

“Aspects of anti-Semitism in Salonika, during the Nazi Occupation (1941-1944): the authorities, the press and the people. An example of differentiation and exclusion”.

Maria Kavala, Ph.D

Adjunct lecturer (Modern Greek History)

School of Political Sciences, Aristotle University of Thessaloniki

Egnatia 46

e-mail: kavalamaria@yahoo.com

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Summary:

This paper will investigate the anti-Semitic stereotypes and prejudices of Salonika non Jewish society during the Nazi Occupation, through the relevant discourse. It will examine three different sources: the official documents of Greek and Nazi authorities, the propaganda press and the oral and written testimonies, aiming to understand some of the causes that led to a mixture of administrative collaboration and popular indifference to fate of the Jews in the country's main Jewish center; which were the arguments or the alibis that the Greek authorities, the collaborationists but mostly the fellow citizens used? Why did they enter into "the Jew phobia" (or returned or eventually expressed it), and thus participated in stigmatization, discrimination, separation, indifference, looting, physical attacks, deportation and extermination?

Key words: holocaust, anti-Semitism, anti-Jewish, Salonika, Nazi Occupation, World War II, collaboration, indifference, perpetrators, by-standers

This paper will investigate the anti-Semitic stereotypes and prejudices of Salonika non Jewish society during the Nazi Occupation, through the relevant discourse. It will examine three different kind of documents: the official documents of Greek and Nazi authorities, the propaganda press and the oral and written testimonies, aiming to understand some of the causes that led to a mixture of administrative collaboration and popular indifference to fate of the Jews in the country's main Jewish center;

which were the arguments or the alibis that the Greek authorities, the collaborationists but mostly the fellow citizens used? Why did they enter into "the Jew phobia" (or returned or eventually expressed it), and thus participated in stigmatization, discrimination, separation, indifference, looting, physical attacks, deportation and extermination?¹

In historiography, anti-Semitism² was the central key interpretation of genocide particularly during 1945-1965 and most recently.³ Today, we can no longer explain the actions, motives or the purpose of the perpetrators and of the by-standers of the Holocaust by anti-Semitism alone. However, I think it is necessary for any attempt of historical approach of the Nazi program of exterminating, to focus on anti-Semitism as an ideology and its consequences in local and historical context.

Therefore, we understand more thoroughly the history of the Final Solution in its Greek version; not as an accident in history but integrating it into the long duration of the Modern Greek and European history, with the national, religious and social contrasts that characterized it.⁴ By examining, coming to terms with and teaching about this kind of processes we can develop an understanding of the roots and

¹ Pierre-André Taguieff, *Ti einai antisemitismos*, Athens, Vivliopoleion tes Estias, 2011, p. 49.

² The term anti-Semitism describes all the different forms of hostility (attitudes or actions) against the Jews, depending on the national and cultural traditions, on the social and political conditions of each era and its' result is to marginalize, displace or wipe out the Jews as Jews. See Rika Benveniste, "Skepseis gia ton elliniko antisemitismo", *Synchrona Themata*, 91, (October - December 2005), p. 41. Giorgos Margaritis, *Anepithymetoi sympatriotes, Stoicheia gia ten catastrophe ton meionoteton sten Ellada, Evraioi, Tsamides*, Vivliorama, Athens 2005. Helen Fein, "Dimensions of Antisemitism: Attitudes, Collectives Accusations, and Actions", Helen Fein (ed.), *The Persisting Question: Sociological Perspectives and Social Contexts of Modern Antisemitism*, Walter de Gruyter, Berlin and New York 1987, p. 67-85.

