Collaborationism and «Red Terror» in Greek Macedonia, 1943-1944

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Abstract – Collaborationism and «Red Terror» in Greek Macedonia, 1943-1944.

In the autumn of 1943 the Communist-led Resistance organization ELAS established a monopoly on violence in the German-occupied part of Greek Macedonia. Its most important opponent, the nationalist Resistance organization PAO, was dissolved. Former members of PAO and other «reactionary elements» were persecuted and many of them were executed. But the victory of ELAS against «reaction» was not permanent. From December 1943 – January 1944 on hundreds of villagers took up arms for «protection» against ELAS. They created anti-Partisan units and collaborated with the German military authorities and SD. ELAS and the Secret Police of the Communist Party called OPLA practiced «Red Terror» against «traitors» and other «enemies of the people». This paper will examine the relation between armed collaborationism and the birth of «Red Terror» especially in the last phase of Occupation. The focus will be on the motives and the structure of the collaborationist militia called EES (National Greek Army). On the other hand it will also ask if «Red Terror» was organized centrally as an answer to the anti-Communist action.

Key words: Macedonia, Red Terror, collaborationism, EAM, civil war
Parole chiave: Macedonia, terrore rosso, collaborazionismo, EAM, guerra civile

For many decades the issues of collaboration with the foreign enemy and left-wing violence during the period of Axis’ occupation (1941-1944) were taboo in Greek historiography. The political and ideological motives of collaboration were not discussed in detail, nor was there any exploration into the social background and the emergence of pro-Axis groups, because the cooperation of the Greeks with the Axis’ occupying authorities was contrary to the post-war myth of «national unity» (in the version of the right or the left)\(^1\). In 2004, the first conference was held in Greece, and when two years later the conference proceedings were published\(^2\), they documented that collaboration was a mass phenomenon and not a matter of a few «traitors» or the pre-war elites. They also made clear that Nationalism and anti-Communism were the ideological roots of most Greek collaborators\(^3\).

The same ideology applies to the issue of left-wing violence because it points out that civil war clashes took place under Axis’ occupation and that large sections of the Greek population stayed away from the Communist-controlled resistance movement. Stathis Kalyvas was the first scholar who put «violence in the centre of the civil war research

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2. Ι. Μιχαηλίδης, Ι. Νικολακόπουλος, Η. Φλεισέρ (επ. ), *Έχθρος εντός των τειχών. Όψεις του Διασώσημου στην Ελλάδα της Κατοχής*, Ελληνικά Γράμματα, Αθήνα 2006.
agend». His articles about the «red terror» and armed collaborationism enflamed a Greek Historikerstreit. Kalyvas raised the question of the logic of left-wing violence and showed that it was centrally organized and not the result of spontaneous acts nor the work of zealous revolutionaries.

In the light of the above, this paper examines the relationship between armed collaborationism and the birth of «red terror» – especially in the last phase of the German occupation – in the region of Greek Macedonia. The focus will be on the motives and the structure of the collaborationist militias and groups, especially by EES (Εθνικός Ελληνικός Στρατός – National Greek Army). On the other hand it will also raise the question whether «red terror» was organized as a reaction to the anti-Communist action or whether if it was based on a general plan for the repression of any kind of non-Communist opposition. The main sources for this paper are reports of the Communist Party groups in Macedonia, documents of the Foreign Office and records of the Greek and German administration during the occupation.

**Occupation and Resistance movements**

After the invasion of the German and Italian troops in April-May 1941, Greece was divided in three occupation zones: Germany retained strategically important points like western Crete, Salonica and central Macedonia, the border area to Turkey and some Aegean Islands. Italy occupied the Ionian Islands, Epirus, parts of western Macedonia, Thessaly, central Greece and the Peloponnese. The Dodecanese Islands were under Italian rule since 1912. Bulgaria annexed (without Hitler’s permission) eastern Macedonia and Thrace and set up a policy of ethnic cleansing against the Greek population. In Athens a collaborationist government under Lieutenant General George Tsolakoglou was formed, but its authority in the province – where it existed – was very limited. King George II, the legal government and units of the Greek Army fled to Crete. After the German conquest of the island in May 1941, they moved to Cairo. In exile, they represented Greece to the Allies. The existence of a government in exile was a challenge for the legitimacy of the collaborationist regime. But none of both governments was able to fill the political vacuum in the mountain areas.

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Economic disaster, famine and malnutrition were the direct consequences of foreign occupation. In Athens some 35,000 people became victims of a mass starvation in the winter of 1941-42. The black market was flourishing, and social order collapsed. Furthermore, the reprisals of the Axis’ troops against the population beginning in October 1941, and the extermination of the Greek Jews in 1943-44 painted a clear picture of Hitler’s New Order in Greece. The Axis’ terror enabled the conditions for the coming violence of the civil war.

Under these circumstances, resistance groups took action. But only a few of them were able to build mass movements and to organize armed liberation struggle. The most important was EAM (Εθνικό Απελευθερωτικό Μέτωπο – National Liberation Front). It was established in Athens at the end of September 1941 and was led by KKE (Κομμουνιστικό Κόμμα Ελλάδας – Communist Party of Greece), which had some years of experience in underground work. In April 1942, ELAS (Ελληνικός Λαϊκός Απελευθερωτικός Στρατός – Greek People’s Liberation Army) was established as the military arm of EAM and KKE. In the next two years ELAS controlled large mountain areas from the ex-Greek-Yugoslav borders in the North to the Peloponnese in the South. In this Communist-controlled territory the administration of the collaborationist Greek government was abolished and revolutionary institutions like «self-administration» and «people’s courts» were developed. No other parties than KKE were allowed to take political action. A health and social system was created, taxes were raised and the peasants were obliged to support ELAS with food. Cultural activities were engaged and the youth was organized in EPON (Ενιαία Πανελλαδική Οργάνωση Νέων, United Panhellenic Organization of Youth). The so-called «Free Greece» was a state within a state: and more than that it was the prelude for a post-war «People’s Republic». In May 1944, a «mountain’s government» called PEEA (Πολιτική Επιτροπή Εθνικής Απελευθέρωσης – Political Committee of National Liberation) would have been proclaimed. In autumn 1944, «Free Greece» would have been extended to many urban centres including parts of Salonica and Athens.

