

Antisemitism in Greece 2017 – Michal Navoth

Throughout 2017, antisemitic manifestations were mainly not violent in Greece.¹ As in 2016 there were no incidents targeting Jews, and vandal attacks of Jewish sites were few (although in comparison to 2016 there were more cases perpetrated against Jewish sites where severe property damage was also caused). Events that were more frequent included desecration of Jewish sites with graffiti (with more incidents in comparison to 2016), dissemination of stereotypes and conspiracy theories through the internet and social networks as well as in the mass media, the press and TV. The Jews are featured as ruling the world politics and finance.

That general trend coincides not only with the findings of our analysis of antisemitism in Greece in 2016, but also with antisemitic tendencies worldwide in 2016, when the number of violent incidents decreased and the verbal and visual antisemitism on social media increased.²

The survey refers also to the trial and activities of the Golden Dawn, the extreme right wing party in Greece, and concludes with initiatives undertaken to combat antisemitism.

Vandal attacks of Jewish sites

On 30 March 2017, in Kavala, a port city in the northern Greece, a Holocaust Memorial, dedicated to the 1,484 Jews of the town who died in Treblinka, was vandalized for the second time, since it was erected in June 2015.³ The vandals used

¹ Based on information the author has obtained from The Central Board of Jewish Communities in Greece (KIS). The information is part of KIS forthcoming report on antisemitism in Greece in 2017.

² Tel Aviv University, Kantor Center for the Study of Contemporary European Jewry, Antisemitism Worldwide 2016 General Analysis Draft, 5, http://kantorcenter.tau.ac.il/sites/default/files/Doch_full_2016_170717.pdf; See Michal Navoth, *Greece*, in Kantor Center for the Study of Contemporary European Jewry, Antisemitism Worldwide 2016 General Analysis Draft, 36, http://kantorcenter.tau.ac.il/sites/default/files/Doch_full_2016_170717.pdf;

³ The memorial was vandalized for the first time on 21 June 2015, two weeks after its inauguration. See Michal Navoth, *Greece*, in Kantor Center for the Study of Contemporary European Jewry, Antisemitism Worldwide 2015 General Analysis Draft, 41-42, <http://kantorcenter.tau.ac.il/sites/default/files/Report%202015%20with%20graphs.pdf>

hammers to smash the marble coating on the memorial.⁴ The mayor of Kavala, Ms. Dimitra Tsanaka, visited the Memorial right after the act of vandalism. The City Council, prominent figures, and many citizens of Kavala co-signed an on line petition, expressing the local's society immediate and strong reaction in condemning the vandal attack against the Holocaust monument. Within only a few days, the Municipality of Kavala kept the promise of its mayor for the restoration of the monument at the expense and responsibility of the municipality⁵ The Central Board of Jewish Communities in Greece (KIS) expressed the "abhorrence of Greek Jewry" for the attack and welcomed the Tsanaka's swift reaction. The Board said: "...these acts of desecration show that anti[s]emitism - an anti[s]emitism almost without Jews - , racism and intolerance survive and lurk everywhere, at every moment".⁶ Following an investigation, in July 2017, the local police arrested four suspects. The case against them was forwarded to the prosecutor.⁷

On 17 July 2017, during the evening time, an individual, an excommunicated Old Calendarist monk, who is dressed as a monk and calls himself "father Kleomenis", attacked and brutally vandalized the Holocaust Monument in Larissa, located in the central Jewish Martyrs Square of the city. The monument was the first Holocaust Monument in Greece when erected in 1987, in the memory of the Greek Jews deported and exterminated in the Nazi death camps. The incident was filmed by Kleomenis associates and the video was uploaded to You Tube. It shows him

⁴ World Jewish Congress (WJC), Vandals attack Holocaust memorial in northern Greece, 31 March 2017, http://www.worldjewishcongress.org/en/news/vandals-attack-holocaust-memorial-in-northern-greece-3-5-2017?utm_source=World+Jewish+Congress+Daily+News&utm_campaign=a1d523ce9e-EMAIL_CAMPAIGN_2017_03_31&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0_a1de7e9b27-a1d523ce9e-318793389;

⁵The Central Board of Jewish Communities in Greece (KIS), *Restoration of the Vandalized Holocaust Monument of Kavala due to Prompt Reaction of the Municipality and the Local Society*, 13 April 2017, https://kis.gr/en/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=708:restoration-of-the-vandalized-holocaust-monument-of-kavala-due-to-prompt-reaction-of-the-municipality-and-the-local-society&catid=12:2009&Itemid=41

