

West Side Stories: the Greek Gastarbeiter's migration to the Federal Republic of Germany and their return to the homeland (1960-1989)

Maria Adamopoulou

Thesis submitted for assessment with a view to
obtaining the degree of Doctor of History and Civilisation
of the European University Institute

Florence, 31 January 2022

European University Institute
Department of History and Civilisation

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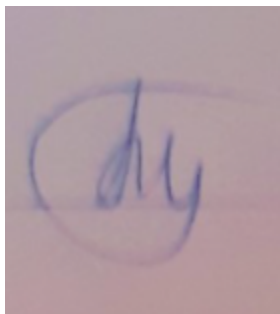
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Abstract

This doctoral thesis is a social history of the Greek migrant workers in West Germany, with an emphasis on the role of the sending country in all the stages of their migration journey. It examines the different ways the Greek migrants' transnational bonds were formed, expressed and preserved in their daily life in West Germany in the period 1960-1989. Heated debates about the desirability of emigration and return, confrontations and divisions in the realms of the Greek migrant community in West Germany, manipulation efforts and failed initiatives of the sending state are at the centre of my investigation. Starting from the postwar reconstruction period, I set the background of the political and social transformations in Greece and West Germany, which made up the push and pull factors of the Gastarbeiter system. In the three Cold War decades, the Greek Gastarbeiter were present in West Germany and continuities and ruptures in policymaking and social attitudes determined their fate. In a nutshell, this research project seeks to answer the following questions: who were the Greek Gastarbeiter? What did the Greek state do for them? How was their agency expressed? The Greek Gastarbeiter might have been "birds of passage", but their imprint in the evolving realities of postwar Greece was indelible.

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As a special note, I would also like to thank professor emerita Luisa Passerini for her tireless encouragement to young scholars of oral history and her admirable freshness. My deep thanks also go to professor Pothiti Hantzaroula, who introduced me to oral history and supported my application to the EUI.

I really treasure the feedback from all colleagues in summer schools, conferences and seminars. Moreover, I greatly appreciated the dedication of the History Department's librarian Serge Noiret. In the same vein, my gratitude also goes to all archivists and librarians in the archives I consulted for their availability and professionalism. My friends Ana-Maria Spariosu and Juna Toska helped me greatly with language issues in English and German and I am really grateful to them for that.

The deepest gratitude goes to my family for supporting me during the long process of writing a PhD. Without their love and care, I might not be writing those lines now. Deep thanks to all my friends and to my teacher mr. Achilleas Kitsoleris, for their unlimited faith in me. A huge blessing was also my late grandpa's life lessons.

Additionally, I would like to thank separately each one of my narrators, who opened their heart and their house to me. Every interview was a unique experience, and I will always cherish them. Here, it would also be unfair from my part not to acknowledge the mediators through whom I reached my narrators, namely my aunt Zoe Tsakiri and my uncle Vangelis Stavaras, my great aunt Roula Pasmatzis, my neighbor Kiki Kanonidou, and my friends Marina Georgini, Maria Tsinidou and Christina Kappa.

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PREFACE

Every thesis is a journey. The inspiration for my project came from a poignant book. My friend Marina gifted me this book, so my deepest thanks go to her as instigator of this wonderful adventure. The book was *A Seventh Man* by John Berger. It was a shock. It had been a long time since I had read something so intense and that touched a chord. I had no grandparents who were Gastarbeiter, even though they could easily have been, as I realized later taking interviews from people of their generation. They all brought me back to the childhood stories of my dear grandpa and his warmth and authenticity. This thesis is dedicated to his loving memory, because he taught me to love stories and the people inhabiting them.

Long story short, my PhD proposal came out of a sudden midnight inspiration to compose a full questionnaire for my future narrators. I went to Florence for the interview and right away I met two of my best friends-to-be: Nouran and Turkey. In September 2017, I moved to Florence to start the curriculum and what looked like a hectic schedule. In the meanwhile, I fell in love with the Italian language. One intensive month of classes with my favorite teacher Alessandra was enough for me to start trying out my skills by ordering espressos and pizzas and much more beyond those stereotypes of the Italian lifestyle, which I should note are still enormously enjoyable. I also met more of my best friends, Nastazja from the Law Department in our favorite place for aperitivo during the first year, the famous Cafe Letterario Le Murate, Erse from SPS and the Greek squad, namely Kalliopi, Natalia, Eugenia and Kostas.

I was already friends with Maeva, too, when the October presentation took place. I remember her asking me about the phrase “survival strategies” that I had used in my presentation -actually it was a concept that my master’s supervisor had used a lot, so I thought it could be useful for my present project as well. I also recall the comment by Ann Thompson about my thesis looking more like a political rather than a social history in its approach. But you know-the personal is political and so on ... And then, under the influence of John Berger, I guess, and Stephen Castles that I had read at the time, I also used the word “alienation”. A French colleague approached me later and congratulated me for my guts to use such a word! Strange place, I thought, but then I

was happy that the first crash test went fine, and my supervisor thought the same, so I had that!

I do not remember much more from the first semester, just the seminars and the December Papers, courses in Italian and German with Silke, and I guess social life and small trips around Florence. After Christmas, around February, something happened that myself, the usually chill and calm person never expected to happen: the stress kicked in. I was actually on a day trip to Pisa with my friend Nouran, when some extreme symptoms knocked on my door-luckily not on Heaven's door, I was still on earth!

Nouran was really supportive and helped me reach Florence still standing. Here, I should also really thank my supervisor, Laura Downs, from the bottom of my heart, for the most humane face academia could have taken, for her support and encouragement and real, genuine interest and care. I will be always indebted to her for that. In a more materialistic sense, I will also be indebted to her for choosing me for a small job contract in the first year and for all the wines she has offered me- after working hours, of course!

However, Nietzsche was right, "whatever does not kill you, makes you stronger". So here I was again, ready for new challenges and new adventures. I stayed in Florence for my first research mission, collected, transcribed and translated much digitised Greek press, and I submitted the June Paper. That spring, I also took part in my first conference as a PhD student, GRACEH in Vienna. There I was called out by a migration scholar that I should be wary not to fall into the trap of writing an "histoire total". To be honest, I am not sure I have not done that! That summer, I also started my first interviews, and I was so happy to finally go into the field and test my powers.

The second year was clearly the year of conferences. I discovered a very useful way to keep on top of conference calls by using a virtual map with pins of different shapes and colors. In this way, I somehow created my own secret code. We also organized a workshop about oral history with Dieter, an EUI alumnus. For that, I also put my skills in tackling budgets and bureaucracy to the test, although luckily the administrative staff took over most of those impenetrable (for me) logistics. However, we prepared a CfP and emailed people and set up an overall quite successful two-day workshop with a keynote by our favorite Professor Emerita, Luisa Passerini. Here, I

should not forget to mention my immense gratitude to my friend Turkey, who hosted me repeatedly and cooked the best cannelloni for me. I think it was a decisive factor in the success of this workshop. Never underestimate the value of being well-fed!

That year, I also took my first research mission to a German archive, the DOMID in Cologne. My sister joined me, and we shared a bright flat near the university campus. The archivist of DOMID, Beate, was really welcoming and friendly, and she brought me whatever I asked for and was accessible. In the end, I offered her an old tourist guide of Greece and a chocolate box. I really appreciate kind archivists! In Cologne, I had the chance to again meet two old friends from the International Students of History Association, Lizbeth and Sophie. I also formed a small circle of Greek friends; I enjoyed the famous Carnival and its Kolsch beer and I indulged in the cultural life of the city.

After, I spent an amazing week in Berlin hosted by the Centre Marc Bloch. The topic of our seminar-which was francophone, by the way- was migration to Berlin from 1917 to today. We took a couple of thematical guided tours, we had keynotes, we discussed a lot, we experienced the diversity and the popular multi-kulti Berliner society. Most of all, again, I met colleagues who quickly became my friends and whom I would meet again soon: Marta, Giselle and Egem.

After time speaking in French, Italian would come next with a two-day conference in Napoli and Salerno. The people there were all so welcoming. I felt like I was part of a family. We gathered around a buffet on the second day, and it felt as if we had known each other for a lifetime! To make it even better, my friend Nastazja joined me in Napoli, and we took a tour of the Amalfi Coast, eating and drinking anything that was made with lemons! In the meanwhile, I had submitted my One Quarter of the thesis, so I felt no barrier towards indulging ...

To remain on Italian soil, Bari and The Migration Conference were another positive experience, but this time the family was quite huge! There, I saw again Egem, and I met two other colleagues, Raphael and Tihomir, and we joined several sessions together. In Bari, I almost died from the summer heat and the same goes for Madrid-global warming is certainly here to stay! It was just the end of June, but the organizers of the conference were very thoughtful in offering us a tin bottle for water and a fan alla spagnola so we could survive the heat...I still remember how sweaty we were in

the stuffed amphitheater when Aleida Assmann was giving her keynote. Paradoxically, she did not seem to be suffering in the same way! The gazpacho they offered us as a first dish cooled us down a bit, and our walks in the campus and the beautiful streets of Madrid also contributed to my bonding with two new colleagues and Marta whom I mentioned already above. In Madrid, I also met Victor, a visiting fellow at the EUI in spring and a new friend. He took me to Cervantes' birthplace and offered me plenty of tapas, cervezas and the famous abbey caramelized almonds, which you buy through a rolling wooden window without seeing the nun who sells them!

In August, I took part in the best summer school I have attended so far, in Konstanz. The two organizers, Ulrike and Gruia almost adopted us all! They cared so much, and they invested a lot, from the treasure hunt on the first day to the farewell lunch on the last one. There, I also met my amazing young friend from Bucharest, Alexandra, then finishing her master's degree. We talked a lot the three of us, the third person being our sensitive architect friend, Youssif.

September was also intense with conferences: first, Cluj-Napoca in Romania together with train enthusiasts. It was quite an experience. I was reminded of what it means to have a real passion about something, a passion that goes beyond the narrow limits of academia all the way to erudition and collectorship. I took the train through the beautiful Romanian landscapes, an old and slow train like the ones my Gastarbeiter used to ride on. When I reached Bucharest, I stayed at Alexandra's place together with her cat. All this moving around has never allowed me to have a pet of my own, sometimes not even a room of my own, much like Virginia Wolf!

I had a small adventure in Hamburg because my phone got stolen, but a guardian angel, in the form of Ulrike from the Konstanz summer school, offered me food and shelter for one night, and I really, deeply thank her for that! Academics are not immune to these kinds of adversities, you know. Thanks to her, I made it in time to Berlin to find my new flat for my next six months there as an Erasmus exchange student. As the German phrase goes, I'm kissed by luck!

To continue the intense year of 2019, I joined a weeklong academy in Tutzing near Munich, where I presented a poster-my first and maybe last, because we looked like marketing agents, and I'm not a big fan of that branch ... However, my good old self

befriended new colleagues, Merve and Juna, with whom we talked a lot about the Balkans and their common heritage. It was beautiful to be by the lake at the end of September and listen to the buzzing sounds of different languages.

In fact, I was an exchange student in Berlin, but in reality, I did not stop moving until 2019 was over. In October, I participated in a methodology seminar in Lyon, where again I met all kinds of interesting colleagues. Before that I made a stop in Geneva to visit my friend Nastazja, working at the ILO at the time. Labor, labor, labor...

In November, I took the Teacher's Training at the EUI, because I thought I could use these skills to teach somewhere during my last year. I couldn't have predicted the pandemic and the sedentary year of 2020! In Florence, it was nice reuniting with friends and colleagues, but Berlin was calling. I made it to the 30-year anniversary of the Fall of the Wall, and I was even there in front of the Brandenburg Gate for the big concert. It was not kitsch. It was kind of spontaneous and youthful. It ended in a big outdoor party with DJs. I was moved, and I felt part of history. I'm a historian in the end!

In Berlin, I again met the friends I mentioned above. Coincidentally our paths crossed, and we were in the same place at the right time. With Marta and Giselle, we took long walks and had many talks. Turky visited me and brought with her small treasures from the British Museum and her amazing, highly intellectual company. And thus, the blessed year 2019 ended, and 2020, together with the new decade, was welcomed. January and February were months filled with concentration on my chapters and much cultural life in Berlin-which has amazing free museums on Thursday afternoons and free midnight movies in my favorite mute film cinema Babylon. Then, the pandemic changed all our habits and turned us into home officers!

However, I should not complain. Staying at home helped me progress with my writing, and I was lucky to have finished with the interviews the previous summer. I shared the common experience which made us all think differently and reset some of our priorities, maybe even becoming humbler and more considerate. I still managed to go for my last research mission in Athens in September and to get a very precious and generous amount of material from the Archive of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. I'm telling you, I'm lucky with the archivists I encounter! In Athens, I also met my good, old friend Sophia, and we had deep talks about everything, from academia to

miscellanea. It's a blessing to have friends with whom you are on the same wavelength and still be able to be your intact self without masquerade...

And then, in October, I even made it to Graz, as a visiting fellow at the Centre for Southeast European Studies. I was the first and the last to present in front of an audience; my colleagues had to do it online due to the autumn lockdown. I even organized a virtual workshop on postwar migration in Southeast Europe, together with my caring mentor in the CSEES, Rory Archer. As for the social life, I had luck once more; my colleagues were really nice and my new friend Lucija, an Erasmus intern at the Center and fond of social movements, became my daily companion for exploring the surroundings of Graz and the current politics.

I managed to send my first full draft on the 8th of March, quite symbolically on International Women's Day. In the meanwhile, I was an online visiting fellow for the MIREKOC institute in Istanbul, and I contributed to their projects regarding Euromed migration routes and the concept of the "fragile state".

During spring and summer 2021, virtual conferences restarted for me, and I dusted off my rusty presentation skills. I presented in the EUI Migration Group, in the Graduate Conference of the Princeton Seager Center for Hellenic Studies, in "The Fragility of Global Migration" of the University of Göttingen and in the UCD conference "Identities in Flux". I also took part in the virtual Oral History and Interviewing Conference co-organized by my dear friend and colleague at the EUI, Ana Maria. My deepest gratitude also goes to her for her hospitality, inspired talk and her patience throughout the language revision of this thesis. In May and June, I again met my dear supervisor for her feedback on route towards the final draft.

In September 2021, I had a reunion in Athens and Delphi with two loyal friends, Jelena and Henriikka, with whom we have dreamt together for ten years now, a fairer society and a moral academia. For this fall, the virtual meetings were here to stay, and I participated in the Cold War Studies Summer School in Utrecht, I presented my work in their Economic and Social History Seminar and I also took part in the online workshop by Max Planck Institute "The Decade of Disenchantment?".

I also met my old, good friends in Florence after a long time, and I felt so grateful for the unique friendships that this PhD has gifted me. Without their love, care and support, this thesis would not have been the same. And the journey continues...

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

ARD Arbeitsgemeinschaft der öffentlich-rechtlichen Rundfunkanstalten der Bundesrepublik Deutschland / Working group of public broadcasters of the Federal Republic of Germany

BR Bayerischer Rundfunk/ Bavarian Radio

CDU Christlich-Demokratische Union/Christian Democratic Union

DGB Deutscher Gewerkschaftsbund/ German Trade Union Federation

DNL Dimokratiki Neolaia Lambraki/Democratic Youth Lambrakis

EAM Ethniko Apeleftherotiko Metopo/National Liberation Front

EDA Eniaia Dimokratiki Aristera/ United Democratic Left Party

EEC European Economic Community

EK Enosis Kentrou/Center Union

ERE Ethniki Rizospastiki Enosis/National Radical Union

ERT Elliniki Radiofonia Tileorasi/ Greek Radio and Television Broadcast

FRG Federal Republic of Germany

GDR German Democratic Republic

GSEE Geniki Synomospondia Ergaton Ellados/ General Confederation of Greek Workers

IKA Idryma Koinonikon Asfaliseon/ Social Security Institute

KKE Kommounistiko Komma Elladas/Greek Communist Party

KYP Central Intelligence Service/Kentriki Ypiresia Pliroforion

NATO North Atlantic Treaty Organisation

ND Nea Dimokratia/New Democracy

OAAA Organismos Asfaliseos Apasholiseos Anergias/ Employment and Insurance Organization for Unemployment

OAED Organismos Apasholisseos Ergatikou Dynamikou/ Manpower Employment Organisation

OECD Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development

OEEC Organization for European Economic Cooperation

OGA Organismos Georgikon Asfaliseon/ Agricultural Insurance Organization

PAK Panellinio Apeleftherotiko Kinima/Pan-Hellenic Liberation Movement

PAM Patriotiko Antidiktatoriko Metopo/Patriotic Antidictatorial Front

PASOK Panellinio Sosialistiko Kinima/Greek Socialist Party

SPD Sozialdemokratische Partei Deutschlands/German Social Democratic Party

SWR Südwestrundfunk/ Southwestern Radio

INTRODUCTION

Manolis Anagnostakis (1925-2005), the so-called “poet of the defeat”, was a tireless and politically engaged commentator of postwar Greek reality. The collection *The Target (O Stohos)*, published in 1970, is one among the anti-dictatorial *18 Texts*. It focuses mostly on registering the poet’s bitterness for the material affluence and spiritual void. Anagnostakis broods over the stance that he, as a sophisticated and committed individual, must take in view of a permanent chaos orchestrated by vested interests.

In his “Thessaloniki, Days of 1969 AD”, Anagnostakis wrote amidst the colonels’ rule about the transformation of his native city. Change at the micro-level of the urban mirrored the overarching metamorphosis of the whole country into a consumerist paradise, a superficial and kitsch facade of an unfortunate land and its oppressed people. The poem’s title is reminiscent of Cavafy’s “Days of 1896”, where the young Alexandrian poet uses sarcasm about his financial and social situation.

Anagnostakis uses the same sarcasm to reflect on the massive character that emigration took on in the late 1960s, hidden behind the advertised modernisation of the country: “In Egyptou Street-first turning right/ There now stands the Transaction Bank Building/ Tourist agencies and emigration bureaus [...] For the time being, in the old street as was said, there stands/ the Transactions Bank/-I transact, you transact, he transacts/Tourist agencies and emigration bureaus/-we emigrate, you emigrate, they emigrate¹”.

Here, the lesson to take from Anagnostakis is two-fold: firstly, being self-reflective, what stance do I adopt as a migration scholar and social historian vis-a-vis the history of labor migration from Greece to West Germany? Secondly, by using the pronouns “we”, “you”, “they”, the poet reflects on the universality of the phenomenon of migration. It affects everybody directly or indirectly, through friendly and family networks and policymaking simultaneously formed in a top-down and bottom-up way. Therefore, the question arises: in which ways was the Greek Gastarbeiter migration a collective experience? How did it impact Greek postwar history and its people? How was it articulated in political debates and in daily life? How was it

¹ <https://akindofclock.com/manolis-anagnostakis-thessaloniki-days-of-1969-a-d-1970/>

represented in the arts? Why is it important to remember it, and how can we contextualize it in the general Cold War atmosphere?

The scholarly work produced on the question of the Gastarbeiter usually depends on German archives and thus reflects the discourse and policymaking of the host country. On the other hand, the bottom-up perspective which inspired research on the social life of migrants, based largely on participative observation or ego-documents, like interviews, memoirs and letters, often fails to consider the political context in which this specific kind of migration took place.

My intention here was to create a reader about the Greek postwar labor migration to the Federal Republic of Germany and the guest workers' return to their homeland. Taking advantage of my mother tongue being Greek, I focused on the existing archive material produced by the Greek state and its representative authorities on West German soil. Through those sources I traced the intentions of the Greek governments concerning emigration, their policymaking and the hopes, fears and anxieties they voiced through their correspondence and statements in the general context of the Cold War.

Moreover, by using the Greek press of the period, I followed the debates around emigration and how local interests intertwined with wider considerations about the place of Greece in Europe and the desirable future directions of the country and its people.

The lived experience of the migrants themselves, as mirrored in interviews and letters to the press or published surveys of the time, adds a personal touch to the trajectory of emigration and return. Their initiatives and reactions to the state's measures are a significant documentation of the migrants' agency.

On top of that, the testimonies of my narrators are not just complementary. On the contrary, due to their format as life stories, they cover the whole period from the end of the Second World War to the present. They shed light on unknown local histories and personal misfortunes, which made up the socioeconomic conditions of the postwar Greek countryside, mainly in the area of Northern Greece, the main depository of the Greek Gastarbeiter. Moreover, they give life to the experience of emigration from the moment the decision to migrate is taken all the way to the selection process, the adaptation to the new environment and the dynamics of

professional and social life to the final decision to return. Finally, they also involve a multitude of other actors beyond the narrator, be it family members, employers or colleagues. Thus, it helps us to understand how a whole network of people was involved in the migration process, facilitating or aggravating it respectively.

Life stories are “accounts of what people have done during their lives set in the context of their evolving understandings of why they have done so, and with what consequences”. They shed light not only to the formulation of individual agency and memory, but also to its interaction with collective memory and its cultural circulation². As narratives of migrants’ lives, they are stories filtered through personal and intersubjective processes during social experiences and life journeys³.

As in Mitchell Abidor’s book title *May Made Me*, one of my points of inquiry is the centrality of my narrators’ experience as Gastarbeiter in their life stories. Germany Made Them? Most probably, the answer is yes, despite the fact that our interviews took place almost forty years after their return. Forms of individual and collective memory and the workers’ subjectivity could have been central to my investigation; albeit the need to create a larger narrative with all the different actors of a thirty-year process took priority. Nevertheless, the structure of the thesis serves the purpose of bringing “the past into the present”, in order to include the prelude of the Gastarbeiter era, not only in high politics, but also in their formative years. When the contextualization is deemed appropriate and the reader can follow the framework, the narrators take over. In my mind, they are the psyche of this story.

The period I’m investigating covers three decades: from 1960, when the labor recruitment agreement was signed between West Germany and Greece, until 1989 and the German reunification. During those years major political turns took place in both countries, while the 1973 oil crisis influenced major decisions of the West German state concerning immigration.

As far as the historiography of Greek labor migration is concerned, the National Center of Social Research, founded in 1959, carried out the first empirical studies,

² Mary Jo Maynes, “Age as a Category of Historical Analysis. History, Agency, and Narratives of Childhood.” *The Journal of the History of Childhood and Youth* 1, no. 1 (2007): 119. <https://doi.org/10.1353/hcy.2008.0001>.

³ Anastasia Christou, “Narrating Lives in (e)Motion: Embodiment, Belongingness and Displacement in Diasporic Spaces of Home and Return.” *Emotion, Space and Society* 4, no. 4 (November 2011): 256.

mostly economic analyses, examining the negative or positive impact of migration for the sending country like in the work of Xenophon Zolotas' *Μετανάστευσις και οικονομική ανάπτυξις* (Migration and economic growth) published in 1966. After the democratic transition of 1974 and the gradual return of the Gastarbeiter, the scholarly interest turned to the workers' social and psychological problems, both abroad and during their re-integration in the homeland⁴.

In my investigation, I consider that the Greek Gastarbeiter in West Germany were living transnational lives and that their integration did not inhibit them from keeping their Greek identity. The Greek authorities introduced measures in order to ensure the migrants were not assimilated in the West German lifestyle and worldview. Another major concern, which runs through the whole period and is informed by the polarised climate of the Cold War, is the potential communist infiltration of the Greek Gastarbeiter. Journalists, politicians, businessmen, academics, embassy and consulate employees, leaders of local groups related to Greek political parties and members of associations were interacting in the common arena of the Gastarbeiter presence in West Germany. However, more than that, I am mainly curious to examine the reaction of the migrants themselves, their own initiatives and their stance towards their surrounding culture and their roots in their sending country. Were they active in forming ethnic associations, keeping up with homeland politics and organizing distinct communities?

These were questions asked and answered in the case of Greek migrants in Belgium already in Lina Venturas' work of 1994 *Μετανάστευση και Έθνος. Μετασχηματισμοί στις συλλογικότητες και στις κοινωνικές θέσεις* (*Migration and the Greek Nation: transformation of collectivities and social positions*). Being one of the first attempts in Greek migration studies to approach migration theoretically and consider the dynamics between nation and foreigner, it was successful in discussing assimilation and the ways in which ethnic identities are formed⁵.

Since I'm opting for a bottom-up approach, my prime focus is not on the administrative, legislative or economic measures taken by both governments concerning the migrants. Thus, I'm not interested in policy making per se but on the

⁴ Lena Korma, "The Historiography of the Greek Diaspora and Migration in the Twentieth Century." *Historiein* 16, no. 1–2 (June 30, 2017): 56.

⁵ *Ibid*, 58–59.

influence of this policy making on the individuals and their reaction to it. The interplay between the macro and the micro level is essential, since it opens up a window to the diverse realities in various big cities and small villages where the migrants settled. Moreover, a cornerstone in my analysis is the idea of mobility and movement, both literal and metaphorical. Literal, because they would change addresses and workplaces but also metaphorical through their mental travels and their double belonging to places and people.

My studying of the phenomenon of the Gastarbeiter started with John Berger's book *The Seventh Man*. The lived experience of people through poignant short passages and striking photos of industrial settings, crumbled dormitories and wagons pointed in the direction of social history. This research project began by asking questions such as the following: how did the daily life of the Greek Gastarbeiter in West Germany look like? How were they spending their working days and their free time? How did they experience discrimination, racism and xenophobia? What did it mean to be considered a piece or a number and not an individual with needs, rights and desires?

While progressing with my readings in Migration Studies, I noticed that the earlier works concerning Gastarbeiter were not at all neutral. On the contrary, for the Greek case, John Berger, Stephen Castles, Michael Piore, and George Matzouranis were writing their books as engaged academics and intellectuals, living in the midst of a crisis-ridden Western Europe of the oil shock. This Europe began to retract its openness to its migrant residents in order to prioritize its own citizens. The foreign populations who settled in its territory more than a decade ago were now deemed unwelcome.

John Berger in the cover of his book summarizes the innovation of the Gastarbeiter system. It was not a new phenomenon; workers were migrating for work in more developed countries since at least the beginning of the industrial revolution. However, this time, migration followed the accelerated rhythm of modern life. Its density was concentrated in one generation which was called to make the leap from the slow rural world to the frantic accord-based industrial reality.

These scholars sympathized with the migrants due to their left-wing worldview and sensitivity. However, they were primarily mourning the optimistic long sixties, its illusions and lost opportunities. As Luisa Passerini once said in a conference, "after

our hope to change the world was betrayed, we still stood outside factories, but instead of giving out leaflets, we started taking interviews about the workers' life stories".

Having myself lived through a similar crisis throughout the 2010s, their anxiety touched me. However, the scholarly production on Gastarbeiter and migration in general did not stop in 1974. It became less radical and critical, but it offered new analytical tools to explain labor migration, like the concept of transnationalism. In our globalized world, one can argue that we all live transnational lives, not because we strictly move in space with our bodies, but because we live under the influence of decisions meant for the whole planet. The methodological lens of transnationalism tried to break the bipolarity between sending and host country and open up space for fluidity, arguing that people live simultaneous lives.

Transnational migration refers to "the circular pattern of mobility between two or more nation-states, involving activities of an economic, political and cultural sort by migrants on a regular basis as part of their life-occupation"⁶. The concept of transnational social spaces was conceived as a reaction to the overused and vague terms of "integration" and "assimilation". Thus, migration moved in hermeneutics from having a strictly bipolar point of reference to lasting transnational social bonds⁷.

Long-term attachment to the migrants' country of origin is expressed in various activities, including participation in homeland politics, return visits, consumption of cultural products like music, transnational family structures and remittances⁸. 'Long-distance nationalism' refers to the sending country, which constantly envisages to reinforce the loyalty of its nationals residing outside its frontiers through language, religion and culture⁹.

Migrants and refugees are bound to the limitations their homeland poses on them. The interest of scholars regarding the sending country was mainly expressed in the field of

⁶ Elle Li Tingting and Bob McKercher, Effects of place attachment on home return travel: a spatial perspective, *Tourism Geographies* 18, no.4 (2016): 361-62.

⁷ Steffen Mau, *Social Transnationalism: Lifeworlds Beyond The Nation-State*. Routledge, 2010. <https://doi.org/10.4324/978020387906119-20>.

⁸ Christopher Molnar, "On the move and putting down roots: Transnationalism and Integration among Yugoslav Guest Workers in West Germany" in Jason Philip Coy, Jared Poley, and Alexander Schunka, eds., *Migrations in the German Lands, 1500-2000*, New York, NY Oxford: Berghahn, 2016, 192-3.

⁹ Rainer Bauböck and Thomas Faist, eds. *Diaspora and Transnationalism: Concepts, Theories and Methods*. Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2010, 43-44.

return migration and on how it employed its returnees to serve its own interests. It is also mirrored in the so-called diaspora studies, where attention is focused on how these groups can be used as a tool for foreign policy and as a pressure group for lobbying.

On the other side, some social scientists turned their attention away from the policymaking of the state and prioritized the migrant population or community per se. How were these communities organized, what was the role of culture and leisure as their sticking glue, how was the way they experienced and communicated different from the native population of the host country?

These interrogations were crucial in order to crack the romanticized image of the Gastarbeiter or any other migrant group as homogenous and united. It also credited the importance of cultural history in the understanding of the opposing dynamics in the realms of migrant communities and of the politicization of leisure as an instrument for identity formation and retention. There was a point in the writing of my thesis that this path looked the most adequate to approach the influence of the sending state on its citizens abroad via subtle indoctrination through leisure.

However, the specificity of the Gastarbeiter system lies in an aspect that the scholars frequently ignored: the migrant population is much more a sway of its homeland's politics than a target of the host country's policymaking. Not only do political upheaval or normalization back home incite migration or return. In all instances, from the decision to migrate to the settlement and all the way to their return, the homeland informs, shapes and inhibits all the initiatives taken by the migrant. This understanding of the power of the sending country inevitably placed the Greek state at the center of my investigation, in the forefront rather than in the background of the action.

John Berger argued that the migrant experience is not at the margins of modern society but at the very center of it. I also argue that by studying the Greek Gastarbeiter we also study the transformation of modern Greek society in the second half of the 20th century. Continuities and ruptures in the policymaking for its migrants mirrored the anxieties and priorities of the Greek state, struggling to find its place in the postwar European family and the Cold War polarizations. The stories of the Gastarbeiter are the crystallization of the experience of a people who fought against

the adversities of war and destruction, only to find new obstacles and challenges during the postwar reconstruction.

More than that, migrants are considered as agents of change and, indeed, throughout my thesis we can follow their resilience, inventiveness and courage. Nevertheless, it is another indication that they were not active in a vacuum. On the contrary, they had to fight for a place under the sun in the absence of a safety net. They were conceived as buffers and as guests, so this temporary and transitory status increased their precarious position. On top of that, the Greek state was either absent or annoyingly present, interested more in its peoples' surveillance and compliance than its relief and accommodation.

It is important to keep in mind that, apart from the sending country, the host country was not a neutral actor in our story. Already from the early 1970s, social scientists have shown how the Federal Republic of Germany created the Gastarbeiter system to cover its increasing manpower shortages without making too many commitments towards the migrants. Although, initially conceived as a buffer against labor shortage, the Gastarbeiter became almost irreplaceable, while their presence initiated debates regarding integration and citizenship rights. Moreover, the bloody legacy of the Third Reich was haunting the renewed and peaceful relations with their labor recruitment partners.

Triadafilopoulos and Schönwälder have written extensively on West Germany's guest worker program and placed it in the postwar effort of West Germany to appear as a liberal-democratic state respectful of human rights, away from its authoritative past¹⁰. German migration policy was publicly debated during the mid-1960s and the early 1970s, the debates mainly revolving around the denial that the country is de facto an immigration country¹¹.

For Alexander Clarkson, there were two major sociopolitical trends: the political language of Cold War conflict, given that the ideological polarization between the American and Soviet blocs could be found in every state exporting labor to the

¹⁰ Triadafilos Triadafilopoulos and Karen Schönwälder, "How the Federal Republic Became an Immigration Country: Norms, Politics and the Failure of West Germany's Guest Worker System." *German Politics and Society* 24, no. 3 (2006): 13-14.

¹¹ Karen Schönwälder, "Why Germany's Guestworkers Were Largely Europeans: The Selective Principles of Post-War Labor Recruitment Policy." *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 27, no. 2 (March 2004): 248 and 259.

Federal Republic, and the historical legacy of the Nazi regime¹². According to Rita Chin, after 1945 the politics of difference remained a constituent part of the modern nation, although in more elusive forms of racialized thinking about labor migration and in ways of understanding difference in the Federal Republic¹³.

Maria Alexopoulou in her 2020 book *Deutschland und die Migration* attempted an inclusive consideration of the different populations that migrated to Germany and the response of German society to it with reluctance. As far as the Gastarbeiter were concerned, she followed the process of their transformation from a temporary workforce from the South to a potentially integrated foreign fellow citizen and the new vocabulary created to designate this change in attitudes¹⁴.

The political sociologist Barbara Schmitter examined the role of associations, trade unions and welfare organizations as active spokespeople on behalf of the foreign workers¹⁵. Rodoula Matziari investigated more specifically how did the different milieus within the trade unions and especially within IG Metall react to the migrant workers and the state migration policy from the 1950s onwards.¹⁶

The social historian Simon Goeke studied forms of expression of the migrants' agency through their initiatives at the workplace and the neighborhood. He viewed strikes, squatting and demonstrations as efforts to claim their rights and appropriate the space rightfully belonging to them¹⁷. A case study of women Gastarbeiter, their strikes and transnational class solidarity was studied by Jennifer Miller in her article¹⁸.

¹² Alexander Clarkson, *Fragmented Fatherland: Immigration and Cold War Conflict in the Federal Republic of Germany, 1945-1980*. First edition. Monographs in German History, volume 34. New York: Berghahn Books, 2013, 16.

¹³ Rita Chin, ed. *After the Nazi Racial State: Difference and Democracy in Germany and Europe. Social History, Popular Culture, and Politics in Germany*. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2009, 101.

¹⁴ Maria Alexopoulou. *Deutschland und die Migration: Geschichte einer Einwanderungsgesellschaft wider Willen*. Reclam Verlag. 2020.

¹⁵ Barbara E. Schmitter, "Immigrants and Associations: Their Role in the Socio-Political Process of Immigrant Worker Integration in West Germany and Switzerland". *The International Migration Review* 14, No. 2 (Summer, 1980): 184-185.

¹⁶ Rodoula Matziari. *Migrantinnen und Migranten in der Industriegewerkschaft Metall: eine Erfolgsgeschichte?*. Verlag Dialog-Edition. 2014.

¹⁷ Simon Goeke, "The Multinational Working Class? Political Activism and Labor Migration in West Germany During the 1960s and 1970s." *Journal of Contemporary History* 49, no. 1 (January 2014): 160 and 181.

¹⁸ Miller, Jennifer. "Her Fight Is Your Fight: 'Guest Worker' Labor Activism in the Early 1970s West Germany." *International Labor and Working-Class History* 84 (2013): 226-47.
<https://doi.org/10.1017/S014754791300029X>.

Lauren Stokes' contribution to the study of welfare destined to the Gastarbeiter adds a double insight both to the policies and to the discourses regarding family migration, which became stigmatized and scapegoated in the framework of the recruitment halt. Apparently, the social attitudes were rapidly changing to reach the point of a "Fear of the Family", as Stokes' book suggests¹⁹. A specific side of welfare provision to the Gastarbeiter, targeting the second generation was education. It carried a special weight touching upon the issue of language and identity, as studied by Brittany Lehman in her book²⁰.

The fact that West Germany was the host country for the Greek Gastarbeiter made it a distinctive case, different from organized migration to Belgium, France or Switzerland in the same period. The legacies of the Nazi past had a greater resonance and were politically manipulated for their own goals by both the government and the opposition. Moreover, postwar Germany was the embodiment of the Cold War on the European map and thus its polarized dynamics affected the fate of the guest workers' political participation, labor activism and social integration. Last but not least, West Germany attracted the largest part of emigration from Greece in the second half of the 20th century and thus the transnational connections between the two countries were intensified not only at a government level, but also in daily life, consumption and pop culture.

What is more, the Greek-German relations shared only few characteristics with other sending countries of the South. For instance, Italy and Yugoslavia experienced a brutal Nazi Occupation like Greece, but each country made a different use of this past. Additionally, Spain, Portugal and later Turkey were ruled by dictatorships like Greece in the period 1967-1974, but the degree of mobilization and resistance on West German soil was different for every ethnic community. Finally, Greece competed with Spain and Portugal for an early admission to the EEC, which meant that its Gastarbeiter acquired a different status as European expatriates.

¹⁹ " 'An Invasion of Guest Worker Children': Welfare Reform and the Stigmatisation of Family Migration," *Contemporary European History* Volume 28, no. 3 (August 2019): 372-389; Lauren Stokes. *Fear of the Family: Guest Workers and Family Migration in the Federal Republic of Germany*. Oxford University Press.2022.

²⁰ Lehman, Brittany. *Teaching Migrant Children in West Germany and Europe, 1949-1992*. New York, NY: Springer Berlin Heidelberg, 2018.

On this note, here the latest initiatives on the history of Greek-German relations can be mentioned briefly. The Online Compendium (ComDeG) a freely accessible, multi-perspective reference work for German-Greek history is developed in cooperation with the Center for Modern Greece (CeMoG) of the Free University of Berlin and the Institute for Greek-German Relations (EMES) of the National and Kapodistrian University of Athens²¹.

The Compendium organized a series of lectures in the fall of 2020 on the topic of “the Postwar renewal of Greek-German relations”, a symposium and an exhibition under the title “Greek-German Relations during the Military Dictatorship in Greece (1967–1974)” under the auspices of the Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung and the Greek Archive for Contemporary Social History.

In 2010, the Hellenic Parliament Foundation published in Greek the conference proceedings *Landmarks Of Greek-German Relations*, edited by Evangelos Chrysos and Wolfgang Schulttheiss, referring to the long-lasting bonds between the two countries since the late 18th century. Contributions of interest to the scholar of Gastarbeiter history are Cay Lienau’s chapter about the consequences of migration to the sending and host country, Dimitris Apostolopoulos’ chapter about the renewal of the two countries’ economic relations after the Second World War, Elias Katsoulis’ chapter about the Greek migrants’ resistance to the colonels’ junta and finally Konstantina Botsiou’s chapter on the place of the two countries in the framework of the EEC.

In 2018, an edited volume by Stratos Dordanas and Nikos Papanastasiou appeared in Greek under the title *The long Greek-German 20th century: the black shadows in the history of the bilateral relations*. The book covers the period from the beginning of the First World War to the end of the Cold War. Of special interest are the chapters by Dimitris Apostolopoulos concerning the postwar reconciliation of the two countries and by Nikos Papanastasiou on the Bavarian Radio’s programs against the Greek colonels’ rule.

Recently, monographs on facets of the Greek Gastarbeiter migration added valuable insights to the scholar debate. In 2020, Papanastasiou published his monograph in

²¹ <https://comdeg.eu/>

Greek entitled *Antistasi apo mikrofonou: o Pavlos Bakoyannis apenanti stin hounta ton syntagmatarhon* regarding the anti-dictatorship mobilization of the director of the Greek programs on the Bavarian Radio. The main primary sources he used can be found at the archive of the Bavarian Radio in Munich, but also at the Archive of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Athens, which I also consulted for this thesis.

Eleni Tseligka's 2020 book *From Gastarbeiter to European Expatriates: Greek Migrant Communities in Germany and Their Socio-political Integration*, engages in a comparison of two migration regimes concerning the same people. The guest workers became European expatriates, and a bloc actor policy transformed the previous bilateral migratory framework. The book also examines the role that the social and cultural background of Greek migrants has played as a variable of integration.

A comprehensive collection of oral testimonies is Eleni Delidimitriou-Tsakmaki's book *The Trees That Did Not Put Down Roots: Gastarbeiter Testimonies (Τα δέντρα που δεν ρίζωσαν: μαρτυρίες μεταναστών Γερμανίας.)* published in 2001. The author, a Gastarbeiter herself, settled in Munich, conducted oral interviews with former Greek Gastarbeiter between 1996 and 2000. The main issues treated in her work are the working conditions in the West German industry, but also the organization of the Greek communities and their welfare institutions.

Scholarly articles also focused on specific aspects of the Greek Gastarbeiter migration experience. Anastasia Christou and Russell King turned their attention to the sense of belonging of the first and the second generation and the enactment of nostalgia during return visits²².

Maria Kontos's chapter "Greek migrant women in Germany: Strategies of autonomy in diaspora" contributed to the study of women workers' agency and empowerment through their migration experience²³.

²² Anastasia Christou, and Russell King. "Imagining 'Home': Diasporic Landscapes of the Greek-German Second Generation." *Geoforum* 41, no. 4 (July 2010): 638–46; King, Russell, Anastasia Christou, and Jill Ahrens. "From First-Generation Guestworkers to Second-Generation Transnationalists: Greek-Germans Engage with the 'Homeland.'" Working Paper 65, Sussex Centre for Migration Research, University of Sussex, December 2010.

²³ Maria Kontos. "Greek migrant women in Germany: Strategies of autonomy in diaspora" in E. Tastsoglou (ed.), *Women, gender, and diasporic lives. Labor, community, and identity in Greek migrations*, Lanham, Boulder, NY, Lexington Books, 2009,31-48.

Nikolaos Papadogiannis' articles on emotional communities through music and the VFR travel between host country and homeland added a fresh viewpoint to the cultural history approach to the Greek Gastarbeiter history²⁴. His newest contribution on Greek women sex workers in West Germany brings a further intersectionality in considering other kind of labor alongside the Greek Gastarbeiter presence²⁵.

SOURCES

As for my primary sources, I consulted the Archive of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Athens, whose collections can be browsed as titles, using keywords in the following database: (http://arxeio.mfa.gr/portal/mfa_search.jsp?locale=en). Once my application for research was accepted by the archive's board, I was given access to the collections for one year. In the library, I took notes of files covering the period 1960-1974. They consisted of the correspondence between the Greek Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Greek Embassy in Bonn.

Much of the information exchanged between Athens and its embassy in Bonn was labeled as confidential and those letters and reports never made their way to the parliament or the press. Having access to the original texts penned by the responsible Greek authorities on migration is essential, if we want to trace the reasoning behind their actions and decisions. In order to set the background of the policymaking regarding the Greek Gastarbeiter, I peeped through the ajar door of the backstage negotiations documented in the officials' correspondence. By their content, but also by their register and tone, I could measure the available room for maneuver and the micropolitics involved in an otherwise high politics arena.

Apart from the archives of the foreign ministry's headquarters, I found it useful to move to the periphery and examine the local response to the center's directives. Since most of the Gastarbeiter originated from Northern Greece, I accessed and examined the respective folders available at the Historical Archive of Macedonia in Thessaloniki. I took photos of the registers kept by the Unemployment Office (OAED) of the Rodopi Prefecture and its correspondence with the Ministry of Labor.

²⁴ Nikolaos Papadogiannis. "A (Trans)National Emotional Community? Greek Political Songs and the Politicisation of Greek Migrants in West Germany in the 1960s and Early 1970s." *Contemporary European History* 23, no. 04 (November 2014): 589–614; Nikolaos Papadogiannis. "Travel and the Greek Migrant Youth Residing in West Germany in the 1960s-1970s," n.d., 26.

I localized them through the filters in the database of the General State Archives (<http://arxeiomnimon.gak.gr/>).

As the thesis was progressing to another direction, I ended up using a little percent of my findings from the local branches of the Unemployment Office. However, a project more centered to the labor history dimension can greatly benefit from the detailed catalogues kept in the prefectures, since the previous professional experience of the migrants is mentioned and their specialization and place of work in West Germany is detailed.

Moreover, local histories and microhistories can be based on this type of sources, as well, because the researcher can trace family networks and local connections. A remarkable finding in those files was the great number of Muslim Greek citizens from the area of Rodopi, who migrated in West Germany. Among other, this kind of case study could add to the study of the ethno-religious diversity of the Gastarbeiter.