In September 1941, another resistance organization appeared in the Greek capital under the name of EDES (Εθνικός Δημοκρατικός Ελληνικός Σύνδεσμος – National Republican Greek League), which had a strong republican orientation. In July 1942, its leading figure, ex-Colonel Napoleon Zervas, a person with political ambitions and also military capabilities, took up to the mountains. In a small area in northwestern Greece

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10 As regards the German reprisals in Macedonia, see S. N. Dordanas, Το αίμα των αθώων. Αντίποινα των γερμανικών αρχών κατοχής στη Μακεδονία, 1941-1944, Εστία, Αθήνα 2007. As regards the deportation and destruction of the Greek Jews, see In Memoriam. Gewidmet dem Andenken an die jüdischen Opfer der Naziherrschaft in Griechenland, ed. By M. Molho, Essen 1981.
Vaios Kalogrias (Epirus) he organized the guerrilla warfare with the help of local warlords, ex-regular officers of the Greek Army, friends of the pro-Republican military leaders Nikolaos Plantiras and Stylianos Gonatas and British Liaison Officers (BLOs). He also created a «free zone» and established a political administration. Zervas became the most famous leader of non-Communist resistance. Until the end of occupation he commanded an effective guerrilla force of about 5,000 men.

About a year later Colonel Dimitris Psarros, a leading member of another pro-Republican resistance organization called EKKA (Εθνική και Κοινωνική Απελευθέρωση – National and Social Liberation), set up his own guerrilla group in Central Greece (Mount Parnassus). In the Peloponnese pro-Royalist army officers founded the guerrilla group ES (Εθνικός Στρατός – Greek Army). In Crete, EOK (Εθνική Οργάνωση Κρήτης – National Organization of Crete) became the main resistance force, and in eastern Macedonia operated the independent groups of Antonis Fosteridis. With the exceptions of EDES, EOK and Fosteridis, all other non-communist guerrilla forces were dissolved by ELAS until liberation. Their members were killed or fled to the cities. For example, Psarros was captured by ELAS and executed in April 1944. Other members of EKKA and ES joined either ELAS or the «Evzone-Regiments» (mostly known as «Security Battalions») in southern Greece. The latter were formed in autumn 1943 by the Greek collaborationist government in Athens and collaborated with the German military administration in order to combat «Communism». Their commanders were officers of the pre-war Greek Army, principally with a pro-Republican sentiment.

In German-occupied Macedonia, things were much more complicated. The Bulgarian atrocities in eastern Macedonia and the fear of a Bulgarian take-over of all Macedonia, including the port of Salonica, mobilized the nationalist sentiment of the Greek local population. On July 10, 1941 in Salonica four army officers – Ioannis Papathanasiou, Thomas Barbas, Evangelos Dortas and Anastasios Sakellaridis – established the Central Committee of YVE (Υπερασπισταί Βορείου Ελλάδος – Defenders of Northern Greece). In contrast to EAM, EDES or EKKA they didn’t express political goals. Their main aim was the struggle against the Bulgarian Anschluss-propaganda in western and central Macedonia. In this way they wanted to ascertain that German-controlled Macedonia would remain a part of Greece during and after Axis occupation.

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This was regarded as necessary because a Bulgarian Association in Salonica organized propaganda activities for the proselytism of the approximately 80,000 Slav-speaking inhabitants in western Macedonia, especially through the distribution of food. Furthermore, Bulgarian liaison officers were appointed by the German headquarters in that area and tried to mobilize the Slav-speaking minority against the Greek authorities. In the areas of Kastoria, Florina and Edessa they played a key role in the formation of armed detachments which collaborated with the Italian troops in Kastoria and the Wehrmacht in Florina and Edessa. They became known under the name of «Ohrana-Battalions». Their political aim was the «unification» of German-occupied Macedonia with «Great Bulgaria». Officially, they wanted to maintain «peace and order» like the Greek collaborationist militias.¹⁹

Very soon, army officers and members of the Greek administration and the middle class in Salonica (such as lawyers, doctors, merchants and intellectuals) joined YVE. The regional departments of the pre-war Greek Army became a base for the recruitment of new members. YVE also attempted to establish contact with the Greek government in exile. Vice president Panagiotis Kanellopoulos, an Athenian philosophy professor and liberal politician, who was linked with personal ties to Papathanasiou, a leading member of YVE, sent financial help to the organization and also instructions for the preparation of armed struggle.²⁰

Guerrilla Struggle and Civil War

In January 1943, the Central Committee of YVE was able to organize its first guerrilla group in Pieria under the orders of low-ranking army officers. One month later this group was attacked by ELAS and dissolved. Its leading members were executed and the rest of them fled to Salonica. EAM accused YVE of planning «counter revolutionary» units in order to combat ELAS. But YVE was more interested in reaching an agreement of coexistence with EAM. In any case, this act of limited violence shocked the leadership of YVE because it didn’t expect such a reaction. If continued to hope for an understanding with EAM, though the latter made it clear that it wouldn’t tolerate a separate guerrilla force.²¹ In the eyes of KKE, ELAS was the only «legitimate» organization in Greece to fight against the occupying powers.²²

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²¹ V. Kalogrias, Okkupation, cit., pp. 175-177.

At the same time the army officers of EKA (Ένωσις Κοινωνικής Απελευθέρωσης – Union of Social Liberation), a local section of YVE in the region of Kozani in western Macedonia, came to terms with EAM and cooperated with ELAS’ units. With their help ELAS succeeded in capturing an Italian Battalion in the so-called «battle of Fardyka-bos» in March 194323. This action was the first – and last – success of armed resistance in Macedonia, given the vastly different concepts of EKA and ELAS on guerrilla warfare. In view of the growing refugee problem after the large-scale reprisals of the Italian Army in the area of Voio, the nationalist officers, who supported the idea of an «apolitical» guerrilla army, wanted to refrain from similar actions in the German-occupied area. They also demanded the leadership of all guerrilla units. Conversely, KKE mistrusted the existence of an independent organization like EKA, in favour of an uncompromising struggle (and not only in the Italian occupation zone), arguing that the guerrilla warfare should remain under the control of EAM. In the district of Kastoria, near the pre-war Greek-Yugoslav border, the cooperation between independent groups of nationalist-minded personalities24 and ELAS also came to an end. The problem here was the attitude of ELAS toward the members of the Slav-speaking «Ohrana-Battalions». ELAS tried to persuade them to join the liberation struggle, while the Nationalists opposed any such idea. In both cases, the growing reputation of the nationalist army officers among the local population became a problem for ELAS, which decided to neutralize them25. Western Macedonia was not big enough for two organizations.

