

The Mourtzoukou Factory [Leviathan] in Volos  
By Raphael Frezis

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Translation by Marcia Haddad Ikonomopoulos

One of the largest factories in Greece, which was located in Volos, was "Leviathan" which provided first quality men and women's garments.

The steam-powered factory, originally small in size, was built on a piece of land about 100 square meters in size on Anapavseos Street, next to the Krausidon River. It began to operate under the name "Leviathan-Mourtzoukos-Sigaras-Levis and Sia" in 1908 with the participation of the entrepreneur Kalamara.

The operational buildings of the factory grew steadily over the years, when the factory passed to the ownership of Zakaria Mourtzoukou and Zakarai Levi.

In 1914, the period of the First World War, the factory ceased production due to the absence of quality material. It reopened in 1920, and according to records of 1922, about 900 employees worked there, many of them poor refugees from Asia Minor who had been forced out by the exchange of population. During the height of operation, the factory supplied shops throughout Greece, producing products from British wool woven on 87 looms manufactured in Germany. The demand for goods was so great that the factory worked on three shifts.

The tall chimneys towering over the area and the sirens sounding to wake the employees to come to work remain vivid symbols in the minds of older citizens from Volos. During those years, the city reached Payason Street and the surrounding plots of land were farmland and vineyards.

In 1928, Zakaria Levi left the partnership and Zakaria Mourtzoukos' sons rose in the business: Anselmos became the general manager and Saul, the technical manager. Funds of 32,000 British liras [a substantial sum for that period]- was initially reinvested by a major manufacturer- with the aim of expanding and modernizing the operations, and broadening the activities.

Major shareholders were Anselmos Z. Mourtzoukos [7,000 shares], his wife, Thalia, the child of Zakaria Levi [1,000 shares], the widow of Zakaria Levi [1,400 shares], his daughter, Anna [1,000 shares], Xanthi, the widow of Zakaria Mourtzoukos [2,000 shares], Saul Mourtzoukos [2,000 shares], Joseph Besso [1,400 shares], Kaiser Fortes [12,500 shares?], Moses Mizan from Milan [1,000 shares], Senor Saporta, also from Milan [250], Haim Mourtzoukos [100 shares], Minos Konstantinos [1,000 shares], Elia Kamhi and Sia [1,000] and Joseph Kovos [7,000].

At the first Council of Directors of the Firm, the following merchants participated: Solomon K. Kamhi, Minos Konstantini, Daniel Yiaxiel, Joseph Bessos, Senor Saporta, Haim Mourtzoukos and Zakaria Naar. All of the Council of Directors [throughout its history] remained Jewish, and for the most part were relatives or auditors.

In 1930, the firm borrowed 15,000 British liras from the National Bank [at 8% interest] to use to buy finishing machines and other equipment for the refining of cashmere. Along the same lines, an account in the amount of 20,000 British liras was opened at a Belgium financial institution [with the interest rate of 6%].

Visitors to the factory were impressed by the cleanliness, the modern equipment, the pleasant nature of the workers and the social welfare programs provided by the Directorship. For the excellence of the products produced by the firm, the factory was honored with the Gold Medal at the International Exposition in Paris.

Additional loans were taken through the National Bank of Greece and other financial institutions outside the country. The growth of indebtedness [from 1934 on] began to put the firm in financial difficulties. In November of 1936, the newspaper "The Stock Exchange" mentioned that the firm was experiencing financial difficulties, and the National Bank of Greece, after an audit that had taken place, confirmed the rumors.

On June 19, 1938, the same newspaper mentioned that the firm was placed in the hands of the creditors since it could not overcome the general textile crisis and that it needed short-term help in meeting the responsibilities of the bank loans. In spite of the fact that during these years annual production was in excess of 900,000 meters [of material], the factory was required to reduce its staff to 600 people.

That same year, 21,034 shares were transferred to auditors [acting on behalf of the Directors was Odysseus Kuriakopoulos, and on of the Bank of Greece, N. Georgoulas].

The lowering of the capital was accompanied by the issuing of new shares, a fact which allowed the factory to continue to function.

During the war-1940-due to a shortage of quality material and workers, and inflation, the Director of the firm tried to liquidate reserve stock and convert it into material.

From 1941, the Council Directors was made up only of Anselmos Mourtzoukos and Zakaria Naar. In 1944, after the liberation of Greece, only Zakaria Naar

remained. The National Bank of Greece appointed K. Moraitis as Vice President. From 1946, Anselmos Mourtzoukos assumed authorization of the Council of Directors and, from 1947, along with his son-in-law, Freddy Barouch and Zakaria Naar, served on the Council.

The factory was finally sold to the Agricultural Bank in 1954 with the intention of using the property for the storage of agricultural products. The property was resold in 1988 [by the municipality] to be used to erect a building housing the central administrations of the schools of Volos.

Among the many Jews who worked at the factory during its years of operation were: Vital Tovil, Avraam Kapeta, Anselmos Mourtzoukos, Raphael Haim Koen, David Manoach, Zakaria Daskalakis, Paul Bourlas, Asser Haim Koen, Raphael Filosof, Elias Haim Politis, Aliko Mourtzoukou, Daniel Haim Koen, Elias Mizan, Leon Mourtzoukos, Renee Abravanel, Saul Mizan, Haim Mourtzoukos, Zakinos Mizan, Menashe Haim Mourtzoukos, Joseph Taraboulous, Zakos Koen, Solomon Manoach, Rachel Manoach, Solomon Koen, Eva Manoach, Avraam Alimanis, David Manoach, etc.

The registered trademark of the firm "Mourztoukos" was designed by Market David, as noted in the business card.

Finally, it should be noted that one of the original shareholders [Kalamara] was the son of the banker from Thessaloniki. In the last decade of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, he was the accountant for the Thessaly Railroad Firm and, in spite of the fact that, in 1894, he is listed as "retired," it was speculated that he promoted later regulations, reaching the position of Deputy Head of Operations. Along the same line, it appears that he was involved in a number of other operations without his name actually appearing. It is theorized that [in Volos] he was the main shareholder in a factory involved in supplying of energy [air, fire and electric] in addition to the fabric factory "Leviathan." Nothing can be kept secret in a small community and, before long, it was common knowledge of his involvements and his name became synonymous with "clock maker" [a nickname that actually means someone who has an uncanny ability to regulate his time and make the most of it, literally being in two places at once: translator's note]. Every morning, when the siren would sound to call the workers to their shift, the citizens of Volos would say: "Kalamaras is whistling," as they set their watches and went about their work.