Among the most useful findings in the local archive was also the original text of the recruitment agreement between Greece and West Germany detailing all the terms and conditions. Moreover, amidst the other certificates, I found originals of otherwise lost (or to be precise, burnt) social conduct certificates (pistopoiitika koinonikon fronimaton) required for a complete application portfolio in the Greek Gastarbeiter recruitment. Again, my use of them was very limited due to the scope of the thesis, but a further examination can lead to ground-breaking research on surveillance.

As far as quantitative data is concerned, I accessed statistical data for the years 1960-1989 and reports published by the same institution, available in a digitized form by the Greek Statistical Service (<http://dlib.statistics.gr/portal/page/portal/ESYE>).

Moreover, I consulted the digitized OECD economic surveys for Greece for the period 1960-1989 through their database, to which the EUI library offers access (https://www-oecd-ilibrary-org.eui.idm.oclc.org/economics/oecd-economic-surveys-greece_19990286).

As far as the German statistical data for the years 1960-1989 are concerned, they are distributed with the permission of the Federal Statistical Office. I accessed them in PDF format through the website: (<https://www.digizeitschriften.de/en/dms/toc/?PID=PPN514402342>). In the Index, the

reader can find a table compiled by the data provided in the statistical yearbooks concerning the size of the Greek Gastarbeiter population in different German federal states for the period 1960-1989. In the same yearbooks, relevant information is provided for other nationalities, as well. In my case, I just focused on the Greek workers.

From the German archives available, I searched through the digital collections of the Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung, where I localized material concerning the Greek Gastarbeiter destined to the SPD Press Office at the online library of the foundation (<https://www.fes.de/bibliothek/>). The detailed reports penned in the early years of the recruitment helped me realize that there were experts ready to offer their advice to the Greek authorities, but they were mostly heard by West German Social-democrats and the trade unions. Moreover, they manifest an important fact: that alongside the Gastarbeiter, there were Greek students and scholars, fluent in German and with connections to the local authorities, willing to offer their experience and insight.

As far as the Greek press published in the Federal Republic of Germany is concerned, I consulted in paper form the issues of the newspaper *Elliniki* and the Greek edition of the magazine published by IG METALL in the Documentation Center and Museum of Migration in Germany (DOMiD), located in Cologne. I also found issues of the IG Metall collection and other Greek-language publications in the ELIA Archive in Athens.

The Greek-speaking press published in West Germany offers a different viewpoint from the printed media back in the migrants' homeland. Details from their daily life, social events and gatherings, advice for a safe workplace and other miscellanea constitute the material of those newspapers and periodicals. A cultural history of the migrant communities, with attention to their clubs and associations, free time and leisure can be narrated by cross reading those newspapers, each one of which represented a distinctive section of the political spectrum. In this view, the migrants' self-representation and their segmentation can also be studied along the same lines.

Another type of primary sources I used were the scholarly publications by Greek and foreign sociologists, political scientists, demographers and journalists. Reports, field studies, policy suggestions and interviews with stakeholders were important tools to define the problem, describe the situation and suggest solutions. Sometimes, it was

not easy to retrieve these publications, because almost sixty years passed from their first publication, and they are nowadays out of print. However, it worth the effort, since their authors were not just vocal witnesses of the ongoing reality of the Gastarbeiter migration, but they became a pressure group and an intermediary between the authorities and the migrants. Their works were products of an epoch, and thus, contextualization and interpretation were necessary, while using them.

However, the main bulk of my material is derived from the Greek press of the period under investigation. I chose my press material according to its availability and bearing in mind the equal representation of the whole political spectrum.

Available in digitalized form through the National Library (<http://efimeris.nlg.gr/ns/main.html>) were the following newspapers: *Eleutheria* (1944-1967), *Empros* (1896-1969), *Makedonia* (1911-1981), *Rizospastis* (1917-1983) and *Tachydromos* (1958-1977).

Digitalized and accessible through a paid subscription at the following website (<http://premiumarchives.dolnet.gr>) were the newspapers published by the Christos Lambrakis House, namely *To Vima* (1945-today), *Ta Nea* (1945-today) and *Oikonomikos Tahidromos* (1926-2004).

Newspapers in paper form can be found in municipal libraries in Greece and in the libraries of the different foundations. I found and took photos of several volumes of the newspapers *Ellinikos Vorras* and *Avgi*, covering the period 1960-1967, in the respective department of the municipal library of Thessaloniki.

Moreover, I consulted the Historical Archive of Greek Diaspora kept in the library of the Aristotle University of Thessaloniki. It contained press clips for the period 1967-1975.

Generally, on what concerns printed media in Greece, researchers have a hard time in locating and accessing full collections. If they are lucky and with the assistance of librarians and archivists, they end up taking photos from reckless, heavy and dusty volumes which fall apart in their hands. I went through this process to include non-digitized newspapers in my material, in order to get a better representation of the political parties active in the period. However, digitization would make the scholars' life much simpler, while they could access the collections anywhere.

Left-wing	Centre	Right-wing
Greek press published in Athens		
<i>Avgi</i> <i>Rizospastis</i> (post-1974)	<i>Eleutheria</i> <i>To Vima</i> <i>Ethnos</i> <i>Ta Nea</i> <i>Oikonomikos Tahidromos</i> <i>Makedonia</i> (Thessaloniki)	<i>Kathimerini</i> <i>Ellinikos Vorras</i> (Thessaloniki) <i>Estia</i> <i>Eleutheros Kosmos</i> (1967-1974)
Greek-language press published in the Federal Republic of Germany		
<i>Zeitung Der IG Metall Fur</i> <i>Die Griechischen</i> <i>Arbeitnehmer</i>	<i>Eleutheron Ellinikon Vima</i>	<i>Elliniki</i> <i>Ellinika Nea</i>

Table 1.1. Press consulted in digital and printed form.

The left-wing EDA was publishing the morning *Avgi* and the afternoon *Demokratiki Allagi*. The party complained that the circulation of its newspaper was obstructed mostly in the rural areas of the country, since reading *Avgi* was practically forbidden in the villages because just by buying it you could end up at the police station²⁶. *Rizospastis*, firstly founded in 1916 and banned in 1947 during the Greek Civil War, renewed its circulation in 1974 as the official newspaper of the Communist Party of Greece.

As far as the right-wing newspapers are concerned, the biggest publishing group belonged to Eleni Vlachou with two newspapers (*Kathimerini* and *Mesimvrini*) and one weekly magazine *Eikones*. It supported Karamanlis and its line was of a moderate Right or an independent conservatism. A much more aggressive spirit, almost of the extreme right, characterised other right-wing newspapers, like *Akropolis* and *Apogevmatini*. *Estia* by the Kyrou brothers remained fixed in its elitist, conservative and almost extreme-right profile. New titles that appeared were *Eleutheros Kosmos* by Savvas Konstantopoulos in 1966, which ideologically prepared the turn to the dictatorship.

In Thessaloniki, the main newspapers were the morning *Makedonia*, first published in 1911, and the afternoon *Thessaloniki*. They were both center-right and belonged to

²⁶ Jean Meynaud, *Les Forces Politiques en Grèce*, Lausanne (ESP), 1965, p.216.

Velidis. The morning newspaper *Ellinikos Vorras* first appeared in 1936 and appealed to a right-wing audience, representing a fighting Right²⁷.

The main representative of the Center was the Lambrakis Publishing House with two newspapers *Vima* and *Nea*, a weekly magazine *Tachydromos* and a monthly literary journal *Epoches*. Moreover, the newspaper *Eleutheria* by Panos Kokkas also belonged to the spectrum of the Center, supporting different politicians. *Ethnos* by John Nikolopoulos first supported the Center but then turned to the Right. These newspapers advocated for reconciliation and detente, away from polarization and extremism²⁸.

From the German press, I only used the issues of *Der Spiegel*, which can be found online in digitized form on the magazine's website. I filtered them with the keyword "Gastarbeiter" and the results were precise and easy-to-read.

When it comes to audiovisual material, the situation is remarkably better. Due to the nature of the media and the extensive digitalization efforts, both German and Greek databases proved helpful and the material was well preserved and contextualized.

The German-language audiovisual material I found is freely available through the collection of the ARD mediathek (<https://www.ardmediathek.de/>).

As for the Greek-language audiovisual material examined, I found freely available news broadcasts on the website of the Hellenic National Audiovisual Archive (<http://mam.avarchive.gr>) and the digitalized archives of the National Radio and Television (<http://archive.ert.gr>).

Interviews, news broadcasts and propaganda reels are primary sources that benefit from the audiovisual beyond their verbal content. Music, for example, is an element that comes across as a message, directing the researcher to investigate further what it meant for the Gastarbeiter' sense of belonging or how it was exoticized by the host society. By keeping in mind that the spread of those mass media, and especially television, coincided with the period I was studying, I offered them a privileged place

²⁷ Manolis Kandyllakis, "The Press in Macedonia and Thrace" in *La Presse Grecque De 1784 A Nos Jours Approches Historiques Et Théoriques Actes Du Colloque International Athènes, 23-25 Mai 2002 Textes Recueillis Par Loukia Droulia Athenes 2005*, p.304-307.

²⁸ Despina Papadimitriou, "The 20th-century Greek Press: Continuity and New Tendencies" in *La Presse Grecque De 1784 A Nos Jours Approches Historiques Et Théoriques Actes Du Colloque International Athènes, 23-25 Mai 2002 Textes Recueillis Par Loukia Droulia Athenes 2005*, p.77-80.

among my primary sources. It was not always easy to transform their multimedia content in a written narrative, but I found them indispensable to a psychography of the society in which they were produced and circulated.

Last but not least, I have conducted 11 semi-structured interviews in the form of life-stories with returnees in their native villages and cities in Northern Greece. I used the snowball method to locate my narrators, using my network of family and friends as intermediaries. As a target group, they make up an age cohort born approximately between 1930 and 1950. I conducted the interviews during my research missions and holiday breaks in the years 2018 and 2019.

The interviews took place either in the narrators' houses or in a cafe, sometimes with the presence of the person who put us in contact. Most interviews took place in Thessaloniki, one on Lesbos island, one in Veroia and the rest in villages of Northern Greece. I met my narrators for the first time during the interview, and I did not meet them again or make them check the transcripts, mostly due to logistics. I also only sent the transcripts to two of them, who asked for a copy.

Each interview was approximately a 2-3 hour-long audio recording. It was loosely structured according to my questionnaire, which is attached in the Index. A consent form in Greek was required and signed at the end of each interview. The original names of the narrators are used in the text. Apart from the individual narrators, three couples and a mother and a daughter are included. As for the language used, I transcribed the interviews in Greek, and I later translated them into English. The transcripts are available upon request and in the future I might consider to bestow them to a library or archive.

The first chapter is mostly based on secondary sources on the postwar reconstruction period, which coincides with the childhood and teenage years of my narrators. In this chapter, I set the background of the political and social situation in the two countries and the changes they experienced in the two postwar decades. Mainly through the testimonies of my narrators, I examine the family survival strategies of the prospective migrants and the social conditions that made them take the decision to migrate.

Although the ongoing reality of the Cold War and its implications in their daily life is omnipresent, I will seriously take into account the legacy of the Second World War

and its impact on the lives of my actors. The memory of the Second World War, which in the Balkan countries including Greece was also experienced as a fierce civil war, left its imprint for the years to come. Throughout the postwar reconstruction and the economic boom, the traumas of the wartime were sensed both in the form of material losses but also - and maybe more importantly - as a spectrum haunting the spirits and the choices of the old enemies.

The second chapter focuses on the framework of the bilateral labor recruitment agreement and the requirements it predicted for the movement of workers. The debates around emigration and the measures taken in the first years of its implementation from 1960 to 1963 are also included in this chapter. I analyze the initiatives taken by the governments to regulate the organized emigration and the gaps in these policies, the reaction of the population to the newly presented opportunity, the discourse in the Parliament and the press surrounding the growing flows towards the Federal Republic and the first efforts of organization among the migrants.

The third chapter revolves around the cataclysmic mid-1960s in Greece and the shock waves they sent to the guest worker community in the Federal Republic. Emphasis is given to the increased politicization and polarization of the migrants through examining their activities in relation to organizing themselves in communities. Moreover, the Center Union government in power was investigated for its political gains and scandalous cases of bribing by the previous government while simultaneously acquiring an increased interest in following the covert activities of communist clusters, conveyed mainly through the reports of the Greek general consul in Bonn. Finally, the first crisis of 1966-67 is examined in this chapter in connection to the first wave of return migration resulting from it.

The fourth chapter is dedicated to the dark period of the dictatorship and the restrictive measures it took towards the Greek migrants. It examines how the different communities and associations competed with each other, what actors were involved and how diverse groups advocated for social visibility and representation. The Greek Houses, the schools and the Orthodox Church, but also associations and political clubs, created their own social events and protests and boycotted each other's initiatives. Special emphasis is given to cultural expressions like music and dance, that became tropes of identity formation and the arena of contestation. Apart from

their labor, the Greek migrants were valuable for their free time because of the way they would use it. The use of their free time was also a deeply -and maybe even an unconsciously- political choice. Last but not least, the political uses of the return visits and the creation of special summer camps for the workers' children by the junta are also examined in this chapter.

The fifth chapter consists of my narrators' accounts on the memory and lived experience of being a Greek Gastarbeiter. The issue of family networks and their activation before and during the emigration, the new reality of industrial work and the relationship with their co-nationals, other foreign workers and the locals remain in the spotlight.

The sixth chapter is dedicated to the last period covered by the timeframe of this thesis, namely the period of democratic transition known as Metapolitefsi. Issues discussed in this chapter are the de-juntification claims in order to cleanse the Greek authorities from extremist elements and the debate on migrant voting rights. The problem of adequate Greek schooling for the second generation is also examined as a paramount factor for the eventual return of the families back to Greece. The main focus of this chapter is the flow of return migration, the measures taken (or not taken) to facilitate it and the social scientists' suggestions regarding the growing pressure it created.

The seventh chapter deals with the legacy of the Greek Gastarbeiter and their imprint on the memory and popular culture of the country. Music, literature and filmography are examined in order to trace the metamorphosis of the depictions and definitions of who is a Gastarbeiter. This last chapter shows how influential the phenomenon of labor migration to West Germany on the Greek population used to be, measured by its persistence in artistic creations. Forms of art produced by the Gastarbeiter are left out of this chapter because they open a different discussion, extending far beyond the scope of my own dissertation.

CHAPTER ONE: (IN)FERTILE GROUNDS FOR EMIGRATION: WAR, DESTRUCTION AND RECONSTRUCTION (1945-1960)

All traditional historical accounts after Herodotus start with a preamble. Very often this is a flashback in time in order to trace the roots of the problem under investigation. Herodotus asked what pushed Persians and ancient Greeks to go to war. I am asking what made the modern Greeks become Gastarbeiter in the Federal Republic of Germany. In order to answer this question, it is essential to follow the thread back to the time when Greece and Germany were still war enemies and the future Gastarbeiter were still children living under the deprivations and harsh conditions of an occupied country. What were the consequences of the Second World War on Greek economy and society, and how did the new postwar realities push the two countries towards oblivion and rapprochement? Were there still surviving memories and references to the Nazi Occupation, and how were those articulated?

More than that, the end of the Second World War was not a happy ever after for Greece since the country and its people spent the next five years in a bloody civil war. Although its influence on the living conditions was significant, it was its impact on the political realities and the social atmosphere which remained tremendous for the next decades to come. This chapter considers the importance of those war-time experiences for the future migrants, who spent their formative years in a climate of violence and terror. Their families suffered losses and had to restart their livelihoods by employing new survival strategies. What did that mean for the opportunities that the youth had? What were the sacrifices they had to make both on a personal and at the collective level?

However, this was not the first time that people were coerced by forces beyond their control. The area of Northern Greece was the biggest outlet of Gastarbeiter migration towards West Germany in the 1960s. It is not a coincidence that it was the theatre of the Civil War but also the main part of the national territory where the 1923 population exchange refugees settled. In the transgenerational memory of the Gastarbeiter, it is the fate of their families to move and reinvent themselves. How did this heritage make them susceptible to the idea of migration? How do they represent themselves and is the refugee identity still alive and important for them?

I.A. NAZI SKELETONS IN THE CLOSET

The Gastarbeiter were not the first foreign labor force recruited by Germany. The Third Reich made extensive use of imported forced labor. In January 1942, the Commission for the Recruiting of Greek Workers for Foreign Work invited applications at its Salonica office from interested workers, and by the end of the year around 10.000 Greeks were reported to have registered. The Gestapo reports suggested that the Greek population was outspokenly anti-Nazi, showing defiance and a certain strength of national feeling²⁹.

In the following paragraphs, the reader can follow how the tensed relations of the two former wartime enemies were smoothed in the early postwar years. The rapprochement that took place under the pressure of economic planning and the new Cold War realities served as the framework in which the recruitment of Gastarbeiter from Greece became possible. However, as it is emphasized in the title of this part, the Nazi skeletons were well hidden in the closet. They were not given any space for coming-outs, the authorities blocking all debates about reparations or transitional justice.

Initially neutral, Greece got under the sway of Nazis in the early 1940s and experienced a tri-partite (Italian, Bulgarian and German) Occupation. On the 28th of October 1940, Greece was initially invaded by Italy from the side of its Albanian territory. Although the Greeks quickly drove Mussolini's troops back across the Albanian frontier, on the 6th of April 1941, Nazi Germany launched a military campaign against Greece to support its fascist allies. The Greek government fled to Crete, which subsequently fell to German forces on 30 May 1941³⁰.

When the German troops evacuated Greece in October 1944, the country was devastated. During the winter 1941/42, famine stroke the big urban centers and thousands starved to death, while many civilians were assassinated in German reprisal actions until the end of the war. About 60.000 Greek Jews were exterminated in death camps. A significant portion of the population suffered from epidemics like malaria,

²⁹ Mark Mazower, *Inside Hitler's Greece*, New Haven&London: Yale University Press,1993, 74-78.

³⁰ Craig Stockings, and Eleanor Hancock, *Swastika over the Acropolis*. Brill, 2013. <https://doi.org/10.1163/9789004254596>.

tuberculosis and typhus. Finally, super inflation and the extensive destruction of infrastructure brought the Greek economy to its knees³¹.

For the decades to follow, the effect of the Greek Civil War of 1946-1949 and the polarised framework of the Cold War influenced and distorted the official memory of the Occupation in Greece. The communists were declared the main enemy and traitors to the nation and society. The resistance movement was reduced to its negative aspects, which made it easier to justify the ex-collaborators.

Not touching the sensitive Nazi past was one of the cornerstones of the newly reinstated democracy in post-war Germany. Konrad Adenauer's priority was to limit prosecution only to "those who were genuinely guilty." According to Rita Chin, after 1945 the politics of difference remained a constituent part of the modern nation, despite the governments' effort to distance themselves from the Nazi past as well as to condemn overt forms of neo-Nazi violence³². The "stain" of Nazi Germany was so profound that presenting a liberal image became imperative for successive German governments. Older racial assumptions enjoyed a continued half-life, mostly as packaged fears about adverse popular reactions³³.

In Greece, the end of the civil war in 1949 signalled the gradual pacification of Greek society. The political schism had to be bridged by bringing the Left back to the parliament, always in accordance with the country's Cold War alliances³⁴. Although the 1952 constitution supposedly replaced the provisional statutes of the civil war period, a "para-constitution" still existed alongside it³⁵.

Greece was rewarded by the West with NATO membership in 1952 and substantial Marshall Aid money³⁶. The Marshall Plan included a modernizing package of high productivity, high wages, redistributive taxation, and mass consumption³⁷. As

³¹ <https://www.occupation-memories.org/en/deutsche-okkupation/statistik/index.html>

³² Chin, *After the Nazi Racial State*, 101.

³³ Neil Gregor, Nils H. Roemer, and Mark Roseman, eds. *German History from the Margins*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2006, 2.

³⁴ Susanne-Sophia Spiliotis. "An Affair of Politics, Not Justice": The Merten Trial (1957–1959) and Greek-German Relations in Mazower, Mark, ed. *After the War Was over: Reconstructing the Family, Nation, and State in Greece, 1943-1960*. Princeton Modern Greek Studies. Princeton, N.J: Princeton University Press, 2000, 294-295.

³⁵ Mark Mazower, "The Cold War and the appropriation of memory: Greece after liberation," in *The politics of retribution in Europe*, ed. István Deák, Jan Tomasz Gross and Tony Judt (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2000), 222.

³⁶ Dan Stone, *Goodbye to All That? The Story of Europe since 1945*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2014, 110.

Pagoulatos writes, “be it an honest technocratic credo or an astute political strategy for obtaining the acquiescence of the masses, the cause of development was heralded as the simultaneous solution to both equity and efficiency”³⁸.

In March 1947, the US offered a program of military and economic assistance to Greece and Turkey, while George Marshall promised in June 1947 that the Truman administration would financially assist “the revival of a working economy in the world so as to permit the emergence of political and social conditions in which free institutions can exist”³⁹.

A significant dimension of the Marshall Plan in Greece was its political agenda, in other words, the search for stability. Reuniting the Greek society, achieving a balance between parties, army and crown and tying the country to the West were its main priorities. In a nutshell, the two ultimate goals were a self-sustaining democracy and convergence with the Western European political paradigm⁴⁰.

Greece received the highest per capita U.S. assistance until then by any underdeveloped country⁴¹. After the end of the Marshall Plan in 1951, West Germany became a dynamic economic factor in the area. The increasing influence of West Germany to Greece through investments and agreements spanning from trade to cultural exchanges was seen by the Left as a renewed invasion⁴².

The leftist EDA was the only party to denounce the Association Agreement with the European Economic Community in January 1962. It considered that the Greek accession to the EEC was further binding the country to the strategic interests of the US and NATO. However, the key factor shaping mass attitudes towards the EEC was the Cold War⁴³ and the desire to reduce Greece’s heavy dependence on the United

³⁷ Dan Stone, ed. *The Oxford Handbook of Postwar European History*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012, 50.

³⁸ , George Pagoulatos, *Greece’s New Political Economy*. London: Palgrave Macmillan UK, 2003. <https://doi.org/10.1057/9780230504660>, 214-5.

³⁹ Konrad Hugo Jarausch, *Out of Ashes: A New History of Europe in the Twentieth Century*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2015, 460-462.

⁴⁰ Konstantina Botsiou, “New Policies, Old Politics: American Concepts of Reform in Marshall Plan Greece.” *Journal of Modern Greek Studies* 27, no. 2 (2009): 226-227. <https://doi.org/10.1353/mgs.0.0063>.

⁴¹ Konstantina Botsiou, “The interface between politics and culture in Greece” in Stephan, Alexander, ed. *The Americanization of Europe: Culture, Diplomacy, and Anti-Americanism after 1945*. New York, NY: Berghahn Books, 2006, p.279-280.

⁴² *Avgi*, 26/7/61, p.1.

States. Karamanlis' persistent efforts received the blessings of French and German leaders, including Charles De Gaulle and Konrad Adenauer⁴⁴.

Given that the bitter memories of the past were left behind, it was the two countries' rapprochement and common interests that laid the foundations of their asymmetrical interdependence⁴⁵. 1958 is considered the year when the normalization of West German and Greek relations was fully achieved. Anti-communism, the perceived Soviet threat and the fact that West Germany and Greece were both front-line states in the Cold War created a common destiny for the two countries⁴⁶.

As for the high levels of wartime collaboration among the bureaucratic and business elites in Greece, only few people were severely punished⁴⁷. At the same time, the Greek authorities were quite indifferent in pursuing war criminals. Contrary to the benign judicial neglect of Nazis and collaborators, the repression of the Greek Left was harsh and systematic⁴⁸.

When the diplomatic relations between Greece and Germany resumed in December 1950, it was clear that the war-crimes issue required special handling. German diplomacy expressed the opinion that "the harmonious opening up of relations between the two countries requires a general, swift, and so far as possible noiseless settlement of the war crimes question."⁴⁹

Operating in the shadow of the Cold War and the German economic miracle, the Greek governments followed quite a servile appeasement policy in relation to the recent past. Nazi collaborators were acquitted, making war-time collaboration invisible and socially acceptable. In contrast to other occupied countries, where the

⁴³ Susannah Verney, "An Exceptional Case? Party and Popular Euroscepticism in Greece, 1959–2009." *South European Society and Politics* 16, no. 1 (March 2011): 55. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13608746.2010.538960>.

⁴⁴ Κωνσταντίνα Μπότσιοιου, Ε. Σακκας, *Η Ελλάδα, η Δύση Και η Μεσόγειος 1945-62. Νέες Ερευνητικές Προσεγγίσεις*. Πανεπιστήμιο Μακεδονίας, Θεσσαλονίκη, 2016, 10.

⁴⁵ Christos Tsakas, "Growth Models and Core–Periphery Interactions in European Integration: The German–Greek Special Relationship in Historical Perspective." *JCMS: Journal of Common Market Studies*, December 2020, p.12. <https://doi.org/10.1111/jcms.13160>.

⁴⁶ Morgens Pelt, *Tying Greece to the West. US–West German–Greek Relations 1949–1974*. Copenhagen: Museum Tusulanum, 2006, 25.

⁴⁷ Tony Judt, *Postwar: a history of Europe since 1945*. New York: Penguin Press, 2005, 49.

⁴⁸ Mazower, *Inside*, 374-375.

⁴⁹ Spiliotis, "An Affair of Politics, Not Justice", 294-295.

victims of the war and the resistance members were glorified, in Greece the “bandits” were prosecuted⁵⁰.

The left wing newspaper *Avgi* published by the EDA deputies Manolis Glezos and Leonidas Kyrkos brought to surface the continuities with the recent past of Nazi Occupation. Many articles from the early 1960s spoke about former Nazi officials now employed in the recruitment process or living conditions in West Germany that were reminiscent of the concentration camps.

For example, in late May and early June 1960, one reporter wondered if nothing had changed since the Nazi Occupation, since the German official who had sent workers to forced labor in Nazi Germany was still employed on the same task, but in an even more official way! Hermann Westermayer was working in Greece already before the war, and, after the Nazi invasion, he was writing the declarations of the German embassy in Athens. Thus, his activity should have posed a moral issue for the government. In a cunning way, the journalist suggested that he now had more support coming from the Greek Ministry of Labor, since it published directives pushing the Greek workers to Adenauer’s Germany to find “happiness”!⁵¹

In 1962, an article bearing the title “Achtung!” and written in a font reminiscent of the Nazi propaganda posters warned that the ambassadors meeting in Athens were the same people that had made up Hitler’s closest circle⁵². *Avgi* employed an intense wording describing the life conditions of the Greek guest workers in West Germany. Inspired by Marx’s eerie image of a specter flying over Europe, the dark powers of capitalist policymaking were released against the migrants. Thus, Satan was involved in the function of the labor offices, Nazi-era traitors cultivated a terror regime and migrants lived in animal-like conditions⁵³.

Moreover, the conditions under which the guest workers were living were often compared with the inhumane treatment in concentration camps, where people were squeezed together in slums⁵⁴. More than that, it was commented that the

⁵⁰ Hagen Fleischer, “Vergangenheitspolitik und Erinnerung: Die deutsche Okkupation Griechenlands im Gedächtnis beider Länder.” In *Die Okkupation Griechenlands im Zweiten Weltkrieg*, ed. Chryssoula Kambas and Marilisa Mitsou, Cologne: Böhlau Verlag, 2015,37.

<https://doi.org/10.7788/9783412218379-001>.

⁵¹ *Avgi*, 27/5/60,p.1 & 28/5/60,p.1 & 01/6/60,p.1.

⁵² *Avgi*, 18/3/62, p.1.

⁵³ *Avgi*, 14/4/1964, p.1.

⁵⁴ *Avgi*, 23/4/61, p.1.

discrimination that Jews suffered after 1933 had parallels with the prohibition of entrance to certain places for guest workers. The reporter commented that the alienation and exclusion felt by the workers made life a nightmare⁵⁵.

In 1964, the poet Nikos Gatsos reflected on the spectre of the recent tragic past. In his view, tragedy was not the exception but rather the rule throughout Greek history in hindsight: “but always with the joy, the awareness of sorrow, the memory of tragedy. We have many such memories, some old, some recent. We think of a public square where the hostages were executed just a few years ago by the Nazis. The time when homeless, hungry people found shelter where they could. The time when people died in the streets of starvation, because the enemy took our food. This sort of thing has happened to us for 20 centuries. We know what tragedy is; so we can be melancholic”⁵⁶.

Beyond the fatalism of the tragic destiny of the Greeks, intellectuals like Iakovos Kampanellis rang the bell about the social circumstances that pushed the youth to migrate. His own experience as a detainee in the Nazi camp of Mauthausen made him highly sensitive to the legacy of the Third Reich. Using an emotionally charged language he wondered “why Kanellopoulos would not consider emigration to Germany a blessing? He knows that the Nazis are still in power. And he knows even better that the party he has the honor to lead protected and still protects the collaborators of the Germans. The traitors (dosilogous) [...] maybe the reasons why the people (o laos) ‘take their eyes and go’ are not only financial. Maybe there are other reasons. Equally important. Let us not forget that when you face the ‘other’ as only hungry for bread, it is as if you don’t want to know all the truth that you have in front of you”⁵⁷. What was the obvious truth Kampanellis cunningly referred to? Regrettably, the acute social inequalities and political divisions the Civil War bestowed upon the Greek society for almost half a century...

⁵⁵ *Avgi*, 26/4/61, p.1.

⁵⁶ interview in English for the documentary “The Inner Man” produced by the Canadian television in 1964, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RyCRItmkXBM&t=154s>.

⁵⁷ *Eleutheria*, 24/3/1965, P.4

I.B. FRATRICIDE OR HOW TO DESTROY THE FUTURE GENERATION

Polymeris Voglis suggests that the civil war started in 1943, as a struggle of the left-wing resistance organizations (EAM and ELAS) against the much weaker right-wing organizations and Nazi collaborators and their militias⁵⁸.

Stathis Kalyvas who wrote extensively on civil wars as violent phenomena, divides the Greek Civil War into three phases. The first phase took place during and immediately after the occupation and was fought between, on the one hand, ELAS (the National Popular Liberation Army), which was the army of the Communist resistance organization EAM (National Liberation Front) founded in September 1941, and, on the other hand, various nationalist resistance organizations, collaborationist militias, and the post-occupation British-backed Greek government in December 1944.

The years 1945 and 1946 constituted the second phase of the civil war with sporadic guerrilla warfare, but mainly with the leftists' persecution by armed right-wing bands and state officials⁵⁹. The third phase, between 1947 and 1949, was a renewed full-scale Communist insurgency, which ended with their definitive defeat.

Indicative of the Greek governments' attitude towards the Left is the fact that in the years after 1949, the victors preferred to use the pejorative term *symmoritopolemos* (bandit war) to describe the conflict. It was only in 1989 that the Greek term for civil war, *emfylios*, was officially adopted as a decisive step towards reconciliation⁶⁰.

A new, dividing cleavage was introduced between the so called nationally-conscious (ethnikofrones), "healthy," "clean," and first-class-citizens and the "sick," second-class citizens, comprised of defeated communists, leftists, sympathizers, and non-royalists⁶¹. Greek communists were contemptuously called 'Slav-communists' or

⁵⁸ Polymeris Voglis, "Political Prisoners in the Greek Civil War, 1945—50: Greece in Comparative Perspective." *Journal of Contemporary History* 37, no. 4 (October 2002): 523–40. <https://doi.org/10.1177/00220094020370040201>.

⁵⁹ Stathis N. Kalyvas, *The Logic of Violence in Civil War*, Cambridge University Press, 2006, 248-249.

⁶⁰ Peter Siani-Davies, and Stefanos Katsikas, "National Reconciliation After Civil War: The Case of Greece." *Journal of Peace Research* 46, no. 4 (July 2009): 564. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0022343309334611>.

⁶¹ Nicolas Demertzis, and Hara Stratoudaki. "Greek Nationalism as a Case of Political Religion: Rituals and Sentimentality." *Historical Social Research / Historische Sozialforschung* Vol. 45 No. 1 (2020): 109. <https://doi.org/10.12759/HSR.45.2020.1.103-128>.

Eamovoulgaroi (supporters of EAM and Bulgaria) and were accused of attempting to surrender Greek Macedonia to the Slavs⁶².

Until 1974, all Greek citizens were categorized by the authorities either as ethnikofrones of the first grade (E1), the second grade (E2), “Alpha” leftists (A), “Beta” crypto-communists (B), “Gamma” dangerous communists (G), and “Chi,” unknown (X) ⁶³. The state asked EAM/KKE members to sign a 'repentance declaration', while women had to return to domestic tasks and be submitted to the rules of the patriarchal family. EAM/KKE women were not only called 'Bulgarians' but also 'whores'⁶⁴.

Under law 516/1948, a “civic-mindedness certificate” (pistopoiitiko koinonikon fronimaton) was necessary in order to take up state employment or a professional permit, a passport, a driver’s license, or even a scholarship or university education⁶⁵. The certificates were based upon police surveillance records and they were documented in paper dossiers (fakeloi). Many leftists were exiled or forcibly detained in special camps for “reconversion and rehabilitation”⁶⁶.

As the French political scientist Jean Meynaud wrote: “everything depended on the opinion of the local police authorities about a specific individual. The people who were suspected to have subversive views got their own police file and calculations reach the number of 1,5 million such files, which meant that surveillance became widespread. There was a way to close such a file: the suspected person would publish in the local newspaper a public declaration repudiating their previous political beliefs, also known as process of de-colorisation, which presupposed their guilt. Naturally, this system worked as a pressure mechanism towards the citizens and the vagueness of the law left the possibilities open to various interpretations and the resulting intimidation of the foes”⁶⁷.

⁶² Jessica Reinisch, and Elizabeth White, eds. *The Disentanglement of Populations: Migration, Expulsion and Displacement in Post-War Europe, 1944-9*. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011, 274-5.

⁶³ Minas Samatas, *Surveillance in Greece: From Anticommunist to Consumer Surveillance*. New York: Pella, 2004,34.

⁶⁴ Claire Duchen and Irene Bandhauer-Schöffmann, eds., *When the War Was over: Women, War and Peace in Europe, 1940-1956*, London ; New York: Leicester University Press, 2000,109.

⁶⁵ Siani-Davies, “National Reconciliation”, 559–75.

⁶⁶ Samatas, *Surveillance*, 25-26.

⁶⁷ Meynaud, *Les Forces Politiques*, 176-177.

Ethnikofrosyni was originally tolerated by the Americans, because it was compatible with the Cold War rhetoric and easily understood by the average non-communist Greek⁶⁸. Governments effectively managed the patronage system for their electoral victories, and until 1974 an atmosphere of mistrust, fear and oppression was predominant in rural areas⁶⁹. As Gounaris observes, “the rhetoric of anticommunist ideology was seen as a standard procedure to extract a bigger portion of social welfare, to improve or to secure one’s social standing, or even to legitimize a variety of social activities and initiatives”⁷⁰.

Illustrative of the persistence of the political divides throughout the decades we are studying here is the fact that even twenty years after an event, it had the same symbolic power and concerned the same “old guard”, active in the Greek political scene. For example, in 1984, the socialist government of PASOK tried to attack the main opposition party, the right-wing New Democracy, connecting it to its past as ERE and the surveillance state it had enabled in West Germany. In secret files revealed to the public, it presented the secret decree 12/1963 dating back to 13th of May 1963 entitled “regarding the surveillance of anti-national action of Greeks in Germany”⁷¹.

As Dan Stone writes, “ordinary Greeks were policing and informing on their compatriots for the usual web of ugly motives that are to be found wherever forms of everyday terror obtain”⁷². However, despite the familiarities between the surveillance system used in Greece and in East Germany, the Greek surveillance was less dependent on informants that were intimate with the person under scrutiny. The Greek family ties proved relatively resistant, despite the repressive pressures often put on families⁷³.

As John R. Lampe and Ulf Brunnbauer suggest, “the five single-party regimes that governed Southeastern Europe in the 1950s had much in common. They ruled though

⁶⁸ Alexander Stephan, ed. *The Americanization of Europe: Culture, Diplomacy, and Anti-Americanism after 1945*. New York, NY: Berghahn Books, 2006, 283.

⁶⁹ Judt, *Postwar*, 201-202.

⁷⁰ Basil C. Gounaris, “Social Dimensions of Anticommunism in Northern Greece, 1945–50” in Philip Carabott, and Thanasis D. Sfikas, eds. *The Greek Civil War: Essays on a Conflict of Exceptionalism and Silences*. Routledge, 2004, 184-5.

⁷¹ *Ta Nea*, 12/5/1984, p.9

⁷² Stone, *Oxford Handbook*, 517.

⁷³ Minas Samatas, “Studying Surveillance in Greece: Methodological and Other Problems Related to an Authoritarian Surveillance Culture” *Surveillance & Society* 3(2/3): 189.

powerful ministries, large security services, and a compliant judiciary. News came from state radio stations and a censored press. Opponents faced prison camps, or worse, and ethnic minorities forced deportation. Greece was an exception only in the survival of several political parties and religious freedom”⁷⁴.

The three distinctive political formations of the 1950s and the 1960s were very reminiscent of Greek politics over a generation back, and the same was valid for the support given by different population groups to the parties of the Right, Center, and Left. Generally, during the early postwar period unsolved issues, structural deficiencies and legacies of the interwar period resurged in the surface. It is helpful for our investigation to make a leap to the 1920s and discover how the refugees of the population exchange of 1923 were connected with the Gastarbeiter of the 1960s.

I.B. REFUGEE PARENTS, GASTARBEITER OFFSPRING

According to the recruitment data of the German Commission in Athens, 60% of the Greek emigrants to West Germany in the 1960s left from the primarily rural regions of Epirus, Macedonia and Thrace. Even as late as the years 1970-77, 68% of the emigrants left from these three border regions in the North of the country⁷⁵. In order to understand the specificity of the area of Northern Greece, apart from looking only at the tremendous destruction during the Civil War, we should go back to the tragic consequences of the end of the Eastern Question in Greece.

The Balkan Wars of 1912-1913 resulted in an increase in both the population and the territory of the country. More importantly, the influx of more than a million refugees in the aftermath of the defeat in Asia Minor in 1922 was detrimental. To make matters worse, political polarity and instability, which had been prevalent for decades, made the state’s reaction slow and at times insufficient⁷⁶.

As an overarching reasoning and always mindful not to risk anachronisms, I find commonalities in the way the refugees of 1923 and the Gastarbeiter of the 1960s were perceived by the Greek state. Clearly, they first and foremost constituted a problem:

⁷⁴ John R. Lampe, and Ulf Brunnbauer, eds. *The Routledge Handbook of Balkan and Southeast European History*. Routledge, 2020, p.423-424. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9780429464799>.

⁷⁵ Rossetos Fakiolas, and Russell King. “Emigration, Return, Immigration: A Review and Evaluation of Greece’s Postwar Experience of International Migration.” *International Journal of Population Geography* 2, no. 2 (June 1996): 173-4.

⁷⁶ Alexandra Barmpouti, *Post-War Eugenics, Reproductive Choices and Population Policies in Greece, 1950s-1980s*. New York, NY: Springer Berlin Heidelberg, 2019,198.

they were precarious, needy and vulnerable. Materially, this meant they had to become self-sustainable. The uprooted refugees could achieve that by cultivating their own plot of land, while the unemployed Gastarbeiter had to make ends meet by working in a factory. In both cases, the risk of infiltration of this newly formed proletariat was present and thus both the inter-war governments and their postwar successors were experiencing their little red scares influenced by their respective polarised contexts. Dissident voices were closely monitored, and subversive actions were readily penalised.

Nevertheless, both the refugees and the Gastarbeiter were also viewed as an asset, as a “gift to the Greeks”. The refugees of 1923 were educated and skilful patriots, expected to invest their entrepreneurial spirit to the benefit of the Greek economy. Equally, the Gastarbeiter were the youthful, strongest and healthiest part of the population, sent abroad in a traineeship, in order to acquire skills and capital to be invested to the motherland. Moreover, both groups were targeted by the state as special recipients of welfare and propaganda.

After the end of the Greco-Turkish War of 1919-1922, feverous negotiations resulted to the 1923 Treaty of Lausanne. In the Convention Concerning the Exchange of Greek and Turkish Populations a compulsory population exchange was agreed upon. Ultimately, between 350,000 and 500,000 Muslims migrated to Turkey, and about 1.2 million Orthodox people moved to Greece. To ensure adequate compensation and resettlement of refugees, Athens and Ankara agreed to a Mixed Commission under the League of Nations, which included Greek and Turkish representatives as well as delegates from neutral member states⁷⁷.

After the population exchange, 638.253 Greek refugees from Asia Minor, Pontos and other areas settled in Macedonia, making up 45% of the total population of the region. In some prefectures there was a higher concentration, like in Kilkis (72%), Drama (70%), Kavala, Pella and more than 40% in Thessaloniki and Serres. The introduction of new cultivations like cotton and sugar cane together with the mechanization of the production did not radically change the situation among small

⁷⁷ Erica Chenoweth, Adria Lawrence, and Belfer Center for Science and International Affairs, eds. *Rethinking Violence: States and Non-State Actors in Conflict*. Belfer Center Studies in International Security. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2010, 127.

producers in the post war period. The fall in the prices of tobacco, which was predominant among other crops, further intensified the malaise of the farmers⁷⁸.

Macedonia, part of the Greek territory since the Balkan Wars of 1912-13 and a fertile “breadbasket”, became the depository for East Thracian, Pontic and Asia Minor refugees. Many of them had been farmers, and a badly needed land reform was prompted by their settlement in the region. In the cultural realm, their settlement contributed to the creation of new social categories, like local or indigenous.

The refugees were often unwelcomed, since some locals regarded them as less Greek than themselves or, worse, as total “others” who came to take away their land. The Greek government reasserted its claims over the territory by concentrating refugee settlement. Through the Refugee Settlement Commission, the government provided each refugee family with a cow, a horse, a house and a plot to cultivate⁷⁹.

Both for the League of Nations and for the Greek interwar governments, the Asia Minor refugees were viewed as a human resource that could be used for the benefit of Greece’s security in hellenizing Macedonia and Western Thrace by replacing the departed Muslim and Slav minorities in crucial border areas.

In order to limit potential radicalism or communism, the other great concern was the formation of a petty bourgeois class through government-backed redistribution of land. The settlement project was carried out by the Refugee Settlement Commission, an international body established under the auspices of the League of Nations from December 1923 to December 1930. Although it recognized that among the refugees the proportion of town dwellers was larger than the farmers, its program deliberately emphasized agricultural settlement. 86.35% of the total expenditure was invested in the rural settlement of the 46% of the refugees.

Although the increase in tobacco production in the 1920s was hailed as a great success, it came at a price after the economic crisis in 1929. Gross income per hectare of cereal crops was much lower than of tobacco, and owing to the limited size of their holdings, production could not meet the family’s needs⁸⁰. Later again, after the war

⁷⁸ Emile Kolodny, “L’émigration macédonienne vers l’Allemagne Fédérale : le cas de Néokaisaria (Pierie).” *Méditerranée* 41, no. 1 (1981): 23-24. <https://doi.org/10.3406/medit.1981.1972>.

⁷⁹ Anastasia N. Karakasidou, *Fields of Wheat, Hills of Blood: Passages to Nationhood in Greek Macedonia, 1870-1990*, University of Chicago Press, 2009, 145-147.

was over, stocks of unsold tobacco were piling up in Greece, reaching the alarming sum of 45,000 tons. In Northern Greece, tobacco growers began voicing strongly worded criticism against the government and Marshall Plan⁸¹.

The experts of the OECD writing in 1962 described the difficulties of agricultural development in Greece. The natural conditions were creating obstacles which were aggravated by the predominance of very small farms and their excessive fragmentation. As they wrote, “nearly 90% of farms accounting for half the cultivated land occupy an area of less than 5 hectares and on average, each farm is split up into more than six separate lots. half of the total cultivated area is given over to cereal production. The other annual crops occupy roughly a further 30%; of these cotton and tobacco are by far the most important, owing to their contribution to export earnings and the fact that they provide livelihood for more than 300.000 families”⁸².

