to M. Makris, the Greek Minister of Interior” (FO 371/153018 RG:1661/1).<sup>124</sup> He further reported to the German magazine, that although both men were resistance fighters for two years – in the period 1942-1943, Karamanlis and Makris were also German spies. As a reward for their cooperation with the German authorities they received a store (selling silk) which belonged to a Jew from Salonika who was deported to the concentration camps. Merten argued that the niece of Karamanlis (Mrs Leontidou) lied to the Greek authorities when she argued that she never worked for Merten, and that she only met him a couple of times. He declared that she was the one sending him information concerning the operations of resistance against the Nazi troops such as that of Gorgopotamos Bridge. He further declared that the Greek Government suspended all criminal cases that were pending against any Nazi or collaborator after they received a loan of “300.000.000” Drachmas from the German Government, and that he had a picture where Merten had posed with Karamanlis, Makris, and Leontidou (RG:1661/1 A and B). The Greek Government denied all allegations of Merten, and declared that everything is propaganda and “figments of a sick mind” (RG: 1661/1/A). The Greek cabinet wrote to the Embassy of Bonn that none of his accusations were true as neither Karamanlis was in Salonika the period in question nor he knew the accused minister or his wife until 1956 (RG:1661/1/A).

---

<sup>124</sup> See also, Kouzinopoulos, 2005:122-123.

Once the news reached the Greek public press, there was a political turmoil inside the Greek Parliament. The Greek Minister of Interior M. Makris threatened to sue Merten for his false allegations, while Merten argued that he had valid “proof” for all that, and he would soon visit Greece to confirm these. He also accused the Greek judge who sentenced him to 25 years to prison, Mr. Toussis, for hiding important information during his hearing after he was “bribed”. He further accused Mr. Marshal Themelis (under-secretary of Ministry of Defence) for giving “hostages for him during occupation”, and that he has collected all this information from the British Foreign Office (RG: 1661/1 B, and D).

The British Foreign Office rushed to report that all these allegations made against them were totally invalid, however the British officials panicked when Max Merten further said that he was holding a list of Greek collaborators concerning the Jews of Greece that took from an archivist who worked at the National Archives in London and Merten’s lawyer, *Dr. Posser*, now had them in his hands (RG: 1661/2). The Foreign Office wanted to check the authenticity of these German files stored in London, and asked an expert archivist from Germany to make copies of the micro-films (FO 371/153018 RG:1661/2).<sup>125</sup>

Following a full investigation of the originality of the German archives, the German Government found absolutely no evidence that such a list exists and that Merten’s accusations lacked any credibility. The former also stated that the list available concerned only information about the Greek Jews in the Italian controlled zone, while the Foreign

---

<sup>125</sup> They suggested that it was better for the Foreign Office not to make any official statement about these files, since the German Government “confirmed” to the British that indeed the files were stored in London, and it was better “to deny the existence of any such list, if possible, and to secure the early return of the German archivist without publicity, if in fact he arrives” and inform the Greek Government too (FO 371/153018 RG: 1661/2). Otherwise, if this issue went public, the Foreign Office would “stress that the documents in the Public Record Office are open to anyone” (RG: 1661/2 B).

Office further confirmed that the Public Record Office indeed gave a copy to Merten's lawyer, *Dr Posser* (RG 1661/2).<sup>126</sup>

The Greek Government furthermore, in an effort to save itself from further publicity, suppressed all copies of *Der Spiegel* that covered all the allegations of Max Merten against the Ministers of Karamanlis. The debate in the Greek Parliament continued for at least five days, and the ministers who were involved in the Merten case tried to defend themselves. The Minister of Interior M. Makris for instance, defended his wife (Doxoula Leontidou) arguing that she did not know Merten, but that she worked "as a typist in a civil office, dealing with the supply of petroleum products, which had come under the direction of Merten's civil administration" and that if she was Merten's secretary, many people from Thessalonica would have come out in public to "confirm this", but no Salonikan recognised her as his secretary (RG 1661/3). Regarding the allegations made against Minister Makris, he himself argued in the Parliament, that the Salonika Bar Association confirmed that there was another man named Makris, who was a lawyer in Salonika and was indeed a Nazi collaborator but he is not related to him. Makris showed a letter to the Parliament supposedly "signed by Merten" that the Jewish properties were gifted not to Karamanlis, the Interior Minister and his wife "but to two women entirely unconnected to them". But the British Embassy in Athens left "some doubt" on the originality of this file concerning the Jewish properties (RG 1661/3).

---

<sup>126</sup> However, once the news reached Greece; they sent shockwaves in the Greek Parliament. The politicians from the leftist party EDA demanded that the minister of Interior Mr. Makris, Marshal Themelis and the whole cabinet resign. Fearing that this event would bring a new slap to the Greek Government, Karamanlis wanted to call for elections earlier than 1962, especially when the leftish EDA was winning in the opinion polls, and if the Left had won the elections the mechanisms of provocation were ready to take hold. As we read from a report that was sent to London by the British Embassy in Athens in October 1960: in the prospect of a Leftist victory in the next elections "the Army was organised and determined to take over" (RG: 1661/3). Mazower declares what is already known to us, namely that Karamanlis secured his position in 1962 with "rigid elections" although there were "revelations of the wartime collaboration of senior ministers" (Mazower, 1998a: 317). We also need to remind ourselves that while the Merten case went public damaging the Karamanlis administration, Greece was entering at the same time a 5 year political crisis until the military tanks entered Athens with the coup of 21 April 1967.

The case was suddenly closed for Merten. In one report written by the British Embassy in Athens, stated the following:

“The question remains, how could an affair so petty in itself assume such large dimensions that it overshadowed in this country for the time being everything else, even Mr. Khrushchev’s performances at the United Nations? How could such squalid allegations, virtually unsupported by any evidence, have been allowed to create a major political incident? Was there in fact something hitherto unrecognised behind it all? and if so, what was it? Did somebody stimulate Merten to make his allegation? [...] Some people are now even suggesting that Monsieur Karamanlis allowed the agitation to continue and the newspapers to go on publishing the scandals so that he could, by providing them false, reinforce his position and possibly introduce new legislation to curb the newspapers” ( RG 1661/3).

However, in our own point of view, there are other more important questions that have not been answered by anyone. What was exactly that thing that fuelled this scandal, and why did the Prime Minister Constantine Karamanlis, if indeed his ministers were clean from accusations, pass this new law suspending all war crime cases? Did he want to save his cabinet past? What was exactly the role of the German Government in all this and why the latter fought so hard with the Greek authorities to release Merten? Why did British Officials choose to remain silent when in fact it was the Public Record Office that furnished Merten with documents? Was there any list of collaborators after all, and if so, did the German Government had information and hide it? Who profited from this case? Did the victims of Merten deserve to see at least this criminal so involved in the Salonika Jewry prosecuted?

What is most certain is that Max Merten although sentenced to 25 years by the Greek Military courts, enjoyed a free and clean life until his death. We chose to stay in this case much more, not only because it is one of the biggest Nazi cases in Greece although extremely unknown, but because it really captures the very essence of our critique throughout

this chapter. Namely, that there was a plethora of political mechanisms in Greece and in Europe that sought to hide elements that would bring light to the issue of collaboration. Spiliotis suggests that the case of Merten shows “the lack of seriousness of German justice in prosecuting war criminals” and as regards to Greece, “the compliant attitude of the Right toward the Germans could easily be presented as a continuation of wartime collaborationism” (Spiliotis, 2000: 297). In doing so, justice did not take place to the eyes of public opinion and most importantly to the eyes and memories of the Jewish victims. The new legislative law suspended further Nazi war cases. There is a file stored in the General Archives of the State (GAK) from the Athens Court that lists a number of legal cases pending for Nazi war criminals between 1961 until 1968, and these file cases never opened in Greece.<sup>127</sup> Last but not least, the most comical and yet tragic event took place upon Max Merten’s return to Germany; not only he was free from the charges made against him, but he “received compensation from the German government for time spent in Greek prisons” (Spiliotis, 2000:299).

Authors who investigated also the file case of Max Merten such as Susanne-Sophia Spiliotis, criticized Hannah Arendt for failing to read properly the story behind the case of Max Merten and for hasting to accuse the Greek population for being *indifferent* to the Jewish victims, and that Merten’s case in Greece was ‘unique’ in Europe (Spiliotis, 2000:300, see also Arendt, 2006:189-190).

Spiliotis although recognised that Arendt was unaware about all the truth behind the Merten case, since the files “were only opened in 1990”, however the term “indifference” to characterise a whole population for the treatment of Jews, was insufficient and rather unfair. The Karamanlis administration did not take seriously Merten’s record and his involvement to

---

<sup>127</sup> GAK, ABE 1246, File 7: “*Fakelos Ekremon Aitiseon Nazismou 1961-1968*” (Nazi Pending Applications 1961-1968).

the Jewish deportations, and that the scandalous treatment of the case was seen as an anathema and disrespect for the Jewish victims, however, it does not explain anything about a case where political and financial aspects were on the table (Spiliotis, 2000: 299-300). The Merten Case is not “unique” in the history of the European trials; on the contrary, it shows exactly how (at least a part) of *de-Nazification* and *pacification* took place, that is, by hiding a whole Nazi dynasty behind the carpet for financial and politico-diplomatic reasons, and certainly Germany and Greece were among these countries. And of course Arendt, was neither aware that Merten was compensated by the German political elite and that his release was the outcome of a corrupt agreement between two governments (Greek and German). This case in our point of view is not unique, but in fact *paradigmatic* to understand how the system of collaboration survived in post-war Europe and without doubt in Greece.

And indeed the European picture was not so different either, though in percentages as we shall discuss, Greece had the “lowest” rate of convictions not only in Western Europe but in the former Eastern bloc (Pendas, 2009: 355). There was a significant shrinking of the trials everywhere and many authors argue as we shall see that certain political events in front and behind the Iron Curtain shaped legal decisions too. But politics was not the only factor that decreased the numbers of convictions in Europe, but there were real and substantial legal inefficiencies. For up until the Nuremberg Trials, crimes of that scale, namely, genocidal crimes and “crimes against humanity” were new to the legal lexicon, and as Robert Fine argued, the scale of atrocity during the second world war revealed a “radically new form of criminality” (Fine, 2000a:297). The legal breakthrough was when the Nuremberg Charter included in the legal vocabulary the term “crimes against humanity”, for now not only it closed legal holes of the past, but included above all minorities such as the Jews who fell victims of systematic attack and extermination by Nazi Germany. It signified a new moment in history of European trials, for now not only crimes against specific communities were

seriously considered but raised the importance of criminalizing not “states” but “individuals”. The latter for the first time were put in front of court in the same way as Nazi leadership: they were “responsible not only for crimes against humanity but for all crimes under international law” (Fine, 2000a:294). As Robert Fine declares:

“It established a link between people and their actions by treating ‘cogs’ in the Nazi murder machine as perpetrators and thus as responsible human beings. It stated that service to the state does not exonerate any official in any bureaucracy or any scientist in any laboratory from his or her responsibilities as an individual. It removed from perpetrators the excuse of only obeying orders. It held those who sit down behind desks planning atrocities as guilty as those who participated directly in their execution. Not least, it signified that atrocities committed against one set of people, be it Jews or Poles or Gypsies, are an affront not only to these particular people but to humanity as a whole” (Fine, 2000a:294).

Here, what we see is a real and substantial effort to judge Germany’s Nazi perpetrators for their deeds and towards particular communities such as the Jews. At the same time, the European countries had to deal with another headache, namely the local collaborators of each individual country either at the expense of Jews or upon other local populations for political purposes especially when postwar Europe was experiencing civil wars or conflicts. For every trial or its postponement was a political statement especially amid cold war. Here, a comparative analysis may help us have an overall view of European trials and how some countries faced different or similar problems.

Pendas suggests that there were different historical periods that courts saw both an increased and decreased rate of convictions. In Western Europe (namely in countries under the western sphere of influence), the “lowest” rate was found in Greece with 2% rate of conviction, that is, “14 convictions out of 800 indictments/investigations”, while the “highest” rate of conviction was found in Holland with 41% rate of conviction. The gap

between East and West Germany is quite impressive, as east of Berlin the rate of conviction was 33%, while west of Berlin the rate reached just 6.4%. Furthermore, Czechoslovakia's conviction performance was 48%, 40% in Slovakia, while the Soviet Union had the "highest" European conviction rate of 50% (Pendas, 2009:355). There are certain explanations for this variety of conviction rates all over Europe. The case of Greece is already explained throughout this chapter, and I believe that the political background of the story already rings a bell, for after the war many European courts took a real political turn. In the Soviet Union for example, the legal reply to the Nazis and collaborators became a political matter and the "Stalinization of justice in Eastern Europe over the course of the 1940s clearly did undermine the due - process protections for defendants and likewise increasingly politicise judicial practice" (ibid). But if Moscow and the Eastern countries "politicised" the trials and went through fast speed sentences, while the West took seriously the "due-process protection" and treated the accused with a "fair" tone, it cannot explain why the Netherlands had such a good performance in contrast with other western European countries, such as Germany and Greece (ibid).

Both the cold war and the period of *denazification* played a crucial role in shaping the trials and the memory of the war. West Germany in this respect resembles the Greek case for, like Greece, the former was pressured to be democratised as well as punish the Nazis, yet these former Nazis were "a significant bloc of voters" for postwar leadership (Herf, 1997: 203). Herf suggests that in West Germany, one could not expect both justice and memory, and at the same time achieve victory in the "national elections". Something was suppressed here as well, and it was memory that suffered from this cunning compromise (ibid). On the same issue Herf continues by arguing that:

"Democratic renewal went hand in hand with silence and the forgetting of a dark past. Too much memory would undermine a still fragile popular psyche.

The Cold War and anti-Soviet politics which focused attention on Soviet actions after 1945 rather than Nazi warmaking between 1941 and 1945, reinforced this line of thinking [...] More democracy in this situation, could entail less denazification, less purging, fewer trials for perpetrators of the Holocaust and war crimes, and less reflection on that history from the political leadership” (Herf, 1997:225-226).

Tony Judt echoes the previous thought, arguing there was a generalised “hypocrisy” and “cynicism” in Western Europe as to the way in which legal justice and punishment of collaboration took place (Judt, 2000:297). Of course this is not to suggest that there was no punishment at all, for the Nuremberg Trials, did demonstrate the ability of the legal system to achieve justice; it is a view that not only Judt shares, but we as well. However, certain amnesties that occurred both in Germany and Austria after the war, pushed the Nazis back to the social, administrative and political fabric as more than “500,000 former registered Nazis” came back on track (ibid). This attitude opened the *Windbags of Aeolus*, for if a great number of Nazis were safe now, who would sit down and judge the collaborators all over Europe? If the Germans and Austrians were guilt-free why should not be the same for the collaborators in rural Peloponnese? Tony Judt in this respect may give us the answer: “If Austria was guiltless, then the distinctive responsibilities of Non-German nationals in other lands were assuredly not open to close inspection” (Judt, 2000:296).

There were certain parameters that made things even more complicated. Here, we do not have all the answers but mainly we present the legal insolvability of the matter. For the courts now dealt not only with the Nazi criminals or else Germany’s perpetrators, but the real enemies within, namely the plethora of collaborators in each country (Pendas, 2009: 356). As Pendas suggests:

“Collaboration posed a different kind of problem than did German atrocities. The distinction between perpetrators and victims was often difficult to draw

clearly. On the one hand, there were cases in which the difference between the perpetrators and the victims was political (as in crimes against resistance groups). Emphasizing such political distinctions risked extending the *de facto* civil war of the late war period in the postwar era. On the other hand, when the crimes in question had been committed against ethnic minority groups (e.g., French or Dutch collaboration in the genocide of the Jews), any recognition of the minority's suffering undermined the majority's claim to be innocent victims of the Germans. Both situations made it difficult to prosecute perpetrators in the long term. Situations of inter-ethnic civil war, as in Yugoslavia, obviously posed even more serious challenges. Moreover the scale of collaboration was often so vast that a genuine thorough purge would have been untenable" (Pendas, 2009:356).