Without warning ELAS arrested some of the non-Communist officers in Avgerinos and brought them to Partisan courts in Vouhorina. They were accused of not having resisted the Italian troops, a «fact» that enabled the latter to destroy the town of Servia. The officers were sentenced to death as «counterrevolutionaries» and were executed in mid-April 1943. Among them were Miltiades Portes, Lazaros Mantzios and Kosmas Boulogiannis. It is interesting to note that they were not accused as «collaborators of the Nazis». Their comrades fled to Salonica, EKA was dissolved and ELAS ruled in the region of Voio26. A similar fate befell the leaders of the nationalist groups in the region of Kastoria who were arrested in mid-April in Melanthio. Kourtisakis and Zisis were

24 Among them were the First Lieutenant of the reserve Agelos Kiourtsidakis, Ioannis Kollaras, Konstantinos Zisis and the later well-known chief of the Communist-led Partisans in Grammos during the «third round» of civil war (1946-1949) George Giannoulis. Dim. G. Zafeirooulos, ΚΚΕ και Μακεδονία, Αθήνα 1948, σ. 28-29.
sentenced to death in a Partisan court and were executed. These were the first extended actions of organized «red terror» in Macedonia. But in contrast to the events of Pieria, this action had serious consequences: followers of YVE arrested members of EAM near Kozani and shot them in reprisal for the execution of the army officers. Relations between YVE and EAM worsened. The spiral of civil war violence between the two resistance organizations had just started.

The German propaganda in Salonica took advantage of this rivalry and started a press campaign in favour of Wehrmacht’s «anti-Bolshevik struggle». Well-known collaborationists like Lieutenant-Colonel George Poulos appealed to the Greek army officers to join his «struggle» on the side of the Third Reich. Poulos was a fanatical supporter of the National Socialist ideology and dreamed of a post-war career as a Greek Führer. He was also the chief of a radical anti-Semitic Party called EEE (Εθνική Ένωσις «Η Ελλάς» – National Union of Greece). His Volunteer Salonica Battalion, founded in April 1943, was the first armed collaborationist unit in Greece and numbered 300 members. Poulos’ men took part in German military operations against ELAS and became famous for plundering and burning villages and shooting innocent people as Communists. Even Germans officers criticized Poulos’ terrorist methods because they led people to join EAM. His headquarters was in the village of Krya Vrysi, near Salonica.

In May 1943, under the impression of civil conflict, YVE changed its name to PAO (Πανελλήνιος Απελευθερωτική Οργάνωσις – Panhellenic Liberation Organization) and published a clandestine newspaper, the «National Voice» (Εθνική Φωνή). Its Central Committee called for the liberation of Greece, but it also condemned the «anti-National» actions of the «anarchists» and «internationalists» of EAM. Not without reason PAO insisted on the preservation of social order after the withdrawal of the German and Bulgarian occupying troops. At the political level, it announced its loyalty to the Greek government in exile. But no concrete pro-Royalist biases were expressed. PAO wanted to reach all ‘patriotic elements’ that desired freedom and were afraid of Communism, i.e. both Royalists and Republicans. Its group of bourgeois and conservative intellectuals initiated the non-Marxist Socialist Union (Σοσιαλιστική Ένωσις) as a counterweight to the socialist slogans of KKE and EAM. Not without reason PAO attempted to gain influence over the students at the University of Salonica. However, the Communist student groups were much better organized.

27 Dim. G. Zaferiopoulos, ΚΚΕ και Μακεδονία, pp. 40-42.
29 Νίκα Ευρώπη, 1 Μαΐου 1943.
In parallel to this, the leadership of PAO condemned Poulos’ appeals for closing ranks with the German authorities. After the entry of Bulgarian units in Central Macedonia (July 1943), it decided to set up guerrilla groups in the mountain areas of Pieria, Vermion, Paikon, Belles, Krouisia and Holomon under the command of army officers and gendarmes, and with the support of the Turkish-speaking Greek-Orthodox settlers from Pontus, who were both anti-Bulgarian and anti-Communist. Their villages around Kilkis, Kozani and Katerini constituted the centres of the nationalist guerrilla groups. Their number was estimated about 1,000-1,500. ELAS regarded this conservative peasant movement with enormous suspicion or even hostility. Before that, it had unsuccessfully tried to persuade the leaders (capetani) of the Turkish-speaking Pontian communities such as Mihail Papadopoulos (Mihalagas) to join the liberation struggle. But ELAS wasn’t willing to tolerate their traditional way of living, their hierarchical clan-family structures and their deep religiosity. All that was interpreted by EAM as a sign of «backwardness». On the contrary, PAO representatives assured the Turkish-speaking notables that they would respect their local structure and autonomy. For this reason and because of the social rank of the army officers, the Turkish-speaking capetani sided with PAO against Bulgarians and Communism. PAO’s anti-Bulgarian nationalism was now combined with a strong anti-Communist attitude.

The existence of two rivalry guerrilla organizations in the same area split the resistance movement. The British tried to achieve an agreement between them. A BLO named Nicholas Hammond, after the war a renowned classical scholar, met with representatives of EAM, PAO and the EDES-section in Salonica in July 1943, and persuaded them to cooperate with each other. But an official military support of PAO and the EDES-section through the British authorities in the Middle East didn’t take place. The British didn’t want to provoke EAM and to increase the differences between Nationalists and Communists. This decision gave EAM a great advantage because PAO wasn’t officially recognized as a resistance organization. EAM could declare that it was the only «true» resistance movement in Macedonia.

On the other hand, EAM wasn’t really interested in cooperation with the nationalist camp. It preferred to attract army officers of both organizations (PAO, EDES-section) to ELAS and to keep its monopoly on guerrilla struggle. The Communist leadership of EAM considered PAO and EDES (actually all non-Communist resistance groups)

33 A. Frontistis, ΠΑΟ. Ιστορία και προσφορά της εις την Εθνικήν Αντίστασην 1941-1945, Θεσσαλονίκη 1977, p. 88
34 After the disaster of the Greek Army in Asia Minor, 1922/23.
35 TNA FO 371/43679 R 2850: «Summary of letter from PAO to the Greek Prime Minister [Cairo]», January 4, 1944. V. Kalogrias, Okkupation, cit., pp. 201-202.
36 The reach cattle dealer Mihalagas was for a while a financial supporter of EAM. On the biography of Mihalagas, see T. Kallianiotis, «Οι αντικομουνιστές καπετάνιοι στη Δυτική Μακεδονία (1942-1949)», Οι άλλοι Καπετάνιοι, pp. 232-242. As regards the Turkish-speaking Pontian leaders in the region of Kilkis, see P. Charatsidis (Vrachos), Το 13 Σύνταγμα ΕΛΑΣ. Η Εθνική Αντίσταση στο Κιλκής, cit. pp. 8-9, 62. K. Tsaniklidis, Το 13ο Σύνταγμα του ΕΛΑΣ. Η Εθνική Αντίσταση στο Κιλκής, Θεσσαλονίκη 1990, pp. 8-9.
as «pseudo-resistance» organizations and «enemies of the liberation struggle»\(^{40}\). Their officers were denounced from the powerful clandestine Communist press as «fascists», «reactionaries» or «traitors»\(^{41}\). In the case of PAO, its initials became a synonym for «reaction» and «collaborationism». EAM had no scruple to associate PAO with the German administration or Poulos’ Volunteer Salonica Battalion\(^{42}\). The Communist press also condemned the nationalist aims of PAO and its «collaboration» with state officials\(^{43}\). These charges stuck, PAO is usually considered as a collaborationist organization.

