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War Booty Not to Be Displayed

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WAR BOOTY NOT TO BE DISPLAYED: SEXUAL VIOLENCE DURING THE GREEK WARS OF THE TWENTIETH CENTURY, 1912–1949

Tasos Kostopoulos

ABSTRACT: Sexual violence during the Greek wars of the twentieth century has been an unevenly studied topic. While the rape of Greek women by enemy soldiers or irregulars has been occasionally referred to in mainstream war accounts in a rather abstract way, the corresponding record of the Greek Army is usually bypassed. Based on archival sources and extensive use of memorial literature, especially war diaries and memoirs of former soldiers (among them the private diary of a rapist soldier, who recorded in detail no less than four gang rapes perpetrated by him and his comrades during the Second Balkan War), this article examines what we actually know about the occurrence, the frequency, the aims and specific patterns of sexual violence perpetrated by Greek soldiers or suffered by Greek civilians during successive military conflicts.

War shaped the lives of most Greeks during the first half of the twentieth century. In two decades of almost continuous warfare, first between 1912 and 1922 and then throughout the 1940s, hundreds of thousands of male citizens took part in military operations, which also engulfed either most of the country's would-be citizens living in "unredeemed" territories, in the first case, or the whole of Greece's civilian population, in the second. We may therefore safely infer that the sexual violence perpetrated during those conflicts functioned as a formative experience for many Greeks of both sexes who happened to be its victims or perpetrators, or were mere bystanders, deeply affecting their perception of sexuality and/or gender roles.

This article examines the traces left by this experience in order to discern the patterns of this specific war crime, the motives behind it and the factors determining its frequency. The research is mostly based on a variety of ego-documents (diaries, memoirs, private correspondence) and other primary sources dealing with wartime; the most informative of them is the private diary of a rapist soldier who described in detail his participation in gang rapes during

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the Second Balkan War (1913), providing a rare glimpse into a perpetrator's mindset and *modus operandi*. As Regina Mühlhäuser has aptly remarked, the content of such ego-documents is always influenced by "the conditions and interests that shape the narratives", reflecting the subjectivity and particular social background of their compilers; nevertheless, they constitute a valuable source for "gaining insights into the experiences, perceptions, interpretations and patterns of action" of the soldiers themselves.¹ In official documents, sexual violence is on the contrary mentioned (and castigated) only when it is considered harmful to the military or political aims of the war effort.²

Literature on sexual violence during warfare has proliferated since Susan Brownmiller's seminal *Against our Will*, the first book to explicitly put rape at the epicentre of gender studies, dedicating a specific chapter to its perpetration during wartime and exploring the factors that enhanced or curtailed it in the framework of various conflicts.³ A crime that had long remained unmentionable, war rape since then has become a much-discussed topic, acquiring rather high visibility under the influence of feminism, the media focus on the Yugoslav Wars of the 1990s (and, to a lesser degree, the 1994 Rwandan genocide) or the reorientation of social sciences towards the study of war not only as a technical, political and diplomatic event but also as a social phenomenon.⁴ Brownmiller's perception of military rape as "the work of ordinary Joes, made unordinary by entry into the most exclusive male-only club in the world"⁵ has thus been used, on the basis of an ever-growing corpus of specific case studies,⁶ to enlarge the scope of gender-based

¹ Regina Mühlhäuser, *Sex and the Nazi Soldier: Violent, Commercial and Consensual Encounters during the War in the Soviet Union, 1941–45*, trans. Jessica Spengler (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2021), 12–13.

² *Ibid.*, 14.

³ Susan Brownmiller, *Against our Will: Men, Women and Rape* (1975; London: Penguin, 1986), 31–113..

⁴ Raphaëlle Branche et al., "Writing the History of Rape in Wartime," in *Rape in Wartime*, ed. Raphaëlle Branche and Fabrice Virgili (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012), 3.

⁵ Brownmiller, *Against our Will*, 32.

⁶ See, for example, James Mark, "Remembering Rape: Divided Social Memory and the Red Army in Hungary 1944–1945," *Past and Present*, no. 188 (2005): 133–61; Dagmar Herzog, ed., *Brutality and Desire: War and Sexuality in Europe's Twentieth Century* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009); Gina Mary Weaver, *Ideologies of Forgetting: Rape in the Vietnam War* (New York: SUNY Press, 2010); Raphaëlle Branche and Fabrice Virgili, eds., *Rape in Wartime* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012); Nayanika Mookherjee, *The Spectral Wound: Sexual Violence, Public Memories and the Bangladesh War* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2015); Gemma Clark, "Violence against Women in the Irish Civil War, 1922–3: Gender-based Harm in Global Perspective," *Irish Historical Studies* 44 (2020): 75–90; Mühlhäuser, *Sex and the Nazi*

war violence to include sexual attacks on boys and men; to further explore aspects such as the dichotomy between random and organised sexual violence in wartime, the role of military hierarchy in its proliferation or containment, the promotion of sexual aggression as an effective tool for the attainment of specific war objectives or the contribution of women to the perpetration of sexual violence; and, last but not least, to examine how ethnic, racial or political reasoning contributed to the development of a widespread culture of rape or inhibited it.⁷

A crucial distinction to be explored here is the dichotomy between “random” and “targeted” sexual violence. In the first case, war provided just a window of opportunity for the satisfaction of personal lust; sexual violence was facilitated by a pervasive militarist culture that promoted offensive masculinity or by the diffusion of sexist-cum-nationalist stereotypes concerning the loose morality of local females. In the second case, the victims were not only conceived as sexual objects but were also put at the receiving end of a conscious strategy of intimidation with a view of inflicting collective revenge or achieving more strategic purposes, like the ethnic cleansing of a coveted region or the complete subjugation of a national or political foe. More often than not, such aims were not explicitly articulated, of course: they were mainly served through a policy of tolerance, displayed by army commanders for their subordinates’ “understandable” excesses; at most, through the explicit provision of a *carte blanche* for every form of “reprisals” the rank and file wished to take in targeting specific individuals or communities within the local population.

War Rape and its Sources: Our Measure of Knowledge

As stated above, Greek society was marked to a considerable extent by the experience of war during the first half of the twentieth century, an experience that included two decades of more or less constant warfare, plus some minor engagements.

Soldier, 27–116; Fayeza Hasanat, *The Voices of War Heroines: Sexual Violence, Testimony and the Bangladesh Liberation War* (Leiden: Brill, 2022).

⁷ Elisabeth Jean Wood, “Sexual Violence During War: Toward an Understanding of Variation,” in *Order, Conflict and Violence*, ed. Stathis N. Kalyvas, Ian Shapiro and Tarek Masoud (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), 321–51; Branche et al., “Writing the History of Rape in Wartime”; Gabrielle Ferrales and Suzy Maves-McElrath, “Beyond Rape: Reconceptualizing Gender-based Violence During Warfare,” in *Gender, Sex and Crime*, ed. Rosemary Gartner and Bill McCarthy (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014), 671–89; Laura Sjoberg, *Women as Wartime Rapists: Beyond Sensation and Stereotyping* (New York: New York University Press, 2016); Joanna Burke, *Disgrace: Global Reflections on Sexual Violence* (London: Reaktion, 2022).

The first war decade (1912–1922) began with two victorious Balkan Wars in 1912–1913 (first a joint campaign of four Christian Balkan states against the Ottoman Empire, then a bloody showdown among former allies for the spoils), followed by a military campaign waged by Greek Army units in southern Albania, in support of an irredentist rebellion of the Greek minority there (1914). Between 1915 and 1918, northern Greece was transformed into a First World War battlefield between the Bulgarian and German armies, on one hand, and a multinational expeditionary corps of half-a-million Entente troops supported by a Greek force of 130,000, on the other; more than 20,000 Greek officers and soldiers were subsequently dispatched to Ukraine in 1919 to fight the Bolsheviks. The apex of this war decade came in 1919–1922, when 200,000 Greek soldiers were entrusted with the task to subdue the resistance of Kemalist forces in Asia Minor and secure the annexation of the lands promised to Athens by the Treaty of Sèvres (1920). The final act of this last endeavour, the collapse of the Greek Army in August 1922 and subsequent uprooting the region's Greek Orthodox communities, with tens of thousands of civilians massacred and more than a million refugees flooding war-torn Greece, put an end to a whole century of irredentism as the dominant aspect of Greek public life.

The second war decade begun in the framework of the Second World War, with an Italian attack on Greece (1940), followed by a German one (1941) and more than three years of joint Axis occupation (1941–1944) marked by widespread famine, extreme social polarisation, armed resistance and brutal reprisals by the occupation troops. As a reaction to the emergence of a powerful left-wing resistance movement (National Liberation Front–Greek People's Liberation Army, EAM-ELAS), the Axis authorities enlisted 20,000 armed collaborators into various auxiliary units, subordinated to the local SS leadership, and developed a policy of mutual tolerance towards the more conservative factions among the pro-British resistance groups. At the end of the occupation, an abortive rebellion by pro-Communist resistance forces in Athens was quelled by British forces in December 1944; the state apparatus and right-wing paramilitaries subsequently unleashed a wave of white terror against the mass base of the Left, resulting in a full-blown civil war between a regenerated Communist guerrilla and a US-backed conservative government, which finally won after three years of intermittent fighting (1946–1949).

Our knowledge of the frequency and extent of sexual violence perpetrated by the Greek military or suffered by Greek populations during those conflicts is uneven and fragmentary. As a general rule, mainstream war accounts have occasionally referred to the rape of Greek women by enemy soldiers or irregulars,

which state-sponsored sources have exploited as propaganda tools,⁸ a practice also followed by adversary state propaganda in focusing on the respective Greek war crimes;⁹ narratives hostile to the occasional perpetrators' camp have also explicitly described rapes perpetrated during the 1940s civil war, as shall be shown below. Testimonies by bystanders or international monitors, on the other hand, became commonplace during the Balkan Wars and the Asia Minor campaign, reflecting an international norm strongly defined by the futile attempt to impose certain legal limits on the inherent barbarity of warfare, a growing awareness of women's rights and an attempt to check mutual recriminations that made use of rape (by the adversary) as a propaganda weapon.¹⁰ Last but not least, first-person narratives by the victims themselves are very rare, the victims of such outrages usually preferring to describe their experience as if it had happened to someone else.¹¹

⁸ On the Balkan Wars of 1912–1913, see *Atrocités bulgares en Macédoine (faits et documents): Exposé soumis par le recteur des Universités d'Athènes aux recteurs des Universités d'Europe et d'Amérique* (Athens: Estia, 1913), 5, 7, 15, 31–32 and 46; *Αι βουλγαρικάί ωμότητες εν τη Ανατολική Μακεδονία και Θράκη* (Athens: P.D. Sakellariou, 1914), 16, 27, 29, 32–33, 37, 60–61, 72, 88, 97, 100–101, 103, 213–14, 218, 227–30, 334, 337 and 345. On the Asia Minor campaign, see Konstantinos Faltaits, *Αυτοί είναι οι Τούρκοι: Αφηγήματα των σφαγών της Νικομήδειας* (Athens: Dim. Delis, 1921); Andreas Andréadès, *La destruction de Smyrne et les dernières atrocités turques en Asie Mineure* (Athens: P.D. Sakellarios, 1923).

⁹ On the Balkan Wars, see Lubomir Miletitch, *Atrocités grecques en Macédoine pendant la guerre gréco-bulgare* (Sofia: Imprimerie de l'Etat, 1913), 50–51, 54–55, 58, 88–95, 98–100, 109–12, 151–52, 155–56, 158 and 161–66; Comité de Publication DACB, *Les atrocités des coalisés balkaniques* (Constantinople: Ifham, 1913), 1:5–7, 24–25 and 30, and 3:5–9, 15–16, 18–19 and 29–30; Le Comité de la Défense Nationale, *Les atrocités des Bulgares en Thrace* (Constantinople: s.n., 1913), 8–9. On the Asia Minor campaign, see Ligue pour la Défense des Droits des Ottomans, *Atrocités grecques dans le Vilayet de Smyrne, 1re série, Mai 1919* (Geneva: Imprimerie Nationale, 1919) and *Deuxième série, Mai–Juin 1919* (Lausanne: Dr A. Bovard-Giddey, 1919); Permanent Bureau of the Turkish Congress at Lausanne, *Greek Atrocities in the Vilayet of Smyrna* (Lausanne: Petter, Giesser & Held, 1919); Ministry of Interior, *Greek Atrocities in Turkey* (Constantinople: Ahmed Ihsan, 1921).

¹⁰ For the most celebrated piece of evidence on this interest, see Dotation Carnegie pour la Paix Internationale, *Enquête dans les Balkans* (Paris: Georges Crès, 1914), 78, 82, 113–14, 121, 130, 228, 275, 298, 305–10, 312, 317, 337–41, 344–46, 365–66, 406 and 409–17. On the Asia Minor war, see *Reports on Atrocities in the Districts of Yalova and Guemlik and in the Ismid Peninsula* (London: HMSO, 1921); Maurice Gehri, “Mission d'enquête en Anatolie (12–22 Mai 1921),” *Revue Internationale de la Croix-Rouge*, no. 227 (15 July 1921): 721–35.

