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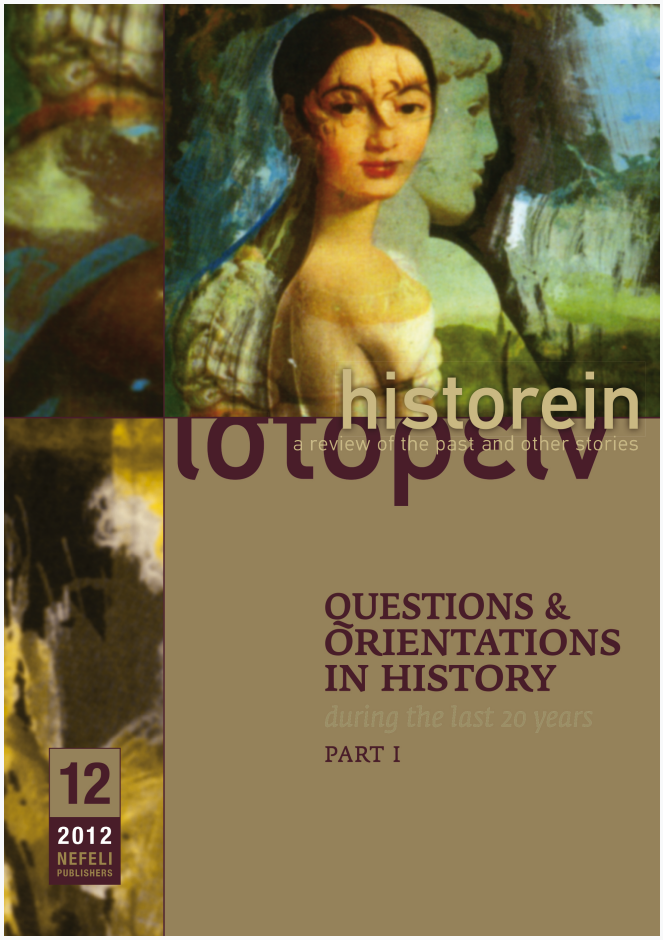

2. The Second World War and Its Aftermath

Editorial Committee

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II
The Second World war and its aftermath

Eleni Paschaloudi

Ενας πόλεμος χωρίς τέλος: Η δεκαετία του 1940 στον πολιτικό λόγο, 1950–1967
[A war without end: the 1940s in political discourse, 1950–1967]
Thessaloniki: Epikentro, 2010. 383 pp.

Giorgos Antoniou
International Hellenic University

This monograph by Eleni Paschaloudi is the revised version of her doctoral dissertation, which she completed at the University of Macedonia in Thessaloniki. The subject of the book is the political use of the past, and more specifically that of the 1940s, in the political propaganda and rhetoric of the main political parties in Greece from 1950 to 1967.

It is true that the 1940s have been a privileged field of research, to say the least, within the boundaries of contemporary Greek historiography. Most of the aspects of this turbulent period appear to have been thoroughly examined. The impact of this period in the wider context of contemporary history is, to a certain extent, devastating since it overshadows many other fascinating subjects of study. Moreover, the over-politicisation of the historiographical production has sidelined interesting alternate but parallel debates about the cultural and political dimensions of that turbulent past.

In this sense, Paschaloudi's book is a very welcome contribution. While the initial point of departure is the 1940s and their legacy, while reading the book one cannot but wonder if we know as much as we think we know about the famous impact the 1940s bequeathed to postwar political, social and cultural life. In most cases when we examine the politics of memory, especially the memory of occupation, resistance and civil war, we examine it through the "lens" of the immediate post-junta period (1974–1989), when the main narratives, symbols and political interpretations concerning the traumatic events of the 1940s were produced. In that sense, this book reconstructs zealously the way that the 1940s were commemorated immediately after the end of the civil war, offering a new approach on the matter.

It is difficult to categorise this book in a single epistemological trend. It lies between political science and history, using theories of political behaviour from the former but adopting a clear

historical viewpoint; it also lies between political history and social and cultural memory since its focus is split proportionally between the description of the party strategies and the general social and cultural place the 1940s acquired during the subsequent two decades. Its sources and methodology are again mixed; the basic source is indeed the press but this material is used not in the usual "image of the other" type of approach taken with newspaper materials; rather, Paschaloudi proposes a solid and less popular approach to press articles and material as a trustworthy and rich source that were used to explain and reinterpret party strategies and choices during election campaigns.

Paschaloudi claims that immediately after the end of the civil war, both sides were eager to forget and return to a peaceful way of life which could offer prosperity and economic growth. The left was brutally defeated, many Communist Party of Greece (KKE) members were executed, imprisoned or exiled and others fled to the socialist countries. On the other hand, the rightwing and centrist political parties had won a "bitter" victory. Despite the fact that this was presented as a great victory against communism and Slavism, it was still a victory against a part of the Greek nation and, therefore, difficult to commemorate. Both sides, the victors and the vanquished, chose to remain silent about the past and constructed their political discourse on a different basis.

Therefore, the divisions of the civil war constituted a past that nobody wanted to remember and, of course, no one wanted to harbour these painful memories. Usually, commemorative events, as John Bodnar notes, contain powerful symbolic expressions and metaphors, signs and rituals that give meaning to competing interpretations of past and present reality. Thus an official/public commemoration, at a cultural level, serves as a symbol that "coerces" the discordant interests of diverse social groups and unites them into a "unitary conceptual framework" which connects the ideal with the real. Officials use it as a powerful metaphor that stimulates ideals of social unity and civic loyalty. These purposes could not be served by any celebration referring to the civil war.

For a long time, civil war divisions coloured the memory of the entire decade. Central to Paschaloudi's argumentation on the politics of memory is the thesis that the whole period of the 1940s was remembered through the prism of the civil war. In other words, the memory of the Nazi occupation and resistance was appropriated by the memory of the civil war. What complicated matters further was that the civil war became taboo in political discourse of the time. Whereas in Spain a political culture and official memory were constructed on the basis of the nationalist victory immediately after the Spanish civil war, in Greece neither the right nor the left alluded to the Greek civil war.