Apparently, policymaking made in the 1920s still determined the fate of farmers in the 1960s. Many of my narrators who later became Gastarbeiter in West Germany remember that being unable to be sustained only through their production, many families completed their income from agriculture with other activities. As Aliko remembers her mother, a widow with three daughters, “[she] was the bravest widow of all! She brought us up with the tobacco etc., but God Almighty we were never deprived of anything. Naturally, not wealthy, but we always had food. In the winter she would work as a cook in a foundation, and the director would tell her to take two plates for us too. We would also cultivate tobacco.”⁸³

Many refugees did not enjoy any benefit from the relief services and were left alone to survive. Elena describes the fate of her mother who came as a refugee from Pontos, and how “while they were coming to Greece on the boat, they all died, and she was left alone. She was nine years old, and they sent her as a servant in wealthy houses. When she grew up a bit, she would also cook, wash the dishes. My mum had difficult times and then she had nervous problems. She had two half siblings in Kastoria. And

⁸⁰ Elisabeth Kontogiorgi, “Economic consequences following Refugee Settlement in Greek Macedonia (1923-1932)” in Renée Hirschon(ed.), *Crossing the Aegean. An Appraisal of the 1923 Compulsory Population Exchange Between Greece and Turkey*. Berghahn, New York-Oxford, 2003,63-64& 69.

⁸¹ Andreas Stergiou, *Greece's Ostpolitik: Dealing With the "Devil."*, Cham: Springer International Publishing, 2021, 45. <https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-61129-3>.

⁸² OECD (1962), *OECD Economic Surveys: Greece 1962*, OECD Publishing, Paris,p.6. https://doi.org.eui.idm.oclc.org/10.1787/eco_surveys-grc-1962-en.

⁸³ Interview with Aliko and Kostas.

because she was fed up with being a maid, she quit and went to stay with her half-brother who assaulted her even though he was married. And thus, my mum married my father in an arranged marriage, because he was a widower with two children.”⁸⁴

Kostis was born in 1931 in a village near Drama, in Northeastern Greece. As he describes, his village had a population of 5.000 people and had a tradition in music with a Music School established in 1906, when it was still under Ottoman rule. After the population exchange of 1923, three neighborhoods that hosted people from different backgrounds were created. As he narrates, “there were two settlements (synoikismoi), one from Thrace, one from Pontus and the village were locals (ntopioi). Neither Bulgarian nor Turkish-speaking, plainly locals since the village was built”.

In some regions, the structures of economy were still functioning in traditional modes that were left over from the Ottoman period. Andreas, born in Arkochori in the province of Veroia, describes his father’s choice to jump from livestock to entrepreneurship, “my grandpa, Apostolis, had 5000 goats, and the village was property of a Turkish bey who would come from Veroia once per month to take the harats. My grandpa would send my dad from Naousa to Chalkidiki for the winter with the herd, because it’s warmer. But my father left, and he went to Naousa to a very nice gentleman, where he learnt the art of tailor. With the money he took from his property, he opened a big tailor’s shop in Naousa, and he was a partner with the Lampropoulos brothers in Thessaloniki.”

Voula⁸⁵, born in Nea Kavala in the Kilkis prefecture, narrates that her mother’s family came from Lampsakos, near Canakkale, and her father’s from Kesan. They were first settled in Kavala and when her father was 15 and her mother 11, they moved to the village of Nea Kavala in the province of Kilkis. Some Italian architects made those villages, where the lake Arzanou-Matovou used to stand. They were epoikismos projects. They created farms, so that the settlers would cultivate the land and have their own houses. However, it proved difficult for them to abandon their urban habits and to become farmers from one day to the next. As she illustrates, “when my people the Kavaliots would go to Axioupoli, the locals would be scared! They wanted ouzo,

⁸⁴ Interview with Elena.

⁸⁵ Throughout the text the name Voula is used as a pseudonym, after the narrator’s wish in the end of our interview not to use her original name.

tsipouro, meze. They were from the city, not villagers. They would even go to their fields with the caminetto to make coffee and drink with the neighbors”.

In the fertile regions of Serres and Kavala the plots were very small, and the families settled on them cultivated high value crops, mainly tobacco. Kystallenia remembers that her parents were born in Eastern Thrace, and they settled as refugees in the village of Koumaria, near Serres, where her two brothers and herself were born in the early 1930s. She did not go to school because, as she narrates, “I had a stepfather who didn’t care for us. We were working in the fields, we were orphans, we had hardships. We were very poor, we were cultivating wheat, corn and cotton, but we had a few hectares only”.

I.C. BEARING THE BARE NECESSITIES

The end of the Civil War found Greece almost ruined, given that 9,000 villages, 23% of all buildings and 65% of industrial establishments were destroyed⁸⁶. The total of the Civil War casualties was approximately 108.000 fatalities for a population of 7.330.000⁸⁷. The last three years of the war added around 45.000 dead to the 15,000 victims of the battle of Athens in 1944. There were also some 55.000 fatalities as a result of reprisals. Following the half million dead in World War II and the Nazi Occupation, the final toll of this terrible decade in a population of less than 7.5 million was indeed heavy⁸⁸.

In Dimitris Papadopoulos’ study about the border region of Prespa in Northwestern Greece, we see the devastating effect of the civil war in infrastructure and population. While the 1940 census recorded over 10.000 people in 22 Prespa villages, in 1951 the population dropped to less than 3.000. By the 1950s, most of these deserted villages were accessible only by boat, due to the authorities’ indifference in reconstructing the damaged road network⁸⁹.

⁸⁶ Costis Hadjimichalis, *Uneven Development and Regionalism: State, Territory and Class in Southern Europe*, Croom Helm, 1987, 16.

⁸⁷ Kalyvas, *The Logic*, 248-249.

⁸⁸ Ioannis D. Stefanidis “Greece from occupation and resistance to civil war, 1941– 1949” in Lampe, John R., and Ulf Brunnbauer, eds. *The Routledge Handbook of Balkan and Southeast European History*. Routledge, 2020, p.417. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9780429464799>.

⁸⁹ Dimitris C. Papadopoulos, “Ecologies of Ruin: (Re)Bordering, Ruination, and Internal Colonialism in Greek Macedonia, 1913-2013.” *International Journal of Historical Archaeology* 20, no. 3 (September 2016): 634. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10761-016-0364-3>.

Although the American economic aid was initially intended to promote industrial development, its distribution from the Central Bank to the large National Bank of Greece favored agriculture instead⁹⁰. However, the mechanization in agriculture, poor rural living conditions and the new road system resulted in accelerated urbanization⁹¹.

The balance between urban and rural populations was reversed between 1951 and 1971, from 38 per cent and 48 per cent, respectively, to 53 per cent and 35 per cent, a shift accompanied by an increase in small service-sector businesses⁹².

The historian Efi Avdela evaluated how in the press of the time there was a parallel yet contradictory debate about urbanization as flight to civilization. While some still perceived the city as a place of perdition, the majority viewed it as a vector of modernization. Throughout this period, discourses of "dangerous hobbies", crime and morality were discourses of both material and spiritual development, entangled in a web of hope and fear⁹³.

Juliet Du Boulay in her 1974 study *Portrait of a Greek Mountain Village* claimed that in the period following the civil war the living standards and the expectations of the villagers who had tried life in the city were changing. As a result, the farmers, instead of the hard work in the fields that barely secured them survival, advocated for less working hours and better living conditions in their homes, together with new habits and a familiarization with the urban lifestyle⁹⁴.

Accordingly, T. Sanders, an American sociologist who studied the social transformation of rural Greece in the '50s, wrote in his 1962 study that around 700.000-750.000 people moved from their villages, but because their mobility was temporary, they were not embedded in the host urban society. However, one or two years of life in the city were enough to influence their psychology, mainly the female

⁹⁰ Othon Anastasakis, "Greece's Cold War: Exceptionalism in Southeastern Europe" in Lampe, John R., and Ulf Brunnbauer, eds. *The Routledge Handbook of Balkan and Southeast European History*. Routledge, 2020, p.499. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9780429464799>.

⁹¹ M. P. Drury and Costis Hadjimichalis. "Uneven Development and Regionalism: State, Territory and Class in Southern Europe." *The Geographical Journal* 154, no. 1 (March 1988): 109. <https://doi.org/10.2307/633485>.

⁹² Stone, *The Oxford Handbook*, 511.

⁹³ Efi Avdela, "Loisirs dangereux : modernité, moralité et criminalité juvénile en Grèce dans les années 1950-1960", in Robert Beck, and Anna Madœuf eds. *Divertissements et loisirs dans les sociétés urbaines à l'époque moderne et contemporaine*. Tours: Presses universitaires François-Rabelais, 2005.

⁹⁴ Juliet du Boulay, *Portrait of a Greek Mountain Village*, Oxford University Press, 1974, mentioned in Βύρων Κοτζαμάνης, "Η κινητικότητα του αγροτικού πληθυσμού στη δεκαετία 1940-50 και η αναδιάρθρωση του κοινωνικο-δημογραφικού χάρτη της μεταπολεμικής Ελλάδας: πρώτη προσέγγιση", *Επιθεώρηση κοινωνικών ερευνών*, Τομ. 77, 1990 <http://dx.doi.org/10.12681/grsr.915>. p.122.

and young population. They got acquainted with new ideas for clothing, beauty, amusement and relations with their parents⁹⁵.

Efi Avdela's work on delinquent youth and honor crimes sheds light on the transformation of the social mores of Greek society, in tune with processes like urbanization and sexual liberation. The so-called "dissolution of morals", especially among the youth, was regarded as the product of both the familiarity with violence during the long decade of war and of the new urban living conditions⁹⁶. As far as gender roles and representations are concerned, honor was intrinsically connected with female sexual discipline, while masculinity was identified with a man's ability to protect the honor of his family and thus his own reputation⁹⁷.

As Stratos Dordanas' study on the red-light district of Thessaloniki showed, after the end of the war, the state made a dynamic comeback towards the regulation of social morality. The example was set by the developed Western world, and the Greek state wanted to promote Greece to the outside world⁹⁸. In the meanwhile, as Konstantina Botsiou argues, "the everyday hero was the 'unpretentious' man of the land, who now became the new lower middle class that seized the urban centers, while lionized were the people who 'minded their own business'"⁹⁹.

The type of agriculture that emerged was based on small entrepreneurial units characterized by meagre and non-competitive production while being dependent on state interference and control¹⁰⁰. Clientelism acquired momentum during the pre-dictatorial period especially through employment 'favors' and the allocation of public resources and public works¹⁰¹.

⁹⁵ T. Sanders, *Rainbow in the Rock. The people of Rural Greece*, Cambridge, 1962, mentioned in the same article as above, p.121.

⁹⁶ Avdela, "Loisirs dangereux".

⁹⁷ Efi Avdela, "« Pour cause d'honneur » : violence interpersonnelle et rapports de genre en Grèce dans les années 1950-1960", in Christine Bard et al., *Femmes et justice pénale: XIXe-XXe siècles*. Rennes: Presses universitaires de Rennes, 2002.

⁹⁸ Stratos N. Dordanas, "'Common Women' or 'Women of Free Morals': The Suppression of Prostitution in Post-War Thessaloniki (1945–1955)," *Byzantine and Modern Greek Studies Vol. 35 No. 2* (2011), p.231.

⁹⁹ Konstantina Botsiou, "The interface between politics and culture in Greece" in Stephan, Alexander, ed. *The Americanization of Europe: Culture, Diplomacy, and Anti-Americanism after 1945*. New York, NY: Berghahn Books, 2006, p.283-284.

¹⁰⁰ Theodore Coulombis et al. eds. *Greece in the Twentieth Century*. Portland, Or: Frank Cass, 2003, 158-9.

¹⁰¹ Judt, *Postwar*, 210.

After the war, despite the fact that many farmers left their land, it was common to have a split rural family, where the head of the family or the eldest migrated, and the rest of the family members together with the elderly kept cultivating the land. In its turn, the rural exodus created an increased urbanization and thus a construction fever in the absence of a state policy for housing¹⁰².

Most of the families were bound both by agricultural exploitations and by the cultural values related to the preservation of the family fortune. A practice to maintain the family patrimony intact was for women to receive their share of the family's wealth, not in land or livestock but rather as movable property. This share was usually given as a dowry, and when it took the form of cash the family had to sell either goods or labor in order to secure that money¹⁰³.

Emigration rates were highest where population increase was particularly rapid during the 1950s, where households were larger than average, where standards of literacy and schooling were low, where unemployment rates were high, and where a high proportion of the working population was engaged in agriculture¹⁰⁴.

Before reaching adulthood and having migration as an alternative to the scarcity of resources available in the underdeveloped Greek countryside, my narrators were bound to their families' fates. For example, the practice of exchanging goods was in use during all the years of hardships as an alternative method of sustainability for the villagers.

Long after the war was over, the wages for services would be paid in goods instead of money, as Elena, born in the early 1940s in the village of Filotas in the Florina region, describes, "we did not have money because mainly they would pay my father in kind, like wheat. And our parents had this habit to take wholesale, much sugar, much flour, they would take them from the Union (enosi). They would give them tobacco and take those goods and only 50 drachmas in cash."

¹⁰² Σ. Αντωνοπούλου, "Εκβιομηχάνιση, αγροτική έξοδος και το ζήτημα της στέγης στις χώρες της περιφέρειας κατά τη μεταπολεμική περίοδο: η ελληνική εμπειρία". *Επιθεώρηση Κοινωνικών Ερευνών* 69 (1988), 156-176.

¹⁰³ Konstantina Bada, and Pothiti Hantzaroula, "Family Strategies, Work, and Welfare Policies toward Waged Domestic Labor in Twentieth-Century Greece." *Journal of Modern Greek Studies* 35, no. 1 (2017): 21. <https://doi.org/10.1353/mgs.2017.0001>.

¹⁰⁴ Fakiolas and King. "Emigration, Return, Immigration", 173-4.

Elena belongs to the primary school graduates, because the financial situation of her family was relatively good compared with the rest of the villagers, given that her father was a field guard. However, by a twist of fate, when the breadwinner of the family died things changed radically for their six-membered household. As she remembers, “some people did not have oil to put in their food, we had a whole tin. We lived very well because my dad was a field guard. But when he died, we lived through some poverty. He died in 1956 from Echinococcus. He went to Thessaloniki for a surgery, but it didn’t work. And when he died, we needed to build a house and cut bricks. We would mix straw with mud and water; my brother would step on it to mix it with his latex boots. And then he would put the mixture in wooden forms, leave it in the sun to dry and with them we built the walls. We did not have money to buy glass for the window, and we would put thick sacks to avoid the cold and being seen from outside. Later, we managed to put glass windows”.

An important gap existed in means of collective consumption between urban and rural areas, including housing, health facilities, educational opportunities, employment diversification, recreation and the position of women¹⁰⁵. Elena remembers the daily life in their village in the late 1950s, which was quite lively on Sundays, the day when people wore their formal clothes and allowed themselves some little luxury, with barely any money earned: “we would go to the fields for pocket money, because our village was a brides’ market (νυφοπάζαρο). Every Sunday, my brother would take me and my sister out for a walk and we would go, sit on a table and order vermouth, liquor banana. We were making straws for an extra income, and one year I earned a lot, 7.000 drachmas. But we were not clever. We spent that money on our dowry, to buy textiles, damascene, velvet etc, instead of buying a flat in the neighboring town!”.

Girls’ roles were strongly circumscribed in the patriarchal institution of the family, and after finishing school they had to get married. For young Greek women, studying at university not only paved the road to a career but was also a means to escape their gendered ‘fate’: to be under either their father’s or their husband’s sway¹⁰⁶.

However, the way to higher education was open only to a minority. The percentage of illiterate people over 10 years old was 24% in 1951. Ten years later, in 1961, 43.4%

¹⁰⁵ Judt, *Postwar*, 504.

¹⁰⁶ Robert Gildea, James Mark and Anette Warring. *Europe's 1968: Voices of Revolt*. Oxford University Press. 2013, 70.

were primary school graduates, and 46.8% did not finish primary school. Out of the total of the active population, 27.3% had a lower education and only 2.5% had finished middle education. The 58.3% were farmers without any specialization¹⁰⁷.

Eleni, born in 1932 in the village of Polymylos near Kozani, was the youngest daughter of refugee parents who came from Pontus and settled in the village after 1923. Due to the war she lost her father, and she started working since she was 10 years old. As she recounts, “I went to school until the 3rd class, then the Germans came. It was the mess (anakatosoura). My father died when he was 62, when the Germans came, and my mum was left alone with us. We had an old Turkish house. My mum, how would she know, she was a simple woman, would send me to the cows and not to school. Yes, and you see at school I would take 10 with merit, a good student, I don’t know how I would be, if I would continue. My brother would ask me if I studied, and I knew everything by heart. I had an elder brother and a sister, and I’m the youngest one.”

Poppy’s parents were also refugees; her father came from Asia Minor and her mother from Eastern Thrace. They settled in Agia Kyriaki in the province of Kilkis, where Poppy was born in 1938. They were five siblings, and Poppy did not finish school. She quit after the fifth class of primary school. In her account she is furious with her mother, who following a common practice of the time “would keep me at home all the time for the chores, sometimes she was sick. I was ashamed when I was going to school and the rest of the classroom was more advanced, and I would go back home and cry. All my siblings finished primary school, only I didn’t because I was the eldest of the sisters and I should help with the chores. I was 12, and I would knead bread.” Poppy also had her experience as an apprentice in a seamstress’ studio. However, her family had no money to pay the fees, so she would work in the seamstress’ vineyard in return for her apprenticeship. In her own words, “nothing is for free, you need to work for everything. And those years we worked a lot.”

Illiteracy remained high, affecting almost one out of four Greeks in 1951. Access to tertiary education continued to be “reserved” for the privileged offspring of

¹⁰⁷ Σ. Μπαμπανάσης, «Η διαμόρφωση της φτώχειας στην Ελλάδα του 20ου αιώνα (1900-1981)», *Επιθεώρηση Κοινωνικών Ερευνών* 42 (1981),135.

established upper and upcoming urban-middle classes that could afford the “economic time” entailed in the long road to higher education¹⁰⁸.

For example, Kyriakos, born in a village of Lesbos island in 1942, remembers with regret that when he was thirteen years old, he applied to the Theological School of Patmos (the island where John the Evangelist wrote his *Apocalypse*). Every year around 120-150 students would apply, and they would admit only 25. Indeed, he went to Patmos with his mother to pass the exams and when they announced the results, they told him that he was ranked 18th out of the 25. However, because he was studying very hard during summer, his eyes had a disease, which he needed to fix before starting school there. Unfortunately, when they returned to Lesbos, his father couldn't afford to send him again back to Patmos, since he had already rented a field for 2.000 drachmas to pay their tickets the first time. The only path open for him now was to start an apprenticeship and win his own bread, “and thus, when I was fourteen my mum took me to one co-villager of ours who had a carpenter's lab in Mytilene to learn the craft.”

During the 1950s, Greece was in the midst of a massive population movement from the underdeveloped countryside towards urban areas. The Greek government provided limited assistance to families and individuals facing the painful personal dislocations of internal migration¹⁰⁹. Back in their villages, the presence of the guerrillas provided local communities with an unprecedented opportunity to settle scores¹¹⁰.

Kitsa was born in 1941 in Ampeli, a village in the province of Serres. Her father was killed during the civil war. As she recalls, “my dad was one of the rare property owners of Ampeli (noikokyraios). He had a shop in the village, he had a big house, they were very wealthy. And they killed him one night, we didn't find him. In forty days' time, they even burned our house, they hated my father, they were jealous. [...] My mum around dawn prepared some clothes, we were five little children, the eldest was 8-9 years old and the youngest six months old. And my mum woke up my eldest brother and told him to take us downstairs but somehow, he forgot me. My mum

¹⁰⁸ Botsiou, “The Interface”, 283-284.

¹⁰⁹ James Edward Miller, *The United States and the Making of Modern Greece: History and Power, 1950-1974*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2009, 68-69.

¹¹⁰ Tsoutsoumpis, Spyros. *A History of the Greek Resistance in the Second World War: The People's Armies*. Cultural History of Modern War. Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2016, 260.

started screaming and climbed the burning steps and threw me off the window to save me and she also fell on a bunch of wood in the yard.”

As Kitsa remembers, “since they burned our house, we complained to the mayor and they sent us to Serres, where we lived with 16 families in a tobacco warehouse. We stayed some years in Serres and, then, on her own, my mum re-built the burnt walls with mud bricks, and she hired a worker only for the roof. I had a mum who was really a hero. At that time, we were little and we were still going to school. Before we went to the tobacco warehouse, they put us in an old inn (hani). We were little and didn’t understand, but my brother was hungry, and he begged for some food.”

Kostas born in 1950 in Alonia near Veroia and his father, an ELAS fighter, was in prison, “because of the traitors in the village. The priest of our village was collaborating with the Nazis. He would pull our leg and he would tell my mum, Euthimia do not worry, Avraam will soon be out of prison. He was in prison in Meliki, and my poor mother would hope today, tomorrow, today, tomorrow. In the meanwhile, the priest would go and give testaments to execute him.”

The postwar order used as ideological cement an ultra-nationalism that was both virulently anti-communist and explicitly founded on religion. The authorities also implemented widespread censorship that maintained rural dwellers in ignorance and thus reinforced a traditional notion of order and a respect for hierarchy. Nevertheless, when it proved necessary to further intimidate the population, paramilitary anticommunist organizations with their origins in German occupation and civil war took action¹¹¹.

The legacy of his father as a communist meant that the whole family suffered and was bullied. As he recalls, “I grew up with the police in my house, with KKE and communism in my house. Even if I wanted to forget, the policemen would remind me. They would come and annoy my father once in a while. When I was in the first class of high school in Meliki, we would cycle from our village Alonia. Here came a policeman, we were calling them Baskines back then, Spyros from Creta, fat and rosy with a moustache. He approached me and asked me if I had a license for my bike, and when I replied no, he confiscated it! Only because I was my father’s son. And quite

¹¹¹ Helen Graham, and Alejandro Quiroga. “After the fear was over? What came after dictatorships in Spain, Greece and Portugal” in Dan Stone(ed.) *The Oxford Handbook of Postwar European History*. Oxford, 2012,509.

often they would come and listen to what radio station my father was listening to. He would listen to Tirana, Moscow, Sophia, I don't know exactly, and they would come to listen."

In family history, the concept of "strategy" reflects how individuals adapt their activities to those of other family members and to economic opportunities so as to ensure an adequate income¹¹². Kostas recalls that the youngest children of the family, "were brought up by my grandma, since our parents were working in the fields all day long. And since my grandma spoke only pontiaka, my sister and I learned to speak like this. When I went to school I had a very nice teacher, and he made us write a whole page full of "o". I wrote a page, and I finished earlier than the others, and I said in pontiaka "teacher, I'm done" (deskale, eteleiosa). And he smiled and replied to me in pontiaka, write it once more". Even though, as Kostas admits, they "lived through difficult years. In 60-61, when I was going to high school, I was wearing one pair of trousers, I didn't have another". Kostas managed to continue his education and to graduate from a technical school as an electrician.

Andreas was born in 1942 in Arkochori, a mountainous village near Naousa. In his case, during the absence of his father, his sister was forced to sustain the family income by working in a manufacturing plant. As he remembers, "I was 5, the other 7, the other 9 and my elder sister who was 11 years old at the time, took a job in the Lanaras' factory to bring us up. Anyway, they took my dad away to Poland, and we grew up for some years as little poor kids, like orphans. When my father came back around ten years later, we re-opened the tailor's shop. There in Poland he would work, shovel coal into wagons. And we wrote many letters, and the Red Cross, with the signature of the King and Karamanlis, brought him back. In the meanwhile, we returned to the village and an uncle was also helping us. We planted apple trees, fig trees, walnut trees, pistachio trees and cherry trees, my mum would dry tomatoes and we had a pig for the winter, we lived quite well."

As Venken and Röger propose, "children tend to treat separation from their parents more seriously than adults, and the importance of strong emotions such as fear and

¹¹²Theo Engelen, Ad Knotter, Jan Kok, and Richard Paping. "Labor Strategies of Families: An Introduction." *The History of the Family* 9, no. 2 (January 2004): 124-5.

mourning is often only comprehensible to them through their interpretation of the way adults articulate similar feelings”¹¹³.

Andreas recalls that “one night in 1947 we were sleeping upstairs; downstairs we had the mules; we hear at twelve, one or two at night, Ta-ta-ta-ta-ta, ta-ta-ta-ta-ta. A trumpet was informing the communists inside Naousa that they were coming from the mountain. 3.500 bandits would come down from the mountain, a whole army and they were sounding the trumpet. [...] They knocked on our door, we started crying and my mum told my dad to climb and hide in the attic, between the tiles. But instead of climbing from the balcony, he locked himself in the bedroom. There came 10-12 bandits and a short woman with crossed cartridges on her chest. She cried “where is your husband?”. They went upstairs, broke the door and found my dad. My mum gave him a blanket and we were all crying, we were terrified.”

Guerrillas believed that their sacrifices gave them the moral high ground *vis-à-vis* civilians and entitled them to their unlimited help. Conversely, civilians who had seen their properties time and again destroyed by Axis troops and witnessed the guerrillas’ inability to protect them, increasingly came to resent such attitudes, especially after the onset of the civil war¹¹⁴.

Poppy was born in 1938 in a village near Serres and also suffered from night raids, when “the partisans would come at night and take our bread. Back then, our mums prepared 10-12 loafs. They would come with big sacks and put bread, sheep, animals, anything inside. One night we were sleeping in the living room (sala), our parents on the bed and we the kids, two boys together, three girls together on a mattress ... The partisans came and they started taking the bread, when the one said, ‘here there are many kids and tomorrow they will be hungry’, and he was counting our little heads. We were very scared, and we were hiding under the blankets. And he said, ‘alright, let’s leave them one loaf’. They wouldn’t leave anything behind, and then, they would also kill the ones who refused to give them.”

Poppy and her family were afraid, and thus they left as refugees to Chersos, a big village with an army, where all the populations of the surrounding villages were

¹¹³ Machteld Venken, and Maren Röger. “Growing up in the Shadow of the Second World War: European Perspectives.” *European Review of History: Revue Européenne d’histoire* 22, no. 2 (March 4, 2015): 204. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13507486.2015.1008410>.

¹¹⁴ Tsoutsoumpis, *The People’s Armies*, 259.

gathered. Whoever had two rooms, offered the one to the refugees. While they were in Chersos, they had 30-35 sheep, and her brother would take them into the mountains together with someone else's. The partisans took them all, and her brother was hidden to escape. He wasn't 15 years old yet. Poppy's parents went the next morning to check, and her brother was crying, saying "mum, they took the sheep. It doesn't matter my boy; they didn't take you".

In the general unruliness and chaos of the war, many innocent people die, as a collateral loss. Aliki was born in Katerini, and she was an orphan since she was 4.5 years old. Her father died and left his three daughters orphans. As she narrates, "he probably died out of sadness. Because the partisans came and killed his brother, and for three months my father wouldn't eat. This happened in the civil war, they killed my uncle, with whom my dad was very close, they were of course 8 siblings but with my uncle...And when he would come on a white horse with his boots, like a cowboy, he would throw us money, he would throw us candies. And then, when he was killed, they hid it from my dad, but when he found out, three months, four, he ate nothing and he finished his life in his shop, he was a tin-maker. My uncle was very handsome (leventis), you would see him as a man, as handsome, as stunning (kouklos)! With green, blue-green eyes, and he would wear those boots! He had four daughters and two sons, six children".

Fear, anxiety, stress and insecurity reigned in people's hearts and minds. Children were also part of the harsh reality of the war as resistance fighters, orphans, political prisoners or evacuees. On top of all, they constituted a special recipient group of propaganda¹¹⁵. A factor we should not underestimate is the internal dynamics of the villages that were keen on scapegoating. Often, villagers were bullying their co-villagers who chose different political affiliations and did not hesitate to hurt them in public.

Theo was born in 1930 in Polymylos near Kozani and was a young boy when his father joined ELAS as a partisan. It seems that the pressure in the village against him was tight, since Theo feels the need to defend his father's choices, "my father was the most peaceful person in the world, he didn't hurt anybody. He might have killed German but no Greek whatsoever. He says and he said, and he admits. And then he

¹¹⁵ Reinisch and White, *The Disentanglement*, 271.

was sent into exile and here in the police station they were beating him, the policemen. We went through all this, God almighty all this in our lives. [...] Here the villagers would go to the leftists, and they would beat them up. Now they die and we come to know it all. We never hurt anybody. If I could help, I would help, if not I wouldn't bother them.”.

Both Eastern and West European authorities aimed to create homogenous nation-states in the name of national security after World War II. Postwar migration policies, including expulsion of undesirables or repatriation of exiles, foreign labor recruitment and granting of asylum, all served the goal of national security.

As Tara Zahra touchingly describes, “It was not possible for many Europeans to return home in 1945, at least not to the societies or families they had left behind. Nor could the family be a tranquil refuge from mass politics. The problem was not only that children and parents had grown apart, that homes had been looted or bombed, and that neighbours and relatives had been murdered. The significance of the family itself had changed, as had basic ideas about what constitutes a happy home”¹¹⁶.

¹¹⁶ Zahra, Tara. *The Lost Children: Reconstructing Europe's Families after World War II*. Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 2011,245.

CHAPTER TWO: CATALOGUES OF FLEEING: DEBATES AND THE FIRST CHALLENGES OF THE GASTARBEITER EXODUS (1960-1963)

Due to food shortage, long queues for food supplies had been a daily routine during the period of Nazi Occupation. The journalist of an article in *Avgi* dated February 1961 drew a comparison with his contemporaries waiting long hours in order to get inscribed in the “catalogues of fleeing”¹¹⁷.

When the bilateral labor recruitment agreement was signed in Bonn in 1960, Greece had high hopes for the prospects it opened up for further collaboration between the two countries. In the fifteen years since the end of the Second World War, the former enemies put the past behind them and opened up new pathways of political rapprochement and commercial exchanges. Economic co-operation was an *acquis* for the Greek side which searched continuously for foreign investments, markets for its products and willing bankers for its loans. In the meanwhile, politicians envisaged Greece’s accession to the European Economic Community and searched for useful allies, who could promote the Greek cause.

Relief from growing unemployment and political upheaval was one of the major incentives of the Greek government when it signed the labor recruitment agreement. The idea behind this new type of organized migration was to transform unemployed and poorly educated farmers into a high-skilled workforce, aiming to create a Greek economic miracle. As a general rule, the *Gastarbeiter* were considered as a buffer for the growing West German economy. Here, it is argued that the Greek state conceived its *Gastarbeiter* as a tool to achieve high development through their remittances and professional skills without any cost on its part. Nevertheless, not all parties agreed on the utility of migration. A heated debate in the Parliament and the press exorcized it as a curse or lauded it as a blessing.

In practice, a huge rural exodus meant that villagers were so desperate that they would take any offer to escape their misery. Obviously, the recruitment process was not neutral but rather exploited for micropolitical interests and favoritism. Through its anti-communist apparatus, the Greek state blocked access to migration for an important segment of the Greek population. No matter how discriminative, this strategy was in tune with the Cold War anxieties penetrating political discourse and

¹¹⁷ *Avgi*, 7/2/61, p.1.

policymaking in both countries. However, the alternative ways open to candidate migrants sabotaged the authorities' scrutiny of the candidate profiles and created headaches for the Greek consular authorities on the West German soil. Potential communist infiltration was a constant fear of the bureaucrats and thus took priority over the accommodation and welfare offered to the Greek Gastarbeiter.

II.A. MODUS OPERANDI

On the 30th of March 1960, the bilateral labor recruitment agreement between the Greek and the West German government was signed in Bonn. According to the text of the agreement, both governments were “driven by the desire to strengthen and promote relations between their peoples, in the spirit of European solidarity for the benefit of both, in the pursuit of a high standard of employment and the full exploitation of the potential of production, in the belief that these efforts serve the common interests of these Peoples and promote their economic and social progress, and mediation for the placement of Greek workers in the Federal Republic of Germany”.

In his article, Apostolopoulos examined the normalization of Greek-German relations after the Second World War. Following the end of the German occupation of Greece on the 12th of October 1944, both nations showed a willingness to put the trauma of war and the occupation behind them. The benefits of migration were threefold, since the Greek Gastarbeiter were given a way out of poverty, the Greek government covered a part of its trade deficit by receiving foreign currency and, at the same time, West Germany solved its manpower shortage by importing working hands¹¹⁸.

Greek emigration rose from around 20.000 people a year in the 1950s to 100.000 in 1963. West Germany absorbed the lion's share of these migration flows. While two-thirds of Greek emigration was overseas in the 1950s, the percentage of emigration towards West Germany leapt from 11 percent in 1959 to 70 percent in 1964¹¹⁹.

Political encouragement of international migration in the 1960s led to increasingly underpopulated regions of feminized and aged population, a decline of labor inputs into agriculture and a consequent drop in agricultural output. Dominant classes

¹¹⁸ Dimitrios K. Apostolopoulos, “Greece and Germany in Postwar Europe: The Way towards Reconciliation.” *Journal of Modern Greek Studies* 21, no. 2 (2003): 233.

¹¹⁹ Emmanuel Comte, *The History of the European Migration Regime: Germany's Strategic Hegemony*. Routledge, 2017. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315163048>, 70-71

succeeded in ‘exporting’ both unemployment and political unrest, and the country’s main exports were more often labor and capital rather than goods¹²⁰.

The Greek sociologist Nikos Mouzelis writing in 1976, agreed that, to a certain extent, massive foreign migration has operated as a political safety valve. It reduced unemployment and strengthened the meagre income of village households through remittances. Nevertheless, it had a negative side, as well. It created discontent both among the migrants and those left behind, while the increased geographic mobility it involved made inequalities more visible and less acceptable¹²¹.

Between 1955 and 1973, 603.300 Greeks migrated to West Germany, or more than half of the total number of emigrants from Greece¹²². The peaks in the annual emigration outflow, with over 100.000 people leaving the country, were the years 1963–65 and 1969–70. Throughout the period 1960–1972, West Germany accounted for between 50 and 70 per cent of total Greek emigration and for more than 90 per cent of Greece’s emigration to the European Community (EC). Overall, during the period 1960–1975, more than 1 million Greeks emigrated from a total population (in 1961) of 8.4 million.¹²³

Greeks were under-represented in mining, construction and transport, and over-represented in all the main branches of heavy and manufacturing industry, like metals, textiles and chemicals. They were gathered in the main industrial areas such as Stuttgart (vehicle manufacture) and Ruhr (Düsseldorf, Wuppertal, etc., centers of heavy manufacturing)¹²⁴.

The Greek migrant flow contained many women, reaching 38% of migrants during 1960–1973. Women migrated to work, especially in electrical goods factories, and

¹²⁰ Costis Hadjimichalis, *Uneven Development and Regionalism: State, Territory and Class in Southern Europe*. Croom Helm, 1987, 15.

¹²¹ Nikos Mouzelis, “Capitalism and Dictatorship in Post-war Greece”, *New Left Review*, March-April 1976, 71.

¹²² Evangelia Tastsoglou, and Laura Maratou-Alipranti. “Gender And International Migration: Conceptual, Substantive And Methodological Issues.” *Επιθεώρηση Κοινωνικών Ερευνών* 110 (January 1, 2003), 11-12.

¹²³ Christos Nikas, and Russell King. “Economic Growth through Remittances: Lessons from the Greek Experience of the 1960s Applicable to the Albanian Case.” *Journal of Southern Europe and the Balkans* 7, no. 2 (August 1, 2005): 236-7.

¹²⁴ Russell King, Anastasia Christou, and Jill Ahrens. “From First-Generation Guestworkers to Second-Generation Transnationalists: Greek-Germans Engage with the ‘Homeland,’” n.d., 5.

their level of employment remained higher than that of other immigrant nationalities and of German women¹²⁵.

According to the recruitment data of the German Commission in Athens, 60% of the Greek emigrants to West Germany in the 1960s left from the primarily rural regions of Epirus, Macedonia and Thrace¹²⁶. More specifically, 70,5% from Thrace, 77,8% from Macedonia, 81,6% from Thessaly and 84,7% from Epirus¹²⁷.

Emigrants were pushed by high unemployment and low wages, personal insecurity, restricted political freedom and difficulties in social life. They were attracted by the pull factors of intensive labor demand, higher wages and better welfare facilities, while there were also important network factors favoring this migration¹²⁸.

The guest worker system functioned as follows: in the sending countries, prospective employers and authorities advertised the employment opportunities abroad to candidate-emigrants. These candidates were to present themselves at a recruitment centre where those that fulfilled the required conditions were selected. According to the needs at the receiving end, groups of candidates were called in for departure. After a final selection, these recruits were taken to their destination. The whole process was legally framed through bilateral and multilateral agreements between sending and receiving countries¹²⁹.

A second way was also available to Greek workers with the issuing of work and residence permits after entering West Germany as a tourist. The Interior Ministry advised the prefectures that they should refuse passports in case there was a massive flow. There were hardly any limits to prefectures' room for maneuver. On the backstage, there was already a lively trade in 1960 between Greek agents and German

¹²⁵ Anastasia Christou, and Russell King. "Imagining 'Home': Diasporic Landscapes of the Greek-German Second Generation." *Geoforum* 41, no. 4 (July 2010): 640.

¹²⁶ Fakiolas and King. "Emigration, Return, Immigration", 173-4.

¹²⁷ Bernard Kayser, "Nouvelles donnees sur l'emigration grecque." *Population (French Edition)* 19, no. 4 (August 1964): 714. <https://doi.org/10.2307/1526846>.

¹²⁸ Fakiolas and King, "Emigration, Return, Immigration", 173-174..

¹²⁹ Jozefien De Bock, "Of Employers, Uncles and Interpreters: The Diverse Trajectories of Guest Workers to the Belgian City of Ghent, 1960–1975." *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies* 44, no. 7 (May 19, 2018): 1237. <https://doi.org/10.1080/1369183X.2017.1311205>.

firms with lists of workers' names, which could be obtained for the necessary assurances of getting into West Germany via the second way¹³⁰.

There was also a third way, namely entry as a tourist, search for employment and subsequent regularization of the residence with assistance by their employer. Although through the seventies and eighties the German government restricted family-unifying migration and controls of local settlement, tourist visas continued to be a major gate of entry¹³¹. German employers often utilized the option of nominal recruitment, which entailed advantages such as fulfilling job vacancies faster than the standard procedure and assuring that their trained migrant workers stayed once joined by their spouse¹³².

As Lina Venturas suggested, we should not “overestimate the efficiency of these selection mechanisms or disregard the effect of family and local networks, the unequal ability to control things in villages and in major urban centers, the various agents' interest in sending abroad as many workers as they could and the parallel or illegal ways of emigrating”¹³³.

More than migrants from other Mediterranean countries, Greeks migrated collectively. As a result, the Greek population of a given German city was made up mainly of migrants from a few towns or villages. Greeks also tended to migrate inside of Germany to strengthen these kinship and village relations¹³⁴.

Here, before focusing on the actual way the recruitment was evolving day by day in the Greek countryside of the early sixties, it is useful to draw our attention to the balance of powers in the Greek political scene. The supremacy of certain political ideals and the repression of others, together with the access to resources for opposing political groups informed both the way the recruitment evolved and the debates in the

¹³⁰ Johannes-Dieter Steinert, “Migration and Migration Policy: West Germany and the Recruitment of Foreign Labor, 1945–61.” *Journal of Contemporary History* 49, no. 1 (January 2014): 22. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0022009413505661>.

¹³¹ Marcel Berlinghoff, “ ‘Faux Touristes’? Tourism in European Migration Regimes in the Long Sixties.” *Comparativ Zeitschrift für Globalgeschichte und vergleichende Gesellschaftsforschung* 24 (2014) Heft 2, 97-98.

¹³² A. González-Ferrer, “The process of family reunification among original guest-workers in Germany.”, *Zeitschrift für Familienforschung* 19, no.1 (2007), 12-13&17.

¹³³ Lina Venturas, “Gouvernements Grecs et Partis Politiques : Lutte Pour Le Contrôle de l’émigration (1950-1974).” *Revue Européenne Des Migrations Internationales* 17, no. 3 (2001): 55-56. <https://doi.org/10.3406/remi.2001.1794>.

¹³⁴ Thranhardt, Dietrich. “Patterns of Organization among Different Ethnic Minorities.” *New German Critique*, no. 46 (1989): 22-23.

Parliament and the press. It is needless to say, though, that plurality of views existed in the realms of every political party. Nonetheless, for the sake of their public image and their position as power holders or opposition parties, the three main parties of the period adopted a single stance regarding emigration.

In the 1952 elections, the Right was represented by the general Papagos' Greek Rally. After his death in 1955, his successor Konstantinos Karamanlis created ERE (Ethniki Rizospastiki Enosi, National Radical Union)¹³⁵. It was the major right-wing party, which was more the party of owners of shops and businesses and of farmers¹³⁶. From 1952 to 1963, the Right maintained a decisive parliamentary majority with a popular vote of between 44 and 50 percent.¹³⁷

ERE won elections in 1956, 1958, and 1961. ERE won the 1961 elections, but the extensive use of electoral fraud caused a rift between the two rival sides¹³⁸. The leftist EDA published a Black Bible concerning the 1961 elections. In its preface, it was suggested that “violence, electoral fraud and crime stamped like permanent ink the election’s parody on the 29th of October 1961. [...] the will of the Greek people was strangled, falsified and distorted.”¹³⁹.

The Communist Party of Greece (KKE) was banned by law 509/1947 and its exiled Central Committee settled in Bucharest. From there, it supervised the Greek communist diaspora throughout the communist bloc and the party’s covert activities in Greece¹⁴⁰.

The Left was still able to operate under the cover of EDA (Eniaia Dimokratiki Aristera/ United Democratic Left Party), which became more and more influential in the 1950s¹⁴¹. It was founded in 1951, formed as a coalition of the Leftist forces in Greece, and it was supported by KKE. However, EDA gradually acquired a voice of

¹³⁵ Siani-Davies and Katsikas, “National Reconciliation”, 559–75.

¹³⁶ Charles C. Moskos, “The Breakdown of Parliamentary Democracy in Greece, 1965-67.” *Επιθεώρηση Κοινωνικών Ερευνών* 7, no. 7–8 (January 1, 1971): 8. <https://doi.org/10.12681/grsr.538>.

¹³⁷ Miller, *The United States*, 68-69.

¹³⁸ Stathis Kalyvas, *Modern Greece: What everyone needs to know*, Oxford University Press, 2015, 107.

¹³⁹ preface in the EDA, *Black Bible: The electoral coup of the 29th of October*, Athens, 1962, (in Greek).

¹⁴⁰ Paschalis Pechlivanis, “An Uneasy Triangle: Nicolae Ceaușescu, the Greek Colonels and the Greek Communists (1967-1974).” *The International History Review* 43, no.3 (2021), 598-613. <https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/07075332.2020.1764609>

¹⁴¹ Nikos Christofis, “The ‘invention of resistance’ in the rhetoric of the Greek and Turkish Left, 1951–71.” in Karakatsanis, Leonidas, and Nikolaos Papadogiannis, eds. *The Politics of Culture in Turkey, Greece and Cyprus: Performing the Left since the Sixties*. Routledge Advances in Mediterranean Studies 4. Abingdon, Oxon ; New York, NY: Routledge, 2017, 211-12.

its own¹⁴². Although the leaders of this party were frequently harassed on the grounds that they were propagating Marxism, the party managed to gain considerable electoral support¹⁴³.

EDA's main inquiries were about the issue of loyalty to NATO and of the relevance of Cold War dictates¹⁴⁴. EDA found its basic support among intellectuals, workers, and employees, particularly among the families of Asia Minor refugees¹⁴⁵. It reached its peak in 1958, when it became the main opposition party with 24% of the vote¹⁴⁶.