¹¹ Mühlhäuser, *Sex and the Nazi Soldier*, 13; Riki Van Boeschoten, “The Trauma of War Rape: A Comparative View on the Bosnian Conflict and the Greek Civil War,” *History and Anthropology* 14, no. 1 (2003): 51.

Most Greek narratives usually bypass acts of sexual violence perpetrated by the Greek Army, although a certain amount of information can be detected in primary sources dealing with the Balkan Wars or the Asia Minor campaign.¹² Unlike other forms of violence committed during wartime, the intrinsically hedonistic nature of this specific crime does not allow any room for its reinterpretation as a byproduct of military necessity or extreme situations: if actions such as the destruction of villages, the execution of prisoners of war and the arbitrary or collateral killing of civilians can make sense in the context of a narrative denouncing war as a dehumanising process, sexual assault is by definition a conscious individual choice. Most of the time, such incidents are therefore mentioned in an offhand, vague or laconic way, unless the narrator himself takes credit for having saved one or more women (especially girls) from the hands of his colleagues¹³ – including a few cases in which he painfully admits his ultimate failure to prevent such an outrage.¹⁴

Far less prominent is the mentioning of rape in state-sponsored propaganda material produced during or in the aftermath of the Second World War. In this case, assaults on women seem to have given way, as a diplomatic argument, to the loss of human lives and material damage, which was easier to prove and closely linked to the vital questions of war reparations and American aid for the country's reconstruction.¹⁵ An interesting exception is a report compiled in 1945 by a four-member commission formed to study Axis atrocities in the island of Crete. Its authors, all of them male (writer Nikos Kazantzakis, university professors Ioannis Kakridis and Ioannis Kalitsounakis and a local liaison), made a specific reference to a few instances of sexual violence by German or Italian

¹² For the first work that broke a long silence of Greek historiography on that matter, dealing with various forms of violence endured by Balkan and Asia Minor civilians during the war decade of 1912–1922, see Tasos Kostopoulos, *Πόλεμος και εθνοκάθαρση: Η ξεχασμένη πλευρά μιας δεκαετούς εθνικής εξόρμησης 1912–1922* (Athens: Vivliorama, 2007). War crimes perpetrated by the Greek Army are no longer considered an academic taboo, although most relevant works by Greek historians have only been published in foreign languages.

¹³ Panagiotis Panagakos, *Συμβολή εις την ιστορίαν της δεκαετίας 1912–1922* (Athens: s.n., 1960), 697–98; Spyros Vlachos, *Απομνημονεύματα* (Athens: s.n., 1975), 1:139–40; Christos Karagiannis, *Το ημερολόγιον, 1918–1922* (Athens: s.n., 1976), 265; Nikolaos Soleintakis, *Από τα Χανιά στο Κάλε Γκρότο* (Athens: Armos, 2022), 54.

¹⁴ A. Dimitriou, “Απ’ τη φρίκη του πολέμου: Φωτιά και αίμα,” *Ριζοσπάστης*, 31 August 1934, 3; Petros Apostolidis, *Όσα θυμάμαι 1900–1969*, vol. 1, *Γκαρνιζόν Ουσάκ 1922–1923* (Athens: Kedros, 1981), 20.

¹⁵ [Konstantinos Doxiadis, ed.], *Αι θυσίαι της Ελλάδος στο Δεύτερο Παγκόσμιο πόλεμο* (Athens: Aspioti ELKA, 1946); Ministry of Social Welfare, *Καταστραφείσαι πόλεις και χωρία συνεπεία του πολέμου 1940–1945* (Athens: s.n., 1946).

occupation troops.¹⁶ While confessing their astonishment at the extremely low number of rapes reported to them by the villagers, compared to other extreme forms of military brutality, they took it, however, at face value, as a reflection of what had really happened, without questioning (at least on paper) the veracity of their assertions or the reasons for this restraint.¹⁷

When investigating all those records, a distinction should be made between conventional and civil wars because of their inherently disparate definition and treatment of the enemy, especially as far as the civilian population is concerned. In the first case, enemy populations are usually defined on the basis of certain easily identifiable external traits (religion, ethnicity or nationality); belligerent troops aim at either their *temporary* subordination or permanent expulsion from a disputed territory. In civil wars, on the other hand, it is always far more difficult to discern the internal enemy within the broader population; not only are the criteria applied for such a clearing out more subjective, but so too is the ultimate goal of a permanent “re-education” of prospective survivors according to the victors’ dominant norm.

Through a Perpetrator’s Eyes: The War Diary of a Rapist Soldier

In order to study the perpetration of sexual violence during wartime, a most revealing start is to look at it through the eyes of a self-avowed perpetrator, making use of an extremely rare source: the personal war diary of a serial rapist. It belonged to Ioannis Giotsalidis, a Greek soldier from a mountainous village in Laconia and a former emigrant to the United States (an “American boy”, in his own words), who recorded no less than four gang rapes he committed along with a few colleagues, on Macedonian Slav (“Bulgarian”) women during the Second Balkan War.¹⁸

Composed in an almost phonetic script, his 147-page handwritten notebook provides interesting insight into the mentality and the *modus operandi* of a serial rapist who exploited all relevant opportunities a war could offer. Each of the assaults described in it were perpetrated by two or three soldiers, quite

¹⁶ [Nikos Kazantzakis et al.], *Έκθεσις της Κεντρικής Επιτροπής Διαπιστώσεως Ωμοτήτων εν Κρήτη* (Herakleion: Municipality of Herakleion, 1983), 49, 85 and 96.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 96.

¹⁸ Ioannis Giotsalidis, “Ημερολόγιον του 1912–1913,” *Balkan War Diaries*, Hellenic Literary and Historical Archive, Athens (ELIA). For a detailed presentation, see Tasos Kostopoulos, “Καταγράφοντας το ανομολόγητο: το πολεμικό ημερολόγιο ενός βιαστή στρατιώτη (1912–13),” in *Ιστορίες πολέμου στη Νοτιοανατολική Ευρώπη*, ed. Athina Kollia-Dermitzaki, Vaso Seirinidou and Spyridon Ploumidis (Athens: Irodotos, 2018), 471–89.

enough to subdue any resistance, share the booty and keep it secret. This practice was obviously perceived as an organic part of the *predatory economy* that, according to the journalistic dispatches of Leon Trotsky on the same conflict, provided the logistics necessary for continuing the war far beyond the material limits of the belligerent countries.¹⁹ The question posed by the would-be rapists during their first raid on a village hut near Kilkis, on 28 June 1913, was clear and straightforward: “Are there eggs? Is there a chicken? Is there pussy?” Their discovery, upon entering the house despite the old owner’s denials, was also described in terms of plunder: “We open the door of another room, [we see] a beautiful, hidden, choice plum [ωραίο τεφαρίκι κρυμμένο]. So, we begin with her. After we frigged her, we left her and went away.”²⁰

They committed two other rapes with the help of local collaborators, whose motivation was either to divert the danger away from their own families or to avenge past national feuds with the victims’ close relatives. The first one took place in Kolarovo, a large village in the Petrich area inhabited mostly by Muslim Turks plus a hundred Christian Slavs. The diarist and two other soldiers were hosted in a Muslim house in a more or less friendly atmosphere, facilitated by the fact that one of them, a Christian volunteer from Anatolia, was a native speaker of Turkish. When the guests asked “for a female”, the landlord drove them to “a Bulgarian family” nearby, in order to protect his own; the assault ended with the abduction and rape of three young girls, coupled with the cold-blooded murder of their father, who tried to tag along behind them: “three or four bullets and he went to hell.”²¹ At this point the diarist noted, however, for the first and last time, his remorse for breaching his own moral code: “After we got laid I had regrets,” he wrote in his diary, “because she was a virgin and this was the first time in my life that I did such a thing, to dishonour a girl.” This was the sole act that the serial rapist perceived as *dishonourable*: gang rape, murder and bereaving a girl of her parent were considered minor misdemeanours compared to the loss of a girl’s purity.

Less dramatic, the third incident occurred a week later in the town of Petrich, an agglomeration inhabited by 5,000 Muslims and 2,000 Christian Slavs, most of them adherents of the Bulgarian national church and the Bulgarian party, while a small minority followed the Greek ones. Quartered in a “Greek” house, the diarist and his squad were attracted by the family’s young daughter but were unable to act: “she is a Greek” and, on her own, was “not enough” for a gang

¹⁹ Leon Trotsky, *Τα Βαλκάνια και οι βαλκανικοί πόλεμοι, 1912–1913* (Athens: Themelio, 1993), 376–77.

²⁰ Giotsalidis, “Ημερολόγιον του 1912–1913,” 92–93.

²¹ *Ibid.*, 95–96.

of six soldiers.²² Once more, the defeated were called to pay the price, this time according to a premeditated plan: following the instructions of the girl's brother, the diarist and another "American boy" from Thessaly paid a visit to the home of a "Bulgarian" family, whose male members had left the town in order to avoid persecution for their active political past, leaving behind "two sisters and a sister-in-law". The two soldiers entered the house pretending that they were searching for food and then sexually coerced two of its occupants under the implicit threat of their pistols and swords. The whole incident was narrated in almost sadistic overtones, putting an emphasis on its compulsory character and the victims' displeasure, as a corporal confirmation of the national enemy's crushing defeat. At the end of the visit, the soldier paid the women with "a Bulgarian dollar" and "one of them took it", providing her subjugation with a new meaning. When the local informer learned the news, he "was very glad" but declined the perpetrators' offer to take part in a second assault, saying: "No, they must never learn that it was me that sent you there!"²³

The last incident of sexual violence described in the diary was perpetrated during the interval between the armistice, which put an end to the hostilities, and Greek Army's departure from its furthestmost temporary conquests, at the end of July 1913. It was planned in advance by the diarist and his superior, a "womaniser" military doctor, in their free time during their stay in an unnamed village in the Maleš region, in present-day North Macedonia, with two young girls living next door as their target. Their final assault, described as "brave and decisive" in intentionally vague terms, was carried out during the last hours of their unit's presence in the area – so that the victims would have no time to report it to the upper echelons of the Greek command. According to the diary, similar acts were committed during that same night on a much larger scale, as the departing soldiery "assaulted" the village houses, causing "much trouble" to its inhabitants.²⁴

In all the incidents described above, personal lust is denoted as the sole motive, with war providing just an opportunity to satisfy it; an opportunity provided, however, to a great extent by a cultural and ideological context that promoted sexual aggression as a socially accepted practice among soldiers. In the first part of that same diary, which deals with its writer's participation in the First Balkan War against the Ottoman Empire in Epirus, a region inhabited mostly by ethnic Greeks, there is not a single hint of any sexual violence incident nor any relevant thought; even the joyful welcome for the advancing army by Greek women in

²² Ibid., 107.

²³ Ibid., 107–10.

²⁴ Ibid., 130–31 and 136–37.

Ioannina is portrayed there in almost puritan terms.²⁵ The first mention of his sexual desire was noted in the diary in April 1913, during the peaceful interlude between the two Balkan Wars, when his unit stayed for 12 days in Nareš, a small Slav village near Thessaloniki; even then, however, he described his approach as absolutely consensual – flirting with local girls and sounding out the village teacher about local marriage customs.²⁶ Although the psychological mechanism of his transformation into an outright rapist is not recorded, we may safely suggest that the broader atmosphere prevailing at the time in the army ranks was the catalyst for his passage from erotic attraction to sexual violence: unlike the First Balkan War against the Ottoman Empire, the clash with Bulgaria was widely perceived not as an endeavour of liberation but as an extermination campaign, aimed at the ethnic cleansing of the conquered territories.²⁷ When the king of Greece (and operational chief of the Greek Army) officially relieved his soldiers from any inhibition, declaring on 29 June that Bulgarians had put themselves “beyond the rules of civilised mankind” and were no longer under their protection,²⁸ the average fighter understood it as a license to do whatever pleased him against that part of the local civilian population which could be identified as an enemy and thus ostracised. Even before the outbreak of hostilities, the private correspondence of Greek soldiers explicitly evoked the prospect of indiscriminate violence against “Bulgarian” civilians, reflecting a process of gradual indoctrination that may be safely attributed to a conscious preparation of the ground for ethnic cleansing.²⁹

Conventional Wars: Rebellious Citizens, Ethnic Cleansing and Neutral Bystanders

Most of our other sources confirm the same logic. The lion’s share of the available documentation on war rape by the Greek Army (or, vice versa, by its adversaries

²⁵ Ibid., 52.

²⁶ Ibid., 70–71.

²⁷ Kostopoulos, *Πόλεμος και εθνοκάθαρση*, 48–53.

²⁸ *Αι βουλγαρικοί ωμότητες*, 20–21.

