

An example of ideological use¹ of the press: The “Anti-Semitic discourse of the newspaper *Makedonia* in Salonika and its columnists (1911-1944)”.

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Abstract

This paper will investigate the anti-Semitic discourse of the newspaper *Makedonia* which had taken a multitude of forms since 1911, throughout the history of Modern Greece, of Salonika and of the newspaper itself. We follow the example of *Makedonia* because it's the longest publishing of North Greece newspapers, it's one of the oldest and it's the most complete as far as news are concerned. Moreover, the newspaper helped significantly the processes of incorporation of the city in the Modern Greek state, in 1912 and it was founded with this purpose. Therefore, it is connected to the Greek nationalism of the era, the Greek Great Idea, the transformation of the Jewish community to a minority and the relevant policy.

Key words: anti-Semitism, the Holocaust, Greek nationalism, Jews of Thessaloniki

¹ In the paper the term “propaganda”, as far as the war period is concerned, is used in its main negative connotation by association with its most manipulative examples (e.g. Nazi propaganda used to justify the Holocaust). See Herf, Jeffrey, *The Jewish Enemy: Nazi Ideology and Propaganda During World War II and the Holocaust*, Harvard University Press, Harvard 2006.

For examining the spreading of ideas to serve a cause of other periods we use other terms (disinformation, evangelism, ideological use etc), in order to be more accurate.

This paper will investigate the anti-Semitic discourse of the newspaper *Makedonia* which had taken a multitude of forms since 1911, throughout the history of Modern Greece, of Salonica and of the newspaper itself. We follow the example of *Makedonia* because it's the longest publishing of North Greece newspapers, it's one of the oldest and it's the most complete as far as news are concerned.² Moreover, the newspaper helped significantly the processes of incorporation of the city in the Modern Greek state, in 1912 and it was founded with this purpose, while some of its journalists were funded by the Greek General Consulate in Thessaloniki. Therefore, it is connected to the Greek nationalism of the era, the Greek Great Idea, the transformation of the Jewish community to a minority, the relevant policy and the use of anti-Semitic discourse³ during this procedure.

² Manolis Kandylikis, *Efemeridografia tes Thessalonikes*, v. 1, University Studio Press, Thessaloniki 1998, p. 175.

³ In historiography, anti-Semitism was the central key interpretation of the genocide particularly during 1945-1965 and most recently (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.)

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

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 and the relevant discourse as an ideology and its consequences in local and historical context.

We will examine this discourse aiming to understand:

1. Which were the arguments that the press and up to a point the Greek authorities and the fellow citizens were using against the Jews of the city during the years of the end of the Greek Great idea.
2. In which way press played a role in exclusion procedures as stigmatization, discrimination, separation, which during the Second World War led a part of the society to participate in indifference, looting, physical attacks, deportation and extermination?

Therefore, we understand more thoroughly the history of the Final Solution in its Greek version and we integrate the history of the Genocide of the Jews to the long duration of the Modern Greek, Balkan and European history, with the national, religious and social contrasts that characterized it⁴. As Enzo Traverso first wrote we can see that the ideas that coalesced at the genocide came from Europe's mainstream and not its margins;⁵ in Balkans they derived to a large extent by the national and minority issues of the area which remained unsolved after the First World War.⁶

By examining, this kind of processes we can develop an understanding for the roots and ramifications of nationalism, racism, prejudice, stereotyping in any society.

The first decade of the newspaper *Makedonia*

Throughout the period before the accession of Thessaloniki in the Greek State, the Greek nationalist evangelism in the city was very intense via the Greek consulate, some newspapers, and Greek education. Additionally, the economic agents who had been sent by the Greek State had identified the economic power of the Jews and tried to limit it by the establishment of Greek banks - such as the Bank of the Orient, the Bank of Athens - and by boycotting the Jews in shops and enterprises. The Greek newspapers *Aletheia* and *Faros of Thessaloniki* were publishing articles urging

⁴ See Dimitris Kousouris, "E Polonike syzetese kai e apo ta kato istoria tes telikes lyses: me ten aforme enos profatou sunedriou sto Princeton University", *Synchrona Themata*, v. 112, January-March 2011, p. 49.