⁶ World Jewish Congress, *Vandals attack Holocaust*

⁷Based on information the author has obtained from The Central Board of Jewish Communities in Greece (KIS). The information is part of KIS forthcoming report on antisemitism in Greece in 2017; *Four Men Arrested for Vandalizing Holocaust Memorial in Kavala*, 13 July, 2017, <https://enantiastonantisimitismo.wordpress.com/2017/07/13/four-men-arrested-for-vandalizing-holocaust-memorial-in-kavala>.

denying the Holocaust, cursing the Jews and calling on the local patriots of Larissa to intervene and demolish the Monument, which he pelted with eggs. Some of his characteristic quotes: “Here, we read 6 million! Fairy tales... Shit on their faces, merely 600.000 Hitler wiped out!” Kleomenis spitted the Monument and said: “Satanic Jews”. He kicked the Monument and said: “Curse on your dirty Monuments” and continued: “Worms, Jewish bitches, this has to fall. The stinking Jewishness has to be taken down from Larissa. Rise up! Patriotic organizations of Larissa take it down, bring the bulldozer on!”⁸ On the same day, leaflets of antisemitic content were also strewn across the Monument and the Square of Jewish Martyrs of Larissa. KIS and the Jewish Community of Larissa issued press releases condemning the attack. The Holy Synod of the Greek Orthodox Church issued an announcement condemning Kleomenis and disassociating itself from the "monk" and his actions.

The case has been handled by the Police and the justice system. The General Secretary for Transparency and Human Rights Maria Giannakaki and the General Secretary of Religious Affairs George Kalantzis responded promptly by providing the Public Prosecutor of Larissa, the Cyber Crime Police Department and the Racist Crimes Department of the Police with the relevant evidence.⁹

The Greek Helsinki Monitor (GHM) filed a complaint against Kleomenis for several actions including Larissa, which is now at the stage of local prosecutors.¹⁰

In the aftermath of the vandalism in Larissa, on 21 July 2017 Kleomenis uploaded a video of himself in front of the Holocaust Monument in Thessaloniki, entitled “I am free and I offer pain to you Jewish dogs”. On 23 July 2017, Kleomenis uploaded another video bragging about his “accomplishments” at the Monuments of Larissa and Thessaloniki. He threatened that he would do the same at the Monument of Athens. Although the videos were deleted from You Tube, they had been downloaded by KIS

⁸The Central Board of Jewish Communities in Greece (KIS), *Holocaust Monument in Larissa Vandalized by Alleged Clergyman*, 18 July, 2017, https://kis.gr/en/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=726:holocaust-monument-in-larissa-vandalized-by-clergyman-&catid=12:2009&Itemid=41; *Press Release of the Jewish Community of Larissa for the Vandalization [sic] of the Holocaust Monument*, 19 July, 2017, https://kis.gr/en/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=727:press-release-of-the-jewish-community-of-larissa-for-the-vandalization-of-the-holocaust-monument&catid=49:2009-05-11-09-28-23; World Jewish Congress, *Greek Jewish community outraged after monk vandalizes Holocaust memorial*, 18 July, 2017, <http://www.worldjewishcongress.org/en/news/greek-jewish-community-outraged-after-monk-vandalizes-holocaust-memorial-7-2-2017>

⁹ The Central Board of Jewish Communities in Greece (KIS), *Holocaust Monument in Larissa*

¹⁰ Information provided to the author by Greek Helsinki Monitor (GHM).

and presented to the prosecutor. As of the end of December 2017 Kleomenis has not yet been caught by the police.¹¹

On Friday night, 1 December 2017, unknown persons vandalized the Holocaust Memorial in Athens, which is located, near the ancient cemetery and the Synagogue. Two parts of the three-fold inscription were stripped off. The inscription situated at the entrance of the park next to the Monument with the message of Elie Wiesel to the passersby, in three languages: Greek, French and English. Inter alia, the text reads: "Pause a while as you pass byJust remember. For by remembering we honour their death and we save them from dying again – in oblivion".¹²

Athens Jewish Community President, Minos Moissis and KIS condemned the desecration. KIS Board sent a letter to the Minister of Citizen Protection asking for the arrest of the perpetrators and for increased protection measures. The Athens Municipality reacted immediately issuing an announcement. The Municipality condemned the violent act and assured the Jewish community that it would provide for the reparation of the damage. General Secretary Kalantzis also condemned the incident.

