

DIDACTIC UNIT 2

# **Collaboration cases in Greece**

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## **Collaboration**

**28th Thessaloniki Lyceum, Thessaloniki, Greece**

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# 1. INTRODUCTION

## Title

The lesson plan is designed for high school students (15-18 year-old).

## Duration

12 teaching hours

## Sources

- “The travelling players”, film of Theo Aggelopoulos
- Videos
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HhbCT1yDkwE>
- <http://www.docfoc.com/47247906-1947>
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?t=98&v=avfe96lemFI>
  
- **Thucydides, *History of the Peloponnesian War*, Book 3, 82**

So bloody was the march of the revolution, and the impression which it made was the greater as it was one of the first to occur. Later on, one may say, the whole Hellenic world was convulsed; struggles being everywhere made by the popular chiefs to bring in the Athenians, and by the oligarchs to introduce the Lacedaemonians. In peace there would have been neither the pretext nor the wish to make such an invitation; but in war, with an alliance always at the command of either faction for the hurt of their adversaries and their own corresponding advantage, opportunities for bringing in the foreigner were never wanting to the revolutionary parties. The sufferings which revolution entailed upon the cities were many and terrible, such as have occurred and always will occur, as long as the nature of mankind remains the same; though in a severer or milder form, and varying in their symptoms, according to the variety of the particular cases. In peace and prosperity, states and individuals have better sentiments, because they do not find themselves suddenly confronted with imperious necessities; but war takes away the easy supply of daily wants, and so proves a rough master, that brings most men's characters to a level with their

fortunes. Revolution thus ran its course from city to city, and the places which it arrived at last, from having heard what had been done before, carried to a still greater excess the refinement of their inventions, as manifested in the cunning of their enterprises and the atrocity of their reprisals. Words had to change their ordinary meaning and to take that which was now given them. Reckless audacity came to be considered the courage of a loyal ally; prudent hesitation, specious cowardice; moderation was held to be a cloak for unmanliness; ability to see all sides of a question, inaptness to act on any. Frantic violence became the attribute of manliness; cautious plotting, a justifiable means of self-defence. The advocate of extreme measures was always trustworthy; his opponent a man to be suspected. To succeed in a plot was to have a shrewd head, to divine a plot a still shrewder; but to try to provide against having to do either was to break up your party and to be afraid of your adversaries. In fine, to forestall an intending criminal, or to suggest the idea of a crime where it was wanting, was equally commended until even blood became a weaker tie than party, from the superior readiness of those united by the latter to dare everything without reserve; for such associations had not in view the blessings derivable from established institutions but were formed by ambition for their overthrow; and the confidence of their members in each other rested less on any religious sanction than upon complicity in crime. The fair proposals of an adversary were met with jealous precautions by the stronger of the two, and not with a generous confidence. Revenge also was held of more account than self-preservation. Oaths of reconciliation, being only proffered on either side to meet an immediate difficulty, only held good so long as no other weapon was at hand; but when opportunity offered, he who first ventured to seize it and to take his enemy off his guard, thought this perfidious vengeance sweeter than an open one, since, considerations of safety apart, success by treachery won him the palm of superior intelligence. Indeed it is generally the case that men are readier to call rogues clever than simpletons honest, and are as ashamed of being the second as they are proud of being the first. The cause of all these evils was the lust for power arising from greed and ambition; and from these passions proceeded the violence of parties once engaged in contention. The leaders in the cities, each provided with the fairest professions, on the one side with the cry of political equality of the people, on the other of a moderate aristocracy, sought prizes for themselves in those public interests which they pretended to cherish, and, recoiling from no means in their struggles for ascendancy engaged in the direst excesses; in their acts of vengeance they went to even

greater lengths, not stopping at what justice or the good of the state demanded, but making the party caprice of the moment their only standard, and invoking with equal readiness the condemnation of an unjust verdict or the authority of the strong arm to glut the animosities of the hour. Thus religion was in honour with neither party; but the use of fair phrases to arrive at guilty ends was in high reputation. Meanwhile the moderate part of the citizens perished between the two, either for not joining in the quarrel, or because envy would not suffer them to escape.

Source: [http://en.wikisource.org/wiki/History\\_of\\_the\\_Peloponnesian\\_War/Book\\_3](http://en.wikisource.org/wiki/History_of_the_Peloponnesian_War/Book_3)

- “The vacant lot with the nettles” extract from *To Axion Esti*, the masterpiece of the Greek Nobel laureate poet Odysseus Elytis.

### **FOURTH READING: THE VACANT LOT WITH THE NETTLES**

ONE OF THE SUNLESS days of that winter, on a Saturday morning, lots of cars and motorcycles surrounded Lefteris's neighborhood, with its tin shutters full of holes and its sewer ditches along the street. And shouting wildly, from those cars and motorcycles came men with faces cast in lead and straight hair like straw. They ordered all the men to gather in the vacant lot full of nettles. And they were armed from head to toe, their muzzles leveled at the crowd. And the boys were really scared, because as it happened, almost all of them had some secret hidden in their pocket or their soul. But there was no way out. So making duty out of necessity, they lined up, and the men with leaden faces, straw hair, and black boots fenced them in with barbed wire. And they cut the clouds in two and sleet came down so hard that jaws could hardly keep their teeth in place.

Then, from the far side, walking slowly, **the Man with the Hood** appeared, his finger ready to point, and the hours shuddered on the great clock of angels. And whoever he chose to stand in front of was hauled out by the hair and thrown to the ground to be trampled. Until the moment came when he stood in front of Lefteris. But Lefteris didn't budge. He only raised his eyes slowly and gazed so far away—far into his own future—that the other felt the jolt and tilted back, almost falling. And rabid, he nearly raised his black hood to spit in his face. But again Lefteris didn't budge.