After many failed efforts, the powers of the Center managed to unite under a new umbrella party, the Center Union. The party was headed by veteran politician George Papandreou and emerged as the voice of the newly urbanized Greek¹⁴⁷. The Center Union (Enosi Kentrou) drew more from the salaried employees and civil servants and the rural regions where the 1923 refugees had settled¹⁴⁸.

After the fraudulent 1961 elections, Papandreou began what came to be known as the Anendotos (Unyielding Fight) to contest the electoral results and win power from the Right. The party's demands included the relaxation of the anti-communist ideology, the loosening of repressive mechanisms in the countryside, the free organization of social groups and reform in education. They also demanded that the armed forces be put under civilian control¹⁴⁹.

The reconstruction of postwar Greek society overlapped with the anticommunist struggle, and social life was inevitably channeled through the collective participation in the 'suppression of the communist mutiny'¹⁵⁰. The end of the 1950s saw a political thaw with the gradual liberalization of politics, and by the 1960s there were forces

¹⁴² Michalis Liberatos. *Apo to EAM stin EDA: E Ragdaia Anasygkrotisi tis Ellinikis Aristeras kai oi Metemphyliakes Politikes Anagkaiotites*. From EAM to EDA. The Rapid Regroupment of the Greek Left], Athens: Stochastis, 2011 ; Katerina Lamprinou, *EDA 1956-1967. Politikē Kai Ideologia*. [United Democratic Left (EDA) 1956–1967. Politics and Ideology] Athens: Polis, 2017.

¹⁴³ Siani-Davies and Katsikas. "National Reconciliation", 564.

¹⁴⁴ Μπότσιου και Σακκας. *Η Ελλάδα, η Δύση Και η Μεσόγειος*, 14.

¹⁴⁵ Charles C. Moskos, "The Breakdown of Parliamentary Democracy in Greece, 1965-67." *Επιθεώρηση Κοινωνικών Ερευνών* 7, no. 7–8 (January 1, 1971): 8. <https://doi.org/10.12681/grsr.538>.

¹⁴⁶ Siani-Davies and Katsikas. "National Reconciliation", 564.

¹⁴⁷ Kalyvas, *Modern Greece*, 107.

¹⁴⁸ Moskos, "The Breakdown", 8.

¹⁴⁹ Anastasakis, "Greece's Cold War", 474..

¹⁵⁰ Gounaris, "Anti-communism", 179-180.

threatening ‘eternal’ Greece founded on the pillars of religion, the military, and a rigidly hierarchical society¹⁵¹.

In May 1963, Grigoris Lambrakis, an independent left-wing MP and member of the Greek branch of Bertrand Russell’s Peace Movement, was assassinated by right-wing extremists who had connections with the police. His death marked the beginning of the Democratic Youth Movement Grigoris Lambrakis¹⁵².

Lambrakis’ murder came to solidify that something was profoundly rotten. His funeral gathered half a million people, and Athens came to a standstill. Everyone went on strike. On placards could be read the letter “Z”, meaning “he is alive” (“zei,” in Greek). As Evi Gotzaridis poetically puts it, “when Lambrakis was killed, his optimism, courage, and charisma had just begun to dispel decades of crippling fear and silence”¹⁵³.

After his assassination, everybody started speaking about the “deep state” or “parakratos”. It was defined as “an entity separate from the transparent, officially recognized ‘democratic’ state, the deep state, or security state, [which] represents coalitions within the government that work to ‘veto’ or ‘fine tune’ policies related to national security”¹⁵⁴. Whenever cultural awe proved insufficient, the Greek political establishment could always fall back upon the direct violence of the ‘shadow state’ or ‘parakratos’, a group of paramilitary anticommunist organizations intimidating or murdering the perceived enemies of the political and social order¹⁵⁵.

For example, the TEA (Tagmata Genikis Asfaleias - General Security Battalions) were special paramilitary units active in the countryside and organized by army officers trained in anti-communist propaganda. There were many cases in the courts against men of the TEA, mainly for the intimidation of the rural population and in

¹⁵¹ Stone, *The Oxford Handbook*, 503-4.

¹⁵² Dimitris Asimakoulas, “Translating ‘Self’ and ‘Others’: Waves of Protest under the Greek Junta.” *The Sixties* 2, no. 1 (June 2009): 27. <https://doi.org/10.1080/17541320902909532>.

¹⁵³ Evi Gkotzaridis, “‘Who Will Help Me to Get Rid of This Man?’: Grigoris Lambrakis and the Non-Aligned Peace Movement in Post-Civil War Greece: 1951-1964.” *Journal of Modern Greek Studies* 30, no. 2 (2012): 315. <https://doi.org/10.1353/mgs.2012.0020>.

¹⁵⁴ Spyros Tsoutsoumpis, “‘Political Bandits’: Nation-Building, Patronage and the Making of the Greek Deep State.” *Balkanistica* 30, no.1 (2017),39.

¹⁵⁵ Stone, *The Oxford Handbook*, 509.

order to gain more votes for ERE. The Center Union on the 16th of February 1964 promised their dissolution or re-organization but failed in completing it¹⁵⁶.

In the shadow of the political turmoil that the Lambrakis affair created, Karamanlis also opposed, as a prime minister, the royal visit to London. The king and prime minister met, disagreed, and then released separate statements outlining their positions. On the 11th of June 1963, after consulting the cabinet, Karamanlis resigned¹⁵⁷.

The change of government in 1963 marks the end of the present chapter, in which the main axis of investigation is the first three experimental years of the recruitment. In the part that follows, we will examine how the new agreement led to an unexpected rural exodus, inspiring mixed feelings in the decision-makers. We will follow the reaction of the candidate migrants as it was depicted in reportages and the heated debates in the Parliament, revolving more around metaphors and agonizing cries than proper policymaking and solid initiatives.

II.B. A BLESSING OR A CURSE?

Lina Venturas, identifying phrases exclusively from the Parliamentary proceedings from 1950 to 1967, found emigration referred to as ‘God's blessing’, ‘curse’, ‘tragedy’, ‘bleeding’, ‘danger for the biological character of the Nation’, ‘danger for the future of the Greek Race’, ‘cause of the disintegration of the Greek Nation’ or ‘slave trade’¹⁵⁸.

Most of our information about the mass exodus, mainly from the regions of Northern Greece, comes from two newspapers published in Thessaloniki, *Makedonia* and *Ellinikos Vorras*. Already from the first year of the recruitment, it seemed like the different prefectures were in a rat race concerning which would issue more passports. In the following pages, we will follow the numbers of emigrants and incredible incidents that were taking place on a daily basis in the recruitment offices. In parallel, I will examine the reactions of the official authorities and the parliament discussions that shaped and were shaped by the ongoing emigration flow.

¹⁵⁶ Meynaud, *Les Forces Politiques*, 263.

¹⁵⁷ *Avgi*, 12/12/1963, p.1.

¹⁵⁸ Lina Venturas, “Gouvernements Grecs et Partis Politiques : Lutte Pour Le Contrôle de l’émigration (1950-1974).” *Revue Européenne Des Migrations Internationales* 17, no. 3 (2001): 50. <https://doi.org/10.3406/remi.2001.1794>.

Ellinikos Vorras was the major right-wing newspaper that was covering the ongoing out-migration flow with extensive reportages. Published in Thessaloniki and with a wide coverage in rural northern Greece, its editors realized that their readership demanded frequent updates on the topic. Thus, already from early 1960s we find articles investigating the causes of the phenomenon.

The image of hundreds of young people gathered outside the employment offices, reminded to some reporters the recent past of military mobilization. Around 1000 young people, mainly from villages, walked tens of kilometers in temperatures between -2 and -6 degrees Celsius and they gathered outside the Employment Office of Kozani. As the journalist wrote, “those young men could be a proper army battalion, and one would think that they are gathered for a military check or to get employed in some national project. However, neither the former nor the latter happens. These young men, totally healthy, ideologically and physically, who until yesterday were plowing the fields and who are full of blood and sweat, are now gathered to be registered and emigrate to Germany”¹⁵⁹.

In late March 1960, the journalist wonders if migration was a solution to the social problems of the country and introduces the theme of “hemorrhage”, in which blood was transferred from the Greek national body to reinforce other nations¹⁶⁰. In late April, migration was already presented as a national disease, dating back to ancient times when the escapism and the vagabondism of Greek merchants led them to new territories¹⁶¹.

Reactions also came from the Church, like the one by the Metropolitan of Kitros Varnavas who was anxiously following the growing migration flows from his area of jurisdiction. He sent a telegram to the government and the Holy Council warning that “the phenomenon has social but also national dangers in store, since the migrants are the best and healthiest of the working and rural youth. There is an urgent need for action to stop the flow”¹⁶². The industrial class also started to get worried as this letter from the Ministry of Industry to the Ministry of Labor shows. The Ministry of Industry asked the Offices of Employment to freeze the permission to emigrate for

¹⁵⁹ *Ellinikos Vorras*, 29/1/1960.

¹⁶⁰ *Ellinikos Vorras*, 22/3/1960.

¹⁶¹ *Ellinikos Vorras*, 24/7/1960.

¹⁶² *Ellinikos Vorras*, 24/7/1960.

skilled workers. The reasoning was that if the level of emigration would continue there would be a problem in Greek industry in the near future¹⁶³.

The arguments used in the above statements mirror the anxieties of the ruling classes regarding national security and sovereignty. In their view, the crème de la crème of the nationally-minded population of border regions of the country were fleeing. They were leaving their fields and villages as a sway to the communist enemy, who was lurking within the gates, but also across the northern Greek borders. The right-wing government risked implicating its supporters in an uncertain expedition, where instead of serving their nation and its economy, the migrants would give their blood to a more developed country.

Demographic anxieties dominated the discourse about migration, comparing it to the spread of an epidemic. All northern Greece was affected by the contagion of that fever to leave, which loomed to annihilate the dynamic part of the population. The newspaper urged the government to offer employment chances in order to correct the “crime” and “error” of letting them go¹⁶⁴.

The majority of the remaining working hands in the villages were made up of children and the elderly, since the youth fled to escape misery. Alarmed, the reporter urged the Parliament to “beware of the village!”¹⁶⁵. The Minister of Interior, Makris, remained determined that “never again was the Greek countryside so prosperous”, contrary to all the complaints coming from the opposition¹⁶⁶.

As a general rule, right-wing deputies and ministers of the Karamanlis government appeared quite cold-blooded and realistic in their statements. They adopted a down-to-earth and technocratic approach to the new reality of increased emigration. For example, when asked in the parliament Makris stated that real emigrants were only the transatlantic ones. According to the minister, the mobile subjects that entered the European space were emigrating temporarily and were normally returning to their homeland. They were receiving a satisfying wage, effectively supporting their

¹⁶³ *Empros*, 4/2/1961, p.16.

¹⁶⁴ *Ellinikos Vorras*, 30/1/1961 & 8/2/1961.

¹⁶⁵ *Ellinikos Vorras*, 28/2/1961 & 1/3/1961.

¹⁶⁶ *Ellinikos Vorras*, 11/3/1961.

families and largely gaining expertise in the advanced European industries becoming precious skilled labor upon their return¹⁶⁷.

At all instances, Makris kept repeating that there is nothing problematic with the whole situation. The local employment offices had a different experience though. Candidate migrants needed money to come and stay in the cities and towns the selection was taking place. They had to get new clothes so as to appear in a decent manner. They were forced to sell their land and animals at very low prices. Others sold their new guns or hunting dogs for a pair of shoes and a pair of trousers¹⁶⁸.

In their effort to legitimize their policy, right-wing representatives used all sorts of arguments. As with other ideologically charged areas, the country's natural poverty and the age-old traits of the "race" were invoked to justify emigration¹⁶⁹.

In March 1961, the minister of Governance Tsatsos was called to answer in the Parliament by the deputy Tsirimokos about the intra-European migration. His response was that "this emigration has a temporary character. Mostly, those migrants return as skilled labor. This emigration also has drawbacks that we don't deny. However, we should not forget that when we talk about emigration, when we read in the press that our youth is lost, and that our youth leave for abroad, we should not forget that this phenomenon was not invented in 1959, but it is a 30-century old Greek phenomenon which in the last years had an increase but already decreases. We all hope that it will decrease further as much as the national income will be increasing".

In the mainstream right-wing discourse, emigration was a necessary evil. It created a getaway for the frustrated, unemployed youth of the country, who otherwise might revolt. The deputy Lychnos among other things stated: "Hence this surplus population should leave the country, if we do not wish to condemn them to wretchedness and drive them to social revolution. [...] If we were to put an end to emigration, as the extreme Left want us to do, the result would be social uprising — and this is exactly why they want it"¹⁷⁰.

¹⁶⁷ *Eleutheria* 6/2/1961, p.10.

¹⁶⁸ *Makedonia*, 5/2/1961, p.6: "*The Collective Flight Of Greek Youth Leaves Emotionless The Government*"

¹⁶⁹ Venturas, "Gouvernements Grecs", 51-52.

¹⁷⁰ Speech by G. Lychnos, MP; Parliamentary Proceedings, 1/6/1960. Seen in Venturas, "Gouvernements Grecs", 45-46.

The deputy's argument both obscures and uncovers the complex reality of the recruitment process. If things functioned the way it was predicted by the recruitment agreement, only candidates with civic mindedness certificates would be eligible and thus the potential revolutionaries would be excluded. Indeed, the right-wing ERE was quick to exploit the advantage of controlling the state mechanism. Through the certificates of social beliefs and the Employment Agencies, it used the employment opportunities provided by the migration agreements to cater to its own people¹⁷¹. As the centrist newspaper *Ta Nea* underlined in early 1961, the majority of candidate migrants were ethnikofrones¹⁷².

From the other side, though, the available alternatives to the official recruitment, namely recruitment through invitation by relatives already employed in the Federal Republic or the use of a tourist visa with employment prospects, opened the way to other social groups that would normally be blocked at the filtering of the selection. Both Greek and West German authorities turned a blind eye to those sideways -at least initially-, in order to accommodate their needs to export surplus manpower and to absorb it, respectively. As we see in the following letter of the Greek minister of Labor, the Greeks could not afford making a bad impression on the West German employers, since they needed a stable out-going flow of people.

In late July 1961, in his letter to the Minister of Foreign Affairs, the minister of Labor Dimitratos considered essential his visit to West Germany, in order to consolidate among the migrants, the impression that the Greek government cared for them. His visit would uplift their morale and fix the negative experiences they might have had with private intermediaries and interpreters who exploited them. On the other hand, the official visit of the minister could also help polish the name of the Greek workers in the eyes of the West German authorities, whom might have had unfair and wrong impressions and could be negatively predisposed towards the recruitment of more Greeks¹⁷³.

From its side, the Left described emigration as a “slave trade” which deprived Greece of its most productive resources. Sometimes an ethnographic touch was invested to connect the local rural experience of animal markets, like horse markets, with the

¹⁷¹ Venturas, “Gouvernements Grecs”, 53-54.

¹⁷² *Ta Nea*, 31/1/1961, p.6.

¹⁷³ document no. βδγ42-43, ministry of Labor to ministry of Foreign Affairs, Athens, 29-7-61, folder 1964_7/2, Historical Archive of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Athens.

selection of the candidates by German doctors. For instance, in a March 1961 article the reporter claimed that “in Epirus, in the village of Moushousti in Arta, where the horse market was taking place, people are now sold for nothing”¹⁷⁴.

Emigration was attributed to the economic and political dependence of Greece and the economic policy of Right-wing governments submitted to the interests of the oligarchy. Apart from denouncing emigration, the Left made a systematic effort both in and out of Parliament to increase the awareness of politicians and the public about the emigrants' problems¹⁷⁵.

The EDA deputy Kitsikis stated in the Parliament that he saw “the Greek youth to be transferred in the slave market of Germany. The aim of the 5-year plan is migration, which already in 1960 was double than in 1959. [...] Thessaly has a percentage of 25% unemployed people, most of whom are under 30 years old. Epirus has 36% unemployed, Creta 46%, etc. Thus, unemployment is the most pressuring problem of the Greek economy”¹⁷⁶.

The long letter of a reader in *Makedonia* expressed the discomfort of the Greek youth in the primitive conditions of life in rural Greece. The writer of the letter was quite clear that “when the young farmer goes to the army and goes to the big or small city, he steps on the asphalt and realizes how the living standards have changed and is amazed by the colorful neon billboards and the leisure opportunities, how will he return to the hell of the Greek countryside? The moment he will complete his service, he will come back to the urban center to increase the class of idle.”¹⁷⁷.

In early 1961, the reporter Raftopoulos started a tour of 1.500 kilometers in Northern Greece to follow the “tragedy of collective migration”. These kinds of expeditions became very popular among newspapers, who consecrated their “salon” to illustrated and sensationalist accounts both in the Greek countryside and the West German cities, where Greeks were employed.

I consider that the reasoning behind such efforts was to inform, prevent further emigration, and call out the government for its indifference. However, it was inevitable that contrary to its initial goal of discouraging emigration, the publicity the

¹⁷⁴ *Avgi*, 2/3/61, p.1.

¹⁷⁵ Venturas, “Gouvernements Grecs”, 51-52.

¹⁷⁶ *Makedonia* 4/3/1961, p.6.

¹⁷⁷ *Makedonia*, 5/2/1961,p.1: “Hellas Is Emptying!”.

whole issue took exposed the desperate villagers to a potential way out. We should imagine reading a newspaper as a collective activity among illiterate rural dwellers gathered in coffee shops. Thus, the impression made on them and their decision to leave would also be collective and massive.

This article encapsulated all the topoi we mentioned above in a few sentences: “Northern Greece is deserted by its youth, as if there is a call for arms. Caravans made up of the youth are moving towards the prefectures’ capitals, and nobody wants to stay in their village. His father died as a (forced) worker in Germany, now he goes to work there too. The flesh bazaar, where Germans also check their teeth (like with horses)”¹⁷⁸.



The leftist newspaper *Avgi* presented the workers in West Germany as slaves in Ancient Sparta, as “eilotes”, working under hard conditions and enjoying no state protection. *Avgi*, 18/9/64, p.3.

The published journal of a worker in mines, entitled “750 meters inside the Earth”, drew the comparison with butchers and how they picked lambs for slaughter¹⁷⁹. Generally, those parallels aimed to show the denigration of the workers to the level of animals, deprived of their human rights and dignity. Letters sent from readers to the newspaper repeat the leitmotiv of unfree labor, “we are slaves without rights and there

¹⁷⁸ *Avgi*, 5/2/61, p.1&5.

¹⁷⁹ *Avgi*, 2/10/62, p.1.

should be an end to the abnormalcy. What kind of democracy do we have in the end?”¹⁸⁰.

A topic that was commented on surprisingly early enough was the reaction of the West German trade unions towards the “slave-workers, who accept wages lower than the minimum and undermine the struggle of the local workers, while the monopolies try to impose double 8-hour shifts”¹⁸¹. The working conditions they had to face were doubly harsh for the migrant workers, because they were not fully aware of the requirements of their contracts when they first signed them.

So far, our investigation has concerned the *logoi* around the newly established Gastarbeiter system in the Greek parliament and the press. At the same time, the *praxis* around the recruitment and settlement of the workers on West German soil was facilitated by the Greek authorities in Bonn. However, something went quite wrong in the co-ordination between Athens and its embassy in Bonn. In my opinion, it is worthwhile to shed some light on the incident, in order to better understand what the dynamics at the decision centers were and how the Gastarbeiter question was contextualized in the general directions of the Greek foreign policy.

In late June 1961, the ministry of Foreign Affairs stated that the German government approved the placement of Themistocles Tsatsos to the position of consul of Greece in Bonn¹⁸². Before him, from 1959 to 1961, Thomas Ypsilantis served as a general consul in Bonn. From 1963 until his death in 1966, he served as a Center Union deputy.

On the 3rd of February 1961, the Greek general consul in Bonn, Thomas Ypsilantis, was interviewed by the West German tv channel NDR during his visit at the Friedrichshall potash plant in Sehnde. The Greek Gastarbeiter working there were recruited one year earlier. The reporter asked the consul about the migrants’ impressions concerning the implementation of the bilateral recruitment agreement in its first year.

Ypsilantis appeared satisfied with the smooth adaptation of the newcomers, but left a small margin for those who faced difficulties, because they were homesick and could

¹⁸⁰ *Avgi*, 13/11/64, p.3.

¹⁸¹ *Avgi*, 25/4/61, p.1.

¹⁸² *Ellinikos Vorras*, 14/6/1961.

not cope with the cold climate so well. The German employers, according to the consul, were also content with 90% of them. In response to the question by the reporter on whether this agreement would be extended, Ypsilantis answered, “probably yes. As new workers are still needed in the Federal Republic, the agreement is enlarged. And the Federal Employment Agency is even thinking of opening an office in Thessaloniki.”

Only some months later, in early summer 1961, Ypsilantis created quite a scandal with his resignation. The texts of the telegrams that referred to the resignation of the ambassador were submitted to the presidium of the Parliament on the 3rd of June 1961. The ambassador had resigned on May 30, when he telegraphed to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs a resignation letter fluctuating in between a socratic apology and a libel.

He accused the government for lack of political thinking and ignorance of the basic rules of diplomatic conduct, which led to a deterioration of Greek-German relations. As a result, the West German financial assistance to Greece would not be anymore “a duty towards a courageous people heavily afflicted by injustice in the past, but rather as an obligation to the poor and underdeveloped ally in the Atlantic Alliance”. The Greek officials’ vices like selfishness, arrogance, the promotion of individual ambitions and particular interests against such national ones, and the breach of committed obligations inspired disbelief to their West German colleagues.

According to his resignation letter, Ypsilantis was forced to resign after exhausting all his efforts against the governmental shallowness for around two years. To his claims for ensuring basic care and rights for the thousands of Greek workers and students, the government turned a blind eye, presumably for financial reasons. However, at the same time, there was a massive expenditure for individual interests and even for the surveillance of the general consul and the embassy’s staff. Such a treatment insulted his democratic credos and his personal pride and led him to submit his resignation.

The Foreign Minister’s answer was blunt and the Minister, Evangelos Averoff, took the issue personally. He accused Ypsilantis of clumsiness or deliberation, which aggravated the management of very serious national interests. Averoff insisted that Greek-German relations were excellent and if misunderstandings ever arose, they were due to the general consul’s personal inadequacy and his reluctance to support the

Greek positions in accordance with the directives of the Greek government. Averoff accused Ypsilantis of using his resignation for political exploitation, as he was already doing during his service, when he allowed leaks of confidential information to the press.

As for the reaction of the opposition party of Center Union to Ypsilantis' resignation, the government commented ironically that “in the light of the seriousness and dignity of the State, does not intend to make the misery of an official the subject of further discussion”¹⁸³.

The lessons to take away from this rift are that the Greek authorities were rather bigoted and deeply affected by nepotism. The absence of transparency in the transactions between the ministry and the embassy will come up again in the future years, to the point of becoming a target for accusations for corruption and scandals. More than that, the rivalries among the Greek authorities undermined their effectiveness and undermined their main mission, which was to serve their compatriots' needs for a micropolitical trade-off to gain access to resources supposedly destined to relieve the Gastarbeiter.

Something was decisively wrong in the treatment of the Greek Gastarbeiter by their government, given that West Germans also reacted to this indifference. For instance, the voluntary Consul of Greece in Düsseldorf Jaul Nelten quitted his position and made the following statements: “I can no longer follow insensitively the exhaust of the poor Greek workers and accept the feelings of rage against me that are born in their hearts. I cannot understand the social policy of the Karamanlis government. Thousands of Greek workers are sent to Germany, mainly former unemployed, with a small support from the Greek state and then they are left to chance, or they are given to the general consuls who do not possibly know the Greek mentality”¹⁸⁴.

We can imagine that the disillusioned voluntary consul would not also understand how the recruitment became a lucrative business for some, and the “migration offices” sprouted in big cities. *Avgi* commented that suddenly they were more than the grocery stores¹⁸⁵! Or how the different circles of social groups in Greece were living

¹⁸³K. Svolopoulos (ed.), *Κωνσταντίνος Καραμανλής: Αρχείο, Γεγονότα & Κείμενα*. Konstantinos Karamanlis Foundation, vol.5,1997,p. 91-93.

¹⁸⁴ *Oikonomikos Tachydromos*, 31/8/1961, p.8.

parallel and perfectly not coinciding lives. While the public attention was focused on the majestic royal wedding of the Greek princess Sophia and Juan Carlos of Spain, on the very day of the wedding, 360 people migrated only from a single district in Attica, Loutraki¹⁸⁶.

In the meanwhile, the deputies in the Greek parliament were engaging in pleasantries and wordplays. The Vice-President of the government Panagiotis Kanellopoulos in one instance stated that emigration is God's blessing for Greece. This statement became a constant source of attacks and inspired jokes and humorous sketches. For instance, the deputy Allamanis commented that "Kanellopoulos had no limits, the blessed one!". The doctor and deputy of Enosis Kentrou Kokkevis in the Parliament café said that "the youth should be vaccinated against eulogia, but not the illness, but against the eulogia of emigration of Kanellopoulos!". Another instance of blessed talk took place during an encounter of a priest and a young man in an emigration office: - your blessing, bishop. -Where are you going? -To the devil's mother¹⁸⁷! In Corfu, the owner of a coffin-maker shop gave his store the name "emigration"¹⁸⁸.



Fig.1: Coffin maker's label "Migration".Source: *Eleutheria*, 12/2/1963,p.2.

Avgi often used a wordplay about the eight years of the Karamanlis government as the "golden century", normally referring to the 5th century BC and more specifically the period of Pericles' rule in ancient Athens. During the two consecutive Karamanlis governments, the country was meant to experience a renaissance. For *Avgi*, the

¹⁸⁵ *Avgi*, 16/2/63, p.3.

¹⁸⁶ *Avgi*, 17/5/62, p.1.

¹⁸⁷ *Eleutheria*, 19/5/1962, p.2.

¹⁸⁸ *Eleutheria*, 12/2/1963, p.2.

quintessence of its failure was the deserted villages of northern Greece and mainly Epirus¹⁸⁹.

Avgi suggested that only intense industrialisation would save the villages and the provinces that lost the income resulting from their specialized local manufacture, like gold and silver-smithing in Epirus¹⁹⁰. It was surprising to see that there was a circular movement of manpower, in which Greek guest workers were replacing 600.000 Italian returnees, and foreign workers were recruited to take the place of the departed youth in Greece because of an acute need for farmers in the harvesting season¹⁹¹.

The Center Union claimed that the country was surrendering its youngest and healthiest human resources after having spent a lot to raise them¹⁹². George Papandreou, the leader of the Center Union party, attacked time and again Panagiotis Kanellopoulos in the Parliament by employing dramatic tones, “emigration on the scale it is happening is a tragic hemorrhage for the country. It is desertion of the countryside, vagabondism in the cities, expatriation of the youth. This is the dramatic image of the Hellas of the economic miracle.”¹⁹³.

The emigration policy of the Karamanlis government was one of the hot points in the election campaign of the Centre Union party in 1963-64. The Center Union opposition emphasized the demographic problems and their consequences as well as the likelihood of the emigrants returning from Western Europe without any specialization, while the Greek market would have lost what little skilled labor it had. As Christos Svolopoulos wrote cunningly in the centrist newspaper *To Vima*, “they surpassed the number of 110.000, and the experts’ prospective is that it won’t stop at 150.000. We are not talking about drachmas or kilos of exported fruit. It’s the number of male and female Greek workers who are in Germany and this number is always growing. A crucial issue, a big problem that surpasses a limit of anxiety for the future, since those productive hands are leaving the Greek homeland and go abroad to find better luck.”¹⁹⁴.

¹⁸⁹ *Avgi*, 3/2/1965, p.3.

¹⁹⁰ *Avgi*, 11/8/63, p.3.

¹⁹¹ *Avgi*, 6/10/63, p.3 & 7/12/63,p3.

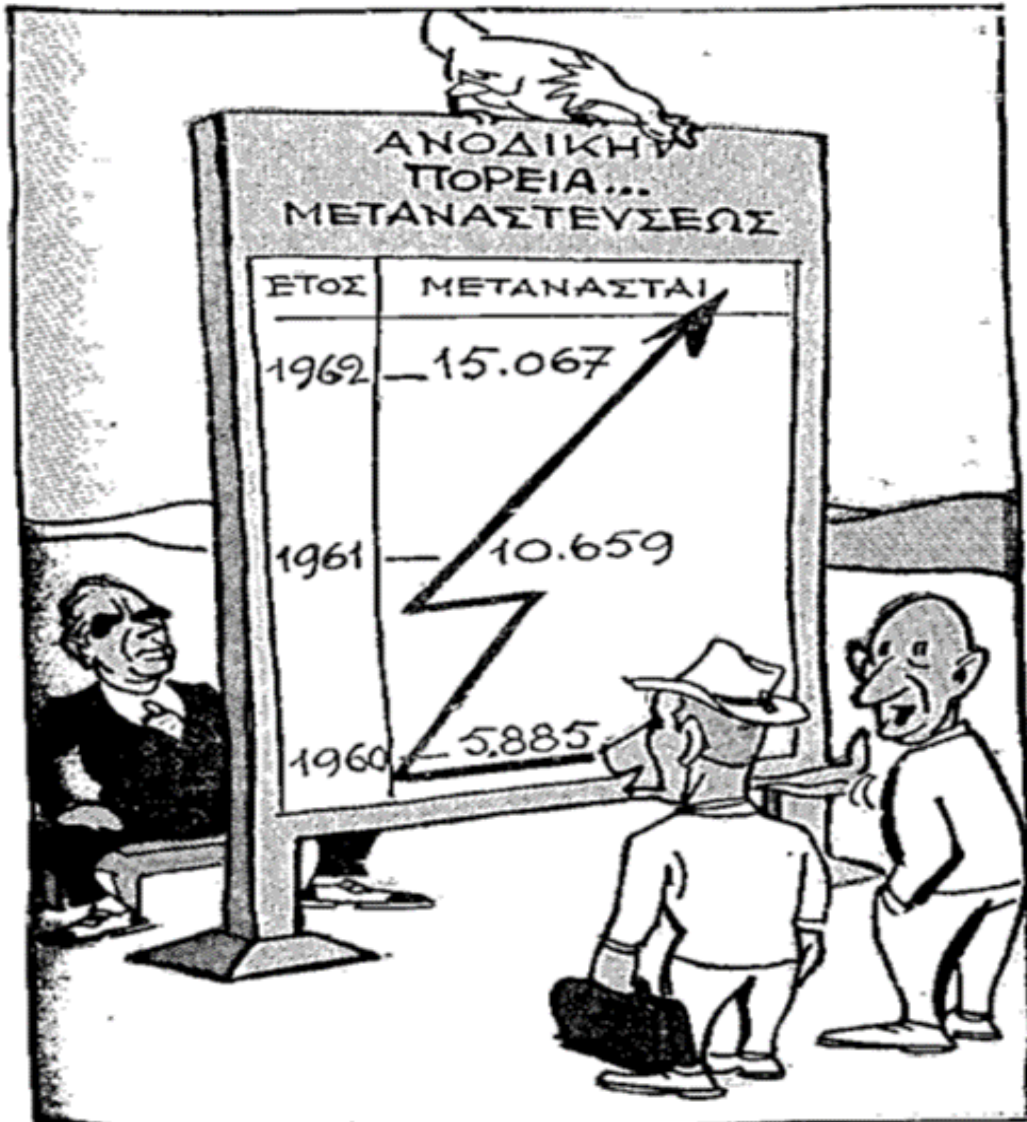
¹⁹² Venturas, “Gouvernements Grecs”,51-52.

¹⁹³ *Eleutheria*, 22/5/1962,p.7.

¹⁹⁴ *To Vima*, 24/11/1963,p.5.

ΑΙ ΕΞΑΓΩΓΑΙ ΜΑΣ!

«Κατά τὰ επίσημα δημοσιευόμενα στοιχεία, προκύπτει ὅτι ἐντὸς διετίας ἡ μετανάστευσις ἔχει τριπλασιασθῆ». (Αἱ Ζημειώσεις).



—“Ὅχι ἀπλῶς ἀνοδική, ἀλλὰ ὑπερανοδική πορεία ἔχουμε... Τρομάρα μας!...”

The title of the strip is “our exports!”. The prime minister Karamanlis sits behind the table, while two men comment that the increase in migration tripled in two years. The opposition often lamented that instead of exporting goods, Greece exported people, while much later in 1974 George Matzouranis wrote about the Greek Gastarbeiter that “They are offered cheaper than the fruits, vegetables and the tobacco. They travel with transit visas, without custom controls.” Source: *Makedonia*, 17/7/1962, p.1.

In February 1962, in the town of Larissa, despair pushed more than 1000 farmers, mainly from the region of Ellassona, to flood the streets of the city from Sunday evening onwards. They slept outside the Employment Office in the winter cold in order to secure emigration cards for Germany¹⁹⁵. In the morning there were more than 2.000 people forming a queue. Because of the crowds, only few were served. The youth gathered and furiously attacked the government for its failure to cater for the employment of the unemployed despite its promises.

The police were called, and the scenes were overtly tragicomic. Many young people climbed and reached the balcony of the first floor and invaded the office through the windows. Another group took a wooden ladder from a nearby house and attempted to climb in through the backyard. In order to intimidate the crowd, firefighters and a water pump arrived on the spot. The clerks of the Employment Office, literally under siege and to avoid a more tenuous situation, began to show the public from the balcony big labels with the clear inscription: “the ministry of Labor phoned us and said that 3.000 more cards were sent”¹⁹⁶.

Apparently, this was not a singled-out caricature, but a daily reality in the recruitment offices. Such situations still take place in many areas of the world, and they offer evidence of the pressures that people experience, making them desperate to seek any way out. In our case, it unveils an ongoing bargain between center and periphery, because the local offices had to carry the burden of decisions taken at a higher level by the bureaucrats who knew nothing of the local contexts. It was inevitable that the general structures of clientelism would penetrate also the recruitment process and allow the ministry to play its cards, literally and metaphorically.

Equally, the Greek government missed no chance to propagate its “special care” for the Gastarbeiter, as a smoke screen to hide its insufficiencies and as a pending promise to keep their hope intact. On the 1st of June 1962, the Prime Minister K. Karamanlis was present at the signing of the new general collective labor agreements. The following protection measures were predicted for the Greek workers in Germany: more local offices of the Ministry of Labor were added to the existing ones, and an office for labor consultation was set up at the Greek Embassy in Bonn. According to the government, in this way, the workers were facilitated or further reconciled with

¹⁹⁵ *Eleutheria*, 9/1/1962,p.8.

¹⁹⁶ *Makedonia*, 9/1/1962,p.5.

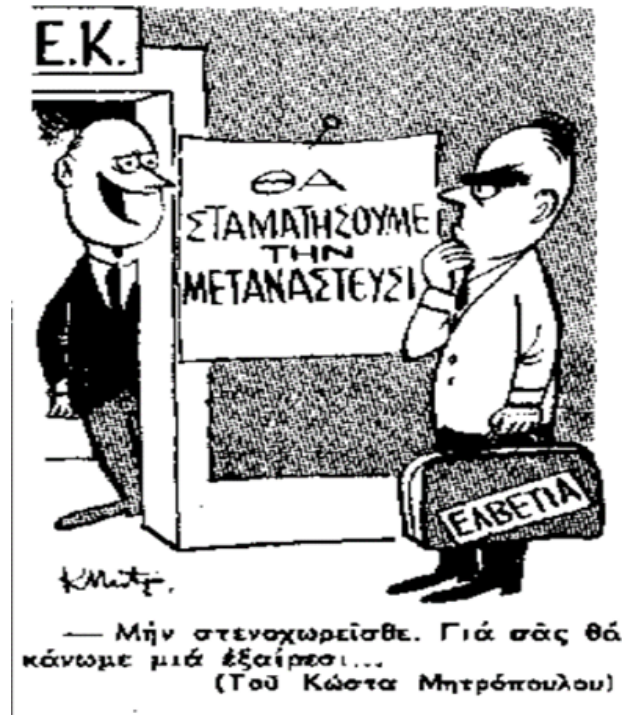
their employers, and greater and more substantial opportunities were provided to them to overcome the language barriers and their ignorance of the host country's legislation.

It was further decided to establish and maintain workers' clubs and libraries in places where a sufficient number of Greek workers were employed, providing them with "adequate leisure opportunities within the framework of Greek national and religious traditions.". In a paternalistic overtone, the government galvanized its care for the workers, who now had to work harder towards ameliorating the country's performance. More precisely, "the Government demonstrated in practice its affection and care for the toiling workers. The Greeks are already called upon to work and to intensify their productive efforts and to create the conditions for the success of the economic development program but also the conditions for the further improvement of their standard of living¹⁹⁷.

George Papandreou during his speech in Tripoli, in the Peloponnese, made a clear distinction between those responsible for emigration and its victims while using his orator's talent to throw a powerful *J'Accuse* to the ERE government. He said among other things that "the agents of ERE are circulating the rumor that EK will prohibit emigration once in government. This statement is ridiculous. Nobody has the Right to prohibit emigration. It would mean the condemnation to death of people not able to survive in their land. We do not accuse the ones who emigrate. We are sorry that they need to emigrate in order to live. We accuse the ERE government, which in eight years decreased rather than increased employment."¹⁹⁸.

¹⁹⁷ Svolopoulos (ed.), *Κωνσταντίνος Καραμανλής*, 388-391.

¹⁹⁸ *To Vima*, 27/10/1963, p.1.



Sketch by Kostas Mitropoulos. The sign hung outside the Center Union office reads “we will halt migration”. Its leader, George Papandreou, says to the opposition leader Karamanlis holding a suitcase for Switzerland: “don’t worry, we will make an exception for you”. Source: *To Vima*, 27/10/1963, p.1.

II.B. IN THE WORKERS, WE DON’T TRUST

Anti-communist concerns arose from the first years of the recruitment, mostly concerning the potential infiltration of the migrant workers and the representation of the country in West Germany. One would imagine that the recruitment of guest workers would be an issue concerning the Ministry of Labor and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Nevertheless, it seems that security matters and the control of the selection process were a high priority for the Greek governments and thus we see the implication of the Ministry of Presidency, the Secret Services, namely the Central Information Service and the General Directory of National Security. Moreover, what is special in the case of West Germany is its bordering with the communist bloc.

Already from 1961, we find numerous reports, correspondence between the Greek embassy in Bonn and the abovementioned ministries and security meetings, geared towards deciding what would be the best way to counteract the communist propaganda and to contain the infiltration of the workers. It is my impression that

since the majority of workers were filtered through the commission for their civil conscience, the scale of communist presence was not as exaggerated as they were afraid of. Thus, their emotionally charged vocabulary emanates the taste of a moral panic rather than a realistic approach to the actual circumstances.

In late 1961, in his correspondence with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the newly appointed general consul in Bonn, Themistocles Tsatsos, reported that he had under his personal responsibility an ongoing surveillance of the activities of Greek students in West Berlin. According to the data, the consul gathered that the students were smuggling leaflets printed by the KKE in East Germany and were sending them by post to Greek guest workers residing in various West German cities, whose addresses they had collected during their tours in factories. They acted as mediators, because the West German post offices rejected post-communist leaflets coming directly from East Germany and returned them to the sender.

Tsatsos suggested to track the background of those students in the files of the Greek police and to communicate with the West German security in order to expel them from Berlin. He emphasized that for the moment their activity might seem trivial, but its impact could be harmful for the attitude of the West German authorities towards the labor recruitment from Greece as well as for the Greek incoming students to West German universities. He did not miss noting that naturally the problem would be much more crucial, if they did not just smuggle printed material but also acted as spies collecting information to dispatch to East Germany¹⁹⁹.

In early 1962, the Greek Military Mission in Berlin reported on the extended activity of the communist Greek students of West Berlin, who were going to East Berlin to follow “socialist classes” and where they also got instructed in the use of weapons. The military mission collaborated with the West German police, who was aware of their activities but could not expel them. This was due to two reasons: firstly, they had no tangible evidence of radical activity and secondly, in West Berlin the Communist Party was not outlawed²⁰⁰. In late February 1962, the Ministry of Interior informed

¹⁹⁹ document β4γ42-99, Greek embassy in Bonn to the Greek ministry of Foreign Affairs, 14/12/1961, folder 1964_7/2, Historical Archive of the Greek Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Athens.

²⁰⁰ Greek Military Mission in Berlin to the Greek Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 12.01.1962, folder 1966_3/8.

the Ministry of Foreign Affairs that letters and a communist leaflet had been confiscated²⁰¹.

The Minister of Foreign Affairs wrote to the ministry of finance to ask for 70.000 drachmas to be invested for the foundation of a workers' union in Hamburg to counteract the OENO propaganda, an action defined as “nationally necessary”²⁰². OENO (Ομοσπονδία Ελληνικών Ναυτεργατικών Οργανώσεων) was the union of Greek ship workers and thus was active in big port cities.

Pesmazoglou when writing about the potential influence of the OENO on the workers was subtly criticizing the lack of rigorous surveillance, especially in the big industrial centers of North Germany, like Hamburg and Bremen. In turn, the indifference of the government regarding intervening contributed to the vicious circle by creating “an intense feeling of abandonment and (thus) an affiliation with organizations of communist inspiration and guidance”²⁰³.

The “brotherhood of Greeks of Hamburg” was also put under investigation since its members were intellectuals and students with “excessively progressive ideas”, while some of them even had suspicious political affiliations. Nevertheless, they were not stigmatized as OENO agents, and thus Pesmazoglou preconceived that prudence rather than outright condemnation was the best policy to follow towards them²⁰⁴.

According to the police director of Evros, workers coming from Samothrace and living in Stuttgart used to order music on the Budapest radio every Sunday at 2pm. More than that they were expressing views and comments artfully blended with the common communist slogans, and more specifically they referred to the loans from the Agriculture Bank of Greece as unfriendly to the farmers and oppressive²⁰⁵.

I suppose that the long trail of this information began with some co-workers in Stuttgart, who reported to their police authorities back home, who in their turn reported it to their superiors in Evros, who then felt the need to refer to the Ministry of Interior in Athens, which gave the final report to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs

²⁰¹ document A1355-16 Ministry of Interior to Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 24.02.1962, folder 1966_3/8.

²⁰² confidential document μδγ2310-11, βδγ42-71, To the General Accounting Office, Athens, 28-6-61, folder 1964_7/2.

²⁰³ confidential document βδγ42-69, Hamburg, 12-9-61, folder 1964_7/2.

²⁰⁴ Hamburg, 3-8-61, urgent confidential document 1426 12.6.1961, folder 1964_7/2.

²⁰⁵ secret document Γ.A5221/77086 ministry of Interior to Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Athens, 11-11-61, folder 1964_7/2.

because it fell under its scope of authority. Apparently, denunciation could travel much faster than the Hertzian waves...

It is always striking to see how easy was for a worker to get in trouble, when their colleagues spread rumors about their national feelings and touched the sensitive chord of national security. Here, the example of a worker helps us understand how the accusations were framed, and more crucially what was the adequate politically charged vocabulary to get you acquitted or behind bars!

In June 1960, Michael Skipas migrated to West Germany where he stayed until December 1961. When he returned to his village for the Christmas holidays, the authorities denied the renewal of his passport reasoning that he showed anti-national behavior while in Germany. He did not quit and pursued his inquiry in Athens, where he visited the police headquarters to find out which were the accusations he was facing.

Soon he learned that he was accused of propaganda for the autonomy of Macedonia as well as for smuggling goods. In his report to the police he wrote the following, “when I was 15 years old I was violently abducted by the communist bandits and I was taken to Yugoslavia where our de-Hellenization was attempted systematically in special schools [...] I managed to cross the borders and to kiss the Greek soil again. From then on, I was living an honorable life in my village, providing for my orphaned family and marrying my two sisters. [...] I’m at your hands to give me back to society clean, as I have been in my entire life”²⁰⁶.