On 25 December 2017 members of extreme left group of anarchists, Rouvikonas or Rubicon, vandalized the Israeli embassy in Athens by throwing bottles of red paint at its façade. The group filmed themselves committing the attack and posted the video online. In a statement released after the attack Rubicon attributed the attack to the oppression of the Palestinian people. KIS condemned the attack and expressed the repugnance of the Greek Jewry. Condemnation was also expressed by Nikos Toskas, Alternate Minister of Public Order and Citizen Protection. Toskas pledged to have the culprits arrested.¹³

¹¹ Based on information the author has obtained from The Central Board of Jewish Communities in Greece (KIS). The information is part of KIS forthcoming report on antisemitism in Greece in 2017.

¹²The Central Board of Jewish Communities in Greece (KIS), *Athens Holocaust Monument vandalized*, 4 December 2017, https://kis.gr/en/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=738:athens-holocaust-monument-vandalized&catid=12:2009&Itemid=41; *Athens Holocaust Memorial Vandalized Again*, 3 December 2017, <https://enantiastonantisemitismo.wordpress.com/category/antisemitism-in-greece/>. For the desecration with graffiti of the monument itself *see infra*.

¹³ The Central Board of Jewish Communities in Greece (KIS), *Announcement on the Attack Against the Israeli Embassy in Athens by Rubicon Anarchist Group*, 27 December 2017,

Desecration of Jewish sites with graffiti

On 13 February 2017 a Graffiti with the Greek words “Jewish Organization of Thieves” as an acronym of the “European Economic Community” was spotted on a bus stop in Maroussi, a suburb of Athens. The Jews were related to the European Union to imply the Jewish responsibility for the financial crisis.¹⁴

On 28 March 2017 in Arta, a city in northwestern Greece, unknown vandals sprayed in red and green some details on a Holocaust Monument (the leaves of the menorah) and sprayed in red the inscription “Yolo” (that stands for “You only live once”). The incident occurred only a few days after the municipality of Arta hosted a ceremony in remembrance of its old Jewish Community, most of whom were deported to extermination camps. In its condemning announcement, KIS stated: "It is obvious that there are still people disturbed by their Jewish fellow citizens even if the latter are dead. They cannot tolerate even their memory!"¹⁵

In the beginning of July 2017 the Holocaust memorial in Athens was defaced with graffiti which reads: “Hello, my name is thanatos [death].” Made in the form of a broken Magen David (Star of David) with each of the broken pieces representing the lost Greek Jewish communities, the monument commemorates the 59,000 Greek Jews

https://kis.gr/en/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=743:announcement-on-the-attack-against-the-israeli-embassy-in-athens-by-rubicon-anarchist-group&catid=49:2009-05-11-09-28-23; JTA, *Greek anarchists vandalize Israeli embassy in Athens*, 26 December 2017, <https://www.timesofisrael.com/greek-anarchist-group-vandalizes-israeli-embassy-in-athens/>; Minister pledges to arrest culprits of paint-throwing on Israeli embassy, 26 December 2017, <http://www.tovima.gr/en/article/?aid=928190>; *Toskas promises to have Israeli embassy attackers arrested*, 26 December 2017, <http://www.ekathimerini.com/224438/article/ekathimerini/news/toskas-promises-to-have-israeli-embassy-attackers-arrested>

¹⁴ Based on information the author has obtained from The Central Board of Jewish Communities in Greece (KIS). The information is part of KIS forthcoming report on antisemitism in Greece in 2017.

¹⁵ The Central Board of Jewish Communities in Greece (KIS), *KIS Announcement for the Desecration of the Holocaust Monument in Arta*, 30 March 2017, https://kis.gr/en/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=703:kise-announcement-for-the-desecration-of-the-holocaust-monument-in-arta-&catid=49:2009-05-11-09-28-23; Based on information the author has obtained from The Central Board of Jewish Communities in Greece (KIS). The information is part of KIS forthcoming report on antisemitism in Greece in 2017; *Greece: Holocaust memorial vandalized in Arta*, 30 March 2017, <https://enantiastontanisimitismo.wordpress.com/2017/03/30/greece-holocaust-monument-vandalized-in-arta/>

who were murdered in the Holocaust. Since its erection in 2010, the monument has suffered repeated vandalisms.¹⁶

