

THE ACCUSED

George THEMELIS, Under Minister of National Defense

Merten charges that during the German wartime occupation of Greece Themelis, who was Nomarch of Edessa under the Germans, arranged to collect hostages from among the Greek population against the safe transportation of goods, and took bribes to include on his list of hostages names of the business rivals, etc. of his bribers.

So far, we have no information on THEMELIS' reaction to the charges.

On 4 October Democratic Liberal Party leader George Papandreou demanded that Interior Minister Makris and Themelis resign while the libel trials are on.

Biographic Background:

Born in 1896 in Salonika where he has been a permanent resident, Themelis graduated from the Military Cadets School in 1918, attended the Superior War College and various air schools in France, transferred in 1932 as a Major from the Army to the Air Force, and retired in 1935 at his own request at the time of the Liberal Party coup. He "drifted" from 1936 to 1940, when he returned to the Air Force at the outbreak of war as a Lt. Colonel on the staff of the Air Defense Command of Salonika.

With the arrival of the Germans in 1941 he became Nomarch of Edessa; further details of his collaboration are not available in Headquarters, but DORFIELD recalls that Themelis had an unsavory wartime record and that GARAGEMAN (Gendarmerie) has such information, including orders signed by Themelis requesting the Greek populace not to fight the Germans.

In 1943 the Germans arrested and executed Themelis' brother-in-law, a ranking member of ELAS. Themelis resigned in protest, and subsequently joined PAOK, the nationalist resistance organization in Macedonia, and was sent as its representative to the Middle East Command. In the Middle East he joined the leftist resistance forces. After liberation he again retired with the rank of Major General.

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He entered politics in 1946, when he was elected Deputy from Salonika on the Kanellopoulos National Unionist ticket, but, after a disagreement with Kanellopoulos he became an Independent. In 1949 he was elected on the Liberal ticket. He returned to the Air Force 1950-1954 as a Major General, in order to fulfill requirements for a pension. In 1956 and 1958 he was elected Deputy from Salonika on the ERE ticket of Karamanlis, who appointed him Under Minister of National Defense in May 1958.

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