«Red Terror» and the birth of a mass collaborationist movement

Soon verbal violence was replaced by a physical one. From August 1943 on, armed clashes between ELAS and PAO took place in German-occupied Macedonia. Until that time, acts of physical violence had been limited. But in autumn, ELAS attacked the Turkish-speaking villages and dissolved the guerrilla units of PAO. Their remnants were concentrated in Halkidike (Mount Holomon). On November 3, ELAS launched an offensive near Vrasta, and although very few nationalists were killed the majority fled via Turkey to the Middle East. Central Macedonia was now in the hand of ELAS\(^{44}\). The members of PAO-units were hidden or looked for safety in German-occupied Salonica.

From that time on ELAS established a monopoly of guerrilla violence in the German-occupied part of Macedonia. Followers of PAO and other «reactionary elements» (like the bourgeois) as well as «collaborators of the Germans» were persecuted and many of them were executed\(^{45}\). But during this period ELAS’ violence was selective and it did not aim to eliminate the nationalist opposition. It seems rather that ELAS attempted to intimidate the nationalist-minded population to avoid any contacts with PAO or other nationalist organizations like EDES and to prevent the formation of a new non-Communist guerrilla movement. ELAS, paid more attention to the «punishment» of the most dangerous exponents of the nationalist camp, that is people who belonged to the local elites – lawyers, doctors and army officers with a strong patriotic sentiment. But in the course of time, the «class struggle» of KKE was extended to the lower social class. The decisive criterion was not membership to the upper class, but the attitude towards ELAS and EAM.

One of the first victims after the «battle of Vrasta» was the reserve officer Vagelis Kyparissis, one of the most active and competent members of PAO in Halkidike, who

\(^{40}\) Το δίχτυ της προδοσίας, «Ριζοσπάστης», 20 Σεπτεμβρίου 1943. Κατάρα και θάνατος στους προδότες’, «Ριζοσπάστης», 30 Οκτωβρίου 1943.

\(^{41}\) Π. Κασιώνος, Αρχεία Τούρκου Πολιτίσμου Καίρου 1944, Φάκ. 10, Υποφ. 4, “Οι μεταμφιεσμένοι φασίστες της ΠΑΟ”, Λαϊκή Φωνή, 15 Αυγούστου 1943.

\(^{42}\) Π. Κασιώνος, Αρχεία Τούρκου Πολιτίσμου Καίρου 1944, Φάκ. 10, Υποφ. 4, “Οι μεταμφιεσμένοι φασίστες της ΠΑΟ”, Λαϊκή Φωνή, 15 Αυγούστου 1943.
was arrested and executed near Polygyros. On December 12, 1943 a bank employee from Arnaia, Alexandros Alexandrou, was taken to the mountains, and not seen again.

The same fate befell the military doctor Emanuel Hatzoglou from Galatista. Other victims were an officer of gendarmerie, Emmanuel Papamathaiakis, and the First Lieutenant Aristides Zafeiropoulos. Also in December, four Nationalists were arrested and executed in Valta, in the peninsula of Kassandra. But the most spectacular action was the kidnapping and execution of Asterios Sissas, the prefect of the department of Halkidike, the latter had been accused of collaboration with the Germans, and of being a member of PAO. In public speeches, he emphasized the «struggle of the Third Reich for the salvation of European civilization». But it is doubtful, whether he really belonged to PAO. Nevertheless, Sissas combined both characteristics of the enemies of KKE and EAM: he was accused of being a «reactionary» and a «collaborator».

These executions were arranged by the local Communist organizations and were politically motivated. In January and February 1944 more executions took place. For example, three followers of PAO in Polygyros, Dimitris Frikis, Dimitris Levanidis and Dimitris Moutaftsis, were kidnapped by ELAS and were brought to the mountain area of Pontokerasia in Kilkis north of Salonica. It is significant that the victims were not killed immediately after their arrest in their home region. Accompanied by Partisans, they were taken far away from their homes and were executed by other unknown persons in an unknown place. This arrest and killing method demonstrated the bureaucratic structure of ELAS’ persecution machinery. In February 1944 and after a German military operation against ELAS’ headquarters in Pontokerasia, the German Army and the Greek collaborationist authorities discovered mass graves of murdered non-Communists. Among them was the former prefect of the department of Kilkis Colonel Christos Drellias.

However, the victory of ELAS against «reaction» was not permanent. Between December 1943 and January 1944 and in the face of the state vacuum (especially of the gendarmerie forces) a mass movement of peasants started to form. Among their leaders were refugees from the EAM-controlled areas, such as captain Lefteris from the region of Nigrita. With the military support of the German authorities and the SD (Sicherheitsdienst – Security Service), they created anti-Partisan units in order to keep ELAS...
out from their villages or to «liberate» their villages from the «EAM yoke». It was no coincidence that they described their fight against ELAS as a «revolution» against an «enemy regime». A new round of armed struggle began. If ELAS had believed that the downfall of PAO would have secured its authority, it was mistaken. The so-called «counterrevolution» of the villagers, represented mainly by the organization of EES (Εθνικός Ελληνικός Στρατός – National Greek Army), was a serious threat to ELAS’ rule in the mountains. For the British authorities in the Middle East, EES [...] raise serious political problems because, in spite of professions of pro-British sentiments, it has shown itself actively ready to collaborate with the Germans. It is in a chronic state of feud with EAM-ELAS and has recently been directly responsible for the death of two British soldiers. EES originated in December 1943. Its objects were – a) to avoid German reprisals by accepting German arms and obeying German orders; b) to keep EAM out of the villages until the arrival of Allied forces of occupation. [...] Left wing terrorism was one reason why some of the villagers of Macedonia organised themselves into the EES, and hostility to ELAS remains one of the dominating features of EES policy.

The initiators of EES were Turkish-speaking Pontian capetani and a few army officers of PAO. They were all contacted by the German authorities in Salonica and thus were strengthened in their decision to continue the struggle against «Communism». At about the same time, the German administration allowed the formation of anti-Partisan units in southern Greece under the authority of Rallis’ government and under the command of Greek army officers with pro-Republican sympathies. But in Macedonia they preferred to support the existing former units of PAO, which had a lot of experience in fighting ELAS. The German administration found it easier to take control over the mass movement of the Turkish-speaking Pontian peasants. The German officials, who generally mistrusted the Greek army officers because of their pro-British attitude, were not interested in helping them to victory. They wanted only to exacerbate the civil war in progress between Communists and Nationalists, and to secure strategic points such as road links near important towns like Kozani.