At that moment, the Great Foreigner with three stripes on his collar, following along behind, put his hands on his hips and snarled: "Look," he said. "Look at the men who say they want to change the course of the world!" And the miserable man, not knowing what truth he'd spoken, lashed his whip three times across Lefteris's face. And for the third time Lefteris didn't budge. Then, blinded by the worthless power in his hands, the Foreigner not knowing what he was doing, drew his revolver and blasted it at the root of Lefteris's right ear. And the boys were very frightened; and the men with leaden faces, straw hair, and black boots turned waxen.

Because the shacks all around shook as in an earthquake, and in many places the tarpaper fell off the walls, and far *off*, behind the sun, women appeared weeping, kneeling down in a vacant lot full of nettles and black clotted blood. While the great clock of angels chimed exactly twelve.

Elytis, O. 1974. *The Axion Esti*, trans. Ed. Keely & G. Savidis, University of Pittsburgh Press

### Aims

Based on Bloom's model<sup>1</sup>, the objectives of the lesson plan fall into 3 levels: the cognitive level, the values' and attitudes' level and the skills' level. This specific model has been chosen taking into account that it centers on the emotional objectives, those related to values and attitudes. This is very important if you take into consideration that the project's *Lessons for present, Lessons for future* main goal is that students involved in the project should form a set of values and principles.

Being involved in the lesson plan the students should:

#### a) Cognitive level

- Enrich their historical knowledge regarding the action of Greek people during the German occupation. In particular, students get to know that except for the spontaneous or organized acts of resistance, there were also acts of collaboration with the Axis forces either by the official government ("quisling" government) or by individual and parastate organizations.
- Learn both the profile of the Greeks that collaborated with the occupiers and their arguments according to which they justified their decision.
- Get acquainted with the press archives and learn about the role of the press during the Occupation.
- Become familiar with emblematic texts of both Classic and Modern Greek Literature with relevant content.

#### b) Emotional level

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<sup>1</sup> For more see: <http://teaching.uncc.edu/learning-resources/articles-books/best-practice/goals-objectives/blooms-educational-objectives>

- **level of values and principles**

- Consider what historical truth is and realize that history can be understood in various ways.
- Realize that arguments are not always true, even if they appear to be so.
- Need to realize the value of information as well as the negative aspects of misinformation. They should also understand the power of propaganda to shape people's attitudes.
- Realize the similarities that human behavior presents in wartime.
- Realize how they would feel if they themselves experienced betrayal actions.
- Realize that cooperation can prove to be positive or negative depending on your partners and its purpose.

- **level of skills**

- Learn how to cooperate and interact within the context of a group
- Acquire skills in using ICT (targeted research on the internet, use of presentation software).

### Methodology

The lesson plan is based on the principles of cooperative learning and inquiry-based learning<sup>2</sup>. This means that the students, split in groups, conduct a research that provides them with motivation, while it turns the teacher into a mere assistant<sup>3</sup>.

The activities are planned to be carried out by either every single group separately or the class plenary session. Each group deals with a specific topic while the teacher's role is limited to posing questions and giving guidelines. When finished, the research output is presented to the class while a common activity is assigned to all students. This way, all students are involved in the specific topic and the knowledge dissemination is achieved.

The lesson plan is organized in three stages. The first stage intends to introduce students to the subject and to provide them with the suitable motives to do their own research on it. The second

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<sup>2</sup> On Inquiry-based learning see: [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Inquiry-based\\_learning](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Inquiry-based_learning)

<sup>3</sup> [http://ksemoudania.wdfiles.com/local--files/example-item 4/ylikoKSE\\_Geniko\\_Meros\\_C\\_201304.pdf](http://ksemoudania.wdfiles.com/local--files/example-item%204/ylikoKSE_Geniko_Meros_C_201304.pdf)

stage is the main part of the lesson plan and the most time consuming one as most of the activities take place during this stage. Firstly, students split into groups and each group separately takes over its specific topic and works on it over the first two teaching hours. During the last two teaching hours the class unites, the groups present their results (1<sup>st</sup> hour) and the whole class take part in a common activity (2<sup>nd</sup> hour). Finally, the third stage is about the closing of the project and it allows time for discussions and rethinking.

### **Why cooperative learning?**

When students work in cooperative learning environments, they gain multiple benefits, concerning the cognitive level, the social level and the emotional one, too.

Team work enables students to achieve the highest possible degree of cognitive development (Vygotsky et al, 2012, 103). Through the members' cooperation, each group is pushed to reach to their highest thought and action state. In addition, students expand their development limits to their personal maximum, as they individualize the group achievements (Matsagouras, H., 8-9). Moreover, group work boosts the students' self-esteem. Similarly, it helps them acquire emotional maturity, influences their psychology positively and builds up their personality.

Additionally, students develop a high degree of responsibility, as they realize that their actions affect both themselves and their classmates. ( Johnson, D.W. 2009, 368). On a social level, the benefits of cooperative learning are self-evident, taking into consideration that it helps the students to develop social skills and improve their interpersonal relations ( Johnson, D.W. 2009, 372).

On the other hand, the various levels of development are not isolated, but they appear to be interacting magically with each other. For example, when experts advise that "If teachers want to increase early adolescents' achievement, teachers should facilitate the development of friendship"(Johnson, D.W. 2009, 372), in fact they focus on the dynamics between social and cognitive level using the notions "friendship" and "achievement".

Finally, students in cooperative learning settings achieve more, gain better understanding of information presented and higher self-esteem, like classmates and the learning tasks more and obtain social acceptance 4.

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<sup>4</sup> [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cooperative\\_learning](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cooperative_learning)



### Other aspects

- Classroom arrangements: The lesson plan can be held in an ordinary classroom. More space is needed during drama activities. The students can be moved in a more spacious room if there is one available; otherwise a special chair and desk arrangement will be needed.
- Groups: Students will work both individually and in groups.
- Equipment: A projector is needed for the images and the video to be displayed.

