

NAZI WAR CRIMES DISCLOSURE ACT- NWDCA

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2000

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HELLENIC INFORMATION SERVICE
DEPARTMENT IIa

INFORMATION BULLETIN

" A " No. 42

- J A N U A R Y 1944. -

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JANUARY 1944.-

THE RESISTANCE OF THE GREEK PEOPLE

Never for a moment has the resistance of the Greek people to their barbarous invaders slackened, in spite of the immense sacrifice entailed by their open support of National Organisations and Guerilla groups. Employees organise and express their protest by strikes and assemblies. Workers enlisted for compulsory labour by the Germans seek every opportunity to escape from the labour camps in full knowledge that they will probably pay heavily both in blood and money for their rashness. Farmers and peasants are well equal to their fellow patriots in the towns, in their acts of open resistance and the example of the inhabitants of Megalli Vrissi who refused to pay the tithe (tax equal to the 10% of the crop) when the cereal crop was being gathered is not the only one in the country. The Germans not only seized all property of the inhabitants of the Megallo Vrissi but also imposed a fine of many million Drachmas, upon them.

With the recent plunders of food stores by the Germans in Salonica, the population of the town organised manifestations for the problem of food supply which had become so acute. Two manifestations took place in Salonica on the 10/11/43.- One crowd gathered in front of the palace of the Governor General which housed all the Departments of the Greek Directorate and another crowd assembled in front of the German Directorate in Eleftheria Square. The attitude of the Greek gendarmerie during these manifestations was very lenient because the crowds were mostly composed of women, children and old men. Hardly any arrests were made except for those effected previously by the Gestapo and amounting to 50 persons.

The Germans on the excuse that large quantities of food had been hidden by the inhabitants did not just content themselves in seizing large stocks, but went as far as to seize even the smallest quantity kept in store by civilians for their personal use. Stocks seized were composed mostly of large quantities of food and charcoal.

The situation now has taken a tragic turn, for with the intense Guerilla activity, the Germans are in no position to supply the Salonica garrison and their troops round the Ohris lake, from the Balkans or Central Europe, and these have therefore to be fed by food which is requisitioned locally.

All the wheat crop of Halkidiki and Macedonia as well as large quantities of wood were thus seized by the Germans. Now the Germans using as excuse that the Guerillas seize existing food supplies, gather in the wheat crop themselves. All the wheat crop was assembled in small market towns round Salonica and loaded according to transport facilities at the Nazi's disposal in Salonica. This, led to a clash between Greek workers employed in loading sacks of wheat on to the trains for Salonica and the German guards in November. The workers refused to load the corn unless part of the requisitioned crop would be handed over to the local food supplies authorities. Faced with the workers obstinate resistance, the Germans opened fire upon them, killing one and wounding 2 others.

On the 10/7/43, all the inhabitants of Neo Ghinekokastron Community were assembled together in the main square by a sudden pealing of the Church bells, the crowd started cheering for liberty, for a greater Greece, and against the extension of the Bulgarian occupation and the entry of Bulgarian troops in KILKIS.

In order to repress this outburst of National feeling, a fine of 20 million Drs. was imposed on the inhabitants of the Community and the German military Police Commander ordered the confiscation of all private property of all peasants considered responsible for this manifestation.

The population of Malkidiki manifest daily and openly their National feelings and the National Anthem is sung in public places in front of Germans and Bulgarians, who avoid all interference, fearing activity of stronger Guerilla groups in this area.

On the 12/10/43, in spite of all terrorist measures taken by the Germans in Athens, and particularly in the streets during the passage of British prisoners captured in the Dodecanese, the population managed to surge close enough to them in spite of shots and severe ill-treatments by the German guards and giving them whatever they had in their possessions.

- GUERRILLA WARFARE -

- Activity of the 5/42 Regt. in the Lidorikion area.
- German forces routed at several points.
- Mortars, machine guns and a large quantity of war material captured.

