

## Reactions and Impact of The Ekpaideftikós Omilo's Operation in Greece

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### **Abstract**

This presentation refers to the impact of the establishment and operation of the Educational Club (Ekpaideftikós Omilos) (EO) from its establishment in 1910 to its suspension in 1930 and to the Communication strategy. (Ekpaideftikós Omilos was an Educational Association that was founded in 1910 in Athens, with founders Tsirimokos, Triantafyllidis and Delmouzos with the aim of improving the education of Greek teachers and Greek schools. The establishment of the EO provoked reactions from the purists of the Athens' university, who with their articles and bitter comments opposed the new reasoning of the EO, while "Orthodox" demoticists are also critical of him. After 1927, unions of conservative circles in Athens expressed their distaste for the members of the EO and characterized them as antichrist-communists. The paper presents people's reactions to the Association's work and action. In particular, it refers to the reactions of purists and non-purists since the establishment and action of the EO, in the views of the association's workers and study of the relationships. Also, the paper focuses on the impact of the EO's action on ordinary teachers as well as the views of the group's pioneers themselves. The paper uses the interpretive historical method of analyzing archival material and attempts a brief comparative assessment of them.

**Keywords:** Ekpaideftikós Omilos, Teachers, Demoticists, Purists

## 1. Introduction

The establishment of the EO provoked reactions from the university's purists, who were opposing the new reasoning of the EO with articles and bitter comments. The "Orthodox" demoticists are also critical of it. After 1927, unions of conservative circles in Athens expressed their disapproval of EO members and members and described them as anti-Christian woolly communists. Newspapers constantly were cultivating a divisive climate except for a few like Nea Foni and Avgi, that were commented positively on the group's activities (New Foni, 17-1-1926, F. 19, Delmouzos Archive, Avgi, vol. B', issue 5-6, February 1925, p.10-11, in: Athanasiadis, 2000, pp. 119, 120). The impact of its operation on several teachers, ordinary members, subscribers of the EO was positive, expressing their support and their positive opinion on the work of the EO with their letters (Betsas-Amarantidou, 2011, p. 18). The pioneers of the project admitted mistakes and problematic situations in its action mainly during the period of language education reform (11th Letter from Christakos to Delmouzos on November 25, 1911, F. 11, Delmouzos Archive).

A key point of criticism is that the people aim the overall method followed by the triumvirate at imposing change from above without preparing the ground for its natural acceptance. The awareness of the value of the EO's effort goes hand in hand with the realization of its difficulty due to the intensity and duration of the struggle. The EO introduced a different way of approaching educational reality and a new linguistic code of communication. The role of the EO as the main body for the realization of language and education reform is noteworthy, although it was intertwined with the role of Venizelos' political will (From what they write to us, *DEO*, vol. 5, 1915, p. 328).<sup>1</sup>

### 1.1 Methods

The paper attempts to reconstruct the action and impact of the Educational Group by primary and secondary sources, and the interpretive historical method of their analysis. It is a type of research that proceeds to explain the emergence and evolution of phenomena in a specific historical context by periodizing the classification, comparison of the evidence (Kallas, G. 2015, p. 159).). The historical method is identified with the juxtaposition of abstract technical formulas and thought patterns Methodological theory and research infrastructures in the social sciences. (Noutsos, 2011, p. 146). It is a necessary condition for making sense of empirical research and, as a complement to it, for formulating pedagogical questions (Pyrgiotakis, 1981). The evidence comes from the unpublished archive of Delmouzos, the digitized archive of Glinos and Triantaphyllides, the archives of Dragoumis, Sotiriou and Someritis and books, articles on the role of EO. The historical/interpretive investigation of the archives allows for the recording of the reactions of the purists and demoticists to his work. The paper also focuses on the impact of the EO's action on ordinary teachers and the views of the group's pioneers themselves.

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<sup>1</sup> Magazine of the EO

## 2. Reactions of the purists & not from the establishment & action of the EO

### 2.1. Reactions to the EO's decision on the model school

It seems that the establishment of the EO has an echo of the specific reality of the time. It directly and indirectly foments the reactions of linguists, who liken language to a castle that needs protection to keep it standing. With the circulation of the IO magazine, the activities of the EO, the meetings it organizes on a weekly basis and the issues discussed become known to a number of people, mainly from the upper classes and beyond. The immediate and strong reaction of the purists to the demoticists of the EO has a positive impact and leads to massive membership. As Tsirimokos points out, the critics of the EO, by exaggerating the movement, *lead to an overestimation of the work of the EO cadres before it has even begun* (Lambrakis - Paganos, 1994, pp. 97, 100).

