

Thursday, February 6th 2020

Biographies of Greek Resistance fighters

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| Date: | Thursday, 6 th February 2020 |
| Activity: | Students empathize and write a fictional story inspired by the biographies of Greek Resistance fighters. |
| Time: | 90 min. |

Complete the tasks below (put a mark when completed).

Don't hesitate to ask the teacher if there is something you are not sure of.

| TASK | DONE? |
|---|-------|
| <ol style="list-style-type: none">Discussion<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ <i>What is Resistance? How do you define it?</i>○ <i>Have you ever witnessed resistance in your home town/country?</i>○ Brainstorm your ideas on Flip-Chart.Cluster and complement your ideas in relevant <i>forms of resistance</i>.Short description of the biographies of Greek Resistance fighters.Study in teams the story of one Greek Resistance fighter.Think of a <i>fictional story</i> based on the facts of the biography. This could, for example, be a narration in first person, as if you were the fighter, a dialogue, a diary entry, an interview, or even a short theatrical play. | |

LELA KARAGIANNI

National resistance hero that was executed by the Germans on September 8th 1944.

Lela Minopoulou, as was her maiden name, was born in 1898 in Limni Evoias. In 1916 she married pharmacist Nikolaos Karagiannis and together had 7 children.

Although her husband owned a pharmacy in the centre of Athens and a two-storey house where their family dwelled, Lela's middle-class comfort did not mean she was not concerned with the plight that hit her country once the Italians and the Germans finally occupied Greece in 1941.

On the contrary, from the very onset of Axis occupation in Athens, **she organized, funded and lead an urban-based underground resistance network** that initially consisted of her own husband and seven children but eventually numbered more than 100 active resistance members.



Lela Karagianni used her middle- and upper-class connections with Greek civil servants and officials posted in various services and ministries of the Axis-related Greek government **to extract valuable intelligence and information** that she would later forward to her British connections in North Africa, mostly Egypt.

Moreover, she **used her own house as a safe house and hideout for resistance fighters** on the run from the Germans or **British intelligence officers** that would pass through Athens in secrecy on their way to the Allies Headquarters in North Africa.

In 1941 she was arrested for the first time by the Italians but was released due to lack of evidence. Her son George and daughters Ioanna and Electra were also arrested, but she continued with her underground operations. She managed to set them free and help them flee to Egypt.

However, she was again arrested on July 11th 1944, this time by the Germans, along with five of her children. Her husband and two of her children had managed to escape. They were all taken to prison

and tortured. She was beaten, burnt, left with no water and threatened that her children would be executed if she did not give up the other members of her resistance network. She never succumbed and even stated that 'threatening her with the life of her children is pointless since their lives belong to Greece and their blood would eventually drown out the Huns'.

Karagianni was finally executed on September 8th 1944 by a firing squad along with 27 other Greek prisoners.

Post-war her contribution has been acknowledged as that of a national hero, her bronze bust is featured in the National Greek War Museum and a statue is erected next to her residence which can still be found in the centre of Athens next to the National Archaeological Museum and bears a plaque in her memory. Also, the Athens Academy has awarded her with the Virtue and Self-Sacrifice Award.



Sources:

- <https://www.sansimera.gr/biographies/1463>
- https://www.alfavita.gr/koinonia/297830_san-simera-h-iroida-tis-ethnikis-antistasis-leka-karagianni-ekteleitai-apo-toys
- https://el.wikipedia.org/wiki/Λελα_Καραγιαννη

(Georgia Tsoulou)

MAYOR LOUKAS CARRER & METROPOLITAN CHRYSOSTOMOS



When the Second World War broke out, there were about 275 Jews living on the Greek island of Zakynthos in the Ionian Sea. Until 1943 the island was under Italian control and the Jews remained unharmed, however, after Mussolini's fall, the Germans occupied the Italian territories and on September 9, 1943 a German force landed on the island.



The German commander ordered all Jews to be assembled so that they could be deported to the mainland and from there to the camps in Poland. To prepare for the deportation, the German officer summoned the Greek mayor, Loukas Carrer, and ordered him to prepare a list of all the Jews on the island. The mayor went to the local church leader, Metropolitan Chrysostomos for assistance. **Chrysostomos volunteered to negotiate with the Germans** and told Carrer to burn the list of Jewish names. He then approached the German commander and **implored him not to deport the Jews**. The Jews were Greek citizens, he said. They had done no harm to their neighbors and did not deserve to be punished by deportation. When the German would not listen and insisted on receiving the list of all local Jews, **Chrysostomos took a piece of paper, wrote the mayor's and his own name on it and handed it over**. "Here is the list of Jews your required", he said.