Both "victors" and "vanquished" chose to commemorate different events from the 1940s for their own purposes. They constructed different narratives of divisive events in order to use them in their political discourse. These conflicting narratives resulted in a shattered memory of the period. Because of the civil war, the right and left could not share the same image of the past. As a result, the resistance did not become the "founding myth" of postwar politics in Greece. Unlike Greece, various resistance movements across Europe were constantly celebrated and constituted the foundation myth of a number of postwar republics. In contrast to what happened in Italy or France, where the patriotic memory and antifascism of the resistance formed the basis of postwar democracy, in Greece the resistance was, to a large extent, identified with the left and, thus, could not become a "shared" past.

According to Paschaloudi, the right and left recollected different events from the 1940s and framed them in different ways. The former framed the 1940s as a period of nationalist victories against foreign and domestic enemies. Firstly, there was the Greek army's victory over Fascist Italy, followed by the defeat of the communists internally. In the discourse and the memory of the right, the 1940s were associated with the atrocities committed by the communists against their compatriots. The December 1944 uprising, in particular, had become synonymous with the communists in the political discourse of the right. The left, on the other hand, forged the 1940s mainly as a period of resistance against the Axis occupation and fascism in general. The KKE was seen as pivotal in this struggle. Subsequently, the memory of the civil war, which was only remembered as a period of inexcusable persecution of resistance fighters, was set aside.

Thus, in postwar Greece there was not a single, unified collective memory of the 1940s, but rather a splintered memory. The right and left proposed different frameworks for the interpretation of the country's collective past. Such diverse narratives contributed to the construction of antagonistic political identities. Moreover, the collective memory was divided not only due to the civil conflict but also because of post-civil war policies as well. The political cleavage of "national mindedness" that the civil war created was intensified by the policies of the governments of the victors of the civil war up to 1967. The discriminations of the left, the monitoring of the activities of the leftwing organisations and parties, the climate of intimidation created by the police or by extreme rightwing groups and the requirement to obtain certificates of social conformity (*πιστοποιητικά κοινωνικών φρονημάτων*) were only some of the means that governments used to suppress left and, sometimes, centrist opposition.

Apart from the construction of narratives and the way that political parties evoked the past in different political circumstances, this book raises extremely interesting questions: Why do political parties need to remember at all? Why do they need to evoke a rather unpleasant and difficult past? Why do political leaders and entrepreneurs feel the need to enclose divisive and yet persistent memories in their discourse?

Paschaloudi stresses throughout her book that when we remember, especially when party officials or governments call us to remember by including past events in their discourse or establishing commemorative ceremonies, the past is not used as an avenue towards the truth; quite the opposite. Where the creation of the past is not in the hands of professional historians, it is more likely that the past is used to serve other purposes such as the formation of political identity.

In conclusion, Paschaloudi's book is a very significant contribution to a newly emerging field, that of the study of the past as a commodity, consumed and appropriated by political and social agents. It is a pity that Paschaloudi did not attempt to compare in her study the post-dictatorship era with the 1950–1967 period, since this comparison might have revealed many similarities – and discrepancies – in the patterns of remembering and dealing with the past. But it's never too late; one lives in hope.

Loring M. Danforth and Riki van Boeschoten

Children of the Greek Civil War: Refugees and the Politics of Memory
Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2012. 329 pp.

Kateřina Králová and Konstantinos Tsivos
Charles University, Prague

Due to armed conflicts, conflicting ideologies, globalisation as well as rapid development of technical means, in the last century Europe experienced a huge and nearly continuous migration movement, which became a permanent subject of research for many academic disciplines. Beginning with Ernest Ravenstein's *Laws of Migration* in 1889, scholars have developed theories on national and international migration, its causes and impact. Historically, the population exchange between Greece and Turkey in the early 1920s is deemed by many as defining the new politics of migration.[1] It was soon followed by many other cases such as the Zionist movement, the refugees of the Russian civil war, decolonisation, and especially post-Second World war migration and consequent expulsion of millions of people from their homes.

In the case of Greece, the issue of Asia Minor refugees has been researched for many decades. The Centre for Asia Minor Studies, which was established by the representatives of the refugee elites shortly after their expulsion, holds an immense collection of archival and oral resources. In the case of the Greek civil war refugees, however, the situation is much more complicated and remains a contentious issue not only for Greek society but also for the academic community.

Research on the civil war was initiated more than a decade after the war ended mainly by foreign researchers and Greeks living abroad.[2] These works paved the way for further exploration of this topic by present-day historians and other researchers in Greece. Yet, most of this research concentrated primarily on the historical events themselves, and it took much longer to focus on the "common man". The pioneers of such an approach are Riki van Boeschoten and Loring M. Danforth, authors of *Children of the Greek Civil War*.

For more than a decade, van Boeschoten has been an associate professor of social anthropology at the University of Thessaly in Volos. She is also a cofounder of the Greek Oral History Association (2012), the first organisation of its kind in Greece. Among others, she has published extensively on the memory of the civil war as well as on Macedonian political refugees in Eastern Europe.[3] As for Loring M. Danforth, he is a professor of anthropology and epistemology at Bates College in Lewiston, Maine. Ever since his master's, he has carried out extensive anthropological research on modern Greece, which resulted in numerous publications.[4]

The topic of the civil war and its impact, which van Boeschoten and Danforth explore in their new book, remains a source of polarisation for modern Greek society and its diaspora, even more so where the children were involved. Until recently, the main publication on the child refugees that was accessible to an international audience was a 1987 study by Lars Baerentzen.[5] This makes Danforth and van Boeschoten's *Children of the Greek Civil War* all the more significant. And yet, it is symptomatic for

the local dealing with the past that the book has been published in English first and that it may be published in Greek if the circumstances permit it.