## 2. BIOGRAPHY RATIONALE

In the Greek language there is a word whose literal meaning does not exist in other languages. That word is the verb “μηδίζω” (midizo). This verb derives from the word Medes, the name of an ancient civilization in the Persian Empire. When the Persian king was marching against Greece with a huge army following him, people in few Greek cities got so scared that they switched sides (“μῆδισαν”) and went to support the Persians<sup>5</sup>. The metaphorical meaning of the word is close to the English “side with” or “defect”.

As history repeats itself, we learn that during war humans can act either as heroes of resistance or as collaborators with the occupants, due to fear or mere opportunism. Therefore, we have chosen to work on three specific topics aiming at motivating students to search for the various types of cooperation with the enemy, its causes and consequences on individuals and society as a whole: a) “Quisling” governments”<sup>6</sup> b) The Security Battalions c) The role of press during the Occupation

Firstly, the collaborative governments are examined in detail. Questions like “Who were the members of these governments?”, “What were their actions?”, “Why did they collaborate?” will be faced in this part. In addition, questions are being posed concerning how these governments justified their choices, what was their ideological background, what was their relation to the civil war that followed.

Secondly, the Security Battalions are studied. The reasons for their establishment and their members’ profiles are looked at. Furthermore, the biography of G. Poulos, the leader of a Security Battalion that took part in horrible acts in the wide area of Thessaloniki is presented. As a consequence, the questioning about the parastate activity of the state Security Battalions is aroused. This questioning is further extended: Supposing that the fear in face of the enemy is understandable, can we also justify the subsequent inhuman atrocities?

The type of cooperation as it is seen in the cases of “quisling” governments and Security Battalions is both obvious and named at the same time. Nevertheless, collaboration may also appear less personalized and might be covered as well so that it becomes more difficult to be

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<sup>5</sup> Herodotus, *Historiae* (7.172.1-7.174.1)

<sup>6</sup> The term “quisling” is used although it is not generally acceptable, since Greek “quisling” governments did act as puppet governments but they did not call the Nazi forces to invade the country.

detected. It might be about people wearing hoods that inform on their fellow men, or it might be about influencing the public opinion in favor of the occupiers and their collaborators. For example, when the Nazis invaded the Greek cities, the collaborative newspapers presented the “joy” of the Greek people while welcoming the German forces. Consequently, in the third part students deal with the role of the press in manipulating people’s conscience and the power of propaganda.

## 3. HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

### 3.1. “QUISLING GOVERNMENTS”

During World War II, and especially after the defeat of the French Army, Marshal Philippe Pétain of France introduced the term “collaboration”, used to signify the idea of facilitation and cooperation of an invaded country with the occupying forces. In Greece, the term widely used to describe this kind of cooperation, in which the defeated party practically forced by the victor, was the ideologically – loaded “dosilogismos”, which all but equals treason.

A most striking example of such “collaboration” was [Vidkun Quisling](#) (July 18, 1887- October 24, 1945), a Norwegian military officer and politician with fascist political views. During World War II, he invited Hitler to occupy Norway and sided with the occupying army during the invasion, thus securing, as a reward by Hitler himself, the office of Prime Minister, which he held until the end of the War. His surname is now infamously used as a synonym for “traitor” and is commonly referred to such governments in occupied countries from 1941 to 1944.

Prior to the outbreak of World War II and the armed conflict with the Axis Powers, Greece had been already saddled with its own internal issues and political battles. On April 27th, 1936, following the death of dominant political figure Eleftherios Venizelos, King George II appointed, unilaterally, Ioannis Metaxas as Prime Minister. Taking advantage of the political circumstances, tolerated and/or aided by the King and having ensured the consent of the United Kingdom, Ioannis Metaxas set in motion the creation of a dictatorial regime, fashioned after other similar European regimes.

The apathy of the party political system and the death of the Popular Party leader, Panagis Tsaldaris, left no room for manoeuvre (perhaps a coalition government) to the Liberal and Popular Parties, who had – until then- dominated Greek politics. When they realized, under the pressure of public opinion, the need for such an entente, it was already too late. Following the replacement of high- ranking military officers and Prefects with individuals of the King’s and his own entourage and in concordance with the King, he abolished the Constitution on August 4th, 1936 and imposed dictatorship, one that was neither imposed by a powerful political party nor constituted a [Coup d’état](#), but was in fact based on the tolerance and lack of initiative of the political system. Barring certain actions meant to contribute to the economic recovery of the

country, his authoritarian governance would be “crowned” by the –disputed by many historians– refusal, on the morning of the 28th of October 1940, to accept the Italian ultimatum which demanded unhindered entrance of the Italian troops in Greece: “The moment has come that we will fight for the independence of Greece, its integrity and its honor. Even though we kept the strictest neutrality and equal distance to all, Italy does not recognize that we should live as free Greeks and asked us today at three in the morning to surrender part of our national territory of their choice otherwise they would start military moves against us at six in the morning. I replied to the Italian ambassador that I consider the request and the manner the request was made as Italy’s declaration of war against Greece. Greeks, now it is time for us to prove if indeed we are worthy of our ancestors and the freedom that our forefathers secured for us. Our nation as a whole will rise united as one body. Fight for our Homeland, our women, our children and our sacred traditions. Now we fight for everything.” One year later, Diplomat and Nobel laureate in Literature, Giorgos Seferis will write: “When the 28th came, he couldn’t see that it was then and only then, and not at the festivities of the Stadium (referring to fascist fiestas of the regime), that the whole population was on his side, on the side of his refusal to Grazzi (the Italian Ambassador in Greece at the time) in that dawn. He failed to understand that that day did not ratify but abolished the regime of August 4th.” (Kasdaglis, 1972)

After the death of Metaxas and in a charged climate of general disintegration, Alexandros Korizis, appointed Prime Minister, committed suicide only days after the arrival of the German troops in Athens, while the Greek Army found itself in a terrible state. The King then invited renowned republican and anglophile Emmanouil Tsouderos to form a government, which caused Tsouderos to state that “his appointment is, in practice, the first royal disapproval of the dictatorship”. (Tsouderou, 1990, 1)

Consequently, during that time, Greece suffered from both a triple occupation, by Germany, Italy and Bulgaria and a quite peculiar political system, at first with two governments (the official Government under Emmanouil Tsouderos, who followed the King when he first fled to Crete and then to Cairo, and the subsequent Governments of the Occupation, as detailed below) and later, from March 1944, with three Governments, with the addition of the “Political Committee of National Liberation” or the “Mountain Government”.