On the eastern front, as we analysed, the trials were politicised, but here too, like Greece (but with an opposite political ideology), people were purged and executed *en masse* without always a fair trial. Laughland suggests that after the "Percentages Agreement", the Soviets took absolute control of the Balkan Peninsula except Greece. And if as we just saw in this chapter, Britain and later the US controlled politically and military Greece, and gave freedom to the far-rightists and collaborators to purge the leftists, the opposite occurred in the neighbouring countries. In the latter countries such as Bulgaria, the Soviet advance was coupled with massive executions as all men by 1944, were treated as "political enemies" and therefore as "fascists". The first round of executions sent 3,000 collaborators to the firing squad as "war criminals" and literally the "entire political class was wiped out" (Laughland, 2008:154). By 1945, further "10,000 verdicts in 131 trials" sent thousands to death, and over 30,000 – 40,000 murders occurred "without any pretence at legal process" (Laughland, 2008:155). As Laughland argues,

"Indeed, the political nature of the purges was perhaps clearest in the prosecution and conviction of Dimitar Peshev, the vice-president of the Bulgarian National Assembly, who in March 1943 had sent a letter to Prime

Minister Filov signed by forty-three out of the country's one hundred and sixty members of parliament saying that it was quite unacceptable to accede to the Germans' demands to deport Jews. His protest was astonishingly successful, and Peshev has been posthumously credited with almost single-handedly saving the lives of Bulgaria's 48,000 Jews. But he was no Communist, and so he was soon prosecuted by the people's courts and was sentenced to fifteen years in prison (although he was released after a year and a half for good behaviour). Twenty of the deputies who signed his letter in 1943 were sentenced to death by the same tribunals" (Laughland, 2008:155-156).

The difference however between Bulgaria and Greece, is that it was the anti-Nazi fighters that were chased, whereas in Bulgaria it was the majority of collaborators that were chased; For Bulgaria as Jan Gross declared was a "loyal Axis member" (Gross, 2000: 17). It may have saved 48,000 Jews (as we just saw in the previous paragraph) in its region but sent to death the Jews from the Greek territories they illegally annexed such as parts of Thrace and Greek Macedonia (see chapter 2). What perhaps here Laughland overlooked was what we emphasized in the second chapter, namely, that Bulgaria and many other axis countries of the eastern Balkans went through forced assimilations as they were "eager to kill only certain groups of Jews" and save others in a form of "political expediency", in order to boost the national numbers and their ethnic-homogeneity (Browning, 1978: 110-111; see also chapter 2). In other words, it was opportunistic strategy and not philosemitism.

At the same time however, Laughland rightly suggests that the difference between Greece and the communist eastern countries was that in the latter, the "communists wanted blood, but in Greece, at least, they did not get it" (Laughland, 2000:168). Thus, we are sceptical to promote symmetries or mathematical analogies. This approach may not serve well appropriate critique as to the political peculiarities of each country and there is a risk to breed cynicism as well. If we do so, we will fail not only to appreciate the political injustice of each country, but we will trivialize Greece's unfair and undemocratic treatment of its people. We

will also fail to see that in this symmetry, they were still some countries in the West and the East that performed in the legal aftermath better than others. One of these examples as we saw was the contrasted cases of two Western European countries such as Greece and Netherlands, for the former had the “lowest” 2% rate of conviction and the latter had the “highest” 41% rate of conviction (see again Pendas, 2009:355). But according to Tony Judt, it was not only Holland that performed well, but Norway and Belgium (Judt, 2010:45-46). In the former:

“The entire membership of the Nasjonal Sammling, the main organisation of pro-Nazi collaborators, was tried, all 55, 000 of them, along with nearly 40.000 others; 17,000 men and women received prison terms and thirty death sentences were handed down, of which twenty-five were carried out [...] In neighbouring Belgium many more deaths sentences were passed (2,940), but a smaller percentage (just 242) carried out. Roughly the same numbers of collaborators were sent to prison but whereas the Dutch soon amnestied most of those convicted, the Belgian state kept them in prison longer and former collaborators convicted of serious crimes never recovered their full civil rights” (Judt, 2010:45-46).

What is meaningful then to add in our discussion is the political asymmetry of postwar development of each country, at least on the western front. All western countries suffered greatly after the war, but not all faced extreme political leadership. All countries fell into civil conflicts, and as Pendas argued, these conflicts were in danger to turn into real civil wars if there was no immediate denazification (Pendas, 2009:356). Before drawing some differences between the western countries, we do acknowledge at the same time a general civil war atmosphere all over Europe. According to Dan Stone, all countries ended up killing one another at a local level and no country escaped from civil conflicts; Poles, Greeks, Yugoslavs, French, Rumanians, Italians and so on, while the Jews were still chased, murdered and persecuted in the Eastern bloc (Stone, 2014:3-4).

“By the end of the war, the Allies were in effect promoting what the Nazis had advocated in the 1930s: ‘ethnic homogeneity as a desirable feature of national self- determination and international security. Purges of collaborators - often carried out by people who themselves had dubious pasts – resulted in tens of thousands of deaths before the return of governments - in –exile, most of which had sat out the war in London [...] DP camps, especially housing Jewish survivors of the Nazi camps and of postwar anti-Semitic violence in Eastern Europe, were a blot on the Eastern European landscape until more than ten years after the war. Violence and civil war continued in many parts of Europe. Communist authorities did not put down the last pockets of nationalist resistance in Poland until the early 1950s; civil war in Greece precipitated British withdrawal from Great Power status and permanent American intervention in the shape of the Truman Doctrine and Marshall Plan” [...] (Stone, 2014:4).

However, on the western front (and if we exclude Portugal and Spain from this comparison as they were not occupied during Axis Europe but experienced a chronic, barbaric and lethal dictatorship until 1970 and 1975 respectively like Greece in ’67-’74), it was in the latter that civil conflicts as elsewhere, developed into real civil war after the 40s.<sup>128</sup> This situation perhaps explains the “lowest” conviction rate of Greece on a European level and especially in the western region (Pendas, 2009:355). While, as earlier suggested in this chapter, Tony Judt argued that the problem of collaboration and the soft trials occurred everywhere in Western and Eastern Europe, but the Greek scale was “unique” (Judt, 2010:48). Keith Lowe wrote that “it was not only in Greece that the ‘democratic’ government

---

<sup>128</sup> I do not think that Greece shared characteristics with Spain and Portugal despite the fact that all three countries experienced military juntas. Greece was to share profound similarities with the above countries, mainly after the mid 70s. Tony Judt rightly suggests that despite the fact that Greece became a full NATO Member in 1952, and took position in the West-East geo-sphere; all three Mediterranean countries would share characteristics with Turkey, Yugoslavia and the “developing world” in terms of “standards of living” for a very long time and not with other western European countries. In other words, the western alliance (i.e. NATO) did not guarantee Greece an early prosperity or saved her from dictatorships, like Spain and Portugal unlike Western Europe (Judt, 2010:504). It did not guarantee prosperity for the existence of NATO in the above countries, presupposed such models of leadership, for the Mediterranean Sea was seen as a Western passage to the East. It was after all one of the reasons why Karamanlis after the end of dictatorship “pulled” Greece out of NATO for seven whole years, as an act of “protest” to the USA for openly backing the junta, for failing to protect her under NATO regulations, and for failing to protect Cyprus from illegal invasion and occupation (Judt, 2010:510).

mirrored the behaviour of the Communist governments of eastern Europe....but it was not quite so extreme as it was in Greece” (Lowe, 2012:360). Most western countries turned their back to the left-wing fighters and purged them in the aftermath while keeping a large section of collaborators safe. This “‘trial of the resistance’, as Italian historians call it, occurred in several countries after the war – but nowhere was it as harsh as it was in Greece” (Lowe, 2012:312). Because,

“The Greek civil war was to have profound effects for the rest of Europe. It was the first and bloodiest clash in what was soon to become a new, Cold War between East and West, left and right, communism and capitalism. In some respects, what happened in Greece defined the Cold War. It not only drew the southern boundary of the Iron Curtain, but provided a stark warning to Communists in Italy and France, and indeed all over Western Europe, about what might happen if they were tempted to try and seize control<sup>129</sup> [...] it was the situation in Greece that proved to be the catalyst. The Greek civil war was therefore not merely a local tragedy, but an event of truly international significance. The Western powers recognised this, and seemed prepared to endorse almost any injustice as long as it held communism at bay” (Lowe, 2012: 312-314, underline my emphasis).

## Conclusion

Throughout this chapter, we have examined very carefully the socio-political mechanisms that led to the legal aftermath in Greece. This chapter was crucial to understand the political developments in Greece before during and after the war was over which shaped the vast majority of legal decisions against the collaborators. We also saw how the latter profited from the well prepared right-wing Greek State and how the British Foreign Policy played a dramatic role in shaping these outcomes. Last but not least we analysed many still unknown elements of Greek History regarding collaboration such as the legal case of Max

---

<sup>129</sup> Of course Keith Lowe expresses his own view with regards to the question of the temptation of the Greek Left to seize power. We do not share the same view on this, and we have explained all too analytically the reasons in chapter 5.

Merten who was undeniably one of the most responsible perpetrators for the destruction of the Jewish community of Salonika, and how the Greek and German legal system with certain negotiations failed to deliver justice to the doers. This chapter was crucial in order to comprehend the next chapter, namely to see how the political and social context in post-war Greece played a catalytic role on the Memory of the Holocaust. This particular volume aimed at linking the Greek Holocaust experience with the overall political experience that was developing in Greece. The politics of collaboration and the legal aftermath in Greece works as a reference point to theorise in the next chapter so as to see how the memory of the Holocaust failed in Greece. As we shall see, the undemocratic and nationalistic State that developed in post war Greece gave no room to comprehend and welcome the Holocaust into people's collective memory, as the country entered a new era of aggressive and nationalist politics that were driven by the cold war suppressing people's democratic rights. Any political alternative that was driven by the people's movement was considered anti-patriotic and a threat. It is the latter values that we will seek to challenge in the following chapter and how the Greek Holocaust as a result remained a neglected issue too.

## Conclusion

This chapter considers the outcome of the war in the memory of the Greek Holocaust. I am looking at how the rise of the authoritarian and nationalist state in Greece, suppressed people's rights, political beliefs, freedoms but also education. As we discussed in the previous chapters, namely - the legal aftermath and the politics of collaboration – these parameters entered the social and political infrastructure of the Greek State, introducing a new wave of persecutions and terrorism in order to “control the masses” (Mouzelis, 1976:58). The first part considers the stories of the Jews who came back from the camps but also from the mountains of Free Greece. The Jewish survivors were pre-occupied with the rapid political developments and they share with us the effects upon their community. In the second section we discuss restitution and how the State responded to the issue of the Jewish properties by drawing and criticizing similar developments elsewhere in Europe. While later we touch upon the issue of collective memory and history in order to see how Greek society responded to the memory of the Holocaust. What followed in Greece after the war were martial laws, silence and oppression. The Greek State until the fall of the Dictatorship in 1974, emphasised on the Greek identity, and the political oppression that prevailed, affected everyone including the Jews who came from the concentration camps. Everyone who challenged the new status quo of the State was in danger to face exile, prison or death, and thus the Greek Holocaust was treated indifferently. We will see that even after the restoration of Democracy, in 1974 and after the transitional years to democracy, in the 80s, the Greek State still failed to incorporate the Jewish Holocaust in the national memory of the country. All these things will be touched together so as to trace and awaken our socio-political and analytical tools in order to make an appropriate critique.

## **The Greek Jews are Back**

Moments of relief and happiness were drowned in survivors' faces once they came back. Soon these emotions would be substituted by feelings of neglect and forgetfulness. Dr Matarasso remembers for instance that the first Greek Jew who escaped the terror of Auschwitz and came back in Salonika was the Athenian Leon Batis. He arrived in the middle of March 1945 in the northern city and everyone seized to meet him. All the remaining Jews of Salonika once they heard the rumour that he is alive and that he escaped the Nazi horror, rushed in to talk to him. They wanted to know what happened to friends and relatives (Matarasso, 1948: 65). Leon Batis looked very pale and tired as he had to cross so many countries by train and sometimes by foot. Everyone who saw him was anxious to know more details, about the situation in the camps, but Leon Batis was worried about the fate of his own family. He asked the locals how far Athens was from Salonika as he wanted to return to the capital. Instead of receiving an answer, he was bombarded by questions as they wanted to hear and learn everything from him. Batis said that his life will be recorded one day as he literally saw everything in the death camps and his story cannot but be "published" or "filmed" one day (Matarasso, 1948:65). He further declared that he almost went crazy towards the end of his captivity but he was lucky as he was rescued by Polish partisans (Matarasso, 1948:66).

The few Greek Jews who survived the terror of the Nazi camps, were longing to come back to their country. No one however thought that upon their return, they would enter a completely destroyed and divided country; a community (Salonika) that no longer existed, and a remaining one (Athens) with neighbourhoods under armed political terror (Lewkowicz, 2000: 247-250). These changes affected the Greek Jewry. As we have seen in chapter 5 and chapter 6, the political affairs that developed in the 40s played a negative role in the process

of liberalization of the country, not only constitutionally but socio-politically since the enforcement of far-right and militaristic politics became institutionalised, giving amnesty to the collaborators who in fact participated in the newly elected government of Tsaldaris. The composition of the government was fanatically right-wing, welcoming all kinds of terrorists in parts of social and administrative life (Richter, 1986:522). The laws that were imposed were driven by the events of December 1944. Although many fighters of ELAS were imprisoned, however the laws now extended beyond crimes and involved a sensational number of people. The law which remained applicable for many years, involved now all the population that was involved with the left-wing resistance or were sympathetic to the left (Iatrides, 1972:257). Not to mention, that at the same time very few extreme right-wingers, royalists, fascists, and collaborators were imprisoned, for the vast majority of them, took the control of the streets (Eudes, 1972:248). Some politicians of the centre such as Sofoulis and Tsouderos in Greece made the following remarks concerning the fascistic atmosphere of the time:

“The campaign of terror instituted throughout the country by the extreme right after the events of last December is growing worse every day. Its nature and extent are now such as to make life impossible for non-royalist citizens, and preclude any thought of proceeding to a free plebiscite or to elections. The extreme right-wing terrorist organisations, of which the most important were partially armed by the Germans and collaborated with them in every way, have not only not been disarmed or prosecuted but are still collaborating openly with the forces of law and order to stifle every vestige of democratic thought” (quoted in Eudes, 1972: 248).

The Jews of Greece were strongly affected by these post-war policies, especially those who took part in the resistance. Although the Greek State issued new laws in order to recognise the “full civil rights” of the Jews as well as re-building the communities from scratch, however the emergence of civil war along with multiple earthquakes that occurred in

the 40s and 50s made things even worse. The civil war, in fact had tremendous consequences for the Jews of Greece. Since the whole society was divided politically, the Jews faced new persecutions as most of them were left-wingers and supported the resistance of EAM/ELAS which saved “many Jews during the Nazi occupation”. Even the Jews who did not have strong political sentiments, they faced charges too as they were “treated as enemies” of the state (Plaut, 1996:74). As Plaut argues:

“Many of the Holocaust survivors belonged to the leftist EAM/ELAS camp, the same resistance forces that helped save many Jews during Nazi occupation. Nonpolitical Greek Jews were treated as enemies and taken as prisoners during the civil war, merely because of their association with the EAM during the Second World War. As the fighting intensified in 1948-49, the royalist press represented Marxism as “a whole Jewish intrigue” in which every Jew was either a Communist or an agent who spread heresies to weaken the Greek-Orthodox church” (Plaut, 1996:74).