The authors focus exclusively on refugee children; not adult migrants or on those born already in exile. Within this group they try to identify and deconstruct collective memory and the factors that influenced it most significantly. By using oral history as well as archival sources, they move conceptually and methodologically within history and anthropology, but also more specifically within diaspora and refugee studies. In doing so, they present a complete picture of the children, who were uprooted in one or the other. They explore the traumatic experience that the children experienced in their early days and how they dealt with it subsequently.

One of the most innovative objectives is their treatment of both the children evacuated by communists to Eastern bloc countries as well as those stationed in the children's camps (*paidopoleis*) established by Queen Frederica in the later period of the civil war. By addressing the evacuation of children from Greece, the (hi)story – as the authors put it themselves – of their migration, the impact of separation, be it from their families or the environment itself, and the institutionalisation of their education defined by two opposing ideologies make the book not only outstanding in the conceptual academic way but also agreeable reading for the layman.

In doing so, the book provides the first comprehensive picture of the politics of children's relief provided by both the Greek monarchy and the Communist Party of Greece (KKE), often referred to euphemistically as *paidofylagma* (child protection) or *paidomazoma* (child abduction), respectively, depending on perspective. The authors deal critically with both terms and bring them closer to the term *paidopoleis* in a comparative way. Thus, they break the traditional, simplistic dichotomy of the evacuation of children by claiming it was either forced or voluntary. They stress that the ideology of both sides was strongly nationalistic and did not consider the child as an "active subject". Moreover, the authors deal with another very controversial issue: they also look at the significant group of slavophones, more specifically Slav-Macedonians (ethnic Macedonians, as explained in the book on p. 10), among the children. They follow them and their organisations outside the borders of Greek state, in Skopje as well as overseas, comparing their memories with those of the ethnic Greeks. All of the above-mentioned issues are put into the broader context of the cold war, which provides an important framework for a further understanding of the theme, and permit a closer look into the interaction of national and transnational refugee networks.

In the ten years the authors researched on their topic, they visited several archives and collected 114 interviews. The results of their efforts are admirably presented in three parts, divided into eight chapters, in a very balanced, original and richly illustrated study. The authors were able to explore a lot of primary and secondary sources. The theoretical part of the book is based on classical works within memory studies (Halbwachs or Nora), ethnography (Marcus, Fischer, Apadurai and Clifford) and oral history (for example, Passerini). The historical and factual part relies on the most pivotal works of the English, Greek and Macedonian bibliography, dealing with issues relating to refugee studies and the Greek civil war, and also on a sufficient number of autobiographies. Together, they create good basis for the deconstruction of personal testimonies, which are by no means used only for illustration or to enlarge the content of the book, as is often the case.

In the first part of the book, Histories, van Boeschoten and Danforth explain the methodology and then put the topic into a broader historical context. After that, they introduce the two evacuation programmes: first the one conducted by the KKE and the second, subsequently, by Queen Frederica. The authors compare these programmes with evacuation programmes in other European countries in the 1930s and 1940s and describe the international legal frameworks for refugees and children after the Second World war. The second part of the book, Stories, contains transcriptions of seven emotionally very strong individual private (hi)stories. Here, former refugee children, of Greek or Slav-Macedonian ethnicity and either emigrants or repatriates, describe their experiences during the civil war and their lives abroad. In our opinion, this is a successful attempt at how to show the full range of (hi)stories and not (as usual) only one universal history. The third part, Ethnographies, is essentially an anthropological interpretation. In the beginning, it follows the changing identities, traumas and the concepts of place, home and family.[6] The authors then drive their attention to the so called "ethnographies of memory" by analysing experiential communities of memory and political communities of memory (225–229). This is demonstrated in the last chapters in the form of four case studies, where they pay a closer look at the minority organisations, the political narrative as outlined by Nicolas Cage's *Eleni* more than three decades ago, and the actual *lieu de mémoire* in each case. According to the authors, the book primarily wants to contribute to "the process of healing and reconciliation for the individuals and communities that have the traumatic experiences of the Greek civil war" and, more generally, to "a deeper understanding of the complex lives of refugee children" (295). The judgment may be premature but we feel that they have, at least partially, succeeded in their aim.

If we can find a weakness, and this applies not only for van Boeschoten and Danforth's book but also for many other studies on the Greek civil war and emigration, it is the lack of consultation of archival materials in the former communist countries. This problem, to some extent, is caused by linguistic diversity, large distances, or – until recently – the inaccessibility of the archives in Eastern and Central European countries. However, it is essential to take these archival materials into account, to avoid inaccuracies or generalisations. A small, painless example: the authors missed the fact that the local committees of the KKE were abolished in the majority of communist countries but not in the USSR and Czechoslovakia, which had the largest communities of Greek immigrants (70). Nevertheless, neither this small complaint nor other minor flaws alter in any sense the fact that this publication is of great benefit for the broad spectrum of academic disciplines mentioned above.

We strongly believe that *Children of the Greek Civil War* should be basic reading for any researcher of the civil war as well as for refugee studies in general. All in all, the authors can be proud of their hard work, readers will enjoy the pleasant reading, but eyewitnesses will be satisfied that more light has been shed on their life-stories. Let us just hope that a Greek publisher will soon provide the local audience with a professional translation.

NOTES

1 Norman M. Naimark, *Fires of Hatred: Ethnic Cleansing in Twentieth-century Europe*, Cambridge: Harvard UP, 2002, or Holm Sundhaussen, "Ethnische Zwangsmigration", in Institut für Europäische Geschichte (ed), *Europäische Geschichte Online (EGO)*, Mainz: 2010-12-03,

www.ieg-ego.eu/sundhaussenh-2010-de URN: urn:nbn:de:0159-20100921712, accessed 20 Dec 2012.

2 Heinz A. Richter, *Griechenland zwischen Revolution und Konterrevolution, 1936–1946*, Frankfurt am Main: Europäische Verlagsanstalt, 1973, and John O. Iatrides (ed.), *Greece in the 1940s: A Nation in Crisis*, Hanover, London: University Press of New England, 1981.