Following the completion of the takeover and the Greek capitulation, the occupying forces wanted to ensure the viability of this “New Order”, taking full administrative and political

control over the occupied territories and aiming, on the one hand, to serve their own interests and, on the other hand, to cloak themselves with a semblance of internal political legitimacy. Furthermore, this choice would not only secure the desired passive support from the populace, but would also save them resources which would be of paramount importance for the war effort. In truth, they established a titular “self- government” of Greece, which had an additional purpose, namely to limit the Italian and Bulgarian nationalistic aspirations, who coveted the annexation of territories under their administrative control.

To wit, the occupation governments had no international recognition, acted as cogs in the occupation machine and their only concern was to serve the interests of Germany to the detriment of the Greek people. It is indicative of their marginal presence (and indeed only at the territories controlled by the Germans, as Italians and Bulgarians exercised full and immediate power over their areas of control), that these Governments lacked Ministers of Foreign Affairs.

### **The Tsolakoglou Government (April 30, 1941 - December 2, 1942)**

On April 20, 1941, General G. Tsolakoglou signed the first capitulation (that of the army of Epirus) and, on April 30th, he himself was appointed Head of the first occupation government, He confessed later: “I found myself before a historic dilemma: To allow the fight to continue and have a holocaust or, obeying the pleas of the Army's commanders, to assume the initiative of surrendering.... Having made my decision to dare, I did not consider responsibilities.... Until today I have not regretted my actions. On the contrary, I feel proud”. (Tsolakoglou, 1959, 250)

This first Quisling government included not only germanophiles, but also distinguished Generals who made history on the Albanian battlefield, such as Demestichas, Bakas, Moutousis, Katsimitros. (Makryghiannis, 1999, 336) Despite Tsolakoglou’s allusion with regard to the capitulation and the takeover of power, which he claimed only happened for the purpose of mediating and preventing the worst for the Greek people, the number of people who collaborated with the Germans and the rest of the occupation powers is both surprising and disconcerting. However, according to Chris Woodhouse, despite Ioannis Metaxas’ collision with the Axis, “he had cleared the path for the Occupation, readjusting accordingly the state apparatus and acclimatizing the populace to authoritarian governance. Consequently, the Germans did not need to invent a new kind of administration to fill the void and their only course of action was to find certain people for the empty posts in the Government”. (Woodhouse, 1976, 51) In support of this

statement, history professor, Dr. Hagen Fleischer, notes: "...the conquerors knew that the "August 4th" regime had already paved the way". (Fleischer, 1989, 362)

Archbishop of Athens and All Greece Chrysanthos refused to perform the inauguration ceremony of the new Government. This "problem" was solved by subsequent occupation Viceroy Damaskinos, who agreed to perform it instead.

Absent an organized popular resistance, the Government of George Tsolakoglou finds fertile soil to spread propaganda, based on three fundamental pillars (Antonopoulou, 2013) definitive break from previous Governments of the Metaxas regime, co- existence of the Greek people with the German occupying forces, which would be, ideally, quite different from the stereotypical relationship between conqueror and defeated and would imply protection and assistance of the latter and, lastly, dealing with the vital issue of food safety of the impoverished Greeks, who, on top of everything else, had to face speculation and black market practices. Following the death of 300,000 people who perished during the harsh winter of 1941- 1942, Tsolakoglou resigned on December 2, 1942, having miserably failed in all three tasks.

### **The Logothetopoulos Government (December 2, 1942- April 7, 1943)**

The man who succeeded G. Tsolakoglou as Prime Minister of Greece, now renamed as //Elliniki Politeia//, was none other than the Vice President of the previous Government and established doctor Konstantinos Logothetopoulos, who was indeed among the first who welcomed the German troops in Athens in April 27, 1941. That Government failed too in performing the above- mentioned three tasks and Logothetopoulos himself was driven to quit, as the demand of the Axis Powers for recruitment of Greek citizens age 16- 45, destined to be sent at the war factories in Germany and other occupied territories, was met with public outcry and massive protests and was therefore cancelled. We are now in the middle of the Occupation and the National Liberal Front and, on a more general note, the Greek Resistance, have started to materialize.

### **The Rallis Government (April 7, 1943- October 12, 1944)**

On April 7th, 1943, the office of Prime Minister of the German- oriented political construct "Elliniki Politeia" was assumed by Ioannis Rallis. As he refers, "The state should be prepared for its defence, if it were for its survival" (Rallis, 1947, 42). Unburdened by the problems of previous German- appointed Prime Ministers (as the alimentation of the population had already

been achieved by the food distributions of the Red Cross, he instead focused on the “timely” suppression of the Greek Resistance and, namely, of EAM- ELAS, (National Liberation Front-Greek People’s Liberation Army), against the continuous leakage of members of the regime who were fleeing to free territories and a growing feeling about the imminent defeat of the Nazis.

As a condition for becoming Prime Minister, Rallis had asked for permission for the establishment of 4 Battalions of Evzoni (selected light Infantry troops), the infamous “Security Battalions”, who would be tasked with maintaining order in the countryside, against the common Communist threat.

### 3.2. SECURITY BATTALIONS

According to the Greek people’s collective memory, the German occupation of Greece is a synonym to the Greek resistance against the Axis forces. However, there is the dark spot of some Greeks who collaborated with the German forces during that period of time. That collaboration came to life in terms of traitorous governments as well as several military officers and civilians that fought against their fellow countrymen. These people were organized in squads called Security Battalions.