Among the first to receive the circular establishing the Model School is Venizelos, and in his reply to Dragoumis he congratulates him on the decision and expresses the view that it will be more effective in the struggle for a living language than any other propaganda work. He states that he wishes to send a report on the matter to the Istanbul Political Review (Venizelos, 1910, April 22). [Letter to I. Dragoumis], I. Dragoumis Archive (F. 24, Subop. 3), Gennadios library, ASKSA, Athens).

Yannios from Polis, where he was at that time, was one of those who respond positively to the invitation of the circular and enrolled himself as a member, sending 20 dirhams for the subscription and annual donation. He said that he would be one of those who, along with a little money, would put all their heart and give their entire mind. He was willing to help materially and morally wherever they saw fit concerning their school (Yannios, 1910, May 9). [Letter to I. Dragoumis], Delmouzos Archives, F.12, Amfissa, Greece).

The broader activism of the demoticists during the three years 1909-1911 led to the foundation of the association "On the legal defense of the national language" and to the passing of Article 107 of the recognition of the Greek language as the official language of the state (Tsolakis, 2004, p. 74). With the announcement of the establishment of the EO in 1910, the reaction of the opponents of demoticism was immediate. By May 1910, the intention of the members of the ephorate to establish a school had already become known, and questions were being raised in the press by the purists about the method of teaching and its operation, and especially about the role of Katharevousa as the official language of the state and its use in the curriculum.

The news of the initiative to establish a model school provoked some positive and several negative and abusive comments in the press. The newspaper of Cyprus Alithia had expressed its enthusiasm, as its two-hyphenated phrases show, for the news of the establishment of the first Model School *with our national demotic language as a thundering herald of a great national victory and as a Panorian dawn of the blessed day that will reappear with a new and newborn homeland!* Her article was entitled Blessed hour (Blessed hour, Eph. Alithia, Thursday 29 April 1910, F. 24, L.4, Archive of I. Dragoumis, Gennadios Library, ASKSA).

Teachers from Macedonia, Asia Minor and the Aegean islands greet the announcement of the establishment of a Model School with enthusiasm (Rogari, 2010, p. 97).

## 2.2. The ardent opponents of demoticism

The ardent opponents of demoticism included several university teachers such as G. Hatzidakis, Mystriotis, Skias, Exarchopoulos and others (Chatzistefanidis, 1986, p. 182 and Lambraki,-Paganos, 1994, p. 76). In the conservative circles of Athens, the purists led by G. Hatzidakis, G. Mistriotis and A. Skias, published critical comments in the press and false and abusive thoughts about the new union as they considered the presence and targeting of the EO as scandal (Triantafyllidis, 2001, p. 128). Skias criticized them with the argument of using *katharevousa* as a vernacular term, after they casually modified it to make it appear as supposedly vernacular (Hatzistefanidis, 1986, p. 182). Exarchopoulos in June 1910 accused the founders of the EO for supporting *false theories based on the slanderous sermon of the heretic from Paris*, namely that the cleaner is the only cause of existing evils and called them deceived victims (Triantafyllidis, 1982).

Hadjidakis in the ep. Athinai, in an article on the Model School, promoted the intention of establishing the school as a practical but not scientific project that required a long theoretical examination, *because the school, like the church, is not a laboratory for untested experiments...*and concluded with the admonition *not to experiment in primary schools* and wondered if teaching was done in the mother language (Hatzidakis, G.N, The Standard Primary School, ep. Athens, Tuesday, May 4, 1910, F. 24, Sub.4, Archive I. Dragoumis, Gennadios Library, ASKSA).

Xenopoulos was quick to express in the newspaper Kairoi his concerns about the quality of the school and its teaching, about the attitude of the state to the possible cultivation of the spoken language of children, about the need to comply with the laws and rules of the state. In the case of the teaching of the vernacular, he wondered what the system of teaching would be and formulated the questions: *Where did the founders get the permission to promise us other books, another system of teaching, whether ancient and katharevousa would be taught, how would the demotic be taught, with the system of Psycharis, Filidas or the excesses of the woolly ones?* He was coming down with the reservation to see and then disapprove or approve of the EO's project (Xenopoulos, Gr. eff. Times, Athens, May 1910, F. 24, Sub.4, 5. Archive I. Dragoumis, Gennadios Library, ASKSA).