The German authorities were resolved to continue with their plans. Realizing their attempt to stop the deportation failed, the Metropolitan and the mayor warned the Jews on the island, told them to leave their homes and go into hiding in the mountains. Chrysostomos promised that the Greek islanders would provide them with food and shelter. Two thirds of the Jews followed the instructions and stayed in hiding until the island was liberated. In August-September 1944 three small German boats came to deport the Jews. However the small German force was unable to round up all the Jews, and the community was left relatively unharmed.

On March 14, 1978, Yad Vashem recognized Loukas Georgios Karrer and Metropolitan Dimitrios Chrysostomos as Righteous Among the Nations. Their courageous act is included in school curricula in Israel and is taught to Israeli students.

Sources:

- <https://www.yadvashem.org/righteous/stories/chrysostomos-karreri.html>
- <https://www.mixanitouxronou.gr/ean-apofasisete-na-apelasete-tous-evreous-tha-parete-ki-emenai-iroiki-apantisi-tou-mitropolitou-zakynthou-stous-germanous-pou-esose-272-simplites-tou-apoveveo-thanato/>

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CAPTAIN NIKIFOROS (DIMITRIS DIMITRIOU)



Dimitris Dimitriou, born 1921, was a Greek military officer who served in World War II against the Italian Forces as a lieutenant of the Greek Cavalry Force and later in a Heavy Artillery battalion during the fight against the German Army in Northern Greece.

After the surrender of the Greek army, he was **one of the first Military Academy-trained soldiers to enter armed guerrilla resistance** as part of the National Liberation Army (ELAS), where he changed his name to Captain Nikiforos ('he who bears victory').

Nikiforos was well-known for his armed resistance against the Axis forces in occupied Greece and for his **involvement in the explosion of the Gorgopotamos Bridge**, known as Operation Harling.

Operation Harling, known as the Battle of Gorgopotamos in Greece, was a World War II mission by the British Special Operations Executive (SOE), in cooperation with the Greek Resistance groups EDES and ELAS, which destroyed the heavily guarded Gorgopotamos viaduct in Central Greece on 25 November 1942. This was one of the first major sabotage acts in Axis-occupied Europe.

The force available for the operation numbered 150 men: the twelve-strong British team, which would form the demolition party, 86 ELAS men and 52 EDES men, who would provide cover and neutralize the garrison. Nikiforos was part of the ELAS Group that was commissioned to take out the north outpost garrison.

According to the plan, the attack was to take place on 23:00 on 25 November. The attack on the garrison outposts on the two ends of the bridge began as scheduled, but went on far longer than the time originally allotted. It was with the courageous military leadership of Nikiforos that the outposts were finally destroyed and the Operation could proceed to become successful and a major setback to German supplies of Northern Africa Axis forces.

After the end of World War II, Nikiforos was imprisoned as a result of the Greek Civil War that followed directly after the Great War and was released in 1952. He went on to become an active

political voice and a prolific author. He died in 2000 recognised by both friends and foes for his contribution to the Greek Resistance.

Sources:

- <https://ethniki-antistasi-dse.gr/kapetan-nikiforos.html>
- [https://el.wikipedia.org/wiki/Δημήτρης_Δημητρίου_\(Νικηφόρος\)](https://el.wikipedia.org/wiki/Δημήτρης_Δημητρίου_(Νικηφόρος))

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MANOLIS GLEZOS & APOSTOLOS SANTAS

One of the most humiliating moments not only for Greece but for all humanity was when in April 27, 1941 the swastika was hoisted on Acropolis Hill, on the very cradle of democracy and Western Civilization. It was the day when the German troops entered Athens to take control of the surrendered city. The moment the Nazi flag flew in the sky of Attica marked the beginning of three and a half years of pain, hunger and death.



Yet, two young men, barely 18, made a heroic move which later proved to be the beginning of the great Greek resistance to the Nazis.



On 30 May 1941 Manolis Glezos and Apostolos Santas **climbed on the Acropolis and tore down the swastika**, which had been there since 27 April 1941, when the Nazi forces had entered Athens. It inspired not only the Greeks, but all subjected people, to resist the occupation, and established them both as two international anti-Nazi heroes. The Nazi regime

responded by sentencing the perpetrators to death *in absentia*, but they did not learn who they were until much later.