3 See her "The impossible return: coping with separation and the reconstruction of memory in the wake of the civil war", in Mark Mazower (ed.), *After the War was Over: Reconstructing the Family, Nation and State in Greece, 1943–1960*, Princeton: Princeton UP, 2000, 122–141, "From 'Janissaries' to 'Hooligans': Greek and Macedonian Refugee Children in Communist Hungary", in Maria Todorova (ed.), *Remembering Communism: Genres of Representation*, New York: Social Science Research Council, 2010, 155–186, and *Μνήμες και λήθη του ελληνικού εμφυλίου πολέμου* [Remembering and forgetting the Greek civil war], Thessaloniki: Epikentro, 2008.

4 See, for example, these three books published by Princeton University Press and later translated into local languages: *The Death Rituals of Rural Greece* (1982), *Firewalking and Religious Healing: The Anastenaria of Greece and the American Firewalking Movement* (1989), and *The Macedonian Conflict: Ethnic Nationalism in a Transnational World* (1995).

5 Lars Baerentzen, John O. Iatrides and Ole L. Smith (eds),"The 'Paidomazoma' and the Queen's Camps", in *Studies in the History of the Greek Civil War, 1945–1949*, Copenhagen: Museum Tusculanum Press, 1987, 127–158.

6 The conclusions of its first chapter were also included in Danforth's earlier article "We Crossed a Lot of Borders: Refugee Children of the Greek Civil War", *Diaspora* 12/2 (2003): 169–209.

Katerina Tsekou

Προσωρινώς διαμένοντες: Έλληνες πολιτικοί πρόσφυγες στην Λαϊκή Δημοκρατία της Βουλγαρίας 1948–1982
[Staying temporarily: Greek political refugees in the People's Republic of Bulgaria, 1948–1982]
Thessaloniki: Epikentro: 2010. 587 pp.

Christina Alexopoulos
National Institute of Oriental Languages and Civilisations, Paris

This book by Katerina Tsekou is based on her doctoral dissertation which she completed at the Ionian University in May 2009. In it, she examines Greek political refugees first as a whole – thus filling a major gap in Greek historiography – and then by focusing on the fate of those who found refuge and, in some cases, settled in Bulgaria for an indeterminate time. She then studies the living conditions, the integration policies and the survival strategies of the refugee populations in their relations with local authorities and the organisations of the Communist Party of Greece (KKE).

Except for a few collective reference works and some very detailed studies on particular aspects of the daily life of Greek political refugees in the Eastern bloc countries, we have

very little information on these populations. Thus, a detailed, comparative study of the experience of political refugees in the different host countries has yet to be carried out. The fact that the fate of the political refugees in Bulgaria is so infrequently addressed was a major motivation for the author, especially since her informants seemed surprised to have found someone who was interested in them at long last. This work contributes in a very innovative way to a better knowledge of the living conditions, the identity dynamics and the political issues faced by the political refugees, both Greek- and Slavic-speaking, who were exiled from Greece. It thus allows us to measure the geopolitical reality of the Balkans on a macrohistorical level and to compare the informants' reconstructions from memory with the official discourse of the communist authorities.

Methodologically speaking, the author is determined to take a multidisciplinary, open approach to oral history, beyond traditional archival sources, through the written and oral testimonies she collected. In her research of the written archives, the author evaded the difficulties inherent in a transitory political situation, hardly propitious to a researcher interested in the communist period. Tsekou had access to different archival sources, such as the Red Cross, the Contemporary Social History Archives (ASKI), and to different newspapers. She collected oral stories through a survey of 37 informants. She used a questionnaire, which can be viewed in the book's appendix. This wealth of information allowed the author to compensate for the lack of official information, to proceed at different levels of analysis and, ultimately, to shed light on the protagonists' subjective experiences, by contesting any official common belief and by ferreting out words unspoken, reticences and eloquent silences in the various testimonies.

All the same, it would have been interesting to put forward the enunciative context and the personal and political career of each witness, informant or author, as it is justifiably done concerning Giorgos Manoukas, a repentant communist who served the propaganda machine of the colonels' military dictatorship. Nonetheless, Tsekou's book remains an exemplary work in the way it handles both oral and written sources and records the perspective of a multifocal restitution of the plurality of viewpoints regarding extremely controversial issues. It is an innovative, solid and meticulous work, dealing with issues that are rarely addressed and which trigger discord among researchers.

In the first part, the author examines Greek political refugees as an entity. She refers to the permeability of borders during the Greek civil war and mentions the help given to the communists by neighbouring countries. She also evokes the living conditions in the Bulkes camp in Yugoslavia, showing the extent of the persecution of the refugees who were in disagreement with the camp leadership. She details the refugees' experience in camps in neighbouring countries (Yugoslavia, Albania and Bulgaria) and then discusses the consequences that the conflict between Tito and Stalin in 1948 had on them. She relates the different migratory waves, the composition and origin of the populations during and after the civil war. The issue of the displacement of children, of their origins and their identity attachments, and of the forced or voluntary aspect of their departures allows the author to present the prevalent versions of the winners and losers of the civil war. The minority issue is also addressed, in order to evoke the long trips of the Slavic-speaking Macedonians from Greece between Bulgaria and Yugoslavia. After having presented the different communist organisations, the author shows that the KKE acted as

a state force governing all relations between the refugees and their host country. In a climate of "socialist paternalism," the refugees' daily life, from looking for a job to being assigned a home, the possibility to study or even to marry, was ruled by the party. The membership-card control process, a great census and re-registration operation of those from among the refugees who continued to have the right to be members of the KKE, reinforced the party's power and crushed any possibility of resistance among the refugees. Persecutions inside the party lasted for decades, first made by general secretary Nikos Zachariadis's partisans and then by his opponents. The Tashkent events of 1955 may be one of the most convincing examples. The perpetuation of a state of exile, which at first the party considered to be temporary, the nostalgia of ageing refugees and the repatriation practices allowed the author, in the introductory chapter, to accurately retrace the refugees' living conditions, from the rupture of leaving their country to the fantasy of a possible homecoming. These themes resurface again in the book, but this first part remains exemplary for the composite presentation of the different migratory experiences.