³ Michael P. Marrus, "Regard sur l' historiographie de l' Holocauste", *Annales*, 48, 3 (May -June 1993), p. 773-798 and Odette Varon-Vassard, "Historiographia tis genoktonias ton Evraion ('42-42). E anypofore alitheia kai to kathisichastiko psevdos", *Synchrona Themata*, 62 (January- March 1997), p. 92-100. Indicative literature using anti-Semitism as key interpretation: Leon Poliakov, *Bréviaire de la haine: le IIIe Reich et les Juifs*, Paris 1951, Daniel Jonah Goldhagen, *Hitler's Willing Executioners: Ordinary Germans and the Holocaust*, First vintage Books Edition, New York 1997, D. Walter, *Antisemitische Kriminalität und Gewalt: Judenfeindschaft in der Weimarer Republik*, J.H.W. Dietz Nachfolger, 2000, Bonn etc.

⁴ Dimitres Kousoures, "E poloniki syzetese kai e apo ta kato istoria tes telikes lyses: Me aforme ena profato synedrio sto Princeton", *Synchrona Themata*, 112, (January-March 2011), p. 49

ramifications of prejudice, racism, and stereotyping in any society; especially now, that the vulgar, bigoted, paranoid public discourse of neo-Nazism in Greece and elsewhere, is able to convince the crisis tired citizen but who is also politically philistine and sophomoric.⁵

The Jews populated the Greek peninsula in the 2nd century B.C. and their presence went on during the Roman and the Byzantine period (Romaniote Jews). However, there was marked a significant rise in their population in 1492, when took place their massive exodus from the Iberian Peninsula. Then, Salonika was one of their main reception places. During its Ottoman period, the millet of the Jews flourished. When, however, the city was integrated in the Greek country in 1912, the Jewish population started to shrink, among the conflicting interests developed. From 62,000 in 1912 in a city of 150,000 inhabitants, it reached at the dawn of World War II about 50,000-56.000 in a city of 250,000.⁶ The Jews became a minority all over the country, within the framework of the national state, not only regarding religion and not exactly in the national sense, but in a process of political and cultural assimilation. The community of Salonika remained the most densely populated in Greece, with a great cultural pluralism, quite powerful financially and in troubled cohabitation with the newer residents, the refugees of Asia Minor in 1922, because of political and economic rivalries. In the years of Metaxas' dictatorship and during the war the differences seemed rather mitigated.

The vast majority of the Jews were of Greek citizenship (there were only 112 families of Italian citizenship and 365 Sephardim of Spanish citizenship⁷) following also in

⁵ Maro Douka, "Akomi kai me timema te zoe mas...", *Chronos* (on line magazine), 4, August 2013.

⁶ They agree to the numbers above the followings: Hagen Fleischer, *Stemma kai Svastika. E Ellada tes Katoches kai tes Antistases (1941-1944)*, v. 2, Athens, Papazeses 1995, p. 302, Mark Mazower, *Sten Ellada tou Hitler. E empeiria tes Katoches*, Athens, Alexandria 1994, p. 268, Andrew Apostolou, "Avoiding the issue of collaboration and indifference during the Holocaust in Greece" in Roni Stauber (ed.), *Collaboration with the Nazis. Public discourse after the Holocaust*, Routledge, London and New York, 2010, p. 139.

⁷ Carpi Daniel (ed.), *Italian Diplomatic Documents on the history of the Holocaust in Greece (1941-1943)*, Tel Aviv University, Tel Aviv, 1999, Document 1942.9, Salonika, July 23, 1942, Consul General Zamboni to the Italian Diplomatic Mission to Athens, p. 89 - 90. M. Morcillo Rosillo, «E Germanike Katoche kai oi dioxeis tou evraikou plethysmou mesa apo ten ispanike diplomatike allelografia (1943 - 1946)», *Thessalonikeon Polis*, 3 (October 2000), p. 192.