⁵ Enzo Traverso, *The origins of Nazi Violence*, The New Press, New York 2003.

⁶ Mark Mazower, *Salonica. City of Ghosts. Christians, Muslims and Jews 1430-1950*, Harper Collins Publishers, London 2004, p. 293-421.

economic exclusion of Jews and reminding the blood libel⁷ against them - a common practice of scape-goating Jews in Europe in times of crisis. On the other hand during the crucial time of the first period of the accession, this attitude of the newspapers above displeased the authorities of the Greek community and the Bishop of Thessaloniki, and the newspapers' editors were asked to apologize for their actions because at that time Greek authorities and Greek government wanted to keep balances till the stabilization of the situation. At the same time the bourgeoisie of the Greek community was in communication and conciliation with the bourgeoisie of other communities, especially the Jews, on the premises of financial transactions, the market and the places of residence, and it was not easy to adopt a hostile attitude towards them.⁸ However, the discourse of the newspapers above was reinforcing the already existing negative stereotypes about Jews and was influencing the Greek Christian public opinion. *Makedonia* kept distances from this line at the period

The Jews populated the Greek peninsula in the 2nd century B.C. and their presence went on during the Roman and the Byzantine period (Romanote Jews). However, there was marked a significant rise in their population in 1492, when took place the massive exodus of the Jews from the Iberian Peninsula. Then, Ottoman Salonika was one of their main reception places. The tiny communities of Old Greece spoke Greek and were highly assimilated whereas the Sefardic Jews of the north who played a highly influential role in what was now the country's second largest city,

⁷ When a society is under crisis, the mechanism of scape-goating in the Middle Ages yet, and until recent years due to the fanaticism of the Catholic Church, the social, economic and political conditions have led to a "national and / or racial character 'construction of the "Jews" that combined the accusation of killing God, of greed and avarice, of cunning and criminality. And if in the 19th century the "treatment" in this situation was the baptism of the Jew, the 20th image constructed seems to not have another "treatment" except of extinction. In Greek literary tradition the image of the Jew was firstly related to the accusation of God killing and from there was connected to anything defiled, filthy, indecent, profane (blood libel), relating to money and profit. Literature which reflects the inter-war society of Thessaloniki, follows the above stereotypes. See Fragiski Ampatzopoulou, *O allos en diogmo. E eikona tou Evraiou ste logotechnia. Zetemata istorias kai mythoplasias*, Themelio, Athina 1998, p. 32-33. René Girard, *La violence et le sacré*, Grasset, Paris 1972.

⁸ Maria Kavala, "E Thessaloniki ste Germanike Katoche (1941-1944): Koinonia, oikonomia, diogmos Evraion" (Thessaloniki during Nazi Occupation: society, economy, persecution of the Jews), doctoral thesis, Department of History and Archaeology of the University of Crete, Rethymno 2009, p 46-47.

were quite distinct from the Greeks in both language and culture.⁹ The Jewish flourishing community of Thessaloniki started to shrink, among the conflicting interests developed, when Thessaloniki became part of the Greek state. 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 250,000.¹⁰ The Jews became a minority all over the country, within the framework of the Greek state, not only in a religious or nation-state sense, but in the framework of a political and cultural assimilation.

During this first period of its edition *Makedonia* was trying to differentiate from the newspapers above. It was trying to keep balances and to have a neutral profile as far as the relations between Christian Greeks and Jews are concerned. It did not join any of the existing parties, following an independent line, but supporting at the same time the creation of a local Macedonian party, believing that the interests of Northern Greece could not be served by the existing political situation. During this period we can find articles on the previous good relation between Christian Greeks and Jews, or articles on the wise New Greek administration of the city, after 1912, references which at the same time was revealing the tensions between the Jews and the Christians. Gradually the newspaper started supporting the liberal party of Eleftherios Venizelos. Thus, it is expressed the hope that since in Thessaloniki people are pro-liberal, pro Eleftherios Venizelos Party there isn't going to be any problem between Greeks and Jews, since his party is considered modern and protective to other ethnicities.