The second part deals with the arrival and settlement of Greek political refugees in Bulgaria. The author focuses on the geographical origin of the concerned populations, to show that they come mainly from northern Greece, particularly from the prefecture of Evros. The study of ethnic minorities among the combatants of the Democratic Army (DSE) and the refugees shows that, at the end of the war, Slavic speakers often defined themselves as Macedonians and were wooed by both the Yugoslav and Bulgarian authorities. The refugees arriving in Bulgaria were settled in different camps, where they endured very difficult living conditions, despite the local population welcoming them as "resistance veterans" and important efforts being made by the Bulgarian government to improve their daily lives. After the war, there was an obvious lack of resources, which affected all aspects of life throughout the country: medical coverage and the supply of food and clothes, the schooling of children and the professional training of adults remained very problematic. The Bulgarian Red Cross organised and supervised the settlement of refugees from Greece in different places. In a country undergoing full reconstruction, the Bulgarian government's solidarity towards its sister party and the refugee populations from Greece proved faultless. But the populations from Greece often seemed ill-disposed to collaborate with the Bulgarian authorities (for example, in the refusal to compile, on time, lists of names showing the refugees' movements, be disciplined and adapt to the ways of life of the host society). They balked at leaving their camps of origin to assimilate with the local population and felt that the aid provided by the Red Cross should have continued after the first few years of their stay. However, these tensions were limited. On the other hand, the management of the events of the seventh battalion of the Democratic Army, a veritable witch hunt against the so-called "internal traitors" who were responsible for the communists' defeat, illustrated the abuse of power on the part of the KKE. The author alludes to a spate of persecutions and torture that some of the communist members of the seventh battalion had to endure. What's more, their torturers were promoted within the party hierarchy and enjoyed total impunity.

The third part of the book is devoted to the refugee integration policies and addresses the KKE's role as a veritable informal state in the bosom of the different people's republics, running the refugees' social and personal lives. The participation of refugees in the reconstruction of the Bulgarian state was on the basis of KKE decisions, which determined each refu-

gee's future: profession, studies, housing, displacement authorisation and private life. This control was exercised through the Democratic Organisations of Culture and Instruction, which were under the control of the KKE's political bureau. They organised all the artistic, cultural, sporting, educational and scientific events for the refugees: in the 1960s, there were about 70 activity circles throughout the communist countries. It was at this time that the refugees began their publishing activities. As the refugees' dream of establishing socialism began to fade, the idea that it was an imperative for all political refugees to return to Greece progressively found its way into KKE discourse. The author shows the tensions that the refugee community faced in its efforts to believe that a homecoming was possible. Tsekou emphasises the social models conveyed by the party organisations: hard workers, proud and willing to establish new relationships between men and women, open-minded and educated families. This very complete third part allows us to study the living conditions of different categories of refugees (women, old people, children). It chronicles the different experiences of refugee children who left Greece with or without their parents. The institutional policies for refugee integration presented in this part correspond to the survival strategies these populations put in place, which is the focus of the fourth part.

In Part Four, the author breaks away from material considerations to evoke representations of memory and identity built around the main stages of this experience, tackling the past and the projection into the future. A series of antinomical representations organised and conflictualised the lives of the refugees. Bulgaria, an ally of the Nazis and Greece's traditional enemy, became a host country in which the refugees were invited to reconstruct themselves. Greece, which was so strongly criticised by the KKE for its subjugation to American imperialism, remained at the centre of the refugees' problematic as a desired and dreaded country. An important number of refugees would not be confronted with the reality of homecoming. The few registered returns in the 1950s and 1970s increased after 1974 (the end of the dictatorship) and in 1983, when the socialist Pasok government allowed the return of refugees of Greek origin.

The economical, psychological and cultural difficulties involved in returning to Greece, as well as the ambivalent perspective on both capitalist Bulgaria and the communist era, leave the reader with a vague feeling of bitterness, irrevocable loss and endless uprooting. In this way, the author succeeds magnificently in transmitting something of the protagonists' subjectivity, psychic reality and historical singularity.

Violetta Hionidou

Λιμός και θάνατος στην κατοχική Ελλάδα, 1941–44
[Famine and death in occupied Greece, 1941–1944]
Athens: Estia, 2010. 295 pp.

Eugenia Bournova
University of Athens

Violetta Hionidou's declared intention is to study "the Greek food crisis and famine that marked the years of the Axis occupation, its demographic and economic effects, and to a lesser degree its consequences" (1). This book was originally published in English in 2006 as *Famine and Death in Occupied Greece, 1941–1944*.[1] Despite its ambitious title, however, it suffers from four fundamental weaknesses.

Firstly, it focuses on studying the famine during the occupation years on just three islands, whose relevance as representative examples of the situation in the whole country is neither substantiated by other research nor can be derived from the book itself.

Secondly, based on a problematic working hypothesis about the stagnation of agricultural production – which, too, has never been substantiated nor is proven in the book itself – it is suggested that the reason behind the famine was a lack of means of transport on the mainland; however, this alone is not enough to explain the scarcity of goods.

It fails to publish actual figures; the tables and charts presented in the book display only percentages, and there is no way of checking the data. It therefore fails to meet even basic scientific standards.

Finally, there is no main scientific premise. The author's goal remains unclear, and we are told only that she was encouraged to write this book.

It would be easy to attribute these weaknesses to the fact that the author is not a historian. She studied mathematics and continued with an MSc in operational research (both in Athens), an MSc in demography (London School of Economics), and, finally, a PhD in geography (University of Liverpool). She has taught as a temporary lecturer in social statistics in the departments of sociology at the University of Crete and social statistics at the University of Southampton. Furthermore, this book is a consolidation of her postdoctoral research and a follow-up to her PhD thesis, *The Demography of a Greek Island: Mykonos 1859–1959; A Family Reconstruction Study* (University of Liverpool, 1993), which focuses on one of the three islands studied in the book. Additionally, in 1995, the author published an article in the journal *Continuity and Change*, entitled "The Demography of a Greek Famine: Mykonos, 1941–1942".