Greece the process of legal emancipation as elsewhere in Europe earlier. Throughout the interwar period both Italy and Spain was trying to associate the community, without this becoming feasible. It was a minority, which, however, did not refer to any national state. As far as politics is concerned inside the community, during the interwar period there was the Zionist movement against the Assimilation movement and the socialists⁸ while the supporters of the Communist Greek Party were no longer as many as the previous decade.⁹ The Jews had representatives in the Greek parliament but they showed limited interest for a more active involvement in the political life of the country.¹⁰ The community was more in a process of adjustment to the new conditions which have been created, especially from 1922 onwards. The “rich Jews” of the myth, in fact constituted a community with wealth, middle and lower social layers, similar to the social stratification of the other inhabitants of Salonika. The processing of their latest census shows that there was a strong wealthy 10% of the Jewish population (with a property of over 2 million drs), a 15% of rich people and that the 50% of the population belonged to the middle and the lower social layers, with the 25% belonging to the very poor, where the main asset was the basic household items.¹¹

Moreover, the Jewish community of the city on the eve of the expatriation had undergone, together with the total of the society of Salonika, the losses of the bombings, the war and starvation (25% of the lost soldiers of Salonika were Jews,

⁸Dimosthenis Dodos, *Oi Evraioi tes Thessalonikes stis ekloges tou ellenikou kratous 1915-1936*, Savvalas, Athens 2005, p. 205.

⁹Elias Nikolakopoulos, “E eklogike epirooe tes kommounistikes Aristeras, 1936-1951. Synecheies kai asynecheies”, in Hagen Fleischer (ed.), *E Ellada '36 - '49. Apo te Diktatoria ston Emfylio Tomes kai synecheies*, Kastaniotes, Athens 2003, p. 224 – 229.

¹⁰Dodos, *ibid*, p. 207.

¹¹ 5% of the population owned chattel calculated to inflationary drs less than 14,000 drachmas, 20% from 14,000 to 69,000, 25% from 69,000 to 172,000 drachmas. Thessaloniki Jewish Community Records, 1939 - 1945, 1997.A. 0220, Reel 1 – 12.

We can understand the value of these amounts, if we consider that at this time the "unofficial" price of olive oil in Athens, even after the stabilization of prices in 1943, was 5,000 drachmas per oka and the beans for 4,000 drachmas the oka, Violetta Hionidou, *Famine and death in occupied Greece, 1941 – 1944*, Cambridge University Studies, Cambridge 2006, p. 93. That means that with 172.000 drs for ex. Someone could buy olive oil or beans only for 1.5 month.

almost 1.000 Jews of the 2.000 hunger victims, died from starvation).¹² A big part of the population were unemployed, many women were in charge of the households.¹³

These data confirm that the community was an integral part of the society of the city and that since the mid 30s the causes for intercommunal tensions (political and economic rivalries, ethnic cohesion) had begun to be limited.¹⁴ However, the previous shaped prejudices and stereotypes couldn't easily change during the crisis of the war and during the Nazi-initiated persecution and murder of the Jews.

The anti-Semitic discourse and the acts

In the summer of 1942 in response to the imposition of forced labor by the Nazi authorities, Athanasios Chrysohoou, the Inspector General of provinces of Macedonia, complained about the exclusion of Jews of the measure (which probably happened because there was a different plan for them). This gave rise to the first anti-Jewish measures in the city. In fact the initiative for the implementation, even before the order of the Nazis, was taken by Vassilis Simonides, the Governor-General of Macedonia (a minister with cabinet rank),¹⁵ while the Municipality of Salonika in the occasion of the same issue was trying to resolve the case of the cemetery to the advantage of the Greek Authorities.¹⁶ The Inspector General of provinces of Macedonia¹⁷ was known for his fanatical anti-communism and nationalism, the municipal authorities of the city, Vassilis Simonides and his employees had highlighted to the Nazi authorities the argument of unequal treatment between Christians and Jews as to achieve administrative and political goals of the previous

¹² Geniko Epiteleio Stratou, Diefthynse Istorias Stratou, *Agones kai nekroi tou elleniou stratou kata to 2o Pangosmio Polemo 1940-1941*, ekdose Diefthynses Istorias Stratou, Athens 1990. Maria Kavala, "E Salonica ste Germanike Katoche: Koinonia, oikonomia, diogmos Evraion", doctoral thesis, Department of History and Archaeology of the University of Crete, Rethymno 2009, p 192.