Since 1915 the newspaper began to support openly Eleftherios Venizelos. During the First World War, in 1916 we find news about the Jewish newspapers of the city, that they were pro-German and were funded by a Jew member of the Greek Parliament.¹¹ This is written in a city where people are mainly pro Eleftherios

⁹Mazower, *ibid*, p.402-403.

¹⁰ They agree to the numbers above the followings: Hagen Fleischer, *Stemma kai Svastika. E Ellada tes Katoches kai tes Antistases (1941-1944)* (*Crown and Svastika: Greece during Occupation and Resistance (1941-1944)*), v. 2, Athens, Papazeses 1995, p. 302, Mark Mazower, *Sten Ellada tou Hitler. E empeiria tes Katoches (Inside Hitler's Greece: The Experience of Occupation, 1941-44)*, 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.

¹¹ "Apokalypteria germanofilon efemeridon. Pos synterountai", *Makedonia*, January 8, 1916, p. 3.

Venizelos who at the time supported Greece's entry into the war on behalf of the Entente while Germanophile neutrality is preferred by King Constantine I. Even though the article with the above information was small and on the 3rd page of the newspaper, it was reinforcing the idea of a conspiracy coming from the Jews against the interests of the city's society; an idea which was already there since the accession of the city in the Greek State.

By the end of the first Balkan war in October 1912, the entry of the Greek army in the city was followed by an important economic crisis. The millets of Muslims, Jews and Christians were trying to find ways to cope with everyday survival, and in early November 1912, there was panic in the city due to bread shortages and famine threatening Thessaloniki. All but the Greeks, who seemed excited, were very worried about their future. The Jews requested the assistance of the admirals of the English and French warships that had just arrived at the pier, because they felt to be threatened by the Greeks; these movements angered the Greek population, given the earlier promulgation and intensity. There was looting of Jewish stores and violence against Jewish citizens, rich and poor, by part of the Greek population, but also by the Greek army. Violence exercised at the expense of Muslims, particularly by Greek refugees, but the situation was more acute in the countryside than in the city as to Muslims. Muslims, Jews and Christians were living together, were interacting and communicating when necessary, however, the religious diversity remained the main feature and other social aggregates with other criteria were still limited (class, gender, language). The social structure of each ethnic group was distinct and if there was a reference to a national state the existing proclamations played a key role in how they perceived issues arising due to the political changes that brought the Balkan dissolution of the Ottoman Empire. The new claims and objectives accentuated the differences rather than the similarities between the ethnicities. For the local Greeks the Jews were emerging as the "enemies", because they were the majority of the city's population, because of economic competition, negative stereotypes and their partial opposition to join the Greek state.¹²

In this context *Makedonia* was following a less, than other newspapers hostile attitude towards the Jews keeping probably the main line of the venizelist government which it regarded the alliance with Entente as the most likely to favour the

¹² Kavala, *ibid*, p. 51-52.

implementation of Greece's remaining irredentist ambitions, the Greek Great Idea. In October 1916 Venizelos had established a rival government in Thessaloníki, which, like most of "New Greece," was passionately loyal to Venizélos. In June 1917 the entente allies ousted King Constantine and installed Venizélos as prime minister of a formally united but bitterly divided Greece. Venizélos duly brought Greece, which was up to that time neutral, into the war on the side of the Entente. Naturally, he expected to reap the rewards for his loyalty at the Paris Peace Conference.¹³

Therefore, during this period in 1918 we read articles on how the Jews in USA or France are fighting with the Entente forces,¹⁴ probably in an effort to present Jews elsewhere in a positive image and to urge the local community to support also Entente.