The pressure of The School of Philosophy of Athens towards the tradition of archaism is manifested by the predominance of almost all of the clerical professors and by the influence on its students (Triantafyllidis, 1988, Apanta vol. 6, op. p. 321). G. Mistriotis had identified the announcement of the foundation of the Model School with the reintroduction of dialects and with barbarism and had accused his vulgarists, the founders of the Society, of not having Greek blood flowing in their veins (Charalambous, D., "The political ideological criticism of the conservative current for the popularist textbooks of the period 1917-1920", in:

Conference 100 years since the language education reform of 1917, Thessaloniki, Faculty of Philosophy, AUTH, May 12-13, 2017, p. 86).

A university professor had called the work of the ephorate of EO ethnocidal (with the comment: *the names Melas, Dragoumis to figure in ethnocidal demands*). P. Economou had commented on the the ephorate's intention to establish a model school, describing it as an epidemic of hairlessness that attacks hitherto invulnerable organisations (such as education). Although he had accepted that the establishment of a new school was a great and patriotic idea, because education was outdated, he nevertheless called on the EO to stop raising scandals by means of linguistically heretical notices (Dimaras, 1974, sq. B'. pp. 73, 74).

### 2.3 Reaction of the orthodox demoticists

At the same time, indirect and overt denunciations of the association were also made by the radical demoticists, *the orthodox demoticists* Psicharis and Efthaliotis (Chatzistefanidis, 1986, p. 140). The newspaper Athinai had published several such reactions.

Petrokokokkinos had complained to Delmouzos about the polemics of the Katharevousians and at the same time the criticisms of the demoticists in Munich and Leipzig, who seemed to have been annoyed by some articles of the DEO in the Katharevousa (Petrokokkinos, 1911, March 10, and 1912, August 9) [22nd and 26th letters to Delmouzos], Delmouzos Archives, F.10, Amfissa, Greece). They accused him of being a denialist because he wrote two articles in the Katharevousa (language). Palamas, an intellectual figure of the time, in a letter to Petrokokokkinos, which he did not finally send, had expressed his reservations about the fighting spirit of the participants in the tax committee of the Model School and had stigmatised the lack of determination of many of them and the hesitant language of the text of the tax committee. Palamas had returned the statement sent to him by the EO and said he had read it carefully but regretted that he could not sign it because he disagreed with the way the reason for the prevalence of the demotic was presented (Lambrakis-Paganos, 1994, pp. 94, 97). Palamas had returned the statement sent to him by the EO and said that he had read it carefully but regretted that he could not sign it because he disagreed with the way the reason for the predominance of the demotic was presented (Palamas, K. 1911, November 5). [Letter to I. Dragoumis], Archive I. Dragoumis, Deputy. 3, 1, Gennadios library, ASKSA). As a demoticist, he had been critical of the EO, had followed its activities and had also participated in its events willingly (Lambrakis-Paganos, 1994, pp. 85, 103). Palamas in 1913, invited by EO, gave two lectures about Valaoritis and called it a *station*.

In 1911 Glinos observed that an attempt was being made to misunderstand the purposes of the existence of the Group, due to personal interests and the disingenuous attitude of some. The EO was targeted by two opposing poles: on the one hand, the purists had identified the Group as a centre of ‘*maliarism*’ and, on the other hand, the genuine demoticists of Psiharis' circle had accused them of adopting the mixed language, not the genuine demotic

language, i.e. the spoken language of the people (Glinou, D. Declaration of the EO, *DEO*, vol. 4, 1914, p. 233).

In May 1914 the Hellenic Teachers' Association had submitted a memorandum against Tsirimokos' bills, and indirectly against the EO, because they set the end of studies at the age of 15, whereas this should not be set beyond the age of 14, for reasons of economic and social order (Triantafyllidis, 1982, p. m).

However, it was necessary to point out that some in the teaching profession had begun to convert to demoticism. In 1922-23 the demoticists were in the majority on the Board of the Teachers' Federation. The diffusion of demotic ideas was more limited in the field of secondary education (Athnasiadis, 2001, p. 43). In 1916 the EO sent its constitution and the minutes of the association's meetings to the prefect of Attica and Boeotia, who returned them as unacceptable because their language was in violation of the constitution's provisions on the official language of the state ([Document of the Prefect of Attica and Boeotia], (1916, June 7), Delmouzos Archives, F.20, Amfissa, Greece).