¹³ See Kavala, *ibid*, p. 190.

¹⁴ Mazower Mark, *Salonica. City of Ghosts. Christians, Muslims and Jews 1430 - 1950*, Harper Collins, London 2004, p. 416.

¹⁵ Apostolou, *ibid*, p. 140, 158.

¹⁶ There was a conflict since the 30s between the municipal authorities of Salonika and the Jewish Community about the displacement of the Jewish cemetery. Yomtov Yacoel, *Apomnemevmata 1941-1943* (ed. And intro. Phragiske Abatzopoulou), Foundation Etz Achaim - Parateretes, Salonica 1993, p. 84 - 88.

¹⁷ Fleischer, *ibid*, p. 334.

period. They might think, as during the interwar period, that the Jewish community was a foreign national with hostile intentions, but they didn't use this argument any more in written documents. They used and abused their political and administrative power against the Jews. Even though relatively few Jews were killed by the Greek authorities or by local armed Greek Christian collaborators, as elsewhere, there was considerable administrative and police collaboration in the rounding up and deportation which together with the popular indifference proved lethal to the Jews.¹⁸

Moreover, the Nazi Occupation authorities knowing the nationalist anti-Semitic arguments of the previous period used them to reassure the other communities in the country - which were assimilated Romaniotes, that they will not have the same luck.¹⁹

The nationalist anti-Semitic ideology of the time was facing the Jews as foreigners in the national body, across Europe and in Greece. At this stage it was not explicitly expressed in the official discourse of the Greek authorities, but existed as a general anti-Jewish atmosphere, as described in the reports of the Italian consul Zamboni to the Italian diplomatic mission in Athens.²⁰ Nationalism now would meet more than ever the traditional prejudices about Jews, which were systematically strengthened and fostered by Nazism through press propaganda in Salonika.

Between May 1941 and May 1942, *Nea Evropi* (New Europe), which was the main propaganda newspaper of the Nazis (only this one and *Apogevmatine* were allowed to circulate), was publishing news and reports about persecution and measures against Jews around the world. It started with reports concerning countries far away from Greece and later added reports about European countries (mainly the UK), the Balkans and Russia, in an attempt to make the issue more familiar to the readers step by step. The newspaper and the Nazi authorities attempted gradually to diagnose the reactions of the public and to influence it. Besides, the public opinion and the anti-Semitic trends in local societies were of particular importance as far as the implementation of the "Final Solution" is concerned. That was at first proved in Germany. The Nazi authorities were monitoring progressively and carefully the

¹⁸ Apostolou, *ibid*, p. 140.

¹⁹ Fleischer, *ibid.*, v. 2, Athens 1995, p. 334.

²⁰ Carpi, *ibid*, p. 83, Document 1942.7, Salonika, July 16, 1942, Consul General Zamboni to the Italian Diplomatic Mission to Athens.

reactions of the German population to the increasingly severe anti-Jewish measures.²¹ The more apathetic the community was, the more their attitude was considered as an implied license for the escalation of the persecution. For this reason opinion polls were organized in Germany but also in France.²² Silence and indifference to the suffering of others or to the infringement of civil rights in any society can - however unintentionally - perpetuate the problems.