After the Greco-Turkish War of 1919–1922

The above moderate attitude of *Makedonia* changed after the defeat of 1922, the end of a 2,500-year Greek presence in Asia Minor and of the elusive vision of the Great Idea.¹⁵ The anti-Semitic discourse of the newspaper started gradually to grow especially after 1922.

¹³ The conference opened on 18 January 1919. Delegates from 27 nations were assigned to 52 commissions, which held 1,646 sessions to prepare reports, with the help of many experts, on topics ranging from prisoners of war to undersea cables to international aviation, to responsibility for the war. Key recommendations were folded into the Treaty of Versailles with Germany, which had 15 chapters and 440 clauses, as well as treaties for the other defeated nations. The five major powers (France, Britain, Italy, the U.S. and Japan) controlled the Conference. In practice Japan played a small role and the "Big Four" leaders were the dominant figures at the conference. They met together informally 145 times and made all the major decisions, which in turn were ratified by the others. The open meetings of all the delegations approved the decisions made by the Big Four. The conference came to an end on 21 January 1920 with the inaugural General Assembly of the League of Nations. http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Paris_Peace_Conference,_1919 (visit 21/8/2014)

¹⁴ "Oi Evraioi dia ton symmachikon agona", *Makedonia*, March 11, 1918, p. 2.

¹⁵ This war is known as the Western Front (the Turkish War of Independence in Turkey and the Asia Minor Campaign or the Asia Minor Catastrophe in Greece was fought between Greece and the Turkish National Movement during the partitioning of the Ottoman Empire after World War I between May 1919 and October 1922. It is usually estimated that the refugees in Greece numbered approximately 1.5 million people. The core of the refugee population settled in Attica and Macedonia. The official refugee population per region in 1928 was as follows (number of refugees and percent of the refugee population):

The ten-year span of 1922 - 1932 marks the beginning of a new period in Greek society and in Greek politics. The political, cultural, social and economic dimensions of integrating more than 1 million new arrivals into a country with a population of 5 million comprised manifold aspects.

The effects of the Asia Minor Catastrophe with the arrival of the destitute refugees made the situation in Thessaloniki volatile.¹⁶

The refugees competed first the Jews and then the locals at all levels. They became cheap labor, especially women, supported domains to which they used to work in their homelands, but also others who were under developing. At the same time, domains supported by the work of Jews were supported now by that of refugees. The causes of mass migration of Jews to Palestine since the early 1930s have to be searched in this fact too.

Makedonia supported the Greek refugees and at the same time started a “war” against the Jews of Thessaloniki more persistently and systematically than before. The newspaper discourse became deeply anti-Semitic mainly since 1923 and on. We can find political articles that follow the main anti-Jewish narratives of the era, about the Bolsheviks and the Jews in Russia and the idea of “Judeo-bolshevism”.¹⁷ It’s important to mention that in Greece was starting the period of institutionalizing anticommunism. Venizelos’ anticommunist campaign was intensified after the Asia Minor defeat by Turkey and the influx of more than a million refugees, many of whom favored KKE (The Communist party of Greece), especially after Venizelos and Atatürk had settled the Greek-Turkish conflict, and Greece renounced all its claims over Turkish territory.¹⁸

Macedonia: 638,253 52.2% (with 270,000 in Thessaloniki alone between 1915-1925), Central Greece and Attica: 306,193 25.1%, Thrace: 107,607 8.8%, North Aegean Islands: 56,613 4.6%, Thessaly: 34,659 2.8%, Crete: 33,900 2.8%, Peloponnese: 28,362 2.3%, Epirus: 8,179 0.7%, Cyclades: 4,782 0.4%, Ionian Islands: 3,301 0.3%, Total: 1,221,849 100%.