With German help, the villages around provincial towns like Katerini, Kozani, Kilkis and Nigrita became the strongholds of EES. Reputable warlords like the farmer Kisa-Badzak in Katerini and Mihalagas in Kozani, or representatives of the younger gen-

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54 Remarkable is that in the areas in which non-Communist guerrilla groups operated, like EDES in Epirus and Fosteridis in eastern Macedonia, no mass collaborationist movements were established. On the contrary, in the areas where the non-Communist guerrilla forces have been dissolved by ELAS, like PAO in German-occupied Macedonia and ES in Peloponnese, armed collaborationist movements made their appearance. Perhaps, an understanding between ELAS and PAO in Macedonia would have hindered the creation of EES.
ation like the agricultural student Kostas Papadopoulos in Kilkis, stood at the head of armed units, which assumed the role of local militias. In the area of Nigrita, an ex-officer of PAO, Colonel Spyridon Spyridis, was the leading figure of the anti-Partisan movement. In the Kassandra peninsula in Halkidike, the anti-Partisan groups set up local committees, which replaced the Greek authorities. In the region of Veria, west of Salonica, the Volunteer Salonica Battalion of the National Socialist-minded George Poulos spread fear and terror among the inhabitants. In Salonica, death squads under the command of Antonis Vihos and Antonis Dagoulas were responsible for the murdering of innocent citizens. In the German records, the most anti-Partisan units are referred to as *Freiwilligen-Verbände* (Volunteer Battalions)\(^58\). In the Greek vocabulary they became known as «Security Battalions» (Τάγματα Ασφαλείας), although they did not maintain contact with Rallis’ government. Most of them obeyed German orders, but according to their philosophy they fought their own war against «Communism» in the «name of the Greek nation» – and not for the sake of the occupying powers\(^59\). The collaborationist forces counted more than 20,000 members all over Greece\(^60\). Only in Macedonia did the Volunteer Battalions have more than 6,000 members. The number of their *capetani* ranged between 300 and 350\(^61\). In October 1944, the strength of EES was estimated at 8,000\(^62\). Most of these units became active under the name of «PAO» because they wanted to identify themselves with right-wing resistance\(^63\). But the officers of PAO in Salonica, who also opposed EAM and ELAS, criticized their collaborationist attitude\(^64\).

In general, a mass wave of uncontrolled violence broke out against real or supposed adherents of the Communist Party, in the countryside and also in Salonica. Members and followers of EAM and ELAS were arrested and beaten, some of them were handed to the German authorities as a proof of loyalty. In several cases units of EES participated in German actions against the Partisans. For example, Kostas Papadopoulos and his armed unit of about one hundred men took part in a military operation of the *Wehrmacht* in February 1944 in the region of Kilkis. After the withdrawal of the Partisans, Papadopoulos established a «reign of terror» in his native area north of Kilkis. He persecuted the adherents of EAM, raised taxes and confiscated grain cereal. The members of his unit presented themselves as forces of EDES and allies of the Germans and the British, with the aim to restore public order. KKE represented the indigenous «reaction», and feared


\(^{60}\) P. Voglis, *H αδύνατη επανάσταση*, cit., p. 53.


\(^{62}\) TNA FO 371/43694 R 17346: «The nationalist organization EES’», No 8018, October 25, 1944.


\(^{64}\) I. Papathanasiou, *Για τον Ελληνικό Βορρά*, vol. 2, cit., p. 850.
that Kilkis would become a stronghold of EES, more dangerous than EDES or EKKA. Especially opposed to EAM and ELAS were the villages of the Turkish-speaking refugees from Asia Minor and the Vlachs. According to a Communist source, 57 villages took up arms against ELAS. Until October 1944 ELAS attacked 28 villages and burned down around 850 houses of «traitors». At the same time, groups of EES killed more than 300 civilians, apparently members or sympathizers of EAM.

Structure of EES

In April/May 1944 units of EES in western Macedonia under the leadership of Mihalagas took part in the German military operations «Falke» and «Maigewitter» in the region of mount Vermio. The aim of this campaign was the destruction of ELAS’ support bases. Mesovouno and Pyrgoi were among the villages which were totally burned down by the occupation forces. More than 300 Greeks lost their lives, most of them civilians. A result of this terror measure was the arming of further villages from the Germans and EES. Also ELAS organized new attacks against «reactionary» villages such as Lefkadia, Ano and Kato Kopano, Agelohori, Platani and Vryta. In the region of Pieria ELAS concentrated its actions against the village of Koukos, the home village of Kisa-Badzak and a stronghold of EES in that area.

Most of the capetani of EES refrained from mass executions, while Poulos, Vihos and Dagoulas did not. The influence of the National Socialist ideology and the close link with SD were probably the main reasons for this. In the EES-controlled areas, many members of KKE and EAM abandoned their homes. It was their turn to flee and to seek asylum from the Partisans in the near mountains. But the anti-Communist wave of violence did not limit the activities of KKE. On the contrary, it intensified the civil war clashes and legitimated «red terror» against «reaction» and «collaborationism» as an act of resistance.

The anti-Communist leaders (mostly of refugee origin) were part of the peasant armed movement under the aegis of the German administration. But there were important differences between them. Poulos and the leaders of the death squads in Salonica did not come from the right-wing resistance movement. From the very beginning, they collaborated with the German authorities, particularly with SD, also in the hope of mate-