This term is used to describe military squads that were set up during the last period of the German occupation (1943-1944) by collaborationist governments together with the German authorities. They aimed at fighting against the anti-Nazi resistance movement organized by the Greek guerilla army (EAM – ELAS) and their associates. The establishment of such battalions was serving the German authorities by sparing German military blood. The Security Guilds were under the orders of the SS captain and the German Police of Greece.

These battalions varied in relation with their organization and can fall under three categories. The first battalions were called “Evzonika”. They were established by the Rallis government. In fact, their establishment was a presupposition set by Rallis in order to take over governance. The men that formed the very core of those battalions were the honorific guards of the Unknown Soldier “Evzonoï”. The first battalions were launched in Athens in the fall of 1943. Over the next months 9 more were created that numbered approximately 6000 officers as well as soldiers in Patra, Agrinio, Korinthos, Pirgos and Nafpaktos.



The second category consisted of the main Security Battalions that started as volunteers' units. Created by the initiative of local nationalists, former members of the dissolved Greek army, those guilds were armed by Germans so as to turn against the Greek resistance army (ELAS). That kind of battalions appeared mostly in Peloponnese, while variations of them were formed in Western Crete, Attica, Kefallonia and Lefkada.

In some countryside villages, people could join those battalions either individually or in groups. In some other cases it was even obligatory to join those guilds. Refusing to join the battalions, some officers of Kalamata were imprisoned for long periods of time.

Those battalions grew instrumental in the German occupation troops and they carried out cooperative missions aiming at terrorizing the Greek population. They participated in cleansing operations execute by Wehrmacht, such as burning villages and successive road blocks in refuges' neighborhoods of Athens during 1944. Moreover, there are witnesses that these battalions contributed to the enforced recruit of workers to staff the German war industry as well as the selection of hostages that were about to be executed.

As a separate category, we will study the battalions that appeared in Northern Greece and were organized directly by German authorities without the Rallis government being involved. The Germans eschewed the involvement of Greek government as they didn't want to disappoint their allies, the Bulgarians. The Germans relied on the initiative of some Greek fans of national socialism, in order to form those battalions in Northern Greece. Macedonia, isolated as it was geographically from the rest of Greece, became the action field of armed squads guided by the Germans.

One of the most broadly known battalions is that led by Colonel Poulos. (see 8)

Antonios Vihos' battalion is subsequent to the Poulos' one. His men recruitment began in early 1944 when Greek resistance army had dominated Central and Western Macedonia. Vihos was in charge of all organizations that operated against EAM. His men were no more than 500-600 and were equipped by the Germans. Vichos established the Panhellenic Organisation of Nationalist Battalions (POET) whose aim was the elimination of the anarchists. The battalion's members were in favor of the New Order that the Germans were striving to install in Europe. They committed thefts, arrested people and even tortured them.

Eventually, Vihos was proved to be acting purely in his own best interests and profit. Besides, he did not offer Germans any military success against Greek resistance. When his great ambitions became obvious, the Germans imprisoned him in August 1944 and later on transferred him to Germany.

The gap that Vihos left behind was to be filled by a Security Battalion that had a different approach on how to get its members. That was the armed union of Kyriakos Papadopoulos widely known as Kisa Batzak that acted on mountain Pieria starting from the village Koukos. Kyriakos Papadopoulos and his fellow peasants were refugees of Pontos origin that had settled in the area due to the population exchanges. All of them were exceptional and fearless fighters, great shooters, dedicated to their leader and they had valuable experience of guerrilla warfare. Initially, they had been approached by both sides, the Germans and ELAS. Yet, in the memory of those people the role that the Russians played in the Pontos resistance war was still active. Moreover, they were conservative, fanatic Christians and of very low educational level. Apparently, they came to the conclusion that ELAS and EAM would be dangerous for their homeland, religion and family. Consequently, they joined the German army and fiercely fought against the Greek resistance.

Koukos village became the center of anticommunist actions. During a cleansing operation on mountain Olympus, Kisa Batzak's men managed to beat guerrilla units of ELAS. In November 1943, ELAS attacked Koukos, but its residents resisted strongly. Therefore, the Germans, convinced that Kisa Batzak and his 1500 men were a valuable ally against ELAS, provided them with heavy military equipment.

On Kisa Batzak's initiative, guns were distributed to residents of 10 more villages, sometimes even under threats. Consequently, the entire area proved to be a safety net for the Germans and the place where many ELAS members were killed in action. In summer 1944, Kisa Batzak settled in Thessaloniki as the leader of EES, an organization set up by the Germans themselves. His relationship to the Germans became closer and in July together with others he travelled to Vienna to meet with members of the Nazis regiment. Settled in Thessaloniki, he coordinated the last operations against the Greek resistance, and when the Germans started to retreat, he took shelter in EDES. In November 1944, when the Germans had already pulled out, the sanguinary battle of Kilkis took place between the Greek resistance and former German allies. At the end of that battle Kisa Batzak committed suicide, so that he wouldn't get captured by the communists.

Antonios Dagoulas' battalion was also responsible for a great many criminal activities. Originated from Grevena, Antonios Dagoulas ended up in Thessaloniki where he became leader of an armed unit that consisted of approximately 100 men. His battalion was strongly supported by the Germans in their fight against ELAS and its associates. Since March 1944, having unserved support by the German authorities, they committed mass executions killing people on the slightest suspicion.

In July 1944, mass executions multiplied with raids and road blocks in various city's neighborhoods. The members of Dagoulas battalion were dressed in grey uniform and had a red armband that bore a skull as their emblem. Furthermore Dagoulas himself was so cruel that he was given the name "The Dragon of Thessaloniki". Dagoulas' men were the scum of society and they had come together in order both to fight communism and make a living. Apart from the murders, they usually looted their victims' houses.

In October 1944 Dagoulas joined anti-German squads in order to shed off himself the stigma of being a traitor of his own homeland.