On 23 September 2017, only hours after opening of exhibition in Thessaloniki, a banner outside the venue had been vandalized with antisemitic graffiti. The exhibition entitled "Shared Sacred Sites in the Balkans and the Mediterranean" has been a collaboration between the Macedonian Museum of Contemporary Art, the Thessaloniki Museum of Photography and the Municipality of Thessaloniki. The graffiti said: "Jews Out".¹⁷

The internet and social networks

The internet facilitates the distribution of hate and bigotry in an abusive language and unleashed manner. The web magazine KOUTIPANDORAS posted online antisemitic comments under an article, with no Jewish content, by a reader with the user name "dirty Jew" who uses Hitler's emoticon as his profile picture. The web page allowed the comments to be published, though at the end of each article there is an announcement warning readers that comments containing inappropriate language would be deleted. In response to the protest of KIS, Kostas Vaxevanis, a known journalist who administrates the web magazine, replied that the site deleted daily hundreds of defamatory comments (not only antisemitic) but they kept coming back under various names and accounts.¹⁸

The internet is also used for posting antisemitic blogs and articles reiterating claims that Jews do not pay taxes. This falsity, which has been popular in the recent years of

¹⁶ *Athens Holocaust memorial defaced with graffiti*, 11 July 2017, <https://enantiastonantisimitismo.wordpress.com/2017/07/09/athens-holocaust-memorial-defaced-with-graffiti/>

¹⁷ *Thessaloniki: Exhibition banner vandalized with antisemitic graffiti*, 29 September 2017, <https://enantiastonantisimitismo.wordpress.com/2017/09/29/thessaloniki-exhibition-banner-vandalized-with-antisemitic-graffiti/>

¹⁸ Based on information the author has obtained from The Central Board of Jewish Communities in Greece (KIS). The information is part of KIS forthcoming report on antisemitism in Greece in 2017

the economic crisis and targets the Jews for Greece's economic woes, continues in 2017 too.¹⁹

The website Asteiakia (jokes) publishes amongst its various categories of jokes also vulgar and hideous "jokes" about the Jews, which trivialize Holocaust and offend the Jewish people. The following are characteristic examples: "What 10 Jews on TV are? A soap opera" ; "How do 30 Jews enter in a Fiat? "In the ashtray"; "What do Jews search for in ashtrays? Missing persons?" "Jews and negroes play basketball in an oven. Who will win? The Jews, because they play on home ground".²⁰ In other cases, Jews are depicted with stereotypical features with regard to their noses, avarice and greed. KIS Board addressed a letter to the Cyber Crime Police Department to undertake all the necessary legal actions remove those antisemitic jokes from that website.

The internet is a platform for promoting online books sale. The renowned "Politeia" bookshop in Athens promoted the online sale of Plevris' books, some of them with blatant expressions of antisemitism. GHM protested the sale and KIS criticized its promotion. Following KIS announcement, ELEFThERI ORA on its issue of 1 November 2017 accused KIS of imposing "Zionist censorship on bookshops."²¹

THE PROTOCOLS OF THE ELDERS OF ZION are also among the books disseminated on the internet. "Public", a chain of one of the biggest department stores for electronic appliances in Greece, sells the PROTOCOLS in its online book store.²²

The PROTOCOLS were also part of educational material on the online platform of a private Greek school "Elliniki Paideia" (Greek Education), intended for the religion

¹⁹ *Id.*

²⁰ *Id.*

²¹ *Id.* For more information about Konstantinos Plevris, see Michal Navoth, *Antisemitism in Greece: The Trial of Konstantinos Plevris*, Stephen Roth Institute for the Study of Contemporary Antisemitism and Racism Tel Aviv University, Topical Brief No. 8, 2011 (Roni Stauber & Beryl Belsky eds.), http://humanities1.tau.ac.il/roth/images/ANTISEMITISM_IN_GREECE_-_THE_TRIAL_OF_KONSTANTINOS_PLEVRIS.pdf

²² Based on information the author has obtained from The Central Board of Jewish Communities in Greece (KIS). The information is part of KIS forthcoming report on antisemitism in Greece in 2017.

class of the first grade students, where the themes of “masonry”, Zionism and the Protocols of the Elders of Zion were all related.²³