Finally, the Ministry of Interior ordered an investigation of his case which showed that the consulate of Frankfurt acquitted every suspicion based on two reports by his colleagues²⁰⁷. The tropes the worker used in his apology were the pillars of nation-mindedness, namely motherland, religion and family. He escaped his communist abductors’ coerced infiltration, only to return to his village to pursue a peaceful and honorable life, taking care of his unwed sisters as a model brother. He pleaded the authorities to wash away the stigma of traitor and reconstitute his patriotic honor.

²⁰⁶ 19.03.1962 Skipas’ request to the Amyntaion police authorities, folder 1966_3/8.

²⁰⁷ document A1355-32, Ministry of interior to Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Athens, 25.04.1962 & confidential-urgent document A135-51 Greek embassy in Bonn to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 20.06.1962, folder 1966_3/8.

Remaining for a moment on the issue of Macedonia and the potential propaganda around it, some complaints can be found about the depiction of the poverty reigning in rural Northern Greece by the West German radio programs and films. For example, the Greek Minister of Foreign Affairs, Averoff, wrote to the general consul in Bonn, Tsatsos, asking him to contact the West German Ministry of Foreign Affairs and call their attention to the content of an emission by the Bavarian Radio (Bayerischer Rundfunk). According to Averoff, the attitude of the emission was not in tune with the cordial relations of the two countries, and furthermore, the negative image of the harsh living conditions, mostly in Macedonia, could be exploited by systemic elements spreading anti-Greek propaganda²⁰⁸.

As the historian Roberto Sala argues, the so-called "ether war" was an integral part of the propaganda struggles between East and West. The foreign language radio programs produced in the Eastern Bloc were top-notch for the respective national language groups in their home countries and less for migrants in the Federal Republic or in other Western European countries. Nevertheless, the broadcasts turned out to be very successful among the immigrants in West Germany, as the broadcaster from home could only be received poorly or not at all. The careful selection of the music in offer on those stations led to the intensive use of communist broadcasts by foreigners²⁰⁹.

To counteract the propaganda from Budapest, the Greek ministry of Foreign Affairs suggested that the embassy in Bonn should send approved material to the West German radio stations in order to compete for the attention of workers²¹⁰. In late September 1961, they promised to start Greek radio programs, necessary against the intensive propaganda from Budapest and Warsaw²¹¹. Indeed, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs informed the Ministry of Presidency, which had a directory for radio, that after numerous efforts by the Bonn Embassy the radio programs would start in late

²⁰⁸ document βδγ72-10, telegram of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs to the Greek embassy in Bonn, Athens, 19.01.1963, folder 1966_3/8.

²⁰⁹ Roberto Sala, "Gastarbeitersendungen" und „Gastarbeiterzeitschriften“ in der Bundesrepublik (1960–1975) – ein Spiegel internationaler Spannungen." *Zeithistorische Forschungen/Studies in Contemporary History* 2, no.3 (2005),369.

²¹⁰ secret document μδγ 2370-29, βδγ42-83, Ministry of Foreign Affairs to Ministry of Presidency, Ministry of Labor and the Greek embassy in Bonn, Athens, 20-11-61, folder 1964_7/2.

²¹¹ secret document βδγ42-67, Ministry of Foreign Affairs to Ministry of Presidency, Athens, 7-9-61, folder 1964_7/2.

September. Thus, the necessary material, like discs with music and lectures, had to be sent as soon as possible in order to equip the radio station for its broadcasting²¹².

Already in August 1960, the TV show “Abendschau” broadcasted on the SWR channel presented interviews with Greek guest workers. The first scenes show Gastarbeiter sitting on their bunk beds or eating some pasta, and in the end, we see them proudly going to deposit their deutsche marks as checks at the post office. The reporter was interested in knowing what was the preferable way to emigrate for the Greeks, and his interviewee working at the employment office answered that most of them had relatives or acquaintances. Most of them came from the villages, and thus when one person settled they would immediately report home to their village and write to them, 'Here in Stuttgart you get a job, the accommodation is not so good, but you can work here'²¹³.

On the 22nd of November 1960, the same SWR tv show “Abendschau” broadcasted a second episode on the Gastarbeiter. This time, though, it focused more on the Greek women and their working and living conditions in a German canning factory. It is remarkable that despite the fact that the show was about them, the women move as silent figures, working or smiling, but remain mute. Their stories are told by their employer, Mr. Vogel, and a man the reporter interviewed.

Out of the 100 foreigners working in the factory, around 50 were Greek, mainly women and girls. Their employer, Mr. Vogel, found his employees by applying at the employment office. This application was forwarded to the German commission in Athens, and everything else was done automatically according to the bilateral agreement. As he advertised his company, he claimed that they offered a very nicely furnished dormitory in a solid building, namely a home for girls and a home for men. It had central heating and shower rooms with cold and hot water.

Their earnings were also roughly double compared to what they were earning in Greece. The contracts were signed for a period of one year. But as Mr. Vogel mentioned, a lot of them already signed up to extend their contracts. There were even

²¹² secret document A1351-106, μδγ2370-8, Ministry of Foreign Affairs to Ministry of Presidency, Athens, 7-9-61, folder 1964_7/2.

²¹³ <https://www.ardmediathek.de/ard/video/swr-retro-abendschau/interviews-mit-griechischen-arbeitern/swrfernsehen-de/Y3JpZDovL3N3ci5kZS9hZXgwbzExOTcyNTA/>

workers who wanted to stay in Germany for at least 5 years in order to improve their livelihood considerably and also to have their families join them.

Some portraits of the workers follow on screen, like Konstantinos from Athens, married with three children and a locksmith by profession. Or Anastasia, who worked in a weaving mill in Greece for three years, earning only 37 drachmas. That was 5 marks and 50 pfennigs in 8 hours. In Germany she earned twice as much in the same time²¹⁴.

In late 1962, an emission of the Bavarian Radio presented the Federal Republic as the Promised Land for the modern Ulysses migrating from Greece. Beyond their smiling faces, the migrants cannot hide that misery pushed them to migrate. A Greek MP commented that in the past his voters were asking for favors regarding the acquisition of land or mediation with the authorities, but lately the only thing that everybody asked for was a ticket to Germany! Anyway, the farewell song in the ports and train stations “was less melancholic, because they were confident that their motherland would offer them better prospects upon their return”²¹⁵.

In the correspondence between the press office of the Ministry of Presidency, the Greek military mission in Berlin and the press office of the Bonn Embassy, it is obvious that the West German propaganda disturbed the national pride of the Greek authorities. It presented Greece as a poor country so that the workers consider themselves glad to be living in a developed country with high living standards and, on the other hand, to promote further migration of their relatives through the migrants’ letters. Both were part of the systematic effort of the Federal Republic to encourage migration in order to have a wider range of selection available²¹⁶.

On the 19th of May 1963, a guest worker from Arcadia (a region in Peloponnese, the same as “et in Arcadia ego”) sent a letter to the newspaper *Alitheia* of Tripoli complaining about the denigrating way Greece was depicted on the West German television. According to the worker, “when some unshaved and terrible travelers ruin the reputation of our country and sabotage its tourism, the state has the duty to defend

²¹⁴ <https://www.ardmediathek.de/ard/video/swr-retro-abendschau/griechische-arbeiterinnen-in-deutschland/swrfernsehen-de/Y3JpZDovL3N3ci5kZS9hZXgvdzExOTU4Nzk/>

²¹⁵ document 430, Press Office of the Greek embassy in Bonn to the Ministry of Presidency, Bonn, 21.12.1962, folder 1966_3/8.

²¹⁶ document βδγ72-9, Ministry of Presidency to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Athens, 12.01.1963, folder 1966_3/8.

itself; moreover, the Greek authorities in (West) Germany should also complain in order to stop the ridiculing of the country”²¹⁷.

The Greek military mission in Berlin informed the press office in Athens about the film “The Country of Gods” out on the 20th of March 1963. As the title shows, the film focused on the antiquities of Greece, but emphasis was also given to the heroic spirit of the Greeks and their struggles for freedom. The cliché portrayed was that Greece “enlightened the world, but its delayed development compared to the Western world is due to its 400-year slavery”. The Tripartite Occupation during the Second World War was always presented in the documentary accompanied by the comment that Greece managed to rise again despite the disasters and the difficulties it had to face²¹⁸.

In the past, during the Nazi Occupation of Greece, the forced labor sent to the Third Reich in 1942-1943 established a reputation of poor performance, and according to a report “they stand out as the worst of the foreign workers”. The use of Greeks, according to another, was 'a failed experiment'. But what alarmed the Gestapo above all were the Greeks' anti-German sentiments. They caused more trouble than any other group, infecting other foreign workers with their unruliness and misbehaviour²¹⁹.

On the contrary, from the 1960s on, the Greeks became desirable Gastarbeiter for the country of the economic miracle. They were somewhere in the middle of the racial (and racist) hierarchies the West Germans were using to interpret the foreigners' place amidst them. They shared different traits with the other ethnic groups recruited alongside them, while the Greek authorities constantly tried to remind their West German counterparts that Greece belonged to the West.

As Efi Avdela argues about the Greek bureaucrats of the postwar period, “in fact, we may wonder whether they did more or less the same as the representatives of other countries: they considered it their national duty to present a “nice image” of their country abroad”²²⁰. Despite the malaise due to the country's stereotyping as a

²¹⁷ document βδγ72-20, Ministry of Presidency to the Press Office of the Greek embassy in Bonn, Bonn, 4.06.1963, folder 1966_3/8.

²¹⁸ document βδγ72-19, Greek Military Mission to the Ministry of Presidency, West Berlin, 21.03.1963 folder 1966_3/8.

²¹⁹ Mazower, *Inside Hitler's Greece*, 76.

backward bucolic place, the fact that Greece was gradually becoming a desirable tourist destination, made the Greek authorities eager to swallow their pride in exchange for some Deutsch Marks spent under the Greek sun...

CHAPTER THREE: APPLE OF DISCORD: POLITICAL EXPLOITATION, CRISIS AND THE FIRST RETURN (1964-1967)

²²⁰ Efi Avdela, *When Juvenile Delinquency became an International Post-War Concern. The United Nations, the Council of Europe and the Place of Greece*, Vienna: Vienna University Press, 2019, 43-44.

While in opposition, the Center made many promises to the Gastarbeiter and to the local electorate that it would halt emigration through the improvement of the living conditions and employment opportunities. However, for the short period that it remained in power, it focused rather on revealing the scandals within the previous right-wing government towards the indoctrination of the Gastarbeiter. It did not use the momentum of social mobilization to address the workers' needs; on the contrary, it maintained the biases of anti-communism. Despite some limited efforts towards social policy measures, the main emphasis was put once again on their control and surveillance for reasons of national security.

A key person in this period is the Greek general consul in Bonn, Alexis Kyrou. All the contradictions of the Greek authorities' stance towards the Gastarbeiter are mirrored in his words and actions. Kyrou, who started his diplomatic career in the turbulent interwar years of the Metaxas dictatorship, knew how to find his balance on the suspended rope of Cold War diplomacy. He managed to retain his position in Bonn despite the power takeovers. Condemned as a neo-Nazi by his enemies, in his correspondence with his superiors in Athens, he pledged for fewer top-down measures and a more rationally organized administration and information flow.

In the meanwhile, the Greek Gastarbeiter started to get organized in communities which corresponded mainly to their political affiliations with parties in the homeland. The mid-sixties were a period of increasing political tensions and polarization. Mass mobilization, demonstrations and strikes made the headlines every day. Expectedly, the heatwave of the events of July 1965 reached the Greek Gastarbeiter in West Germany and set their spirits on fire. Every group fought for its influence and visibility, and a small-scale Cold War was in play among the opposing communities.

On top of the demands for the democratization of their homeland, the Greek Gastarbeiter had to face an unexpected disruption in their host country. The economic crisis of 1966-1967 caused the first regression of the West German economy, affecting first and foremost its most vulnerable part, the foreign workers. Their precarious status became more visible than ever, and many of them, fired and humiliated, took up the way back home and thus made up the first wave of return migration.

In order to better understand the culmination of different initiatives by Greek workers on West German soil, we have to keep in mind the general political and social context back in their homeland. In the early 1960s, the emergence of influential protest movements demonstrated a potential to move Greece towards a genuine democratization process²²¹.



The right-wing opposition accuses the Papandreou government that it did not keep its promise to stop emigration, nor to support the farmers. In the left corner the text reads “tobacco producers cannot win their bread”, while the placard of the demonstrators reads, “we want a place under the sky of Greece and not Germany”. The prime minister George Papandreou replies, “Don’t be in hurry! Soon you’ll have a place in the Kingdom of Heaven!”. Source: *Ellinikos Vorras*, 19/4/1964.

²²¹ Konstantina E. Botsiou. “New Policies, Old Politics: American Concepts of Reform in Marshall Plan Greece.” *Journal of Modern Greek Studies* 27, no. 2 (2009):230. <https://doi.org/10.1353/mgs.0.0063>.

Gradually, a new popular awareness over cultural values, collective consumption, and uneven regional development started to rise²²². A massive youth protest movement emerged in the years 1963 to 1967, in the general framework of an increasing popular support for the Left paired with restricted liberalization²²³.

During the same period, the prime minister, George Papandreou, launched major reforms to support education and the economy. Those measures increased his popularity and caused concern among conservatives²²⁴. Despite the fact that the Center Union government appeared as liberal, the prime minister refused to let left-wing political exiles return or to consider the legalization of the KKE and he publicly criticized commemoration of the resistance by EDA²²⁵.

However, the increasing social upheaval offered a pretext to the military to intervene in politics. The rising popularity of Papandreou's son Andreas exacerbated the perception of a threat in the eyes of the anti-communist forces²²⁶. When the prime minister decided to take over the Ministry of Defense, he faced King Constantine's objection. After the former's resignation, the king appointed a puppet government led by Athanassiadis-Novas²²⁷.

The new government was formed with defectors from the Centre Union and for this reason the July events were called 'apostasy'. For a month, numerous demonstrations were organized, where violent clashes with the police took place and hundreds of people were arrested²²⁸.

The years 1965–7, after George Papandreou was forced to resign, have been recorded in Greek history as a period of governmental instability, political recriminations, royal

²²² Judt, *Postwar*, 211-212.

²²³ Efi Avdela, "Youth 'in Moral Danger': (Re)Conceptualizing Delinquency in Post-Civil-War Greece." *Social History* 42, no. 1 (January 2, 2017): 91. <https://doi.org/10.1080/03071022.2016.1256105>.

²²⁴ Asimakoulas, "Translating", 27.

²²⁵ David Close, 'The Road to Reconciliation? The Greek Civil War and the Politics of Memory in the 1980s', in Philip Carabott & Thanasis D. Sfikas, eds, *The Greek Civil War: Essays on a Conflict of Exceptionalism and Silences*. Routledge, 2004, 258.

²²⁶ Othon Evangelos Anastasakis, *Authoritarianism In 20th Century Greece : Ideology and Education under the dictatorships of 1936 and 1967*, unpublished thesis, London School of Economics and Political Science, University of London. 1992, p.153.

²²⁷ Stone, *Goodbye*, 110&122.

²²⁸ Polymeris Voglis, "The Junta Came to Power by the Force of Arms, and Will Only Go by Force of Arms': Political Violence and the Voice of the Opposition to the Military Dictatorship in Greece, 1967–74." *Cultural and Social History* 8, no. 4 (January 2011): 556. <https://doi.org/10.2752/147800411X13105523597922>.

interference, and civil unrest, which gave the military the pretext to intervene in politics²²⁹.

During its short term in office, the Centre Union party also took measures aimed at gaining more influence over migrants. Attempts were made at establishing a more pro-labor policy than that of previous governments, with the appointment of Labor Attachés at the consulates in host countries and teachers to improve the quality of Greek-language education for expatriates' children, while there was again an attempt to curb the influence of the Left²³⁰.



The leader of Center Union and prime minister in 1963-1965, George Papandreou was also known as the “Old Man of Democracy”. Here the right-wing press plays with this nickname and the massive flight of youth, depicting the map of Greek territory as the prime minister. The title of the strip reads “Greece became a country of old men because of the emigration of youth”.Source: *Ellinikos Vorras*, 19/3/1965.

When the Center Union rose in power, a change of guard happened to the staff of the Greek authorities in West Germany. Writing to the Minister of Foreign Affairs, the

²²⁹ Anastasakis, “Greece’s Cold War”, 475.

²³⁰ Venturas, “Gouvernements Grecs”, 53-54.

Greek general consul in Bonn, Alexis Kyrou, did not miss the opportunity to thank the government but also to remind it that a fragile psychological atmosphere was created due to the dismissals, which “could give the impression to some suspicious elements that it was high time to put in place their selfish interests”. Thus, it was primordial to secure the status and the authority of the embassy and the consulates in the Federal Republic²³¹.

As a government, Center Union focused heavily on investigating and revealing the alleged excesses of right-wing governments in the 1952-63 period²³². In the part that follows, we will concentrate on reports published by the Ministry of Labor concerning the treatment of the Greek Gastarbeiter by the ERE government in the years 1960-1963 and the political gains expected from them. In my opinion, those reports increased the visibility of the workers’ problems and mobilized the public opinion in their favor. However, the self-interested and sensationalist touch in them, partly annulated their mission to activate positive policymaking and made apparent the political system’s failure to move beyond micropolitical rivalries and revenge actions.

III.A. A CATAPULT THROWING STONES OF SCANDAL

April 1964 was the time the renowned report by Polychronis was publicized. The report was entitled *Problems of the Greek Workers Working in West Germany* (*Προβλήματα των εν Δυτική Γερμανία απασχολουμένων εργατών*). Its writer was Leandros Polychronis, director of the Ministry of Labor, who, commissioned by the minister, gathered information about the propaganda and infiltration efforts of the previous government of ERE.

Apparently, poor Gutenberg was to blame for “the penetration of the communists in the conscience of the Greek workers”! The illustrations and the quality of the journals published in East Germany and destined to women and children was high compared to what the conservative press had to present²³³. On the other side of the Iron Curtain and dangerously close, the Greek political refugees in East Germany were expected to retain a Greek national identity. The magazine *Pyrros* reproduced the radical

²³¹ document βδγ542-175 1739, Greek embassy in Bonn personally to the minister of Foreign Affairs, Bonn, 11-4-1964, folder 1965_4/4.

²³² Theodore A. Couloumbis, “PASOK’s Foreign Policies, 1981-89: Continuity or Change?” in Clogg, Richard (ed.) *Greece, 1981-89: The Populist Decade*. Palgrave Macmillan, 2014, 123-124.

²³³ document βδγ42-77, Greek embassy in Bonn to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Bonn, 1-11-61, folder 1964_7/2.

patriotism of the Greek Left based on the notion that the Greek ‘people’ were victims of foreign oppression²³⁴.

In order to keep the Gastarbeiter away from such subversive voices, the ministry had to be gallant with the “right” -in both senses of the word- press supply. In a meeting in mid-November 1961 in the ministry of Foreign Affairs, the suggestions were, first and foremost, to massively post Greek newspapers to the local offices of the Greek Ministry of Labor, which would then distribute them for free to the factories in their areas and, secondly, to promote the publication of a weekly and a monthly magazine²³⁵.

In December 1961, the existing Greek newspapers published in West Germany were four, namely *Elliniki Echo* in Stuttgart, *Hellas* in Frankfurt, and *Echo Ellados* and *Foni* in Düsseldorf, which were published by the DGB, the biggest trade union in West Germany. Tsatsos characterized this unruly publishing activity as “unacceptably anarchic“, and he strongly recommended to name only one Greek and not German authority to which the publishers would have to refer²³⁶. The Socialist Union of Greeks in West Germany, which supported the party of Centre Union, also published since May 1962 a monthly journal under the title *Demokratiki Poreia*. Its chief editor was George Voukelatos and it was based in Bad-Godesberg near Bonn.

Polychronis zealously searching in the correspondence between the ministries in Athens and the Greek Embassy in Bonn found several mischievous actions by the ERE government. For example, in a document dated 8th of January 1964 from the Ministry of Presidency to the Greek Embassy in Bonn, 400.000 drachmas from the budget for secret national needs of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs were sent to the Greek Embassy to finance the publication of the newspaper *Hellas*. In the same document it was stated that the newspapers *Laos* and *News of Greece* published in Germany were also supported financially²³⁷.

²³⁴ Mary Ikoniadou. “‘We are and we remain Greeks’ The radical patriotic discourse in Pysros magazine in the GDR, 1961–68.” in Karakatsanis, Leonidas, and Nikolaos Papadogiannis, eds. *The Politics of Culture in Turkey, Greece and Cyprus: Performing the Left since the Sixties*. Routledge Advances in Mediterranean Studies 4. Abingdon, Oxon ; New York, NY: Routledge, 2017,202.

²³⁵ meeting proceedings, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Athens, 13.11.61, folder 1964_7/2.

²³⁶ document βδγ42-91, Greek embassy in Bonn to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs regarding their document μδγ 2370-33, Bonn, 2-12-61, folder 1964_7/2.

²³⁷ Leandros Polychronis, *Problemata ton en Dytike Germania apasholoumenon Ellinon ergaton*, National Press, Athens, 1964,15.

As Jean Meynaud suggested, “ERE offered financial support to a specific part of the press, sometimes with the preface that the funding was connected with the advertisement of public enterprises. Thus, many newspapers were obedient to the directives given from the government under the cloak of a superficial freedom of the press. For example, the free distribution of certain newspapers, like *Ellinikos Vorras*, among the Greek guest workers was credited to the public budget”²³⁸.

Polychronis continued his investigation with other kinds of printed material. Apart from that, for the anniversaries of the 28th of October and of the 25th of March hundreds of parcels with “illuminating national material” were always sent from Greece to all the Greek authorities in Germany. This material was made up of small propagandist leaflets in which, according to Polychronis, there was not the slightest reference to the importance of the Independence War of 1821 - on the contrary, there was only a virulent anti-communist propaganda in hysterical tones.

Polychronis unveiled the implication of the German authorities, as well. He found out that in January 1962, Andreas Konitopoulos, special advisor in the Ministry of the Presidency, arrived in Bonn and paid a visit to the German Press Ministry and pleaded for the publication of a Greek newspaper in West Germany funded by the German state. Polychronis reminded the readers of his report that Andreas Konitopoulos during the 4th of August 1936 dictatorship was the general director of the Press Censorship Office for Northern Greece based in Thessaloniki. Thus, we see that the political life of the 1960s is not at all detached from old divisions dating back to the pre-war period, and the trajectories of some figures offered a battleground for personal attacks.

The newspaper at stake would be distributed free of charge among the Greek workers, it would be anti-communist and would propagate pro the governing party in Greece. Indeed, with the contribution of the Greek ambassador in Bonn at the time, Themistocles Tsatsos, the German government agreed and from January 1963 the newspaper *Elliniki* was published once per month and then twice per month in Bonn. In an ironic tone, Polychronis noted that in the first issue of *Elliniki*, even though the German Embassy in Athens required to include a message to the Greek workers in

²³⁸ Meynaud, *Les Forces Politiques*, 262.

Germany by the Greek King Paul and by the German President Dr. Lybke, there was paradoxically a message by the Prime Minister K. Karamanlis with a big photo of him and a message from the chancellor Adenauer.²³⁹

First of all, we will have a look at the response of the former ambassador Themistocles Tsatsos to the “accusations” of Polychronis, through the pages of the newspaper *To Vima*: “Polychronis adopting the communist slogan concerning the misery of workers distorted the truth, denying the existence of the minimum care about the workers. It is although commonly admitted that since I became ambassador in 1961, local offices of the Greek Ministry of Labor and Greek Houses were founded, more priests were hired, libraries and discotheques were created, free German lessons were offered, Greek schools were founded and 25 social workers were hired”.

The former general consul concluded his answer by explaining why he bothered answering all those biased accusations anyway. He did so, because he realized how the Ministry of Labor was totally aligned with the report, which concerned an issue of great importance to the majority of Greeks, who however had little information on it and, last but not least, because the report was unfair to his West German colleagues, who helped his work with enthusiasm²⁴⁰.

Polychronis responded to Tsatsos’ letter, because he considered that, instead of replying to the accusations of the report, Tsatsos turned the whole debate into a personal attack. He claimed sarcastically that Tsatsos avoided answering and promised to do so in the future with the hope that soon Karamanlis would return to the government and offer him protection. Polychronis predicted that this would not happen during this generation’s lifespan! Polychronis also answered to the accusation that his wife was imprisoned for her communist beliefs by reminding Tsatsos that once upon a time in the interwar period he was also exiled under the same accusation, but his political stance thereafter showed how wrong the judges were²⁴¹!

An article by Gert Ziegler published in the German newspaper *Handelsblatt* suggested that the Greeks officials were super-sensitive and saw only the negative sides of emigration, because they were shameful that Greece could not provide its

²³⁹ Meynaud, *Les Forces Politiques*, 16.

²⁴⁰ *To Vima*, 9/5/1964, p.5.

²⁴¹ *To Vima*, 13/5/1964, p.9.

workers with labor. The article presented all the optimist predictions for the Greek workers, like the fact that in Greece they would be anyway unemployed, however, now they would acquire technological specialization and send remittances and savings for a new start in Greece. The article was a response to the Polychronis report, which ignored all the positive German initiatives in West Germany but also the impeccable services offered by the German Commission in Athens²⁴².

The Polychronis report was characterized as “catapult” in the issue of 16th of April 1964 in the Athenian newspaper *Ta Nea*. As we can see, the vocabulary is very emotionally and ideologically charged in the headline “Germany, a black hell for the Greek worker: poverty, espionage, exploitation, abandonment” and in phrases like the following: “indignation, disgust and anger because nobody could not imagine the filthy role had by the various interpreters and different kinds of members of Karamanlis’ disgrace.”²⁴³.

The issue of surveillance is presented in the same article as terrorization, given that “there are individuals who are watching the workers on every step with the preface of the communist danger[...] These agents are paid high wages from secret resources, to mingle with the workers and praise ERE’s policies while swearing against the opposition leader”²⁴⁴.

Migrant letters arriving to the editors dramatized the social circumstances they were experiencing. According to them, apart from the harsh working conditions, the surrounding atmosphere was equally heavy, and the authorities discouraged the Greek workers not only from a frivolous lifestyle including laughing and staying up until late, but also from discussing openly political issues²⁴⁵.

The authorities were accused that they “wore the cloak of a democrat”, since in reality nothing changed with the alteration from a right-wing government to one of the center. The main concern being that the Greek authorities were lenient or even supportive of para-state extremists, the left-wing migrants protested against the “orgy of the right-wing bullies”²⁴⁶.

²⁴² *Oikonomikos Tachydromos*, 10/9/1964, p.1 and 16.

²⁴³ *Ta Nea*, 14 April 1964, p.1.

²⁴⁴ *Ta Nea*, 14 April 1964, p.1.

²⁴⁵ *Avgi*, 4/2/1965, p.3.

²⁴⁶ *Avgi*, 13/3/1965, p.3 & 14/3/1965, p.3 & 12/6/1965, p.3.

The migrants' letters to the leftist press offered an illustrated validation of the Polychronis report with spooky depictions of the "hell of the slave markets". The Karamanlis government instead of protection offered the migrants surveillance, obstacles in their work, mind control and threats. Terror and horror were the potent metaphors of their lives²⁴⁷. Generally, the point was that much para-state and anti-constitutional activity took place under the nose of the official Greek authorities, who willingly ignored it, not to say, encouraged it and supported it.

Nevertheless, here a disclaimer is necessary, because we have to be vigilant with our conclusions in the blurry and blurky universe of state bureaucracy. The theory of the "standing civil war" allowed the police, the army and the secret services with numerous civilian collaborators across the society to act quasi-independently from the government²⁴⁸. Reportedly, the prime minister himself, Karamanlis, after the assassination of the EDA Deputy Grigoris Lambrakis, wondered in 1963, "who really rules this country?"

As time went by, the polarization gradually reached its peak, mostly after the July events. In October 1965, we read in the leftist *Avgi* that there was a general terrorist plan against the Greek migrants plotted by both the Greek government, which was not independent and served the king (aulodouloi), and Bonn. According to *Avgi*, the terrorization aimed to bend the migrants' democratic beliefs and moral, while psychological pressures and political blackmailing were the methods used to achieve it²⁴⁹.

A wordplay confused on purpose the Greek words for authorities (ypiresia) and servants (ypiretis) to convey the message that the Greek authorities were serving the interests of fascist organizations²⁵⁰. In the times of spaghetti westerns, the theme of gangsters was also used to describe the actions of the undercover agents of ERE among the workers in West Germany²⁵¹. Contrary to the leftist decency, the king's servants showed signs of ultimate moral corruption and shameless decadence when

²⁴⁷ *Avgi*, 15/4/1964.

²⁴⁸ Stergiou, *Greece's Ostpolitik*, 35.

²⁴⁹ *Avgi*, 15/10/1965.

²⁵⁰ *Avgi*, 17/10/1965.

²⁵¹ *Avgi*, 19/11/1965, p. 3.

they reported “unwanted” young women workers as prostitutes to the West German authorities²⁵²!

Here, we may allow ourselves a small bracket to reflect on the sexual mores prevalent in Greek society of the time, in order to better contextualize the importance of such an accusation. There was no sharp contrast between left-wing and right-wing families in the way they brought up their children in 1950s Greece. Although there were differences concerning the role of religion in family life, both were traditional in their values and morality and conservative when it came to their daughters²⁵³.

Especially in rural areas, exposing in public the newly-weds’ bloodstained sheets as a proof of the bride’s virginity was still common. The concept of virginity remained for many years a major source of anxiety not only for women but also for their paternal family²⁵⁴.

A part of the West German population was not free of such moralistic preoccupations, as well. In an utterly racist view of Southerners as womanizers and irresistible zigos, endangering the locals’ unturbulent lives, an article in the magazine *Neue Illustrierte* cried “shameless foreign workers, out!”. Written in May 1965, the article complained about the negative sides of the presence of 1.100.000 foreign workers out of whom 170.000 were Greek.

The article claimed that “if the situation continues, maybe in one year’s time we will not be masters of our home. They flood our coffeehouses, they whistle at our girls, they harass our wives, they beat up our policemen and they want to be loved by us”. Mainly the article attacked Italians and presented 7 photos of criminals, 4 Italians, and 1 Turk, one Greek and one Yugoslav. However, the magazine was sympathetic towards the Greeks, as it wrote that “80% of the Greeks want to stay in Germany and they are sympathetic. Most of them respect our hospitality”²⁵⁵.

The separation of families endangered many marriages and encouraged affairs between married workers and German women. At the same time, it was a common view that female guest workers needed to be protected from both their fellow

²⁵² *Avgi*, 28/10/1965.

²⁵³ Gildea and Warring, *Europe's 1968*, 70.

²⁵⁴ Efi Avdela, Kostis Gotsinas, Despo Kritsotaki, and Dimitra Vassiliadou. “From Virginity to Orgasm: Marriage and Sexuality in Twentieth-Century Greece.” *Journal of Family History* 45, no.3 (2020),320.

²⁵⁵ *To Vima*, 4/5/1965, p.8.

nationals and German men. For instance, some welfare organizations offered special housing or religious and cultural opportunities targeted at female guest workers²⁵⁶.

The newly appointed consul in Frankfurt, Markantonatos, sent a report to the embassy in Bonn with his first impressions in April 1964. A closer look leaves the taste of an anthropological observation of human characters inhabited by generalizations and clichés. Thus, in the consul's view, the Greek workers "are mostly proud, law abiding and peaceful individuals, whose dignified behavior earned them their employers' and colleagues' respect. There are very few exceptions of troublemakers, petty fraudsters and men and women who neglect their family duties".

Apart from the study of their characters, the consul felt the duty to offer his insights regarding the potential communist infiltration of those docile workers. From his perspective, the Greek guest workers were more money-driven materialists living in an advanced country of the capitalist free market than political animals prone to heated debates. Their priority was to buy a car or a piece of land back in Greece, and if it happened that they were denounced as communists, this was often as a result of personal enmity²⁵⁷.

Alexis Kyrou, the Greek ambassador in Bonn, in a letter to the newspaper *To Vima*, in November 1964, wrote that "it is natural and inescapable if among the 150.000 of our workers in West Germany today there is also some scamming. It would be unfair, though, to make conclusions for the whole from the exceptions. For this whole, I can assure you as representative of Greece in West Germany that the German employers and the German services are very satisfied both with their efficiency and their overall behavior. I can also certify that the Greeks are among the other foreign workers now in the FRG that have the least contact with the German police."²⁵⁸

Actually, in August 1964, in view of the recent crisis in Cyprus, fears were voiced about potential conflicts between the Greek and Turkish guest workers living in the Federal Republic, which could eventually disturb the social order. Given that representatives of students' and workers' unions asked the embassy's permission to host public gatherings, Kyrou took initiative to publish a directive to the consulates.

²⁵⁶ Mark E. Spicka, "Guest Workers, Social Order, and West German Municipalities, 1960–7." *Journal of Contemporary History* 54, no.3 (2020), 633-634.

²⁵⁷ document βδγ42-176, Greek consulate in Frankfurt to the Greek embassy in Bonn, Frankfurt, 18.04.1964, folder 1965_4/4.

²⁵⁸ *To Vima*, 26/11/1964, p.11

In this, it was mentioned that nobody argued against the patriotic feelings and the reasonable wrath of the Greeks concerning the Cyprus events. Nevertheless, it was necessary to keep calm and decent, avoiding any incidents and gatherings incompatible with “our Greek civilization”²⁵⁹.

III.B. REPORTERS BEYOND BORDERS

In September 1965, the Ministry of Labor published a report entitled *The issues of the Greek workers in West Germany (Τα θέματα των εν Δυτική Γερμανία Ελλήνων εργατών)*, which described the current situation for the Greeks in different cities and suggested measures that needed to be taken to improve their life conditions. The writer, Socrates Kladas, was employed by the Minister of Labor Bakatselos, in order to investigate the condition of Greek services in the Federal Republic of Germany and the needs of the Greek workers residing there.

In his account, he was quite critical of past practices adopted by the government of the conservative party ERE in the period 1961-1963, and his perspective stemmed from his ideological position at the Center of the political spectrum. Similar observations about the working conditions but also the leisure time of the Greek workers were published before in several newspapers and in a series of articles penned already in 1962 by Vasos Mathiopoulos.

Mathiopoulos observed good intentions but lagging performance among the Greek authorities in the Federal Republic. As far as the information and amusement of workers was concerned, Mathiopoulos mentioned that from February 1962, a radio program for the Greek guest workers, broadcasted every Tuesday, was taken over by the Süddeutsche broadcasting. It contained news from Greece, short messages from around the world, Greek folk music and a commentary on the particular problems faced by workers²⁶⁰.

In regard to radio, Kladas’ report informed his ministry that the previous situation in which the only sources of information in Greek were the radio stations of Prague, Budapest and Bucharest had changed since November 1964. In the special issue of magazine *Epoches* under the title “Migration: blessing or curse?”, there were hints

²⁵⁹ document βδγ42-198, Greek embassy in Bonn to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Bonn, 12-8-1964, folder 1965_4/4.

²⁶⁰ SPD-Pressedienst P/Xvii/222, Bonn, 2 November 1962, Archive of the Friedrich-Ebert Stiftung.

about the surveillance of migrants when it came to the radio stations they would listen to. Until 1964, the only radio amusement for the migrants were the emissions with Greek pop songs from the Budapest radio station.

The journalist argued that “some imagination and good will would be enough to organize transmissions of special programs created by the National Radio Foundation from the West European radio stations. Instead of that measure, they were taking note of migrants asking for Greek songs from the Budapest radio, so that when they would come back to Greece they would be in trouble with the authorities”²⁶¹.

From the 1963 reportage by Panos Sklias published in the newspaper *To Vima*, we are informed about the Greek program in Deutsche Welle. The emission of that radio station in Cologne every Tuesday evening for a quarter was destined to the Greek workers. It started with the melody of “Amygdalia”, went on with international news, continued with news from Germany concerning social insurance and unemployment benefits and offered advice on how the workers could save money, how they should act in case of an accident, how they could bring their family to Germany, etc.²⁶².

In November 1964, daily radio programs were constituted for the foreign employees by the radio stations in West Germany. The Bavarian Radio was responsible for the Greek radio program. The duration was 45 minutes from 20.15-21.00, and its purpose was informative, educative and amusing. Twice per week there was also a German language lesson and every fifteen days an emission under the title “to get to know Germany” and “to get to know Greece”. Music, Greek songs and sport news made up the biggest part of the program. Every Friday there was also a sermon. Every fifteen days there was a talk given by the Greek ambassador in Bonn Alexis Kyrou.

Many listeners took initiative to send letters to Munich, as we are informed by the article published on the 1st of February 1965 in the newspaper *Elliniki*. Every day almost 200 letters made their way to the directors of the Greek program, namely the Greek journalist Paulos Bakojannis, the director of the Gastarbeiterredaktion Brigitte Seufert and their assistant Eva Mayer²⁶³.

²⁶¹ Elia Demetra (ed.), “E metanasteusi eulogia e katara? Mia ereuna ton epochon“, *Epoches*, Athens, 1965,19.

²⁶² *To Vima*, 1/2/1963, p.9.

²⁶³ *Elliniki*, 1/2/1965,p.2.

As the historian Roberto Sala suggests, the introduction of the "guest worker broadcasts" at ARD as well as the state funding of "guest worker magazines" came as a response to the communist propaganda. Political interests played a decisive role in the creation of the first foreign language media for migrants in the Federal Republic²⁶⁴.

In early April 1964, Kyrou informed the Ministry of Foreign Affairs that Deutsche Welle would start 40-minute long, Greek-speaking emissions to be transmitted to Greece at 23.00 Athens time. His wish was that the Greek program could be included in the special programs for the Mediterranean European countries rather than in the ones destined for Southeastern Europe. Together with his report, Kyrou also attached his inaugural message to the Greek audience, which echoed his intention to "further tighten the two countries' ties, which had nothing to divide them, but on the contrary have many common interests and views to unite them".

He recognized that the ancient ruins, the classical tradition's revival in Goethe and the Greek hospitality attracted the German tourists. On the other hand, the Greeks "really wished to forget the dark parenthesis of the war, feeling that the Germans of the Federal Republic had nothing to do with that era, but they were spiritual relatives of Winkelmann and Hölderlin".

He subtly made political comments concerning the Cold War alliances of the two countries, underlining that both were dedicated to the democratic institutions, the national independence of the peoples and the defense of NATO, hinting that there was some misinformation concerning the Cyprus question. Anyway, the purpose of those emissions was for Kyrou the dissemination of information about life in West Germany, to which 140.000 Greek workers also participated. His warmest wish was that this information would bring understanding and in turn friendship between the two countries²⁶⁵.

His inaugural message to the Greek guest workers through the Bavarian Radio, on the 11th of April 1965, lacked the intellectualisms and instead emanated paternalistic overtones. He hoped that this communication between him and his compatriots would be useful for both, and he wanted to keep it mutual and reciprocal by inviting them to

²⁶⁴ Sala, "Gastarbeitersendungen", 386.

²⁶⁵ document βδγ41-452, Greek embassy in Bonn to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Bonn, 7-04-64, folder 1964_7/2.

write to him. He would answer either personally with a letter or through his radio message.

He continued in a sentimentally manipulative way stressing that he knew “you are not university professors, so you could write your thoughts simply as you write to your parents back home. Besides, what else should the Greek consul be rather than your father in this foreign country, whom you can address for advice and protection?”. He had been serving just fourteen months as a consul in Bonn, and he found that much had been already ameliorated, but also much more could be done for them “to remain good Greeks and return, that blessed hour, to the motherland even better than you were when you left [...] May the God of Greece be of help!²⁶⁶”.

In his study on Greek foreign policy published in 1955, Kyrou argued that, as descendants of “the most glorious race in the world”, the Greeks ought to protect their mores and traditions and to avoid the “silly aping” of things foreign. According to Kyrou, it was only internal discord among Greece’s “ruling classes” that had prevented Hellenism from spreading its “intellectual, commercial and political influence” over the Balkans and the entire Mediterranean basin as befitted “the History and the genius of the Race”. The inference was that national unity should be achieved at all cost and dissenting voices could barely be tolerated²⁶⁷.

This view was shared by other state bureaucrats, who took their role as representatives of the government and the king quite personally. They used their positions for a strange political tutelage and intimidation of the compatriots entrusted to them. In the following paragraphs we will follow how the freedom of speech reigning in West German media could create troubles to more vocal Greek Gastarbeiter, who dared to open up in air.

The West German media showed an increased interest in the July events and the political crisis in Greece. Two episodes of the SWR channel’s tv show “Abendschau” included interviews with Greek Gastarbeiter and representatives of the Greek authorities in West Germany. More precisely, on the show of the 21st of July 1965,

²⁶⁶ document βδγ42-241, internal in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs from the second political directorate to the directorate of Greeks Abroad, Athens, 12.4.1965 folder 1964_4/4.

²⁶⁷ Ioannis Stefanidis, *Stirring the Greek Nation Political Culture, Irredentism and Anti-Americanism in Post-War Greece, 1945–1967*, Aldershot: Ashgate, 2007, 43-44&248.

Greek guest workers from a cement factory in Kehl and from a guest workers' hostel near Offenburg commented on the political crisis.

The reporter described the situation as follows, “crisis in Greece. Violent demonstrations over government reshuffle. The union calls for a strike. There are riots and clashes. Thousands of Greeks work and live almost 3,000 kilometers from the trouble spot. In Baden-Württemberg and Rhineland-Palatinate there are 62,000, of which a third are women. Are you worried? Are you worried? We visited their workplaces here in a cement factory in Kehl am Rhein.“

Among the three workers interviewed by the reporter, the first stated that unfortunately the political situation in Greece was very bad. The other two argued that they are now far from their homeland anyway, they found themselves in a foreign country and they are minding their own business without caring about what happens in Greece. We might think that their answer was totally apolitical, almost selfish, but the outcome of the interview proved that their hesitation and suspicion had a basis.

The reporter paid a visit to a guest worker dormitory near Offenburg, where the workers felt more protected and opened up. One worker was blunt about the situation which “dissatisfied the Greek people. Because Greece doesn't need a king, because Greece is a very poor country“. His colleague agreed that “every Greek guest worker abroad, whether in Germany or in America or Australia, wants this crisis to end immediately in our fatherland. That law, peace and unity arise down there. We don't want a crisis anymore. We don't want war anymore. We want work, industry just like any other European country“²⁶⁸.

Two days later, on the 23rd of July 1965, a second episode of the show investigated how the Greek social worker employed by Caritas Freiburg exerted political pressure on the Greek guest workers entrusted to him, who had expressed themselves critical of the political conditions in their home country in the evening show.

The social worker filed a report on the incident to be addressed to the Greek government agencies, but he did not reveal its content to the relevant question of the reporter! His superior in Freiburg, Director Schwer, said that they were aware of this

²⁶⁸ <https://www.ardmediathek.de/ard/video/swr-retro-abendschau/reaktion-griechischer-gastarbeiter-auf-unruhen-in-griechenland/swrfernsehen-de/Y3JpZDovL3N3ci5kZS9hZXgvdzExNTkxOTg/>

case. He continued saying that “the Greek social workers who work for their guest workers in Germany do not have any political tasks. Rather, they are employed by us to take care of people. If a social worker were to be politically active, he would be exactly the opposite of what our charity, the Caritas Association, wants. Namely, human care. We will pursue these things very vigorously and overlook what has to be done, and then arrange the appropriate measures”²⁶⁹.

According to a 1967 *Spiegel* article, since the crisis in the summer of 1965, the majority of the Greeks in West Germany had sympathized with the Greek Left. The Center Union of the overthrown leader Papandreou began to build a guest worker organization with party cells and party youth in Germany, with its headquarters in Bad Godesberg, under the leadership of George Voukelatos and others. The Communists also worked on German soil, through EDA and its branches in West German cities.