²⁹ “In case of war we shall leave nothing intact in Bulgaria, we shall burn down their villages and even their women and children will be bayoneted” (F. Paraskevas to “dear parents,” Sari Pazar, 15 June 1913, Balkan Wars/Archive of the Paraskevas Family, ELIA). This collective hate, a by-product of decades of Greek-Bulgarian rivalry for dominance in the post-Ottoman Balkans, was shared by soldiers and leaders alike. Already in the autumn of 1912, when Greece and Bulgaria were still allies fighting against the Ottoman Empire, Crown Prince – later king – Constantine confided, for example, in his army chief of staff that “the only nickname we wished to obtain was that of Bulgar-slayer,” like the Byzantine Emperor Basil II. Xenofon Leukoparidis, ed., *Το αρχαίον του στρατηγού Π.Γ. Δαγκλή* (Athens: Viliopoleion Vagionaki, 1965), 2:57.

on Greek civilians) emanates from the major conflicts of the first war decade. As far as the record of the Greek soldiery is concerned, sources repeat to a large extent the patterns discerned in Giotsalidis' diary. All the assaults recorded were committed on non-Greek women, who most of the time were considered either part of the enemy's civilian mass base or unfriendly neutrals. Individual assaults by just one or a few soldiers may have taken place under any circumstance, more often during a unit's short stop in a certain place, as a collateral ramification of their search for food or firewood: "attempted rape on a Gypsy woman, confusion, screams," reads a sergeant's diary from the Balkan Wars,³⁰ for example, while a gunner in Asia Minor recalls learning that, during the previous night, his colleagues "had maltreated a Turkish shepherd girl" close to their camp.³¹ Many of those attempts of sexual assault would result in rape, as in the case of our diarist, while others would fail, due to the intervention of an officer or a more scrupulous soldier. In at least one case, a would-be rapist also received a good thrashing by a colleague as punishment;³² more often, however, the attackers were only verbally reprimanded, out of respect for military camaraderie.³³

Of course, political or military expediency dictated a few exceptions to this rule. Shortly after the outrages committed in Smyrna/Izmir at the onset of the Greek occupation, when, according to the official report of the Interallied Commission of Enquiry on the events, "many women were raped" by Greek soldiers and local Greek civilians,³⁴ at least one evzone was court-martialled and shot by firing squad for the rape of a local Turkish woman,³⁵ and in another incident a warrant officer was publicly cashiered and sentenced to 20 years in prison for a similar crime.³⁶ The main reason behind this display of strictness, thoroughly detailed to the troops in the orders of the day issued by their commanders, was not any humanitarian concern for the protection of threatened

³⁰ Stefanos Tzanos, *Ημερολόγιον Βαλκανικών πολέμων 1912-13* (Thessaloniki: K. & M. Ant. Stamoulis, 2016), 201.

³¹ Vassileios Moustakis, *Λόγια του κανονιέρη: 1079 μέρες συνοδοιπόροι με το θάνατο!* (New York: s.n., 2000), 23.

³² Karagiannis, *Το ημερολόγιον*, 265.

³³ Vlachos, *Απομνημονεύματα*, 139-40, for an explicit justification of such a stance by the intervening officer.

³⁴ E.L. Woodward and Rohan Butler, eds., *Documents on British Foreign Policy, 1919-1939*, 1st ser., vol. 2, 1919 (London: HMSO, 1948), 241

³⁵ Admiralty (London) to Admiralty (Paris), 21 May 1919, The National Archives, Foreign Office (FO), 608/104/36; Thanasis Apartis, *Από την ανατολή στη δύση* (Athens: Gnosi, 1984), 44.

³⁶ "Ελλ. Δικαιοσύνη," *Βήμα* (Smyrna), 8/21 July 1919, 1; "Η στρατιωτική καθαίρεσις του ανθυπασπιστού Κλήμη," *Κόσμος* (Smyrna), 11/24 July 1919, 1-2; "Ελληνική Δικαιοσύνη," *Κόσμος*, 12/25 July 1919, 1.

females but national expediency: as the duration of the Greek occupation depended on the consent of the Allied powers, whose local agents were closely scrutinising the attitude of the Greek troops, the latter's self-restraint was considered as a testing ground for Greece's ability to act as a colonial force that could adequately police "foreign peoples".³⁷ However, such punishments proved very unpopular among the rank and file, where they were widely perceived as a proof of neglect (or even treason) by their superiors. Wild stories circulated among the soldiery that Muslim women who had denounced their rapists to the Greek command were nothing but spies of the Kemalist guerillas, seeking to take advantage of the relevant interrogations in order to calculate the strength of a local garrison.³⁸ Even the official Greek counter-report on the Smyrna incidents of May 1919, compiled by Colonel Alexandros Mazarakis during the autumn of that year and addressed to the Interallied Commission, explicitly attributed all denunciations of rape by Greek soldiers to "women of dubious morality", whose words should not be taken at face value.³⁹

More traceable than individual transgressions are some incidents of collective sexual violence committed by Greek soldiers during their advance into enemy territory. Dictated, as it seems, by a widespread culture of plunder, according to an old unwritten law that treated local women as an integral part of war booty,⁴⁰ such gang rapes are usually mentioned along (and on an equal footing) with looting and similar predatory acts.⁴¹ "At 11 a.m. we arrive at Gürecik village. The previous night the main army corps had been there and had real orgies. They looted the houses and dishonoured many virgins," an

³⁷ [Col. Neokosmos Gregoriades], Order of Battle, 5 July 1919, in Giannis Koutsonikolas, *Ημερολόγιο εκστρατείας 1919–1922* (Athens: Dimos Arachovas, 2008), 288–89. Although also inhabited by a numerous minority (or, in the case of Smyrna itself, a relative majority) of ethnic Greeks, the occupation zone was mostly populated by Muslim Turks, the majority of whom were openly hostile to Greek rule; the latter was therefore widely considered not as an affair of national liberation but more or less as a colonial endeavour, justified by the need to protect local Christians from Muslim rage and gradually "civilise" the "lower races" of the local population according to Western norms.

³⁸ Karagiannis, *To ημερολόγιον*, 138.

³⁹ Woodward and Butler, *Documents on British Foreign Policy*, 250.

⁴⁰ Brownmiller, *Against our Will*, 98; Mühlhäuser, *Sex and the Nazi Soldier*, 51 and 87–88.

⁴¹ Dotation Carnegie, *Enquête dans les Balkans*, 82–83, 305–10 and 317; Arnold Toynbee, *The Western Question in Greece and Turkey* (London: Constable, 1922), 295–96; Agamemnon Politis, *Η ελληνική εκστρατεία στη Μικρά Ασία: Προσωπικές σελίδες ημερολογίου* (Athens: Sokoli, 2009), 45; Koutsonikolas, *Ημερολόγιο εκστρατείας*, 285.

infantryman notes in his diary during the Second Balkan War.⁴² Another diary narrates a similar incident, during the Greek Army's advance on Ankara, in almost identical terms: "9 July 1921. At around 10 p.m. we arrived at Aribere village, next to a river. The village was literary pillaged and plundered. Many rapes were committed in front of the girls' parents etc. ... We passed the night in an atmosphere of celebration, with fires, grilled meat, etc."⁴³ Similar scenes, albeit with a less joyful atmosphere, took place during the Greek Army's panic-stricken retreat from the Asia Minor hinterland to the littoral, in August 1922.⁴⁴ It also seems that the location of a village, on a route frequently used by advancing or retreating army units, implied an increased exposure to both material plunder and sexual violence: three weeks after the above-mentioned rapes, the village of Gürecik – situated on a main provincial road – was once more subjected to an unspecified torment of "sad incidents", at the hands of another Greek unit passing through.⁴⁵

Mass rape could go unhindered, and even be tacitly sanctioned by the military command, if its perpetration was considered an organic part of reprisals for the participation of the local population, or parts of it, in the enemy's war effort or in civilian acts of armed resistance. Especially when Greek soldiers had been the victims of various atrocities on the part of enemy guerillas, the local civilian population would pay a heavy price, its female component providing a most attractive target for indiscriminate revenge. The atrocious murder of Greek soldiers by their Turkish military captors or armed Muslim villagers in the Kaylar region during the First Balkan War, a massacre sometimes coupled with the rape or sexual mutilation of the unfortunate victims, was, for example, avenged by the dead soldiers' comrades not only through official reprisals, such as the burning of villages and mass execution of their male inhabitants, but also through the rape of the younger women of those same localities. When this specific form of retaliation was vividly described by Stratis Myrivilis, in a

⁴² Dionysios Livieratos, *Ωρες μάχης: Ημερολόγιο 23 Φεβρουαρίου–5 Οκτωβρίου 1913* (Athens: Euroekdotiki, 1991), 72.

⁴³ Petros Vamvakas, *Σημειώσεις του στρατιωτικού μου βίου* (Thessaloniki: Nea Poreia, 1990), 27.

⁴⁴ Apostolidis, *Όσα θυμάμαι*, 19–21; Panagakos, *Συμβολή*, 697–98 and 707–8; T. Thnitos, "Μέσα στη φρίκη του πολέμου," *Ριζοσπάστης*, 31 July 1932, 2.

⁴⁵ Leonidas Kallivretakis, "Ημερολόγιο εκστρατείας 1912–1913: Οδοιπορικές και πολεμικές σημειώσεις Ηπείρου – Μακεδονίας – Θράκης του εθελοντή Κωνστή Ι. Καπιδάκη," *Ίστωρ* 2 (1990): 73. The village is mistakenly mentioned as "Dorikovo", a place name that does not occur in the region; the description of the route followed by the diarist's unit leaves however no doubt about its real identity.

short story of his during the 1920s, the author was publicly reprimanded by the Academy of Athens for breaking a taboo by focusing on “the less gentle aspects of warfare”.⁴⁶ Sexual violence could also be tacitly exonerated as a form of collective revenge for atrocities perpetrated elsewhere by the victims’ co-nationals: in his memoirs, which are characterised by a blatant effort to minimise and excuse sexual crimes committed by Greek soldiers, General Theodoros Pangalos (a major during the Balkan Wars and a dictator during the mid-1920s) attributed the rape of “some Bulgarian women” in Petrich to an explicit clearance by the rapists’ superior officer, who wanted to avenge some earlier sexual assaults on Greek women by Bulgarian soldiers in another Macedonian town.⁴⁷

The same pattern of rape as a complementary form of retaliation, next to mass killing or other atrocities, was extensively applied during the Asia Minor war, when the Greek expeditionary force found itself deeply demoralised by a constant feeling of encirclement by an openly hostile Muslim population. After discovering in September 1921 the mutilated bodies of a Greek medical unit in a Turkish village, incoming soldiers not only burned it but also confined all its inhabitants to a secluded fortress, subjecting them to miscellaneous forms of spontaneous punishment: “The soldiers do whatever they wish. Some of them kill Turkish peasants for revenge, some others dishonour women and girls,” one of them noted in his diary.⁴⁸ Sometimes, such a clearance for indiscriminate violence on civilians was provided by one and the same officer under various circumstances: Colonel Konstantinos Palaiologos is, for example, named in two different diaries as the instigator of similar reprisals in Bergama (1919)⁴⁹ and the Simav Mountains (1922).⁵⁰ “The cries and the crying of women and children don’t stop,” the second of these sources reads. “Every woman, every child and every weak party are at the mercy of any Greek soldier ... The soldiers continuously describe what they saw or did all these days. They met whole families, many women, beautiful or ugly. Some of them were crying, others were mourning their husbands or their honour.”⁵¹

Sexual violence could also be unleashed in the name of revenge for an ally’s sufferings, as in the case of Lizynka, an Ukrainian town that had put up stubborn

⁴⁶ Stratis Myrivilis, *Διηγήματα* (Mytilini: Tachydromos, 1928), 3–27; Eri Stavropoulou, “Οι Βαλκανικοί πόλεμοι στην πεζογραφία του Στράτη Μυριβήλη,” in *Η Ελλάδα των Βαλκανικών πολέμων*, ed. Lydia Tricha (Athens: ELIA, 1993), 371.

⁴⁷ Theodoros Pangalos, *Τα απομνημονεύματά μου 1897–1947* (Athens: Aetos, 1950), 1:369.

⁴⁸ Karagiannis, *Το ημερολόγιον*, 258.

⁴⁹ Manolis Sofoulis, *Ημερολόγιο πολέμου (1906–1941)* (Athens: Grigoris, 2007), 116.

⁵⁰ Karagiannis, *Το ημερολόγιον*, 290.

⁵¹ *Ibid.*, 295–96.

resistance to the French Army, only to be looted (and its female inhabitants sexually assaulted) by Greek soldiers under the specific instructions of their commander.⁵² Respect for an ally's civilians could, on the other hand, result in the increased vigilance of the military authorities: during the final onslaught of the Entente forces on the Balkan Front in autumn 1918, when Greek Army units committed many rapes while advancing across the "liberated" territory of Serbian Macedonia, the Serb government warned Athens that such behaviour should not be allowed further north, "within old Serbian territory, where the temperament of the people is very different from the Macedonian one and they do not easily tolerate such insults to their honour".⁵³

Irregular troops – of whatever nationality – seem to have committed the lion's share of sexual violence, as a result of their laxer discipline and staffing with professional brigands, hired guns or violence-prone men. During the Balkan Wars, irregular Greek "scouts" were credited with numerous rapes and the systematic looting of Muslim villages, often beyond the regular army's zone of control.⁵⁴ In all those cases, the motive could be pure revenge or just personal satisfaction; some perpetrators came from local communities with open scores to settle with the victims, while in other cases the latter are described as having had perfect relations with their Christian neighbours in the past.