In each of these reports the persecution or the restrictive measures against Jews were justified by the known, anti-Jewish narratives of the period. So we read that in Brazil the action was taken because the Jews were "parasites" through their commercial activities; in the Balkans the authorities "eradicated the Jewish infiltration" to "cleanse national life" by the foreign Jew; in Russia according to the newspaper there was "Judeocracy", a domination of Jewish people, that on the one hand they were conspiring and collaborating with the Jews of the West and the United States and on the other they were in the "communist paradise" and they were planning a "Jewish-Bolshevik conspiracy."²³ In the particular context of WWII, the stereotypic figure of the "Bolshevik Jew" was the one that embodied the type of the absolute enemy. "Jew" was approximately equated with "guerrilla" (Bolshevik) and this ideology was chosen to convince Nazi government officials to assist in the extermination.²⁴ Correspondingly, the headquarters of Hitler urged the German authorities in Salonika to arrest Jews for their participation in the Greek resistance

²¹ Constantin Goschler et Philipp Ther, "Introduction. Une histoire sans frontières" στο C. Goschler, P. Ther et C. Andrieu (επιμ.), *Spoliations et restitutions des biens Juifs. Europe XXe siècle*, Autrement, Paris, 2007, p. 15.

²² Jacques Semelin, *Aoploi apenanti sto Hitler. E antistase ton politon sten Evrope 1939 - 1943*, Chatzenikoles, Athens, 1993. p. 213.

²³ *Nea Evropi*, May 2, 1941, June 7, 1941, June 14, 1941, July 13, 1941, Sept. 4, 1941, Oct. 12, 1941, Nov. 20, 21, 1941, Dec. 2, 1941, April 11, May 13, 15, 16, Sept. 13 1942, *Apogevmatine*, Jan. 27, 1943. In the collaborationist trials by the Special Court for the Collaborationist in 1945, the collaborationist of the press were included, journalists who worked during the Nazi Occupation in *Nea Evrope* and *Apogevmatine*. The chiefs of the newspapers and several of the journalists were sentenced. Elene Chaidia, "Dosilogoι: Apo ten Katoche sten apelftherose" in Mark Mazower (ed.), *Meta ton polemo. E anasygkrotese tes oikogeneias, tou ethnous kai tou kratous, 1943-1960*, Alexandria, Athens 2003, p. 62-63. Also Chaidia, "Ellenes Evraioi tes Thessalonikes. Apo ta stratopeda synkentroses stis aithouses dikasterion", in Rika Benveniste (ed.), *Oi Evraoi tes Elladas sten Katoche*, Praktika tou 3ou Symposiou Istorias, Eatireia meletes Ellenikou Evraismou. Vantias, Salonica 1998, p. 47.

²⁴ Taguieff, *ibid*, p. 65-66.

which was a pretext to start the persecution. However, the authorities were responding that they didn't have any evidence for something like that at least as much as to justify mass arrests.²⁵ At this point we can see how Nazi Germany used its bureaucratic infrastructure to implement destructive policies ranging from social engineering to genocide.

During 1942 similar reports in the newspaper were limited, perhaps because of the intense problems of survival and of a general policy of waiting and complacency, while the coordination of the "final solution" was underway (Wansee Conference on the 20th of January 1942). This kind of reports appeared, again in April 1943 when the authorities had already begun the displacement.²⁶ These articles strengthened in an abusive or ironic way, the narrative, the idea of the final deportation and disappearance.

On the other hand, the newspaper "Apogevmatini" (The Afternoon paper), which was the second one controlled by the Nazi authorities and the collaborationists was not publishing anti-Jewish propaganda articles during the first year of Nazi Occupation. It was a traditional interwar newspaper of the city, which was trying to be presented as more neutral. However, in January 1943 published an article on measures against the Jews in Romania and from 12th February 1943 started a series of publications on "Jewish curse" that "infects the national organization" and by which the city should be purified. "Finally streets are filled by bright stars worn by elegant or soiled Jews".²⁷ The articles above were celebrating the forthcoming expulsion of the Jews and were strengthening the narrative of the final expulsion or extinction.

All this Nazi propaganda was not an impersonal mechanism. The texts were written by Christian Greeks as Evripidis Chimonidis, who was member of the Nazi propaganda office, by Nikos Fardis and Petros Orologas, who was also a member of the Nazi propaganda office.²⁸ The last two columnists before the Nazi Occupation, held managerial positions in major newspapers of Salonika (Makedonia, Makedonika Nea, Phos, etc.), and were responsible for creating anti-Semitic climate during the interwar period; especially Nikos Fardis was accused and went on trial of instigating

²⁵ Fleischer, *ibid*, v. 2, p. 300.