West German cells of the right-wing National Radical Union (ERE) emerged against the Left bulwarks. All three parties, which concentrate on the Greek communities in the German cities and on the 25 Greek meeting houses in Germany, found outside help. The EDA comrades and groups on the Left were looked after by the GDR. In East Berlin two magazines were published in Greek: *Ηχώ* (*Echo*) and *Μετανάστης* (*Migrant*). The socialist center politicians made friends with the SPD and the German Trade Union Confederation. Finally, the right-wing groups were supported by the Hellenic Embassy in Bonn, the 14 consulates and the KYP secret service since the royal coup in Athens.

In December 1966, 250 leftist journalists, students, and workers received threatening letters from an organization called the "Black Hand, National Combat Group in West Germany". The content of the pamphlet was that the "known anti-national" recipients had to stop their political activity, otherwise they would be forced to do so by "violent, hard measures"²⁷⁰.

As we read in a 1967 *Spiegel* article, the Greek general consul in Bonn, Alexis Kyrou, was considered by some Greeks in West Germany “as the current representative of

²⁶⁹ <https://www.ardmediathek.de/ard/video/swr-retro-abendschau/politischer-druck-auf-griechische-gastarbeiter/swrfernsehen-de/Y3JpZDovL3N3ci5kZS9hZXgvbzExNTkyMDU/>

²⁷⁰ *Der Spiegel*, 16/1967.

the far right of his country [...] he was brother of the publisher Elias Kyrrou and co-owner of the right-wing Athens newspaper *Estia*".

Quoting an article on *Der Spiegel*, *Avgi* demanded his replacement, because he was "a neo-Nazi, an enemy of the migrants and supporter of the darkest German and Greek social circles". Thus, he was not worthy of his title and his mission to represent the Greek guest workers, and he had to leave his position immediately²⁷¹!

From 1932 to 1936 the young diplomat was secretary of the Greek legation in Berlin and later he served the diplomatic body in different places. He moved to Bonn in January 1964 as Greek ambassador posted by the Papandreou government. "Little was missing, and I would have become a pianist," Kyrrou once confessed to a German friend. "But I chose the Foreign Service, thank God. I can only say that it is much easier to be a diplomat than a good piano player"²⁷².

In the part that follows, I use his reports to the ministry of Foreign Affairs as a looking glass to the political thriller taking place in the Greek circles of the Federal Republic. The tensions were high, verbal and physical harassment ended up being a daily reality and got normalized. In my view, both the authorities and the workers were balancing on the razor's edge in quasi-revolutionary circumstances. The general consul himself was, at the same time, in the loop, since he had a hands-on experience of the situation and the power to manipulate it, while, quite paradoxically, he was also out of the loop, since his authority was castrated by the self-sabotaging obsessions of the state apparatus.

III.C. IN THE LOOP, OUT OF THE LOOP

Kyrrou had the habit of writing long reports to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, explaining his quasi-sociological observations regarding the activities of the guest workers in the Federal Republic. In April 1965, he sent his account on the causes of the enhanced communist activity, reasoning that it was not a novel phenomenon, but its roots could be traced back to the superficially peaceful elections of 1963 and the police pressures of the time.

²⁷¹ *Avgi*, 12/4/67, p.5.

²⁷² *Der Spiegel*, 16/1967

The supplanting of the Right by the Center in the government gave the communists the opportunity to move more openly. Their first step was to traduce all the Greek authorities in West Germany not only as incompetent, but as brute royalists-fascists and cruel perpetrators of all “democratic” citizens and “liberal” movement. Kyrou boasted that he was quick to warn the government to filter such accusations, but unfortunately the press published the accounts of those “fighters for freedom and democracy”.

The next step of their ascending influence started in early 1965 with the foundation of the Lambrakis’ clubs and the fundraising campaigns for EDA and the KKE. Kyrou appeared determined that there was no real need for financial support since they got funds from East Berlin, if not even directly from Moscow. A proof of that was the ease with which they wasted money on renting rooms and orchestras for events with free entrance and drinks and the printing of leaflets and journals.

Kyrou was convinced that the police measures were not enough, even if at a first level they were necessary. On the contrary, the Greek government had to use exclusively democratic measures against them, so that, like Caesar’s wife, they would not only be but also appear democratic.

An important way to protect the workers from the communist infiltration was the existence of mainstream sources of information, echoing the views of the government. Moreover, around 8000 DM were required for the financial support of non-communist student unions and 12.000 DM for the activities of non-communist workers’ unions and communities²⁷³.

After the murder of Lambrakis in 1963, Mikis Theodorakis, famous composer and an EDA deputy in the popular district of Piraeus, was chosen as the leader of the Dimokratiki Neolaia Lambraki (Democratic Youth Movement Lambrakis). It was to count approximately over 50.000 members, it created 200 cultural centres and represented the most active pro-democracy force in the country²⁷⁴.

In March 1965, Kyrou asked if a decree forbidding fundraising campaigns and political gatherings aimed at the Lambrakis youth was acceptable for the ministry. In

²⁷³ document βδγ42-241. internal in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs from the second political directorate to the directorate of Greeks Abroad, Athens, 12.4.1965, folder 1964_4/4.

²⁷⁴ Gkotzaridis, “Who Will Help Me”, 317.

his view, that would prevent the involvement of the West German authorities in containing the political activities of the Greek guest workers, as they did with the Spaniards²⁷⁵.

In late January 1965, the military attaché in Bonn, Makarezos, alarmed his superiors in Athens regarding the increased activities of the Lambrakis Youth in West Germany. The report concluded that urgent measures were required, not only to avoid long-term consequences on the country's national security but also to prevent the deterioration of its relations with the official West German authorities, who were already concerned with this heightened communist activity²⁷⁶.

What is of greater interest in this report are the letters attached to it. They are three different types of letters, all pointing to the danger that the Lambrakis Youth posed to the peaceful and respectable national-minded Greeks. The first is a letter of an individual denouncing the Lambrakis activities in Hannover, the second is a collective complaint letter of thirty Greeks from Sindelfingen destined to the Minister of Presidency, and last is an anonymous threat note from Siegburg to Bakojannis in the Munich Radio.

The individual worker found a call from the Lambrakis Youth in his room, and he felt the duty "as a Greek" to report his impressions to the embassy. In his view, the problem was that many workers were mindless of the danger of infiltration and joined the meetings only to listen to some Greek, meet their compatriots and spend their time. In the meanwhile, the skillful speakers attracted the attention of those innocent people and made them join every meeting. As a result, "they corrupt their thoughts and make them communists".

The collective letter was a reaction to an acknowledgement published in Avgi for 800 DM collected in Sindelfingen as a support to EDA. The 30 Greeks of the letter, "bearing healthy national sentiments", considered themselves insulted because they did not belong to those circles propagating communism publicly. In case needed, they were ready to report the names of the workers doing so. They feared the danger of the

²⁷⁵ document βδγ42-232, Greek embassy in Bonn to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Bonn 16.03.1965, regarding the document μδγ352-57 dating 23.2.1965, folder 1965_4/4.

²⁷⁶ military attaché in the Greek embassy in Bonn to the General Headquarter of National Defense, Bonn, 26-1-1965, folder 1965_4/4.

expansion of communism among the Greeks, since the “Z bearers” were part of their community’s council.

The threat is written in ridiculously incorrect orthography, so that one is skeptical about whether it is not made on purpose. Anyway, the text warned Bakojannis personally to be obedient and avoid accusing the Lambrakis Youth, because “Poseidon with his crane is watching you”! If he dared to play the vinyl with Karamanlis’ speech, he would have to face the consequences. The speaker’s nineteen “friends” did not miss out on sending their greetings ...

From the beginning of 1967, the tensions among the opposing political groups were peaking mainly in the major industrial cities with migrant presence, like Düsseldorf, Hannover, Hamburg and Stuttgart. Rising outcry concerned the activities of the fascist group Black Hand made up of Greek extremists attacking leftist guest workers, together with the non-renewal of several passports by the Greek authorities²⁷⁷. The leftist *Avgi* characterized this measure as equal to Hitler’s tactics of bullying workers, in order to stop their struggles for improving their working and living conditions²⁷⁸.

The spring of 1967 was a hot one in the political arena, given that the parties were preparing for elections in late April. Those never took place because of the colonels’ coup d’état. Nevertheless, it is interesting to read the reportages among the politically active migrants in West Germany in order to follow their aspirations and the general reigning atmosphere. In hindsight, they look like the orchestra playing on the sinking Titanic...

The halls were flooded with guests during the soirées organized by the EDA and the Lambrakis youth. Positive vibes electrified the atmosphere, which was filled with “optimism, faith in a better future, smiles and civilization; the Left expresses their will for a new Greece”. In many places, like in Hamburg, Greek guest workers and students took part in the Easter Peace marches²⁷⁹.

In Munich, a big pre-election meeting with the motto “victory to EDA” took place one week before the 21st of April²⁸⁰. In early March, Munich was also the venue for the seminar organized by the Union of Greek Communities voting for a return to

²⁷⁷ *Avgi*, 26/1/1967,p.3.

²⁷⁸ *Avgi*, 15/4/1967, p.5.

²⁷⁹ *Avgi*, 16/4/1967, p.5.

²⁸⁰ *Avgi*, 17/4/1967, p.5.

normality and an end to the political crisis. The participants demanded free elections with the analogic system, the abolition of repressive measures and the respect of the migrants' freedoms and their right to vote by post²⁸¹.

It is quite amusing to read Kyrrou's complaints about the piles of documents sent from the Greek police authorities asking to cross-reference information about various workers suspected of communist activity. The general consul, quite exasperated with his collocutor's indifference to his advice, attempted once again to suggest more effective ways of action. As he said, those thoughts were already mentioned in his numerous reports and were the fruit of his crystallized experience.

There were specific reasons that offered the communists ample space for their activities including the non-filtered recruitment process, the reactionary atmosphere since the July 1965 events, the encouragement from the DGB and the SPD on West German soil, the lenient stance of the West German police who feared accusations for employing Nazi methods and the use of West Berlin as a base for KKE and EDA agents to smuggle propagandist material from the Eastern Bloc²⁸².

However, despite the heightened communist propaganda, its appeal and impact were limited. Thus, Kyrrou gave two possible explanations for the growing number of filed denunciations: either the security office was examining all possible cases, or the workers themselves felt entitled to denounce their colleagues. As a result of the "bombardment" of the consular office with documents, serious cases might be overlooked in the "flood" of information. Anyway, many denunciations happened due to personal conflicts or under the influence of alcohol. While drunk, some workers would utter frivolous words which would later cause them trouble, being susceptible to misinterpretation.

What was advisable to do, though, in cases of proven communist activity? The Ministry of Public Order suggested the removal of passports, although Kyrrou had time and again wondered about its legality and most importantly its impression among the workers.

²⁸¹ *Avgi*, 18/3/1967, p.3.

²⁸² document A022-41, Greek embassy in Bonn to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Bonn, 2-01-1967, folder 1967_42/6.

In Kyrou's view, such a measure would only fuel propaganda campaigns and fierce reactions, as it happened for a minor event like the eviction of the Stuttgart community from the Greek House. What would expose the Greek authorities even more would be the issue of residence permits by the West German authorities despite the removal of the workers' passports, especially for those whose spouses were German citizens.

Although Kyrou felt entitled to voice his opinions as an experienced general consul, he was also mindful of impressions, and he felt obliged to include this line in his report: "naturally, in no case I suggest tolerance of communist activity or fatalistic acceptance of the leftists' blackmailing. I just consider it my duty to alert you about the potential danger [...]". To further show his willingness to suggest effective anti-communist measures, he came up with an idea that would save the reputation of Greek authorities. The burden of shame would be shouldered by the West German side, which could easily and lawfully expel the stigmatized workers on grounds of national security²⁸³.

Like a self-fulfilling prophesy, the recession of 1966-67 gave the answer to the Greek authorities' malaise towards politically active workers. There was no need for expulsions; many Greek workers were losing their jobs as a consequence of the first crisis hitting the growing West German economy. The OECD experts warned already since 1964 that "by and large it seems that the short-term advantages (solving the problem of employment, inflow of earnings) of emigration may be cancelled out by very dangerous drawbacks in the longer run"²⁸⁴. Was the Greek state ready to absorb a significant number of returnees and what were the new challenges arising from this disruption?

²⁸³ document A022-41, Greek embassy in Bonn to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Bonn, 2-01-1967, folder 1967_42/6.

²⁸⁴ OECD (1964), *OECD Economic Surveys: Greece 1964*, OECD Publishing, Paris, https://doi.org/eui.idm.oclc.org/10.1787/eco_surveys-grc-1964-en. p.22.

250 εκατ. δολάρια αι καταθέσεις τών
"Ελλήνων εργατών εις Δ. Γερμανίαν.



— Καί γιατί δέν ζητοῦμε βοήθεια
ἀπὸ τοὺς "Ἕλληνας, παρά ἐκλιπαροῦ-
με τοὺς Γερμανοὺς;

(Τοῦ κ. Φωκ. Δημητριάδη)

Strip by Phokion Demetriadis. The newspaper's title reads "250 million dollars the bank deposits of the Greek workers in West Germany". The old man dressed in traditional costume addresses the minister Konstantinos Mitsotakis saying, "And why don't we ask for help from the Greeks rather than begging the Germans?" Source:

Oikonomikos Tachydromos, 24/3/1966, p.1.

III.D. ON A FIRST COME, FIRST LEAVE BASIS

A short-lived recession from 1966–1967 resulted in high unemployment and lower real wages. When the West German economy began to falter in 1966, around 1.3 million foreign workers lost their jobs. Employers also mechanization and production speeds and worsened working conditions to counteract their loss in profit²⁸⁵.

In just a year, from the end of June 1966 to the end of June 1967, the number of Greek workers fell from 196.200 to 146.800. Bilateral agreements made no provision for illness and family benefits for family members who had remained in Greece and for the export of cash benefits to workers returning to Greece²⁸⁶.

As late as 1966, the Minister of Labor Bakatselos was the first Greek Minister of Labor to visit West Germany after the agreement was signed²⁸⁷. Dimitris Mylonas of the newspaper *Ta Nea* followed the minister, the special advisor Socrates Kladas and the general director of Employment Malatestas on their tour of West German cities²⁸⁸.

The migrants' complaints to the Minister of Labor Bakatselos were mainly of a sentimental character; they didn't refer to the hours or the hard work, but to the nostalgia, the absence of family warmth and the difficulty to get used to the German lifestyle. Referring to the issue of return migration, even if the returnees would be specialized after their stay in Germany, the Greek labor market would have no capacity to absorb them, as the minister stated in the discussions with the German officials. The West German government still saw their stay as temporary, and it was thus reluctant to give permission to the opening of stores apart from Greek restaurants²⁸⁹.

Nikolaos Papademetriou, a reporter for *Eleutheria*, conducted some interviews among migrants in different cities. Out of the 650 foreign workers working at Siemens in West Berlin, 400 were Greek. A 30-year-old worker from Peloponnese was earning 720 DM per month and would send 300 DM to Greece for his parents and three children. To the question on whether he would return to Greece, he replied: "To do what in Greece? I was working with a tractor, always drowned in the mud. I got

²⁸⁵ Jennifer Miller, "Her Fight Is Your Fight: 'Guest Worker' Labor Activism in the Early 1970s West Germany." *International Labor and Working-Class History* 84 (2013): 230-231. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S014754791300029X>.

²⁸⁶ Comte, *The History of the European Migration Regime*, 77-78&104.

²⁸⁷ *Eleutheria*, 16/1/1966, p.12.

²⁸⁸ *Ta Nea*, 2/2/1966, p.9.

²⁸⁹ *Ta Nea*, 3/2/1966, p.3.

stomach problems.” In the department of female Greek workers, a worker from Veroia would send 200 DM per month to her sick husband who stayed in Greece with her two children²⁹⁰.

The crisis of 1966-67 in West Germany affected the foreign workers since one of the first measures was to cut off the extra working hours. Moreover, the price inflation meant that saving money became harder. As we read in early 1967, only 20.000 workers returned for the Christmas holidays and stayed only to settle some personal issues under the fear that they would lose their job and already had trouble with the border authorities upon their return²⁹¹.

The unemployment (650.000 unemployed in March 1967) made difficult the position of foreign workers in Germany. Opel fired 3.500 workers, and Volkswagen and Ford allowed the workers to work only four days per week²⁹². At the same time, due to the augmenting rates of unemployment in the Federal Republic, the psychological pressure on the migrants was great.

George Matzouranis, always a sensitive reporter, named his article in *Avgi* “farewell to security” to stress the precarity haunting the 200.000 Greek guest workers²⁹³. In early April 1967, he maintained that due to the prolonged crisis the “spectrum of job loss is wandering all around”, while the stressed guest workers came to realize that there was no bread for them anymore in their adoptive country, and they would most probably have to head back home²⁹⁴.

In early January 1967, the KKE radio station, *The Voice of Truth* (Η Φωνή της Αλήθειας) transmitted an emission concerning the rising unemployment in the Federal republic and the eventual return of the guest workers in Greece. The installation of propaganda apparatus with a big radio station was essential for the political agitation of the Communist Party inside and outside of Greece. Cominform decided on its

²⁹⁰ *Eleutheria*, 26/1/1966, p.3.

²⁹¹ *To Vima*, 4/1/1967, p.1.

²⁹² *Eleutheria*, 31/3/1967, p.3.

²⁹³ *Avgi*, 22/1/67, p.5.

²⁹⁴ *Avgi*, 9/4/1967, p.5.

creation in 1948 and chose Bucharest as its headquarters. Besides that, there was another radio station in Moscow that had broadcasted since 1947²⁹⁵.

On the 8th of January, it reported that there were already 300.000 unemployed workers, and their number could possibly reach the height of 700-800.000. Notably, the Minister of Labor, Kantzer, claimed that in the occasion of a financial crisis all the foreign workers would be expelled in three years' time. A worker commented that anxiety was widespread, and when the workers left the factory at the end of their shift, they were no longer sure if they would find their card in its place the next day, or if it would already be at the headquarters together with their dismissal papers.

That was also the reason many workers hesitated to take leaves for return visits during holidays, fearing that they would be fired upon their return. In 1963, employees' "right to vacation" (Urlaubsrecht) had been codified in the Federal Vacation Law (Bundesurlaubsgesetz). However, already before the crisis, guest workers' work and residence permits were dependent on the whims of floor managers or foremen, who often harboured anti-foreigner sentiment²⁹⁶.

A woman worker depicted dramatically their stress, as "we constantly live through "ah", like we are giving exams. This kind of anxiety, and even worse, we feel every day". It was calculated that more than 50.000 workers would return and the Ministry of Labor sent its advisor to investigate the problem. The conclusion of the radio message echoed the KKE views on migration and employed a grim vocabulary to depict the reality the migrants faced.

As the speaker said, "it is not a coincidence that the ERE leader labelled migration as God's blessing. The blessing turned into a curse, though. The Greek migrants live again through the same nightmare, as when they were forced to leave their homeland to foreign countries to seek better luck. Now, they voice relentlessly and terribly their

²⁹⁵ Adibekov, G. *Das Kominform und Stalins Neuordnung Europas*. Frankfurt am Main, Germany: Peter Lang, 2002, p.269-271, seen in Stergiou, Andreas. *Greece's Ostpolitik: Dealing With the "Devil."* Cham: Springer International Publishing, 2021, p.39. For more information on the KKE radio station see Vaso Psimouli, "Eleútherē Elláda", "Ἐ φῶνέ τῆς ἀλῆθειας" Ὁ παράνομος radiostathmós tou KKE: *Arkheio 1947-1968*. Athens:Themelio,2006 (in Greek).

²⁹⁶ Michelle Lynn Kahn, "The Long Road Home: Vacations and the Making of the 'Germanized Turk' across Cold War Europe." *The Journal of Modern History* 93, no. 1 (March 1, 2021): 116-118. <https://doi.org/10.1086/712801>.

J'Accuse against the governments who did nothing so far to create employment opportunities for them"²⁹⁷.

The Greek general consul in Bonn, Alexis Kyrou, conscious of the psychological impact of the crisis and the eventual panic that would start spreading among the Greek workers, offered again his paternal advice through his radio message on the very last day of 1966.

According to Kyrou, despite the reality of serious difficulties in the West German economy, the workers' impression was magnified due to the comparison with the constant development of the previous years. In other words, "our friends, the Germans, were spoiled by the unstoppable increase in their resources and their living standards.[...] for the first time after eight years, in December 1966, the unemployed were more than the vacancies available in the job market."

In his letter to the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Pavlos Oikonomou-Gkouras, he emphasized that the most affected area was Nordrhein-Westfalen, where 65.000 Greek workers were employed at major car industries like OPEL in Rüsselsheim, Frankfurt, BMW in Munich and DAIMLER-BENZ in Stuttgart. According to Kyrou, the new circumstances meant that massive dismissals were probable, while the recruitment of new workforce would stop almost completely. In its turn, return migration would accelerate and the communist propaganda among the workers would intensify. The threat was grave in the event of a massive return of workers fueled with anti-national and subversive credos²⁹⁸.

As Polymeris Voglis skillfully describes, "in the early hours of 21 April 1967 unfamiliar noises woke up the people in the cities. A voice on the radio announced that the army had taken over power to save the Greek nation from demagogues and subversives"²⁹⁹. In the next chapter, we will explore what was the impact of the junta on the daily life of the Greek Gastarbeiter and what was their response spanning from co-operation to resistance.

²⁹⁷ General Directorate of Press/Radio Department, regarding the KKE radio station 9-9:30, Athens, 8-1-1967, folder 1967_42/6.

²⁹⁸ document A022-41, Greek embassy in Bonn to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Bonn, 2-01-1967, folder 1967_42/6.

²⁹⁹ Voglis, "The Junta Came to Power", 549.

CHAPTER FOUR: WORKERS DIVIDED: SUPPORT AND OPPOSITION TO THE GREEK DICTATORSHIP (1967-1974)

The late sixties found the Greek Gastarbeiter puzzled, to say the least. Their position in the Federal Republic was under pressure due to the economic crisis of 1966-1967, while their homeland was ruled by a military dictatorship since the 21st of April of 1967. Surprisingly or not, after the first shock, more continuities than ruptures reigned in the handling of the Gastarbeiter question.

The authoritarian regime of the colonels brought to a peak the already existing divisions among the Greek Gastarbeiter. One of the most active networks of resistance to the junta was organized on West German soil, using the experience and the connections of trade unionists, students and workers. On the opposite side, traditionalists and anti-communists found the junta to be a generous sponsor of their activities towards the protection of both their native and adoptive countries from the red danger.

Support and opposition to the junta were expressed in multiple ways. Although the colonels were quick to limit freedom of expression and censor the press, radio became one of the loudest voices of resistance. During the seven years of the dictatorship, the confrontation of opposing groups became more aggressive, resorting to violent means to solve their differences. Although more subtle and indirect, culture also became a battleground, mainly through the regime's appropriation of folk music and dances for its own nation-saving mission. Apart from the field of culture, education provided a fertile ground for the regime's propaganda, while welfare provisions were also used as a lure for the workers' submission.

West Germans adopted a prudent stance towards the Greek dictatorship, providing protection to stigmatized workers without compromising their interests through an open condemnation of the regime. The gradual integration of the Gastarbeiter created more opportunities for contact and exchange while they stood side by side in circle dances and strikes. Tourism also helped West Germans get acquainted with the Gastarbeiter's homeland and increased their curiosity for their music and their food. However, the end of the period is marked by the global oil crisis, which made the Federal Republic reconsider its foreign labor recruitment and eventually put a halt to it.

The leaders of the 21st of April 1967 coup were colonel George Papadopoulos as Prime Minister, Minister of Defense and Minister of State Chancellery, Colonel Nikolaos Makarezos as Minister of Coordination, and Brigadier Stylianos Pattakos as Minister of the Interior and Deputy Prime Minister. The triumvirate was assisted by a “Revolution Council” consisting of several dozen officers and army officials³⁰⁰.

As a 1968 article in *Der Spiegel* suggested, many believed that the junta “came out of nowhere, its creators starting from scratch [...] they made it in a few hours with a few battalions, without breakdown, almost without bloodshed”³⁰¹. However, only ten days before the coup d’état, the American ambassador in Athens, Talbot, informed the Secretary of State about the frail political situation in Greece. He argued that the plausible scenarios were either a dictatorship of the Right, or a radical left-leaning government³⁰².

In a familiar discourse, the colonels claimed to be foiling a communist coup, maintaining the tacit support of the US and Greece’s other NATO allies³⁰³. Papadopoulos knew how to slide between different categorizations and presented himself “to his people as the savior of the fatherland, to the Americans as a moderate custodian, [...] to Marxists as a socialist, to pious people as a Christian, to the enlightened as a free spirit”³⁰⁴.

The military rulers rejected the descriptions of fascism, totalitarianism, and even dictatorship, while they used the term “revolution”, rejecting the notion of the “coup d’état”. They presented their intervention as a necessary “revolutionary change” aimed at the salvation of the country from “chaos and red totalitarianism” and at a “national renaissance”³⁰⁵.

The social system would remain essentially bourgeois, and the economic system would consist of a free market economy, but the old political establishment would be neutralized³⁰⁶. It was argued that the military coup was less a legacy of the Civil War

³⁰⁰ Asimakoulas, “Translating ‘Self’”, 28-29.

³⁰¹ *Der Spiegel*, 40/1968.

³⁰² Stergiou, *Greece’s Ostpolitik*, 88.

³⁰³ Stone, *The Oxford Handbook*, 511.

³⁰⁴ *Der Spiegel*, 40/1968.

³⁰⁵ Anastasakis, *Authoritarianism In 20th Century Greece*, 177

³⁰⁶ Theodore A. Couloumbis, “The Greek Junta Phenomenon.” *Polity* 6, no. 3 (March 1974): 354. <https://doi.org/10.2307/3233933>.

and more the result of failure by the political elite to reach a consensus over how to manage the incipient democratization process³⁰⁷.

It was somewhat ironic that it was an openly anti-communist military coup that eventually paved the way for political reconciliation. Instead of Right and Left, the chief divide became the one between supporters and opponents of the Junta³⁰⁸. Already in the first days, seven thousand people were arrested and imprisoned, civil liberties were suspended, the press was censored, while political parties and unions were banned³⁰⁹.

The attitude of Greek newspapers, which had enjoyed considerable freedom before the colonels, fluctuated. Some newspapers remained neutral, but some publishers closed their newspapers “voluntarily” and they left Greece. Helene Vlachou issued a statement condemning the junta and then closed down her entire publishing group, including the *Kathemerine* and *Mesemvrine* newspapers, and left Greece. Newspaper that challenged the regime directly were closed down, as for instance, *Ethnos* and *Avgi*. Among those that remained in circulation, some expressed their opposition in subtle ways³¹⁰.

In West Germany, new Greek newspapers appeared during this period. *Ellinika Nea* (*Griechische Nachrichten*) was a weekly paper owned by George Psilogeorgis and issued in Frankfurt by Demetrios Koromilas. During the period of the dictatorship (1967-1974), the newspaper openly supported the regime and opted for the rhetoric of the undivided Greek nation with its call to “advertise to all your friends and acquaintances the most impartial and uninfluenced by political parties and groups, independent newspaper in West Germany. It is the duty of every Greek who wishes to learn the truth and is interested in his professional affairs”³¹¹.

On the opposite side stood the paper *Eleutheron Ellinikon Vima* issued in Augsburg since 1966 by Ioannis Papageorgiou, which presented itself like a weekly democratic paper of the free Greeks of Europe. In the issue of 18th November 1967, we read a call to “propagate the *Elliniko Vima*, it is the tool for the struggle against the hated

³⁰⁷ Kalyvas, *Modern Greece*, 109.

³⁰⁸ Siani-Davies and Katsikas. “National Reconciliation”, 565.

³⁰⁹ Voglis, “The Junta Came to Power”, 549.

³¹⁰ Asimakoulas, “Translating ‘Self’”, 31.

³¹¹ *Ellinika Nea*, 6/4/1968.

fascism. The democratic newspaper of the free Greeks is sold in all the railway stations of West Germany and all the European capitals”³¹².

In September 1968, the dictators organized a fraudulent referendum on a tailor-made constitution. The campaign turned Greece into a single advertising pillar: millions of posters stuck to walls, buses, trees, shop windows and kiosks. "NAI" (“yes”) shone at night in ten-meter letters from the Athenian Lycabettos and sounded from records, radio and cinema speakers³¹³.

In 1968, the funeral of George Papandreou in Athens ended in violence when the police attacked the cortege. Reports from Amnesty International, the Red Cross, and the Council of Europe all confirmed that torture had become commonplace in Greece³¹⁴. In November 1969, the European Commission of Human Rights ruled against Greece, because the junta was violating the European Convention on Human Rights. However, the United States blocked the same debate in NATO³¹⁵.

Apart from Denmark and Norway all the other NATO allies adopted policies that ranged from equivocation to an acceptance of the developments in Athens as a *fait accompli*. West Germany’s approach aligned with its effort to tie Greece to the West through economic and military aid³¹⁶.

For example, the SPD and CDU/CSU Grand Coalition of the years 1965-1969 continued to supply the Greek Army with weaponry. After the Social Democrats under Willy Brandt came to power in 1969, Bonn also adopted a hostile stance to the Athens regime, sympathizing with exiled Greek resistance groups operating from Germany³¹⁷.

Social democrat cabinet ministers tried to maintain distance between the West German state and what they considered to be a neo-fascist regime, but this

³¹² *Eleutheron Ellinikon Vima*, 18/11/1967, p.1.

³¹³ *Der Spiegel*, 40/1968.

³¹⁴ Effie G. H. Pedaliu, “‘A Discordant Note’: NATO and the Greek Junta, 1967–1974.” *Diplomacy & Statecraft* 22, no. 1 (March 15, 2011): 107. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09592296.2011.549745>.

³¹⁵ Victor Fernández Soriano, “Facing the Greek Junta: The European Community, the Council of Europe and the Rise of Human-Rights Politics in Europe.” *European Review of History: Revue Européenne d’histoire* 24, no. 3 (May 4, 2017): 370. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13507486.2017.1282432>.

³¹⁶ Pedaliu, “‘A Discordant Note’, 102-104.

³¹⁷ Heinz Richter, *Griechenland 1950–1974 Zwischen Demokratie und Diktatur*. Peleus Studien zur Archäologie und Geschichte Griechenlands und Zyperns. Ruhpolding: Verlag Franz Philipp Rutzen, 2013, p.374 as seen in Stergiou, Andreas. *Greece’s Ostpolitik: Dealing With the “Devil.”* Cham: Springer International Publishing, 2021, p.97.

engagement did not benefit any specific political movement³¹⁸. For example, when Andreas Papandreou visited Bonn to organize the resistance to the junta among the migrants, Willy Brandt met him in his role of party leader rather than as foreign minister.

When Andreas Papandreou traveled to Bonn, he released a statement that urged Greek Gastarbeiter and students to focus on “liberating our land and reestablishing genuine democracy”. Papandreou saw the progressive migrants as a future potential electorate and started creating local Friends of PAK organizations³¹⁹.

Anti-junta organizations that originated from the Centre, like the Democratic Defence (Dimokratiki Amyna) and the Panhellenic Liberation Movement (Panellinio Apeleftherotiko Kinima, PAK), were less skeptical about the use of violence than the traditional Communist Party³²⁰.

The major underground organization of the Left was the Patriotic Anti-dictatorial Front (Patriotiko Antidiktatoriko Metopo, PAM), established a few days after the coup by members of EDA and the Communist Party. Although the Greek Communists depended on the Eastern Bloc’s support for their survival, they found themselves in the uneasy position of having to reconcile their ideological principles with their comrades’ realpolitik of ‘peaceful coexistence’ with the junta³²¹.

The Prague crisis of August 1968 made a deep impact on the Greek opposition. The KKE Exterior, headed by Kostas Koligiannis, celebrated the Warsaw Pact intervention. On the contrary, the KKE Interior supported the opposition and identified Greece as the ‘Czechoslovakia of the West’³²². The Greek “1968” took form at the 1973 Polytechnic uprising against the dictatorial regime. The internal conflict in the realms of the Greek Left boiled down to the dilemma between a tactic

³¹⁸ Clarkson, *Fragmented*, 125.

³¹⁹ Draenos, Stan. “Andreas Papandreou’s Exile Politics: The First Phase (1968-1970).” *The Historical Review/La Revue Historique* 11 (December 5, 2014): 31,41 and 53. <https://doi.org/10.12681/hr.332>.

³²⁰ Voglis, “The Junta Came to Power”, 551.

³²¹ Sotiris Wallden, ‘Οι Έλληνες Κομμουνιστές και οι σχέσεις Χούντας - Ανατολικών Χωρών (1967-1974)’ [The Greek Communists and the Junta - Eastern Bloc relations (1967-1974)], *Ta Istorika* 27, no. 52–53 (2010) as seen in Paschalis Pechlivanis. An Uneasy Triangle: Nicolae Ceaușescu, the Greek Colonels and the Greek Communists (1967-1974), *The International History Review*, 2020, p.2.

³²² K i m C h r i s t i a e n s ‘Communists are no Beasts’: European Solidarity Campaigns on Behalf of Democracy and Human Rights in Greece and East–West Détente in the 1960s and Early 1970s”, *Contemporary European History* 26,no. 4 (2017),635.

of direct confrontation with the junta or utilization of the margins of liberty created by a certain liberalization of the regime³²³.

In the beginning, the junta was probably tolerated rather than supported by the middle and upper strata that had in the past identified with the anti-communist political class³²⁴. Apart from some isolated exceptions, few major political figures supported the Colonels. Karamanlis' statement of 23 April 1973 went bluntly against the military regime suggesting that the junta provided consumerism as a diversion, while their only legitimacy came from the "economic oligarchy" and the "opportunists"³²⁵.

The low level of the dictatorship's popular support coexisted with a relatively good economic performance. The junta did not hesitate to increase the country's public debt by adopting populist measures such as the forgiveness of farmers' debts³²⁶. Generally, Papadopoulos introduced in his speeches the recurrent theme of the endless kilometers of paved country roads, realizing that the regime's stabilization could only be achieved by courting the country's periphery rather than the large urban centers as epicenters of mass mobilization³²⁷.

A student movement emerged only in late 1972, culminated in the 'Polytechnic School Uprising' of November 1973 and was brutally suppressed. It involved spontaneous and innovative practices, weak ties with the underground political organizations and mass appeal³²⁸.

On 20 August 1973, Papadopoulos proclaimed that he would restore parliamentary democracy, but shadowy elements in the regime took advantage of the brutal crushing of a student uprising in November 1973 to overthrow him. Within a week he was replaced by Brigadier Dimitrios Ioannidis³²⁹. On the 25th of November 1973, the hard-

³²³ Balampanidēs, Giannēs, and Dimitris Hall. *Eurocommunism: From the Communist to the Radical European Left = Eurōkommounismos: Apo Tēn Kommounistikē Stē Rizospastikēeurōpaikē Aristera*. The Routledge Global 1960s and 1970s Series. London ; New York, NY: Routledge, Taylor & Francis Group, 2019, p.49.

³²⁴ Dimitri A. Sotiropoulos, "The Authoritarian Past and Contemporary Greek Democracy." *South European Society and Politics* 15, no. 3 (September 2010): 451. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13608746.2010.513604>.

³²⁵ Sotiris Rizas, "The Search for an Exit from the Dictatorship and the Transformation of Greek Conservatism, 1967-1974." *The Historical Review/La Revue Historique* 11 (December 5, 2014): 25-26. <https://doi.org/10.12681/hr.331>.

³²⁶ Kalyvas, *Modern Greece*, 109.

³²⁷ Michalis Nikolakakis, "The Colonels on the Beach: Tourism Policy During the Greek Military Dictatorship (1967-1974)." *Journal of Modern Greek Studies* 35, no. 2 (2017): 430. <https://doi.org/10.1353/mgs.2017.0026>.

³²⁸ Voglis, "The Junta Came to Power", 564.

liner Ioannides re-imposed censorship and martial law in an attempt to manage the situation³³⁰.

The military regime collapsed after the coup Ioannidis planned and executed against Archbishop Makarios in Nicosia on 15 July and its failure to prevent the Turkish landing in Cyprus on 20 July 1974³³¹. The military conflict was brief, as the Greek armed forces were unable to react, while the Turkish army had occupied 40 per cent of the island³³². After that, the official leadership of the military regime and the armed forces invited the old political elite to form a new government.

IV.A. THE JUNTA'S EYES AND EARS

As can be expected, the first thing that the junta considered was the loyalty of the representatives of the Greek state in the Federal Republic. The trustworthy employees were kept and promoted, and the unwanted were swiftly removed from their positions characterized as “incompetent and overnumbered staff”, as we read in the Athenian newspaper *To Vima*. According to this article, the Minister of Labor Lekkas signed a decision to send back to his position as a labor attaché Andreas Chrysochou, while Flokos would remain in his position in Brussels. The minister met with the two officials and ordered them to submit a report in ten days suggesting measures “for the improvement of the services offered to the Greek workers in order to serve their real interests”³³³.

In early April 1967, few days before the junta seized power, *Der Spiegel* already noticed that right-wing Greeks on the Rhine and Ruhr areas were threatening and intimidating their left-wing compatriots. There was an ongoing struggle among foreign workers, secret police officers, diplomats, party officials and journalists. To the West German eyes, there were similarities with the passionate opposition between Titoists and exiled Croats.

Heinz Richter, secretary at the DGB board in Düsseldorf, was also the head of a specially set up Greek section of the German Trade Union Confederation. Before the junta, he received the Golden Cross of the "Order of the Phoenix" from the Greek

³²⁹ Pedaliu, “A Discordant Note”, 115.

³³⁰ Asimakoulas, “Translating ‘Self’”, 37.

³³¹ Rizas, “The Search for an Exit”, 30.

³³² Sotiropoulos, “The Authoritarian Past”, 451.

³³³ *To Vima*, 10/5/1967, p.8

King Constantine for his services to the Greek guest workers. On the 15th of January 1967, in Düsseldorf, Richter warned three hundred Greek guest workers that he would send his cross back, because “the Greek government seems to intimidate guest workers and wants to separate them from their German friends”.

The Greek general consul in Bonn, Alexis Kyrou, complained to the DGB chairman Rosenberg and finally picked up the microphone himself on the Greek radio program of the Bavarian Radio. “I am certain,” summed up Kyrou, “that you, my dear compatriots, will all show reason and will reject with contempt his lies and slander that only sow weeds and discord between us in these difficult times”. The ambassador's message outraged many listeners, and the Greek participants in a DGB seminar in Berlin called for the broadcast to be suspended³³⁴.

One month later, in mid-June 1967, the Greek migrants tuned in to the emissions of the Bavarian Radio were informed about the “interest” of the new regime regarding them through the interview of the Minister of Labor Lekkas. The minister stated that the government was seriously preoccupied with the issue of Greek workers in Germany and studied their problems, to which they would soon give the necessary solutions. As for their return, the government and the minister personally wished the return to the Motherland of all its expatriate children, but this was naturally an issue that the workers had to decide in free conscience depending on their work and their condition³³⁵.

The colonels were also quick to organize groups of supporters among the diaspora and advertise their “spontaneous” expressions of gratitude towards them. In the censored press, we find, already in June, declarations of solidarity with the “uplifting” work of the dictators. For instance, the Associations of the Greeks in Germany praised the work in all aspects of government activity and stood by the side of the National Government “unhesitatingly”. Characteristic is the declaration of the Union of Greek Volunteer Officers in West Germany published in Munich on the 5th of June 1967, starting with an all-time favorite phrase from Sophocles going as follows, “there is no worse thing than anarchy because it destroys cities and turns houses upside”. After this touch of antique wisdom, the abovementioned officers advised their Greek

³³⁴ *Der Spiegel*, 16/1967.

³³⁵ *To Vima*, 14/6/1967,p.8.

compatriots confidently that “the National Government discarded the evil state of dispute towards the Greek citizens, recreating an atmosphere of peace”³³⁶.

Among the conservative Greeks there was almost an obsession to align with the famous motto of the junta about “quiet, order and security”. They presented themselves as hard-working and apolitical guests, who would never upset their hospitable hosts by any hot-tempered reaction. For instance, ninety-six Greeks in Euskirchen published a statement in which they denied the fact presented by a German newspaper that in their town there was a fight among Greeks for political reasons. In their statement, they mentioned that there was indeed an incident, but it was a purely personal dispute. They also underlined that their main aim in residing in Germany was their work, and in case they had political differences they would solve them with a calm discussion³³⁷.

As we read in the pro-junta newspaper *Courier of Egypt*, over 1000 Greek workers attended a gathering in Düsseldorf in March 1970, where the Greek ambassador analyzed the measures taken for the care of the Greek workers. The measures taken “destroyed the myths of the anti-Greek propaganda, which was spread by the self-exiled in West Germany, which is the center of the anti-government activities”³³⁸.

The same vocabulary was used by the Vice-President of the junta, Patilis, who spent two weeks in West Germany touring the areas with Greek presence in June 1969. Upon his return, he stated that the regime did not consider them as expatriates, but rather “a guard of Greece with a specific mission in a friendly and allied country”. As the minister proudly claimed, “the rest of motherland-negating (αρνησιπάτριδες) Greeks were withdrawn in their fortresses and did not dare to appear in areas where ethnikofrones lived”³³⁹.

On the 22nd of June 1968, Fotios Gauras, chairman of the far-right "National Movement of the Greeks" in Munich, published this praise to the junta entitled "Revolution for the People" in the *Bavaria Courier*: “the national government is the embodiment of the awakened sense of self of the nation. She did not even need to call on the people for her support; the Hellenic people immediately supported her with

³³⁶ *To Vima*, 14/6/1967, p.1.

³³⁷ *Elliniki*, 11/5/1968, p.2.

³³⁸ *Tachydromos Egyptou*, 13/3/1970, p.1.

³³⁹ *Tachydromos Egyptou*, 19/6/1969, p.4.

swift and self-sacrificing readiness: the April Revolution was the people's own act, and the national government its long-awaited government”³⁴⁰.

Many fascist associations were operating on German soil - such as the "Patriotic Union", the "Union of Greek Reserve Officers", and the “National Movement of the Greeks”³⁴¹. The most pronounced pro-junta organization was the “Union of Greeks in West Germany”. It convened its conferences in Thessaloniki, pleading the military government to be always alert against the “satanic methods of the anarchocommunists to proselytize the youth through the corrosion of the national, cultural and social institutions”. In the framework of the conference, the representatives of the Union visited border stations and offered gifts to the soldiers and the OAED technical school. They also offered a lunch to the authorities, proving once more that “even though their hands were working abroad, their hearts and souls were always in Greece”³⁴².

IV.B. (RADIO) WAVES OF RESISTANCE

Every criticism to the regime was presented as a vicious attack to its credibility, but the good-willing dictators were always right and defied all “fake news against the renascent Greece”. Moreover, they were not alone in this battle since they had at their side industrialists who disliked the influence of trade unions on the Grand Coalition. For instance, as we read in late June, the West German factory owner Alfred Winderling sent a letter to the DGB condemning them of their successful demand to the German government to issue residence permits to Greek workers, who would be attacked upon their return to Greece. Winderling claimed that “all the decent, national-minded and democratic workers would have no trouble at all upon returning in Greece”³⁴³.

Action against Spanish and Portuguese regimes and the Greek junta was appreciated by West German trade unions, given that some of their leading functionaries were exiled during the Nazi rule³⁴⁴. For the sociologist Barbara Schmitter, trade unions,

³⁴⁰ *Der Spiegel*, 28/1968.

³⁴¹ *Der Spiegel*, 16/1969.

³⁴² *Makedonia*, 8/8/1972, p.13

³⁴³ *To Vima*, 23/6/1967, p.8.

³⁴⁴ Goeke, Simon. “The Multinational Working Class? Political Activism and Labor Migration in West Germany During the 1960s and 1970s.” *Journal of Contemporary History* 49, no. 1 (January 2014): 175-176. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0022009413505665>.

seen as established and recognized organizations of the working class within the existing capitalist system, could function as a potential spokesperson of the foreign workers³⁴⁵.