Another example that explains the hard-core nationalist line of the Greek politics and the effect upon the Jews is that of the story of Moisses Michael Bourlas, who was a member of EAM/ELAS. He faced severe consequences after the Varkiza Agreement and during the civil war. He was disarmed based on the agreement, but since the treaty was betrayed and the collaborators were in full armed operation, many left-wing Jews were chased and imprisoned. In his book *Ellinas, Evraios kai Aristeros (Greek, Jew and Leftist)*, remembers the charges he faced upon his return from the mountains. He declared that back in Salonika, the police and many traitors entered his house, took everything he owned and he was then thrown to prison (Bourlas, 2000:82-83). It is interesting to see the similarities between Bourlas’s story and the story of Gianni’s father we interviewed in the village of Distomo, for he as well and upon his return, was tortured by the collaborators and confiscated everything from his house (see chapter 4). Bourlas was questioned in prison, but later was sent back home. However, when he understood that a new wave of violence was about to begin in the streets of Greece after

promoting new far-right politics by the “Greek” and the “British Governments”, he decided to join again the resistance and help the most poor people by participating in the left-wing youth of EPON (Bourlas, 2000:83). Bowman declares, that many Jews who took part in the resistance of EAM/ELAS had to leave Greece amid civil war as many indeed were chased, “imprisoned” or “shot” (Bowman, 2002:76).

Furthermore, during the summer months of the same year, when the right wing state became more tough and violent, Bourlas along with fellow Greek citizens were imprisoned and harassed by the police forces. However, he faced the most violent physical abuse since he was “a Jew” (Bourlas, 2000:87). In his memoir, he declared that most of his relatives were lost in the concentration camps of Nazi-Occupied Poland. He and his father fought together throughout the war with the bands of ELAS. His father fought with great courage but died after he was caught in the late 60s by the Dictatorship of Papadopoulos. He was sent to the islands of exile and died after receiving systematic “tortures” from the guards of the prison (Bourlas, 2000:199).

The scene in the cities was the same, since the implementation of ultra right-wing politics of Tsaldaris created a phobic nation irrespective of one’s political beliefs. Laws of Metaxas Dictatorship were revived while as we have seen in chapter 6, Napoleon Zervas (leader of EDES who became a minister of Public Order) transformed police officers into new battalion units and were used to arrest people in order to give names of former fighters of EAM/ELAS, and of course any suspicion of going against the laws of the “country, family and religion” one was severely punished (Close, 2002: 28, 26-27). These emergency laws of 509 and 516 (that persecuted the left) went tougher after the Truman Doctrine and everyone who did not obey to these laws was charged *ad hoc* for supporting the “Bulgarian Pan-

Slavism” (Eudes, 1972: 359).<sup>130</sup> When the British foreign policy gradually withdrew from Greece in 1947 in the middle of the Greek civil war, and the U.S. policies took over with the *Truman Doctrine*, political decisions went even more extreme. The doctrine declared a war against communism, aiming at making Greece “self-supporting and self-respecting democracy” (Murtagh, 1994:36-37).

Until 1974, every citizen who was not “*ethnikofron*” (National minded) was likely to face even death sentences. As Karakatsanis declares:

“...the formal exclusion of the left from public life was enforced by a large police bureaucracy that engaged in systematic surveillance of hundreds of thousands of citizens and kept dossiers (*fakeloi*) on them. Until their abolition in 1974, these dossiers placed suspected leftists into various categories of threat to the state – categorising them as *ethnicofrones* of the first grade (Epsilon one), the second grade (Epsilon two), ‘Alpha’ leftists, ‘Beta’ cryptocommunists, ‘Gamma’ dangerous communists, and ‘Chi’ unknown – all in an attempt to eradicate leftist influences and to secure the loyalty of the masses to the established regime” (Karakatsanis, 2001: 30).

## Restitution

This political oppression that prevailed in Greece affected the Jews who came back from the Nazi concentration camps and tried to establish themselves in the cities and especially in Salonika. However, they were oppressed too as they had to swallow “unwelcome issues of national and ethnic self-definition” (Mazower, 2000a:19). The Greek State made some first steps to incorporate the history and experiences of the Jews in the Greek collective memory as late as 1990 but without much success (ibid). When the Jews came back from the death camps, they faced dramatic changes as the new centre of the

---

<sup>130</sup> See also Close, 1993: 159-161; Close, 1995a: 150-155.

Jewish community was now Athens and not Salonika. In 1946 some 10,000 Jews lived in the capital, but very soon the number started to drop, as many fled to Israel until 1951, while others were imprisoned in the islands of exile for their political beliefs. By the end of the 50s, the number of the community was decreased even more; approximately to 6,000 Jews (Lewkowicz, 2000:248-249). These falling numbers show how much unwelcomed the Jews were in the aftermath and once they came back from the concentration camps.

Upon their return, the Greek State acted irresponsibly and indifferently concerning the issue of the Jewish properties. Before analysing the issue of restitution, it is worth to mention that the erasure of Jewish existence in the city of Thessaloniki, as we discussed in the second chapter started from the big fire of 1917, where the central district of the town was completely destroyed. According to Demosthenis Dodos, this area was mainly inhabited by the Jewish community, however Eleftherios Venizelos never tried to rebuilt the city for the community. What he did instead was to push the Jewish community out of the centre, and re-design the city according to his own national aspirations (Dodos, 2007:54-55). The most catalytic event that signified the end of the Jewish presence in the city of Thessaloniki was in December 1942, when the Nazi official Max Merten and the Greek collaborator and “Central Governor of Macedonia” Vasilis Symonidis, pulled out the central Jewish cemetery and took it out of the ancient walls of the town. It was considered not only a gigantic project in terms of its cost, but had a “political” meaning as well. The area of the old Jewish cemetery covered “550,000 square meters and had approximately 500,000 graves” (Molho, 2007:33). The project foresaw the complete destruction of the cemetery; the transfer of the human bones, and the use of the material for other causes. According to Rena Molho, today some of these stones “furnish kinder-gardens, bars, and restaurants in luxurious touristic hotels in Cassandra of Chalcidice”, while the empty cemetery was about to house a few years later the campus of

the new university, namely the *Aristoteleion Panepistimio Thessalonikis* (Molho, 2007:33-34).

When the Jews claimed back their properties the Greek State closed the doors to them. Some 600 Jews applied for their properties but only 60 applications were accepted, as many collaborators confiscated them illegally during and after the war, and the State made no effort to give to the Jews what they owned. On the same argument, Molho rightly criticizes the Greek State for refusing to give the properties to the people who owned them. It shows how the state abandoned the Jews and their rights to be and belong in the Greek society. This irresponsibility contributed once again to the process of “pushing away” the “Jewish genocide from the national collective memory”, as if these victims (who after all, as we saw in chapter fought on the side of their fellow Greeks) were not part of Greece (Molho, 2007:38-39). According to Lewkowicz, “the survivors returned to a city where their homes and their shops had been taken over by Orthodox Greeks, and all Jewish synagogues (except one) and other educational and cultural establishments had been destroyed by the Germans” (Lewkowicz,2000:247). The refusal to give to the Jews their properties meant in simple terms that they were not welcomed and not recognised in the country. Numerous buildings, schools and synagogues “were sold in order to create income”, and although in the 50s and early 60s the community tried to start all over again by establishing new educational centres, the introduction of the military regime in Greece in 1967, cancelled in a night all Jewish efforts to re-build a new community. All major councils shrunk their members, however, and this is fruitful for further critique; the previous “measure was put in effect in 1975, following the first elections after the dictatorship”, whereby “the rabbinical council was abolished” and the “official language of the council...was changed from Ladino to Greek” (Lewkowicz, 2000:249). Today the city of Thessaloniki erased every trace of Jewish existence. There are neighbourhoods that once reminded us that there was a historical community who lived there.

Buildings, squares, historical cemeteries and schools are all gone now (Lewkowicz, 2000:250).

The issue of Jewish properties in post-war era was not a uniquely Greek phenomenon. The negation of restitution was a real problem for the whole of Europe as it was coupled with systematic post-war anti-Semitism. Mazower suggests that when the European Jews returned either from the mountains or from the concentration camps, they became victims again of homelessness. Throughout the continent, “their pre-war homes were generally occupied by others, their possessions gone” (Mazower, 1998a:219). As the author writes:

“In fact the number of Jewish refugees swelled after the war, as around 220,000 Jews from eastern Europe moved westwards. Anti-Semitic pogroms in Poland during 1946, with dozens of dead, accelerated this movement [...] West European anti-Semitism barred doors to Jewish DPs that were opened to Balts and East Europeans. Thus the numbers of Jewish refugees on the continent continued to increase until 1948 when the creation of the state of Israel and the US Displaced Persons Act allowed most of them to leave Europe” (Mazower, 1998a:219).

The neglect and indifference did not end with the fall of Hitler. Most European Jewish communities were annihilated, but those who survived faced systematic attack, racism and hatred in the aftermath. According to Lagrou, the disappearance of the Jewish culture in Europe was apocalyptic, for if one takes the example of Romania which used to have the “third largest Jewish community”, by the end of the war and in 1948, the Jews “reduced to one-sixth” (Lagrou, 2005:4). Despite the fact that France and Hungary would be two exceptional cases, whereby “a sizeable” number of Jews had survived, an anti-Semitic and polemic attitude of local people towards the survivors prevailed. For the survivors naturally tried to claim their properties, and when they did, massive protests against them took the streets of Paris with banners “France to the French” (Lagrou, 2005:7). On the one hand,

postwar Europeans closed the doors to survivors by refusing to give their houses back, on the other, there were Eastern countries such as Poland where pogroms and mass slaughters were committed against the Jewry; the “Kielce Pogrom of 4 July 1946” was one of the many atrocities that occurred in the aftermath Europe (ibid). And as we saw in the last section of chapter 4, numerous slaughters and pogroms occurred as a result of resentment, hate and revenge and the Jews were once again one of the central victims of this ferocity especially in countries such as post-war Poland, which according to Lowe, was “the most dangerous country for the Jews after the war”, for only in a year, and roughly after liberation until 1946, Poland lost 1,500 Jews approximately due to political and ethnic conflicts (Lowe, 2012:203). With regards to the Jewish property in a European context, Lowe writes that:

“The plunder of Jewish property during the war had taken place in every country, and at every level of society. The comprehensive nature of this plundering was sometimes quite astounding. In the old Jewish quarter of Amsterdam, for example, the houses were stripped of everything right down to the wooden window and door frames. In Hungary, Slovakia and Romania, Jewish land and property was often divided up amongst the poor. Sometimes people did not even wait until the Jews had gone. There are examples in Poland of acquaintances approaching Jews during the war with the words, ‘Since you are going to die anyway, why should someone else get your boots? Why not give them to me so I will remember you?’” (Lowe, 2012:197-198).

According to Toscano, Italy’s laws to reintegrate the Jews back to the Italian society seemed a little bit more fruitful and certainly better than other countries such as Greece. This of course does not imply that the Italian society did not confront similar problems. From 1944 until 1947, a whole process of returning the properties to the Jews started and to some extent it was achieved. The implementation of these laws included both restitution and compensation. The latter case involved examples where whole villages or cities were destroyed or bombarded (Toscano, 2005:151-152). Many Jews however as elsewhere

received a lot of disappointment as they had to fight for their properties with legal means. Despite similar problems, “documents show that these laws did indeed result in the substantial return of property taken from Jews in compliance with law number 126 issued in 1939...” (Toscano, 2005:153). A case that caused conflicting outcomes was the property issue in the former fascist republic of Salò. Here, despite the fact that “the movable property” was returned to the survivors without any bureaucratic difficulty, it did not however give back buildings and homes that were taken away from the survivors by the Nazis and Italian Fascists (Toscano, 2005:154). Further north, in the Netherlands, Kristel suggests that the Dutch Jews “had trouble relating to a society that had failed to protect more than hundred thousand of its people from the Nazis” (Kristel, 2005:141). Post-war reintegration came with indifference and “hostilities from Non-Jews”, thus many Jews left to Israel (Kristel, 2005:145).

### **Memory and History in Greece**

The poverty of the holocaust memory in Greece can be felt not only in the legal system, but in education too. After the restoration of democracy, there were very few attempts to touch upon the issue of the Jewish holocaust. Only after 2000, the educational system made its first but very poor attempt to incorporate the holocaust in the historical curriculum. Before the last decade, only a very small section on the European holocaust was included in the last year of high school, but nothing concerning the Greek Jews and their history in Greece before, during or after the war (Vasar, 2007:90). What is more, only during the last decade did Greek academia get involved in researching that particular area of the Second World War, but the students in the schools and the universities, unless they were interested themselves, did not get a proper grasp of the war and certainly did not learn about the Greek Holocaust. Even the curriculum of history in the Open University in Greece at least up until 2006, only “5 pages” discussed the Second World War; “three” pages discussed the

resistance, “two” pages referred to the civil war, “while the genocide was absent even as a footnote” (ibid).

Although many Greeks today know very well the events that occurred throughout the decades, however these events are not part of the official education. Hagen Fleischer declares that even the number of human casualties during the war is still not clear. Although there is a “clear picture” with respect to the deaths among the Greek armed forces, yet the losses of unarmed civilians during occupation, during the December events and civil war, remain a puzzle and the sources so far have not been thoroughly “reliable” (Fleischer, 2009:218). With respect to the Greek Holocaust, again, we could argue that it is the responsibility of the Greek State to incorporate the Jewish Holocaust in its educational system, and to abandon traditional and nationalist lines of education. The question remains what the new generations learn today and how it is possible to preserve the memory of the Jewish Holocaust.

One of the reasons why we chose to provide an analysis of the political and social conditions under which the populations of Greece found themselves in the aftermath, was because this socio-political context stigmatised the memory of the Holocaust. The Jews of Greece and their fate were systematically ignored as the overall experience of the war was denied as well. The nationalist and ultra-authoritarian state that was developed created an atmosphere of silence, retreat and oppression. Especially in the fifties and sixties, the social and educational system was anachronistic and completely censored. What is interesting to see here, is that the post-war development of Greece was found in the absence of any reference to the war. This poverty of memory is highly interrelated with the ultra nationalist state that developed in Greece after the war, suppressing people’s rights, and because during the months of liberation (as we saw in chapter 5 and 6), the forces of extreme right and the collaborators shaped post-war politics, and in fact liberation in October 44 did not last at all

but new rounds of war occurred (Fleischer, 2009:218). Alkis Rigos in his essay “*E Mnimi kai I Simantiki tis*” (The Memory and its Importance), asks:

“But how really can we celebrate this commemoration day in Greece of 1945, when at the same historical moment various members of the Security Battalions collaborators of Nazism constituted the dynamic lance of the national state against the persecuted communists and against any progressive element? How to honour the epos of resistance against fascism, when the largest and most significant faction of resistance was constituted by the left-wing EAM? How and who will talk about the horror of Nazi concentration camps, when the state of national-mindedness was opening in Makronisos the first postwar European concentration camp?” (Rigos, 2007:20, translation mine).

