

The Holocaust of the Jews of Thessaloniki through the Clandestine Press of PEAN

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Within a few months of 1943, the overwhelming majority of the members of the historic Jewish community of Thessaloniki was transported from their homes, in cattle cars, to be exterminated in the Nazi death camps. This event was not a fringe incident in the history of Thessaloniki during the Second World War. To the contrary, the Jews constituted a large percentage of the city's population, with a long presence, who contributed to the social, economic, political and cultural life. Furthermore, most of them resided in central areas of the city, next to their Christian compatriots. Their suffering was visible and known to all the citizens of the city and beyond.

Nevertheless, the persecution of the Jewish population of Thessaloniki is mostly absent from the articles of the clandestine press of resistance organizations, both in Thessaloniki and in Athens. The exceptions are the journals "Doxa" [Glory] and "Megali Ellas" [Great Greece], which were published by the Panhellenic Union of Struggling Youth (PEAN) as well as its affiliated organization Army of Enslaved Victors (SSN). PEAN was a youth resistance organization in the period of the Occupation, acting primarily in the region of Athens.

Within the pages of the two journals, it becomes clear that their editors display a great interest in the drama of their Jewish compatriots of Thessaloniki and are well aware of the antisemitic measures of the Nazis—and their consequences—very close to the actual events. The paper will present excerpts from articles of the two newspapers, together with information from other publications and sources, so as to place them within a proper framework. The sources include all the issues of two clandestine newspapers, with additional primary materials from several Greek archives.