Last but not least, civilians also committed rape out of revenge, sometimes in order to redress past traumas and grievances suffered under a harsh social order. A number of such incidents marked the end of Ottoman rule during the First Balkan War, especially in the feudal estates (*çiftlik*) traditionally cultivated by Christian peasants. Georgios Modis, the first postwar prefect of Eordaia, described some of them as a collective outburst of subaltern retribution: "Even [Christian] women were prodding their husbands to rape Turkish women," he wrote, portraying the perpetrators as "shepherds who deemed useful for nothing but ploughing the land with their heads bowed, and as having no voice, no individual will, no spirit at all".⁵⁵

⁵² Sotiris Alexopoulos, ed., *To ημερολόγιο του εύζωνα Χρήστου Αλεξόπουλου* (Kavala: Xyrafi, 2011), 55.

⁵³ Governor-General of Macedonia [Anastasios Adosides] to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Thessaloniki, 3 October 1918, Archives of the General Directorate of Macedonia, Historical Archives of Macedonia, Thessaloniki (IAM), file 72.

⁵⁴ Kosmas Velios to King Constantine, Athens, 16 June 1913, Archives of the General Directorate of Macedonia, IAM, file 117.

⁵⁵ Georgios Modis, *Μακεδονικός Αγών και Μακεδόνες αρχηγοί* (Thessaloniki: Society for Macedonian Studies, 1950), 34.

As already mentioned, specific patterns or motives of sexual violence during wartime are more difficult to discern when they are described by the victims' side, as such acts are usually attributed either to a conscious policy of intimidation and ethnic cleansing or to an inherent barbarity with cultural or racial overtones. The systematic rape of Asia Minor Greek women by Turkish soldiers and armed civilians after the collapse of the Greek Army in 1922, in what became the final act of the region's ethnic cleaning of Christian minorities, may for example be attributed to a number of converging reasons: pure lust, a nationalist culture of annihilation or the wish to avenge three years of military occupation and the destruction of the hinterland by the retreating Greek Army.⁵⁶ It is less easy to pronounce a verdict on the rapes committed by Bulgarian officers or soldiers during World War I in the Greek-inhabited urban centres of occupied Eastern Macedonia.⁵⁷ Those perpetrated during the same years by Entente troops in the rest of Greek Macedonia, although ostensibly not politically motivated, might also comply with a specific rationale, as far as the choice of victims was concerned: in the village of L'k (present-day Mikrolimni), for example, it was the wives of Greek Army deserters who were raped by French soldiers,⁵⁸ while in Nestram (present-day Nestorio) assaults by French colonial troops on Slav-speaking women were instigated by the village chairman himself, who allegedly even delivered two women to them to be raped.⁵⁹

If there is an abundance of information about instances of sexual violence during the Balkan Wars and the Asia Minor campaign, this is not at all the case concerning Greece's third major conventional war of the twentieth century:

⁵⁶ For personal reminiscences of this violence by its survivors, see Georgios Tenekidis and Fotios Apostolopoulos, eds., *Η έξοδος*, vol. 1, *Μαρτυρίες από τις επαρχίες των δυτικών παραλίων της Μικρασίας* (Athens: Centre for Asia Minor Studies, 1980), 9, 11, 25–26, 28, 37–38, 42–43, 58–59, 71, 103, 107, 145, 155, 160, 183, 239, 344, 356 and 361–77, the latter a narrative obviously refined; *Η ιστορία της Αγγελικής Ματθαίου, το γένος Πολίτη, από τη Φώκαια της Μικράς Ασίας* (Nicosia: Aigaion, 2014), 24–25 and 29–30; Dora Sakayan, *Smyrne 1922: Entre le feu, le glaive et l'eau, les épreuves d'un médecin arménien* (Paris: L'Harmattan, 2000), 13, 15, 18 and 44–46; Spyridon Klaudianos, *Σκηνές φρίκης από την μικρασιατική τραγωδία* (1930; Athens: Labyrinthos, 2019), 40–41, 44, 78, 85–86, 89, 152–53, 166 and 196–97.

⁵⁷ *Rapports et enquêtes de la Commission Interalliée sur les violations du droit des gens, commises en Macédoine orientale par les armées Bulgares* (Nancy: Berger-Levrault, 1919), for an official account compiled by the Entente.

⁵⁸ Dimitar Topurkovski, "Податоци од историјата на село Л'к – Леринска околија," in *Хроника на селата во Леринско*, vol. 1.2 (Skopje: DARSM, 2019), 10 and 22.

⁵⁹ Kosta Dinkovski, "Податоци за село Нестрам, Костурско," in *Хроника на селата во Костурско*, 207.

Greece's repulse of the Italian invasion of 1940 and subsequent advance into Italian-occupied southern Albania until the German attack of April 1941. Such incidents are almost completely absent not only from official or mainstream histories of that conflict but also from the respective memorial literature of former combatants. A survey of 42 diaries and memoirs of war veterans has revealed only one case of rape, perpetrated by Greek soldiers on an unspecified number of Muslim Albanian women who were hiding in a cave in order to survive the ongoing military operations.⁶⁰ This silence may be attributed to a greater unwillingness by the veterans themselves to spoil the image of a defensive war that has been elevated to the status of a national icon, but may also reflect an actual display of self-restraint by the Greek military, especially compared to their earlier deeds; an assumption that is indeed supported by a number of objective factors.

First, Greek-Italian hostilities took place either within Greece (during the initial phase of the war) or in a territory foreign to both belligerents, mostly populated by Albanians (Muslim but also Orthodox Christian), who generally professed an attitude of benevolent or absolute neutrality towards both of them.⁶¹ Although clearly despised or mistrusted by many Greek soldiers, who considered the southernmost part of Albania as unredeemed Greek territory ("Northern Epirus"),⁶² and even by some newly coined nationalist songs of the Greek Army,⁶³ those civilians could not be automatically identified with the enemy, nor classified as an a priori hostile element; in most cases, they were viewed just as unfortunate bystanders and unwilling victims of a conflict far beyond their own will, who needed to be treated with a touch of empathy, at least.⁶⁴ Second, the Greek Army's earlier experience in Asia Minor seems to have generated a strong

⁶⁰ Giannis Krampis, *Στα χαρακώματα: Δεκαετηνιά αυθεντικές ιστορίες πολεμιστών του 1940–1941* (Athens: Syllogos Apantaxou Floriaditon, 1991), 27. According to this testimony, two of the raped women identified the culprits; the latter were publicly reprimanded by their commander, who threatened them in rather vague terms with a punitive treatment under battle, but were not court-martialled for their crime.

⁶¹ Spyros Loukatos, *Οπλίτης στο αλβανικό μέτωπο: Ημερολογιακές σημειώσεις 1940–41* (Athens: Potamos, 2001), 220 and 235–36; Ioannis Nikolaidis, *Μνήμες του '40* (Ioannina: s.n., 1985), 97 and 111; Dimitris Michelidis, *Από την Κρήτη στην Αλβανία* (Athens: s.n., 1977), 41–43.

⁶² Loukatos, *Οπλίτης στο αλβανικό μέτωπο*, 75; Evangelia Koutsodonti, *Το ημερολόγιον ενός στρατιώτου* (Athens: Pelasgos, 2000), 30; Stathis Gotsinas, *Από χιόνι... Πολεμώντας στην Αλβανία* (Athens: Vivliorama, 2006), 45–46.

⁶³ Leonidas Pournaropoulos, *117 μέρες εκείνο το χειμώνα: Πολεμικό ημερολόγιο ενός τσολιά 1940–1941* (Athens: s.n., 1983), 79.

⁶⁴ Dimosthenis Zades, *Αλβανική ραψωδία* (Athens: Mnimi, 1981), 40; Koutsodonti, *Το ημερολόγιον ενός στρατιώτου*, 29; Loukatos, *Οπλίτης στο αλβανικό μέτωπο*, 75, 257, 286 and 297.

feeling among its officer corps that their survival in a land inhabited by a foreign population relied, to a large extent, on the locals' benevolent attitude or at least their passivity towards foreign occupation, imposing therefore on them (and their soldiers) a larger degree of self-control than in previous, more offensive endeavours: the troops were constantly reminded of the need to "behave with decency toward the villagers"⁶⁵ and soldiers were punished even for trying to develop consensual sexual relations with local girls.⁶⁶ In contrast to the strict containment of the troops' sexual degeneration, other forms of transgression (for instance, the looting of food or destruction of private property for sources of heating) enjoyed more toleration, as those same sources attested. Last but not least, Albanians themselves took extensive care to hide their younger womenfolk from the reach (or even the eyes) of passing by Greek soldiers, a measure also facilitated by the strict norms of gender segregation already dominant in their traditional society.⁶⁷ Sometimes, the hiding of the female family members was ordered by the Greek officers themselves, in order to keep their soldiers from any temptation.⁶⁸ We may thus once more safely conclude that the attitude of the military hierarchy is clearly decisive for the prevention of sexual violence by subordinates.

On the Use of (Un)Civil Sexual Violence

In contrast to the first war decade, when most of the evidence on war rape had to do with the perception and treatment of alien nationalities, sexual violence during the civil strife of the 1940s was intrinsically linked to the repression of an internal enemy, defined as such on the basis of political and social antagonism.

⁶⁵ Prodromos Kozanidis, *Το ημερολόγιο ενός αγωνιστή του '40* (Athens: s.n., 2019), 124; Dimitris Michelidis, *Από τα αλβανικά βουνά στην Εθνική Αντίσταση* (Athens: Afoi Tolidi, 1984), 75.

⁶⁶ Takis Siskos, *Πολεμικές δόξες: Ελληνικό έπος στα βουνά της Β. Ηπείρου* (Tirana: Elikranon, 2007), 38. Also, Loukatos, *Οπλίτης στο αλβανικό μέτωπο*, 244, 246, 257–58 and 260–61, for a case of self-imposed restraint by a Greek soldier flirting with a married young Albanian woman, under the feeling that such a love affair was in fact prohibited.

⁶⁷ Zades, *Αλβανική ραψωδία*, 23; Manolis Roumeliotakis, *Γράμμα στο γιο μου από τον πόλεμο της Αλβανίας* (Athens: Plethron, 1981), 51; Eleni Belia, ed., *Ημερολόγια πολέμου και αλληλογραφία 1940–1941* (Athens: Syllogos pros Diadosin Ofelimon Vivlion, 1998), 88; Michail Vlontakis, *Πολεμικών ημερολόγιον 1940–1941* (Athens: Odos Panos, 2007), 50–51; Georgios Kakadiaris, *Φανερά και απόκρυφα του πολέμου 1940–1941 και της Κατοχής* (Athens: s.n., 2000), 25.

⁶⁸ Michelidis, *Από την Κρήτη στην Αλβανία*, 43–44.

Part I. Occupation and Resistance

Foreign military occupation played of course a decisive role in the wholesale barbarisation of local socio-political conflicts that set the pace for the 1946–1949 civil war. Although naming the victims of sexual assault was still not an easy affair, due to the persistence of traditional ideas about female and family “honour”, there is no doubt that the Axis occupation forces (German, Italian and Bulgarian) and their local auxiliaries had a fair share of such crimes; not only during counter-insurgency operations against actual or alleged resistance strongholds and related “reprisals”,⁶⁹ but also under more peaceful circumstances, in the form of individual transgressions or typical instances of the abuse of power by local commanders, security personnel and ordinary troops.⁷⁰ A minor record of similar excesses by the British troops who suppressed the 1944 Athens uprising and safeguarded the country’s political policing until 1947 is also discernible in contemporary and memorial literature – with an emphasis, by hostile Communist propaganda, on the alleged sexual promiscuity of the colonial regiments composed by “Black” Gurkha soldiers.⁷¹ The most interesting aspect in the whole period was, however, a clear dichotomy, as far as sexual violence was concerned, between collaboration and resistance as well as across the Right-Left divide.

⁶⁹ [Kazantzakis et al.], *Έκθεσις*, 96; Stratos Dordanas, *Το αίμα των αθώων: Αντίποινα των γερμανικών αρχών κατοχής στη Μακεδονία 1941–1944* (Athens: Estia, 2007), 471, 475, 538 and 547; Vasiliki Papagianni, *Κραυγές της μνήμης* (Athens: Sokoli, 2005), 292; Lidia Santarelli, “Muted Violence: Italian War Crimes in Occupied Greece,” *Journal of Modern Italian Studies* 9, no. 3 (2004): 294; Dimitris Paschalidis and Tasos Chatzianastasiou, *Τα γεγονότα της Δράμας* (Drama: DEKPOTA, 2003), 287; Tasoula Vervenioti, *Η γυναίκα της Αντίστασης* (Athens: Odysseas, 1994), 124–25.