¹⁶ Ioannidou Heleni, «E engatastase ton prosfigon sti Voreia Ellada», *Istoria ton Ellinon. Neoteros Ellinismos (1910-1940)*, v.12, Domi, Athina 2006, p. 252 - 264, Ioannidou, «E prosfygiki Kalamaria», *Oi prosfyges ste Makedonia. Apo ten tragodia stin epopiia (Refugees in Macedonia. From tragedy to the epic period)*, Etairia Makedonikon Spoudon, Thessaloniki 2009.

¹⁷ “Ai protheseis ton Soviet”, *Makedonia*, July 19, 1924, p. 2.

¹⁸ Minas Samatas, “A brief history of the anticommunist surveillance in Greece and its lasting impact”, in *Histories of state surveillance in Europe and beyond* (ed. Kees Boersma, Rosamunde Van Brakel, Chiara Fonio and Pieter Wagenaar), Routledge, Oxon, New York, 2014, p. 51.

Moreover in the newspaper we find stories of everyday life in the city which present Jews as “filthy”, “violent”, “disingenuous” and in combat with the refugees¹⁹ often written in a highly hostile language.²⁰ In 1928 the book columnist of the newspaper, Aristides Andronicus, published *Judas through the centuries. The hidden enemies of humanity*, in Athens,²¹ while earlier (1925) as an ex general manager of the Greek Embassy in Petersburg had published a book about the meaning of Bolshevism in which the main idea was the one of Judeo-bolshevism.²²

In many cases the journalists used selective stories that came over as wide-covering and objective. This discourse step by step was demonizing the Jews, the “enemy” who didn’t fit the picture of what was “right” and the right for the period was the homogenous Greek nation. The nationalist anti-Semitic ideology of the time, mixed with traditional prejudices (the “reach Jew” or the “filthy Jew”), viewed Jews as foreigners in the national body, both across Europe and in Greece. This was especially true in the case of Thessaloniki, a relatively new Greek city since it had become part of the Greek State in 1912, which had to be homogenous according to this prevailing ideology, especially after the end of the “Greek great idea”.

The 30s

Greek society was now called upon to face, with some delay, the consequences of the 1929 world economic crisis. The situation in the first two years was nothing less than tragic for the refugees and despite the gradual amelioration a good ten years on after 1922 things remained extremely difficult.²³

¹⁹ Nikos Fardis, “N. Sousenov, To gourouni tou Mochoum”, *Makedonia*, January 1, 1923, p. 1. De Feld, “Sto perithorio. Ta pontikakia”, *Makedonia*, February 9, 1923, p. 3. De Feld, “Sto perithorio. Oi tourkoï”, *Makedonia*, April 16, 1923, p. 3. “Tis imeras”, *Makedonia*, December 21, 1923, p. 1.

²⁰ “As tous ginei mathima”, *Makedonia*, September 2, 1924, *Makedonia*, November 24,25, 1926.

²¹ See Ampatzopoulou, *ibid*, p. 205-206 and Maria Vassilikou, “Ethnotikes antitheseis sten Ellada tou Mesopoleμου. E periptose tou empresμου tou Campell”, *Istor*, 7, (1994), 153 – 174, and Emilio J. Demetriades, *Thessaloniki 1925 - 35 Paratiritis*, Thessaloniki 1994, p 301-355.

²² Stratis Bournazos, “To elleniko antocommunistiko entypo 1925-1967. Mia proti proseggisi”, *Archeitaxeio*, v. 5, May 2003, p. 54-55.

²³ Ioannidou, «E egkatastasi...», *ibid*, p. 252 - 264, Ioannidou, «E prosfygike Kalamaria», *Oi prosfyges sti Makedonia. Apo tin tragodia stin epopiia (Refugees in Macedonia. From tragedy to the epic period)*, Etairia Makedonikon Spoudon, Thessaloniki 2009.