It would also be easy to attribute these weaknesses to the fact that the author makes casual and unsupported generalisations. This tendency for generalisations is even obvious in her use of such a small "sample" as is the island of Mykonos, since she identifies Greece with this beautiful place. Right from the Prologue, the author announces that "this study focuses on the food crisis of the occupation years, presenting an overall account of the events that led to the famine, those that led to its elimination and everything in between" (31), and then goes on to say that "[she has] therefore concentrated on case studies of three populations"

(3): those of Syros, Mykonos and two towns on Hios (the town of Hios and Vrontados).

When the author refers to the rest of occupied Greece, she does so through the studies of other contemporary authors, each time attempting to present an overview of the subject. Unfortunately, however, she does so inadequately.[2] Finally, in an attempt to justify her personal choice, she inaccurately claims – despite evidence to the contrary – that she was led to research the archives of these three islands because there are no archives on the mainland. Let's make it clear right from the beginning: this study, which even lacks a specific scientific premise, does not refer to the whole of occupied Greece but to just three islands and, even then, not in their entirety.

However, we shall not focus on these two aforementioned characteristics of the author (that she's not a historian) and the book (that it's not scientific), but will analyse its weaknesses in order to clarify certain misunderstandings and misinterpretations which could arise in the general reader.

As regards the supposed representativeness and lack of sources, already in the Prologue the author starts with unsupported phrasing and assumptions. She states that "while not forgotten by the Greeks, many of whom experienced it, the famine has been effaced from official memory. The contrast with the Irish famine is stark" (1). It is not clear what the author means, but she seems to disregard the addition into the Greek language, following the occupation, of the adjective *κατοχικός* (katochikos; from the Greek *κατοχή* meaning "occupation"), describing a person who fears not having enough to eat and who hoards food!

Searching for an answer as to why she chose these three islands as the focus of her study of the famine, the author informs us early on that "a significant part of the Hian population sought refuge in Turkey . . . Escaping from Syros or Mykonos was hardly an option, and thus these populations offer a unique opportunity to study the demographic effects of famine on 'closed' populations" (6). In doing so, the writer admits that this is an exception and not the norm and that, as such, these three islands do not represent the whole of Greece – unless she believes that Greece in its entirety was transformed into a Warsaw ghetto. Moreover, when she claims that "an effort is made to answer the question which occupational groups suffered worst from the famine" (7) through the utilisation of death certificates of the island populations, does she do so thinking that this is the first such research of its kind? In no way can the occupational distribution of these populations be considered representative of that across Greece or, at least, of that of the Greek urban population. My study on Athens presents substantiated answers relating to the occupational groups that suffered most from the famine.

Thus, in the first chapter she makes statements which by no means apply to Greece as a whole! In doing so, she treats the readership as *bon pour L'Orient*, particularly when she "informs" us that there are no archives in the registry offices in mainland Greece. I personally visited all the Greek cities with wartime populations of over 10,000 people and they all had registry archives, which I indexed.

She declares that "it was in mainland Greece that the combined effects of resistance, civil war and migration were the greatest, causing, in most cases, disruption in civil registration. In some areas, such as the islands of Mykonos, Syros and Hios, registration was not interrupted" (26).

She goes on to state that in Athens and Piraeus "burials took place without the appropriate

permit and remained unregistered" (28). Obviously, such a claim about the administrative region of the capital does not stand, as records were kept of all the deceased, including those found dead on the streets. The same applies to the rest of the urban centres in the country.

She writes that "in Athens, and probably in most urban centres, the poor, the unemployed workers and the destitute were the first to feel the effects of the scarcity and were the first to die during the winter of 1941–42" (32–33). Why does she cite no sources? How does she know this? From narrations, or have other researchers already provided the answers using archives that Hionidou seems to enjoy informing people abroad that they do not exist? She then goes on to claim that "the salaried classes managed to survive the winter with difficulty but without facing death" (33). Once again, she does so without referencing a source[3] and we do not know whether she read or was told this. Surely, this is not scientific work.

As such, the first two chapters constitute a general overview of the famine in Greece, and specifically in Athens, presented through an incomplete and utterly selective bibliography. Consequently, they lie far behind the historiographical production in Greece during the last ten years, and they contribute absolutely nothing.

The greatest inconsistency can be found in Chapter 9. Here, she suddenly uses data for Athens and Piraeus, Thessaloniki and 27 other cities (which she doesn't even name, yet it is made obvious that data exists for the entire urban area), in direct contradiction to her own claims, made at the beginning of the book, that she dealt with the islands because there are no archives for mainland Greece!

Now to the issue of the supposed stability or even increase in agricultural production. Hionidou goes on to make additional unrealistic claims; for example, that agricultural production during the occupation remained stable or even increased – a claim that is supported only by the author herself and a handful of extremely elderly people who she interviewed on two islands!

In Chapter 5 she writes:

> In this chapter I shall show that the situation was not as depicted. Overall production did not necessarily decline, certainly not to the degree that was claimed. On the contrary, at times and in places production was substantially increased . . . this divergence between the written sources and the reality was proved mainly from interviews with survivors of the occupation years. To put it simply, production, though non-quantifiable [sic], was much higher than is suggested in the written sources (68).

To start with, every historian knows that produce intended for self-consumption has never been included in official statistics and reports. This is the way it has always been. So, because some elderly islanders told the author that, during the occupation, they used to sow and plant wherever they could in an attempt to satisfy their nutritional needs, she concluded that there was an increase in agricultural production!

On the other hand, she all too easily declares that "by the end of the occupation, people in the countryside were, in nutritional terms, much worse off than the urbanites" (146). How exactly is this presumed? It is useless to wonder whether and why people died, when we know that at the eve of the war at least one-quarter of all grains was imported. The interruption of these imports was in itself enough to cause the famine.