65 ΑΣΚΙ: Αρχείο ΚΚΕ, Κουτί 414 – Φάκ. 23/7/12, 13ο Σύνταγμα ΕΛΑΣ Κιλκίς προς την ΠΕ ΕΛΑΣ Κιλκίς. 114 members of KKE and EAM lost their lives. About one hundred «Communist» villages were burned down from the Volunteer Battalions. ΑΣΚΙ, Αρχείο ΚΚΕ, Κουτί 414 – Φάκ. 23/7/14, ΠΕ Κιλκίς, «Εκθέση της κατάστασης της περιφερείας μας προς το Μακεδονικό Γραφείο», 4 Απριλίου 1944. See also ΑΣΚΙ, Αρχείο ΚΚΕ, Κουτί 414 – Φάκ. 23/7/22, «Εκθέση της ΠΕ Κιλκίς από τις 1 Μαρτίου 1944 μέχρι τις 31 Ιουνίου 1944 προς το Μακεδονικό Γραφείο». ΑΣΚΙ: Αρχείο ΚΚΕ, Κουτί 414 – Φάκ. 23/7/33, ΚΚΕ ΠΕ Κιλκίς προς το ΓΠΜ, 27 Ιουλίου 1944.
66 ΑΣΚΙ: Αρχείο ΚΚΕ, Κουτί 414 – Φάκ. 23/7/31, ΚΚΕ ΠΕ Κιλκίς προς το ΓΚΕΜ, 22 Ιουλίου 1944.
68 S. Dordanas, Το αίμα των αθώων, cit., pp. 448-482.
69 ΑΣΚΙ: Αρχείο ΚΚΕ, Κουτί 413 – Φάκ. 23/6/5, ΠΕ Κατερίνης για το Μακεδονικό Γραφείο, 7 Ιανουαρίου 1944.
rial benefits. On the contrary, the capetani of EES and Spyridis had no fascist past. In the initial phase of occupation they had cooperated with YVE/PAO. They represented the local elites, enjoyed popular support and defended – in their own view – the territorial integrity of Macedonia within the framework of foreign occupation.

The British authorities in the Middle East were worried because

the movement amongst the peasants to arm themselves with weapons provided by the German authorities is continuously increasing […]. But particularly in the region of Kozani this phenomenon, entirely due to the crimes and stupidity of the Communists, has become more widely spread. All the villages between Kozani and Servia have already been armed, and so have the villages north of Kozani. Up to now over 1,000 rifles and 25 machine guns have been disposed of by the German authorities to the peasants of Kozani […]. The instinct of self-preservation […], in conjunction with the lively indignation provoked by the whole Communist activity, is driving the rural districts over to the Germans […]. At the head of the men under arms in one or more villages are the old chieftains or leaders dismissed by the Communists and members of the national bands in Macedonia, which were disbanded in the winter for lack of resources, especially ammunition. The most important are, in the district of Kozani-Servia, Papadopoulos, a Turkish-Speaking Greek from Pontos, formerly a cattle dealer, all of whose animals the guerrillas stole […]. The armed peasants generally avoid co-operating with regular officers and party leaders, wishing to win for themselves, as they say, the monopoly of delivering the country from the Communist scourge.

To legitimize their actions, the capetani still presented themselves as leaders of PAO. But in fact, they did not receive orders from the Central Committee of PAO, which led an illegal existence in Salonica and officially condemned the capetani’s collaboration with the German authorities. But unofficially, PAO showed understanding for their decision to continue the anti-Communist struggle. Otherwise, so argued their leading members in a letter to the government in exile, the peasants had no hope of resisting ELAS:

EAM started a pitiless persecution of all nationalists, whether members of PAO or not, in the districts which had controlled, kidnapping, mishandling, murdering and executing by (or without) sentence of the rough and ready courts of Justice, a great number both of men and women. As a result over 50,000 refugees have now fled into Salonika from the territory controlled by EAM, not daring to return to their homes where certain death would await them. The people, in despair, […] simply in order to save their lives, now began to resort to the hated invaders, begging for arms and ammunition for self-defence against the Communists by their own efforts. And the invaders, exploiting the situation, are now trying to form their own units under their control and for the furtherance of their own objectives. As a result there is no longer any national struggle in Greece against the invaders, […] but the whole nation has been divided into two camps: that of the EAM, purely Communists, […] and that of the Nationalists […]

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73 TNA FO 371/43679 R 2850: «Summary of letter from PAO to the Greek Prime Minister», January 4, 1944.
For many bourgeois and conservatives, the only way to prevent ELAS from seizing power by force was the military cooperation with the German administration until liberation. They also feared that KKE had secretly decided to incorporate Greek Macedonia into a post-war Communist Balkan Slav-Federation under the leadership of the Yugoslav comrades. The creation of SNOF (Slavjanomakedonski Narodno Osloboditelen Front, Slav-Macedonian People’s Liberation Front) in western Macedonia as a Slav-section of EAM with contacts to the Yugoslav Partisan movement was regarded as a proof of KKE’s «national treachery»74. Finally, the capetani wanted to avoid a revolutionary transformation of the pre-war social order. Many of the warlords or supporters of EES were people with financial influence in their home regions75. Within this, collaboration with the Germans had a political and military and also an ethnic and a social dimension.

The relations between the capetani of EES and other collaborationist leaders were problematic, because they competed with each other for the Germans’ patronage and the control of certain territories. For these reasons, the creation of a united anti-Communist block was not possible. The capetani had no formal relationships with the Greek administration in Salonica. They tried to gain recognition, but without success. The Greek officials, such as the General Inspector of the Prefectures in Macedonia Colonel Athanassios Chrysohoou, who was in secret contact with the government in exile76, denied official talks with the heads of the anti-Partisan units. Chrysohoou argued that the struggle against «Communism» was a matter of the Greek state – and not of individuals or autonomous groups. Unofficially, he met with the capetani of EES in order to persuade them to keep their distance from the Germans and to accept state authority77. But the capetani were not willing to give up their own position of power or to part with their powerful German «ally»78. The leaders of EES also met with representatives of EDES, for example in the region of Kilkis, trying to achieve the transformation of EES to EDES79. As well in Pieria capetani of EES negotiated with officers of EDES in order to put themselves under Zervas’ orders80, but they adopted only the initial «D» in their caps81 and were not incorporated into the structure of Zervas’ guerrilla force in Epirus. The British Liaison Officers by EDES opposed such an idea, and the capetani showed no real interest in obeying EDES’ instructions82.