Europe was facing an era of despair. Fascism and Nazism occurred. Public attitudes were affected by the seemingly oppressive problem of personal responsibility and individual freedom in a world of economic insecurity. The Enlightenment ideal of the self-sufficient man, capable of determining his own destiny, now seemed fraudulent, at complete variance with contemporary social and economic conditions.

Economically, there was the "purse string" argument. Fascism and Nazism gained popularity as defenders against an imposing Communist menace. With the successful advent of communism to power in Russia, and with the loudly made argument that the abolition of private property would sweep away class differences and create an equitable economy, much of European middle-classdom worked up a fear of the "Bolshevik menace," the possibility of the forceful overthrow or the subversion of the existing social and political order. Both Mussolini and Hitler made opposition to communism a major element of their ideologies.²⁴

The impact of fascist ideas in Thessaloniki emerged by the creation of relevant organizations. One of the most important was the National Union of Greece (Ethniki Enosis Ellados or EEE). It was an anti-Semitic nationalist party established in Thessaloniki, Greece, in 1927. Registered as a mutual aid society, the EEE was founded by Asia Minor refugee merchants. According to the organization's constitution, only Christians could join. Its members were opposed to Thessaloniki's substantial Jewish population. It was led by Georgios Kosmidis, an illiterate Turkish-speaking trader and D. Charitopoulos, a banking clerk. The party's leaders were the main defendants in the trial held after the Campbell Riot of 29 June 1931, in which Greek nationalist mobs attacked the Jewish "Campbell" settlement in the city.²⁵

Estimates put the party's strength at 7,000 members in 1932 and after the above pogrom; by 1933, it had 3,000 members march to Athens, in apparent imitation of Benito Mussolini's 1922 March on Rome. However, it polled miserably in the 1934 city elections in Thessaloniki, and in 1935, the party imploded as a result of infighting. It was revived by the German occupation authorities in 1942, during

²⁴ http://www.britannia.com/history/euro/3/2_2.html (Visit, 21/8/2014)

²⁵ Vassilikou, *ibid.* Theodosios Tsironis, "E organosi Ethniki Enosis 'E Ellas' (EEE) ste Thessalonike tou Mesopolemou (1927 - 1936). Ta katastatika kai e drase tes", *Epistemonike Epeterida tou Kentrou Istorias Thessalonikis tou Dimou Thessalonikes*, v. 6, KITH, Thessalonike 2002, p. 293 – 313. Kavala, o.p., p. 78-84.

the Axis Occupation of Greece; many members of EEE became prominent collaborators of the Nazis, and many more joined the Security Battalions and helped in the identification of Greek Jews. Owing to its paramilitary uniforms and organization, the party was commonly referred to as "The Three Epsilons" or "The Steelhelmets", in allusion to the German paramilitary *Stahlhelm*.²⁶

A co-defendant in the trial of 3E was Nikolaos Fardis, editor-in-chief of the *Makedonia* newspaper at the time. The newspaper had adapted a permanent anti-Semitic discourse and in 1931 started a new anti-Jewish campaign, accusing the Zionist cultural club Maccabees for cooperation with Bulgaria. He was considered as the instigator of the Campel pogrom. Fardis, as the other defendants, was not convicted; a part of Thessaloniki population was supporting him by holding manifestations; the trial took place in a small town (Veroia) near Thessaloniki as to avoid riots.²⁷

The Campel pogrom was an open conflict between refugees and the Jews and *Makedonia* had played a significant role in triggering the situation. The conflict reinforced the already negative public view for the Jews, as shown by the increase of 3E members.

During this whole period the Jews of Thessaloniki were accused of refusing to learn the Greek language, so to assimilate culturally, and that this was equal to treason.²⁸ *Makedonia* continued its anti-Semitic discourse in many different ways either by asking the exclusion of the Jews of the city's institutions or by enhancing the ideas of "Jewish-communist conspiracy", "Jewish devious behavior" etc.²⁹

Moreover, in 1932 Nikolaos Fardis, the chief editor of the newspaper released with the paper *Historical Sketches*, a multivolume history of the city that had the aim of teaching the history of the city to the residents and especially to the young residents, the refugees. It is indicative of how the volumes presented the history of the city: It was starting with the visit of the Apostle Paul in Salonica, in 54 AD and the

²⁶ Kavala, Ibid, p. 84.