#### **2.4 Reaction of the of the conservative church circles**

The change of direction of the Group after the split and its transformation into a socialist or even socialist association had provoked the systematic reaction of the conservative ecclesiastical circles in Athens which had formed the association of 'Zealots of Christ'. In March 1928 the Zealots of Christ printed a 16-page supplement which referred in a harsh and inexorable style to the activities of the "anti-Christian woolly communists" and some teachers, professors and clergymen of Hellenism. On the cover of the paper was an exhortation to burn the anti-national books and the heads of the woolly horde, and to punish inexorably the teachers who had committed crimes against pupils and to organize rallies in towns and villages. D. Giannakopoulos, president of the zealots of Christ, had called on the Greeks to wake up because we are in danger of disappearing as a nation and as a race. He urged the burning of books written in a vulgar and vulgar language that contributed to the destruction of the immortal pure Greek language. He claimed that the governments were fostering immorality and had let loose a plethora of atheistic writings and immoral novels.

He even quoted an image of a goat monster with horns that symbolized the brutal tendencies of the woolly-horned goats. Below he had commented on specific attitudes and admonitions of ten individual persons Delmouzos, Glinos, Stamatelos, Konstantinarakis, Papamavrou and other speakers, to prove that they are corruptors of our students, profaners of language and of the whole society. He also made reference to the criminal indifference of 'His Beatitude', who does not consider their books immoral, nor their action. He had reported with satisfaction that the lecture at the municipal theatre of Piraeus had ended in a strong disapproval of ten woolly teachers who were insulted, pounced upon by the people. Subsequently, he gave a list of names of the teachers of Piraeus, and woolly-headed teachers of Athens. First on the list were the names of A. Papanastasiou, the former Prime Minister

and Minister, and of Delmouzos, Glinos, Triantafyllidis, Vachiaviolos, Imvriotis. Paper entitled: "The Antichrist, the pilgrimage of the Antichrist hair communists and their teachers, professors and clerics of Hellenism". The list of 26 names followed the order of their registration: A. Papanastasiou (MP), Delmouzos, Glinos, Triantafyllidis, Imbriotou, Iordanidou, Varnalis, Vachaviolos, Tsamasfyros, Kordatos, Papamavros, Bertos, Kontopoulos, Rouchotas, Sarris, Kourtidis, Roubos, Dimitratos, Kakouros, Horafas, Doukas, Voutiras, Konstantarakis, Stamatelos, El. Lampridou, Zafeirakopoulos (Delmouzos Archive, F.15, Amfissa, Greece).

It was a fact that when the EO first appeared it was met with a great deal of opposition, because demoticism was still a heresy. Some politicians who began to work with it did so in secret, so as not to be seen as collaborating with bigots, as society was still unenlightened (Avgi, Vol. B, Vol. 5-6, February 1926, in: Athanasiadis, 2001, pp. 118, 119).

The Church, with a memorandum by the Most Reverend Metropolitan Athanasios of Syros, spoke about the atheistic propaganda of the EO workers and their support for socialism. He gave the example of Varnalis, author of works of anti-Christian spirit, and the distribution of the magazine "Anagennisis" with anti-religious content. Because of their actions, she expressed her concern about the influence of the EO representatives on the educational movement and called for immediate measures to be taken (Church, Memoir Rev. Metropolitan of Syros on 17 March 1928, F. 19, Delmouzos Archive).

## **2.5 Reactions in newspapers**

The EO's action had provoked strong reactions from the purists, and not only in the articles of the daily and weekly newspapers. After the strengthening of demoticism and the emergence of the EO as the spokesman of the mixed group, the press often contains opinions mainly from the camp of the linguists and their counter-measures. The newspapers Scrip, Chronos, Kairoi, Athens, Hestia were full of slanderous articles about the living language of the people and furiously waved the flag of reaction (Kordatos, 1973, p. 174).

In the first years of the association's existence, the criticisms of the establishment and its ideological profile were numerous, forcing the founding members to respond in writing, justifying their positions and responding to the attacks on the association. Dragoumis, Boutonas, Topalis, Petrokokkinos, Tsirimokos published articles in Acropolis, Hestia, Panathinaia in which they replied to their critics, who unfortunately included the demoticists of Nouma, with many scathing articles such as that of Psycharis, Mrs. Eftalioti (Glinos, 1985, B', Notes, p. 526). Delmouzos was in the midst of accusations and then complaints against his teaching and pedagogical activities at APV. He was criticised for anti-religious, anti-national and immoral activities, both in APV and in Marásleion, with daily reports (see references in the press of the time, F. 19, Delmouzos Archive).