⁷⁰ For an indicative number of various such incidents, see Kazantzakis et al., *Έκθεσις*, 49–50, 85 and 96; Vervenioti, *Η γυναίκα*, 126; Papagianni, *Κραυγές*, 391; Andreas Christopoulos, *Οι Ιταλογερμανοί στην Αργολίδα* (Nafplio: Efimeris Syntagma, 1946), 66–67, 69, 71 and 104; Minos Dounias, *Ημερολόγιο κατοχής* (Athens: Estia, 1987), 36–37; Pavlos Delaportas, *Το σημειωματάριο ενός πιλάτου*, 3rd ed. (Athens: Themelio, 1979), 172–73; Koula Fafouti, *Δεν θέλω και δεν πρέπει να ξεχάσω...* (Kymi: s.n., 2006), 112–13.

⁷¹ Yannis Aggelakis, “Οι ‘Ινδοί’ στα Δεκεμβριανά,” in *Από την απελευθέρωση στα Δεκεμβριανά*, ed. Prokopis Papastratis, Michalis Lymperatos and Li Sarafi (Athens: Panteion University, 2016), 522–34. Similar racial overtones had also dominated the earlier denunciation, by the pro-British clandestine press, of mass rapes allegedly committed in 1944 on local inhabitants of both sexes by “Black German” troops (*Γερμανομαύρους*), that is, Free Arabian Legion auxiliary units of the Wehrmacht, in the village of Koukouvusta (“Τενική ατίμωσις,” *Ελληνικόν Αίμα*, 16 June 1944, 3).

Under the occupation, rape by the collaborationist Security Battalions was a widespread practice.⁷² An ethnic dimension of their violence is also sometimes evident, as we discern by the gang rape and impalement of a female Jewish teacher in Evia by such troops,⁷³ the mass rape of Macedonian Slav women in Ermakia during a chain of destructive raids in the spring of 1944⁷⁴ or the identical outrages against Armenian women in August 1944, during a raid by Wehrmacht troops and various collaborationist units (Security Battalions, Special Security Police) that burned down the mostly Armenian-inhabited Athenian neighbourhood of Dourgouti.⁷⁵ It is interesting to note that this record went hand in hand with the collaborationists' self-justification that they were primarily fighting against the moral degeneration brought about by the left-wing resistance; a degeneration mostly established by the intermingling of adolescents of both sexes in the ranks of the United Panhellenic Youth Organisation (EPON, the extremely popular youth wing of EAM-ELAS),⁷⁶ although a Security Battalions communiqué went so far as to claim that ELAS guerillas had used the chalice of a mountain village church as a dustbin for the condoms they allegedly used during their stay there.⁷⁷ Equally misleading but far more disturbing, as it smacks of an eerie feeling of a disguised atrocity, is the postwar claim of the Security Battalions' commander in Laconia that, during a 1944 mopping-up of the region's mountains, his unit arrested not only a number "of guerillas and communist fugitives" but also "a lot of ['enticed' pro-guerilla] girls bearing marks of indecent assault and sodomy", many of them either pregnant or carrying "drugs for venereal diseases" in their pockets.⁷⁸

⁷² For various such incidents, on an indicative basis, see Giannis Roumeliotis, *Η Εθνική Αντίσταση στη Λακωνία*, 2nd ed. (Areopoli: Adouloti Mani, 2005), 233; Papagianni, *Κραυγές*, 390; Delaportas, *Το σημειωματάριο*, 92–96.

⁷³ Apostolos Apostolopoulos, *Μαρτυρίες: Μια πορεία*, vol. 4, *Εύβοια* (Athens: s.n., 1996), 110; typewritten memoirs of Stamatis Kavadias, n.d., Giorgos Douatzis Archives, ELIA, file 13, 18.

⁷⁴ Triantafyllia Souchamvali, *Ερμακιά: Ένας μαρτυρικός τόπος* (Athens: Mov, 2022), 55, 60, 66 and 70.

⁷⁵ Untitled typewritten record of atrocities committed in Athens during the summer of 1944, compiled from daily police reports, Aristotelis Koutsoumaris Archives, ELIA, file 47.3, 33.

⁷⁶ Tasos Kostopoulos, *Η αυτολογοκριμένη μνήμη: Τα Τάγματα Ασφαλείας και η μεταπολεμική εθνοκοφροσύνη* (Athens: Filistor, 2005), 135–39.

⁷⁷ "Βεβήλωσις ναού υπό των κομμουνιστών," *Αθηναϊκά Νέα*, 21 April 1944, 2; The same article also in *Νέα Ευρώπη* (Thessaloniki), 22 April 1944, 4, and *Παρατηρητής* (Chania), 28 April 1944, 1.

⁷⁸ Dionysios Papadopoulos, "Ιστορία των Ταγμάτων Ασφαλείας" (1952), Directorate of Army History Archives, fol. 915/A, doc. 1, 22–24. Papadopoulos' memoirs were anonymously

Right-wing guerillas of the Epirus-based National Republican Greek League (EDES) were supposedly restrained by traditional prejudices, according to which the rape of a captive woman would be shortly followed by death in battle as divine punishment.⁷⁹ In fact, as the memoirs of an EDES veteran painfully acknowledge, the rape of women belonging to the families of rival EAM-ELAS guerillas was a usual practice of EDES troops during the armed clashes between the two organisations in 1943–1944; ELAS guerillas, on the other hand, although equally brutal in their use of deadly violence, are explicitly exonerated by that same source of any sexual crime.⁸⁰ Rape was also perpetrated by EDES on a mass scale against Muslim Albanian women of the local Cham minority, as a weapon of ethnic cleansing during the last phase of the war.⁸¹ Another incident that deserves to be mentioned is the fate of a woman with both a Greek and a German name (Eleni Papaioannou or Rita Porscher), who was accused of being an Axis spy and a lover of the Italian military intelligence chief in Ioannina.⁸² Abducted by EDES, condemned to death and shot, she had in the meantime (as the organisation's military prosecutor jubilantly noted in his personal diary) "to satisfy all the needs of the Command Station – thirty [men] on a night, on the eve of her trial".⁸³

The behaviour of left-wing EAM-ELAS was fundamentally different. An inherent revolutionary puritanism, the mass participation of female activists in its ranks and the total dependence on the local population for its survival and growth made its guerillas extremely cautious when it came to sexual violence; their self-restraint was, in addition, reinforced by a strict discipline that did not allow much room even for consensual relations between unmarried comrades-in-arms.⁸⁴ This assessment is confirmed by the scarcity of relevant

serialised that same year by a local Kalamata newspaper; for the passage in this case, see "Η ιστορία των Ταγμάτων Ασφαλείας," *Μεσσηνία*, 1 September 1952, 1.

⁷⁹ Hagen Fleischer and Aristeidis Stergellis, eds., "Ημερολόγιο Φαίδωνα Μαηδώνη (24.6–10.9.1944)," *Μνήμων* 9 (1982): 103.

⁸⁰ Apostolos Papakostas, *Μέρες αντίστασης* (Athens: Angelakis, 2016), 417.

⁸¹ Giorgos Margaritis, "Η σκοτεινή πλευρά των εθνικών θριάμβων," *Ο Πολίτης*, no. 117 (1992): 44–47; Georgia Kretsi, "The 'Secret Past' of the Greek-Albanian Borderlands," *Ethnologia Balkanica* 6 (2002): 183.

⁸² Dimitrios Doumas, *Ιστορικοί σημειώσεις και αυτοβιογραφία* (Ioannina: s.n., 1967), 159.

⁸³ Georgios Romanos, *Μια αθηναϊκή βεγγέρα του 1944: Ημερολόγιο από την Ελεύθερη Ορεινή Ελλάδα* (Athens: Potamos, 2008), 167.

⁸⁴ For the general line, see for example Giorgos Kotzioulas, *Όταν ήμουν με τον Άρη* (Athens: Themelio, 1983), 134–42. For the day-to-day reality, one of the best sources is the diary of an ordinary guerilla: Georgios Gounaris, *Ορμάτε σαν λιοντάρια* (Athens: Alfeios, 2020). For the prohibition of even consensual intercourse between unmarried fighters, see also the delicate handling of such a case by an understanding EAM-ELAS superior (Yannis

recriminations, even among the prolific anticommunist civil war propaganda and postwar literature.⁸⁵

Militant songs produced and disseminated during the 1940s by all political camps, the strongest ideological marker of that time, also point in the same direction: while those identified with the EAM-ELAS movement (or even EDES) do not contain the slightest sexist verse,⁸⁶ the songs authored by the collaborationist organisation X, very popular with the broader Right, mostly revolve around the alleged immorality of left-wing women, sexual looseness of ELAS guerillas of both sexes and an offensive masculinity that made the nation's rescue contingent on the sexual disciplining of its internal and external enemies; one of these songs proclaimed, for example, that "the Bulgarian villages will feel again the Greek Occupation and Bulgarian women will remember the evzone's tassel and his endurance".⁸⁷ The same subculture of rape, as both a motive and a weapon, permeates *The grindstone's teeth*, a postwar novel by former right-wing activist Nikos Kasdagles that deals with the anticommunist activities of a "Special Security Police volunteer unit" composed of armed collaborators and their student fellow travellers under the occupation. Privately venerated by the author's former comrades-in-arms as "too outspoken" and the only novel of its

Voultepsis, *Συναγωνιστής Ακέλας*, 2nd ed., [Athens: Alkyon, 1997], 201 and 205–6). That same instance is erroneously described in a PhD thesis as a "cover up of sexual harassment" (Spiros Tsoutsoumpis, "Irregular Warfare in Occupied Greece 1941–1944: Masculinity and Morale in the British Special Operations Executive and the Greek Resistance" (PhD diss., University of Manchester, 2012, 97)), while in fact it concerned the consensual dating of two young lovers. On the significance of the increased role of women in a guerilla movement as a catalyst for the constraint of sexual violence, see also Brownmiller, *Against our Will*, 91, and Wood, "Sexual Violence during War," 341.

⁸⁵ See, for example, a number of postwar semi-official anticommunist publications on the "red terror" of the 1940s, written and tacitly put into circulation by the Greek Central Intelligence Service (KYP): *Το Δεκεμβριανόν κίνημα* (Athens: Politiki kai Koinoniki Vivliothiki, [1960]); *Το ΚΚΕ κατά τον πόλεμον και την Κατοχήν* (Athens: Politiki kai Koinoniki Vivliothiki, 1961); *Βίβλος της εθνοπροδοσίας* (Athens: Syllogos Epanapatrísthenton ek tou Parapetasmatos [=KYP], 1962).

⁸⁶ *Τραγούδια της Αντίστασης και του Εμφυλίου* (Athens: Ellenika Themata, 1975), 5–66 (EAM-ELAS) and 69–82 (EDES). See also Dimitrios Soutzos, *Εμβατήρια και παρωδίες* (Athens: s.n., 1959), 67–92.

⁸⁷ Soutzos, *Εμβατήρια*, 88–89, here 89; *Τραγούδια*, 85–96, here 91. The "tassel" (φούντα) ostensibly referred to the evzone's boot garments; it is, however, a cryptic formula commonly used to denote his penis (πούτσα). In right-wing vocabulary, the term "Bulgarians" was, on the other hand, meant to denote also the ethnic Greek leftists, ostensibly excluded by their ideology from the imagined national community.

kind that “dared to tell” the whole truth about their actions,⁸⁸ the book focuses on a chain of both random and targeted rapes of left-wing female activists or their close relatives by the “special policemen” and right-wing students. Although portrayed as equally murderous and resorting to vicious treachery, leftist activists are, on the other hand, not associated at all with any kind of sexual violence in this same narrative.⁸⁹

Such a culture of respect for female integrity notwithstanding, the handling by the EAM-ELAS leadership of sporadic cases of sexual violence perpetrated by its troops was not an easy affair, however. Old guerillas did not hide their resentment, for example, at the death penalty imposed by the most popular ELAS commander, Aris Velouchiotis, on one of his best fighters, nick-named Oktovrianos, after he was accused of raping a nun; available narratives of that event portray the latter in a very unfavourable light, as a woman of loose morals who had initially seduced the valiant guerilla, changing her mind on the way.⁹⁰ Even more delicate proved to be the intervention of local leaders when traditional ethics and social pressure dictated a more moderate approach. In the rather typical case of a Rumeliot village youth who, before enlisting in ELAS, had raped (or attempted to rape) a girl whose family had denied him permission to marry her, the girl’s father refused to ask for any punishment, preferring to settle for the forced marriage of his daughter with her rapist than face the social costs brought about by the indecent assault she had suffered; as for the victim, she did not dare to even to disclose her own opinion on the matter.⁹¹ The persistence of very conservative traditions within the ranks of ELAS fighters and supporters, both rural and urbanite, according to which the rape of women was perceived as a family stigma rather than as an individual torment, is recorded in various ego-documents produced by resistance veterans. An old refugee from Pontos, for example, arrested by the British forces during the December 1944 uprising and interned by them in a provisional concentration camp near Athens, confessed to his fellow inmates that if his (far) younger spouse

⁸⁸ Theofilos Frangopoulos to Rodis Roufos, Beirut, 8 May 1955 and December 1955, in Evangelia Kosta, “Από την αλληλογραφία Ρόδη Ρούφου και Θ.Δ. Φραγκόπουλου” (MA thesis, Aristotle University of Thessaloniki, 2015), 72 and 105.