COMMUNIQUE :-

Greek Guerilla Groups
5/42 Evzones Regt.
Communiqué No. I - 17/9/43

During operations round the town of Lidorikion by Units of the 5/42 Regt. lasting for 3 days, from the 12th to the 14th inst. the following actions were fought :-

11/9/43 The Italian garrison of Lidorikion was isolated and surrounded by detachments of the 5/42 Regt. and negotiations for their capitulation started. An English major arrived on the spot and acceded to the demand of the Italian major, commanding the garrison, to allow them a delay for their capitulation up to 18.00 hours of the next day.

12/9/43 A German plane flew over the fortress at 9.00 a.m. in the morning and dropped packages of unknown content, in the meanwhile, 15 trucks full of German troops moved from Pafaktos to Lidorikion in order to relieve the besieged Italian troops. The Germans attempted an attack on our positions, but were repulsed by our automatic fire. With the German attack, the Italians broke their promise to the British major and opened fire on our positions with their mortars and machine guns, the men of the Regiment fought heroically both against the Italians protected by their stronghold and against the Germans who were trying to encircle them.

13/9/43 Our detachments continued their pressure against the enemy, expecting a sudden night attack.

14/9/43 All through this day, fierce engagements took place. Some 200 Germans with machine guns and mortars moved to Skakoula, where they started setting fire to some of the houses.

As soon as their intentions were evident, detachments of the 5/42 Regt. fired on the Germans who panic stricken withdrew into Lidorikion, abandoning their mules, mortars, machine guns and equipment.

All during the day, the men of the Regiment made proof of courage and heroism, adding new pages of glory to their history. One officer (Har. Lainas, lieutenant of artillery) and a sergeant were wounded.

Communiqué No. 2-

Ever since the start of the battle for Lidorikion on September the 12th. the Regiment detached one of its light units, composed of some 30 men with 3 L.M.G.'s and sent them to Anathema, in order to hinder all attempts of the enemy to despatch reinforcements from Amphissa. This detachment took up position at AMIGDALEONAS - North of ANATHEMA on the 15/9/43 and at 16.30 hours attacked a German column comprising 3 tanks, 10 cars and 2 motorcycles, compelling them to return to Amphissa. 3 of our officers and soldiers were wounded in this engagement. The enemy abandoned 2 cars on the scene and suffered many casualties. Later a reconnaissance was carried out in order to establish more accurately the enemy's casualties.

Communiqué No. 3-

On the 17th of September 1943, our detachments had taken up positions at ANATHEMA and at 9.00 hours, attacked a strong German column composed of 50 cars, tanks and motorcycles. Several vehicles were destroyed and many casualties both in killed and wounded were inflicted on the enemy who was forced to withdraw to Amphissa.

The besieged enemy garrison within LIDORIKION, attempted to break our lines with a motorised column, in order to effect a junction with the attacking Germans from Amphissa. This move was however, counteracted and the enemy column forced to withdraw into LIDORIKION.

Our casualties from these engagements were slight: 2 soldiers were wounded one of which severely and an officer in charge of one of the detachments.

A patrol composed of three men, laid in ambush in the KRITSILIA plain in DESPOTIA area and attacked on the 10/9/43 at 4.20 hours a detachment of 20 Germans withdrawing from the battle of ARAHOVA. 2 Germans were killed and an officer and 4 or 5 soldiers wounded. The patrol lost 1 man killed. One of our reconnaissance patrols captured a German soldier, a Skoda L.M.G. was also taken in perfect condition.

With the downfall of Italy, all Guerilla activities assumed new proportions and extensions. A large quantity of arms, ammunition and equipment fell into the Guerillas' hands, and the Guerilla war can now be carried further afield with better hopes for the future. One of the very first results that were felt, was the restriction of the occupation forces to large inhabited centres, thus, freeing all the Eparchies and the Country from enemy occupation.

