

VIRTUE AND COURAGE

The Greek Orthodox Church and the academic world of the Greek people protest against the persecution

To: The Prime Minister
Mr. K. Logothetopoulos
ATHENS

Mr. Prime Minister

The Greek people were rightfully surprised and deeply grieved to be informed that the German Occupation Authorities have already started to put into effect a program of gradual deportation of the Greek Jewish community of Salonica to places beyond our national borders and that the first groups of deportees are already on their way to Poland. The grief of the Greek people was even deeper since:

According to the terms of the armistice, all Greek citizens, without distinction of race or religion, were to be treated equally by the Occupation Authorities.

The Greek Jews have proven themselves not only valuable contributors to the economic growth of the country but also law-abiding citizens who understand fully their duties as Greeks. They had their share in the common sacrifices for the Greek country and were always on the front line on the struggles of the Greek nation to defend its inalienable historical rights.

The law-abiding nature of the Jewish community in Greece excludes a priori any reason that it may be involved in actions or acts that might endanger even in the slightest, the safety of the Military Occupation Authorities.

To the national conscience all the children of common mother Greece appear to be an inseparable unity: they are equal members of the national body without regard to religion or dogmatic differences.

Our Holy Religion does not recognize any superior or inferior qualities based on race or religion, stating that: "there is neither Jew or Greek", (Gal. 3:28)

and in this manner, condemning any attempt to discriminate or create racial or religious differences.

Our common fate, in days of glory and in periods of national misfortune, forged inseparable bonds among all Greek citizens, without exemption, no matter what their race.

Certainly, we are not unaware of the deep conflict between the new Germany and the Jew community nor do we intend to become defenders or even simply judges of world Jewry in the sphere of the great political and economic affairs of the world. Today we are interested and deeply concerned with the fate of 60.000 of our fellow citizens, who are Jews. For long, we have lived together in slavery and in freedom and we have come to know their feelings, their brotherly attitude, their economic activity and what is even more important their irreproachable patriotism. True witness of this is the great number of victims offered without regret and without hesitation by the Greek Jewish community on the altar of duty when our country was in peril.

Mr. Prime Minister,

We are certain that the thoughts and feelings of the Government agree with those of all the rest of Greek people on this matter. We believe also that you have already taken the necessary steps and applied to the Occupation Authorities to rescind the grievous and aimless measure to deport the members of the Jewish community of Greece.

We hope indeed, that you have indicated to those in power that such a harsh treatment of Jews of other nationalities in Greece, makes the instituted measure even more unjustifiable and therefore morally unacceptable. If it is security reasons that justify it, we think that it is possible to suggest a solution, and to take measures such as the detention of the active male population (except children and the old) at a specific place on Greek territory under the surveillance of the Occupation Authorities, so that their security is guaranteed even against a hypothetical danger, and the Greek Jewish community will be spared of this deportation which is threatening it. In addition, we note with

regard to the above measure that the rest of the Greek people will be willing if asked, to guarantee without hesitation for their brothers in need.

We hope that the Occupation Authorities will realize in time the aimlessness of the persecution of Greek Jews in particular, who are among the most peaceful and productive elements of the country.

If, however, they insist on this policy of deportation, we believe that the Government as the bearer of any political authority left in the country, should take a clear stance with regard to these events and let the foreigners bear the full responsibility of committing this obvious injustice. For we believe that no one should forget that all actions during these difficult times, even those that lie beyond our will and power will be reviewed someday by the nation and will be subjected to historical investigation. During that time of judgement, the aspect of responsibility assumed by the leaders will weight heavily upon the conscience of the nation, if the leaders fail, to make bold and express the most justified protest of the Nation against measures like the initiation of the deportation of the Greek Jews, which insult our national unity and honor.

With respect

Damaskinos

Archbishop of Athens and all Greece

Followed by signatures of the heads of the major cultural institutions and organizations:

The President of the Academy of Athens, the Rector of the University of Athens, the Rector of the Polytechnical School of Athens, the Rector of the High School of Economic Studies, the President of the Medical Association of Attica, the President of the Roll of Barristers of Attica, the President of the Union of Notaries of Athens and Aegean, the President of the Journalist`s Union, the President of the Association of Greek authors, the President of the Culture Association, the President of the Pireus Chamber of Commerce, the President of the Athens Professional Chamber, the President of the Greek Association of Chemists, the President of the Athens Association of

Pharmacists, the President of the Dentist`s Association, the President of the Athens Craftsman Chamber, the President of the Pireus Association of Pharmacists, the President of the Greeks Actors, the President of the Greek Association of Pharmacists, the President of the Medical Association of Pireus, the President of the Athens Association of Commerchants, the President of the Athens Chamber of Commerce and Industry, the Vice-President of the Greek Union of theatrical and musical Criticals, the President of the Medical Association of Callithea, the Secretary General of the Panhellenic Association of Dentists, the President of the Greek Industrialists Union, the General Director of the Refugee`s Organization, the General Director.