⁸⁹ Nikos Kasdaglis, *Τα δόντια της μυλόπετρας* (1955; Athens: Kastaniotis, 1995).

⁹⁰ Kotzioulas, *Όταν ήμουν με τον Άρη*, 126–33; Giannis Papakonstantinou, *Ενθυμήματα ποτισμένα με αίμα και δάκρυα* (Athens: Linos, 1985), 1:290–92. A few days earlier, Oktovrianos had condemned to death an ordinary guerilla that attempted to rape a local woman.

⁹¹ Nikiforos (Dimitris Dimitriou), *Ανάρτης στα βουνά της Ρούμελης* (Athens: s.n., 1965), 2:244–45.

was raped by the enemy troops, he should kill her in order to wash away the disgrace.⁹²

Similar conclusions are derived from an assiduous examination of the available sources on leftist violence during the ill-fated Athenian uprising of December 1944.⁹³ The meticulous study of the testimonies of 124 conservative citizens of both sexes who had been arrested by the guerillas during the events and transferred as hostages to adjacent provincial centres controlled by EAM-ELAS, testimonies that were collected by the Red Cross under military auspices immediately after their repatriation,⁹⁴ reveals, for example, only a few cases of sexual assaults against female hostages, most of which took place during the last days of the guerillas' retreat, after their total defeat in the Battle of Athens, when the ELAS forces were actually disintegrating.⁹⁵ A notable exception to this rule seems to have been a certain ELAS chieftain, nick-named Captain Fourtounas or Thalassas, who was accused by two female hostages to have raped some younger inmates during their convoy's overnight stations at various locations of the hinterland.⁹⁶ Such exceptions notwithstanding, the scale of these outrages looks rather small, when compared to the indiscriminate looting of the (relatively

⁹² Richardos Someritis, *Ένας μικρός Δεκέμβρης* (Athens: Nea Synora; A.A. Livani, 1994), 46–48.

⁹³ Tasos Kostopoulos, *Κόκκινος Δεκέμβρης: Το ζήτημα της επαναστατικής βίας* (Athens: Vivliorama, 2016).

⁹⁴ Testimonies nos. 1–114 and 116, Red Cross Archive, Benaki Museum Historical Archives (RCA/BMHA). Of the 124 recorded testimonies, 98 belonged to male and 26 to female hostages. On the basis of their testimonies, the total number of hostages taken away from metropolitan Athens between 14 December 1944 and 5 January 1945 is estimated at almost 5,000 people, a few dozen of whom were either executed or died on the way (Kostopoulos, *Κόκκινος Δεκέμβρης*, 188–91 and 207–8).

⁹⁵ Testimonies of Athanasios Asimakopoulos (28 January 1945), file 12, 2; Ioannis and Maria Kotzia (1 February 1945), file 38, 2; Charilaos Papadimitriou (February 1945), file 41, 13; Chryso Konstantinidou (3 February 1945), file 64, 2. All RCA/BMHA. One of the victims is explicitly described as a German citizen. In some cases, a minimal physical resistance or just a scream was usually enough for the attack to be effectively repulsed. The collapse of ELAS discipline and self-restraint after its defeat is also confirmed by the memoirs of a number of guerillas or their supporters: Voula Damianakou, *Υπέυθυνη δήλωση* (Athens: s.n., 1963), 525–26; Evstratios Moutsogiannis, *Από το λεύκωμά μου* (Athens: s.n., 1972), 275 and 280; Manos Ioannidis, *Φάκελος Νο 9745/B* (Athens: Medousa, 2005), 238.

⁹⁶ Testimonies of Loula Vamvaki (24 January 1945), file 20, 1, and Mara Englezaki (March 1945), file 103, 3, RCA/BMHA. Although the first testimony contains also a number of obvious fallacies (“many” Athenian ELAS guerillas are, for example, said to “have changed their [Greek] names into Russian or Bulgarian ones”), her description of a rape appears more credible.

affluent) hostages by their destitute guards and a widespread atmosphere of class retribution that reigned throughout their custody. An anticommunist lieutenant-colonel of the government army, whose wife had also been a hostage, insisted thus, in his official report to the prime minister, that the guerillas, although in general very brutal towards their captives, “didn’t rape any woman at all”.⁹⁷ Last but not least, according to the testimony of a 22-year-old “nationalist” (that is, active anticommunist) student, the daughter of an army colonel, who related to have repeatedly tried to enchant various ELAS officers and finally escaped in the company of a guerilla militiaman, “many girls” among the younger hostages had on the way “succumbed” to the sexual proposals of their guards, most probably looking for protection in an environment of total insecurity.⁹⁸ In order to check this trend, ELAS guerillas publicly executed on the way a woman who was accused to have slept with a guerilla the previous night; the only punishment suffered by her circumstantial lover, on the other hand, was his temporary disarmament.⁹⁹

Part II. The White Terror

If under the Axis occupation sexual violence was somehow eclipsed by far more deadly forms of repression, it moved to the forefront during the next phase of the 1940s: the White Terror unleashed on the mass base of the Left by the official security services and an assortment of paramilitary bands composed of former collaborators, local thugs as well as renegade former guerillas, immediately after the surrender of ELAS, as a political project to destroy the Left and undercut republican moderates. The systematic rape and other forms of gender-based violence, like castration (for men) and humiliating public hair-cutting (for women), were an organic part of this campaign, denounced as such by the “White Books” published during 1945 by EAM,¹⁰⁰ by prominent Liberal politicians¹⁰¹ as well as numerous articles in the left-wing and liberal press.

⁹⁷ Lt. Col. Panagiotis Giannoulis to the prime minister, “Report on the events at the regions of Thiva and Levadia and the torment of hostages,” n.p., 20 January 1945, Archive of the journal *Αντί*, Contemporary Social History Archives (ASKI), Athens, file 61.3, 3.

⁹⁸ Testimony of Mara Englezaki, RCA/BMHA, file 103, 3–4.

⁹⁹ Testimonies of Georgios Voridis (1 February 1945), file 35, 1; Maria Xeferi (1 February 1945), file 37, 1; Charilaos Papadimitriou (February 1945), file 41, 5, and Panagiota Papakosta (10 February 1945), file 55, 1, RCA/BMHA.

¹⁰⁰ EAM, *Λευκή Βίβλος: Παραβιάσεις της Βάρκιζας* (Athens: s.n., 1945), 64, 66, 68, 70–71, 79 (rapes), 58, 68–69 (haircuts) and 72–74 (statistics by region); EAM, *Λευκή Βίβλος: “Δημοκρατικός” νεοφασισμός* (Athens: s.n., 1945), 43–46.

¹⁰¹ EAM, *Παραβιάσεις*, 81.

The loci of gang rapes covered the whole country and their victims included a broad array of women: an EAM organiser in the village of Gida, in Central Macedonia;¹⁰² a teacher in Metsovo;¹⁰³ a leftist just released from prison in Evia, whose traces disappeared after her rape;¹⁰⁴ an EPON activist in Vonitsa;¹⁰⁵ a middle-aged peasant from Palamas, who was raped in her house by the head of the paramilitary gang – a priest by profession – looking for her husband and son;¹⁰⁶ the daughters of pro-EAM peasants assaulted in front of their parents in various villages¹⁰⁷ or abducted during the ransacking of their house by a monarchist band.¹⁰⁸ Especially targeted were not only the female activists of the Left, already demonised as having “betrayed” their gender by undertaking duties that were in disagreement with their “nature”,¹⁰⁹ but also the families of local leftists: in a male-dominated traditional society, “dishonour” through rape was widely perceived as the most effective means of intimidation, the fear of which overshadowed any other threat or actual harassment.¹¹⁰

Publicly denouncing such outrages, let alone naming their victims, was not at all easy under those circumstances. The two White Books that were legally published (and quite broadly circulated) by EAM in 1945 mentioned therefore a rather low number of cases of sexual violence, when compared with more easily acknowledged forms of suffering: the first of them enumerated, for example, 299 murders and 11,080 beatings perpetrated in seven provinces, compared to just 31

¹⁰² Ριζοσπάστης, 17 May 1945, 2.

¹⁰³ Το Βήμα, 6 June 1945, 2.

¹⁰⁴ Ελευθερία, 3 June 1945, 3.

¹⁰⁵ Ριζοσπάστης, 21 September 1945, 2.

¹⁰⁶ Kosmas Souflas, *Απ’ το διωγμό στον εμφύλιο* (Athens: Drymos, 1986), 40, testimony of the victim’s son.

¹⁰⁷ Ριζοσπάστης, 3 August 1945, 2 (Chalkidiki, Dorida) and 22 August 1945, 2 (Thessaly).

¹⁰⁸ Ριζοσπάστης, 12 February 1946, 2 (Thessaly).

¹⁰⁹ For a comprehensive survey of the different approaches of female patriotic mobilisation, as projected by the Greek Left and Right throughout the 1940s, see Angelika Psarra, “Πολιτικές διαδρομές των γυναικών στην εμπόλεμη Ελλάδα,” in *Ιστορία της Ελλάδας του 20ού αιώνα*, vol. 4.1, ed. Christos Hatziosif (Athens: Vivliorama, 2009), 177–227.

¹¹⁰ Papagianni, *Κραυγές*, 380–82; Katina Latifi, *Τα απόπαιδα* (Athens: Exantas, 1999), 70–71; Giona Mike Paidousi, *Κόκκινος επιτάφιος* (Athens: Vivliorama, 2008), 293 and 296–67; Katherine Stefatos, “The Victimization of the Body and the Body Politic during the Greek Civil War, 1946–49,” in Branche and Virgili, *Rape in Wartime*, 47–66; Evangelos Tempelopoulos, *Η Χρυσοκελλαριά (Σαρατσά) στη δίνη των γεγονότων της δεκαετίας του 1940* (Kalamata: s.n., 2008), 292–94; Chrysovalantis Boutsikos, “Ιδεολογικός διχασμός και εμφύλιες συγκρούσεις στην Αργολιδοκορινθία (1944–1949)” (PhD diss., Panteion University, 2021), 140, 170, 237–38 and 512–13.

rapes, 8 attempted rapes and 75 forced hair-cuttings;¹¹¹ only two victims of rape were explicitly named, both of them having already been “exposed” by Athenian dailies.¹¹² The respective data provided two years later by a third White Book, the “Memorandum” submitted by the reorganised Communist guerilla (Democratic Army of Greece, DSE) to the United Nations in March 1947, after the hopes for a peaceful compromise had actually disappeared, were on the contrary not only more numerous but also far more concrete. Once more, the number of rapes was, however, considerably lower than those concerning other forms of violence: 211 cases as against 1,059 murders and 9,809 incidents of corporal maltreatment;¹¹³ in most of the cases, the names of raped women were also not written down, while the victims of other forms of violence were, as a rule, properly named.¹¹⁴ Even decades later, most of the women sexually assaulted during those days were very reluctant to describe their experience, let alone to have it publicly mentioned, because they considered such a revelation detrimental to their own (and their families’) social standing.¹¹⁵ The same reasoning has imposed the suppression of names when such incidents are narrated by other veterans or bystanders.¹¹⁶ The reluctance to “tarnish” not only the “honour” of living women but also the memory of dead ones by explicitly referring to their rape is vividly demonstrated in the memoirs of the EAM secretary in Evia, Stamatis Kavadias: while in a typewritten short version of them, designed for the private information of fellow comrades, a young Jewish teacher is explicitly said to have been murdered by collaborationist forces after they gang raped her,¹¹⁷ in the published expanded version of the same memoirs we are only informed that she was killed after having been subjected to “atrocious torture”.¹¹⁸

A rare exception to this rule of self-imposed silence was provided by the female teacher Despoina (Pepi) Karagianni, who was abducted on 23 September 1946 in broad daylight on Athens’ Omonia Square by a military police squad,

¹¹¹ EAM, *Παραβιάσεις*, 72–74.

¹¹² *Ibid.*, 66, 68, 70–71 and 79.

¹¹³ *Έτσι άρχισε ο Εμφύλιος* (Athens: Plaros 1987), 395. The data provided covered only a small part of Greece (Epirus, Thessaly, Western Macedonia and less than a third of Central Macedonia), leaving out some of the regions that had witnessed the worst of paramilitary sexual violence (Peloponnese, Central Greece and Eastern Macedonia).

¹¹⁴ For example, out of 30 female villagers of Ftelia who were raped in May 1945 by “armed monarchofascists,” only one was actually named (*ibid.*, 33).

¹¹⁵ Mike Paidousi, *Κόκκινος επιτάφιος*, 293; Boutsikos, “Ιδεολογικός διχασμός,” 512.

¹¹⁶ Papagianni, *Κραυγές*, 181–82, memoirs of Diamanto Gritzona.