As regards research without actual figures: in Chapter 9, entitled "Short-term effects on mortality and fertility", the reader faces a phenomenon that should be unacceptable to any social scientist: no actual figures are provided on the deaths on the islands studied. For example, how many deaths were there on Mykonos during the winter of 1941–42, considering that before the occupation and the famine there were ten deaths per month? We do not know, but these are obviously very small populations and any kind of generalisation lacks merit, to say the least. From the diagrams, we can deduce that over a period of several months the number of deaths remained below ten or even five people per month. In this chapter, where one would expect to see actual figures as these occur in the archival material, the author either hides them or does not think it necessary to publish them, presenting only percentages instead.

Moreover, no explanation is provided as to why the famine on Mykonos lasted just eight months whereas on Hios it lasted twice as long (16 months), despite the fact that there was mass migration of young adult men from the former to Turkey.

Finally, claims without any attempt at interpretation create serious difficulties in understanding the different conditions on each island and make obvious – independently of the author's intent – that they are not representative of the whole of the country. Hionidou claims that there was a tenfold increase in mortality among older children and adults on Syros and Mykonos compared to the period prior to the occupation and that this was significantly higher than mortality among infants, young persons and the elderly (170)! She then goes on to say that "Hios was a clear exception. There the elderly (those older than 50) experienced a higher increase than any other age group" (170–172)! If these findings were compared to the findings of my own research on Athens, there might have been some interesting outcomes.

At no point is it made clear what this research aims to achieve. In Chapter 7, "Welfare and relief", it becomes obvious that the material is driving the writing of the chapters, while sources are treated as sacred and are presented without any critical analysis and without taking into consideration that they are products of historical circumstance. For example, it remains unclear whether the author has an opinion about the role of Britain in the Red Cross aid campaign that started in 1942. Even though she has seen the Red Cross archives, she does not pose any questions but simply presents the information as is. Since she does not take a critical stance towards the material she uses but, on the contrary, treats it as absolute truth, the Germans are presented as the most conscientious occupiers that could have been: "when the delegates complained of misconduct by German soldiers . . . the high-ranking officers would make every effort to reinstate the normal state of affairs" (136). However, on the next page the Security Battalions suddenly appear and, whereas it is said that they enjoyed the full backing of the Germans, they become "the [Joint Relief] commission's biggest headache, interfering constantly with its work, attempting to seize food for themselves and their families" (137). Isn't this in direct contradiction to the nice behaviour of the Germans towards the commission, as it was claimed earlier?

The Epilogue states that "this book has examined the causes of the food crisis of the occupation years, its demographic and economic effects, and to a lesser degree its consequences" (235). It refers to almost all the causes except the fundamental one: the halt-

ing of all imports of grains, which covered at least one-quarter of the country's nutritional needs. Instead, based on a few interviews, she insists that "the 1941 harvest did increase the supply of food" (235), as if what little grains were sown by farmers on infertile plots could have covered the shortage caused by the lack of imports.

It is, of course, very positive that scientists of different intellectual perspectives and disciplines have begun to study the 1940s, and we hope that, soon, even more Greek historians will begin to systematically deal with the second half of the twentieth century. It is both proper and necessary to bring together the social sciences and humanities in the study of the twentieth century. After the ideological crisis that resulted from the collapse of communism, history has drawn many scientists with no prior training into the field. Yet history, being one of the most important sciences, demands that its tools, its methodology and its rigour be respected.

NOTES

1 Violetta Hionidou, *Famine and Death in Occupied Greece, 1941–1944*, Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2006. It was subsequently translated into Greek and published by Estia in 2011.

2 Eugenia Bournova, «Θάνατοι από πείνα: η Αθήνα το χειμώνα του 1941–1942» [Deaths from starvation: Athens – Winter of 1941–1942], *Archeiotaxio* 7 (2005): 52–73; Eugenia Bournova, "Deaths from starvation: Athens – Winter of 1941–1942", in Laurinda Abreu, Patrice Bourdelais (eds), *The Price of Life: Welfare Systems, Social Nets and Economic Growth*, Lisbon: Colibri, 2008, 141–162; Eugenia Bournova (with George Progoulakis), «Οι οικονομικές συνθήκες στην περίοδο της Κατοχής» [The economic situation during the occupation years], in Hagen Fleischer (ed.), *Έξι στιγμές του εικοστού αιώνα: Κατοχή Αντίσταση 1941–1944* [Six moments of the twentieth century: occupation – resistance, 1941–1944], Athens: DOL, 2010, 57–71.

3 Eugenia Bournova (in collaboration with Stavros Thomadakis), «Προπολεμική διαβίωση και κατοχική επιβίωση στην Αθήνα: ιστορία καθημερινής ζωής» [Prewar living conditions and survival during the occupation in Athens: an everyday story], *Ta Historika* 41 (2004): 455–470. Eugenia Bournova, "Surviving in Athens during the German occupation", in Dekun Hu (ed.), *The Experience of Occupation, 1931–1949: Proceedings, International Conference Wuhan, China, 14–16 April 2008*, Wuhan: Wuhan UP, 2010, 299–308.

Dimitra Lambropoulou

Οικοδόμοι: Οι άνθρωποι που έχτισαν την Αθήνα 1950–1967
[Construction workers: The people who built Athens, 1950–1967]
Athens: Vivliorama, 2009. 392 pp.

Iordanis Psimmenos
Panteion University

The study of the history of labour and of occupations is a complex task. Addressing central questions relating work and workers' lives to the structure and politics of society in the context of time and place is not an easy exercise. Furthermore, as Huw Beynon and Terry Austrin explain, complexities arise from the ways one treats these relations.[1] By limiting the scope of inquiry to the objective parameters, one can provide a detailed account, for example, of the economics, techniques and regimes of production that ignores the struggles of workers and the sacrifice put into their jobs. Labour activity is one thing, the experience or interpretation of it by workers and the organisation of social institutions that surrounds it is another. A combination of both, in the manner used by E.P. Thompson (1980) and by Philip Abrams, when the latter launched the craft of historical sociology at Durham University, is a more complete, realistic and dynamic account of the history of labour and the social identities of labourers.[2] Work practices and norms, placed alongside motives, effort, roles, status and family and/or community relations, are what after all makes an occupation. Within this line of thought, Dimitra Lambropoulou's monograph *Construction workers: The people who built Athens, 1950–1967* examines the character of this industry as well as the ideas and the social action of the people engaged in it.