This argument is crucial to understand the logic of this thesis, and why we decided to follow this chain of events especially in the last two chapters after giving an analytical account of the Jewish Holocaust in Greece. It is to emphasize and criticize the conditions under which Greece came in and out of the war, how resistance was oppressed and persecuted, how the political and social infrastructure was built, and what was the effect upon the memory of Greek Holocaust. All these political and social developments constituted the facade of Greece and must be seen together. What Rigos emphasises here is the inability of the Greek state to address its own history when the former was the product of silence, oppression, and authoritarianism. It is our duty therefore, to unleash these “selective silences” and focus on the memory which is not only a means of understanding the past, but an “active mode of existence” (Rigos, 2007:20-21).

The Greek state not only failed to include the Holocaust in the process of collective memory, but at the same time the system of authoritarianism negated the very process of liberalization after the end of the war. Costas Tsoucalas echoes Rigos’ thought, arguing that this also affected the educational system. His analysis bares the traces of a conservative

pedagogy which extended far beyond the forgetfulness of the Holocaust. He declares in his book *The Greek Tragedy*, (and here it is interesting to see that his book was published in 1969, in the worst year of Greek dictatorship), that the educational system (especially on the secondary level) focused almost exclusively on the “national identity”, the Christian Orthodoxy and its values, and on the ancient Greek language<sup>131</sup>; all of which were mandatory on a daily basis (Tsoucalas, 1969:117). On the other hand, up until the 50s and 60s, the picture at the universities was even worse as the study of sociology and Marxism was “of course an anathema”, Darwinism was declared as the product of “dangerous subversive ideas”, while the study of the second world war was totally absent and philosophy “ended” with the works of Kant (ibid). In this way, Tsoucalas suggests that:

“The purity of the language was protected in the name of anti-Communism, and so was Christianity as an obligatory social framework. Any fundamental criticism of social, moral or legal institutions was banned or kept for better days. The new Constitution, promulgated in 1952, preached liberty of conscience and declared the separation of State and Church-but opened with the words: ‘The dominant religion in Greece is the Eastern Orthodox Church of Christ’. Religious marriage is the only form that one can legally contract in Greece. Significantly enough, it was not the Church – whose power is minimal – that imposed this new theocracy; it was the conscious choice of the groups in power” (Tsoucalas, 1969:118).

The national and religious identity of Greece shaped social and political institutions which suppressed however the identity and history of the minorities in Greece including the Jews. These values became the canon in the following decades and until the end of Greek junta. As a matter of fact the emphasis on the Greek Orthodoxy remained in the political vocabulary of many Greek politicians even after the restoration of democracy in 1975 (Stavrou, 1995:39). One of the prominent politicians who kept religious ethics and nationalist

---

<sup>131</sup> The argument here is given to criticize those in power who used, abused and politicized ancient Greek language in order to impose a particular nationalist agenda.

values close to political life was the former Prime Minister Constantine Karamanlis who in one of his speeches in 1981 declared that:

“The nation (ethnos) and Orthodoxy ....have become in the Greek conscience virtually synonymous concepts, which together constitute our Helleno-Christian civilisation” (Quoted in Stavrou, 1995:39).

These nationalist values that shaped much of the Greek agenda after the war had a catalytic effect on people's memory of the Jewish Holocaust for it referred to something other than the imposed *Greekness*. It is really important to make an analogy with what was happening in the following decades in other parts of the world concerning the incorporation of Jewish Holocaust in the European Memory. The scientific and academic community outside Greece found an immediate interest in studying the events of the Holocaust as early as 1960. Many authors systematised the terror of Auschwitz and the fate of the European Jewry via key figures of Frankfurt School (i.e. Adorno), and undoubtedly Hannah Arendt's contribution in understanding the holocaust as well as the evil doctrine of Nazi totalitarianism through the key terms of 'radical evil' and 'banality of evil' and through a valuable collection of books and essays helped us to comprehend the history of the Jewish Holocaust as well as its memory (Vasar, 2007: 69). In Greece, not only they were not interested about the study of the Holocaust within academia, but a number academics as such from 1944 until the fall of junta were thrown away from their positions for being progressive and radical ( Papastratis, 2000: 64-67).

However, collective memory in postwar Europe was not so different either. Tony Judt suggests in his essay the “Past is Another Country” that all countries faced similar problems. There were many civil and ethnic conflicts especially in Eastern Europe, and many countries sought to focus on certain myths in order to forget their past (Judt, 2000:295). Jan Gross argued that if only one takes into consideration Poland and look at how the country has

addressed the memory of the Holocaust one will be evidently shocked (Gross, 2000a:75). This indifference did not correspond only in the aftermath but also during the 90s when an opinion poll gave the following results:

“When a random sample of a thousand Poles was asked in 1993, ‘Do you think that during the war the Jewish nation suffered as much as the Polish nation, or more, or less?’ 6 percent of the respondents answered that the Polish nation suffered more, 32 percent that both nations suffered about the same, 12 percent that they could not compare, and 3 percent that they could not tell. Thus apparently, fifty years after the war, over half of the Polish society does not know that Polish Jews were wiped out during the Holocaust” (Gross, 2000a:75).

### **Reassessing the relevance of Hannah Arendt's thought**

The issue of restitution and collective memory in Greece raises another final issue, namely the relevance of Hannah Arendt's thought on nationalism, nation-states and citizenship. One could conclude here that the treatment of Jewish properties in Europe, but most importantly in Greece, reflects the continuity of a nationalist project that did not stop with the introduction of the nation-states. Countries sought to complete the project of one blood/one nation/one religion rhetoric in the aftermath Europe. As we have discussed in chapter 6, Dan Stone made a significant remark with regards to what allied nations launched in the after-math of the Holocaust, namely 'ethnic homogeneity as a desirable feature of national self-determination and international security' (Stone, 2014:4). This has been pictured further with post-war pogroms in Eastern Europe, poor legal response of collaborators throughout Europe, and with the issue of restitution everywhere. In the case of Greece, both the forgetfulness of the Holocaust and the indifference of the Greek authorities as to the Jewish properties reflect the hard-core nationalist line the country took the following decades, and Jews were again subjects of discrimination. These were also symptoms of nationalism and nation-states that started in Europe decades before the Nazi Occupation.

This thesis aimed to address the loss of rights of Jews during Occupied Greece, and how with the formation of the nation-states earlier in the European continent the minorities such as the Jews became stateless. The contribution of Hannah Arendt's thought on nationalism, nation-states and citizenship that we discussed in the first chapter set the foundations of our analysis throughout the remaining chapters; namely a journey of Jewish tragedy after the fall of empires, the rise of flags, the rise of anti-Semitic propaganda, the rise of national identity restricted to borders, the rise of Hitler's ideology that led to the discrimination and extermination of the Jews, and how even after the end of the Second World War, Greece continued that nationalist project that pushed the Jews away from the

national collective memory. The nation-states as Arendt suggests in *The Origins of Totalitarianism* failed to protect the equal rights of minorities and their equal legal representation (Arendt, 1968:290). Because:

“...these new states this curse bears the germs of a deadly sickness. For the nation-state cannot exist once its principle of equality before the law has broken down. Without this legal equality, which originally was destined to replace the older laws and orders of the feudal society, the nation dissolves into an anarchic mass of over- and underprivileged individuals. Laws that are not equal for all revert to rights and privileges, something contradictory to the very nature of nation-states. The clearer the proof of their inability to treat stateless people as legal persons and the greater the extension of arbitrary rule by police decree, the more difficult it is for states to resist the temptation to deprive all citizens of legal status and rule them with an omnipotent police” (Arendt, 1968:290).

### **Final Thoughts**

The political failure of the nation-states to protect the rights of minorities, explain also the negation of Jewish rights in the decades that followed. This thesis departed from these ideas in order to explain how these changes affected the Jews of Greece. The nationalism that prevailed in the country explains further their changed position in the Greek society (i.e. from the fall of empires to the nation states), the anti-Semitic laws that discriminated them, and their participation in the Greek resistance. Furthermore, this thesis described the experience of Greek Jewish prisoners in the camps of Auschwitz, and their will to live and resist along with their European fellow prisoners. We have also described the politics of collaboration in Greece, by raising the issue of *Greek responsibility*, the politics of resistance, whether there were attempts to save the Jews, what was happening in the mountains of Free Greece (through the account of Distomo massacre), and how post-war politics affected restitution,

memory and legal prosecution of Nazis and collaborators. This volume aimed at analysing the Jewish Holocaust before and after the war was over within a particular society, Greece.

## REFERENCES

### PRIMARY UNPUBLISHED ARCHIVES

#### 1. Municipality of Distomo, Boeotia, Central Greece:

- Wehrly, G. (23 June 1944, Athens) *Ekthesis stes Metaferomenes Voethies sto Distomo Boeotias D.E.E.S, Archeia tes Diethnous Epitropis tou Erythrou Stavrou* (A Report on Aid to Distomo, Veotias, D.E.E.S, Archives of International Committee of Red Cross), Distomo: Municipality of Distomo.

#### 2. Gennadius Library, Athens, Greece:

##### Emmanuil Tsouderos File:

File **14**: “*Exthrikai Thiriodiai*” (Enemy’s Ferocities):

- Translation of a series of five articles by M. Emm. Tsouderos, former prime minister, published in ‘Vima’ of 22<sup>nd</sup> to 26<sup>th</sup> April on the internal situation of Greece”, single page file number: xiv-1.

##### Filippos Dragoumis File:

**File:38** “Israeli Community: G.D.M (1932-33)”, “*Genikos Deikitis Makedonias , Israelitika Thessalonikis kai Florinas*” (General Commander of Macedonia , Israeli Issues of Salonika and Florina):

**Sub-file:38.2** “*Israelitika Thessalonikis 1932-35*” (Israeli Issues of Salonika 1932-1935).

-Press Office of Thessaloniki, “*Diloseis tou K. Tsaldari dia tous Evraious tis Thessalonikis*” (Statement of Mr. Tsaldaris to the Jews of Salonika), from the Jewish Chronicle 26 November 1932.

- Press Office of Thessaloniki, 9 December 1932, “*Ai Oikonomikai Kakouchiai ton Evraion tis Thessalonikis*” (The Economic Sorrows of Salonikan Jews).

**File: 39:** “*Genikos Deikitis Makedonias – Israelitika Thessalonikis – Israelitikos Typos 1930-1934*” (General Commander of Macedonia – Israeli Issues of Salonika- Israeli Press 1930-1934).

**Sub-file: 39.2** “Press Office of Thessaloniki”:

- “*Ai Diamartyriai ton En Bulgaria Evraion, Ek tis Pravda*”, (The Protest of Bulgarian Jews, from ‘Pravda’) Sofia 28.3.33.

- “*Dia tou Boikotaz tha Syntrivei o Hitler*” (Hitler will be Crashed by Boycott), from ‘Pueblo’, Thessaloniki 30 March 1933.

**File 62**, “*Yfipourgios Exoterikon (Kyvernisi G.Papandreou, Politika, Kairo – Athina 1943-1945)*, (Deputy Foreign Minister – G. Papandreou Government, Politics, Cairo – Athens 1943-1945).

**Sub –file 62.2**, “*Apeleftherosi Oct-Dec 1944*” (Liberation Oct-Dec 1944):

- “*O Logos Pros to Ethnos*” (The Speech to the Nation) by Georgios Papandreou Oct 1944.

**Sub-file 62.3**, “*Politika-Politiaka, Synenoseis Kyvernisis kai Vasilia, Oct-Dec 1944*” (Political-Civic, Negotiations between the Government and the King, Oct-Dec 1944):

- Confidential telegram to the British Embassy, 10/12/44.

- Dragoumis’ telegram to London Embassy, 27 December 1944, Protocol No. 22750

**Sub-file 62.4** : “*Ekthesin dia tin Esoterikin Katastasin tes Ellados (July-Aug 1944)*” (Report on the Internal Situation of Greece, July-Aug 1944):

- “*Peri Katastrophis Distomou*” (About the Catastrophe of Distomo), 18 November 1944, To Washington B’ Embassy.

**Sub-file 62.5** : “*Dekemvriana 1944*” (December Events 1944):

- Churchill: Press Conference, December 27<sup>th</sup> 1944.

- Debate in the House of Commons, 11/12/44, London, Copy of summary to the Greek Information Office.

- Debate in the House of Commons, 12/12/44, London, Copy of summary to the Greek Information Office.

- Copy of “Caserta Agreement” 26 September 1944.

- Précis of Operational Orders Issued by G.O.C. Forces in Greece (Attached to Caserta Agreement).

- “Aide Memoire”, 14 Dec 1944, The ELAS Central Committee, Certified true copy, Athens 15/12/44.

- London 28 December 1944, No. 3706 (Summary of the British Press, copy to the Greek Information Office).

**3. PRO FO:** (accessed via the Academy of Athens: *K.E.I.N.E Research Centre*, and the Public Record Office, London)

**Foreign Office (London):**

**FO 954/11B, Image ref: 154** (From Foreign Office to Athens, 5<sup>th</sup> December, 1944)

**FO 954/11B Image ref: 156** (Downing Street, 5<sup>th</sup> December 1944)

**FO 954/11/B Image ref: 160** (From Foreign Office to Athens, 9<sup>th</sup> December 1944)

**FO 954/11B, Image ref: 189** (From Foreign Office to Washington, 17 December, 1944)

**FO 954/11B, Image ref: 195** (9<sup>th</sup> December 1944, From Foreign Office to Athens)

**FO 954/11C, Image ref: 121** (Mr. Macmillan's telegram No. 670 and your telegram No. 999 and 1000 of April 18<sup>th</sup> : Greek Policy)

**FO 371/153018, RG 1661/1** (Greece 1960, Subject: Nazi accuses Greek Cabinet Ministers of being wartime agents)

**FO 371/153018, RG 1661/2** (Greece 1960, Subject: Merten Affair: German Government has informed Greek Government that H.M.G holds a list of Greeks who collaborated with the Germans during Occupation in Greece. Archivist being sent to inspect the document)

**FO 371/153018, RG 1661/3** (Greece 1960, Subject: "Merten Affair", topic of a four-day debate in the Greek Parliament, October 12-15)

**FO 371/37206 R: 10268**

**FO 371/37206 R: 10177**, (11 October 1943)

**FO 371/37206 R: 10450**

**FO 371/37206 R: 10295**

**FO 371/37206**, (Mr Shone, From Cairo to Foreign Office, 15 October 1943)

**FO 371/37206 R: 10293**, (17 October 1943)

**FO 371/37207 R: 11673**

**FO 371/37210 R: 13842**

**Cabinet Papers (London):**

**CAB/65/47/7, Image Ref: 0001**, 9<sup>th</sup> August 1944, the Secretary of Foreign Affairs [W.M. (44) 103 RD Conclusions], Minute 1, Confidential Annex.

**CAB 66/49/47, Image Ref: 0001**, (6<sup>th</sup> April 1944, Telegram No. 215).

**CAB 66/49/47, Image Ref: 0001**, (6<sup>th</sup> April 1944, No. 218. Most Secret, His Majesty's Ambassador to the Greek Government, Cairo to FO).

**CAB/66/49/47 Image Ref: 0001**, The Greek Crisis (April 1-25, 1944), Telegrams: No. 198 (3rd April 1944), No. 199 (4th April 1944), No. 215 (6th April 1944), No. 217 (6th April).