²⁷ Kavala, ibid, p. 78-84.

²⁸ For more see Ampatzopoulou, ibid, p 205-206 and Vassilikou, supra, and Emilio J. Demetriades, *Thessaloniki 1925 - 35 Parateretes*, Thessaloniki 1994, p 301-355.

²⁹ "Peri ton thanaton tou Giosef Eligia", *Makedonia*, September 6, 1931, "Dia tous epaggelmatias", *Makedonia*, December 31, 1931, "Chioni", *Makedonia*, December 13, 1931, *Makedonia*, December 19, 20, 21, 1932.

attacks against him by the Jewish community of the era.³⁰ In fact it was promoting the idea that the Jews of the city were enemies of the Christians since decades.

Makedonia's anti-Semitic discourse from 1925-1935 was reinforcing reasons and motivations to act due to threats on the security of the individual, it was demonizing the “enemy” and it was using a narrow range of discourse. It is important to mention that the other big newspaper of the city *Efemeris ton Valkanion*³¹ was following a rather moderate attitude on the issue.

The newspaper *Makedonia* had a quite high circulation. In 1915 it was reaching 14.000 copies daily, while the Christian Greek population of the city was about 34.000 and in 1919 8.000 copies. The impact of the newspaper ideas was quite obvious in the incident of the Campel pogrom, as in fact it was the newspaper that created the issue.

Makedonia's anti-Jewish discourse stopped during Metaxas' dictatorship and rather newspaper circulation too. The regime was on the surface relatively tolerant to the Greek Jews, repealing the anti-Semitic laws of previous regimes. Metaxas was mainly and firmly opposed to the irredentist factions of the Slavophones of northern Greece (consisting of Slavophone Greeks and Bulgarians mainly in Macedonia and Thrace), some of whom underwent political persecution due to advocacy of irredentism with regard to neighbouring countries.

The previous anti-Semitic discourse of some of *Makedonia's* columnists will found fertile ground to flourish again during the Nazi occupation.

The Nazi Occupation

During the Nazi Occupation *Makedonia* together with the other newspapers of Thessaloniki were not allowed to circulate. It was only *Nea Evropi* (New Europe),

³⁰ See Nikos Fardis, Thessaloniki, *Makedonia newspaper library, Historical Sketches*, Series 1, No. 1, Thessaloniki 1932.

³¹ Afternoon newspaper which was published in 1918 and it circulated until 1941. It was reissued for a month in 1946 and for about 5 months in 1950. It was marked by the personality of the director and editor, Nikolaos Kastrinos. It showed particular sensitivity to social problems and supported the republican side and Alexandros Papanastasiou. Manolis Kandylakis, *Efemeridografia tes Thessalonikes*, v. 2, University Studio Press, Thessaloniki 1998, p. 235-243.

which was the main propaganda newspaper of the Nazis and *Apogevmatine* (The afternoon newspaper) which were allowed to circulate.

Nikos Fardis and Petros Orologas who held managerial positions in *Makedonia* and other major newspapers of Salonika (*Makedonika Nea*, *Phos*, etc.), and were responsible for creating anti-Semitic climate during the interwar period³² became members of the Nazi Propaganda Office.³³ Moreover, Evripidis Chimonidis, the editor of *Nea Evropi*, D. T. Eliades, the chief editor, M. P. Papastratigakis, a journalist from Athens who before the war was a confidant of Metaxas' censorship, Georgios Pollatos, the owner of *Nea Evropi* after 1943 had economic benefits.³⁴ M. Papastratigakis for example was receiving a salary of 30,000 drachmas, when the price of the newspaper was 4 drs.³⁵

Between May 1941 and May 1942, *Nea Evropi* 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 reactions of the German population to the increasingly severe anti-Jewish measures.³⁶ 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

³² Ampatzopoulou, *ibid.*, p. 205 – 206 and Vassilikou, *ibid.*, p., 153 - 174, and Dimitriades, *ibid.*, p. 301 - 355.