The Greek Embassy in Bucharest informed the Ministry of Foreign Affairs that the newspaper *Romania Libera* published a reportage from Bonn concerning complaints of the West German trade unions. Targeted were the pressures of the Greek Embassy against the Greek guest workers with a special directive issued by the embassy on how to deal with their issues. Especially denounced was the cancellation of the leftists' passports³⁴⁶.

As the social historian Nikolaos Papadogiannis noticed, “the condition of the Greek left-wingers deteriorated significantly in the late 1960s and the early 1970s. The junta stripped many left-wingers of their Greek citizenship by cancelling their passports, while pro-junta Greek elements in the Federal Republic of Germany, such as the members of the league of Greeks of West Berlin (Syndesmos Ellinon Dytikou Verolinou), regularly intimidated foes of that regime”³⁴⁷.

What is notable once again was the disorientation of the embassy regarding some spasmodic moves of the junta, of which it got informed through the opposition newspapers. For example, the embassy found itself accountable for the missing of a worker, about whom they had first read in the DGB press organ *Die Welt der Arbeit!* More precisely, in late August 1967, the embassy wrote to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs to ask urgently for verification of the arrest of the Greek guest worker Dimitris Kyriakidis and on which grounds it had happened.

The newspaper challenged the embassy to prove wrong the accusation that the abovementioned worker was arrested upon his return to Greece on the 17th of June, after having taken part in a big anti-dictatorship demonstration organized by the DGB in late May. Apparently, the embassy had no clue about the fate of the worker,

³⁴⁵ Schmitter, Barbara E. “Trade Unions and Immigration Politics in West Germany and Switzerland.” *Politics & Society* 10, no. 3 (1981): 320 and 333-34.

³⁴⁶ document 2265 αρμ415-208, Greek embassy in Bucharest to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Bucharest, 19.9.1967, regarding the circular I01-47, folder 1967_42/6.

³⁴⁷ Nikolaos Papadogiannis, “A (Trans)National Emotional Community? Greek Political Songs and the Politicisation of Greek Migrants in West Germany in the 1960s and Early 1970s.” *Contemporary European History* 23, no. 04 (November 2014): 601.

because Athens had found it unnecessary to inform them, ignoring the unwritten rule of impressions...³⁴⁸

In early December 1967, Michael Roufogalis, a key-person in the KYP, wrote to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs regarding the communist activity in West Germany. According to him, West Berlin was the pathway through which the communists across the Iron Curtain exchanged their messages and the leadership of KKE based in East Berlin was channeling its guidelines westwards. For the first time after the inactivity of the old Orthodox community in West Berlin, a new conservative movement saw the light. Roufogalis considered it crucial to support it appropriately in order to control the Greek community in the next elections and, thus, isolate its current communist leaders³⁴⁹.

By the early 1970s, some Greek political refugees in East Germany applied formally with the GDR authorities for return to Greece, but they actually moved to and settled in West Germany and West Berlin. This action was perceived by German communists as “class betrayal”. This situation caused the SED to formulate a new policy towards the Greek refugees in 1973. It allowed them to emigrate under the condition that they had not signed an obligation on confidentiality and that they did not insist on joint emigration with their relatives who were GDR citizens³⁵⁰.

Sometimes, through the vocabulary used in their correspondence with their superiors, it is possible to detect the radicalization of the state officials appointed by the junta in key positions, like in the case of Konstantinos Ivraakis, the vice consul in Frankfurt. In December 1967, he sent a report about the anti-national and anti-regime activity in his region. According to Ivraakis, during the first months of “transition”, there was vivid and intensive communist activity, influential among workers belonging previously to democratic organizations. However, after the first excitement, there was a fatigue. The majority of the “momentarily carried away” Greeks withdrew from the movement, leaving only the leadership to act individually, handing out their manifestos outside factories and churches.

³⁴⁸ urgent document AO22-87 Z/35-37, Greek embassy in Bonn to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Bonn, 24-8-1967, folder 1967_42/6.

³⁴⁹document βδ550-236, 2-12-1967, folder 1967_42/5.

³⁵⁰ Stefan Troebst, “Evacuation to a Cold Country: Child Refugees from the Greek Civil War in the German Democratic Republic, 1949–1989 *.” *Nationalities Papers* 32, no. 3 (September 2004): 684. <https://doi.org/10.1080/0090599042000246442>.

In his opinion, the West German authorities in Essen were not willing to collaborate in the surveillance activities of the consulate. On the contrary, under the pressure of the DGB and according to the statements of the Minister of Interior in Essen, Schneider, they were ready to grant asylum to Greek workers on the grounds of political persecution. Moreover, negative towards the targeting of anti-regime activity was also the stance of the Evangelical Church. Instead of discouraging such activity, the Diaconate collaborated closely with the trade unions, encouraging workers to resist through the organization of seminars.

In Ivraakis' view, apart from the radical and vocal communists, there were also other oppositional teams that kept a low profile but supported the work of the "extremists". On the other hand, the majority of workers both in terms of numbers and in terms of qualities and values were part of the healthy and national-minded Greeks. Those Greeks were mobilised quite late compared to their opponents, but their coiling under the auspices of the Union of Greeks in West Germany "National Renaissance" bore the promise of successful action. Its members already created committees in various cities, made up of "serious individuals determined not to allow the prevalence of the subversive movement through the commonly known communist method of violence and terrorism."³⁵¹

In October 1967, the Ministry of Public Order informed the Ministry of Presidency about the corpora of the abolished EDA party that they confiscated from its central offices. The most significant document was a 23-page report dating back to the 1st of October 1966. It referred to the creation of the Central Organisational Office of Greeks Abroad (Κεντρικό Οργανωτικό Γραφείο Ελλήνων Εξωτερικού) in June 1964. Its primary duties were the foundation of communist unions, the participation of the Greek guest workers in the West German trade unions, the control of the existing student unions, the creation of EDA clubs, the publication of a newspaper for the guest workers and the nomination of able leadership. Attached to the report there was a map indicating the centers of numerous Greek presence in the Federal Republic³⁵².

In late November 1968, the new general consul in Bonn, Petrou, informed his superiors about the content of the emission "Report" shown on the East German

³⁵¹ document βδγ50-258, Greek consulate in Frankfurt to the Greek embassy in Bonn and the Directorate of Greeks Abroad of the ministry of Presidency, Frankfurt, 12-12-1967, folder 1967_42/5.

³⁵² document βδγ50-212, Ministry of Public Order to the General Directorate of Press of the Ministry of Presidency, Athens, 18-10-1967, folder 1967_42/5.

television. According to Petrou, the East German speaker, Hans Heigert, adopted a highly ironical tone throughout the program and commented that the images coming from Greece reminded partially of the German past, implying that they were reminiscent of Hitler's rule. The footage used was taken from celebrations in the Panathenaic Stadium and included also interviews about freedom of speech. The issue of censorship was also commented on through images of books with cut-out pages.

The last part of the program showed the Greek composer Mikis Theodorakis in his exile in a mountainous village of Peloponnese. He stated that "where I live is worse than in a prison". Apart from the Greek content there was also material from the NPD conference, during which opposition members were beaten up, and statements by a German student who wrote the slogan "114" on the wall of the Greek consulate in Munich³⁵³. Furthermore, the press attaché in Bonn, Manousakis, produced a report on the same issue, accentuating the comparison of the Greek regime to National-Socialism³⁵⁴.

In early February 1968, the Third German Television in its emission Ex-Tempore hosted a 45-minute long performance under the title "if you don't complain, you will be buried". It was created by Vasos Mathiopoulos and was accompanied musically by bouzouki and songs by Maria Farantouri, Dimitris Tountas and George Axiotis. The person honored was Mikis Theodorakis, but at some points, according to Kyrou, "the play had an overtly communist content through the praise of EAM and ELAS resistance fighters as heroes"³⁵⁵.

In 1967, director for the radio programs for foreigners in the Bavarian Radio was Gerhart Bogner, who was especially fond of the Greek program, as we learn from a reportage in the newspaper *Eleutheron Elliniko Vima* for the third anniversary of the radio program. We read that Bogner was a warm philhellene and had travelled many times in Greece, where he got acquainted with the problems and the mindset of the people.

³⁵³ document βδγ4001073, Greek embassy in Bonn to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Bonn, 26-11-1968, folder 1970_3/6/2/2.

³⁵⁴ secret note, document βδγ400-1083, Greek embassy in Bonn to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Bonn, 2.12.68, folder 1970_3/6/2/2.

³⁵⁵ document βδγ400-450, Greek embassy in Bonn to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Bonn, 5.2.68, folder 1970_3/6/2/2.

Nevertheless, the star of the Greek radio program was the restless Pavlos Bakojannis. He was well-known from many emissions but mostly from the “issue of the week”, a political commentary around international political affair. According to the reporter, “the objectivity of his judgement and his courage made him, after the establishment of the dictatorship in 21st of April, a real warrior for a free and democratic Greece”³⁵⁶.

In his 1972 collection of stories under the title 20.20’, the author Vassilis Vassilikos encapsulated the psychological impact of this emission to the Greek Gastarbeiter: “this radio station or better its program entered my life and stamped it. From when I found it, I run every day to the Heim to catch it on the screen, 20.20’ central European time. Usually, I turn on the radio at 20.15’ in order not to miss a single second, not even a millisecond, because the program and I, we are in an unbreakable, a demonic I would say relation: it exists for me, as I also exist for it. When I won’t listen to it, it will not only stop existing just for me, but for the others as well.”

This intense and almost existential attachment of the migrant to the radio is totally aligned with scholars’ observations that ethnic minority media are equated with collective self-representation, being the voice of the community³⁵⁷. Crucial to both the idea and the functioning of publics is thus the imagining of a shared engagement³⁵⁸.

In the editions of the ARD for the year 1968/69 there was a statement of the main mission of the radio programs for the Gastarbeiter. They were meant to contribute to the assurance of a smoother stay, but also to the maintenance of their bonds with their motherland. The Bavarian Radio (based in Munich) was the producer of the daily programs for Italians in South Germany and for Greeks and Spaniards in the whole FRG. The Westdeutscher Rundfunk (based in Cologne) fed the rest of the Italians, the Turks and the Yugoslavs”.

From the same booklet, we are informed that the Essen Radio (based in Frankfurt) transmitted every Sunday the emission “Rendez-vous in Deutschland” , a music

³⁵⁶ *Eleutheron Ellinikon Vima*, 2/12/1967, p.2.

³⁵⁷ Kira Kosnick, “Ethnic Media, Transnational Politics: Turkish Migrant Media in Germany” in Georgiou, Myria, Olga Guedes Bailey and Ramaswami Harindranath (eds.) *Transnational lives and the media: re-imagining diasporas*, Palgrave Macmillan UK, 2007, 152.

³⁵⁸ *Ibid*, 44, 46, 52.

program with announcements and news in the four foreign languages and in German. The program ended every evening with the emission “Musik ist international”³⁵⁹.

In the issue of 3rd of February 1968 of the Frankfurt-based conservative newspaper *Ellinika Nea*, this emission was praised for its neutrality and moderation, which made it a “source of deep pleasure and national pride. In this emission one can listen to Greek music - modern, folk and pop -but also current news and significant comments on the Greek economic and political situation. [...] The journalists do not color their comments with outrageous mottos of political exploitation, which are responsible for the division and the hatred among our compatriots who live in this hospitable country”³⁶⁰.

As we see, the critique to the regime through Bakojannis’ comments were not appreciated by everyone, and mainly by those who digested the unifying and nation-saving mission of the colonels and saw any opposition to this effort as a divisive action. In the same conservative newspaper *Ellinika Nea*, a letter dating the 27th of January 1968 commented that “unfortunately the editor of the political comments in the Greek program of the Bavarian Radio continues the destructive tradition of the dark past”³⁶¹.

Thus, Pavlos Bakojannis with his political comments against the dictatorial regime in the Munich radio program was on the top of the dictator’s blacklist. As we read in *Der Spiegel* in the issue of the 23rd of September 1968, the journalist had a gun license and the special care of the German political police. Munich's police advised the Greeks to be careful in traffic and to exercise prudence especially when climbing and leaving their car. The security guards were worried that Bakojannis might fall prey to an arranged accident.

Christian Wallenreiter, director of the Bavarian Radio, rejected all attacks against the supposedly one-sided, anti-national and anti-Greek foreign language broadcasts as “not valid”. The press attaché Pericles Tatsopoulos at the Greek Embassy in Bonn called Bakojannis in Munich on March 12 1968. Bakojannis learned from another Greek diplomat that his potential pro-junta intervention could gift him 200,000

³⁵⁹ Kardamakis, Matthaïos. *On resistance and democracy: a critical overview of the Greek program of the Bavarian Radio*, Munich, 1976, 24-25.

³⁶⁰ *Ellinika Nea*, 3/2/1968, p.1.

³⁶¹ *Ellinika Nea*, 27/1/1968, p.3.

Marks. Tatsopoulos asked Bakojannis three times by phone for a meeting but only in vain³⁶².

As we are informed by *Elliniki* on the 3rd of December 1970, the Greek Consulate in Munich retained Bakojannis' passport, which was given to the authorities in order to be renewed. There was no official explanation for this act, but it was obvious that the motives were connected with his polemic against the Greek government, which was expressed in his comments on the radio. The Bavarian Radio, the Bavarian Union of Journalists and the Deutscher Gewerkschaftsbund (DGB) complained about the removal of the passport³⁶³.

In the newspaper of IG Metall we read in July 1972 about a call to resist pressures and censorship, this time from the part of the German director since "the Deutscher Gewerkschaftsbund fought strongly against the effort of the new president of the committee of the Bavarian Radio, Dr. Fritz, to censor and menace the editors of the Greek radio program in Munich. Thus, the warning from the German trade unions regarding the new law concerning radio in Bavaria is confirmed. All radio institutes in Germany are called to contribute, in order to counter this intervention, since they are all responsible for the foreign radio programs"³⁶⁴.

As Alexander Clarkson suggests, "each new ethnic minority created its own specific political culture, shaped by the ideological context of its homeland, the relationship of its homeland government with West Germany and the manner in which its members ultimately settled in the FRG. It was mainly the ideological language of the Cold War that recurred in every immigrant group, bringing very different immigrants and Germans together on both the left and the right"³⁶⁵. Political actions were welcomed and supported by the foreign-language publications, rallies and demonstrations³⁶⁶.

On 23 April 1967, over 1000 Greek guest workers and students demonstrated in Stuttgart calling for free elections in Greece. The city authorities had mixed feelings, fearing the potential of social upheaval, but also sympathizing with the guest workers'

³⁶² *Der Spiegel*, 23/9/1968, issue 39.

³⁶³ *Elliniki*, 3/12/1970,p.3.

³⁶⁴ *Zeitung Der IG Metall Fur Die Griechischen Arbeitnehmer*, July 1972, issue 7,p.2.

³⁶⁵ Alexander Clarkson, "Home and Away: Immigration and Political Violence in the Federal Republic of Germany, 1945-90." *Cold War History* 8, no. 1 (February 2008): 15-16. <https://doi.org/10.1080/14682740701791193>.

³⁶⁶ Goeke, "The Multinational Working Class?", 175-176.

frail position³⁶⁷. Indeed, the Federal Republic of Germany became a particular hotspot for many leftist opposition members. On May Day 1967, Greek and Spanish migrant workers united with Germans in protest marches against the junta, with slogans that related the events in Greece to Nazism³⁶⁸.

On the 11th of May 1968, protesters made parallels during their protest between the Nazi era and the current military dictatorship in Greece. In a photo by Ludwig Wegmann, we see two protesters in striped pajamas holding a banner with the inscription “gestern Dachau, heute Griechenland, morgen?”.

Together with the Social Democratic party, the DGB showed interest in training foreign trade-union members and functionaries, organizing seminars and conferences in the native languages of the Gastarbeiter³⁶⁹.

For the “anniversary” of the junta’s one year in power, demonstrations were organized in various German cities, mainly by the German syndicates and the SPD. In some of them, Andreas Papandreou gave a speech, and Günter Stephan of the German syndicates discouraged the Germans from visiting Greece. On the 12th of May, in a gathering in Essen, the actress Melina Merkouri also gave a speech³⁷⁰.

Already, there were efforts to boycott the pro-junta celebrations. In Frankfurt, on the 31st of March, during the celebration of the Day of Independence, German leftist students and some Greeks raided the hall and got into a fight with the Greek participants. The celebration was cancelled, and the mayor of Frankfurt sued the initiators of the incident³⁷¹.

The persecutor’s office in Frankfurt examined the complaint of the leader of the German syndicate in Frankfurt about the consulate terrorizing the Greeks of the area. The preface was given with the incidents in the Palmengarten during the celebration of the 25th of March 1821, which was finally annulated. In the meanwhile, the Consul Ivraakis characterized the accusations as untrue and wondered how the German

³⁶⁷ Mark E. Spicka, “Cultural Centres and Guest Worker Integration in Stuttgart, Germany, 1960–1976.” *Immigrants & Minorities* 33, no. 2 (May 4, 2015): 126-8. <https://doi.org/10.1080/02619288.2014.904639>.

³⁶⁸ C h r i s t i a e n s, ““Communists are no Beasts””,631.

³⁶⁹ Barbara E. Schmitter, “Trade Unions and Immigration Politics in West Germany and Switzerland.” *Politics & Society* 10, no. 3 (1981): 325-328.

³⁷⁰ *Elliniki*, 11/5/1968.

³⁷¹ *Elliniki*, 13/4/1968,p.2.

syndicalists had adopted the views of 10-15 Greek communists, anarchists and terrorists³⁷².

The number of incidents involving political violence quickly increased after the Greek military coup of 1967. While more radical elements of the opposition set up terrorist cells, the regime organized its supporters both openly as well as covertly through the diplomatic service and the KYP, the Greek counterpart to the CIA³⁷³.

It seemed almost impossible to escape the informers of the military government, whose arm extended even into German authorities. In twenty-one employment offices, for example, sat Greek officials. In July 1967, Flokos, meanwhile Social Council, dictated a confidential "Newsletter No. 120". According to it, "the recipients ... should inform the Ministry of Labor and us about organizations (such as combat committees against dictatorship, etc.), who are those who are responsible and what they are doing".

At the beginning of March 1969 in Dörnigheim, the driver of the Greek Consulate General in Frankfurt pulled his service pistol and targeted Greeks who shouted, "Down with the dictatorship" and demonstrated throwing eggs and pieces of ice against the representative of the Athenian colonels. On March 22, in Hannover, at the "Catholic Club House", Greek fascists and anti-fascists were beaten with chair legs and iron bars.

In the Hamburg "Curio House", 17 Greeks were injured by splintering glasses and flying bottles. The next day, some Greeks in the Düsseldorf Congress Hall gave their Rhine-Ruhr Consul Michael Papageorgiou three kicks, and a consul's companion cut someone's face with the neck of a battered lemonade bottle. A week later, about 400 Greeks collided in Düsseldorf. Three were injured in a mass brawl in front of the Rheinhalle by stabbings in the stomach and lungs. A blade accidentally hit the hip of city police vice chief Herbert Bischoff, whom protesters had confused with their consul general³⁷⁴.

The opposition became more prudent, given that many informants were circulating between cities, factories and offices. As this disclaimer in the leaflet of IG Metall

³⁷² *Elliniki*, 11/5/1968.

³⁷³ Clarkson, *Fragmented*, 123.

³⁷⁴ *Der Spiegel* 16/1969.

from March 1969 warned, “attention in Frankfurt!”. Greek workers from Kettwig wrote that an officer of the klimakio and former director of the Greek House in Kettwig was propagating like crazy pro the junta. He was leading and organizing the few junta supporters, and many were terrorized by the fear of betrayal (karfoma). Later he was transferred to Frankfurt, so they pleaded to publish this warning to the IG Metall newspaper³⁷⁵.

Greek workers who chose to join left-wing organizations or trade unions were faced with threats of retaliation also from Greek consular staff such as the withdrawal of identity documents or the arrest of relatives still living in Greece³⁷⁶. For example, we read in the issue of November 7th 1970 in *Elliniki* that 1.300 Greek workers abroad were deprived of their passports, and after having returned to Greece they could not return to their work abroad³⁷⁷.

As Kostas, one of my narrators who arrived in Cologne in 1972, narrated, “during the dictatorship, they were hard years, because there were some who had an identity card from the consulate and would give away resistant fighters. We were very divided as a Greek community. I felt the oppression of the junta, because I knew there were the so-called “karfia” (narks). A comrade from Yannitsa was a political refugee and his kids were in Greece, and they would not allow them join their father in West Germany. He was crying when he was telling us all this, and of course people like him would not return to Greece for fear of getting arrested”.

IV.C. CULTURE AS A BATTLEGROUND

Folk music and mass media were widely used by the junta to manipulate public opinion³⁷⁸. It took direct control over radio, television, and cinema. The radio played martial music or songs that supported the “regeneration” of the nation. Television contributed to cultural stagnation and ideological disorientation. Apart from propaganda films, there were also musicals, war films, thrillers, and endless soccer matches³⁷⁹.

³⁷⁵ *Elliniki*, *IG Metall* 1/3/1969 N.3.

³⁷⁶ Clarkson, *Fragmented*, 129-130.

³⁷⁷ *Elliniki*, 7/11/1970, p.6.

³⁷⁸ Anna Papaeti, “Folk Music and the Cultural Politics of the Military Junta in Greece (1967–1974)” *Mousikos Logos* 2 (January 2015), 60.

³⁷⁹ Asimakoulas, “Translating ‘Self’”, 31.

Since 1966, when TV was officially introduced in Greece, it had won over the Greek family. In ironic fashion, the dictatorship convinced people to seek home entertainment instead of risky socializing in public places³⁸⁰. The creation of a national audience, sharing daily the same images and stories, was actively pursued by the junta. The army-run channel YENED (Ypiresia Enimeroseos Enoplon Dynameon, Information Agency of the Armed Forces) was providing predominantly popular television to win the loyalty of the wider public and in order to maximize the reach of its political message³⁸¹.

The language used in advertising Greek tourism abroad moved from extolling ancient Greek heritage, and in spite of the junta's ideologues, to a depiction of the country as a consumer paradise³⁸². The junta's cultural politics, however repulsive, kitsch, and crudely nationalistic, shared the same modal framework that characterized Greek cultural life in general³⁸³.

Kitsch also obscures the more sinister aspects of the dictatorship's repression. Furthermore, the rigid periodization of Greek kitsch as a trope imposed by the junta in 1967 silences the cultural context of the 1960s—a period that saw a broader proliferation in the West of both mass visual culture and new radical and subversive expression³⁸⁴. Both the conservative intelligentsia, acting as the self-appointed guardian of 'national tradition', and the leftist activists could be equally dismissive of American culture and its impact³⁸⁵.

The idea of Greekness as a cultural and historical continuity emerged at the end of the nineteenth century, and Greek folk music was one of the most useful resources in this identity construction. As Michael Herzfeld showed, folk studies became quintessential for the formation of the new state, since it constructed a narrative of

³⁸⁰ Botsiou, "The Interface", 296.

³⁸¹ Gregory Paschalidis, "Entertaining the Colonels: Propaganda, social change and entertainment in Greek television fiction, 1967–74" in Peter Goddard (ed) *Popular television in authoritarian Europe*. Manchester University Press, 2013, 66-68.

³⁸² Nikolakakis, "The Colonels on the Beach", 432-434.

³⁸³ Dimitris Papanikolaou, *Singing Poets: Literature and Popular Music in France and Greece*. Legenda, 2007, 130.

³⁸⁴ Kourniakti, Jessica. "From Fascist Overload to Unbearable Lightness: Recollections of the Military Junta as Kitsch in Postdictatorial Greece." *Journal of Modern Greek Studies* 35, no. 2 (2017): 360. <https://doi.org/10.1353/mgs.2017.0023>.

³⁸⁵ Stefanidis, *Stirring the Greek Nation*, 250-251.

cultural continuity from ancient to modern times³⁸⁶. In parallel, the dictators promoted every form of ‘low entertainment’, in order to distract the masses³⁸⁷.

In *Music as Social Life: The Politics of Participation*, Thomas Turino emphasized throughout that “music, dance, festivals, and other public expressive cultural practices are a primary way that people articulate the collective identities that are fundamental to forming and sustaining social groups, which are, in turn, basic to survival”³⁸⁸. Music and dance engage people in various ways. Passion in rebetika dances reflects not only a momentary mood and skill, but also a special sense of “community”³⁸⁹.

After the population exchange between Greece and Turkey in 1923 and for many years, rebetika in Piraeus or Athens was the music of the urban sub-proletariat³⁹⁰. A man would have a favorite song that represented a strong personal meaning. The zeibekiko and the tsifteteli were dances prevalent in the bouzoukia and taverna. For the Greek female, the gendered expression of individualism was tsifteteli, while for the male, zeibekiko, karsilamas and hasapikos³⁹¹. The zeibekikos often expressed intense emotion such as “love-sickness” (sevdas) and bravado, and it was a kind of macho display³⁹².

The poet Nikos Gatsos speaking in the name of “the inner Greek”, argued that “our music often expresses our melancholy, but it is not really tragic. There is sadness in it but also speed and defiance. We love life, we have a deep capacity for pleasure. We feel life is to be lived, fully and strongly. We are sensualists, taken at heart. we are also romantics, very sentimental. There are moments for the Greek when he can feel intensely alone, lost in himself. In these moments he feels full of strength, even heroic”³⁹³.

³⁸⁶ Papaeti, “Folk Music”, 35-36.

³⁸⁷ Papanikolaou, *Singing Poets*, 94.

³⁸⁸ Kay Kaufman Shelemay, “Musical Communities: Rethinking the Collective in Music.” *Journal of the American Musicological Society* 64, no. 2 (August 2011): 355.

³⁸⁹ Demeter Tsounis, “Kefi and Meraki in Rebetika Music of Adelaide: Cultural Constructions of Passion and Expression and Their Link with the Homeland.” *Yearbook for Traditional Music* 27 (1995): 91-92. <https://doi.org/10.2307/768105>.

³⁹⁰ *Der Spiegel*, 02/5/1983, issue 18.

³⁹¹ Patricia Riak, “A cultural interpretation of Greek dance”, *Journal of the Hellenic Diaspora* 33, no.1&2 (2007): 39-59.

³⁹² Tsounis, “Kefi”, 95.

³⁹³ interview of Nikos Gatsos for the Canadian documentary “The Inner Mann” in 1964, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RyCRItmkXBM&t=154s>.

A telling example of this manly attitude was Paraskevas from Mani (a region in Peloponnese renowned for its resistance to the Ottomans) interviewed by a journalist of the newspaper *Elliniki* in May 1970. Although Paraskevas had already spent seven years in Germany, he was still feeling lonely, and every evening drank alone. The scenery was the Greek pub of Opladen (near Leverkusen), where at 7 pm most of the tables were full. In some tables people played cards and tavli, while in others discussion took place on diverse issues. Generally, there was a certain fuss. During weekends in the same pub there was an orchestra, and “the Greek has it in his blood to seek music with bouzouki. A young guy around 28 is dancing on the dancefloor, a chasaposerviko, looking pleased with himself and on his meraki orders a second dance leaving a banknote to the orchestra”³⁹⁴.

Contrary to the lonesome dance, when circle dances were performed, the spirit of resistance was introduced to encompass an identification with nationalism. Through the performance of circle group dances such as tsamikos and kalamatianos, the heroic element of national spirit in the self was celebrated³⁹⁵.

The reporter of a 1969 article in the *Elliniki* offered a romantic view of folk dances filled with nostalgia. According to him, “the Greeks wherever they are don’t forget their motherland. And when they have glenti and come to kefi, they cannot but end up in the prideful Greek dances. Tsamikos and kalamatianos are the usual dances in the panegyri, but when they are danced thousands of miles away from the motherland like in Stuttgart, they move deeply every Greek soul”³⁹⁶.

We could divide the dancing practices among the migrants into three categories: a) the spontaneous and individual initiatives organized in taverns and restaurants for private events like weddings, b) the events organized by associations and firms and c) the state-backed events. Nevertheless, there is no clear dividing line, and the confines of the different initiatives are blurred.

In 1970, the TV show “Unter unserem Himmel (Under our sky)” presented on the Bavarian television had a special episode, a tribute to the guest workers’ music. The episode was entitled “Besuch bei den Gastarbeitern” (A visit to the guest workers), and its summary was as follows: “we employ hundreds of thousands of workers from

³⁹⁴ *Elliniki*, 23/5/1970.

³⁹⁵ Riak, “A cultural interpretation”, 39-59.

³⁹⁶ *Elliniki*, 15/2/1969,p.2.

Spain, Italy, Yugoslavia, Turkey and Greece. Most of them come from villages, from the most remote areas. As a piece of their home, they brought their musical instruments, their dances, their songs with them. In this program we hear their folk music: strange, but no less fascinating sounds”. The reporter found a company of Greek guest workers playing music in a pub and interviewed them, asking their names and details about the songs they were playing. The company consisted of workers playing guitar, bouzouki and accordion, and their music choices included folk songs from Macedonia, but also contemporary hits like the song “Geitonitsa” (little neighborhood) composed by Manos Loizos in 1969³⁹⁷.

A 1971 article in *Ta Nea* described the progressive encounter between West Germans and Greeks through popular hits and film soundtracks, but also their co-existence on the German soil. The journalist suggested that in the beginning, the Germans would ask every Greek if they came from Sparta or Athens, and they would go on mentioning Thermopylae, Marathon and Salamina. However, in the meantime, things changed somehow with all the hits like “Ta paidia tou Pirea”, “Zorba the Greek”, “Three times” and lately the “Dirlada”, while the bouzouki changed their impressions. One could see Germans sitting in silence and listening to youth from Epirus singing nostalgic folk songs³⁹⁸.

The bouzouki music of the 1930s to the 1960s stuck because it distinguished Greek music from Turkish and European music. It made Greeks feel they had a national musical tradition, while it also encouraged a new kind of tourism. Ruins brought the tourists of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries to Greece. Bouzoukia, beaches, and bikinis brought a new wave of tourists who continue to outnumber the locals in many parts of the country³⁹⁹. Nevertheless, the Germans did not need to go to Greece to see live performances of the folk dances since they had them performed in their cities with the support of various firms and institutions.

Moreover, there were some communities that had a more predominant group originating from a specific area of Greece. Initially, Greek migrants who came from

³⁹⁷ <https://www.br.de/mediathek/video/himmelmoment-1970-2-50-besuch-bei-den-gastarbeitern-av:5dd21565e9c001ad86da2>.

³⁹⁸ *Ta Nea*, 23/8/1971, p.5.

³⁹⁹ Gail Holst-Warhaft, “Is Zorba More Greek than Greek Music? How Greek Music is Perceived and Reproduced beyond Greece’s Borders” In Dafni Tragaki (ed.) *Made in Greece: Studies in Popular Music*, 2019, 226.

the Black Sea, but also from various areas in Greece, such as Epirus and Thessaly, gathered spontaneously to sing and dance. Gradually, they founded regional associations⁴⁰⁰. Teaching dance to the younger generation was seen as one of the important ways in which some aspects of Pontic culture could be retained⁴⁰¹.

Nicole Immig in her work about the Pontic associations in Germany argues that with the exception of the Munich association, founded in 1966 and therefore older, it was not until the start of the 1980s that the Pontic Greeks began to organize themselves into local, regional or interregional associations. As far as their identity was concerned, the "second migration" of the Pontic Greeks and their successful integration into society is linked, in some accounts, to the first expulsion and the status of an eternal refugee. Another mode of legitimizing emigration to Germany consists in combining this argument with the idea of a people always striving for modernity and progress, the Pontic population appearing as a vector of modernization during Ottoman rule⁴⁰².

IV.D. OF HEROES, NATION-SAVIORS AND SUNNY SUMMERS

Two of my narrators, Theopoula and Sofia, were children when they followed their parents to the Federal Republic. Theopoula was born in the same village as her parents in the early 1950s. She shared with me her experience of growing up in a West German town, her schooling and apprenticeship. In 1963, when she was ten years old, her parents left her to her aunt for one year, and then her father came and took her with them to Germany.

As she recalls, "I would go to the Greek school in the afternoon, which was housed in a German school. I remember they would give us a cacao milk to drink every day at school. And how did I go to the German school? One day there was a lady from a church association, who was doing a fundraising for the children of Biafra war. And she asked me if I was going to school, and when I said no, she suggested that I enroll. And indeed, I went to that school for three years. I was twelve years old, but they

⁴⁰⁰ Papadogiannis, "A (Trans)National", 595.

⁴⁰¹ Valerie Liddle, "Pontic Dance: Feeling the Absence of Homeland." In Susan R. Hemer (ed.) *Emotions, Senses, Spaces: Ethnographic Engagements and Intersections*, University of Adelaide Press, 2016, 54-55. <https://doi.org/10.20851/emotions-04>.

⁴⁰² Nicole Immig, "Mémoire et immigration des Grecs pontiques en Allemagne" in Teulières, L., Bertheleu, H., & Amar, M. (Eds.) . *Mémoires des migrations, temps de l'histoire*. Tours : Presses universitaires François-Rabelais, 2015,159-173.

placed me in the first class of primary school to start from scratch with the German language. Most of the pupils were German, and there was also a Spanish girl in the other class”.

In Sofia’s memory there still remains the image of two policemen knocking on their door the following morning after her arrival in West Germany. Her father registered her at the town hall, and the policemen were notified and paid them a visit to inform them she had to enroll in a school. At the time, she was twelve years old, and thus she had three more years to complete compulsory education. As Sofia reminisces, “the next day, I found myself at the German school. I knew nothing, I was sitting on my chair looking around, it was a bit hard in the beginning. However, I got adapted quickly by singing their songs etc. Our school was catering to a village of 2-3.000 inhabitants, and yet it had a gym, different teachers for every course, chemistry lab etc. Because there was no swimming pool, they would take us by train to a neighboring place with our swimsuits and our caps. My best friend became a Turkish girl. I knew some Turkish swear words from my grannies, and she blushed when I told her. But we became good friends”.

Sofia’s mother would scold her because she did not speak German at all, and she was afraid she would never learn the language. Nevertheless, Sofia was watching television and thus absorbed much vocabulary. When she took her mother to the doctor and she explained everything in German, her mother was speechless! After finishing school, she continued for three years to the Berufsschule, where, as she recalls, “you learn all the useful stuff for life, from washing in an eco-friendly way to voting responsibly as a citizen. There were some classes uniquely with Greeks and so I was elected president of my class, because I was speaking German fluently”.

As a matter of fact, not everybody was as lucky as Sofia or Theopoula. Kostas, in his narration, inserted pieces of the life-story of his wife. Regarding her education, he commented that when her parents moved to Hannover in 1963, working in a factory producing car tires, their daughter was only seven years old. She spent the whole day locked up at home.

At the time, there were very few migrants’ children, and as Kostas narrated, “the little Germans would touch her to see if she was real, she had a suntan and she was an active child. She was quite naughty, when she was little, she would take their bike by

force, ride it and they would run after her. She would escape from home, and she found a farm with horses, and they would teach her horse-riding. One day a teacher found her there and took her to her school. Nowadays, she speaks fluent German, and she can read a bit, but she cannot properly read and write. She started school at fifteen, who can learn a language at that age?”

The main features of Greek education during the Cold War period were the adoption of obsolete standards, the deceleration of any reform effort and the hindering of any progress. Episodes of reform and counter-reform slowed educational goals⁴⁰³. The educational reform of 1964, in addition to introducing demotic Greek (vernacular) as the language of education, made a strong effort to modernize schools by extending compulsory education from six to nine years and forming a technical and vocational channel that intended to include the majority of the student population⁴⁰⁴.

In 1962, when the Greek delegation in West Germany heard about Italian consular instruction, the Greek representatives quickly approached the *Länder* Ministries of Education about setting up the same. The Greek government initially accepted the established parameters for five hours of consular instruction and the two-thirds/one-third preparation classes, but quickly found them insufficient.

Since 1964, guest worker children could attend compulsory primary school during the day, taking math, sciences, German language, history and religion, while in the afternoon they could take voluntary classes in their mother tongue, history, and geography. In 1966, several Greek parents living in Stuttgart-Bad Cannstatt asked the Baden-Württemberg Ministry of Education to exempt their children from the state's new compulsory schooling laws. Enabling the children's futures in Greece effectively meant the *Länder* should cede sovereignty over several thousand West German residents to a foreign state⁴⁰⁵.

The Honorary President of the Ministry of Labor, Leandros Polychronis, who published the explosive report in 1964 under the Center Union government, now published a letter in the press regarding the education of Greek pupils in the Federal Republic. On the 5th of July 1971, the Law 4816/164 was issued in West Germany

⁴⁰³ Sofia Iliadou-Tachou, “Communism, Anti-Communism and Education in Greece from the Axis Occupation until the Early Cold War.” *History Of Education* 49, vol.3, (2020), 377-378.

⁴⁰⁴ Couloumbis et al., *Greece in the Twentieth Century*, 204-205.

⁴⁰⁵ Brittany Lehman, *Teaching Migrant Children in West Germany and Europe, 1949-1992*. New York, NY: Springer Berlin Heidelberg, 2018, 57, 83-84 and 93.

regarding the education of the foreign workers' children. According to this law, at the end of the school year 1971-72, all the preparative schools had to be dismantled.

Those schools were of one or two years with special curriculum for the foreign pupils. 2/3 of the school year were dedicated to their mother tongue and 1/3 to the German language. After graduating from this school, the pupils would continue to the German schools. In the afternoon they could take extra courses in their mother tongue and lessons in history and geography. Despite the fact that already 700 Greek teachers were teaching in the preparative schools, the system was not optimal.

According to Polychronis, the new law with the imposition of German schooling for pupils over 6 years old stood for "the total de-hellenization of the 25.000 Greek pupils in West Germany". The German government did not approve the foundation of public Greek schools on German soil. In the eyes of Polychronis, those measures were anti-democratic contrary to the liberal ideals of the West German government and its people. The Greek government had to demand the validation of mutuality, since in Greece there were German public schools with staff sent by the Ministry of Education and their own rules and curriculum. For Polychronis, that was an issue of utmost national importance, and the responsibility burdened the political, spiritual and religious elite⁴⁰⁶.

The 1967 junta showed little consideration for the popular sector in allocating resources for education, given that the 8.89 percent budget allocation for education in 1969 was the lowest figure since 1957. In 1969, it recalled the bulk of its teachers from abroad for "pedagogical reasons"⁴⁰⁷.

In November 1969, *Der Spiegel* investigated the propagandistic content of the junta schoolbooks. The state-run Greek textbook publisher published a new history book for the 12-year-old elementary school students in the 6th (last) class. Verbalism and hyperbole were abundant in phrases like: "the country was led into the abyss", "April 21st marks the new milestone in the destiny of the Greek race" etc.⁴⁰⁸.

The pro-junta journalists cultivated in an outrageously racist way the cult of Greek exceptionalism. Judging the Greek reporter of Deutsche Welle (most probably Vasos

⁴⁰⁶ *To Vima*, 10/12/1972, p.15

⁴⁰⁷ Lehman, *Teaching Migrant Children*, 97.

⁴⁰⁸ *Der Spiegel* 47/1969.

Mathiopoulos) as an “anti-Greek idiot”, an article in late June 1971 extorted the national virtues deserving only pride. Greek children should be taught “how few battalions of Greek soldiers faced the entire Wehrmacht during the Second World War and they can feel great. Are Greeks like Congolese to feel inferior? They should have a sense of superiority because Greek education and literature are overwhelmingly superior to the rich but lagging Europeans. We want and deserve Greek schools for the Greek children of Germany”⁴⁰⁹.

As to the language issue, the colonels allowed the use of vernacular in the first three classes of primary education. In the rest of the curriculum the use of katharevousa (archaic) was imposed strictly. Moreover, the only clubs pupils could join were the Greek Scouts, the youth section of the Greek Red Cross and the Sunday Schools. Finally, it was decided under which conditions the teaching staff might be considered disloyal to the regime and so be dismissed or forced to resign⁴¹⁰.

One of my narrators, Petros⁴¹¹, was a primary school teacher who was assigned a position at the Greek schools in the Federal Republic during the years of the junta rule. According to him, during the dictatorship, they did not have clear pressures, but his superiors hinted that they should, at least, never say anything against the “nation-saving revolution”.

The teachers could not act without precaution, because the resistance was also organized. Where Petros was serving, they sent an economist in the labor office as supervisor of fifth grade, clearly a junta envoy. Petros had a friend from his village, who was a member of the KKE. When he learnt they would organize a celebration at school, he warned Petros to avoid any pro-junta exclamation because the communists would bring four coaches full of people to attack the gathering.

The former clerk in the labor office was Petros’ friend and he could be flexible, but the new one insisted they had to do the celebration together. Petros refused, although he was afraid that they would dismiss him. In the end, under pressure, he agreed to participate only with poems and avoiding any political statement or speech from his part.

⁴⁰⁹ *Ellinikos Vorras*, 20/6/1971.

⁴¹⁰ Anastasakis, *Authoritarianism*, 205,220&223.

⁴¹¹ Throughout the text the name Petros is used as a pseudonym, after the narrator’s wish during our interview not to be mentioned by his original name.

As Petros recalls, “he had the responsibility and he brought police forces with dogs, it was a mess! I invited the German teachers at my school and they saw the dogs and they wondered what was wrong. I had nothing to do with all that, and in the end, it was their right to oppose the junta. In the end, the coaches arrived, but they didn’t shoot down the speaker, they didn’t create upheaval. The police and the dogs were of course inhibitors”.

Petros insists that he was neutral, and thus he didn’t give signs of suspicion so that they would surveil him personally. According to him, the leftists were not so visible and most of his friends were right-wing. It just happened that way, because they were the ones who helped him and his family and offered them hospitality when they needed it. His wife agreed that “the junta supporters were hating the others who were supposedly communists. But they were not communists, they just didn’t like the junta. I knew some of them, we were good friends, they were very nice people”.

According to an article in the conservative newspaper *Estia*, in 1971, strict selection criteria were applied in the teachers’ recruitment, like the evaluation of elements of their ethics and character, while they also underwent a rapid postgraduate special training. Since 1970, a Greek primary education inspector was added to the staff of the Bonn Embassy. In cooperation with the consular authorities there, he was in constant contact with parents and students and offered his services on “national issues” (sic)⁴¹².

In January 1971, *Der Spiegel* published another reportage about the situation of the schoolbooks for guest workers’ children and published excerpts from the textbooks used in Spain and Greece, as well as in foreigners’ classes of the Federal Republic.

The textbook for the subject of Religious Education suggested a belligerent attitude, far from the pacifist Christian values it was supposed to teach pupils. It was not pacifism but passivity that the regime was aiming at: "and the authority exercising the power is set with the will or the toleration of God, and we owe it discipline and the execution of its commands "⁴¹³.

In speeches, slogans and manifestos, populism prevailed, given that they appropriated the right to speak on behalf of and save “the entire nation”. The propaganda slogans

⁴¹² *Estia*, 09/11/1971.

⁴¹³ *Der Spiegel*, 6/1971

promoted by the junta in primary schools during the 1970 commemoration of the colonels' coup d'état stressed the theme of Greece as an extraordinary country, a locale or place of martyrs and heroes⁴¹⁴.

Pupils were encouraged to participate in school performances or even tour villages in folk dances events. For instance, the pupils of the 5th and 6th grade of the primary school in Nurnberg formed a dancing group under the supervision of their teacher. They visited almost every Sunday areas away from the big cities and they danced folk dances for the sake of Greeks who lived in those areas⁴¹⁵.

The pupils competed in their singing abilities, as in many school choirs sang Christmas songs^{416&417} and were spoiled with gifts, candies and chocolates⁴¹⁸. Nevertheless, they were not only the children of workers residing with their family in West Germany who were offered generously Christmas gifts. Santa Claus' list did not leave out those children who were left back in Greece with grandparents or other relatives while their parents were working in Germany. To repair the bitter emotions of separation and nostalgia, the National Bank of Greece adopted a caritative role and for the Christmas season of 1974 organized a Christmas party in the border town of Prosotsani.