Fortunio (Sp. Melas) in his article had criticised the politicisation and partisanisation of the language issue by the educational reformers, calling them lexicons, typographers and scribes.

He also called the supervisors the cooks of the so-called educational reform and considered that demoticism was a nationalist movement that couldn't be related to Delmouzo's ideas of progressivism. Below he accused him of colluding with a political party where there was intense gluttony for favours, positions, power, brilliance, etc. (Melas, Sp. Diadhelsisis, Kathimerini, 11 April 1920, no. 205, Triantafyllidis Archive).

The newspapers of the time highlighted and often cultivated, with regular articles, the divisive climate that had been created following the complaints against Delmouzos and the rest of the Volos school, and the process and conclusion of the Nafplion trial. The Post described Mr Delmouzos and company and others as unbalanced hair-splitters who used the opportunity to infiltrate the Ministry of Education and talk about supposedly restorative reform efforts (Makridis, Postman, 10-7-1914, F. 19, Delmouzos Archive). Hatzidakis accused the EO and its workers of making false and unsubstantiated announcements, such as the promise of model books (Notebook, Fortunio, Helliniko Vima, 21/1/1926, F. 19, Delmouzos Archive).

Kathimerini mentioned anti-national propaganda as the main charge against Delmouzos and his associates, with a proposal to establish a lunatic asylum for him and his followers (Kathimerini of Heraklion Crete, 1-6-1925, Delmouzos Archive, F.19, Amfissa, Greece).

Hestia spoke of a communist faction of the educational reform and claimed that for fifteen years the Greek government had been run almost dictatorially by a group of teachers with communist tendencies, a clique that dominated the ministers and governments (Newspapers Hestia, 17/06/1926 and Hestia 14-5-1927, Delmouzos Archive, F.19, Amfissa, Greece).

In another newspaper, called The Hairdressers, very strong words were used against the demoticists as the undertakers of Hellenism, by whom the nation was disgusted and would in time inflict the appropriate punishment on them. The column ended with the statement that the language of the Greek people was one, the one that was written and spoken (i.e. the cleaning language) and not the crude construction of a few frenoblats, those who had long hair but little knowledge (The Hairdressers, newspaper, Triantafyllidis Archive).

Glinos pointed out in July 1925 that the newspapers were still fighting against us, especially Embros, Nea Dias, and with the cartoons that Hatzopoulos published in several of them, every day (38th Letter from Glinos to Delmouzos, F. 14, Glinos Foundation).

The newspaper Nea Foni as in the camp of the defenders of demoticism, which highlighted the personality of Delmouzos as perhaps the only Greek who had sacrificed his youth on the altar of a great ideal and, together with his tireless collaborators and friends Glinos, Triantafyllidis, called them the main levers of the EO, which they called a true spiritual centre (New Voice, 17-1-1926, F. 19, Delmouzos Archive). (Avgi, vol. B', issue 5-6, February 1925, p.10-11, in: Athanasiadis, 2000, pp. 119, 120).

The magazine Avgi had referred to the beginnings of the meetings and speeches of the EO, which emphasised the long-term action of the union with the aim of spreading modern educational concepts in accordance with the modern Greek reality, in the adverse conditions



of society with large and small backwardness (Avgi, vol. B, no. 5-6, February 1926, in: Athanasiadis, 2001, p. 117). Avgi had realised that its work was not limited to the language sector, but also extended to drastic changes in educational structures, such as the establishment of single classrooms, the reorganisation of the Marásleion, the operation of multi-classrooms, the Pedagogical Academy and the missions to Europe (which were cut for financial reasons). At the same time, he indirectly undermined the responsibility of the EO for the mediocre results of its actions. He had argued that EO staff were acting individually in a moving enemy camp, while his accusers were making allegations that would only be made in the most favourable circumstances. They were based on an absolute omnipotence of the EO, which did not exist, as the EO had specific possibilities in the context of educational policy (Avgi, vol. B', issue 5-6, February 1925, pp. 10-11, in: Athanasiadis, 2000, pp. 119, 120).