The site of the church of St Panteleimon in Thebes (central Greece) offers a Greek edition of the PROTOCOLS, published in 1932, in a pdf format for free downloading.²⁴

Another example for the usage of the internet by the church, is the long antisemitic announcement made by the Metropolitan Bishop of Piraeus Seraphim on 28 April 2017 and uploaded on the official website of the Archdiocese of Piraeus. This reaction was triggered after the Greek Orthodox Church had refused to send him as its representative to the Easter Festival of the Holy Fire at the Church of the Holy Sepulcher in Jerusalem. Following the Synad’s decision to replace Bishop Seraphim, the latter accused Israel of preventing his visit and interfering in an internal Church matter. While specifying that his views are not antisemitic but anti-Zionist, Seraphim said that Orthodox Christians stood against Zionism and especially against the wing of Zionism that seeks world domination. Similarly, he quoted the PROTOCOLS OF THE ELDERS OF ZION and referred to the masonry as the arms used by Zionism to secure infiltration and state manipulation.²⁵ In response, KIS slammed the announcement and expressed its belief that the antisemitic remarks are not compatible with the status of an official of the Greek Orthodox Church.²⁶ GHM has filed several criminal complaints against Seraphim for all sorts of racist texts, almost all of them at the stage of preliminary investigations by local prosecutors.²⁷

On 22 March 2017 the NGO Action-Aid Hellas posted on its facebook page anti-Israeli comment which read: “[t]hey do spray them for real in Gaza. Occupation for

²³ *Id.*

²⁴ *Id.*

²⁵ *Id.*; European Jewish Congress (IJC), *Greek Jews slam antisemitic remarks by Orthodox bishop*, 5 May 2017, <https://eurojewcong.org/news/communities-news/greece/greek-jews-slam-antisemitic-remarks-by-orthodox-bishop/>

²⁶ The Central Board of Jewish Communities in Greece (KIS), *KIS Announcement for the Statement of the Metropolitan of Piraeus*, 3 May 2017, https://kis.gr/en/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=710:kis-announcement-for-the-statement-of-the-metropolitan-of-piraeus&catid=49:2009-05-11-09-28-23

²⁷ Information provided to the author by Greek Helsinki Monitor (GHM).

half a century, Embargo for ten years, bombings. Now also chemicals falling down from the sky destroying the most basic goods: water and food".²⁸

The mass media: press and TV.

In an article published on 10 May 2017 on the news site enikos.gr, entitled *In bloody ink*, journalist and cartoonist Stathis (Stavropoulos) denounced attempts to incriminate criticism against Israel that present it as antisemitism in order to annul such political criticism. It was written in response to the publication of a survey on antisemitism in Greece, which showed high rates of antisemitic feelings in the country. On 11 May 2017 KIS made the following announcement:

"Certain anti[s]emitic articles and cartoons in the press and on the internet contribute to the building up of a stereotype based on drawing parallels among "Jews", "Zionists" and "Nazis", equalizing the first with the latter, within a context of a frenetic trend to demonize the State of Israel and its people...

Journalists, cartoonists and media use deliberately the term "agents" of Israel, to avoid being accused of anti[s]emitism, giving as a pretext that they do not aim against the Jews but against the Zionists ...

And it is obvious for us that even the sharpest criticism against the policy of the Israeli Government has nothing to do with [a]nti[s]emitism. **However, when according to a recent research, 65% of the Greeks agree with the opinion that 'Israel treats the Palestinian exactly as the Nazis treated the Jews', then all - politicians and journalists alike - need to take responsibility for reproducing the industrialized propaganda of delegitimization of the State of Israel...**" (emphasis in the original – M.N.).²⁹

²⁸Based on information the author has obtained from The Central Board of Jewish Communities in Greece (KIS). The information is part of KIS forthcoming report on antisemitism in Greece in 2017.

²⁹ The Central Board of Jewish Communities in Greece (KIS), *KIS Condemns 'New Antisemitism'*, 16 May 2018, https://kis.gr/en/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=714:kis-condemns-new-anti-semitism&catid=49:2009-05-11-09-28-23. On 25 May 2017 Stathis replied to KIS's announcement with a comment published on his column on enikos.gr stating that he would continue criticizing the "genocidal policy of Israel against the Palestinians". Based on information the author has obtained from The Central Board of Jewish Communities in Greece (KIS). The information is part of KIS forthcoming report on antisemitism in Greece in 2017.

