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## The mythical life of Abraham Benaroya



He was born a Bulgarian, was a Turkish citizen, became a Greek politician, passed through the German concentration camps and died as an Israeli. The shocking life of a mythical figure of the Balkan left.

Let us talk today about the once famous and enigmatic Abraham Eliezer Benaroya, not to describe all his actions (he needs a whole book) but more to understand what our world and country was like just a century ago. Benaroya was a Bulgarian of Jewish descent (born 1887 in Vidin, Bulgaria), made history as a pioneer socialist in Thessaloniki, became a member of the Greek parliament, co-founded and expelled the KKE, passed through German concentration camps in 1979. as a kiosk in Israel.

**He was the founder (1909) of the famous Labor Union of Thessaloniki, which went down in history as the Federation.** Today we consider pre-eternal the nation-states that make up our world as well as their compact human geography, so we can not understand what was happening just a century ago on the roads we walk. During his lifetime, Benaroya was a citizen of four states (Bulgarian, Turkish, Greek, Israeli) but always considered nationality a secondary issue. The key in his opinion was social consciousness. He was one of the first socialists, later a communist, but in those days the socialists were primarily internationalists. They did not depend on or exhaust their action within the nation-states.

**He was a teacher and printer in Bulgaria (he spoke and wrote six languages), but he said he preferred to do humble work to be close to the proletariat. He was prosecuted for his actions and landed in Thessaloniki. At that time, Macedonia and Thessaloniki belonged**

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**eventually led to the massacre of Greeks and Armenians, began as a progressive movement. The Socialists supported him until he started chasing them too.**

**Thessaloniki was a multinational city, with a larger population of Jews, followed by Turks and Greeks. The majority of the Jews were workers and craftsmen, so good leaven for the newly formed socialist ideas. A Jew and Benaroya, he came down to Thessaloniki and founded the famous Federation, which was a multinational socialist organization consisting of Jews, Greeks, Slavs and Muslims. Crazy things for the data of our time, but very reasonable then. He published a newspaper in the four respective languages, founded the labor center of Thessaloniki, went on strike and generally took great action. The great strikes of 1908 were organized by him. The Neo-Turks arrested him along with all the other leaders of the mobilizations.**

When in 1912 the Greek army took Thessaloniki and all its inhabitants (those who wanted to stay) became Greek citizens, Benaroya became active in Greek politics. The Federation pioneered the establishment of GSEE and the establishment of SEKE, later KKE. In 1915 he was elected member of parliament, while in 1920 he turned the entire Jewish community against Venizelos because he disagreed with the continuation of the war in Asia Minor, considering him purely imperialist. In 1924 he was expelled from the KKE as an opportunist. During the German occupation, it followed the fate of the Jews of Thessaloniki. He was deported to a concentration camp, he survived but his family did not. Returning, he took part in the founding of the Socialist Party with Terzakis, Pouliopoulos and Kazantzakis. striving for political unification of all the scattered socialist forces of the time. However, they were not very successful.



Όσο περνούσαν τα χρόνια και με την συγκλονιστική εμπειρία του ολοκαυτώματος να τον έχει επηρεάσει βαθιά, άρχισε να πηγαinoέρχεται στο νεοσύστατο κράτος του Ισραήλ. Το 1953 εγκαταστάθηκε οριστικά στα περίχωρα του Τελ Αβίβ, όπου ζούσε από ένα περίπτερο που του παραχωρήθηκε από τον Σιωνιστή ηγέτη Μπεν Τσβι. Ο Μπεναρόγια ήταν υπέρ της ίδρυσης του κράτους του Ισραήλ, αλλά καταδίκασε πάντα τον Σιωνισμό. Παρά ταύτα, όλοι μέσα στο καινούριο κράτος τον εκτιμούσαν, γι αυτό και του έδωσαν το περίπτερο ώστε να συμπληρώνει την πενιχρή ελληνική σύνταξη που έπαιρνε. Παρέμεινε πάντα αριστερός σοσιαλιστής και πέθανε το 1979 πλήρης ημερών, στα 92 του. Τι ζωή κι αυτή, ε;

**The irony is that the son of Eliazar Benaroya, a businessman living in California, recently told a Greek newspaper that he had never been a leftist and that the most progressive move of his life was to vote for Bill Clinton once.**

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