74 C. M. Woodhouse, The Struggle, cit., pp. 66-71. In the pre-war period KKE had supported the policy of Comintern for a «united and independent Macedonia» within a Communist Balkan Federation. E. Kofos, Nationalism and Communism, cit., pp. 74-78.
75 V. Kalogrias, Ένοπλες ομάδες ανεξάρτητων οπλαρχηγών και εθνικιστών αξιωματικών στην περιοχή μεταξύ Στρυμώνα και Άξου, «Οι άλλοι Καπετάνιοι», p. 181.
76 On Chrysochoou’s motives, see V. Kalogrias, Αντίσταση και συνεργασία. Η περίπτωση του συνταγματάρχη Αθανάσιου Χρυσοχοού 1941-1944, «Εχθρός εντός των τειχών», pp. 209-229.
77 V. Kalogrias, Okkupation, cit., p. 313. Α. Chrysochoou, Γερμανοί, cit., p. 435.
78 According to informations of KKE, EES and other collaborationist groups were planning the seizure of power in Salonica by arresting the Greek Governor General of Macedonia and the police chief. ΑΣΚΙ: Αρχείο ΚΚΕ, Κουτί 411 – Φάκ. 23/4/39, Προς το Μακεδονικό Γραφείο, Βαγγέλης, 26 Μαΐου 1944.
79 ΑΣΚΙ: Αρχείο ΚΚΕ, Κουτί 414 – Φάκ. 23/7/38, ΕΛΑΣ ΠΕ Κιλκίς προς την ΙΧ Μεραρχία, 25 Αυγούστου 1944.
80 ΑΣΚΙ: Αρχείο ΚΚΕ, Κουτί 413 – Φάκ. 23/6/64, ΕΑΜ ΠΕ Κατερίνης προς την Παμμακεδονική Επιτροπή, 20 Ιουλίου 1944.
81 ΑΣΚΙ: Αρχείο ΚΚΕ, Κουτί 414 – Φάκ. 23/7/39, ΕΛΑΣ ΠΕ Κιλκίς, II Γραφείο, προς την ΟΜΜ, 15 Σεπτεμβρίου 1944.
82 C. M. Woodhouse, Apple of Discord, cit., p. 95.
What was the reaction of ELAS against the collaborationist movement? In a word, mass violence, with the goal to eliminate any kind of armed opposition. The anti-Partisan groups became enemy number one – to the liking of the Germans. KKE was afraid that after the withdrawal of Wehrmacht the «Security Battalions» would enjoy the support of the British in order to fight ELAS and to restore the pre-revolutionary order. But in September 1944 – parallel to the beginning of the evacuation of the German troops from Greece – the British and also the government in exile condemned the collaboration of the «Security Battalions» and required them to lay down their weapons, if their leaders and members wanted to receive amnesty. The agreement of Caserta on September 26 between ELAS, EDES, the Greek exiled government and the Supreme Allied Commander for the Mediterranean provided that all Greek guerrilla groups were to be placed under the authority of the Greek «government of national unity» and ultimately under the orders of Lieutenant General Sir Ronald Scobie, the General Officer and Commander of the British forces in Greece. If the collaborationist units refused to surrender the resistance organizations, they would be treated as enemy formations.

Of course, the anti-Partisan units and militias were an important military counter-weight to ELAS. But at that time the British were more interested in achieving an agreement between ELAS and its opponents than in supporting the enemies of KKE which had collaborated with the Germans. The «percentages agreement» between Churchill and Stalin in Moscow on October 9, 1944 had secured British influence over Greece and enabled London to intervene in Greek affairs without the fear of international complications. However, not a single anti-Communist leader accepted the terms of surrender to ELAS. There were great fears that ELAS would not respect the terms of the armistice and would arrest or even kill the anti-Communist leaders. The latter seemed to have no trust in the promises of ELAS to respect their lives. Looking at the immediate past, these fears were certainly not exaggerated. On the contrary, EES was only ready «to put itself under the orders of the Greek Government [in exile] and of Allies HQ».

The birth of a new Communist underground organization called OPLA (Οργάνωση Προστασίας Λαϊκού Αγώνα – Organization for the Protection of the People’s Struggle) also marked the passage from selective to institutional mass violence. In a public declaration OPLA announced its will to punish the «traitors» and «collaborators» and to...

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83 K. Tsaniklidis, To 13ο Σένταμα, cit., p. 258.
86 For example, British officers supported the negotiations between representatives of EES and ELAS in November 1944 with the aim to achieve a peaceful solution for the disarming of the anti-Communist detachments. G. Chandler, Αρχασμή χώρα. Μια αγγλο-ελληνική τραγωδία, Παρατηρητής, Θεσσαλονίκη 2000, p. 74.
88 ΑΣΚΙ: Αρχείο ΚΚΕ, Κουτί 413 – Φάκ. 23/6/98, ΚΚΕ ΠΕ Κατερίνης προς το Γραφείο Κομματικής Οργάνωσης Περιοχής Μακεδονίας, Έκθεση δράσης ΠΕ Κατερίνης, Αύγουστος 1944, 20 Σεπτεμβρίου 1944.
89 TNA FO 371/43694 R 17346: The nationalist Organization EES, No 8018, October 25, 1944.
protect the organizations which fought for the liberation of Greece and «people’s rule». OPLA was officially founded in December 1943, in order to combat the activity of the «Security Battalions» and high-ranking representatives of the Greek state like the Labour Minister Nikolaos Kalyvas. The struggle against the Greek police forces expanded soon to a kind of a personal vendetta. Another target group was the entire spectrum of the Greek «National Socialist» organizations, as were members of the non-Communist resistance groups. On February 1st, 1944 Kitsos Maltezos, the charismatic intellectual leader of the nationalist students’ movement at the University of Athens, an ex-member of the Communist youth organization EPON, was shot by a group of OPLA. Ex-Communists like Manolis Manoleas, who changed sides and collaborated with the German authorities, also became targets of the ideological war of OPLA. Usually, the members of OPLA were young (among them students), about 18-25 years old, fanatical and with the necessary amount of idealism. Probably, they regarded themselves as the «elite of revolution». They received their secret orders direct from the organizations of KKE.

Very soon OPLA’s assassination attempts against «traitors» and «collaborators» were expanded to Salonica and to other cities, which were still in the hands of the German Army. A prominent victim of OPLA in Salonica was Major Christos Papavasileiou, a former leader of PAO-units in western Macedonia who had fought on the side of the anti-Communist militias against ELAS. But in Salonica most victims were members (or relatives of members) of the collaborationist groups of Poulos, Vihos and Dagoulas and the gendarmerie. OPLA’s activity was undoubtedly an answer of the uncontrolled violence of the «Security Battalions». According to a source of KKE, until May 1944 more than 60 people were murdered in the streets of Salonica by various collaborationist groups. More than 180 were executed as hostages in German concentration camp of «Pavlos Melas». Of course OPLA’s murdering actions were not limited to the «friends of the Germans». For example, on October 20, 1944 OPLA executed George Aidonas probably because his son, Apostolos, was a leading figure of the non-Communist resistance organization PEK (Πατριωτικό Ελληνικό Κομιτάτο – Patriotic Greek Committee), who in the post-war era he was elected as a member of the Greek Parliament.