²⁶ *Nea Evrope*, April 12, 24, 1943.

²⁷ *Apogevmatine*, January 27, 1943, February 12, 15, 25, 26, 1943, 26, 27, 1943, March 15, 1943.

²⁸ Stratos N. Dordanas, *Ellenes enantion Ellenon. O kosmos ton tagmaton asfaleias sten katochike Thessalonike 1941 – 1944*, Epikentro, Salonica, p. 149.

the Campell pogrom (a Salonika area) in 1931.²⁹ The editor of *Nea Evropi* was D. T. Eliades, the chief editor was M. P. Papastratigakis, a journalist from Athens. Before the war he was a confidant of Metaxas' censorship; he was receiving a salary of 30,000 drachmas, when the price of the newspaper was 4 drs.³⁰ In 1943 Georgios Pollatos became the owner of *Nea Evropi*. He bought it at that time and after the war he was sentenced as financial collaborator,³¹ for the economic benefits he had acquired during the Occupation in general.

As we see, the columnists were not a homogenous group of people. Some of them were distinguished members of the interwar Salonika's Christian Greek society, were leaders and shapers of the ideological beliefs of anticommunism and nationalism of the interwar period, which was now enriched with racial elements and which during the interwar years influenced a significant part of the population. Some others had recruited the Nazi propaganda and ideology, because they liked it and because they served their financial and other interests. We would say that to some extent, they represented the various nationalist-anti-communist or pro-Nazi groups of the city: people who previously had professional relationships with Germany,³² ideological collaborators as the members of Ethike Enosis Ellas (National Union Hellas) – the Nazi organization which had been dissolved in the years of the Metaxas dictatorship - and rallied the years of Occupation around George Poulos.³³ Around these groups we can also find Greek and foreign agents (Armenians, Romanians, Bulgarians),

²⁹ Ampatzopoulou, *ibid.*, p. 205 – 206 and Maria Vassilikou, “Ethnotikes antitheseis sten Ellada tou Mesopolemou. E periptose tou empresmou tou Campell”, *Istor*, 7, (1994), 153 - 174, and Aimilios I. Dimitriades, *E Thessalonike tou 1925 - 35*, Parateretes, Salonica 1994, p. 301 - 355.

³⁰ Christos Zafeires- Yannis Kotsifos (ed.), *Thessalonike 1912-2012. Megala gegonota ston kathrefte tou Typou*, Morfotiko Idryma Enoses Syntakton Emeresion Efemeridon Makedonias-Thrakes, Salonica 2012, p. 53.

³¹ Chaidia, “Dosilogoi...”, p. 60-61.

³² Iakovos Chondromatides, “Ligo prin apo ten kataigida”, *E mavre skia sten Ellada. Ethnikosocialistikes kai fasistikes organoseis sten Ellada tou Mesopolemou kai tes germanikes katoches (1941 - 1944). Oi monografies tou periodikou Startiotike istoria*, Athens 2001, p. 44 - 45.

³³ Archeio Protodikeiou Thessalonikes (Archive of CFI of Salonica), file 1539, old. Also, Dordanas, *ibid.*, p. 118 - 124. Poulos was a renounced army officer who had taken part in the movement of 1935. He founded the "National and socialist party of Greece" to collaborate with the Nazi authorities in a common anti-communist struggle.

interpreters, employees of Nazi institutions, partners of any specialty.³⁴ All those groups also benefited from the plunder of Jewish property, so their enlistment into an anti-Semitic discourse had significant material incentives.

