

DATE: 28 September 1960

~~Source: [unclear]~~  
Res file

"DER SPIEGEL" LIBEL

1. The September 28 1960 issue of the German magazine "Der Spiegel" published an article in which  
by German war criminal Max Merten slandered Prime Minister Karamanlis, Minister of Interior Dimitrios Makris and his wife Eudoxoula Leondithou Makris. Following are the main points of the slander:
  - a. Karamanlis, Makris and Eudoxoula Makris were informers of the Aegean Command of the Germans during the occupation receiving money and privileges for such services and particularly the liquidation of a Jewish silk materials warehouse the proceeds of which were about 15,000 British Pounds.
  - b. Merten has a photograph taken during the occupation in which he is shown together with Makris, Eudoxoula and Karamanlis posing as "uncle" (the meaning of the word "uncle" here conveys the meaning of protector and intimate person).
  - c. Merten wants to be tried in the German courts so that he can prove the above.

Repercussions in Greek Government:

2. On Monday night, 26 September 1960, all Athens newspapers received a copy of Der Spiegel with the libel article which was mailed from Athens. The Government press immediately communicated the news of the article to the Government while the opposition press started looking into the Press Law to ascertain whether the article could be reprinted without liability for libel suits and/or governmental restrictions. In "Estaa" a meeting was called which was attended by legal counsel Panagiotis Lykourezos and others.
3. In the meantime the Government quietly bought all the copies of Der Spiegel so that the magazine could not be found at newstands. On 27 September a meeting was called by the Prime Minister in which were also present Kostantinos Tsatsos and Tryfon Triandafilakos and possibly Dimitrios Makris and Panagiotis Kanellopoulos. The Der Spiegel article was discussed and an attempt was made to reach a decision

DECLASSIFIED AND RELEASED BY  
CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY  
SOURCES METHODS EXEMPTION 3B2B  
NAZI WAR CRIMES DISCLOSURE ACT  
DATE 2001 2006

**BEST AVAILABLE COPY**

## 3. (continued)

as to whether or not the article should be made public and other aspects of the issue. The Government finally decided this evening, after a series of high level conferences, to make public the libel article and issue the statement that all claims made by Merten were untrue and that Minister of Interior Makris would sue those responsible for the slander.

Reaction in the Opposition:

4. EDA moved fast to capitalize on the situation. EDA asked deputy Stamatios Merkouris to register a question with the Parliament on the issue but he refused. The plan was to word the question in such a way as to make the article of Der Spiegel public even if the Government had chosen not to do so. Finally it was agreed that Ilias Fredimas would register a question on the issue with the Parliament.
5. Liberal Party leader Venizelos made a statement to the effect that he had no comment on the essence of the matter but those slandered should go to the courts in order to protect their offices and the prestige of Greece. In the meantime there were reports that Liberal Party deputy Mbakatselos would register a question on the issue with the Parliament.
6. The political correspondents of the Athens press generally held the opinion that the problem was rather serious but the majority believed that those who were slandered were innocent. Efthimios Papageorgiou of "Eleftheria" and Harilaos Manos of "Avgi" held that the issue was a very serious political problem while Manousos Floumidis of "Eleftheria" held that three fourths of the article was stated during the Merten trial in Athens while the remaining one fourth which contained the slander against Karamanlis appeared to be incorrect.

C ] Conversations on the Issue:

7. C ] spoke to several individuals in connection with the article. These individuals and the main points of conversation are the following:

**BEST AVAILABLE COPY**

## 7. (continued)

A. Underminister of Press Tryfon Triandafilakos: Triandafilakos called [ ] and asked his opinion in general. During their meeting which took place at 1230 hours today [ ] expressed the opinion that foreign correspondents Marios Modiano, Sedgwick, "arceau and Rigos should be called in so that Triandafilakos would be ahead of their reaction. He proceeded to do so. Triandafilakos stated that Merten is lying but has something in his hands, in all probability, on the basis of which he is threatening. He also made the remark that Evdouxoula Makris had not been as careful as she should have been.

B. Ursula (fnu) of the German News Agency: She stated the following:

1. When Merten was being detained before his trial in Greece she had been asked by Der Spiegel to write an article on him slanted to his favor. She answered that she could write only an objective article and it would have to be against Merten.
2. Merten is financially destroyed because after all that has transpired he cannot work successfully as a lawyer even though he is in partnership with a well known Frankfurt lawyer. In her opinion, therefore, the Der Spiegel article had the following reasons:
  1. Merten would get revenge against individuals who did not assist him sufficiently.
  2. Article is connected with the internal affairs of Germany since Merten's partner is a significant political personality being a member of the Central Committee of the German Socialist Party which is the opposition in Germany and seeks to defame German Government personalities

C. Mario Modiano: He stated the following:

1. Whole affair constitutes blackmail against German Government.
2. Merten probably has information at his disposal which can shake the Greek Government. He threaten to talk if he is tried in Germany,

**BEST AVAILABLE COPY**

Evaluation by

8. The slander against Karamanlis is entirely untrue because he was in Athens during the occupation and later left for Cairo. Karamanlis met Makris for the first time in Athens in 1956 during the Voulpiotis trial when Makris was a lawyer in the case. The attempted involvement of Karamanlis, therefore, does not seem to be anything else but political intrigue.
9. It is definite that Evdoxoula Makris was a typist in the ~~special~~ special office of Merten during his stay in Salonika. It must be pointed out, however, that Salonika was one of the Germanophile cities of pre-war Greece and that many upper class girls attended the German academy and later worked for the Germans.
10. Makris was leading a carefree life during the occupation playing cards extensively and, at times, losing large sums of money. There were reports that he was getting money from women and one such case has been reported to be his affair with Mrs. Koubari who was much older than he was and the wife of the lawyer who helped Makris in his career. Tassos Nastos of "Drasis" of Makedonia reports that he and Makris were good friends during the occupation having good times and gambling extensively. He feels it is possible Makris exploited the relationship of his then girl ~~friend~~ friend Evdoxoula Leondithou.
11. Journalist and DEH public relations officer Kostas Triandafilidis who is a friend of Makris and Nastos reports that Merten came to Greece either at the invitation or simply the knowledge of Makris. He also reported that Merten was invited to the Makris house for cocktails prior to his arrest. Tryfon Triandafilakos also implied this.

**BEST AVAILABLE COPY**