**CAB 101/250**, (Churchill to General Wilson [Italy] and Mr Leeper [Athens], 08/11/44)

**CAB/101/250, Image Ref: 20**, (Response to Telegram No. 707, To Mr. Macmillan [Caserta], T.2134/4, 19/11/44)

### **History of Security Section (Record of Special Operation Executives - SOE):**

**HS 5/ 242, Image: 00059**, (18 July 1943, SECRET).

**HS 5/242, Image: 00088**, (Memorandum)

**HS 5/242, Image: 000091**, (Memorandum)

**HS 8/899, Image Ref: 6** (S.O.E. Activities, Summary for the Prime Minister, Quarter: January to March 1944)

**4. GAK, *Genika Archeia tou* Kratous, (General Archives of the State), Psychiko, Athens.**

**K 202 [ABE 806]: *Archeio tou N. Zerva*** (Archive of N. Zervas)

**ABE 1246, File 7: “*Fakelos Ekremon Aitiseon Nazismou 1961-1968*”** (Nazi Pending Applications 1961-1968).

### **5. Distomo Massacre – Survivors' Interviews (5):**

Giannis (Distomo, 29 September 2009).

Katerina (Distomo, 29 September 2009).

Dimitris (Distomo, 29 September 2009).

Alexandra (Distomo, 29 September 2009).

Costas (Athens, 30 September 2009).

### **6. Greek Newspapers: (accessed by the Municipality of Distomo and the Digital Library of National Library, Athens, Greece)**

*Aneksartisia*, 24/10/44

*Embros*, 12/6/1945

*Eleftheria*, 13/12/45

*Akropolis*, 12/6/1945

*Asyrmatos*, 9/6/1945

*Mahi*, 7/7/1944, 9/6/1946

*Vima*, 2/5/1944

*Rizospastis*, 29/10/1944, 12/10/1944, 5/11/1944

## **7. International Newspapers:**

*Der Spiegel* No.40 / 1960

## **8. Electronic sources:**

Complete Testimony of Dieter Wisliceny, *Nuremberg Trial Proceedings Volume 4, Twenty-Sixth Day, Thursday 3 January 1946*, The Avalon Project: Documents in Law, History and Diplomacy, Yale Law School: <http://avalon.law.yale.edu/imt/01-03-46.asp>

Distomo Massacre Documentary broadcasted in Greek *SKAI CHANNEL*:  
<http://folders.skai.gr/main/theme?id=97&locale=en>

Excerpts from Brigadier Chris Woodhouse and Nigel Clive's interview in the Documentary "Greece: The Hidden War":

<http://web.archive.org/web/20080229103239/http://thematikivradia.ert.gr/details.asp?id=2610&catid=3469>.

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-tXb5YkQeDM&feature=related>,  
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=U3J4v4KNDQI&feature=related>

On Meligala Massacre:

<http://www.enetenglish.gr/?i=news.en.article&id=1474>

## **9. A small section of the photo gallery in the Appendixes was accessed online:**

[http://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/a/a0/Triple\\_Occupation\\_of\\_Greece.png](http://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/a/a0/Triple_Occupation_of_Greece.png)

[http://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/6/69/GreeceRegionsEnglish\\_corrected2.png](http://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/6/69/GreeceRegionsEnglish_corrected2.png)

[http://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/a/ae/Greece\\_Prefectures\\_1941-44.png](http://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/a/ae/Greece_Prefectures_1941-44.png)

<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sonderkommando>

<http://www.haaretz.com/jewish-world/jewish-world-features/greece-finally-commemorates-the-destruction-of-thessaloniki-s-jewish-community.premium-1.510554>

<http://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/7/70/Holocaustdeathtoll%25.png>

<http://www.tlife.gr/Article/polemos/0-77-8278.html>

<http://pontosandaristera.wordpress.com/2010/06/17/aris/>

[http://diolkos.blogspot.co.uk/2011/11/blog-post\\_6077.html](http://diolkos.blogspot.co.uk/2011/11/blog-post_6077.html)

<http://www.holocaustresearchproject.org/othercamps/greekjewry.html>

## PRIMARY AND SECONDARY BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Abatzopoulou, F. (2007). *To Olokautoma stes Martyries ton Ellenon Evraion* (The Holocaust through the Testimonies of the Greek Jews), Thessaloniki: Epikentro.
- Adams, C. E. (1989). "Hannah Arendt and the historian: Nazism and the New Order", in *Hannah Arendt: Thinking, Judging, Freedom*, eds., Gisela T. Kaplan and Clive S. Kessler, Sydney: Allen & Unwin.
- Adorno, T.W. (1973). *Negative Dialectics*, New York: Continuum.
- Aksakal, M. (2008). *The Ottoman Road to War in 1914: The Ottoman Empire and the First World War*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Amyntor. (1942-1943). *Victors in Chains*, [Published by the Authority of the Greek Ministry of Information], London: Hutchinson & Co. (Publishers) LTD.
- Alexander, G. M. (1982). *The Prelude to the Truman Doctrine: British Policy in Greece 1944-1947*, Oxford: Clarendon Press.
- Allison, H. E. (1996). *Idealism and Freedom*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Allison, H.E. (2001). "Reflections on the Banality of (Radical) Evil, a Kantian Analysis", in *Rethinking Evil*, ed., Maria Pia Lara, Berkeley: University of California Press, pp.86-100.

- Apostolou, A. (2000). “‘The Exception of Salonika’: Bystanders and Collaborators in Northern Greece”, *Holocaust Genocide Studies*, Vol.14, No. 2, pp.165-196.
- Apostolou, L. (2005). *Napoleon Zervas: ‘O Misthophoros’, Apo ta aporrhita archeia tou EDES*, (Napoleon Zervas: The ‘Mercenary’, from the Disclosed Archives of EDES), Athens: Filistor.
- Arendt, H. ([1963-1964] 2006). *Eichmann in Jerusalem*, New York: Penguin Books.
- Arendt, H. (1968). *The Origins of Totalitarianism*, San Diego: A Harvest Book- Harcourt, Inc.
- Arendt, H. (1978). *The Life of the Mind*, San Diego: A Harvest Book – Harcourt, Inc.
- Arendt, H. (1978). *The Jew as Pariah: Jewish Identity and Politics in the Modern Age*, New York: Grove Press, INC.
- Arendt, H. (1994). *Essays in Understanding 1930- 1954*, New York: Schocken Books.
- Arendt, H. (1998). *The Human Condition*, Chicago: The University of Chicago Press.
- Arendt, H. (2003). *Responsibility and Judgement*, New York: Schocken Books.
- Auty, P. and Richard Clogg, eds. (1975). *British Policy Towards Wartime Resistance in Yugoslavia and Greece*, London: Macmillan Press LTD.
- Baerentzen, L and Close, D. H. (1993). “The British Defeat of EAM, 1944-5”, in *The Greek Civil War, 1943-1950: Studies of Polarization*, ed., David H. Close, London: Routledge, pp.72-96.
- Barker, E. (1975). “Some Factors in British Decision-making over Yugoslavia 1941-4”, in *British Policy Towards Wartime Resistance in Yugoslavia and Greece*, eds., Phyllis Auty, and Richard Clogg, London: Macmillan Press, pp. 22-59.
- Ben, J. (1979). “Jewish Leadership in Greece during the Holocaust”, in *Patterns of Jewish Leadership in Nazi Europe, 1933-1945; Proceedings of the Third Yad Vashem International Historical Conference*, Jerusalem, April 1979, pp.335-352.
- Bernstein, R. J. (1996). *Hannah Arendt and the Jewish Question*, Cambridge: Polity Press.

- Bernstein, R.J. (2002). Radical Evil: A Philosophical Interrogation, Cambridge: Polity Press.
- Bourlas, M. M. (2000). Ellenas, Evraios kai Aristeros (Greek, Jew and Leftist), Athens: Nisides.
- Bowman, S. (1984). "Jews in Wartime Greece", *Jewish Social Studies*, Vol. 48, No. 1, pp. 45-62.
- Bowman, S. (1991). "Joseph Matsas and the Greek Resistance", *Journal of the Hellenic Diaspora*, Vol. 17.1, Pella Publishing Company, pp. 49-53.
- Bowman, S. and Benmayor, I. (2002). The Holocaust in Salonika: Eyewitness Accounts, USA: Sephardic House and Bloch.
- Bowman, S. (2002). "Jews", in *Minorities in Greece: Aspects of a Plural Society*, ed., Richard Clogg, London: Hurst & Company, pp.64-80.
- Bowman, S. (2006). Jewish Resistance in Wartime Greece, London: Vallentine Mitchel.
- Browning, C. R. (1978). The Final Solution and the German Foreign Office: A Study of Referat D III of Abteilung Deutschland 1940-43, New York: Holmes & Meier Publishers, INC.
- Browning, C. R. (2004). The Origins of the Final Solution: The Evolution of Nazi Jewish Policy, September 1939-March 1942, Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press.
- Bruehl, Y.E. (2006). Why Arendt Matters, New Haven: Yale University Press.
- Byford, J.W. (1959). Grivas and the Story of EOKA, London: R. Hale.
- Chare, N. (2011). Auschwitz and Afterimages: Abjection, Witnessing and Representation, London: I.B. Tauris & Co Ltd.
- Chimbos, P.D. (1999). "Greek Resistance 1941-45: Organisation, Achievements and Contributions to Allied War Efforts against the Axis Powers", *International Journal of Comparative Sociology*, Vol. 40, No. 2, June 1999, pp. 251-269.
- Chomsky, N. (1997). World Orders: Old and New, London: Pluto Press.
- Cienciala, A.M., Lebedeva, N.S., Materski, W., eds. (2007). Katyn: A Crime Without a Punishment, New Haven: Yale University Press.

- Clark, B. (2006). Twice a Stranger: How Mass Expulsion Forged Modern Greece and Turkey, London: Granta Books.
- Clogg, R. (1975). “‘Pearls from Swine’: the Foreign Office papers, S.O.E. and the Greek Resistance”, in *British Policy towards Wartime Resistance in Yugoslavia and Greece*, eds., Auty, P, and Clogg, R, London: MacMillan Press, LTD, pp. 167- 205.
- Clogg, R. (1979). A Short History of Modern Greece, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Close, D. H. (1993). “The Reconstruction of a Right-wing State”, in *The Greek Civil War, 1943-1950: Studies of Polarisation*, ed., David Close, London: Routledge, pp. 156-189.
- Close, D.H. (1995a). The Origins of the Greek Civil War, London: Longman.
- Close, D.H. (1995b). “The Changing Structure of the Right, 1945-1950” in *Greece at the Crossroads: The Civil War and its Legacy*, (eds.) Iatrides, J.O and Wrigley, L, University Park: The Pennsylvania State University Press, pp. 122-156.
- Close, D.H. (2002). Greece since 1945, London: Longman, Pearson Education Limited.
- Cookridge, E. H. (1966). Inside SOE: The Story of Special Operations in Western Europe 1940-45, London: Arthur Barker Limited.
- Copjec, J.C. (1996). Radical Evil, London: Verso.
- Chroneka. (2006). “The Persecution of the Jews in Athens”, in *Ekdosi tou Kentrikou Israelitikou Symvouliou tes Ellados* (Chronicle, Edition of the Central Israeli Council of Greece), January – February 2006.
- Churchill, W.S. ([1954]-1985). The Second World War: Volume VI, Triumph and Tragedy, London: Penguin Books.
- Czech, D. (1994). “The Auschwitz Prisoner Administration”, in *Anatomy of the Auschwitz Death Camp*, eds., Yisrael Gutman and Michael Berenbaum, Bloomington: Indiana University Press, pp. 363-379.
- Davidson, B. (1981). Special Operations Europe: Scenes from the Anti-Nazi War, New Abbot: Readers Union.

- Dank, M. (1974). The French against the French: Collaboration and Resistance, London: Cassell.
- Dawidowicz, L.S. (1990). The War Against the Jews, 1933-45, London: Penguin Books
- D'Entreves, M.P. (1994). The Political Philosophy of Hannah Arendt, London: Routledge.
- Dodos, D. (2007). “*E Thessaloniki pros ton 20o Aiona: To Telos tis Anektikis Polis*” (Thessaloniki towards the 20<sup>th</sup> Century: The End of a Tolerant City), in *Auschwitz: To Gegonos kai I Mnimi tou* (Auschwitz: The Event and its Memory), eds., Vasiliki Georgiadou and Alkis Rigos, Athina: Kastaniotis, pp. 42-57.
- Dordanas, S.N. (2006). Hellenes enantion Hellenon: O Kosmos ton Tagmaton Asfaleias stin Katochiki Thessaloniki 1941-1944, (Greeks against Greeks: The World of the Security Battalions in Occupied Salonika 1941-1944), Thessaloniki: Epikentro.
- Dordanas, S.N. (2011). I Germaniki Stoli stin Naphthalini: Epivioseis Dosilogismou stin Makedonia 1945-1974 (The German Uniform in Naphthalene: Collaboration Survival in Macedonia, 1945-1974), Athina: Estia.
- Enepekidis, P.K. (1969). Diogmoi ton Evraion en Elladi: 1941 – 1944 (The Expulsion of Jews from Greece: 1941-1944), Athens: Victoros A. Papazisis.
- Eudes, D. (1972). The Kapetanios: Partisans and Civil War in Greece, 1943-1949, London: NLB.
- Farmer, S. (1999). Martyred Village: Commemorating the 1944 Massacre at Oradour-sur-Glane, Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Fine, R. (1999). “Benign Nationalism? The Limits of the Civic Ideal”, in *People, Nation and State*, eds., Edward Mortimer and Robert Fine, London: I.B. Tauris, pp. 149-161.
- Fine, R. (2000a). “Crimes against Humanity: Hannah Arendt and the Nuremberg Debates”, *European Journal of Social Theory*, 3 (3), London: Sage Publications, pp. 293-311.
- Fine, R., and Turner, C. (2000b). “Introduction”, in *Social Theory after the Holocaust*, eds., Robert Fine and Charles Turner, Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, pp.1-6.

- Fine, R. (2000c). "Hannah Arendt: Politics and Understanding after the Holocaust", in *Social Theory after the Holocaust*, eds., Robert Fine and Charles Turner, Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, pp. 19-45.
- Fine, R. (2001). Political Investigations: Hegel, Marx, Arendt, London: Routledge.
- Fine, R. (2007). Cosmopolitanism, London: Routledge.
- Fleischer, H. (1995a). Stemma Kai Swastika: E Ellada tis Katochis Kai tis Antistasis (Crown and Swastika: Greece during Occupation and Resistance) Vol. 1, Athens: Papazisis Publications.
- Fleischer, H. (1995b). Stemma Kai Svastika: E Ellada tis Katochis Kai tis Antistasis (Crown and Swastika: Greece during Occupation and Resistance) Vol. 2, Athens: Papazisis Publications.
- Fleischer, H. (2006). "Contacts between German Occupation Authorities and the Major Greek Resistance Organisations", in *Greece in the 1940s, A Nation in Crisis*, ed., John O. Iatrides (Greek Edition), Athens: Themelio Publications.
- Fleischer, H. (2009). Oi Polemoi tis Mnimis: O B' Pagosmios Polemos stin Dimosia Istoria (The Wars of Memory: The Second World War in Public History), Athens: Nefeli.
- Fleming, K. E. (2007). "The Stereotyped 'Greek Jew' from Auschwitz-Birkenau to Israeli Pop Culture", *Journal of Modern Greek Studies*, Vol. 25, No. 1, (May 2007), The John Hopkins University Press, pp.17-40.
- Foot, M.R.D. (1966). SOE in France: An Account of the Work of the British Special Operation Executive in France 1940-1944, London: Her Majesty's Stationary Office.
- Foot, M.R.D. (1999). SOE: An Outline History of the Special Operations Executive 1940-1946, London: Pimlico.
- Friedlander, S. (2007). The Years of Extermination: Nazi Germany and the Jews 1939-1945, London: Phoenix.
- Garlinski, J. (1976). Fighting Auschwitz: The Resistance Movement in the Concentration Camp, London: Fontana/Collins.