Manolis Glezos, born 9 September 1922, is a Greek left-wing politician and guerilla, best known for his participation in the World War II resistance.

Born in Naxos, Glezos moved to Athens in 1935 together with his family, where he finished high school. During his high school years in Athens he also



worked as a pharmacy employee. He was admitted to the Higher School of Economic and Commercial Studies (known today as the Athens University of Economics and Business) in 1940. In 1939, still a

high school student, Glezos participated in the creation of an anti-fascist youth group against the Italian occupation.

At the onset of World War II he asked to join the Greek army in the Albanian front against Italy, but was rejected because he was underage. Instead, he worked as a volunteer for the Hellenic Ministry of Economics. During the Axis occupation of Greece, he worked for the Hellenic Red Cross and the municipality of Athens. Glezos was **arrested by the German occupation forces on 24 March 1942 and was subjected to imprisonment and torture**. As a result of his treatment, he was affected by tuberculosis. He was arrested on 21 April 1943 by the Italian occupation forces and spent three months in jail.

After the war he had a really active political career that spanned decades which ended with him being elected as **a member of the European Parliament in 2014, aged 92**.

Apostolos Santas (22 February 1922 – 30 April 2011), commonly known as Lakis, was a Greek veteran of the Resistance against the Axis Occupation of Greece during World War II.

Apostolos Santas was born in 1922 in Patras. His family moved to Athens in 1934. He completed his secondary education in Athens and was accepted to the Law School of the University of Athens, completing his law studies after the liberation of the country from Nazi occupation in 1944. In 1942, he joined the fledgling National Liberation Front (EAM), and a year later the guerrilla force ELAS, with which he **participated in several battles with the Axis troops throughout Central Greece**.



After the Occupation, because of his leftist beliefs, he was sent into internal exile to Ikaria in 1946 and then to the Makronisos island in 1948. He managed to escape to Italy, from where he went to Canada where he was granted political asylum. He lived in Canada until 1962, when he returned to Greece, where he spent the rest of his life. On 30 April 2011 he died in Athens, aged 89. Santas received numerous awards from various institutions in Greece and other Allied countries.

Sources:

- https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Manolis_Glezos
- https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Apostolos_Santas
- <https://greece.greekreporter.com/2019/05/30/the-day-two-teenage-greeks-took-down-the-nazi-flag-from-the-acropolis/>

(Georgia Tsoulou)

THE BAREFOOT BATTALION



The Barefoot Battalion refers to a group of approximately 160 children who resisted the German rule in the city of Thessaloniki during the Second World War and Nazi occupation in Greece.

The German army took over the city of Thessaloniki in Northern Greece, the second largest Greek city, on April 8th 1941. One of the first actions of the occupants was to seize all government buildings to be used to house their administration services and

detention premises. In this light, all the orphanages in the area were cleared of their children and suddenly hundreds of children were found homeless with no family, housing, clothes or food.

Therefore, in an effort to survive, **the orphans organised themselves in a resistance group of their own, whose main purpose was to steal food and supplies from Germans and their black market associates** and which became known as the Barefoot Battalion due to its members' lack of shoes and clothing.

The Barefoot Battalion had a strict hierarchy and organisation and missions were carefully planned and executed. Their main method of stealing supplies was for one group to follow trucks and vehicles that carried food and another causing a distraction so as to slow them down. Then, the first group of children would climb onto the moving trucks and unload as many supplies as possible before the vehicle would pick up speed again.

Supplies were not only shared among the orphans of the group but **were also shared with many Thessaloniki citizens that would suffer from hunger and hardship.**

These young 'Robin Hoods' also stole weapons to give to the guerrilla fighters of the area and sometimes hid resistance fighters on the run.



Once their activities had become increasingly detrimental to the local occupation forces, many orphans lost their lives during their missions, since **German soldiers had received orders to shoot on sight.**

However, the Barefoot Battalion continued its resistance activities until the end of Nazi occupation in Greece in 1944.



Sources:

- <https://www.mixanitouxronou.gr/to-ksypolito-tagma-ta-orfana-pou-petaksan-sto-dromo-oi-germanoi-kai-kataferan-na-epivosoun-i-tainia-gia-ti-zoi-tous-stin-opoia-protagonistisan-metapolemika/>
- <https://www.newsbeast.gr/weekend/arthro/4098151/i-iroiki-istoria-toy-thrylikoy-xypolytoy-tagmatos>

(Georgia Tsoulou)