Could the above newspapers propaganda have affected the rest of the citizens of Salonika? The legibility of the press is not easy to be determined. Nevertheless, a criterion to diagnosis it may be the advertisements, which have been steadily increasing from year to year. This shows that the advertisers were recognizing that the newspapers had an appreciable acceptance from the audience.³⁵ Though, the anti-Semitic discourse of the newspaper articles couldn't have affected people in such a short period; rather legitimized or strengthened deeper and older prejudices which were there without being so obvious sometimes.

That is why the Nazis congratulated themselves in 1943 that Salonika's non Jewish population had accepted the deportation of the Jews "calmly". The silence of the professional ranks, of the University of Thessaloniki, of the students, of the ordinary people shows the least that they had such a distant perception of the "other" that made them indifferent. We can see an example of this distant perception in the personal correspondence between two friends. They were both from Salonika, but the one was student in the University of Athens and the other was living at the moment in a village outside Salonika, so they wrote each other. Their letters are quite detailed and reflective about what is happening around them (they don't seem to be afraid of being censored). We notice in their letters that near the critical dates for the Jews of both 1942 and 1943 there is no reference to the Jewish issue. Only in one letter of the 29th March 1943, the student who is located in Athens, asks his friend in Salonika: "What happens to our friends the Jews? Here (in Athens) is as if nothing happens ..." to receive not a special response to his friend next letter.³⁶

"There was no discrimination at school against Jews. The neighbors, the seamstress, the grocer were Jews [...] but you will not find a Jew peasant. They used to say that the profit from a chicken throughout the year is only an egg. They were this kind of

³⁴ Dordanas, *Ellenes enantion... ibid*, p. 400 - 401.

³⁵ Patrikiou, "E Evrope tes 'Neas Evropes': Apeikoniseis tes geraias Epeirou se mia dosilogike efemerida tes Thessalonikes 1941-1944", *Istor* 15, 2009, p. 216-217.

³⁶ Kentro Istorias Thessalonikes (Thessaloniki History Center), Archeiake sylloge Takes Germanos (archival collection Takes Germanos), file 4, subfile 3, letter August 13, 1942.

profiteers [...] "³⁷ or "all the Jews in Greece were very rich"³⁸ or "the neighbors who ruined the walls of Jewish houses, found golden coins. Yes, that is a fact".³⁹ These are modern narratives about the past and are coming from people of different social groups, different ideological beliefs. However, they all considered Jews as a homogenous group and according to the stereotype of the wealthy and the speculator. Even wealthy Christian Greeks proceeded to looting when the Jew neighbors were deported from their homes. "My aunt lived in a building on the Paralia area (sea board). And she got carpets, butters cans. And my aunt used to say that they were good people."⁴⁰ The same individuals could alternate successively in different opinions, in different roles or behaviors, while the pressure of the particular circumstances of the Occupation played their role. "One day I was coming down from the Dioiketirio area and I heard people saying "look the Jewish women" little children, girls. "Where were they going? Many people in long queues... ".⁴¹

This latent and sometimes more overt anti-Semitism of the citizens of Salonika, is a bit different from the nationalist anti-Semitism combined with racial elements of the Greek authorities and the collaborationist press. It's a more every day and implicit anti-Semitism, which could however explain to some extent, why there was not a public demonstration against the persecution of the Jews, while at the same time there was the first major student demonstration on March 25, 1943 against civil mobilization and later on against the extension of the Bulgarian zone. It could also explain why stigmatization and discrimination reached the point of desecrating the 'other's' holy places; why there was tolerance and even participation of the population in the unraveling of the cemetery, or in the municipality auctions for the transportation of 100,000 bricks from the destroyed Jewish cemetery to that of Agia Fotini, or to the sale of materials from the barracks of the Municipal settlement 6 after the deportation of the Jews, or even to treason,⁴² and to claiming assets.

This passive, indifferent or complicit attitude of the fellow citizens, the neighbors, the friends - without ignoring or underestimating all those cases of help and salvation -

³⁷ Interview M.F., October 10, 2001.

³⁸ Interview A.A., July 9, 2002.