COMMUNIQUE OF THE NATIONAL GUERILLA GROUPS

A German column, over a battalion in strength, moving along the main Ioannina-Metsovon road, contacted our advanced detachments in the Driskos area at 6.p.m. An engagement was fought, but faced with the enemy's superiority we withdrew fighting a delaying action with the enemy up to Balthouma bridge. There our troops counter attacked and the enemy was thrown back to his starting point beyond Driskos area and all our previous positions were re-occupied. We lost 1 killed and 4 wounded, 2 of which seriously. Enemy losses :- A large number killed and wounded, exact numbers are unknown. 12 German dead were left on the battlefield.

SPECIAL COMMUNIQUE SUB No. 36- A strong German reconnaissance detachment came into contact with our Units in the Driskos area on the 9/9/43 at 12.00 hours. An engagement took place which lasted up to 16.00 hours and the enemy was completely annihilated, but for 12 who were taken prisoner. Our losses :- 1 wounded.

G.H.Q. 10/9/43-

Early morning on the 28/12/43, near Krania village - Preveza area - a Guerilla Unit obtained an overwhelming victory over a German column 500 men strong.

On the same day, small concentrations of Germans, attacked Guerillas at Skala (Paramythia). The engagement lasted for 5 hours and the enemy was repulsed.

On Christmas eve, Guerillas engaged the Germans near Mellis approx. 6 kms. from Ghiannitsa. A bridge was destroyed and casualties inflicted on the enemy.

A stubborn fight was reported raging North of Pindos and Piera, against the Germans who suffered large casualties.

A typhus epidemic was reported to have broken out in the Parnassos district. A fierce German attack was repulsed by the Guerillas during the 17-18th of December 1943. The German lost :- 165 - killed and wounded.

Ever since the occupation, the Germans, Italians and Bulgarians were not the only ones who indiscriminately took their toll of innocent Greek lives. The Albanians whenever they could after the fall of Greece, burnt down Greek villages, plundering the meagre belongings of the inhabitants and killing numerous Greek subjects in the North of Epirus. They played a most bloody role in the pay of their Italian masters and to-day with with the fall of Italy, they offer their murderous services to the Germans.

On the 28th of September 1943, an engagement was fought near Lefterochori between Guerillas and a German detachment comprising also 10 Albanians. 5 Germans were killed and an Officer and 2 Albanians wounded, the remainder turned and fled. In reprisal, the Albanians together with Germans arrested 49 notables and 11 peasants in the surroundings and executed them on the 30/9/43:-

Fierce engagements were fought between German troops and Guerillas who were eventually compelled to evacuate the Grevena, Metsovon and Kalambaka areas. The Germans have thus, once more become masters of the Kalambaka-Ioannina road.

C R E T E

On the 17th of November 1943, a German patrol composed of 17 Germans and 3 Italians entered Ahlada village area. A Guerilla Unit stationed in Pitharaki informed of the presence of Germans immediately set off in pursuit. A severe engagement ensued, lasting all day and the patrol was finally confined to a small house on the Westerly confines of Ahlada village, leaving 5 killed on the scene of action. The building in which they took refuge was a cheese dairy built of concrete. In spite of stiff resistance, the Guerillas manage to storm the building and climbing on to the roof threw hand grenades into the rooms where the remaining Germans had taken refuge, killing them all off.

On the 23/9/43 a german detachment drawn from the 745 Canea Regiment, some 100 men strong, encircled Koustogherakon village and arrested 50 inhabitants, without distinction of age or sex. The Germans then, lined them up with the intention of executing them. This was, however, seen by a nearby guerilla unit which led by a 2nd/Lt. approached the village and opened fire on the german execution squad. Panic stricken the latter abandoned their victims and took up positions North east of the village so as to face the Guerillas. A fierce engagement lasting all day was fought. 20 Germans were killed and over 60 wounded and a large amount of ammunition and a wireless set were captured. Unfortunately, however, the Germans had already executed some 15 of their victims including 4 children.

On the following day, a german detachment disembarked at Soughia Bay. A Guerilla detachment completely annihilated them with heavy machine gun fire.