- Gelber, N.M., Florentin, D., Friedmann, A., and Torok, G.F. (1955). "An Attempt to Internationalise Salonika, 1912-1913, *Jewish Social Studies*, Vol.17, No.2, (April 1955), Indiana University Press, pp.105-120.
- Gerolymatos, A. (1991). "The Development of Guerrilla Warfare and British Policy toward Greece 1943-1944", *Journal of the Hellenic Diaspora*, September 1991, Vol. 17.1, Pella Publishing Company, pp. 97-114.
- Gerolymatos, A. (2005). Kokkini Akropolis – Mavros Tromos: Apo tin Antistasi ston Emfylio 1943-1949 (Red Acropolis – Black Terror: From Resistance to Civil War 1943-1949), Athens: Kochlias Publications.
- Gerolymatos, A. (2009). "The road to Authoritarianism: The Greek Army in Politics, 1935-1949", *Journal of the Hellenic Diaspora*, Back Issue, 35.1, pp. 7-25.
- Gewehr, W. M. (1967). The Rise of Nationalism in the Balkans, 1800-1930, Hamden: Archon Books.
- Gilbert, M. (1986). The Holocaust: A History of the Jews of Europe during the Second World War, London: Collins.
- Gilbert, M. (2000). Second World War, London: Phoenix Press.
- Gillham, B. (2005). Research Interviewing: The Range of Techniques, Maidenhead: Open University Press.
- Glenny, M. (1999). The Balkans 1804-1999: Nationalism, War and the Great Powers, London: Granta Books.
- Greek Characters. (1945a). "The Jews and the Liberation Struggle: A report of the Central Committee of the EAM on the Jews of Greece and the Liberation Struggle", Athens: *Gennadius Library*, pp. 1-8.
- Greek Characters. (1945b). "Notes on the Present Situation of Greek Jewry, A.L. Molho, Cairo, October 12, 1943", Athens: *Gennadius Library*, pp. 1-11.
- Greene, N. (1970). From Versailles to Vichy: The Third French Republic, 1919-1940, Illinois: AHM Publishing Corporation.

- Gross, J. T. (2000). "Themes for a Social History of War Experience and Collaboration", in *the Politics of Retribution in Europe: World War II and its Aftermath*, eds., István Deák, Jan Tomasz Gross, Tony Judt, Princeton: University Press, pp. 15-37.
- Gross, J. T. (2000a). "A Tangled Web: Confronting Stereotypes Concerning Relations between Poles, Germans, Jews, and Communists", in *the Politics of Retribution in Europe: World War II and its Aftermath*, eds., István Deák, Jan Tomasz Gross, Tony Judt, Princeton: University Press, pp. 74-129.
- Gross, J. T. (2001). Neighbors: The Destruction of the Jewish Community in Jedwabne, Poland, Princeton: Princeton University Press.
- Gurewitsch, B. (1998). Mothers, Sisters, Resisters: Oral Histories of Women Who Survived the Holocaust, Tuscaloosa: The University of Alabama Press.
- Gutman, Y. ([1980] – 1984). "Social Stratification in the Concentration Camps" in *The Nazi Concentration Camps: Structure and Aims, The Image of the Prisoner, The Jews in the Camps, Proceedings of the Fourth Yad Vashem International Historical Conference – January 1980*, Jerusalem: Yad Vashem, pp.143-177.
- Guyer, P. (2005). Kant's System of Nature and Freedom, Oxford: Clarendon Press.
- Haida, E. (2000). "The Punishment of Collaborators in Northern Greece, 1945-1946", in *After the War Was Over: Reconstructing the Family, Nation, and State in Greece, 1943-1960*, ed., Mark Mazower, Princeton: Princeton University Press, pp. 42-61.
- Handeli, Y.J. (1992). "A Greek Jew from Salonika Remembers" in *From the White Tower to the Gates of Auschwitz*, Jerusalem: Korot Publishing House, pp.38-55.
- Halevi, S. B. (2012). A Jewish Voice from Ottoman Salonica: The Ladino Memoir of Sa' adi Besalel a- Levi, Stanford: Stanford University Press.
- Halivni, T. H. (1979). "The Birkenau Revolt: Poles Prevent a Timely Insurrection", *Jewish Social Studies*, Vol. 41, No. 2, Articles devoted to the Holocaust (Spring 1979), Indiana University Press, pp.123-154.
- Hall, R. C. (2000). The Balkan Wars 1912-1913: Prelude to the First World War, London: Routledge.

- Hart, J. (1996). New Voices in the Nation: Women and the Greek Resistance, 1941-1964, Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press.
- Heberer, P. (2011). The Children during the Holocaust, Plymouth: Alta Mira Press.
- Herf, J. (1997). Divided Memory: The Nazi Past in the Two Germanys, Cambridge: Harvard University Press.
- Hilberg, R. (1985). The Destruction of the European Jews, New York: Holmes & Meier.
- Hilberg, R. (1992). Perpetrators, Victims, Bystanders: The Jewish Catastrophe 1933-1945, New York: HarperCollins Publishers.
- Hilberg, R., Staron, S., and Kerminsz, J., eds. (1999). The Warsaw Diary of Adam Czerniakow: Prelude to Doom, Chicago: Ivan R. Dee.
- Homer, F. D. (2001). Primo Levi and the Politics of Survival, Columbia: University of Missouri Press.
- Hondros, J. L. (1983). Occupation and Resistance: The Greek Agony 1941-44, New York: Pella Publishing Company, INC.
- Hondros, J.L. (1988). “‘Too Weighty a Weapon’: Britain and the Security Battalions, 1943-1944”, *Journal of the Hellenic Diaspora*, Spring Summer/Back Issue 1988, 15.1 – 2, pp. 33-47.
- Hansen, P. (1993). Hannah Arendt: Politics, History and Citizenship, Cambridge: Polity Press.
- Iatrides, J. O. (1972). Revolt in Athens: The Greek Communist “Second Round”, 1944-1945, Princeton: Princeton University Press.
- Iatrides, J. O. (1981). Greece in the 1940s: A Nation in Crisis, Hanover: University Press of New England.
- Iatrides, J.O, and Wrigley, L. (1995). Greece at the Crossroads: The Civil War and its Legacy, University Park: The Pennsylvania State University Press.

- Ikonomopoulos, M. H. (2003). "The Story behind the Statistics: Variables Affecting the Tremendous Losses of Greek Jewry During the Holocaust", *Journal of the Hellenic Diaspora*, Vol.32, No. 1-2, (March 2003), Pella Publishing Company, pp.89-109.
- Jackson, J. (2003). The Fall of France: The Nazi Invasion of 1940, Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Joes, A.J. (1992). Modern Guerrilla Insurgency, USA: Greenwood Publishing Group.
- Judt, T. (2000). "The Past is Another Country: Myth and Memory in Postwar Europe", in *The Politics of Retribution in Europe: World War II and its Aftermath*, eds., Deàk István, Jan Gross, Tony Judt, Princeton: Princeton University Press, pp. 292-325.
- Judt, T. (2008). "The 'Problem of Evil' in Postwar Europe", *The New York Review of Books*, Vol.55, No. 2, February 14, 2008, pp.1-8.
- Judt, T. (2010). Postwar: A History of Europe since 1945, London: Vintage Books.
- Kant, I. (1952). The Critique of Judgement, Oxford: Clarendon Press.
- Kant, I. ([1934] 1960). Religion within the Limits of Reason Alone, New York: Harper & Row Publishers.
- Kant, I. (1964). Groundwork of the Metaphysics of Morals, New York: Harper & Row Publishers.
- Kalyvas, S.N. (2006). "The Paradox of Terrorism in Civil War", *Journal of Ethics*, 8 (1), Kluwer Academic Publishers, pp. 97-138.
- Kalyvas, S.N. (2008). "Armed Collaboration in Greece, 1941-1944", *European Review of History*, Vol.15, No.2, April 2008, pp.129-142.
- Kaplan, G.T and Kessler, C.S. (1989). Hannah Arendt: Thinking, Judging, Freedom, Sydney: Allen & Unwin.
- Karakatsanis, N. M. (2001). The Politics of Elite Transformation: The Consolidation of Greek Democracy in Theoretical Perspective, Westport: Praeger.
- Kessel, D. (1944). "What the Germans Did to Greece", *Life Magazine*, Vol. 17, No. 22, November 1944, pp. 21-27.

- Kitroeff, A. (1985). "Documents: The Jews in Greece, 1941-1944 – Eyewitness Accounts", *Journal of the Hellenic Diaspora*, Vol. XII, No. 3, (Fall 1985), pp. 5-32.
- Kogon, E. (1950). The Theory and Practice of Hell: The German Concentration Camps and the System Behind Them, London: Secker & Warburg.
- Kostopoulos, T. (2005). E Autologokrimeni Mnimi: Ta Tagmata Asfaleias kai e Metapolemiki Ethnikofrosini (The Self-Censored Memory: The Security Battalions and the Post War National Mindedness), Athens: Filistor.
- Kounio, H.S. (1981). Ezesa ton Thanato: Mia Istoria Katapultis, To Emerologio tou Arithmou 109 565 (I lived Death: A Story Catapult, The Diary of Number 109 565), Thessaloniki: Dodoni.
- Kouzinopoulos, S. (2005). Ypothesis Alois Brunner: O Demios ton 50.000 Evraion tis Thessalonikis (The Case of Alois Brunner: The Executioner of 50.000 Jews of Salonika), Thessaloniki: Ianos.
- Krakowski, S. ([1977]-1979). "The Opposition to the Judenräte by the Jewish Armed Resistance", in *Patterns of Jewish Leadership in Nazi Europe 1933-1945, Proceedings of the Third Yad Vashem International Historical Conference*, April 4-7, 1977, Jerusalem: Yad Vashem, pp.191-201.
- Kristel, C. (2005). "Revolution and Reconstruction: Dutch Jewry after the Holocaust", in *The Jews Are Coming Back: The Return of the Jews to their Countries of Origin after WWII*, ed., David Bankier, Jerusalem: Yad Vashem, pp. 136-147.
- Kruuse, J. (1967). Madness at Oradour, 10 June 1944... & After, London: Secker & Warburg.
- Kubica, H. (1994). "Children", in *Anatomy of the Auschwitz Death Camp*, eds., Yisrael Gutman and Michael Berenbaum, Bloomington: Indiana University Press, pp. 412-428.
- Kulka, E. ([1980]-1984). "Escapes of Jewish Prisoners from Auschwitz-Birkenau and Their Attempts to Stop the Mass Extermination", in *The Nazi Concentration Camps: Structure and Aims, The Image of the Prisoner, The Jews in the Camps, Proceedings of the Fourth Yad Vashem International Historical Conference*, January 1980, Jerusalem: Yad Vashem, pp. 401-416.

- Macdonald, C. (1993). The Lost Battle: Crete 1941, London: Macmillan.
- Mackiewicz, J. (1951). The Katyn Wood Murders, London: The World Affairs Book Club.
- MacMillan, M. (2013). The War that Ended Peace: How Europe Abandoned Peace for the First World War, London: Profile Books.
- Manolopoulou, K. (1994). Anamnises kai Martyries : Distomo 1944 – 1994 (Memories and Testimonies: Distomo 1944-1994), Athens & Distomo: Edition of Municipality of Distomo.
- Matarasso, Dr, I.A. ( 1948). “...Kai Omos Oloi tous den Pethanan...”: E Katastrophe ton Elleno-Evraion tis Thessalonikis kata tin Germanikin Katochin (“...And Yet Not All of Them Died..”: The Catastrophe of the Greek Jews of Salonika during German Occupation), Athens: A. Bezes & Sia.
- Matsas, J. (1991). “The participation of the Greek Jews in the National Resistance, 1940-1944, *Journal of the Hellenic Diaspora*, Vol. 17, (1991) Pella Publishing Company: pp. 55-68.
- Mavrogordatos, G. (2006). “The 1946 Elections and Plebiscite: The Prelude to Civil War”, in *Greece in the 40s: A Nation in Crisis* (Greek Edition), ed. John O. Iatrides, Athens: Themelio, pp. 307-340.
- Mazower, M. (1993). Inside Hitler’s Greece, New Haven: Yale Nota Bene.
- Mazower, M. (1998a). Dark Continent: Europe’s Twentieth Century, London: Penguin Books.
- Mazower, M. (1998b). “*Oi Sinepeies tou Diogmou ton Evraion gia tin Poli tis Thessalonikis*” (The Consequences of Jewish Expulsion for the City of Thessaloniki) in *Oi Evraioi tis Elladas stin Katochin* (The Jews of Greece during Occupation), ed., Rica Benveniste, Thessaloniki: Vantias, pp.53-61.
- Mazower, M. (2000). “The Cold War and the Appropriation of Memory: Greece after liberation” in *The Politics of Retribution in Europe: World War and its Aftermath*, (eds.) Deak, I, Gross, J.T, and Judt T., Princeton: Princeton University Press, pp. 212-232.

- Mazower, M., ed. (2000a). After the War Was Over: Reconstructing the Family, Nation, and State in Greece, 1943-1960, Princeton: Princeton University Press.
- Mazower, M. (2001). The Balkans: From the End of the Byzantium to the Present Day, London: Phoenix.
- Mazower, M. (2005). Salonika: City of Ghosts: Christians, Muslims and Jews 1430-1950, London: Harper Perennial.
- Mayer, H.F. (2010). Apo tin Vienne sta Kalavryta (From Vienna to Kalavryta), Athens: Estia.
- McNeil, W.H. (1947). The Greek Dilemma: War and Aftermath, London: Victor Gollancz LTD.
- Menasche, A. (1974). Birkenau (Auschwitz II) :Anamniseis enos Autoptou Martyros, Pos Echathesan 72.000 Ellenas Evraioi (Birkenau Auschwitz II: Memories of an Eyewitness, How 72.000 Greek Jews were Lost), Thessaloniki: Edition of Jewish Council of Salonika.
- Molho, R. (1986). "Venizelos and the Jewish Community of Salonika, 1912-1919", *Journal of the Hellenic Diaspora*, Vol. 13, Issue 3-4 (1986), Pella Publishing Company, pp.113-123.
- Molho, R. (1988). "The Jewish Community of Salonika and Its Incorporation into the Greek State", *Middle Eastern Studies*, Vol. 24, No. 4, (October 1988), Taylor & Francis LTD, pp. 391-403.
- Molho, R. (1993). "Antisemitism and State Policy in Salonika during the City's Annexation to Greece", *Jewish Social Studies*, Vol. 50, No. 3/4, Summer, 1988-Autumn, Indiana University Press, pp. 253-264.
- Molho, R. (2007). "*Problemata Entaxis tis Genoktonias stin Syllogiki Ethniki Mnimi: E Periptosi tes Thessalonikis*", (Problems of Incorporating the Genocide into the Collective National Memory: The Case of Thessaloniki), in *Auschwitz, to Gegonos kai I Mnimi Tou*, (Auschwitz: The Event and its Memory), eds., Alkis Rigos and Vasiliki Georgiadou, Athens: Kastanioti, pp. 23-42.
- Mouzelis, N. (1976). "Capitalism and Dictatorship in Post-War Greece", *New Left Review*, Vol. 1, No. 96, March-April 1976, pp. 57-80.