A new trend of the discourse can be observed in recent years. The rhetoric has transformed the usage of "antisemitism" into reference to "Zionism". The reason for this camouflage stems from the fact that antisemitism is a form of racism and as such can be prosecuted under the anti-racism law, Law 4285/2014. Anti-Zionism is not considered to be within the bounds of the law and cannot be considered a criminal offence.³⁰ That new rhetoric serves both the extreme right as well as many groups of the left who wish to delegitimize the existence of the State of Israel.³¹

In view of the comparison with the Nazism, the following quotation of Greek Foreign Minister, Nikos Kotzias, on 19 September 2017 is of relevance: "when I hear them equate Israel with the Nazi crimes, I do not hear 'normal' criticism. What I hear is an ex post attempt to acquit those who committed the crime of the Holocaust."³²

Other antisemitic manifestations in the press are demonstrated by the following examples of articles published by ELEFTHERI ORA. On 8 February 2017, following PM Alexis Tsipras visit to Paris, the title of a front-page article read "[h]e put a black tie on and signed our death with the Rothschilds".³³

On 31 August 2017 the printed edition of ELEFTHERI ORA reproduced an article entitled "They are selling off our homes to Jews & illegal immigrants". That antisemitic article, which relates to the financial crisis, makes defamatory allegations against the President of the Athens Jewish Community, Minos Moissis. It implies that the "Jews" (in that case impersonated in Mr. Moissis) are responsible for the "looting of property of the Greek people". The article treats with contempt Mr. Moissis, at the

³⁰ See Navoth, "Greece", in 2016 General Analysis Draft, 42.

³¹ The Central Board of Jewish Communities in Greece (KIS), *KIS Condemns 'New Antisemitism'*.

³² World Jewish Congress (WJC), *At WJC reception, Greek FM Kotzias decries 'hypocrisy and double-speak' of criticism of Israel*, 19 September, 2017, http://www.worldjewishcongress.org/en/news/at-wjc-reception-greek-fm-kotzias-decries-comparison-of-israel-to-nazis-and-defends-right-of-israel-to-exist-9-2-2017?utm_source=World+Jewish+Congress+Daily+News&utm_campaign=2ec4efc911-EMAIL_CAMPAIGN_2017_09_19&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0_a1de7e9b27-2ec4efc911-318793389

³³ Based on information the author has obtained from The Central Board of Jewish Communities in Greece (KIS). The information is part of KIS forthcoming report on antisemitism in Greece in 2017.

time president of a company appointed to work out solutions for Greek bankrupt banks, because only of his Jewish identity.³⁴

The TV was used to promote false accusation of the Jews dominating the world and its economy. On 12 January 2017 Greek journalist, Dimos Verykios made antisemitic comments during the popular morning show "Happy Day" of the nationwide Alpha TV channel. He referred to the Jewish lobby as one of the "factors that dominate the planet through the banking system". KIS issued a statement and addressed a letter of protest to the president of Alpha TV. On 14 January 2017 Verykios denied on Twitter any "antisemitic intention" and claimed that he had just said the "truth: The world money is owned by the banks-Jews-Masons".³⁵

Golden Dawn

The trial of the Golden Dawn, which commenced on 20 April 2015 has gone into its third year. 69 individuals, among them Golden Dawn's leader and all its MPs from the 2012 elections, has been charged with participation in a criminal organization.³⁶ During 2017 the court held close to 100 sessions in which the testimony of the witnesses for the prosecution, including of few protected witnesses, was heard.³⁷ The evidence provides insight into the party operation and its aims. Golden Dawn

³⁴ *Id.* Similar articles were published in news sites. In response to an article published on 10 December 2017 by the online edition of MAKELEIO newspaper, KIS issued an announcement. The Central Board of Jewish Communities in Greece (KIS), *KIS Announcement for the Rethoric Attack Against the President of the Jewish Community*, 19 December 2017, <https://kis.gr/en/>