Except for the Security Battalions, namely the armed units that committed crimes against members of Greek resistance and Greek people in general, there was another mechanism operated behind the scenes, having access to all German administrative mechanisms. Part of that mechanism was Laskaris Papanaoim. He was a German supporter since the interwar, when he settled in Hamburg, turned to trading and married to a German woman.

He came back to Thessaloniki and in 1938 he was appointed to *Special Security*, a special division of Police aimed at beating communists. Holding that position Papanaoim kept German agents informed about what was happening inside the country. When German invaded Greece, his services were of utmost importance and later on he established a counter intelligence agency. Due to the information gathered by Papanaoim English soldiers were arrested and Greeks were executed.

Under the German protection, he operated in the black market and made a lot of money. He was the one who urged the German authorities to take counter-Semitic measures. While Jews of Thessaloniki were being deported, he laid his hands on the most important Jewish companies. When the war ended, he fled to Germany and became German citizen.

In summer 1944, the countdown of the Nazis occupation began. Germans although undefeated up to then, started to recede to the increasing attacks of Greek resistance. At the same time, German government ordered the gradual pull down of German troops and German administrative officers from Greece.

Even though the Germans showed great care about their allies especially the members of the Security Battalions and the EEE, this situation made everyone that had cooperated with Germans panic. Together with the Germans, collaborationists and their families started to abandon the country on foot or by train or even by plane. The leaders of EEE fled from Athens to Germany by train in September 1944. That train stopped in Thessaloniki in order to collect members of the local department of 3E and their families. That was the train that the Poulos' family and the families of the directors of Nea Evropi New Europe and Apogeumatini, newspapers that strongly supported the Axis forces escaped. Most of them took shelter in Vienna, vainly longing for restoration of national socialism. Members of the Security Battalions that were not protected by Germans found shelter in EDES.

Many of the collaborationists were called back to Greece and stood trial. These trials' records contain important information about the collaborationists' world and their inner motivation.

In their apologies most of them claimed that their recruitment to the Security battalions was fairly normal taking into account the current political conditions. According to their allegations they did nothing traitorous against their homeland. They had no other way to protect themselves from the communists' revenge who in their opinion were the ones that betrayed their country. Poulos claimed the same in an effort to take some weight off his shoulders at the Special Collaborationist Court.

The German Occupation of Greece ended in October 1944. The Security Battalion story did not end then, though. Not only did many battalions' members survive the civil war that followed, but also they became part of the victors in the post-civil war Greece and for many decades they dominated the Greek political scene. Together with their ideological descendants, they played a dark role in the political changes in Greece. Those changes are the subject of the last unit.

### 3.3. GREEK NEWSPAPERS COLLABORATING WITH THE ENEMY DURING THE OCCUPATION

The first thing the Germans did as soon as the occupation of Greece started was to put under control all of the mass media in order to impose their own propaganda. Implementation of censorship was assigned to the Tsolakoglou government which was ordained by the Wermacht in 1941. Media specialists of the “Mundus” company, who had been recommended by the Ministry of Exterior Affairs and Propaganda, were sent to Athens with a mandate to disseminate the German Propaganda in occupied countries (Koukounas, 2012).

When World War II broke out in 1939, many daily newspapers were in circulation in Athens.<sup>7</sup> Only two newspapers were forced to stop their circulation, the newspaper *Asyrmatos*, by order of Wilhelm Lischt, supreme commander of the Balkans, for unresolved reasons, or perhaps for personal reasons and the newspaper *Ethnos*, as its press was confiscated so that an Italian-speaking and a German-speaking newspaper could be published

The rest of the daily newspapers continued their publication as usual on the pretext of maintaining their personnel. However, they were under heavy censorship by the Italians and the Germans to the point that dissemination of information was virtually impossible. Nevertheless, they did try to delimit foreign propaganda, through co-operation of their reporters with the illegal and banned resistance press (Mayer, 1959, 2, 320).

On the contrary, in Thessaloniki the publication of almost all newspapers was prohibited and their presses were confiscated. The newspapers that were being published, --old and new -- became instruments of the conquerors’ propaganda (Kandylakis, 2008, 15). The newspaper *Nea Evropi* which started publication on April 14, 1941, became the main means of German propaganda just a few days after the German troops entered the city on April 9, 1941. *Nea Evropi*, along with the newspaper *Apogevmatini* (“the only pre-war newspaper of Thessaloniki that didn’t stop its circulation after the German invasion” Mayer, 1959, 3, 90), presented Thessaloniki as a prosperous city. They were two-page in regular format, or four-page in tabloid and the nazi propaganda as well as misinformation was apparent throughout their pages. Their policy was to project the war achievements of the German armed forces and hush up their

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<sup>7</sup> “*Eleftherion Vema, Kathemerini, Proia, Akropolois, Ellenikon Mellon, Ethniki, Chronos, Efemeris Dimoprasion, Economological, Demoprasiaikon Vema, Estia, Ethnos, Athenaika Nea, Vradini, Typos,*” Mayer, 1959, 2, 316.

defeats. There was scant reference to domestic news. Their editorials were against the Allies and the Greek guerilla-fighters and were strongly anti-Semitic and anti-communist in character.

As Vlassis Vlassidis, professor in the University of Macedonia, who is in charge of the digitization project of the archives of the newspaper *Nea Evropi*, aptly puts it: “They didn’t inform the people, really, about the genuine dramatic events happening and silenced a big part of them. They would limit the information to the orders and activities of the German high command and they only included news of minor importance to make things look better. They were very bad as newspapers go. Big news was normally absent and their reportage would publish only texts approved by the occupation forces”



In September 1944, the two newspapers that became the mouthpiece of the enemy merged into one, under the title *New Europe-Apogematini*, most probably due to paper shortage, until their last common publication in early October of 1944 (Koukounas, 2012) with the departure of the Germans (Mayer, 1959, 3, 90).