### 3. Discussion: The impact - influence of the EO's action

At the end of 1911, the EO was in its first year. The publication of the case against Delmouzos for his management and teaching style at APB had a direct impact on the image of the EO. EO's influence was relatively small in terms of public opinion. It seems that at first the group's appeal, even to cultured and intellectual people who wrote in primary school, was not great, nor was it self-evident. In 1911, Pallis wrote in a letter to Dragoumis The idea is progressing well. Letters are coming to me from different places. If the group is active and enthusiastic, it will come (Exhibit 9. F. 24, Min. 3, Dragoumis Archive, Gennadios Library, ASKSA).

Nevertheless, in his letter to Delmouzos, Dragoumis complained about the lack of response, since only one teacher, Ilias Stavrou, and no one else had answered the questions formulated in the first issue of the Bulletin. The prosecution of Delmouzos and others on the issue of the operation of the APB has, it seems, provoked reactions, but at the same time it strengthens the demoticist tendency. P. Christakou, a teacher at the school in Volos, informed Delmouzos that he should leave for Athens immediately, as the fans were coming every day and the natural leader was missing (11th letter from Christakos to Delmouzos, 25 November 1911, F. 11, Delmouzos Archive). At the end of 1911 the EO was in its first year. The publication of the case of accusations against Delmouzos for his management and teaching style at APB has direct effects on the image of EO. The influence of the EO was relatively small in relation to public opinion.<sup>2</sup> It seems that at the beginning the Group's appeal, even to cultured and

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<sup>2</sup> Ioulia Triantafyllidis, a cousin of Triantafyllidis who was lived in England, in her letter referred to the obsession of purists, narrow-mindedness, prejudice against the spoken language, which she herself was called moldy ideas. But such views are an exception (See Triantafyllidis, 2001, p. 271).

intellectual people who wrote in elementary school, was not great, nor is it a given. In 1911 Pallis wrote in a letter to Dragoumis: *The idea is progressing well. Letters come to me from various places. If the group acts actively and enthusiastically, it will come* (Exhibit 9. F. 24, Min. 3, Dragoumis Archive, Gennadios Library, ASKSA).

### 3.1 The Positive impact - influence of the EO's action

The situation seems to have changed in the spring of 1914, one month after the conclusion of the Nafplio trial and the solemn acquittal of all the accused, namely Delmouzos, Saratsis and the others. El. Baliori, director of the Ionian Bank of Nafplion, had informed her in a letter that all EO books had been sold in a well-known bookshop in her city and asked for more books to be sent. He had mentioned that the particular owner of the bookstore was the second to sign the protest in favour of Delmouzos after the progress of the trial in Nafplio (Triantafyllidis, 2001, p. 249). In 1914, a reprint of Giannides' book "The Language and the Life" was published in Athens, showing the upward trend of the demoticists in Athenian society (Triantafyllidis, 2001, p. 255). At the same time, there was an increased demand for EO books, demonstrating the world's growing interest in educational issues, which was linked to more general social ferment, but also to a modernist mood that overcame the outdated linguistic concepts of the time.

The positive impact of the EO's action was also demonstrated by the fact that in 1915 the EO was awarded the Zappeio Prize by the Association for the Promotion of Greek Studies in Paris, as can be seen on the front page of the Bulletin. In 1916, the Demotic group founded the Educational Club of Egypt in Cairo, with a programme similar to that of the Educational Club of Alexandria. The EO of Egypt openly supported Venizelos and his educational policy (Stavridis-Patrikiou, 1999, p. 313), and had even sent a letter welcoming the acquittal of Delmouzos, describing it as a sweet gospel and wishing that it would lead them to the new path of joy and life (Letter from the Demoticists of Alexandria to Delmouzos dated 14 May 1914, F. 11, Delmouzos Archive).

Iosifides' letter referred to the expectations of the Greeks of the Caucasus to stimulate the education of their children with books from the Ministry of Education and informed about the circulation of a newspaper in a living vernacular (Review, *DEO*, vol. 9, 1921, p. 148).