¹¹⁷ Typewritten memoirs of Stamatis Kavadias, n.d., Giorgos Douatzis Archives, ELIA, file 13, 18.

¹¹⁸ Stamatis Kavadias, *Η Εθνική Αντίσταση στην Εύβοια* (Athens: s.n., 2007), 304.

transferred to Haidari barracks, interrogated under torture and finally raped by her military interrogators; while still in custody, accused of spying on behalf of the guerrillas, she publicly described her ordeal, including her rape.¹¹⁹

The authorities either professed to ignore the systematic sexual violence against the Left, or attributed it to spontaneous instances of personal vengeance of former victims of EAM-ELAS during the occupation. In fact, it was part of a highly centralised intimidation campaign, coordinated through the army chain of command, which provided the arms and the institutional backing of the local paramilitary gangs, often selecting their leaders and staffing them with politically “reliable” rank and file.¹²⁰ In Sparta, according to the memoirs of a politically uninvolved conservative professor of theology, the nocturnal assaults by “unknown” masked men against the homes and young girls of left-wing inhabitants were carried out by a gang of secondary school students organised and led by two of his colleagues, leading cadres of the right-wing organisation X.¹²¹ In Chrysokelaria, a village in nearby Messinia, the White Terror was inaugurated by a pair – at least – of rapes, perpetrated by a gendarmerie detachment, which was entrusted with restoring order and its local collaborators.¹²² The latter formed a paramilitary gang, taking orders from local “aristocrats” who were eager to avenge their short-lived loss of power under EAM-ELAS; more rapes followed, coupled with a few murders, culminating in a nocturnal display of organised terror, when a dozen of local women and some old men were brutally tortured and sexually assaulted in the main square, their screams and cries tormenting the whole village throughout the night.¹²³

Many rapes were, of course, the product of random private initiative, their perpetrators exploiting the windows of opportunity provided by their role in

¹¹⁹ “Η αλήθεια για την υπόθεση της Καραγιάννη όπως την αφηγείται η ίδια,” *Ριζοσπάστης*, 28 December 1946, 1 and 3. Her rape had taken during the first night after her arrest, on 23 September. A year later, Karagianni was sentenced by a military court to ten years imprisonment for “gathering of military information,” but not “spying” (*Ριζοσπάστης*, 13 August 1947, 3) – a rather mild punishment, at a time when death sentences were the rule for similar offenses.

¹²⁰ Vasiliki Lazou, *Η επιβολή του κράτους: Ο εμφύλιος πόλεμος στη Λαμία, 1945–1949* (Athens: Taxideftis, 2016), 68–70; *Αρχεία Εμφυλίου Πολέμου 1944–1949* (Athens: Directorate of Army History, 1998), 1:429–39, 502, 515, 520–23, 531–32, 543–44, 548 and 584, and 2:155, 209, 244–47, 250–51, 256 and 270.

¹²¹ K.A. Glentis, *Εφτά χρόνια στη Σπάρτη* (Athens: s.n., 1977), 101–2 and 107.

¹²² Tempelopoulos, *Η Χρυσοκελλαριά*, 276–77.

¹²³ *Ibid.*, 280 and 294 (gang), 294 (rapes), 281–89 (murders) and 295–99 (night of terror). Apart from the forced hair-cutting of all the arrested women, which is vividly described by the author (an eyewitness at the age of 11 and a conservative teacher as an adult), sexual assaults are only – albeit clearly – implied in his narrative: “Many things that had been perpetrated

state-sponsored repression in order to settle old scores, satisfy their lust or just follow a long-honoured tradition of forced marriage by abduction.¹²⁴ Such private endeavours could, however, enjoy the official backing or tacit understanding of the surrounding anticommunist social milieu, a condition that even today is reflected in sympathetic historiography. In an eloquent instance of sinister understanding, Stathis Kalyvas enthusiastically adopted, for example, the viewpoint of his local informants, according to which a right-wing rapist and his victim, a left-wing local girl who had earlier turned down his advances only to be delivered by him to the Italian troops for interrogation by torture for allegedly hiding weapons, were equally responsible for the bloody vendetta that subsequently ravaged their families: “As a villager told me, ‘Vassilis and Vaso began the whole affair; they survived, but everyone else around them was killed.’”¹²⁵

Last but not least, the ethnic dimension played also a crucial role in the extent of sexual violence perpetrated in regions such as Thesprotia or Macedonia. In the first case, tens of Muslim Albanian women were gang raped in March 1945 in the town of Filiati by a band of former EDES guerillas, now turned into nationalist paramilitaries, during what would be the last act of their expulsion from Greece.¹²⁶ Even more massive and temporally drawn out were the respective outrages endured by Macedonian Slav women, as the minority targeted for ethnic cleansing was this time far more numerous and (a considerable part of it) closely linked with the Greek Left.¹²⁷ Here, too, gang rapes were sometimes perpetrated on a mass scale. In the village of Ftelia, for example, tens of women

that night were known only later. The victims told them to their own people. Not everything was known, however. Many things were deliberately concealed by them. They didn’t want such things to be known, because they would be exposed to eternal humiliation” (ibid., 298).

¹²⁴ Nikos and Argyro Kokovlis, *Άλλος δρόμος δεν υπήρχε* (Athens: Polytypo, 2002), 167.

¹²⁵ Stathis Kalyvas, “Red Terror: Leftist Violence during the Occupation,” in *After the War was Over: Reconstructing the Family, Nation and State in Greece, 1943–1960*, ed. Mark Mazower (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2000), 175.

¹²⁶ *Έτσι άρχισε ο Εμφύλιος*, 255. The report made a distinction between the rape of 30 women and the violent “deflowering” (διακόρευση) of five virgins. For the “inexcusable massacre” that was perpetrated in Filiati, part of which were the gang rapes, see C.M. Woodhouse, “A Note on the Chams,” [Athens], 16 October 1945, in Eleftheria Manta, *Οι μουσουλμάνοι Τσάμηδες της Ηπείρου 1923–2000* (Thessaloniki: Institute for Balkan Studies, 2004), 312.

¹²⁷ On the deliberations concerning the ethnic cleansing of Greece’s Macedonian Slavs after the Second World War and its actual enforcement, see Tasos Kostopoulos, “Cleansing Greece of the Miasma of its ‘Sudeten’: The Macedonian Slavs as an Unwanted Minority in the Aftermath of World War II,” in *Collective Identities and Post-War Violence in Europe, 1944–48: Reshaping the Nation*, ed. Ota Konrád, Boris Barth and Jaromír Mrňka (Cham: Palgrave Macmillan, 2022), 91–127.

were led on 3 June 1945, by right-wing paramilitaries to nearby fields to be raped; available information on what actually followed is quite contradictory, with left-wing publications explicitly referring to the rape of 30 women¹²⁸ or 20 women and men,¹²⁹ while a note from the EAM regional bureau mentioned the rape of only 4 women (identified by the initials of their husbands' names) and an unspecified number of "girls, who are too shamed to tell this", explaining that most of the abducted women were finally saved by the commander of a nearby National Guard unit, who was called in by a female villager.¹³⁰ In many other cases, the repertoire of sexual violence was quite identical with what took place all over Greece,¹³¹ albeit on a larger (and ever-growing) scale: according to the report submitted by the local EAM organisation to the UN Commission of Inquiry in March 1947, only in the prefecture of Pella (with a total population of 130,000 in 1945, at least half of which were Macedonian Slavs), "more than 200 wives and daughters of democrats", 78 of them fully named, had been raped in the space of two years by state organs or right-wing paramilitaries;¹³² moreover, in January 1948, the opening report to the first NOF (the pro-Yugoslav National Liberation Front) congress mentioned 143 cases of rape of young girls by the same kind of perpetrators in Macedonian villages in the previous seven months.¹³³

Part III. Civil War

During the next phase, that of a full-blown civil war (1947–1949), the rape of guerilla relatives and other suspects went on as a form of widespread intimidation,

¹²⁸ *Ετσι άρχισε ο Εμφύλιος*, 33 and 56. The incident is mistakenly dated May 1945.

¹²⁹ NOF leaflet, 10 July 1945, in *Εξεјска Македонија во НОБ*, vol. 2, ed. Risto Kirjazovski and Todor Simovski (Skopje: Arhiv na Makedonija, 1973), 142. According to it, the abductors "enjoyed them for a whole night, then they sent them to their homes".

¹³⁰ Information note dated 8 June 1945, *ibid.*, 73.

¹³¹ *Ετσι άρχισε ο Εμφύλιος*, 20, 32, 45, 50, 86 and 187; Kirjazovski and Simovski, *Εξεјска*, 40, 53, 62, 120, 133, 152, 165, 178, 182–83, 207, 265 and 316; *ibid.*, *Εξεјска Македонија во НОБ*, vol. 3, ed. Risto Kirjazovski and Todor Simovski (Skopje: Arhiv na Makedonija, 1976), 40, 63, 117, 404, 409, 435 and 452–53; Taško Mamurovski, *Македонците во Еξεјска Македонија (1945–1946)* (Skopje: Institut za Načionalna Istorija, 1995), 57, 77, 79 and 88.

¹³² Memorandum of the EAM regional committee of Edessa to the UN Commission of Inquiry, March 1947, in *Εξεјска Македонија во НОБ*, vol. 4, ed. Risto Kirjazovski and Todor Simovski (Skopje: Arhiv na Makedonija, 1980), 84–86. "For understandable reasons", neither the full name list nor the names of some indicative victims were published in the book.

¹³³ "Реферат на другарот Михаил Керамичиев, секретар на НОФ, во првиот конгрес на НОФ," in *Εξεјска Македонија во НОБ*, vol. 5, ed. Risto Kirjazovski and Fani Bučkova-Martinova (Skopje: Arhiv na Makedonija, 1981), 20.

despite the efforts made by the official authorities to reestablish their own monopoly of violence, curtailing the looser forms of such crimes. A set of judicial documents, published by Giorgos Margaritis, depict for example a regime of systematic rape of female relatives of guerillas, in tandem with economic blackmail and material looting, which had been imposed on a small village near Thessaloniki in 1947–1948 by the chief of the local paramilitary militia.¹³⁴ In the hinterland of Giannitsa, the head of a local police station abused his power in 1947, assaulting the wives of absent guerillas who were obliged to present themselves from time to time, as a proof that they had not left their village; after a number of such (allegedly fruitless) incidents, he was at last removed from his post, thanks to the backing that protesting women received from the chairman of the local commune.¹³⁵ The female inhabitants of other Macedonian villages seem to have been far less fortunate, subjected as they were to sexual assaults by paramilitary co-villagers or passing soldiers alike, the same victim sometimes assaulted more than once.¹³⁶ In any case, the prospective victims' ability to count on the support from a faction of the state apparatus seems to have been the crucial factor for the successful repulse of similar endeavours. Lack of access to such a protecting power was, on the contrary, tantamount to potential sexual harassment. An illustrative example is provided by the confession, recorded by Spyros Karavas, of a former conscript army officer (*δόκιμος*) who served in a secluded Slav-speaking village near the border, immediately after the civil war: as the young female villagers (who would constitute their preferable target) were kept out of sight by their families, he explained, his unit proceeded to the customary rape of fair-haired local male kids, as a substitute. The risk they took was indeed minimal, as the village was situated in the "Surveillance Zone", which at the time covered a large strip along the borderline: its inhabitants were

¹³⁴ Giorgos Margaritis, *Ιστορία του ελληνικού εμφυλίου πολέμου* (Athens: Vivliorama, 2000), 1:607–34.

¹³⁵ Dimitar Ugrinovski, "Податоци за село Асар Бегово, Енице Вардарска околија – Егејска Македонија" and "Село Ѓупчево – Гипсохори, Енице Вардарска околија – Егејска Македонија," in *Хроники на селата во Еницевардарско, Воденско, Кукушко, Драмско, Леринско и Костурско*, vol. 3.1 (Skopje: DARSM, 2020), 22–23 and 88.

¹³⁶ Kornelija Pejovska, "Податоци за село Воштарени – Леринска Околија (Егејска Македонија)," in *Хроники на селата во Леринско*, vol. 2.1 (Skopje: DARSM, 2019), 101–3. The source is a confidential report compiled in 1960, on the basis of information collected by seven former villagers of both sexes, all of them political refugees in Yugoslav Macedonia. Years later, when the same author published a shorter narrative of that same village's torment after the Second World War, she carefully omitted any reference to sexual violence. Pejovska, *Сведоштва за грчкиот терор во Леринско, 1945–1949* (Skopje: Matica Makedonska, 1998), 104–15.

forbidden to visit any urban centre without the prior written permission of the local army or gendarmerie commander and, therefore, unable to forward any complaint to the civilian authorities, even if they wished.¹³⁷

Peasant women venturing into the countryside during the civil war could be subjected to rape, sometimes followed by murder, if they were considered (or proved to be) guerilla suppliers or informants.¹³⁸ The same might happen to female guerillas taken prisoner,¹³⁹ to their families who had taken refuge in the mountains, if discovered by the army and its paramilitary auxiliaries,¹⁴⁰ to civilians sent for re-education to the Makronissos concentration camp or arrested for real or alleged underground activities.¹⁴¹ Once more, available ego-narratives usually describe only abortive attempts or explicit threats of sexual violence, as well as the pervasive fear of being raped while in custody, not actual rapes (except when perpetrated against someone else). For both sexes, fear of being sexually assaulted constituted an organic part of the psychological violence they had to endure under interrogation.¹⁴² Popular themes of state-sponsored anticommunist propaganda that emphasised the alleged promiscuity of the “misguided” female guerillas,¹⁴³ as well as the “loose” morals of Macedonian Slav women,¹⁴⁴ may also have contributed to the proliferation of sexual violence

¹³⁷ Spyros Karavas, *Μυστικά και παραμύθια από την ιστορία της Μακεδονίας* (Athens: Vivliorama, 2014), 372.