The official occupation newspapers that had sided with the enemy did not have any appeal to the public, save for the domestic German collaborators who exploited the misery of the poor civilians, in contrast with the resistance press which had real rapport with the people, even if it is very difficult to appraise the extent of its circulation due to the conditions of heavy prohibition that was in effect during those times.

### 4. BIOGRAPHY

Georgios Poulos was born in Romania in 1889. Little is known about his life up to the point that he appeared in Greece during the German Occupation. He was a supporter of Eleftherios Venizelos political party and took part in the Asia Minor campaign as a unit commander. He also participated in 1935's movement and after its failure he was cashiered. Consequently, he did not take part in the Greek – Italian and the Greek -German war. As soon as Germans invaded Greece, he openly sided with the Axis forces. His actions can be divided in two sectors: political and military sector. His political actions were in accordance with his national socialist ideology. He was pro- German and anticommunist and he visualized the implementation of the national socialist model of governance in Greece. In such case political and administrative offices would be bestowed upon him.

Since the first days of the German invasion in Thessaloniki, Poulos presented himself as the leader of the anti-semitic, anticommunist association called “Εθνική Ένωσις Η Ελλάς” (National Union of Greece), which was widely known as 3E. In the leadership of 3E, Poulos was mediating in the Greek police and the German authorities in order to make the two sides cooperate. In the summer of 1941 Poulos' and other members' of the 3E suggestions led to the first arrests of leftists. Poulos also handed over to the Germans a nominal list of the city's masons.

Nevertheless, his political activity hardly lasted the first months of German Occupation, as he was considered disreputable by both the citizens of Thessaloniki and the Germans. Although he was ambitious to gain high rank offices, he wasn't qualified for them. That's why the central administration of 3E regarded him as politically inadequate.

In early 1943, forced by the ELAS insurgents and their recent defeat in Stalingrad, Germans were desperate in seeking military support. Thus, although they did not consider Poulos ideologically adequate, they accepted his military services. At that point the German Military Administration decided that Poulos should establish his own volunteer unit. Despite Poulos' initial expectations, his men were no more than 300 and their fighting abilities were limited. Very few of them were cashiered officers that were seeking for a good salary. The majority of them were marginalized, unemployed and famished adventurers that had neither moral nor ideological boundaries. The only reason why they joined these battalions was to get richer from the loot they hoped to gain. They adopted criminal behavior against Thessaloniki's citizens and



robbed them in the name of the anticommunist fight they were conducting. Some of them were seeking for the opportunity to revenge the death of a relative that had been killed during the Greek resistance. These men were dressed in German military uniforms and they themselves and their families were provided with food, salary and medical care.

Poulos organized an entire mechanism of terror and propaganda, to recruit his men. The base of that organization was Poulos' house in Thessaloniki's city center. The new members' recruitment papers were issued there, while the basement of the house was turned into a torture room.

This battalion's action took place at first within the city of Thessaloniki. Later on it expanded in Western Macedonia where the battalion was moved. Poulos' men were strolling around the streets close to their master's house and their offices and they attacked police officers and civilians. They taunted, insulted and eventually arrested them and took them to their base and beat them up. In the spring of 1943, Poulos was the first one to seize Jewish assets, when they were deported by Germans. He got the jewellery shop of Botton brothers at Mitropoleos street. Jewish shops were passed down to Poulos battalion's members as well.

In the June of 1943, this volunteer squad left Thessaloniki in order to continue their fight against the ELAS units in Western Macedonia. They organized the villages that had been struck by the resistance's soldiers, the so-called conservative villages, and turned them into the very base of their operations. Out of their thirst for money and loot, Poulos' soldiers behaved with extreme brutality even towards civilians. That was the case of Lehovo in Florina which Poulos' soldiers torched and looted. The same tactics were applied in the maltreatment of the civilians in Siatista.

In October 1944, Poulos and his battalion, at that time settled in Halkidona, followed the retreating German army and crossed the Greek – Yugoslavian borders. They took part in fights that the German army was conducting against Austrian and Slovenian resistance. Three years later, Poulos was called back to Greece and went through trial. He was sentenced to death and eventually executed.



## 5. ACTIVITIES

### 5.1. ACTIVITY 1

A short excerpt of “The travelling players”, a film of the famous Greek director Theo Aggelopoulos is presented to the students (7.53 minutes)<sup>8</sup>.

The movie refers to the most important political events in Greece over the period 1936 – 1952. This scene takes place on New Year’s Eve 1946. The period depicted in the film is subsequent to the one that we work on our lesson plan. Nevertheless, this scene was chosen because it gives us the opportunity to talk about the civil war that followed the German occupation in Greece. Through a flashback, students will examine the reasons that led to that civil war. It should be noted that those reasons are not irrelevant to the ideological background of the people that took part in the resistance movement and the people that collaborated with the enemy.

The scene takes place in a tavern. The tavern’s customers fall into two categories: Those that support the king and those that want democracy to prevail. These two sides “battle” through songs they are singing<sup>9</sup>.

The students are asked to:

- Observe the “battle” through the lines of those songs
- Note the differences between the two sides concerning their appearance and behavior (clothing, gun possession, terrorism, enforcement etc)

The students have the chance to express their remarks, while the teacher guides their discussion in order to underline the conflicting atmosphere that exists in the film excerpt. Thereafter, the teacher poses questions like: How did our country end up in a civil war? What preceded the civil war? Is the civil war and the occupation period connected to each other? Weren’t the Greeks united against the Nazis? Didn’t they all take part in resisting organizations? The last question helps the students understand that the former theme unit (Resistance) is connected to the new one (Cooperation with the occupation forces). The title is then written on the blackboard.

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<sup>8</sup> [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=\\_BsiDkHPcDM](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_BsiDkHPcDM)

<sup>9</sup> <http://www.cine.gr/film.asp?id=1215&page=4>

### 5.2. ACTIVITY 2

The students split in 4 groups of 5 (depending on the number of participants) and a specific task is assigned to each group. The teacher also gives advice to the groups on how they will work, what they should search for, what they expect the outcome of their work will be. Also they set the timetable. As usual, when students work in groups everyone has their own role.