³³ Stratos N. Dordanas, *Ellenes enantion Ellenon. O kosmos ton tagmaton asfaleias sten katochike Thessalonike 1941 – 1944*, Epikentro, Salonica, p. 149.

³⁴ Chaidia, "Dosilogoi...", p. 60-61.

³⁵ 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.

³⁶ Constantin Goshler et Philipp Ther, "Introduction. Une histoire sans frontières" στο C. Goshler, P. Ther et C. Andrieu (επιμ.), *Spoliations et restitutions des biens Juifs. Europe XXe siècle*, Autrement, Paris, 2007, p. 15.

France.³⁷ Silence and indifference to the suffering of others, or to the violation 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."³⁸ 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.³⁹

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.⁴⁰ These articles strengthened in an

³⁷ Jacques Semelin, *Aoploi apenanti sto Hitler. E antistase ton politon sten Evrope 1939 - 1943*, Chatzenikoles, Athens, 1993. p. 213.

³⁸ *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, "Dosilogoi: Apo ten Katoche sten apelftherose" in Mark Mazower (ed.), *Meta ton polemo. E anasykrotese 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. Vania, Salonica 1998, p. 47.

³⁹ Taguieff, *ibid*, p. 65-66.

⁴⁰ *Nea Evrope*, April 12, 24, 1943.

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 did not publish 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 (27.01.1943) 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".⁴¹ The articles above were celebrating the forthcoming expulsion of the Jews and were strengthening the narrative of the final expulsion or extinction.

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 and the corresponding worldview, 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,⁴² 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.⁴³ Around these groups we can also find Greek and foreign agents (Armenians, Romanians, Bulgarians), interpreters, employees of Nazi

⁴¹ *Apogevmatine*, January 27, 1943, February 12, 15, 25, 26, 1943, 26, 27, 1943, March 15, 1943.

⁴² 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.

⁴³ 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.

institutions, partners of any specialty.⁴⁴ All those groups also benefited from the plunder of Jewish property, so their enlistment into an anti-Semitic discourse had significant material incentives.

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.

Conclusion

The newspaper *Makedonia* was a "child" of Greek nationalism and the Greek Great Idea of early 20th century. In our case and despite the moderate attitude towards the Jews the first years and before the end of the Greek Great idea, after 1922 it ended using an anti-Semitic discourse reinforcing the pre-existing, religious anti-Semitism. We can observe how this discourse was being transformed mainly in a nationalist one and how later, the supporters of these ideas worked for the Nazi propaganda and transformed the discourse to a nationalist-racial one enhancing the prejudices and stereotypes of the Greek Christian population, already formulated in the past and aiming in personal political and financial profit.

The above analysis can give us an example of how is evolved especially in time of political, economic and social crisis a process of differentiation, stigmatization and exclusion against minorities.

At the same time is an example of how press discourse can serve to rally people behind a cause, but often at the cost of exaggerating, misrepresenting, or even lying about the issues in order to gain that support and often to spread hatred.

In every society it is important to find through the key areas of education, culture, institutions, common ground between different people, similarities and the fruitful contribution of every "other" to the society. We have always to think who loses and who benefits from divisions among oppressed people. Those in power profit

⁴⁴ Dordanas, *Ellenes enantion...* *ibid*, p. 400 - 401.

in many different ways while those who lose are ordinary people in both sides. In the end we all lose when generations are denied the right to develop and contribute their gifts to the rest of the human community.⁴⁵

⁴⁵ <https://carolahand.wordpress.com/tag/finding-common-ground/> (visit 11/9/2014)