¹³⁸ Georgios Koutroukis, “*Εν ψυχρώ*”: Κατοχή – Βάρκιζα – Εμφύλιος (Athens: Kapopoulos, 1996), 90–91. For the testimony of a girl from a right-wing family, who was erroneously perceived as a guerilla collaborator, see Ioannis Karakatsianis, “*Η Μάνη στον πόλεμο: Κατοχή, Αντίσταση και Εμφύλιος*” (PhD diss., University of Athens, 2010), annex, 92–93.

¹³⁹ Papagianni, *Κραυγές*, 181, 448 and 534. For the female guerillas’ strong fear of being raped when taken prisoner, see Foteini Douzi-Sidiropoulou, *Η γιαγιά μας η αντάρτισσα* (s.l.: n.p., [1993]), 169; Alexandra Vlassi-Theodorikakou, *Οι μνήμες μένουν ζωντανές: Οι αναμνήσεις μιας 17χρονης ανταρτοπούλας του ΔΣΕ* (Piraeus: s.n., 2003), 116.

¹⁴⁰ Karakatsianis, “*Η Μάνη στον πόλεμο*,” 312 and 437, and annex, 4, 85, 106 and 111–12.

¹⁴¹ Viktoria Theodorou, *Στρατόπεδα γυναικών* (Athens: s.n., 1976), 28 and 288; Danai Antonopoulou-Psiloroulou, *Τα κορίτσια του Πολυτεχνείου* (Athens: Vivliorama, 2008), 174; Anna Teriaki-Solomou, *Μια ζωή μέσα από καταιγίδες* (Athens: Paraskinio, 2004), 75 and 109.

¹⁴² Polymeris Voglis, *Becoming a Subject: Political Prisoners during the Greek Civil War* (New York: Berghahn, 2002), 136–37.

¹⁴³ D. Giannoukakis, “Τα εύθυμα του πολέμου,” *Ακρίτας*, 20 February 1948, 12–13; Michalis Peranthis, “Οι συμμορίτισσες,” *Έθνος*, 1 June 1948, 1 and 5; Al. Pop, “Το πρόβλημα της συμμορίτισσας,” *Έθνος*, 2 September 1948, 1; *Το τέλος ενός λιποτάκτου* (s.l.: Makedonikos Frouros, 1948), 10–15; Maximos Drakoulis, *Τα οικογενειακά του ΚΚΕ* (Athens: s.n., 1949); Kyria Zanantris, *Ανάμεσα στα θύματα του συμμορισμού* (Athens: s.n., 1952), 94–97 and 111–18.

¹⁴⁴ Doros Pefanis, *ΝΟΦ: Η σλανική αράχνη* (Athens: s.n., 1947), 96–98.

suffered by the respective representatives of the “internal enemy” during the civil war.

DSE guerillas, on the other hand, seem to have only sporadically been accused of sexual crimes. My study of a number of guerilla memoirs, often very critical about the behaviour of their leadership and comrades, revealed no such instance.¹⁴⁵ The same also applies to various ego-documents (diaries, memoirs or correspondence) of government soldiers or DSE deserters, even though all are imbued with a strong dose of anticommunism.¹⁴⁶ We may safely infer that the presence of a high percentage of female fighters in the guerrilla ranks was a factor that usually inhibited the perpetration of such outrages.¹⁴⁷ The subsequent lack of a sexist culture of offensive masculinity in the DSE’s ranks was also due to a more human regulation of gender relationships: in contrast to the puritan abstinence enforced on ELAS guerillas, love affairs (and informal civil marriages) between DSE fighters were a quite common phenomenon, especially within the “regular” units stationed in its stronghold near the border;¹⁴⁸ not only a by-

¹⁴⁵ Koutroukis, *“Εν ψυχρώ”*; Latifi, *Τα απόπαιδα*; Papagianni, *Κραυγές*; Douzi-Sidiropoulou, *Η γιαγιά μας*; Vlasi-Theodorikakou, *Οι μνήμες μένουν ζωντανές*; Vangelis Papadakis, *Αναμνήσεις: Από την Αντίσταση στον Εμφύλιο και την προσφυγιά* (Athens: Vivliorama, 2003); Giorgos Chouliaras (Periklis), *“Ο δρόμος είναι άσωτος...”*: *ΕΛΑΣ-ΔΣΕ-Πολωνία 1941–1958* (Ioannina: University of Ioannina, 2005); Amyntas Kosmas, *Αναμνήσεις ενός καπετάνιου* (Thessaloniki: Bibis, s.a.); Triantafyllos Gerozisis, *Ανταρτόπουλο στο ΔΣΕ*, 2nd ed. (Athens: Synchroni Epochi, 2005); Argyris Kovatsis, *Ο ατίθασος ταγματάρχης* (s.l.: s.n., 2009); Katina Dimitriou-Psarianou, *Ας ζήσει και κανένας*, 2nd ed. (Thessaloniki: Epikentro, 2021). Even a renegade former guerilla commander, whose memoirs provided the canon for anticommunist literature on EAM-ELAS and the DSE in the Peloponnese, had nothing to reveal on this topic, although absolutely negative on the mobilisation of young women by DSE: G[iannis] Karamouzis, *Να γιατί σας πολεμώ* (Athens: s.n., 1949), especially 80–85.

¹⁴⁶ Domna Lypitka-Ountsi, *Μνήμες που χαράζουν* (Thessaloniki: s.n., s.a.), 91–109; G.K., “Ημερολόγιο,” in *Ενθύμιον στρατού*, ed. Giorgis Exarchos (Athens: Ermis-Kronos, 1987), 67–80; Nikolaos Vavoules, “Η ζωή μου στον στρατό, 1946–1960: Ημερολογιακές σημειώσεις” (unpublished typewritten manuscript); Dimitris Tsolomitis, *Πικρές μνήμες: Το σημειωματάριό μου απ’ τον εμφύλιο πόλεμο* (Athens: Fylla, 1997); Georgios A. Angelopoulos, *Το ημερολόγιο ενός στρατιώτη* (Athens: Pelasgos, 2018).

¹⁴⁷ Women constituted up to 30 percent of the DSE combat troops and 70 percent of its support services; in total, the number of female guerillas was estimated at 8,000–10,000 (Psarra, *Πολιτικές διαδρομές*, 215).

¹⁴⁸ Papagianni, *Κραυγές*, 199 and 416–17; Latifi, *Τα απόπαιδα*, 277; Douzi-Sidiropoulou, *Η γιαγιά μας*, 74–75, 151 and 170; Gerozisis, *Ανταρτόπουλο*, 354; Kovatsis, *Ο ατίθασος*, 233. Although most such couples among ordinary guerillas were regularly divided into separate units, they had opportunities to see each other – with even sporadic pregnancies as a result. Sexual relations among fighters seem, on the other hand, to have been much more restricted

product of new objective conditions, the new war being primarily conceived by ordinary rebels as a struggle for collective survival rather than victory, but also tacitly encouraged by their leadership as a tool to stabilise discipline among its troops (especially those forcibly conscripted).¹⁴⁹ Another objective factor to be taken into consideration is the fact that, from 1947 onwards, a large part of the countryside had been almost completely depopulated, its inhabitants relocated by the government forces to the urban centres, in order to deprive the rebel “fish” of the human “water” that allowed it to survive, leaving very little room for any atrocity of this kind.¹⁵⁰ Unofficial government propaganda occasionally accused the guerillas of various sexual crimes against some women who were executed by them as spies or just “reactionaries”; in most of those cases, however, it is almost impossible to distinguish between blatant lies and possible truths.¹⁵¹

Mass participation of women in the DSE had several other side effects, too. Explicitly confirmed by various testimonies is, for example, the atrocious revenge taken by female guerillas on their former rapists, as well as on soldiers or government paramilitaries who were known to have raped other women; in such cases, a form of rudimentary retribution was for the local commander to entrust the rapists’ punishment to the female fighters of the unit.¹⁵² A different phenomenon, sketched by some guerilla ego-documents, were the instances of

in southern Greece, where life conditions were also radically different (Latifi, *Τα απόπαιδα*, 152, 175–76, 189 and 228).

¹⁴⁹ Papadakis, *Αναμνήσεις*, 142.

¹⁵⁰ Lazou, *Η επιβολή*, 239–48; Polymeris Voglis, *Η αδύνατη επανάσταση: Η κοινωνική δυναμική του Εμφυλίου πολέμου* (Athens: Alexandria, 2014), 305–15.

¹⁵¹ A serialised feature entitled “Bloodied Rumelia” (*Η Ρούμελη στο αίμα*), published during the last months of the civil war in the daily *Εμπρός* by Takis Papagiannopoulos (later a professor on psychological warfare in the Hellenic Military Academy), contained, for example, a number of such accusations, often embellished with obviously unrealistic details. In one case at least, which I have checked thoroughly, his accusations proved to be absolutely false. It deserves to be mentioned here that the owner and publisher of *Εμπρός*, Alkiviadis Kalapothakis, was at that time a member of the secret committee which had been created by Prime Minister Konstantinos Tsaldaris on 29 June 1946, in order to coordinate and command the targeted killings of still legal leftists by paramilitary bands led by army officers in mufti (Christos Zalokostas to King George, 7 July 1946, General State Archives (Athens), Royal Court Archive, file 439).

¹⁵² Chouliaras, *Ο δρόμος*, 432–33; Alexander Popovski, interview with the author, Bitola, 12 March 2000; Kosta Alabakov, *Сеќавање за селото Буф и неговите страдања* (s.l.: Pollitecon, s.a.), e-book, 67, <https://shorturl.at/s2Icd>. In his memoirs, the DSE commander named by the last source tacitly avoided mentioning this specific incident, when he described the military operation in case (Kosmas, *Αναμνήσεις*, 174–77).

power abuse by high-ranking commanders or political leaders, especially in the DSE “liberated zone” near the Albanian and Yugoslav borders or its retreats in the neighbouring socialist countries. Although it cannot automatically be defined as sexual violence, the selective assignment of beautiful young female conscripts to relatively safe administrative posts at close range to the interested cadre obviously involved, for example, the eventuality of sexual harassment.¹⁵³ Just like in the case of any civilian hierarchy, the eventuality of such harassment was facilitated by the intimacy of a secluded working environment. In the sole case of sexual assault within the DSE’s ranks that I have managed to locate in guerilla memoirs, a young nurse at Bulkes camp (in Yugoslav Voivodina) was the victim of an attempted rape by a man whom she later identified in photographs as a leading cadre (later general-secretary) of the Communist Party, Kostas Koligiannis; having successfully repulsed him, she kept the whole incident to herself, as it seems was the rule at that time.¹⁵⁴ If denounced, such an act by an ordinary guerilla would lead, on the other hand, to his immediate condemnation to death by shooting, either by a DSE military court or by the “democratic assembly” of his own unit.¹⁵⁵

Conclusion

Sexual violence emerged in wartime as a spontaneous collateral effect of the fighters’ barbarisation, a tool for collective revenge or a conscious strategy for political dominance, intimidation of internal enemies or ethnic cleansing. Its perpetrators were from various social backgrounds: a doctor, a professional officer or an emigrant “American boy” committed rape on an equal footing as an illiterate shepherd or a young peasant who had never left his village before. Instead of being the work of a particular kind of soldier, such violence was mostly contingent on the specific culture promoted each time by both the military hierarchy and state-sponsored war propaganda.

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¹⁵³ Papagianni, *Κραυγές*, 198–99, 426 and 448; Nikos Hatzinikolaou (Kapetan Mavros), *Ταραγμένα χρόνια στο Νέστο* (Thasos: Niragos, 2008), 328–37 and 354–55. Similar instances of favouritism, albeit at a very different scale, are also denounced by the memoirs-cum-declaration of repentance of a DSE leader in the Peloponnese, which must be taken with a grain of salt (Karamouzis, *Να γιατί*, 84).

¹⁵⁴ Papagianni, *Κραυγές*, memoirs of Evangelia Fotografou.

¹⁵⁵ Gerozisis, *Ανταρτόπουλο*, 353–54. The written claims that, although not an eyewitness, he has heard of “one or two such incidents, of guerillas who had been executed because they offended the personality of a girl or had not respected her refusal”.