On the third day Guerillas were forced to withdraw because new german reinforcements of 400 men with mortars had arrived on the scene. We mention here in particular the bravery of John Siradakis 75 years old, one of those executed later. In spite of his age during the arrests, he seized a rifle he had hidden in his house and shot the german officer, a Lieutenant in charge of the squad and wounded 2 soldiers.

C E P H A L O N I A . -

From recent reports we learn that the military operations for the occupation of the Island by the Germans lasted 4 days.

With the Italian collapse, the Italian garrison, over 7,000 in strength, joined the greek Guerillas and decided to resist every german attempt for the capture of the Island. Command of the defence was undertaken by a common H.Q. composed of Guerillas and Italians. The Germans demanded the surrender of the defenders and of all forces on Cephalonia. On refusal, they disembarked at various points of the Island with the support of intense bombing attacks on all main points. The defenders resisted for 4 days causing severe casualties to the enemy.

6.

The surrender of a strong Italian detachment under the leadership of the Italian General compelled the remainder to give in.

Damages caused to the Island are enormous. 2/3 of Argostoli town and many villages were completely destroyed and it is estimated that some 4,000 troops and civilians were killed.

S A M O S . -

On the 29/11/43, an engagement took place between a German detachment of 20 men and 5 Guerillas near Manolates village. 3 Germans were killed and 7 wounded. Guerillas lost 2 killed and 1 wounded.

In September 1943, an engagement was fought between a group of 6 Guerillas and an Italian patrol in the Kerki mountain. 6 Italians and 1 Guerilla were killed.

E U V O E A . -

After Italy's collapse, Italian troops on the Island handed most of their equipment over to the inhabitants. The whole Island is to day ruled by Guerillas. The 7th Guerilla Regiment in Evvoea formed on a military basis and equipped with Italian material and weapons is now well able to give heavy blows to the Germans.

During October-November 1943, Guerillas in Evvoea fought two engagements with the Germans. The first was fought in the Psahna area, the Germans were routed leaving behind 6 killed and 12 wounded. In the second which took place in Prokopion village the Germans lost 9 killed and a large number wounded. Guerilla losses were slight.

- SABOTAGE -

25/12/43. In Macedonia Guerilla detachments destroyed 2 railway engines, a fair number of trucks and many sectors of the Salonica-Gevgeli line.

Other Guerilla detachments caused serious damages in the Mavronerio (Goumenitsa) lead mines. They also cut all road communications between Elasson-Katerini by destroying the bridges.

On the December 24th 1943, Guerilla groups destroyed 2 railway engines in the Panteleimon tunnel north of Larissa.

In Pireaus harbour, during August, many attempts were made to blow up 3 anchored ships requisitioned by the German occupying forces.

- GERMAN REPRISALS -

After Italy's collapse, German reprisals against the civilian population increased considerably.

THESSALY. 70% of houses and property of villages attacked by the Germans have been destroyed. 600 persons were arrested as hostages and sent to Thessaly's concentration camps. 160 others were arrested in Karditsa for helping and collaborating with Britishers. Nothing on their fate is known.

PELOPONNESE. German atrocities are beyond any human description. During December 1943, Kalavrita was occupied and set on fire. From the 2500 houses only 6 escaped complete destruction.

In the Town Cemetery some 1350 persons over 12 years of age were literally slaughtered.

Many villages of this area were burnt and the peaceful monasteries of Aghia Lavra and Megha Spyleon were attacked and plundered. All their gold and silver offerings were looted, their libraries, their works of Art, their famous wall paintings and pictures, true representatives of the greek spirit and church, lay a few hours after the passage of the german vandals under a mass of smoking ruins.

During the same period a second german attack was carried out in Tripoli North East to Stymfalia so as to terrorise the civilian population. Several villages were attacked plundered and destroyed. Damages caused are immense.

On the 11/9/43 a german plane machine gunned for 20 minutes the market town Aliverion (Euvoea) and all the Karavos coast line causing casualties amongst the civilian population.