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91 M. Mazower, Hitler’s Greece, cit., p. 288. S. N. Kalyvas, Red Terror, cit., p. 160. The standard work on OPLA is the study of Iason Handrinos, Το τιμωρό χέρι του λαού. Η δράση του ΕΛΑΣ και της ΟΠΛΑ στην κατεχόμενη πρωτεύουσα 1942-1944, Θεμέλιο, Αθήνα 2012.
92 I. Handrinos, Οργάνωση Περιφρούρησης Λαϊκού Αγώνα (ΟΠΛΑ), cit., p. 211. For more background information on the assassination of Maltezos, see P. St. Makris-Staikos, Κίτσος Μαλτέζος. Ο αγαπημένος των Θεών, Ωκεανίδα, Αθήνα 2000.
94 A. Chrysochoou, ΚΚΕ, cit., p. 104.
95 V. Kalogrias, Okkupation, cit., p. 212.
96 To the activities of OPLA in Salonica see Sofia Iliadou-Tahiou, «Μέρες» της ΟΠΛΑ στη Θεσσαλονίκη. Τα χρώματα της βίας (1941-1945), Επίκεντρο, Θεσσαλονίκη 2013, pp. 184-201.
98 V. Kalogrias, Okkupation, p. 319.
Also in the Macedonian provinces OPLA carried out executions. Until February 1944 OPLA had created a central office and seven execution detachments in the region of Kilkis. «Reactionaries» were observed and the names of the members of the collaborationist groups were registered. Also members of KKE who had capitulated with the «reaction» became a target of OPLA and ELAS. In the spring of 1944, groups of OPLA acted as battle units on the side of ELAS against the collaborationist formations. In Agioneri OPLA killed some villagers who had cooperated with anti-Communist units and stood in contact with «reactionary elements» in Kilkis. In the town of Katerini OPLA executed several «collaborators of the Gestapo». After that, the «heads of the local reaction» fled to Salonica. In Halkidike OPLA dissolved a secret network which collected information for the British authorities in the Middle East about the German and Bulgarian troops. Its three members were executed, probably because they were suspected of working as spies against ELAS. At the same time, OPLA executed Nestoras Manoliadis, the chief of the local EDES-Committee in Halkidike.

In the eyes of its opponents – especially after the events of December 1944 in Athens – OPLA became a synonym for «red terror». But its terrorist activity was not the only one. The main instrument of «red terror» remained ELAS, which controlled a large mountain area and, in the meanwhile, threatened the cities – with the help of OPLA. In September 1944, ELAS started military operations against the Turkish-speaking strongholds of EES and other anti-Partisans groups. But their bloody conquest through ELAS was not completed until the withdrawal of the German troops from Macedonia at the end of October. On November 3/4, ELAS attacked the units of EES, which were gathered in Kilkis awaiting the arrival of British troops to help them. In the so-called «battle of Kilkis», ELAS seized the city and arrested many of the leaders (like Dagoulas) and members of EES and other «Security Battalions». About 1,500 anti-Communists – among them Kisa-Badzak and other collaborators of the Germans – lost their lives. Many of them were executed during or after the «battle». The arrested persons were sent to «concentration camps», one of which, for example, was in a former tobacco warehouse near Serres, east of Kilkis. Under humiliating conditions they had to wait for their trial as «collaborators».

The British consulate in Salonica noticed that even in January 1945...
the prisoners are housed in tobacco ware houses without heating and proper sanitary arrangements. Overcrowding is general, they have no bedding and lack water and soap. They mostly depend on food brought by relatives and friends: those who have none receive 100 drms of bread per diem and some thin vegetable soup. There is no medical service. Those who have been imprisoned for some time are in wretched physical condition. 

After the Occupation was over

In mid-November 1944, ELAS also attacked the «reactionary» Turkish-speaking villages in western Macedonia. Before that, in the presence of British officers the ceasefire negotiations between the local leaders of EES and ELAS ended without result. ELAS made a lot of arrests and carried out mass executions in Vathylakos and other places near Kozani. Mihalagas was arrested by ELAS two months later. Like other prominent anti-Communists such as Colonel Chrysochoou he was kept alive. The reason for this is not known. It cannot be excluded that EAM was planning a public trial for the future. It is worth mentioning that the «highlights» of «red terror» took place after the German occupation. In the case of the «Ohrana-Battalions», ELAS succeeded in persuading many of their members to join SNOF. A military campaign against the Slav-speaking minority was avoided, probably because it was considered as a potential ally against the Greek state. In the peninsula of Kassandra in Halkidike, ELAS dissolved the local anti-Partisan groups, whose surviving members fled to Salonica. But the city no longer provided safety. OPLA was on their track.

Not without reason, Poulos and his Volunteer Battalion had abandoned Salonica and followed Wehrmacht on its way back to Germany. But many other collaborators and «reactionaries» preferred to stay. Most of them, about 2,500 persons (including members of the «Security Battalions» as well as men and women arrested by ELAS as collaborators), were kept in the former German concentration camp of «Pavlos Melas». Among the prisoners were administrative functionaries like Chrysochoou and members of the non-Communist resistance groups like Colonel Miltiadis Vibli. In the first week of December, after a short stay in «Pavlos Melas», the arrested prominent «collaborators» were sent to the ELAS’ prison camp of Aridaia, next to the Greek-Yugoslav border. However they were released after the defeat of ELAS in the battle of Athens, in January.

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109 TNA FO 371/48246 R 903: From Salonica to Athens, No 30, Mr. Rapp, January 10, 1945.
111 Τ. Καλλιανιώτης, Οι αντικομουνιστές καπιτάνιοι, cit., p. 239.
112 The Slav-speaking inhabitants in western Macedonia were the main recruiting field of the successor of ELAS, the Communist-led DSE (Δημοκρατικός Στρατός Ελλάδας – Democratic Army of Greece), in the last two years of the civil war in Greece (1948-1949). In January 1949, KKE promised them an «autonomous Macedonian state». V. Kontis, Σοσιαλιστικά κράτη και ΚΚΕ στον Εμφύλιο, Επίκεντρο, Θεσσαλονίκη 2012, pp. 275-280. C. M. Woodhouse, The Struggle, cit., pp. 262-263.
113 V. Kalogrias, Okkupation, cit., pp. 288-289.
114 M. Mazower, Hitler’s Greece, cit., p. 357.
115 TNA FO FO 371/43697 R 20162: From Athens to Foreign Office, No 10, Mr. Leeper, November 26, 1944.
1944. Not so lucky were the arrested unknown «traitors» who were transported on foot from Salonica to the town of Arnaia, in eastern Halkidike. The majority of them were executed. According to a non-Communist source, the «highlight» was a mass execution of 136 persons on October 31st near Arnaia.

In the aftermath of Axis occupation, Macedonia became a place of mass executions. Only after the defeat of ELAS in Athens, did the wave of organized «red terror» come to an end. Its main object was the punishment of collaboration but also the struggle against «reaction» and other future political and ideological enemies who could be a threat to the power of KKE. It left behind bitter memories and built the preconditions for a new wave of right-wing violence against the left in the post-war era. Conversely, collaboration covered a wide spectrum of goals and motives with anti-Communism as the ideological spearhead of the armed peasant movement.