³⁵ Based on information the author has obtained from The Central Board of Jewish Communities in Greece (KIS). The information is part of KIS forthcoming report on antisemitism in Greece in 2017; *Greece: Antisemitic comments during popular morning show*, 16.1.2017, <https://enantiastonantisimitismo.wordpress.com/2017/01/16/antisemitic-comments-during-popular-morning-show/>; The Central Board of Jewish Communities in Greece (KIS), *KIS Announcement for the Antisemitic Statement of the Reporter Dimos Verykios at the Alpha TV Channel*, 16 January 2017, https://kis.gr/en/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=690:announcement-for-the-antisemitic-statements-of-the-reporter-dimos-verykios-at-the-alpha-tv-channel-&catid=49:2009-05-11-09-28-23

³⁶ Michal Navoth, *Between the Far Right and the Far Left: Current Issues of Racism and Nationalism in Greece*, KANTOR CENTER POSITION PAPERS (Mikael Shainkman ed., March 2017), 3, <http://kantorcenter.tau.ac.il/sites/default/files/PP%20Greece%20170320.pdf>,

³⁷ Golden Dawn Watch, *The Trial Documentation and Monitoring*, http://goldendawnwatch.org/?page_id=420&lang=en

operates according to a strict hierarchic structure and is inspired by Nazi ideology.³⁸ Golden Dawn continues to profess its hatred for Israel and Jews. as illustrated by the following examples.

On 1 February 2017 the party weekly, GOLDEN DAWN, published an article entitled *New Zionist interference against Golden Dawn: The President of the WJC urges to join forces against the movement of the Greek nationalists*. It criticized WJC President R.S. Lauder's interview in KATHIMERINI, on the occasion of Lauder's visit to Athens and his speech on Holocaust Remembrance Day, 27 January.³⁹

On the same issue of GOLDEN DAWN it criticized the vice president of the New Democracy party, Adonis Georgiadis, on his apology statement posted on his facebook account on 27 January 2017, in which he unequivocally rejected his antisemitic behavior in the past.⁴⁰

On 26 March 2017, the Metropolitan Bishop of Thessaloniki Anthimos met with the indicted Golden Dawn leader, Nikos Michaloliakos, who did not hesitate in the past to perform the gesture of Nazi salute and to deny the Holocaust of six million Jews who

³⁸ *Id.*; *Ex-Golden Dawn cadre dishes dirt on party's political goals*, 15 September 2017, <http://www.ekathimerini.com/221716/article/ekathimerini/news/ex-golden-dawn-cadre-dishes-dirt-on-partys-political-goals>

³⁹ Based on information the author has obtained from The Central Board of Jewish Communities in Greece (KIS). The information is part of KIS forthcoming report on antisemitism in Greece in 2017. Mr. Lauder urged Greeks to fight antisemitic extreme right parties such as Golden Dawn. He noted that the rise of antisemitism and nationalism is not just a threat to minorities but to society. See World Jewish Congress (WJC), *At Holocaust memorial in Greece, WJC President Ronald S. Lauder says: 'Indifference has not gone away'* 30 January 2017, <http://www.worldjewishcongress.org/en/news/at-holocaust-memorial-in-greece-wjc-president-ronald-s-lauder-says-indifference-has-not-gone-away-1-1-2017>; *World Jewish Congress chief hails Greek-Israeli relations*, 29 January 2017, <http://www.ekathimerini.com/215700/article/ekathimerini/news/world-jewish-congress-chief-hails-greek-israeli-relations>

⁴⁰ Based on information the author has obtained from The Central Board of Jewish Communities in Greece (KIS). The information is part of KIS forthcoming report on antisemitism in Greece in 2017; *MP Georgiadis' Apology to the Greek Jewish Community*, 14 March 2017 https://kis.gr/en/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=699:mp-georgiadis-apology-to-the-greek-jewish-community&catid=12:2009&Itemid=41. In that context it should be mentioned, that on 5 July 2017 MP Dimitris Kammenos of the junior coalition partner, right wing party Independent Greeks, posted an apology on his facebook account for his past antisemitic and racist comments. After his apology, Kammenos was elected as one of the Vice Presidents of the Greek Parliament. Based on information the author has obtained from The Central Board of Jewish Communities in Greece (KIS). The information is part of KIS forthcoming report on antisemitism in Greece in 2017. For Kammenos' antistemic posts in social media see Navoth, *Between the Far Right*, 7.

perished in Nazi concentration camps, including the 46.000 Jews of Thessaloniki. In its announcement KIS stressed the Greek Jewry's resentment as that meeting was a legitimization of the "exponents of hatred and intolerance in Greece" and a disrespect to the memory of those Jews.⁴¹ As a response, on 29 March 2017 an announcement of the Golden Dawn stated: "In case KIS wants to condemn hatred and intolerance, it should issue an announcement condemning the racist policy of the Israeli State towards the Palestinians."⁴²