- Mouzelis, N. (1986). "On the Rise of Postwar Military Dictatorships: Argentina, Chile, Greece", *Comparative Social Studies in Society and History*, Vol. 28, No. 1, (Jan., 1986), pp.55-80.
- Müller, F. (1979). Eyewitness Auschwitz: Three Years in the Gas Chambers, Chicago: Ivan R. Dee.
- Murtagh, P. (1994). The Rape of Greece: The King, the Colonels, and the Resistance, London: Simon & Schuster.
- Myers, E.C.W. Brigadier. (1975). "The Andarte Delegation to Cairo: August 1943", in *British Policy towards Wartime Resistance in Yugoslavia and Greece*, eds., Auty, P, and Clogg, R, London: Macmillan Press, LTD, pp. 146-166.
- Myers, E.C.W. Brigadier. (1985). The Greek Entanglement, [SOE], Gloucester: Alan Sutton.
- Nahon, M, M.D. (1989). Birkenau: The Camp of Death, Tuscaloosa: The University of Alabama Press.
- Nikolaou, M. N. (2007). Emerologio Apo to Metopo (Diary from the Front), Athens: Castalia Editions & Eleni D. Sfountouri.
- Lagrou, P. (2005). "Return to a Vanished World. European Societies and the Remnants of their Jewish Communities, 1945-1947", in *The Jews Are Coming Back: The Return of the Jews to their Countries of Origin after WWII*, ed., David Bankier, Jerusalem: Yad Vashem, pp.1-24.
- Lande, D.A. (2000). Resistance! Occupied Europe and its Defiance of Hitler, Osceola USA: MBI Publishing Company.
- Langer, L. L. (1991). Holocaust Testimonies: The Ruins of Memory, New Haven: Yale University Press.
- Lappas, T. (2001). E Sfagi tou Distomou: Chroniko (The Massacre of Distomo: Chronicle), Athens: 3<sup>rd</sup> Edition of Municipality of Distomo.
- Lara, M.P. (2001). Rethinking Evil: Contemporary Perspectives, Berkeley: University of California Press.

- Laughland, J. (2008). A History of Political Trials: From Charles I to Saddam Hussein, Oxford: Peter Lang Ltd.
- Lemkin, R. (1944). Axis Rule in Occupied Europe: Laws of Occupation, Analysis of Government, Proposals for Redress, Washington: Carnegie Endowment for International Peace.
- Lengyel, O. (1959). Five Chimneys, London: A Panther Book.
- Levi, P. (1987). If This is a Man, London: Abacus.
- Levi, P. (1989). The Drowned and the Saved, London: Abacus.
- Levi, P. (1996). Survival in Auschwitz, New York: Touchstone.
- Levy, A. (1994). The Jews of the Ottoman Empire, Princeton: The Darwin Press, INC.
- Lewkowicz, B. (2000). “‘After the War We Were All Together’: Jewish Memories of Postwar Thessaloniki”, in *After the War Was Over: Reconstructing the Family, Nation, and State in Greece, 1943-1960*, ed., Mark Mazower, Princeton: Princeton University Press, pp. 247-272.
- Lifton, R. J. ([1980]-1984). “Medicalized Killing in Auschwitz” in *The Nazi Concentration Camps: Structure and Aims, the Image of the Prisoner, The Jews in the Camps, Proceedings of the Fourth Yad Vashem International Historical Conference*, January 1980, Jerusalem: Yad Vashem, pp.207-233.
- Loulis, J.C. (1982). The Greek Communist Party, 1940-1944, London: Croom Helm.
- Lowe, K. (2012). Savage Continent: Europe in the Aftermath of World War II, London: Viking.
- Papastratis, P. (2000). “Purging the University after Liberation”, in *After the War was Over: Reconstructing the Family, Nation and State in Greece, 1943-1960*, ed., Mark Mazower, Princeton: Princeton University Press, pp.62-72.
- Papastratis, P. (2006). “Papandreou and the Lebanon Conference”, in *Greece in the 40s, a Nation in Crisis* (Greek Edition), ed., John, O. Iatrides, Athens: Themelio, pp.205-223.

- Pawelczynska, A. (1979). Values and Violence in Auschwitz: A Sociological Analysis, Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Pendas, D. O. (2009). "Seeking Justice, Finding Law: Nazi Trials in Postwar Europe", *The Journal of Modern History*, Vol.81, No. 2, (June 2009), University of Chicago Press, pp. 347-368.
- Pezzino, P. (2012). Memory and Massacre: Revisiting Sant' Anna di Stazzema, New York: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Piper, F. (1994). "Gas Chambers and Crematoria", in *Anatomy of the Auschwitz Death Camp*, eds., Yisrael Gutman and Michael Berenbaum, Bloomington: Indiana University Press, pp. 157-183.
- Plaut, J. E. (1996). Greek Jewry in the Twentieth Century, 1913-1983: Patterns of Jewish Survival in the Greek Provinces before and after the Holocaust, London: Associated Press.
- Pressac, J.C., and Pelt, R.J.V. (1994). "The Machinery of Mass Murder at Auschwitz", in *Anatomy of the Auschwitz Death Camp*, eds., Yisrael Gutman, and Michael Berenbaum, Bloomington: Indiana University Press, pp. 183-245.
- Rallis, G. (1947). O Ioannis D. Rallis Omilei ek tou Tafou (Ioannis D. Rallis Speaks from his Grave), Athens: A. I Papanikolaou.
- Reitlinger, G. (1953). The Final Solution: An Attempt to Exterminate the Jews of Europe 1939 1945, London: Valentine, Mitchell.
- Resis, A. (1978). "The Churchill-Stalin Secret 'Percentages' Agreement on the Balkans, Moscow, October 1944", *The American Historical Review*, Vol.83, No. 2, (April 1978), Oxford University Press, pp.368-387.
- Richter, H. (1985). British Intervention in Greece: From Varkiza to Civil War, February 1945 to August 1946, London: Merlin Press.
- Richter, H. (2006). "The Varkiza Agreement", in *Greece in the 40s, a Nation in Crisis*, (Greek Edition), ed., John O. Iatrides, Athens: Themelio, pp.285-306.

- Rigos, A. (2007). “*E Mnimi kai E Simantiki tis*” (The Memory and its Importance), in *Auschwitz, to Gekonos kai E Mnimi tou*, (Auschwitz, the Event and its Memory), eds., Alkis Rigos and Vasiliki Georgiadou, Athens: Kastanioti, pp.15-23.
- Rodinus, P. (1943). The Fight in Greece, London: The New Europe Publishing Company LTD.
- Rogozinski, J. (1996). “It Makes Us Wrong: Kant and Radical Evil”, in *Radical Evil*, ed., Joan Copjec, London: Verso, pp. 30-45.
- Rosenbaum, E.M, and Hoffer, W. (1993). Betrayal: The Untold Story of the Kurt Waldheim Investigation and Cover Up, New York: ST. Martin’s Press.
- Rousso, H. (1991). The Vichy Syndrome: History and Memory in France since 1944, Cambridge: Harvard University Press.
- Rozen, M. (2005). “The Jews and Greeks Remember their Past: the Political Career of Tzevi Koretz (1933-1943)”, *Jewish Social Studies*, Vol. 12, No. 1, Fall 2005 (New Series), Indiana University Press, pp.111-166.
- Safrian, H. (2010). Eichmann’s Men. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Sarafis, S. Major-Jen. [(1946)-1980]. ELAS: Greek Resistance Army, London: Merlin Press.
- Sedgwick, A. C. (1948). “The Plot against Greece”, *Foreign Affairs*, Vo. 26, No. 3, (April, 1948), Published by the Council of Foreign Relations, pp. 486-496.
- Sevillias, E. (1983). Athens – Auschwitz, Athens: Lycabettus Press.
- Sfikas, T. D. (1991). ““The People at the Top Can Do These Things, Which Others Can’t Do’: Winston Churchill and the Greeks, 1940-45”, *Journal of Contemporary History*, Vol.26, No.2, April. 1991, pp. 307-332.
- Sfikas, T. D. (1997). “Spanish Echoes in Greece, 1946-1949: The Myth of the Participation of an ‘International Brigade’ in the Greek Civil War”, *Journal of Modern Greek Studies*, Vol. 15, No. 1, May 1997, pp.87-101.
- Theocharis, G.H. (2009). Distomo 10 Iouniou 1944, To Olokautoma (Distomo 10 June 1944, The Holocaust), Levadia: Synchroni Ekfrasi.

- Spencer, P. (2006). "From Rosa Luxemburg to Hannah Arendt: Socialism, Barbarism and the Extermination Camps", *The European Legacy: Toward New Paradigms*, 11:5, pp.527-540.
- Spencer, P. (2012). Genocide since 1945, London: Routledge.
- Spengler-Aksiopoulou, B. (1998). "Allilegui kai Voitheia pros tous Evraious tis Elladas kata tin Diarkeia tis Katochis: 1941-1944" ("Solidarity and Help towards the Jews of Greece during the Occupation: 1941-1944") in *Oi Evraioi tis Elladas stin Katochi* (The Jews of Greece in Occupation), ed. Rica Benveniste, Thessaloniki: Vaniotis.
- Spiliotis S. S. (2000). "'An Affair of Politics, Not Justice': The Merten Trial (1957-1959) and the Greek- German Relations", in *After the War was Over: Reconstructing the Family, Nation, and State in Greece, 1943-1960*, ed., Mark Mazower, Princeton: Princeton University Press, pp. 293-302.
- Stafford, D. (1980). Britain and European Resistance 1940-1945: A Survey of the Special Operations Executive, with Documents, Oxford: Macmillan Press.
- Stauber, R. (2011). Collaboration with the Nazis: Public Discourse after the Holocaust, USA: Routledge.
- Stavrianos, L.S. (1948). "The Jews of Greece", *Journal of Central European Affairs*, Vol.8, No.3, pp. 256-269.
- Stavrianos, L.S. (1949). "Two Points of View: I. The Immediate Origins of the Battle of Athens", *American Slavic and East European Review*, Vol.8, No. 4, December, 1949, pp.239-251.
- Stavrou, T. G. (1995). "The Orthodox Church and Political Culture in Modern Greece", in *Greece Prepares for the Twenty-first Century*, eds., Dimitri Conostas & Theofanis G. Stavrou, Baltimore: The John Hopkins University Press, pp.35-56.
- Stavroulakis, N. (1997). The Jews of Greece. Athens: Talos Press.
- Steinberg, J. (2002). All or Nothing: The Axis and the Holocaust, 1941-1943, London: Routledge.

- Stevens, J. M, Woodhouse, C. M and D.J. Wallace. (1982). British Reports on Greece 1943-1944, Copenhagen: Museum Tusculanum Press.
- Stevens, J.M. (1982). "On Present Conditions in Central Greece, *British Reports on Greece 1943-1944*, ed., Lars Baerentzen, Copenhagen: Tusculanum Press, pp: 1-44.
- Stone, D. (2001). "The Sonderkommado Photographs", *Jewish Social Studies*, Vol.7, No.3, Spring/Summer 2001, Indiana University Press, pp. 132-148.
- Stone, D. (2014). Goodbye to all that? The Story of Europe since 1945, Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Strzelecka, I. (1994). "Women", in *Anatomy of the Auschwitz Death Camp*, eds., Yisrael Gutman and Michael Berenbaum, Bloomington: Indiana University Press, pp.393-412.
- Theocharis, G.H. (2009). Distomo 10 Iouniou 1944, To Olokautoma (Distomo 10 June 1944, The Holocaust), Levadia: Synchroni Ekfrasi.
- Thomas, G. (2011). How to Do Your Case Study: A Guide for Students and Researchers, Los Angeles: Sage.
- Thorpe, A. (2006). "'In a Rather Emotional State'? The Labour Party and British Intervention in Greece, 1944-5", *English Historical Review*, Vol. CXXI, No. 493, Oxford University Press, pp.1075-1105.
- Tomai, P. (2009). Greeks in Auschwitz – Birkenau, [Hellenic Ministry of Foreign Affairs], Athens: Papazisis Publishers.
- Toscano, M. (2005). "The Abrogation of Racial Laws and the Reintegration of Jews in Italian Society (1943-1948)", in *The Jews Are Coming Back: The Return of the Jews to their Countries of Origin after WWII*, ed., David Bankier, Jerusalem: Yad Vashem, pp.148-168.
- Tsarouhas, D. (2005). "Explaining an Activist Military: Greece until 1975", *Southeast European Politics*, Vol. VI, No. 1, July 2005, pp.1-13.
- Tsolakoglou, G.S. (1959). Apomnimoneumata (Memoirs), Athens: Akropolis.
- Tsoucalas, C. (1969). The Greek Tragedy, Middlesex: Penguin Books.

- Tsouras, A. S. (1999). Distomo: Bleeding Humanity, Athens: Municipality of Distomo Edition.
- Tushnet, L. (1972). The Pavement of Hell, New York: St. Martin's Press.
- Vasar, O. V. (2007). "Auschwitz: *I Anadysi mias Diskolis Mnimis*" (Auschwitz: The Emergence of a Difficult Memory), in *Auschwitz: to Gegonos kai E Mnimi tou* (Auschwitz: the Event and its Memory) eds., Alkis Rigos and Vasiliki Georgiadou, Athens: Kastanioti, pp. 58-92.
- Veremis, T. and Gerolymatos, A. (1991). "The Military as a Sociopolitical Force in Greece, 1940-1949", *Journal of the Hellenic Diaspora*, Vol. 17.1, March 1991, pp. 103-128.
- Villa, D.R. (1999). Politics, Philosophy, Terror: Essays on the Thought of Hannah Arendt, Princeton: Princeton University Press.
- Vlavianos, H. (1989). "The Greek Communist Party", in *Resistance and Revolution in Mediterranean Europe*, ed., Tony Judt, London: Routledge, pp. 157-212.
- Vukmanovic, S. (1985). How and Why the People's Liberation Struggle Met with Defeat, London: The Merlin Press.
- Wallace, D.J. (1982). "Conditions in Zervas-held Territory in Greece", in *British Reports on Greece 1943-1944*, (ed.) Lars Baerentzen, Copenhagen: Museum Tusculanum Press, pp. 119-141.
- Wasserstein, B. (2013). On the Eve: The Jews of Europe before the Second World War, London: Profile Books LTD.
- Weiss, A. ([1980]-1984). "Categories of Camps – The Character and Role", in *The Nazi Concentration Camps: Structure and Aims, The Image of the Prisoner, The Jews in the Camps, Proceedings of the Fourth Yad Vashem International Historical Conference*, January 1980, Jerusalem: Yad Vashem, pp. 115-133.
- Wellington, J, and Szczerbinski, M. (2007). Research Methods for the Social Sciences, London: Continuum International Publishing Group.
- Wood, A.W. (1970). Kant's Moral Religion, London: Cornell University Press.
- Wood, A.W. (1999). Kant's Ethical Thought, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

- Woodhouse, C.M. (1961). British Foreign Policy Since the Second World War, London: Hutchinson & Co.
- Woodhouse, C. M . (1948). Apple of Discord: A Survey of Recent Greek Politics in their International Setting, London: Hutchinson & Co.
- Woodhouse, C.M. (1968). Modern Greece: A short History, London: Faber and Faber.
- Woodhouse, C.M. (1975). "Summer 1943: The Critical Months", in *British Policy Towards Wartime Resistance in Yugoslavia and Greece*, eds., Phyllis Auty and Richard Clogg, London: Macmillan Press, pp. 117-147.
- Woodhouse, C.M. (1976a). To Milon Tis Eridos (Apple of Discord), [Greek Edition] Athens: Exantas.
- Woodhouse, C.M. (1976b). The Struggle for Greece 1941-1949, London: Hart-Davis, MacGibbon.
- Woodhouse, C.M. (1977). "Diplomatic Development: Nineteenth and Twentieth Century", in *Greece in Transition*, ed., John T.A. Koumoulides, London: Zeno, pp.92-127.
- Woodhouse, C.M. (1982). "Recent Crisis in Free Greece", in *British Reports on Greece 1943-1944*, (ed.) Lars Baerentzen, Copenhagen: Museum Tusculanum Press, pp.47-72.
- Woodhouse, C.M. (1985). The Rise and Fall of the Greek Colonels, London: Granada.
- Yacoel, Y. (1993). Apomnemonemata 1941-1943 (Memoirs 1941-1943), Thessaloniki: Parateritis Publications.
- Yahil, L. ([1974]-1977). "The Uniqueness of the Rescue of Danish Jewry", in *Rescue Attempts During the Holocaust, Proceedings of the Second Yad Vashem International Historical Conference, April 8-11, 1974*, Jerusalem: Yad Vashem, pp. 617-627.
- Yin, R. K. (2005). Case Study Research: Design and Methods, Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications.