The book explains the history of construction workers in two parts. The first mainly refers to the postwar development of Athens and of the industry itself. In terms of its fundamental importance, the author links the question of urbanicity, of internal migration and of the rise of market and state forces with the modernisation of the industry and its labour processes. Having said this, it might be helpful here to point out that the strength of the analysis lies in the understanding of how continuities and discontinuities in social life construct the industry and its functioning operations. Without leaving aside the issue of chronology and of periodisation, important as they are for historical accounts, the study concentrates more on how building was perceived at large by various social strata of people and how working as a construction worker fitted in to the mobility system in Greece.

The accounts given by the author focus on the classification of workers within the industry and their social representations within wider society. It goes without saying that "hierarchies" and divisions in the construction industry have more a cultural and political root. Masculinity, abilities, knowledge and other social traits determine to a large extent the social placement of workers in the production process and society. The author notes that new mobility credits which emphasised the bipolar dichotomies between mental and manual labour and between certified and technical knowledge were related more to ascribed characteristics of workers, their relation with the city and Athenian society and the workers' "cultural capital". The negative images of ru-

ral Greece and the understanding of internal migration and of agrarian work as something which constitutes a deficit of, if not an obstacle to, progress leads to an even murkier conceptualisation of skilled work. In tandem, the label of unskilled work was attached to all those "problem groups" whose ascriptive characteristics were deemed physically, culturally and politically "inferior" or of lesser marketing value. Taken to extremes, the builder was either seen as a hero of the modern proletariat or as a tragic figure of modernisation. Both provide an image which, although mythical, provided an arena for the discussion of class and patronage in Greece and the country's "march of progress".

Herbert Gutman's idea that the history of labour is not only what capitalism does to workers but also how workers conceive this and respond is the main theme of the second part of the book.[3] In this context, Lambropoulou examines the paths of social transformation in the identity and status of construction workers, of industrial relations in the particular business and of collective action. Indeed, it is worth noting briefly that in her analysis concerning the production process and its technical and economic forms of organisation, she indicates that a large part of it was subjected to perpetual transformations.

The organisation of work is seen as a process of both symbolic interaction between different strata of industry and various local labour markets and control mechanisms. In relation to the latter, the author provides a rather informative analysis of the forms of control exerted by foremen, contractors and subcontractors, who hired, allocated tasks and supervised work on the sites. The reference by the author to Harry Braverman's study *Labour and Monopoly Capital* is appropriate in order to explain why and how regulating labour through subcontracting or other forms of deference is necessary.[4] Nevertheless, control is not expended in the normative formulas of managerial supervision alone. A whole array of desirable goods and the regulation of their flow may also constitute a powerful mechanism of control. Subdivisions of labour and their increasing coercive applications are significant controlling mechanisms. Nevertheless, this is only part of the story of management. Workers' motives to be involved in the industry's economic and noneconomic organisation of production also relies heavily on consent.

The above seems more close to reality when one views the transition of the building industry to a more modern regime of regulation. Borrowing the examples stemming from earlier traditional sectors (i.e., agricultural) of the economy, a whole array of "autonomy drives" was allowed to develop, at least informally, as motives for work effort. One such example is the perception and regulation of labour time. The author, in a quite insightful manner, explains that despite developments in other modern types of industry, task- instead of time-based management continued to be the rule of production among construction workers. As Lambropoulou observes, this had a positive effect for workers' understanding of their job and their identification with occupational norms and values. Furthermore, the regime of regulating labour time according to the completion of tasks had permeated all walks of labourers' life. The flexible nature of time and employment, despite the economic risks involved, also signified some freedoms which permeated leisure, consumption patterns, family time and, most of all, quick returns for harder work but shorter hours at the job. After all, construction workers understanding of a "fair day's work", as it is usually with most labour-intensive and physically demanding and exhausting jobs, is related

to shorter working hours, more leisure time and, sometimes, even with informal economic benefits. It goes without saying that the latter is not only a money issue but also an essential ingredient of the work organisation and the construction markets. Similar developments are also evident in the realm of status or work-prestige strategies. A range of engineering and technology developments had a lasting negative effect on workers' abilities to claim social recognition for their work effort and achievements. Having said this, the increasing deployment of a number of tacit, symbolic and interactive skills by workers raised hopes for an increase in status. Especially among those with longer work experience, an informal type of apprentice system continued. This raised hopes for better job negotiations, more respect among workers and probably better conditions at the worksite itself. It is important to stress here that such a system of production relations and employment patterns relied heavily on the "ability" of the worker to commodify personal and/or physical characteristics, to turn personality traits into market exchange values and turn all existing stereotypes (i.e., masculinity, body structure, perseverance, etc.) into job credits. As the author reminds us, the worker's body posture and "macho" character became more or less a way of selling himself and communicating the message of discipline and the ability to undertake all physical and social challenges.

Having outlined some central features of the book, one clearly understands its strengths and values. In order to present the history of occupations and of workers, one certainly has to guard against an account which limits itself to the technical, economic nature of production. The subjective forms of organisation, the perception of work and the actual responses to it is what makes history.

NOTES

1 Huw Beynon and Terry Austrin, *Masters and Servants: Class and Patronage in the Making of a Labour Organisation; The Durham Miners and the English Political Tradition*, London: Rivers Oram Press, 1994.

2 E.P. Thompson, *The Making of the English Working Class*, Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1980. Philip Abrams, *Historical Sociology*, Shepton Mallet: Open Books, 1982.

3 Herbert G. Gutman, *Power and Culture: Essays on the American Working Class*, New York: Panteon, 1987.

4 Harry Braverman, *Labour and Monopoly Capital: The Degradation of Work in the Twentieth Century*, New York: Monthly Review Press, 1974.