In the end of March 2017 Golden Dawn lawmaker Yiannis Sachinidis was referred to Parliament's Ethics Committee to respond to accusations that he had disseminated racist propaganda to students on a school visit to Parliament. "It is a commonly held belief that the distribution of any propaganda material inside Parliament to minors is unacceptable, even more so material that is driven by intolerance and Nazi-like references to theories of racial superiority" commented Parliament Speaker Nikos Voutsis.⁴³

A survey conducted by the University of Macedonia in February 2017 showed that Golden Dawn received 7.5%,⁴⁴ slightly higher of the support of 7% of the electorate in the elections of September 2015.⁴⁵ The party is not slipping in the opinion polls.⁴⁶ Despite the legal crackdown against it, Golden Dawn is still popular on Greek political arena and is not wishing to fade.

⁴¹The Central Board of Jewish Communities in Greece (KIS), *KIS Announcement for the Meeting of the Thessaloniki Metropolitan Anthimos with the Leader of the Golden Dawn*, 30 March 2017, https://kis.gr/en/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=702:kise-announcement-for-the-meeting-of-the-thessaloniki-metropolitan-anthimos-with-the-leader-of-the-golden-dawn&catid=12:2009&Itemid=41

⁴² Based on information the author has obtained from The Central Board of Jewish Communities in Greece (KIS). The information is part of KIS forthcoming report on antisemitism in Greece in 2017.

⁴³ *Golden Dawn MP accused of distributing racist material to pupils*, 31 March 2017, <http://www.ekathimerini.com/217331/article/ekathimerini/news/golden-dawn-mp-accused-of-distributing-racist-material-to-pupils>

⁴⁴ Philip Chrysopoulos, *Poll: 8 in 10 Greeks Think Government Has Failed*, 14 February 2017, <http://greece.greekreporter.com/2017/02/14/poll-8-in-10-greeks-think-government-has-failed/>

⁴⁵ Navoth, *Between the Far Right*, 4.

⁴⁶ Panayote Dimitras, *Greek Nazi Golden Dawn in Turmoil*, 11 November 2017, <http://www.hopenothate.org.uk/2017/11/11/greek-nazi-golden-dawn-turmoil/> On 4 March 2017 Golden Dawn lost an MP after Dimitris Koukoutsis declared himself an independent, reducing the party's members in the 300-seat Parliament to 17 from 18. As a result, it slipped to fourth place in terms of representation. See *Golden Dawn loses a seat in Parliament*, 4 March 2017, <http://www.ekathimerini.com/216631/article/ekathimerini/news/golden-dawn-loses-a-seat-in-parliament>

Initiatives undertaken to combat antisemitism

In addition to denunciations of Jewish bodies, relevant authorities expressed zero tolerance against antisemitism, including their swift response to rectify damages caused by vandalism. Proceedings are taken by the police and the prosecution to bring the perpetrators to justice. The Cyber Crime Police Department is also addressed to tackle the online hate speech.

The main challenges for the Greek Jewish Community to face in 2018 are enhancement and expansion of the existing educational programs.⁴⁷ This is not an easy task, given the continued dissemination of educational material conveying antisemitic message or objections by educators and non-Jewish parents in Greece to Jewish contents,⁴⁸ but it was always the firm belief of the Jewish community that the best way to confront antisemitism is to start uprooting it in the classroom.⁴⁹

⁴⁷Based on information the author has obtained from The Central Board of Jewish Communities in Greece (KIS). The information is part of KIS forthcoming report on antisemitism in Greece in 2017.

⁴⁸ *School visits to the Jewish Museum of Thessaloniki are not welcomed by all educators and parents*, 5 September 2017, <https://enantiastonantisemitismo.wordpress.com/2017/09/05/school-visits-to-the-jewish-museum-are-not-welcomed-by-all-parents/>

⁴⁹Based on information the author has obtained from The Central Board of Jewish Communities in Greece (KIS); Harry Van Versendaal, *Uprooting anti-Semitism in Greece, starting in the classroom*, 31 May 2017, <http://www.ekathimerini.com/218850/article/ekathimerini/comment/uprooting-anti-semitism-in-greece-starting-in-the-classroom>