## APPENDIX 1: THE JEWS OF GREECE



(Jews of Ioannina are being deported)

Source: <http://www.serbianna.com/columns/savich/107.shtml>



(Jewish deportation from Greek Thrace and Greek Macedonia, Thessaloniki, 15 March 1943)

Source: <http://www.dipity.com/Inuzzo/WW2/>



zarchiv, Bild 101-108-0994-21A  
7. Juli 1943

(Forced gathering in Eleftheria Square, Thessaloniki, 11 July 1943)

Source: <http://www.haaretz.com/jewish-world/jewish-world-features/greece-finally-commemorates-the-destruction-of-thessaloniki-s-jewish-community.premium-1.510554>

**TABLE OF JEWISH LOSSES IN GREECE\***

| <b><u>PERIPHERY</u></b> | <b>Before expulsion</b> | <b>After Expulsion</b> | <b>Rate of loss</b> |
|-------------------------|-------------------------|------------------------|---------------------|
| <b><u>THRACE</u></b>    |                         |                        |                     |
| Didymoteichon           | 900                     | 33                     | -96%                |
| Nea Orestiada           | 197                     | 3                      | -98%                |
| Alexandroupoli          | 140                     | 4                      | -97%                |
| Komotini                | 819                     | 28                     | -96%                |
| Xanthi                  | 550                     | 6                      | -99%                |
| <b><u>MACEDONIA</u></b> |                         |                        |                     |
| Kavala                  | 2.100                   | 42                     | -98%                |
| Drama                   | 1.200                   | 39                     | -97%                |
| Serres                  | 600                     | 3                      | -99%                |
| Thessaloniki            | 56.000                  | 1950                   | -96%                |
| Veroia                  | 460                     | 131                    | -2%                 |
| Kastoria                | 900                     | 35                     | -96%                |
| Flonina                 | 400                     | 64                     | -84%                |
| <b><u>THESSALY</u></b>  |                         |                        |                     |
| Trikala                 | 520                     | 360                    | -31%                |
| Larisa                  | 1120                    | 726                    | -35%                |
| Volos                   | 870                     | 645                    | -26%                |
| <b><u>CENTRAL</u></b>   |                         |                        |                     |
| <b><u>GREECE:</u></b>   |                         |                        |                     |
| Chalkida                | 325                     | 170                    | -48%                |

|        |      |      |      |
|--------|------|------|------|
| Athens | 3000 | 4930 | +64% |
|--------|------|------|------|

**PELOPONNESE**

|               |     |     |      |
|---------------|-----|-----|------|
| Patra/Agrinio | 265 | 152 | -43% |
|---------------|-----|-----|------|

**EPIRUS**

|          |      |     |      |
|----------|------|-----|------|
| Ioannina | 1850 | 163 | -91% |
|----------|------|-----|------|

|         |     |    |      |
|---------|-----|----|------|
| Preveza | 250 | 15 | -94% |
|---------|-----|----|------|

|      |     |    |      |
|------|-----|----|------|
| Arta | 384 | 60 | -84% |
|------|-----|----|------|

**ISLANDS**

|       |      |     |      |
|-------|------|-----|------|
| Corfu | 2000 | 187 | -91% |
|-------|------|-----|------|

|           |     |    |   |
|-----------|-----|----|---|
| Zakynthos | 275 | 75 | - |
|-----------|-----|----|---|

|                |     |    |      |
|----------------|-----|----|------|
| Chania (Crete) | 350 | 77 | -98% |
|----------------|-----|----|------|

|           |      |     |      |
|-----------|------|-----|------|
| Rodos/Kos | 1900 | 200 | -89% |
|-----------|------|-----|------|

|                     |               |               |             |
|---------------------|---------------|---------------|-------------|
| <b><u>TOTAL</u></b> | <b>77.377</b> | <b>10.226</b> | <b>-87%</b> |
|---------------------|---------------|---------------|-------------|

*\*Source: Enepekidis, 1969:170-171.*

## **APPENDIX 2**

### **Case Study: The Massacre of Distomo 10 June 1944**

#### **Interview Schedule (Unstructured Questions):**

- How old were you at that time?
- What happened once the Germans arrived here?
- What were they looking for?
- What happened to you?
- What happened after the massacre?
- Were you at the village when the massacre occurred?
- Why do you think the massacre happened in the first place?
- Do you think it happened as an act of revenge as we hear from many locals or not?
- How did your parents and fellow locals experience the war generally?
- How many Nazis the partisans killed in Stiri?
- Can you please tell me the dynamics between the resistance groups in the villages?
- How do you perceive the differences between ELAS and EDES?
- So based on what you say, you argue that the cooperation between the two resistance groups was breached many times?
- Although you were very young, did you have memories from the massacre of Distomo?
- How did the Nazis kill your parents?
- How did your fellow compatriots feel about the Germans after the massacre?
- Were there any political divisions in the villages?
- Do you know whether there were people who betrayed the partisans?
- Where did you go after the massacre?

## The Aftermath



(This dramatic picture was captured in the Mausoleum of Distomo, September 2009)



(The brutal SS set the village ablaze after the massacre, picture from the Distomo Museum)



(The following pictures were donated to me by the Mayor Athanasios Panourgias in the Municipality of Distomo; Original Donator: Bennaki Museum, Athens)







**APPENDIX 3**  
**BRITISH ALLIED MISSION IN GREECE (SOE)**



(Brigadier Eddie Myers, Chief of Command in Central Greece, British Intelligence Officer, member of SOE)

Source:

<http://www.specialforcesroh.com/gallery/file3044.jpg>

## PARTISANS OF EAM/ELAS



(Men of ELAS are resting in the mountains of “Free Greece”, picture exhibited in King’s College, London)

Source: <http://www.kingscollections.org/exhibitions/archives/empire/cold-war-begins/greece>



(Women of EAM/ELAS are voting for the first time in the Mountains of “Free Greece”)

Source: <http://sindeli.us.wordpress.com/category/historia/page/2/>



(Women in the resistance of EAM/ELAS)

Source:

<http://www.tlife.gr/Article/polemos/0-77-8278.html>



(Captain of ELAS, Ares Velouchiotis)

Source: <http://pontosandaristera.wordpress.com/2010/06/17/aris/>



(Napoleon Zervas, Leader of EDES)

Source: [http://diolkos.blogspot.co.uk/2011/11/blog-post\\_6077.html](http://diolkos.blogspot.co.uk/2011/11/blog-post_6077.html)

## APPENDIX 4

## CASERTA AGREEMENT

26th September 44  
-----

At a conference presided over by the Supreme Allied Commander, Mediterranean Theatre, at AFHQ, at which the Greek President of the Council with other members of the Greek Government and the Greek Guerilla leaders, Generals Sarafis and Zervas, were present, the following decisions were recorded as having been accepted unanimously:

1. All guerilla forces operating in GREECE place themselves under the orders of the Greek Government of National Unity.
2. The Greek Government places these forces under the orders of General Scobie who has been nominated by the Supreme Allied Commander as G.O.C. Forces in Greece.
3. In accordance with the proclamation issued by the Greek Government, the Greek Guerilla leaders declare that they will forbid any attempt by any units under their command to take the law into their own hands. Such action will be treated as a crime and will be punished accordingly.
4. As regards ATHENS no action is to be taken save under the direct orders of General SCOBIE, G.O.C. Forces in GREECE.
5. The Security Battalions are considered as instruments of the enemy. Unless they surrender according to orders issued by the G.O.C. they will be treated as enemy formations.
6. All Greek guerilla forces, in order to put an end to past rivalries, declare that they will form a national union in order to co-ordinate their activities in the best interests of the common struggle.
7. In accordance with the powers conferred on him by the Supreme Allied Commanders after agreement with the Greek Government, General Scobie has issued the attached operational orders.

(Caserta Agreement, source: *Filippos Dragoumis*, Sub-file: 62.5 "Dekemvriana 1944", Gennadius Library, Athens, Greece)

**PRECIS OF OPERATIONAL ORDERS ISSUED BY G.O.C. FORCES IN GREECE\***

**(Attached to Caserta Agreement)**

1. As far as forces operating in Greece to-day are concerned the military organisation is to be as follows:
  - (a) General Zervas to continue to operate within the territorial limits of the PLAKKA Agreement and to cooperate with General Sarafis in harassing the German withdrawal within territory between the northern Plakka Boundary and ALBANIA.
  - (b) General Sarafis to continue to operate in the remainder of GREECE with the following exceptions:
    - (1) ATTICA Province: All troops in this province will be commanded by General Spiliotopoulos, acting in close cooperation with representatives of the Greek Government and assisted by a Liaison Officer nominated by General Sarafis. To be under command Force 140.
    - (2) PELOPONNESE: Troops in this area to be commanded by an officer recommended by General Sarafis in agreement with the Greek Government, assisted by a British Liaison Mission. To be under command Force 140.
    - (3) At a later stage THRACE (incl. SALONIKA) to be under command of an officer nominate by the Greek Government.
2. Tasks
  - (a) Both Commanders to harass the German withdrawal and to eliminate German garrisons.
  - (b) As territory is evacuated both Commanders are personally responsible to Commander, force 140, for:
    - (1) Maintenance of law and order in the territories where their forces are operating.
    - (2) Prevention of civil war and the killing of Greeks by Greeks.
    - (3) Prevention of infliction of any penalty what so ever and of justifiable arrest.
    - (4) Assistance in the establishment of the legal civil authority and the distribution of relief
3. A map showing the operational boundaries has been issued to both commanders.

Signed **H. MAITLAND WILSON,**

General Supreme Allied Commander,  
Mediterranean Theatre

**H.M. Macmillan,**  
British Resident Minister, AFHQ

**G.PAPANDREOU**

Prime Minister of Greece

**S.SARAFIS.**

**N. ZERVAS.**

26<sup>TH</sup> September, 1944

In addition to the above signatures there were present:

**Lieut. General R.M SCOBIE.**

**M.SVOLOS and M. ZEVGOS.**

\*(Operational orders attached to Caserta, source: *Filippos Dragoumis*, Sub-file: 62.5 "Dekemvriana 1944", *Gennadius Library*, Athens, Greece).

|  |   |   |   |   |   |  |  |  |  |
|--|---|---|---|---|---|--|--|--|--|
| COPYRIGHT PHOTOGRAPH - NOT TO BE<br>REPRODUCED PHOTOGRAPHICALLY WITH-<br>OUT PERMISSION OF THE PUBLIC<br>RECORD OFFICE, LONDON |   |   |   |   |   |  |  |  |  |
| F.O. 954 11  |   |   |   |   |   |  |  |  |  |
| PUBLIC RECORD OFFICE   |   |   |   |   |   |  |  |  |  |
| 1  | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 |  |  |  |  |

[CYPER]

FROM FOREIGN OFFICE TO ATHENS

No. 358

5th December, 1944. D. 5.35 a.m. 5th December, 1944.

92222

MOST IMMEDIATE

DEPT

TOP SECRET

Following from Prime Minister.

Following is repetition of my personal and top secret telegram to General Scobie dated December 5th.

[Begins]

I have given instructions to General Wilson to make sure that all forces are left with you and all possible reinforcements are sent to you.

2. You are responsible for maintaining order in Athens and for neutralising or destroying all E.A.M.-E.L.A.S. bands approaching the city. You may make any regulations you like for the strict control of the streets or for the rounding-up of any number of truculent persons. Naturally E.L.A.S. will try to put women and children in the van where shooting may occur. You must be clever about this and avoid mistakes. But do not hesitate to fire at any armed male in Athens who assails the British authority or Greek authority with which we are working. It would be well of course if your command were reinforced by the authority of some Greek Government, and Papandreu is being told by Leeper to stop and help. Do not however hesitate to act as if you were in a conquered city where a local rebellion was in progress.

5. With regard to E.L.A.S. bands approaching from the outside, you should surely be able with your armour to give some of these a lesson which will make others unlikely to try. You may count upon my support in all reasonable

Catalogue Reference: FO/954/11B

Image Reference: 154

**20**

and sensible action taken on this basis. We have to hold and dominate Athens. It would be a great thing for you to succeed in this without bloodshed if possible, but also with bloodshed if necessary.

OTF

[illegible]

Catalogue Reference:FO/954/11B.

Image Reference:154

(Letter of Churchill to Scobie, 5<sup>th</sup> December 1944, FO 954/11B, Image Ref: 154, source Public Record Office).

**AIDE MEMOIRE\***

“The unforeseen bloodshed among the people of Athens, of which we were witness on the 13<sup>th</sup> Dec and subsequent days, is the result of inflexible insistence by the reactionary right on the unilateral disbandment of ELAS forces with the object of imposing after it, a Fascist Dictatorship. General SCOBIE in contravention to the formal agreement of CASERTA, and the proclaimed objects of the Allied war efforts, has unfortunately become heir to this effort on the part of the right and has crudely involved himself in the internal affairs of an Allied country. One result of this misdirected activity has been the regrettable fact that Allied peoples still struggling against the common enemy have entered armed strife, and lament casualties in thousands, in particular amongst the non-combatants, against whom have been turned the aeroplanes, guns and tanks of Great Britain.

Despite these painful events, we always abide by the smooth and democratic development of our country and propose the following terms in answer to those submitted to us through Comrade PORPHYROGENNIS.

1. Until a definite solution of the whole military question by the Government of National Unity to be formed in the future, we agree to withdraw temporarily ELAS formations from the cities of ATHENS/PIRAEUS to the general line laid down in HQ 3 Corps” memo of 3<sup>RD</sup> December, 1944.
2. Simultaneously the Greek Mountain Brigade and the Sacred Squadron to be similarly withdrawn temporarily from ATHENS/PIRAEUS to an area to be defined by mutual agreement.
3. The whole force of Gendarmerie after been disarmed, to be placed on the Reserve and its men dismissed to their homes. The officers and men of the former Rallis Battalions to be disarmed and confined effectively in prison until tried by the Judiciary.
4. The British Forces in Greece to be employed exclusively in the execution of the Missions defined under the Caserta Agreement, which do not envisage their employment in the internal affairs of Greece.
5. The political world of the country to be left uninfluenced in the formation as speedily as possible of a Government of real National Unity. This will resolve by democratic means the whole political and military problem of the nation, including the questions of disarmament of those not entitled to bear arms”.

**14 Dec 44.**

**The ELAS Central Committee.**

**(Certified true copy,  
ATHENS 15/12/44 (Sd) ).**

\*Source: *Filippos Dragoumis* Sub-File 62.5 “*Dekemvriana 1944*” (December Events 1944), *Gennadius Library*, Athens, Greece