³⁹ Interview T. V., January 6, 2002.

⁴⁰ Interview A. A., July 9, 2002.

⁴¹ Interview A. A., July 9, 2002.

⁴² *Apogevmatine*, May 1, 3, 1943.

can be explained if it is considered as a symptom of a society in crisis that despite its strong radicalization, which occurred within the war could not escape from its fears and negative stereotypes that existed before, and which had been strengthened because of the problematic coexistence of the old and the new residents during the interwar period. Despite the fact that the causes of conflict had been eliminated, even if they were neighbors or friends on a personal level, with the different language and religion the Jews remained radically "other", different for the Christian Greek population.

The anti-Jewish ideas did not always and necessarily result in anti-Jewish violence or looting. There were all these cases of fellow Christians who tried to help by showing humanism and solidarity.⁴³ But this was not the attitude that prevailed. Therefore, the above analysis can give us an example of how is evolved every time a process of differentiation, stigmatization and exclusion.

The second silence

The postwar Greek state showed little interest in memorializing the Jews and discussing their suffering. At no point since the war have the issues of anti-Semitism, Christian collaboration and indifference during the Holocaust been nationally debated. Those unpleasant facts had been evaded and ignored in Greece as elsewhere, a task in part accomplished by shifting the focus away from events in Salonika to Athens, where a very small community was present before WWII and where there was a concerted rescue effort.

The basic line, elaborated during the war and followed largely to this day, was that the Holocaust in Greece consisted of the Nazis deporting the Jews without any local government or non Jewish civilian assistance but with the help of some members of the Jewish community.

The adventures of the hard decade of 40s and the nationalism that prevailed after the victory of the Right in the Civil War erased the Jewish memory after the deportation and the extermination of the greatest part of the Greek Jewry.

As in many countries in Europe, Greek non-Jewish society entered the postwar era believing official propaganda. The difference, however, was that the Greek propaganda version would remain largely unchallenged to the recent years.

⁴³ Interview Ch. D., October 28, 2001.

In the 90s there was an explosion of interest around the subject in Greece. The thickening of the testimonies of the survivors was in line with the first scientific approaches. In 1990 the Etaireia Meletes Ellenikou Evraismou (Society for the Study of the Greek Jewry) was founded and it was active for at least a decade in Salonika and Athens, introducing the problematic around Jewish issues in Greek academic community. In 1991 the first International Symposium of History with a relevant subject took place in Salonika and several other symposia and publications followed. At that period, the Etaireia's effort was marginal and its relationship with the University of Thessaloniki was minimal, as with the city authorities too. The audience was young Greek academics, few people of the city and mainly members of the Jewish Community. Twenty two years later, in April 2012 a two days conference for the 70 years since the Holocaust was organized by the University itself, the Municipality of Salonika and the Jewish Community, there was media coverage and the audience was both academics and people of the city who were interested and wanted to learn, to be aware of the facts.

However, much remains to be learned and unlearned. The lack of school education on the Holocaust history and especially its integration in the context of Greek history until at least 2007, shows the need of keep trying as far as education and awareness are concerned. The efforts (seminars for school teachers, relevant teaching guide books, courses in schools and in the university) of the Jewish Museum of Greece, with the support of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Ministry of Health in collaboration with the International Task Force for Holocaust Education, are a first step. Similar seminars for teachers organized by the Jewish Museum of Thessaloniki in collaboration with professors of the Aristotle University of Thessaloniki, the participation of academics in antiracist festivals - speaking about the Holocaust as a subject for an examination of basic moral issues - are some of the recent efforts that attempt to fill the gaps left by the previous silence but also to help society to identify danger signals and to know when to react to protect democratic institutions and values, to prevent genocide and the steps that may lead to it.

Maybe, we simply have to constantly remember - as to mitigate - that diversification is a process of evaluation, where the highest positive value has the familiar, the known "ours." And this turns out most often problematic for a smooth coexistence in societies.