Three gendarmes were arrested by the german Authorities of Larissa and executed for being members of an armed group.

German army detachments from Paramythia and Pargha burnt the following villages on the excuse that Guerillas had passed through the area: Hotka, Ghliko, Potamia, Vouvopotamon, Nemitsan, Spathareai, Ammoudia, Koronopoulo and others.

The destruction of the above was completed by armed moslems who plundered the villages and killed even 3 of the inhabitants.

Soliada village was also set on fire and 140 houses of the 200 destroyed.

On the 9/9/43 bulgarian soldiers followed by Komitatzides from Kerkini, encircled Mesolofon village (Kilkis) and started firing at it. The inhabitants panic stricken fled and the village was looted and plundered.

Six inhabitants from Edessa were taken as hostages by Edessa's german military Police.

The following measures were taken by the Germans in reprisals for continuous Guerilla activities, in the Diaghrou, Ano and Kato Simi areas - Crete.

1) On the 16/9/43 a german unit burnt Myrton village to the ground.

2) On the 16/9/43 Mouries, Dohia, Mythia and Riza villages were set on fire.

On the 19/9/43, in reprisals for sabotage committed by Guerillas the german military authorities executed many inhabitants of Akrotopi village (Filippias).

On the 19/9/43, 10 persons were executed by the Germans in Selades village (Arta) in reprisal for sabotage committed by Guerillas.

On the 30/9/43, 19 persons were executed by the Germans in Loutrotopi village (Arta) for sabotage committed by the Guerillas.

8.-

On the 18/10/43, German troops set fire to 92 houses out of the 93 of Eleftherion village in reprisal for an engagement with Guerillas. Amongst the houses were a school and 3 churches.

On the same day these troops went to Pades village, burnt down 132 houses out of the 142 killing also a man and a woman.

In the Distraton village only 27 houses out of the 220 standing the others having been burnt to the ground.

In the Falconelion village, 65 houses out of the 126 were burnt down.

Many villages of Western Thessaly were destroyed in reprisal for guerilla activities. Of these an average of 80% of the houses and 70% of shops were completely destroyed.

In S.W. Thessaly the enemy passing through villages arrested all males sending those aged from 20 to 30 years to compulsory labour camps at Ekaterini and those between 30-40 to the Katara tunnel.

In the Peloponese 4 villages of Meghaloupolis area were burnt down by the Germans in reprisal for Guerilla activity.

At Monodendri 150 hostages were shot. Executions are reported in many villages of this area.
Routsli village was burnt to the ground.

On the 20-30/10/43, in reprisal for guerilla activity German troops burnt down the following villages of the Ioannina area:

1) Fortazion, 10 houses burnt to the ground. 2) Avghon 40 houses burnt to the ground and 2 persons killed. 3) Krifovon, burnt to the ground. 4) Ravenia burnt to the ground. 5) Pizanion, 3/4 of the houses burnt to the ground. 6) Serviana, half the village destroyed. 7) Bassifa the whole village. 8) Asprohori, completely burnt to the ground. 9) Tseritsiana a 1/4 of the houses. 10) Ellinikon 55 houses burnt to the ground. 11) Kontovrakion, the 1/4 of the houses. 12) Kalmentzion 75 houses burnt to the ground. 13) Aetorahi, 18 houses. 14) Krapsi 5 houses. 15) Anatiliki 30 houses. 16) Mikra Ghipiota 100 houses. 17 & 18) Megha Peristerion, the whole village was burnt to the ground. 19) Mikro Peristerion, the whole village. 20) Kouzakei, 10 houses. 21) Ky-parrissia, one house. The villages of Dazena and Dasiana were plundered.

Cairo, February 5th 1944

The
H . I . S .

sgnd. The Commanding Officer
N. TSANGARIS, Captain R.H.N.

To certify true copy
Dept. IIA



E. VOURLAKIS, W/Commander