With the implementation of the reform of 1917, the Association of Public Teachers of Thessaloniki wrote in a letter that it had been following the struggles for the spread of educational change for years and agreed that "the nonsense of logicotatism has left us behind" and wished it strength in the great work of the supervisors for the good of the nation. The Association of Rizarites, the Refugee Public Teachers of Athens, the Students' Community and many others wrote personal letters expressing their support and asking for help and for the reinforcement of their library with EO books (Letter from the Association of Public Teachers of Thessaloniki to Delmouzos, 20 March 1910, and other letters, F. 12, Delmouzos

Archive). The Education Committee of the Patriarchates of the City and the Committee of the Pantazopoulou Competition for the Compilation of Municipal Educational Reading Books with Presiding Metropolitans copy the programme of the Editorial Committee of the Educational Reform of 1917-1920 in terms of form, content and detailed programme of readings (Triantafyllidis, 1988, Apanta, v. 6, p. 33).

A clear influence was the idea of the EO model school, which was also adopted by the corresponding EO of Cairo and, as seen there, became a reality. In 1920-1921 the local group had moved to Alexandria, where a school with director Marcelo was operating, comprising 4 classes with 40 children, and the results of its operation were wonderful. The news of Marcelo's move to Smyrna raised concerns about how to fill his void. G. Petridis, a well-known publicist of Alexandria, invited Delmouzos to fill the position of director for the coming year, if he could (Letter Petridis G. to Delmouzos, in which he, as head of the EO of Alexandria, Egypt, asks Delmouzos to take over the direction of the Model School of Alexandria, Egypt, F. 8, Delmouzos Archive).

Z. Kapernaros, head of the education department in Volos, sent a warm letter to Delmouzos and Triantafyllides as supervisors, characterising the reading of the Bulletin as a spiritual oasis, he requested that more issues be sent to him to distribute to teachers in his district and the first sheets of the Bulletin, which he did not even have to register as a member of the EO (handwritten and signed letter). The action of the group inspired the inspectors of various regions, ordinary teachers and became an occasion to create similar movements in other cities in support of demoticism. In 1921, Damianos Kyriazis pioneered the creation of the Union of Greek Students Abroad, where he gave relevant lectures (Triantafyllidis, 2001, op. ff. 308). A number of educational inspectors contact Triantafyllidis, either to congratulate him on the editions of his articles that they have received and read, or to express their agreement with Triantafyllidis' findings on the consequences of the language issue and bilingualism in Macedonia, or to ask for the group's bulletin (Triantafyllidis, 2001, pp. 268, 269, 279). Others expressed their positive judgements about the articles and books they had received from Triantafyllidis personally or from what they had bought (Triantafyllidis, 2001, pp. 337). Teachers from Macedonia, Thessaloniki, in their letters to the DEO, expressed their difficulty in working effectively in school with the official language of katharévousa. An inspector from Macedonia complained about the torture of the language of certain books (From what they write to us, DEO, vol. 5, 1915, p. 532).

Apart from the actions of individuals or state officials and institutions and the articles of the press, the greatest enlightenment was achieved by the distribution and dissemination of EO journals and the systematisation of lectures, which were the most important weapons for spreading the ideas of educational demoticism and the need to reform the educational system.

Avgi had given a brief introduction to the change in the approach of the reformers and Glinos in particular. He mentioned that until then he had been presented as the most terrible persecutor of the teaching world, while in his capacity as Secretary General of the Ministry, with his tours, his love for teachers and his dynamism in dealing with educational issues, he

dispelled any doubts against him. The same sheet also mentions the recognition of the equal work of male and female teachers and the visit of the Inspectors of Education to the prefectures of Kefalonia and Corinth, where the first conferences were held with great interest on the part of fellow teachers.

### **3.2 The Positive impact on its members**

Initially, the ordinary members who attended the Group's meetings probably did not have the maturity and sufficient knowledge of the Group's innovative issues. This is evidenced by the confession of Petrokokkinos in 1913, where he mentioned that the discussions during the Monday and Wednesday meetings were unsuccessful, as they resulted in shouting and the like. He himself, in another letter of 1910, mentioned that the world, as perceived from the speeches, was in no mood for cognitive and educational issues (Documents 1857 and 1868, Letters from Triantafyllides to Dragoumis (no date). Digital Archive I. Dragoumis, Gennadios Library, ASKSA).

Then the world's response to the meetings increased, although there was no steady upward trend. The impact of the group's ideas was expected to be greater in the world of its members over time. In the DEO of 1921, there was a reference to the success of the Friday talks: "The hall is full of people and interesting discussions often take place, where mainly the members of the Group meet, get to know each other, formulate thoughts, opinions after the speech of a speaker at the beginning. During the last discussions, the presence of several teachers from the province was mentioned, as representatives of the provincial teachers' associations (Various, *DEO*, vol. 2, 1912, p. 348).