The name of each group comes from the kind of work they have to carry out. So, the names of the groups are:

1. The group of history researchers
2. The group of files researchers
3. The group of biographers
4. The group of performers/drama players

### 5.3. ACTIVITY 3: Collaboration with the Occupier

This group's task is to research the Greek governments that cooperated with the Nazis and present the issue to their classmates.

Students are provided with books, reliable websites and audiovisual material (videos of the TV show Time Machine<sup>10</sup> or documentaries concerning Security Battalions<sup>11</sup>)

The following topics could be looked into:

How did Greece end up in capitulation in April 1941 despite the Greek troops victories in the fall and winter of 1940?

What were the collaboration governments?

What was the profile of the prime ministers that collaborated?

Which decisive thought led them to capitulation<sup>12</sup> – what was their argument?

What were the Security Battalions, why and who established them?

(duration 2 teaching hours)

During the class plenary session: The group of history researchers should present their research results through either a short presentation or a prepared speech (duration 1 teaching hour).

Immediately after that, a short activity that concerns all the students takes place with the teacher's assistance. After they have been informed about the collaboration governments and the arguments they put forward in order to justify their choices, the students take part in a debate on the subject: "I support capitulation – I reject capitulation" (duration 1 teaching hour).

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<sup>10</sup> <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QQNnI9T7Tzc>

<sup>11</sup> <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HhbCT1yDkwE>

<sup>12</sup> Γεώργιος Ι. Πάλλης, *Ο Ιωάννης Δ. Πάλλης ομιλεί εκ του τάφου*, Αθήνα 1947. <http://www.docfoc.com/47247906-1947>

### 5.4. ACTIVITY 4: Propaganda through press

This group's task is to look into the role of the official occupation newspapers through press archives and to present this subject to their classmates.

The students are led to research newspapers' files while drawing their attention mostly on:

- The newspapers' headlines
- Iconographic material: Photos, posters and sketches (for example the ones of famous Greek sketcher Fokion Dimitriadis).

The following questions might be posed:

- What were the Nazi tactics regarding the press of the occupied countries?
- How is the Germans' invasion, the occupation and the cooperation with the occupier presented by the press?
- What were the German-friendly newspapers published in Thessaloniki?
- What was the public opinion about the "official" occupation newspapers?

(duration 2 teaching hours)

During the class plenary session: The files' research group will present their findings through a presentation.

Following the presentation, the teacher guides and encourages the students to take part in a common activity that concerns all students.

The students are handed an excerpt from Thucydides History concerning "war's pathology" (appendix 1). The specific part of the text is selected, as it reveals clearly how people distort the meaning of the words in wartime, in order to serve their own interests. Through this specific activity, the students are asked to discuss the role of propaganda in wartime (duration 1 teaching hour)

### 5.5. ACTIVITY 5: Compiling the biography of G. Poulos

This group's task is to compile the biography of notorious Georgios Poulos, the leader of a Security Battalion, and present it to their classmates.

Poulos was chosen because his activity range was Thessaloniki and the nearby area. The students are handed certain questions to help them with their research. However, the teacher determines whether other issues can be included if it is required depending on the research results. Questions might be:

- Who was Poulos?
- What were his actions?
- What were his motives?
- Narrative of an incident (optional)

(duration 2 teaching hours)

During the class plenary session: The biographers' group should introduce Poulos to their classmates through a presentation or a prepared speech (duration 1 teaching hour).

Following the presentation, an activity for all students takes place. Two short videos are presented to the students concerning the occupation forces' atrocities in the area of Thessaloniki, namely the cases of Hortiatis<sup>13</sup> and Giannitsa<sup>14</sup>. According to the historical evidence, members of Security Battalions were involved in both cases. The teacher asks the students to point out similarities between the two cases.

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<sup>13</sup> On the case of Hortiatis: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?t=98&v=avfe96lemFI>

<sup>14</sup> On the case of Giannitsa: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ub8wc9oNnMQ>

### 5.6. ACTIVITY 6: The issue of cooperation in literature

The group's task is to work on the subject of cooperation through a literature book and present it to their classmates.

The group of the drama players works on the text "The vacant lot with the nettles" that comes from *To Axion Esti*, the masterpiece of the Greek Nobel laureate poet Odysseus Elytis (Appendix 2).

The students should:

- Point out the place, the time and the people
- Discuss, for example who is "The man with the hood that raised the finger"

(duration 2 teaching hours)

During the class plenary session: following the discussion, the group of the drama players has to dramatize the text. They aimed at emotionally affecting their classmates. While working on the dramatization there might be Mikis Theodorakis' music playing in the background. Mikis Theodorakis is a reknown Greek composer that composed the music for "The Axion Esti" by Elytis, the emblematic work of Greek poetry. Next, a Tableau vivant is set under the teacher's guidance. The students take roles according to the text "The vacant lot with the nettles". All students are assigned victim roles but one takes the role of "The man with the hood that raises the finger". The scene freezes. The students stand completely still. "The teacher touches one of the victims. The victim "comes to life" and talks about his/her emotions and thoughts. The procedure is repeated until all students speak. (duration 1 teaching hour).

### 5.7. ACTIVITY 7

The groups dissolve, the class becomes a whole again and the students sit in a circle and they are encouraged to talk about their thoughts and feelings.

The students refer to their feelings through Brainstorming. The teacher writes down the answers on the board.

Then, the students discuss and evaluate the lesson plan. Finally, the teacher poses general questions such as:

- Why would someone hide their face while doing something?
- Do you know any other cases of “men with the hood” or of organizations that act in a similar way? (Ku Klux Klan, ISIS)
- What did you know, did you learn anything new, did anything impress you, what are your conclusions and what are your thoughts in general?

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