The protagonists of the language education reform expressed their positive judgement on its project for the role of language in the upgrading of Greek education, the recognition of the importance of popular tradition and Modern Greek culture, and the justification of the vernacular in the coming years (Betsas-Amarantidou, 2011, p. 18). During this period, the pioneers of the group had every reason to promote the work of the EO and speak of the great impact of the group's speeches, publications and journals. Several ordinary members of the EO or subscribers to the magazine, from Athens and the countryside, communicated with letters published in the EO. They expressed their concerns and anxieties about educational issues and the revival of the Greek school, the empowerment of teachers in their work, the impact of changing textbooks and the vernacular on effective teaching and teacher satisfaction.

Attending the meetings, listening to the speeches of the EO and reading the corresponding article in the journal was a powerful stimulus that definitely affected the linguistic and intellectual sensibility of the ordinary members year after year (From what they write to us, *DEO*, vol. 5, 1915, p. 328).

Several linguistic texts by staff or readers were published in the DEO column, praising the work of the EO and the Demoticists such: A.P. Papanastasiou, politician, member of the EO,

Mylonas, politician, Secretary General of the Ministry of the Republic of Georgia, I. Athanasakis, statesman, Undersecretary of the Military, S. Loverdos, Director of the National Bank, Al. Vamvetsos, Prefect of Florina, M. Tsakiris, teacher from Sebastoupoli, D. Kontogiannis, inspector of primary schools in Piraeus, K. Michaelidis, teacher and inspector from Smyrna on behalf of the High Commission, A.M. Theofanopoulos, teacher from Piraeus, M. Filintas, linguist, and G.P. Kokkinis, inspector (Rogari, 2010, p. 225).

By mid-1927, the politicization of the group's aims had made it difficult to assess its influence. Although Glinos made it clear in the EO declaration that the EO was not a political union, it seems that he was not believed. He himself, as the sole leader of the group, was undoubtedly becoming more political and was clearly moving towards socialism. Many of the club's original fans and supporters distanced themselves from his belief in socialism, or even opposed it. The radical bourgeois Glinos was their role model, but not the socialist.

The draft programme published in Neos Dromos, the declaration of the EO and its regulation had as a common recommendation the adoption of socialist ideas in the field of education and openness to the socialist approach. This had the effect of causing great upheavals among the members, because according to the relevant minutes of the EO, the old members resigned and new ones were written. What was certain was that the split and the subsequent political nuance of the group's leaders led to the withdrawal of its potential candidates from the left wing, a factor that hindered the growth of its power.

#### **4. Conclusion**

EO acted as a catalyst in the linguistic sentiments of the purists who immediately started the reaction. Several university professors criticized the founders of EO for following the false theories of Psycharis. They questioned the identity of their future school (methodology, language of the books). Hatzidakis sees their intention to establish the school as a practical but not a scientific undertaking, while Xenopoulos echoes the concerns of others about the way the school operates.

The work of the founders was characterised as genocidal and harmful. In addition, the true populists (fans of Psycharis) denounced the new union. Petrokkokinos, the group's treasurer, complained to Delmouzos about the effectiveness of their work. Palamas, an eminent scholar of the time, had reservations about the competitive intentions of the founders of EO. He characterised the language of the EO texts as "hesitant". The teaching staff and the Prefect of Attica-Boeotia had expressed their reactions. In 1927, after the split of the group and its transformation into a socialist union, the "Zealous of Christ", an association that passionately defended the religious and national identity of the Greeks, made harsh accusations.

The newspapers had initially published sarcastic comments and articles about the living language of the people, and the group leaders responded with articles of their own. In general, they fostered a divisive climate, using strong language to accuse Delmouzos and the others of

atheist propaganda. To the group's supporters, New Voice presented Delmouzos as an indefatigable spiritual man, and Avgi pointed to the drastic changes in educational structures thanks to EO's contributors.

While EO's influence was initially small, the prosecution and subsequent acquittal of Delmouzos strengthened the populist trend. Sales of the group's books increased, the magazine DEO was founded in 1915, and similar groups were set up abroad with EO as their aim. Finally, teachers' unions from various regions, as well as individuals, had applauded his work. The situation was only halted in 1927, when the EO changed its programme and a large percentage of its members were expelled.

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