As the speaker in the available footage notes, "in a happy atmosphere, the National Bank offered a great joy to those kids with rich gifts, candies and happenings. It offered them a real familial environment that substituted partially the presence of their absent parents working abroad"⁴¹⁹. Next year, in 1975, the same charity action takes place in another border town, Orestiada, on the border with Turkey⁴²⁰.

⁴¹⁴ Anastasia Karakasidou, "Protocol and Pageantry: Celebrating the Nation in Northern Greece" in Mazower, Mark, ed. *After the War Was over: Reconstructing the Family, Nation, and State in Greece, 1943-1960*. Princeton Modern Greek Studies. Princeton, N.J: Princeton University Press, 2000, 238-9.

⁴¹⁵ *Elliniki*, 17/8/1968.

⁴¹⁶ *Elliniki*, 14/2/1970,p.2: "performance and songs from the little Greeks of Ailde under the supervision of their teacher Vandouris and the social worker Sophia Kallifatidou. In West Berlin the poor-men-brotherhood supported the Christmas celebration and offered gifts to the kids."

⁴¹⁷ *Elliniki*, 20/1/1968,p.2: "for Christmas the choir of the Greek school in Weiblingen sang under the supervision of their teacher, while in Ludwigsburg they sang under the Christmas tree lead by their teachers. In Stuttgart a party took place in the Christmas Eve".

⁴¹⁸ *Elliniki*, 3/2/1968,2 & 5: "in Heilbronn more than 500 Greeks and some foreigners took part in the New Year's Eve party in the Turnhalle in Shontheim. The teacher Stauros Papadopoulos offered gifts to the little pupils and the party went on until 2am. In Bergis-Gladbach the curator Manavopoulos organized a party for the pupils of the primary school."

⁴¹⁹ http://mam.avarchive.gr/portal/digitalview.jsp?get_ac_id=1167&thid=2318

⁴²⁰ http://mam.avarchive.gr/portal/digitalview.jsp?get_ac_id=2386&thid=7857

As Laura Downs suggested for the French state in the inter-war period, state intervention in family life was conceptualized as a complement to the family's own initiatives. It was seen not as a menace to the privacy of the family, but as a support that would enable families meet the state's expectations. The child was pictured as a future citizen in whose education and welfare the state had an interest⁴²¹. In the part that follows, I will examine the junta's efforts to mold model citizens-to-be in summer camps tailored to complement the Helleno-Christian education they received at school.

In the *Eleutheron Elliniko Vima*, the so-called "newspaper of the free Greeks of Western Europe" published by Ioannis Papageorgiou in Augsburg since 1966, we find the first mention of a state organized summer camp in Greece specially designed for the Greek workers' children.

In 1967, after the military coup had taken place, the newspaper published the letter of the former Mayor of Athens Plytas to the editor Papageorgiou, which contained a confirmation of his proposal to send kids to Greece for the summer in an organized way: "everything was ready, and it would take place as it was planned in detail in the program for the hospitality in Greece of 500 kids of Greek workers in Germany. But Friday 21st of April cancelled and overturned together with so many other things even that cultural initiative"⁴²².

Finally, the idea was adopted by the junta and implemented for the first time in the summer of 1969. More than 1000 Greek children whose parents were working in the FRG had the opportunity to spend their holidays for free in Greece, hosted in the camps of the Ministry of Social Services. The right to participate was reserved to the kids of the Greek workers who lived in Germany and were between 7 and 20 years old. Another precondition was that they were not themselves working in Germany. The final lists were being prepared by the local offices of the Greek Ministry of Labor, where the parents should submit their applications.

The duration of their stay would be of one month. In total, there would be three missions, of which the first would depart on the 6th of July, the second on the 14th and the third on the 23rd of July. During the trip and in the summer camps, the kids would

⁴²¹ Laura Lee Downs, "Au Revoir Les Enfants: Wartime Evacuation and the Politics of Childhood in France and Britain, 1939–45." *History Workshop Journal* 82, no. 1 (October 2016): 125.

<https://doi.org/10.1093/hwj/dbw027>.

⁴²² *Eleutheron Elliniko Vima*, 1967, issue 9, p.4.

be escorted by teachers, social workers etc., and for this reason there was provision for the trip to Greece to coincide with the school holidays in Germany.

According to the wish of every parent, the kids could be sent to summer camps in Attica or in Northern Greece. The transport was initially scheduled to be done by coaches. However, there was also the idea to use an airplane, for which there were ongoing discussions with the Olympic airways. The expenses of the trip were to be covered in the greatest part by the Greek government. A percentage (40% for the first kid and 30% for every extra one) was to be paid by the parents. More or less, for every kid the cost would be 80 DM or 100DM, if it was a flight⁴²³.

As we read in *Elliniki*, the applications submitted by the Greek workers in Germany for the participation of their kids in summer camps in Greece exceeded any prediction. When the deadline was over, 1800 applications were submitted. The big number of applications created a headache for Flokos, the labor attaché in the Greek embassy, because initially the plan was to send 1000 kids to Greece. Finally, the Ministry of Labor confirmed the hospitality for the extra 800 kids. However, there was also a problem with their transport. The two airways (Olympic Airways and Lufthansa) had booked only 1000 seats. Finally, it was possible to find 350 more seats. That was very difficult because of the increased tourist flow to Greece⁴²⁴.

In the issue of 10th May 1969 of the *Elliniki*, we read that the organization of the camps satisfied an old request from the part of the Greeks in Germany and that the profit for the little Greeks abroad would be great. During their stay there “they will have the chance to meet with their peers from Greece and live in an authentic Greek environment. Apart from that, through the excursions to different places they will have the chance to get acquainted with their motherland. However, the most important advantage is that they will spend some weeks in the healthy Greek climate with plenty of sun of which they are deprived of here”⁴²⁵.

It is exactly this same postcard impression or tourism poster illustration that the authorities used when they welcomed this first group of kids. There is footage available from the arrival of those first missions in 1969, in which the speaker informed the viewers that “based on an initiative from the Ministry of Labor, 60

⁴²³ *Elliniki*, 10/5/1969, p.1.

⁴²⁴ *Elliniki*, 21/6/1969, p.2.

⁴²⁵ *Elliniki*, 10/5/1969, p.1.

children, offspring of Greeks working in West Germany, arrived in Greece to spend their holidays. The little Greeks were welcomed at Ellinikon airport by the Minister of Labor and the Deputy Minister of Social Services, who wished them to have a nice and pleasant time in their homeland with the blue sky and the magic beaches⁴²⁶.

On the 8th of July 1970, the first group of Greek children, offspring of Greeks working in West Germany, Belgium and the Netherlands, arrived in the Ellinikon airport. They would be hosted by the “national government” at the children’s summer camps of Kamma Vourla. The Greek children that arrived were welcomed by the Minister of Labor and other officials. What is noteworthy in the footage is that the children are holding Greek flags, an orthodox icon of Virgin Mary and placards praising the junta with the following, “the Greek children from Belgium thank the “national government”⁴²⁷.

In 1971, for a third year in a row, Greek children from Germany and other European countries were hosted in Greece in summer camps of the Ministry of Social Services in Attica and Northern Greece. Kids aged 8-15 years had the right to participate, and thus it was calculated that almost 2000 Greek kids from Germany would visit Greece. The expenses for the accommodation and transport were partly paid by the Greek state, while the parents had to pay a small part of the air transfer by Olympic airways. The office of the labor attaché Flokos coordinated the mission of kids from Germany to the camps⁴²⁸.

The pro-junta newspaper *Eleutheros Kosmos* praised this “unique example of philanthropy” that the colonels offered to the 1.150 kids they hosted in the summer camps. As we read in a mid-August 1971 article, “it serves a national purpose with deeper importance and incalculable utility. Because it provides the opportunity to those Greek children who are obliged to stay close to their working parents abroad to visit their homeland every year and to keep close ties with it, until they return to it permanently”⁴²⁹.

For the year 1972, we have available footage where we listen to the speaker talking about the arrival of “142 children, offspring of Greeks working in West Germany,

⁴²⁶ http://mam.avarchive.gr/portal/digitalview.jsp?get_ac_id=3308&thid=13446.

⁴²⁷ http://mam.avarchive.gr/portal/digitalview.jsp?get_ac_id=1825&thid=9179.

⁴²⁸ *Elliniki*, 27/2/1971, p.1.

⁴²⁹ *Eleutheros Kosmos*, 18/8/1971.

from the 1.700 expected in total, who will be hosted based on the respective program of the Ministry of National Economy.⁴³⁰

An article in *Makedonia* offers a more detailed description of the welcome organized for the children's arrival in Thessaloniki destined for the summer camps in Northern Greece. It was during the mission of 28th June 1972 when thirty children of workers in West Germany arrived in Thessaloniki by special aircraft, in order to be hosted for one month in summer camps organized by the Ministry of Social Policy.

The Greek children were welcomed in the Mikra airport by the Metropolitane and other officials, while the Papafeion Orphanage's Philharmonic entertained the little guests. One day later, 150 more children would arrive from West Germany⁴³¹. The whole reception was carefully planned to correspond to the needs of the target group. If the adults were welcomed with folk dances in the train stations, the kids encountered familiar childish faces in the orchestra of the orphanage.

In a special reportage on summer camps on the 14th of August 1973, we have a proper propaganda piece about disciplined citizens and national profit: "the states that are interested in their progress pay special attention to the child. Because every child is a social cell from the right development of which the nation is expecting a lot. [...] It is not an exaggeration to say that life in camp contributes to the development of the character and the sociability of the child. [...] Egoism disappears since there should be common effort to play fair. The joy of the one is connected to the joy of the other in cooperation"⁴³².

The philosopher Theodore Couloumbis writing in 1974, some months before the fall of the junta, attempted to interpret its nature. When in May 1972 he asked a junta official when the next elections would take place, the official looked at him and said: "When the twenty-year-old members of the Lambrakis Youth become thirty years old, get jobs, and become heads of families, then they will have enough of a stake in society not to take off on anarchic stunts. Then, we will be ready for elections." Thinking that this already placed elections around 1977-78, I asked: "What about the

⁴³⁰ http://mam.avarchive.gr/portal/digitalview.jsp?get_ac_id=3955&thid=15204.

⁴³¹ *Makedonia*, 29/6/1972, p.3.

⁴³² http://www.avarchive.gr/portal/digitalview.jsp?get_ac_id=2148&thid=6055

next generation of twenty-year-olds coming up? "Oh," he said, "we are not worried about them because they are growing up under the 'proper' education"⁴³³!

IV.E. “COMPATRIOTS, WELCOME!”

In 1967, the German federal railways calculated that 35.000 Greek workers would visit Greece in December to spend Christmas and New Year in their homeland. In 1968 a new train was added, the “Akropolis-Express” connecting Munich to Athens⁴³⁴.

On the 26th of May 1968 the addition of this new express line to the Railways of the Greek State (ΟΣΕ) was celebrated as “a sign of progress in the direction of modernization”. The train constituted a daily rapid connection between Athens and Munich in thirty-three hours, eight hours less than the pre-existing connection with only one night spent on board. In the available footage we can see how this innovation was advertised in Athens: old-style open carriages with ladies dressed up like in the times of their great grandmas were distributing leaflets with the new “Akropolis-Express” connection⁴³⁵.

The border station of Eidomeni, between Yugoslavia and Greece, was the first point of contact of the returnees with their homeland. The state and local authorities never missed an opportunity to fill this void space in between two territories with ideologically loaded messages transmitted mainly through the use of folklore. We are lucky to have audiovisual material from these little open-air feasts taking place in the railway stations, since the junta was especially keen to show its welcoming face in news feeds projected in the cinemas before the films or in television.

As a leitmotiv, in every account of welcome or farewell, the local Philharmonic Orchestra was present and played marches alongside folk songs. In the available footage, a train arrives at Kilkis railway station carrying expatriates from the FRG returning to Greece to celebrate Christmas and New Year. The Philharmonic of the Municipality of Axioupoli plays music, and local authorities and crowds welcome the expats by handshakes through the train windows. Girls dressed in traditional costumes

⁴³³ Theodore A Couloumbis, “The Greek Junta Phenomenon.” *Polity* 6, no. 3 (March 1974): 374. <https://doi.org/10.2307/3233933>.

⁴³⁴ *Elliniki*, 20/1/1968 p.3.

⁴³⁵ http://www.avarchive.gr/portal/digitalview.jsp?get_ac_id=3724&thid=17241

are dancing folk dances. Men and women are dancing folk dances, while the expats are watching and are offered drinks and snacks.

The speaker describes: “4.000 Greeks working in Germany came and spent the holidays with their relatives in the homeland and left with nice memories from the welcome ceremony with the participation of the authorities, their friends and relatives upon their arrival. Music, dances, offerings and smiling, happy faces were seen when they first arrived in Greece (folk music in the background)”⁴³⁶.

In the effort of the junta to appear caring for the expatriated proletariat, the censored press published letters from workers who spontaneously expressed their gratitude and deep emotional attachment to the values the regime fostered: “I was so moved”, one of the Greek workers writes in a letter to the press, “that even though I am older than 50 years old and I have travelled almost all around the world, it was the first time something like that happened to me, and I could not help crying. I congratulate all who prepared and put this idea into action, which boosts the moral of every Greek.”⁴³⁷.

However, letters not only from individuals but also from collectivities appraised the regime’s care for their “class” and their fraternity expressed in the tight hug of the circle dances, like this telegram the Labor Centre of Thessaloniki sends in 1970 to the Minister of Northern Greece: “Together with the representative of the government prefect of Kilkis and representatives of the Ministry of Labor, in a tight hug under the sounds of the Kilkis Philharmonic and the local musical instruments, they danced Greek dances cheering constantly for Greece and the national revolutionary government. The president and the members of the Labor Centre of Thessaloniki as well as all the employed of Thessaloniki express their gratitude to you for the all-encompassing and daily expressed interest for our class.”⁴³⁸

Apart from propaganda newsreels, the press and mainly the newspapers published in Thessaloniki, like *Makedonia*, sent their reporters to cover the receptions of the masses of arriving guest workers. The reporter of this 1971 article noticed that “emotional celebrations took place while the train approached the platform. While the music of the municipality of Axioupoli played triumphally national marches and

⁴³⁶ http://mam.avarchive.gr/portal/digitalview.jsp?get_ac_id=3326&thid=12942.

⁴³⁷ *Makedonia*, 23/1/1970, p.7.

⁴³⁸ *Makedonia*, 23/1/1970, p.7.

traditional songs, the thousands of Greek male and female workers started crying and burst into claps and hurra for Greece. Special groups of employees in the Ministry of Labor and in the Ministry of Government's Presidency, representatives of the local authorities, representatives of the public services of the Kilkis municipality and crowds of people welcomed the Greek workers at the border station of Eidomeni⁴³⁹.

The traffic was high, and the trains packed in both directions, while "mainly intense is the traffic in Thessaloniki's railway station, where this photo was taken yesterday at midnight. The Greek workers were greeted for a goodbye by representatives of the local authorities, who wished them a quick return and permanent settlement in Greece"⁴⁴⁰.

Apart from the popular choice of train journey, more and more migrants started using the plane for their return visits. The airlines Olympic Airways and Lufthansa announced already in May 1968 their plan to test for a year a special workers' fare for travels between Greece and Germany for the Greek workers. The discount was to be applied to the tickets of the economy class and was 60% of the basic fare for a single ticket and 100% for a round trip ticket⁴⁴¹.

The migrants had the choice between coaches and their own car, if they were ready to take the long journey to Greece through Yugoslavia. There was serious consideration from the part of European authorities about the road connection of Yugoslavia with Southern Europe, given that it was a key area in cutting through the Balkans. The most formidable hurdle was the missing link between Belgrade and the Greek border, of which a large proportion lacked a proper foundation or surface and suffered from occasional floods. In 1963, 1 million foreign cars crossed Yugoslav borders, but in 1970 this number had risen to an astronomic 14 million⁴⁴².

Problems in the customs were very often brought up in the articles concerning the return visits, and the complaints were the same regardless of who held the power at the time. In 1967, during the junta, "the inconveniences of the controls at the Greek borders, the raid of the customs office, the misbelief that the representatives of the

⁴³⁹ *Makedonia*, 11/4/1971, p.16.

⁴⁴⁰ *Makedonia*, 13/1/1973, p.7.

⁴⁴¹ *Elliniki*, 25/5/1968, p.6.

⁴⁴² Frank Schipper, *Driving Europe: Building Europe on Roads in the Twentieth Century*, Technology and European History Series 3, Amsterdam: Aksant, 2008, 211-212.

state show and their unmannered behavior erase instantly nostalgia and fill the migrants' hearts with rage"⁴⁴³.

Dated to July 1971, *Elliniki* has a reportage concerning safety on the road, where we read that "the long traffic jams, the high speed, the drivers' tiredness, the carelessness and the poorly preserved roads are the most common causes for accidents. Many drivers overestimate their powers and their stamina. It is not rare that a driver gets into the car in Germany and gets out only once arrived in Greece, without intermediate stop, rest or a night's stay in a hotel"⁴⁴⁴.

As we can imagine, owning and driving a car was a source of prestige for the guest workers. They took pride in owning one that they had contributed to producing. Those in the home country reacted to guest workers' cars with a mixture of awe, bewilderment, and envy. Apart from mere vehicles they were carriers of other consumer goods to the homeland, in bulky packs on tied-down rooftop luggage racks⁴⁴⁵.

From 1960 to 1973, almost 615,400 Greek migrants to Germany were registered, with half of them returning to Greece during the same period. The power relationship between Greece and Germany on migration issues is clearly biased towards the country of arrival, Germany. Greece was the weaker party and had almost no negotiation power⁴⁴⁶.

Nonetheless, according to the dictators, even the enemies of the regime could not hide the successful management of the emigration! The development of the Greek-German relations was the topic of the last emission of the Bonn Radio, as we read in late November 1968 in the newspaper *Ta Nea*. The article boasted that "even though the speaker could not hide his opposition to the government, he confirmed the decrease in Greek emigration and the increasing interest of foreign capital to invest in Greece".

⁴⁴³ *Elliniki*, 1/12/1967, p.1.

⁴⁴⁴ *Elliniki*, 3/7/1971, p.1.

⁴⁴⁵ Michelle Lynn Kahn, "The Long Road Home: Vacations and the Making of the 'Germanized Turk' across Cold War Europe." *The Journal of Modern History* 93, no. 1 (March 1, 2021): 135-136. <https://doi.org/10.1086/712801>.

⁴⁴⁶ Robert Nadler, Zoltán Kovács, Birgit Glorius, and Thilo Lang. "Return Migration and Regional Development in Europe: Mobility against the Stream." London, 2016, 40.

According to data gathered in Germany, the number of workers decreased due to the vacancies in the Greek labor market and the crisis in the Federal Republic⁴⁴⁷.

The crisis of 1966-67 in the West German economy and the subsequent return migration created the perfect opportunity for the colonels to demonstrate how successful their management was, silencing the fact that they did nothing about it. According to the censored press, the opposition could not hide its frustration, given that "this success of the revolution saddened the communists, because the KKE wants the Greeks to migrate so that it takes advantage of this issue"⁴⁴⁸.

The Minister of Labor Vogiatzis gave an interview to the West German television in summer 1968, where he announced new measures for the workers in West Germany. Those measures included basic German language lessons for the candidate migrants, additional health care for pregnant women and babies, care for the education of the Greek children in West Germany and the organization of leisure time for the workers. The ministry was not considering changing the recruitment agreement, and even though there was some pressure on the Greek labor market from the returnees from West Germany in 1966-1967 (55.000 from December 1966 to September 1967), the unemployment was at normal levels⁴⁴⁹.

The employment of foreign workers was for Anton Sabel, the former head of the Federal Labor Office, "the most significant development aid ... which has been provided by the Federal Republic of Germany so far". The Greek newspaper *To Vima* complained that the employment of workers abroad had "proved to be an evil worse than the war". Whole villages were desolate, acreage was breaking, sources of wealth remain unused. In fact, blessings and curses were distributed arbitrarily between the home countries of the guest workers, the host countries and the migrant workers themselves⁴⁵⁰.

In the 1960s in particular, politicians and the media made considerable efforts to convince the population of the benefits the country derived from labor migration. It was related to the European vision of freedom of movement, and it provided an opportunity to boost German confidence. Soon, this idyllic, and self-congratulatory

⁴⁴⁷ *Ta Nea*, 27/11/1967, p.12.

⁴⁴⁸ *Ta Nea*, 22/12/1967, p.1.

⁴⁴⁹ *Ta Nea*, 19/7/1968, p.10.

⁴⁵⁰ *Der Spiegel* 48/1971.

description of the lives of the 'Southerners', turned into indignation for the migrants' poverty and exploitation. 'Europe's Niggers' became a standard line to scandalize the situation⁴⁵¹.

The Greek representative on the *Ausländerbeirat* indicated that the Greeks did not want to be simply regarded as a workforce and that 'they don't want to remain guest workers, but to become co-citizens, equal coarchitects of a new Europe'. Along with the problems in vocational training, he identified the greatest hindrance to the integration of foreigners as the uncertainty of their length of stay⁴⁵².

In 1967, the authors of Athens' Five Year Plan 1968-1972 warned that "continued emigration on a large scale would lead to serious bottlenecks in the labor market, hampering the country's industrialization and economic development". In 1971, according to *Der Spiegel*, that bottleneck was already there. Some sectors showed thousands of vacancies, while the regime was trying to control emigration by permitting it only to agricultural workers and women⁴⁵³.

The former Minister of Labor Manolopoulos commented that "the Greek was always an Odysseus, and he is still tempted by the journey into the unknown, the search for a better life and a new destiny, the discovery of new worlds. One does not wander out more to make big money, but because "it's fashionable". In fact, "it is not emigration, but return migration that is our main problem," analyzed Nikolaos Polyzos, former Director General of the Greek Ministry of Coordination. When the employment of Ghanaians was under discussion, the Secretary General of the Mining Union, got upset: "No black people can be employed in Greece, where so many colleagues emigrate to Germany"⁴⁵⁴.

As Theodore Lianos suggested, there was no feasible migration policy that could reduce the volume of emigration in the short run other than stopping the issuing of new passports. Outmigration was permitted to happen too haphazardly, without seizing the opportunity to transform the human labor capital into a pool of skilled

⁴⁵¹ Karen Schönwälder, "Why Germany's Guestworkers Were Largely Europeans: The Selective Principles of Post-War Labor Recruitment Policy." *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 27, no. 2 (March 2004): 257-258. <https://doi.org/10.1080/0141987042000177324>.

⁴⁵² M. E. Spicka, "City Policy and Guest Workers in Stuttgart, 1955-1973." *German History* 31, no. 3 (September 1, 2013): 364. <https://doi.org/10.1093/gerhis/ght031>.

⁴⁵³ *Der Spiegel*, 48/1971.

⁴⁵⁴ *Der Spiegel*, 49/1971.

labor. Employers in Greece began to complain about labor shortages in 1972, suggesting that further economic development of the country was being threatened. Greek employers strongly supported a policy of importation of labor from African and Asian countries. This paradoxical situation, namely exportation of their own labor and importation of alien labor, indicated that something was decidedly wrong with the Greek migration policy⁴⁵⁵.

According to the Secretary of Labor of the Greek military government, the number of foreign workers in Greece at the end of 1972 amounted to 15.000-20.000, most of them Africans⁴⁵⁶. Domestic jobs were thus attributed to those from the Philippines, whilst the Poles and Egyptians sought seasonal agricultural work or factory work. In 1972, the situation was worrying enough for the Association of Greek Industrialists to announce that it was looking to hire 10.000 contract workers, based very much on the German Gastarbeiter system, and at the end of the same year the country was host to 20.000 foreigners⁴⁵⁷.

Der Spiegel sent its correspondents to remote areas to talk with returnees. In 1971, the reporter visited Agios Athanasios, a few minutes' drive from the historic ruins of Philippoi, in one of the poorest areas of Northeast Greece. There, he met a former worker in West Germany, then 45 years old and owner of a restaurant. The restaurant's equipment included, as required, a Papadopoulos picture hung high on the wall. Moreover, the restaurant was equipped with a German music box "Festival 130", a German kitchen clock with a timer, and a dozen advertising posters for German trucks. His whole family continued to work long hours in the factories of West Germany. However, as he warned "maybe they could make it there. But they leave everything behind, the house decays, the fields become deserted. And when they are back, they have to start all over - that will swallow up all their money"⁴⁵⁸.

In 1972, the Social Care Office in Cologne in collaboration with the Center for Research of Social Inquiry (Verband Bildung und Erziehung) published a survey on the psychology of the foreign workers. For the Greek worker, the portrait was the

⁴⁵⁵ Theodore P. Lianos, "Greece: Waning of Labor Migration," *International Migration Review* 27, no. 1 Supplement (January 1993): 258-259.

⁴⁵⁶ Fakiolas and King. "Emigration, Return, Immigration", 176..

⁴⁵⁷ Sintès, Pierre, Jenny Money, Samantha Eddison, and Caroline Stephens. "Understanding Greece in the World." In *Chasing the Past: Geopolitics of Memory on the Margins of Modern Greece*. Liverpool University Press, 2019, p.21.

⁴⁵⁸ *Der Spiegel*, 49/1971.

following, “they live isolated from the surrounding environment, preferring to stay within the limits of their family. They have their families with them and prefer to have few children. This isolation might be explained by the suspicion that the political life in Greece inspired its citizens with. [...] They are the most optimist of all the foreigners and do not intend to become rich, even though 78% admitted that the poorest class in Greece are the farmers”⁴⁵⁹.

The same year, the writer Lefteris Papadopoulos conducted an interview for the newspaper *Ta Nea* with Ladas, the President of the Chamber of Industry. To the question on what would happen if the 300.000 Greek workers of Germany returned, Ladas was definite, there was no way! Only if the 290.000 would go back to their fields, which was equally impossible. Thus, the solution was to come, but gradually and in small groups. The reporter ironically concluded that these 300.000 workers sent annually 400 million dollars of remittances and, therefore, their return was problematic due to this fact, as well⁴⁶⁰!

In all official discourses addressed to emigrants by the Greek authorities, there was the constantly repeated invitation to return to the home country. Return was a rhetoric followed for reasons of national pride, but it also helped in preserving the 'provisional' status of emigrants as residents abroad. A real mass return of Greek migrants would be economically upsetting because the scale of the re-entry would find the Greek economy unable to cope⁴⁶¹.

After the announcement of the recruitment halt by the German Minister of Economy Arendt, the Greek economic circles considered that it might have a positive effect on the Greek economy, because the manpower available was limited due to emigration. Thus, the return migration together with the many vacancies and the improved wages would benefit the Greek economy⁴⁶².

If West Germany would have a crisis like in the years 1966-67, that would mean that the emigration would be halted, and Greece would have the opportunity to balance its

⁴⁵⁹ *Makedonia*, 9/4/1972, p.9.

⁴⁶⁰ *Ta Nea*, 7/8/1972, p.3.

⁴⁶¹ Fakiolas and King. “Emigration, Return, Immigration”, 185.

⁴⁶² *Makedonia*, 24/11/1973, p.1.

demographical problem and the offer of labor. Naturally, the remittances would be drastically reduced, but West German investment might cover the gap⁴⁶³.

The crisis of legitimacy that the regime faced was fueled by the shifting social dynamics during the same years. Tourism was transforming the landscape of labor opportunities for young Greeks⁴⁶⁴. However, the main way out of unemployment was still migration. As the 1969-1970 OECD survey noted, “registered unemployment fell rapidly through the late summer of 1970. Emigration, which rose sharply in 1969 and somewhat less in 1970, was probably an important factor in the improvement of labor market conditions”⁴⁶⁵.

The 1968-1972 Plan had aimed at employment creation sufficient to contain total net emigration to 17.000 persons a year. In actual fact, emigration averaged four times this figure! Already in 1972, the OECD survey emphasized the problems stemming from a growing emigration. Not only did it involve the splitting up of families, but the security of job tenure also tended to be low for the foreign workers.

A survey taken in Germany in 1968 showed that the full 60 per cent of Greek workers included had been in Germany for more than four years. There were few skilled workers among the Greeks working in Germany, there were about equal numbers of semi-skilled and unskilled workers. The bulk of them worked in basic metals and metal processing; most of the rest in other manufacturing industry, with very few found in the building and service sectors (Arbeits und Sozialstatistische Mitteilungen, Bundesamt für Arbeit und Sozialordnung, Bonn).

So far, they were the measures for the Gastarbeiter and the discourses about them that were on the spotlight. We read accounts about their initiatives, reportages about their views, actions and reactions. Finally, it is high time to let them tell their own stories, describe their experiences and impressions. They are not representing a prototype of the Gastarbeiter; such a thing simply does not exist. They are rather independent personalities with agency, participants in the collective experience of Gastarbeiter migration in their unique way, according and beyond their standards, sharing here their memories, as they were formulated in our exchange.

⁴⁶³ *Ta Nea*, 26/11/1973, p.7.

⁴⁶⁴ Couloumbis, “The Greek Junta Phenomenon.”,354.

⁴⁶⁵ OECD (1971), OECD Economic Surveys: Greece 1971, OECD Publishing, Paris, p.11& 30. https://doi-org.eui.idm.oclc.org/10.1787/eco_surveys-grc-1971-en.

CHAPTER FIVE : GREEK GASTARBEITER IN THEIR OWN WOR(L)DS

V.A. THE BOLD AND THE BEAUTIFUL?

Kostis was one of the first Gastarbeiter to arrive to West Germany in 1960. His friends and him risked travelling via Switzerland, only with tourist visas. As he remembers with humor, “we went by taxi from here. By taxi. We were supposed to be tourists with Swiss francs. At the borders they asked us, where are you going? Tourism. The money? Here. Ok, then go. And we went to our friend from our village, who had a German wife and was in Germany since the war. The next day he took us to the factory he was working at, and we took the job. We fixed our papers, and I was working for five years in this factory. It was called Stemac and was producing electric accessories like sockets from porcelain”.

Kostis met his wife Aliki in Germany, and they are still happily married. Aliki ended up in Germany because she was the only one from her sisters left behind. More precisely, her elder sister found a German husband, while her younger sister went to England to learn English for free while working at a hospital. Thus, Aliki was left alone to cultivate the tobacco fields, while everybody gathered in Germany, when her first niece was born, and her sister invited them there. Plus, her sisters were making fun of her in their correspondence: “you stay in the tobacco fields, loser!”.

However, Aliki had no savings to sacrifice for the expenses, and fortunately an uncle appeared to help her as *deus ex machina*, “here comes one day my mother’s cousin, who loved us very much, also because my mum was a widow. What’s in the letter, Aliki? They tell me to go to Germany, uncle, but we have no place in the sun with my mum, how can I go? He told me that he would pay for my tickets, and if I would work, I could send the money back, if not, it wouldn’t matter. And I went, I found my sisters, and we rented a hut with a dorm bed together with my little sister, while my other sister lived with her husband and her mother-in-law. But I didn’t care, I was satisfied.”

Krystallenia, a daughter of refugees from Eastern Thrace, was born in 1932 in Koumaria in the region of Serres. She was nineteen when she met her husband. They were neighbors, they fell in love, but they were very poor. They were cultivating wheat, corn and cotton, but they had a few hectares only. They had no house to stay in when they got married because her parents-in-law didn’t want to share their house

with their children. Thus, the three brothers built all together a neighboring house with rough materials. Her husband was working in the water-supply works in the nearby villages, but he had no insurance. This precarious situation made them lose their patience, and he left for Germany together with his eldest brother.

However, it was a matter of luck to risk crossing the borders only with a tourist visa. His brother was sitting in another train compartment, and the border police officer did not notice his visa. In his case though, as Krystallenia remembers, “they wrote ‘Tourist’ in his passport during the control in the train and he could not be hired. When he went to ask for a residence permit, the police officer who would issue them was injured in the leg in the Battle of Creta and didn’t like the Greeks. He told him, since you are a tourist, you will stay some time and then return back to Greece. So he stayed two weeks and he returned. Then, his brother sent him an invitation for Stuttgart in 1962, and I joined him in 1963 to work at BOSCH”.

Krystallenia prepared the necessary documents in the nearby town of Serres, at the Employment Office belonging to her village, and then her brother brought her to Thessaloniki to take the train to Athens. As she recalls, “in Athens they put us all together in a building, a mass from all over Greece (mazomata). And then from there the boat took us to Italy and then Stuttgart, where my husband waited for me in the station and picked me up. Young girls would also leave, 18 years old, oooh everybody was leaving...On the way I was crying for my child that I left behind. She was ten years old, and I left her to her aunt. I had nobody to leave her with. I pleaded with one, they couldn’t, I pleaded with another, they couldn’t. Then, my brother’s wife, God bless her, took her. One year later, my husband took a leave, returned to the village to pick her up and brought her to Germany”.

Sofia’s parents took the decision to leave their homeland because in 1962 her father’s business went bankrupt, and he also became indebted by her sister’s wedding. Her father had a central store for wholesale fruit trade in the city of Drama, in Northeast Greece. He would go around Greece, and Sofia knew from a young age, before I went to school, what kind of fruit would each region of Greece produce. He would go and book the whole vineyard, or the whole orange field. And they would send it by trucks to Drama, and there the partner and the accountant would distribute them in the grocery shops. Her father was away and wouldn’t see what was going on with the

money. As Sofia remembers her family was never very rich, but they were also never deprived of anything. Under pressure, the family was split in two, and “my father, my mother and my elder brother went to Germany, and I stayed in Drama with my sister, who was 13 years older than me, and my brother, who was six years younger than my sister. I grew up with them, and then when I finished the sixth grade, my parents came and took me with them. They didn’t want to leave, my mother and father were crying day and night, because they had left their children and their grandchild, their relatives, their parents”.

Elena got married on the 29th of January 1968, and she left for Germany on the 29th of July. Hers was an arranged marriage because she heard that he (the husband) lived in Germany, and she thought that through him she would escape the tobacco fields! Her future husband came for the funeral of his sister to the village, and his siblings told him it was quite time to get married and settle. Elena, in hindsight, is furious with her choice because as she deploras, “he was an alcoholic and I put him on my head! In Germany, I went as a tourist. He should have sent a paper that he could sustain me as a tourist. But he sent this paper six months later! [...] So, I went there, stayed as a tourist for three months and right away they gave me a residence permit and work permit for one year. But where I would work, they did not insure me, and when I went to renew the permit they told me that they had fooled me. This is my only complaint against the Germans. But you know what they say, the work awakes the worker. I did not know, and they fooled me”.

Kitsa first went to Stuttgart, where her uncle was waiting for her. Nevertheless, on the way, they put on her passport the stamp “Zurück” (back,return in German). And thus, she couldn’t work anywhere else than in a hospital. Indeed, her uncle found her a job in a hospital near the train station, where many other Greek girls worked as well. She was put in a Privatstation, where she did almost nothing. They would only clean the corridor with the vacuum cleaner and distribute the food to the patients who were only two per room. So, the cook would bring the food in a trolley, and because they were beginners and they still had no German speaking skills, the cook would touch their relevant arm and say links (left), rechts (right). However, Kitsa bought a book, and she quickly learned to communicate about the basics (tsat-pat in Greek, old slang meaning super-fast).

Her uncle was based in Hanover, and being an interpret, he advised her to bring her passport over so that he could try to employ her in the factory for a higher wage. In the end, Kitsa took the train alone on a Sunday, and it was raining so hard that she was soaking wet. As she remembers, “I was very brave! Very much. I didn’t know the language; I had no idea where I was going! But you know, we were furious, we were very bitter, I was plowing, that’s why I am like that now...And I take the train, I get off and my cousin picked me up. Once home we were talking with my uncle, and when I asked where my aunt was, he laughed, and I saw her coming with a couple and Stelios. ‘Now that you came here, we will get you married’, they told me. And I was 23 years old, I didn’t know. He saw me in a photo, and he wanted to marry me because he was single and didn’t like sharing a house with other workers. He was in a hurry; he had even found a room for us. So, they told me to write a letter to my mum asking for the papers to get married there”.

When Kyriakos was fourteen, his mum took him to their co-villager who had a carpenter’s lab in Mytilene to learn the art. Indeed, he learned the trade of mechanical carpenter and was soon able to work with the spinning machine that refined details and smoothed the corners of wood. He was paid double compared to a simple worker. He would receive 50 drachmas per day and the others 20-25 drachmas. He was living alone in Mytilene, but when he returned from the army in 1965, he already wanted to leave.

As he recounts, “in ’65, when I returned to Lesvos after my military service, I met a friend who was working in the Employment Office, and he threw me a ‘bomb’. He told me ‘Would you like to go to Berlin?’. I knew where Berlin was and what was Berlin, and the West and the East of it. Because I had the curiosity, I was reading a lot. I always made quick decisions. Till I went home that night, I made my decision. I said, I’m gone. I prepared my papers, and I took a friend of mine with whom we were working together in the carpenter’s. He was younger, I persuaded him, and we left together. I was 23, and he was 18.”.

The same year Andreas also took the decision to leave for Germany, after trying different occupations in Greece. His father was taken hostage by the Eastern Bloc during the Greek Civil War. Through petitions to the Red Cross, he was eventually released and returned to his family in 1952. They again opened his tailor’s shop and

worked as a team: his dad would cut, Andreas would sew with the machine and his sister would finish the details. In the meanwhile, Andreas also made a license to be a petty seller. He would go, riding his mule, to various bazaars and villages to sell fabrics from the company Peiraiki-Patraiki, used by the villagers to make shirts, dresses or skirts. However, again, this was not profitable, and Andreas also had a deep desire to learn mandolin, following his father's example.

After finishing his military service, Andreas indeed moved to Athens, where worked in a tailor's shop and at the same time followed music courses. As he remembers, "I would go to Omonoia. I had other friends from Naoussa, who were learning some craft. And I would see in the shop windows some shirts with buttons here, and I would say, 'will I ever have such a shirt?'. In Athens, I was living alone on Ferron street near the theatre Kotopouli. And I would go to the theater and the cinema with my friends. I also bought a book and started learning German, because I was hearing all about Germany."

Finally, the idea to leave for Germany rooted itself inside him. Rumors reached his ears, "this and that in Germany, work". Thus, he applied in Naoussa at the Employment Office, but despite waiting a long time, he got no news from them. Eventually, they called him, and he had to pass through a committee. He went to nearby Veroia and saw 5-6 men from Mesopotamia, in Kastoria, who were fur makers. Being a tailor, Andreas also applied as a fur maker. He recalls that the medical examination made him feel embarrassed, mainly because the doctor was a woman, "an interpret came in and said, get undressed as your mum gave birth to you. We were ashamed to take off our underwear. If it was a man alright, but now she was a woman. A female German doctor. She was telling us in German to raise our leg etc., we would not understand. Some didn't pass the test". Andreas passed the test, and he took the train to Munich, where the teams were split in order to reach their final destination. A German company agent took them to his Volkswagen omnibus, drove them to a hotel and the next day we would already start working. His first impression was about how emancipated the young women were, "next day we went marching to the job and we saw how modern the Germans were, mainly the girls, in the cafeterias with cigarettes. That was in 1965".

Poppy's father also had a cousin in Veroia, the same place Andreas passed through the committee. Poppy's family was poor and would send the girls to work in the cotton fields. While working in his uncle's cotton field, she met her future husband. Her future mother-in-law wanted to see her, because they were distant relatives. Poppy accepted the invitation, and at the age of 21 she felt it was love at first sight. A couple of years passed, during which he did his military service, they met again, and they exchanged letters. Eventually, he came to their village and asked for her hand from her father. After getting married, Poppy moved to her husband's family house, but despite their love, the conditions were adverse. As she remembers, "we were poor, I tell you, those years. We were married then, one year the cotton had a worm that would eat the cotton bud, and it couldn't grow. It was a disaster! The apples could have no price at the market, back then many people had apples. How were we supposed to live? And we decided to leave."

Her brother was settled in Stuttgart already since 1960, and he sent them an invitation. For Poppy, too, the medical exam was a source of embarrassment, but also trouble, "it was not easy, all the exams, the doctors. We were all naked, only with our underwear, and the German doctor would examine everything, our breasts, our ears, everything. Thorough exams to go there and work because they needed workers. And people were leaving to Germany and not only, they would leave for anywhere. But we went to Germany, my brother made us the invitation. But my husband had a problem, he had to do a surgery and he didn't pass the test. I passed, but he didn't."

As a result, her husband would not let Poppy go to Germany alone. He insisted a lot, and finally she didn't go. A month later, her husband did the surgery and passed the test. He went to Germany, and he stayed for eight months, but for Poppy it was not easy to again make the application, and thus she used a tourist visa together with her 7-year-old son. She stayed one month at her brother's place with her son, and then her husband found her a job in the hospital. As we know already, the Gastarbeiter were meant to be young and single. Thus, families always had troubles, and in the case of Poppy their biggest inconvenience was the care of their young child. As she wonders, "what I was supposed to do with my son? We had no house, so my husband, on New Year's Eve, took our son to my mother-in-law in Veroia until we settled".

Theo, starting from 1967, was preparing his papers to leave for Germany. However, for more than a year they would not send the certificate of social conduct. In the end, he took it in December 1968. On the 17th of December 1968 he was to go to Germany. Because they would not provide him with the certificate, he took action. He set out from his village near Kozani and went to the security office in Ptolemaida, which, in his view, was better than in Kozani. As he recalls, “the major with the stars told me ‘Don’t yell, we have many certificates to send to the prefecture’. I was very furious, and the major told the officer to seal the envelope and hand it to me. When the prefect saw it, he said that was not possible because they didn’t give it to privates. They sent it only from office to office. But I was furious from this coming-and-going for one year because they were not clear. So that time, I went to the security, told them that they trusted me to guard the village with a gun at home but would not give me the certificate? I took it, brought it to the prefecture, and they told me now you can go and get a passport”.

Thus, Theo went to get issued a passport in Athens but failed to pass the doctors’ exam because of his eye. He couldn’t read the small letters. The doctors told him that his pupil was lazy and could not see well; actually, he knew already how it had happened, a piece of wheat hit his eye once. He did not lose his spirits and remained a week in Athens. What he did was that, in the hotel he was staying, he filled a paper with small letters, and he learned to discern every letter by trying to read it. Indeed, after all this effort he passed the test. Theo had some experience in what concerned labor migration, since he spent some years in Belgium. As he remembers, “since the 7th of July 1957, when my wife was ready to give birth to our first son, I was in Belgium in the mines. And twelve years later, I decided again to leave for Germany. In the mines we would go to 1000-1500 meters under the surface, and I did not know if I would go up alive again. I was all black, only my teeth were white. Only with a helmet and a flashlight. Then, I returned, and we were working in my wife’s uncle’s fields, but the money we earned was just to survive”.

Kostas had been first in West Germany as a tourist, and then a friend had a biergarten and sent him an invitation. He was just on time for the last mission, 13-14th of August 1972. First, he went to Athens to pass by the doctors. As he recalls, he started his journey alone from his village near Veroia, and “doctors examined us, made x-rays, checked our mouth like we were donkeys. A female German doctor. We got on board

the boat almost like the refugees that are now coming, and we chase them away. We reached Italy and then continued by train till Munich. But there our roads parted, I went to Cologne, others to Munich. This friend just sent me the invitation, but it was up to me to find a job”.

V.B. PIECEWORK, PEACE AT WORK?

Foreign workers suffered from poor working conditions. In *Akkordarbeit*, in the piecework system that many West German employers used with foreign workers, wages could vary based on the number of days worked and the completion of certain tasks⁴⁶⁶.

Krystallenia’s first job was at BOSCH, where her duties included rubbing the wires to use them later for electric appliances, fridges etc. In her narration, she is proud of her effectivity and speed, “I was doing them very quickly (*mani-mani*). It was *Akkord*. We were from many countries; I had an Italian friend. Before finding a house, I was staying in the *Heim* for a couple of weeks”.

In the meantime, Krystallenia changed job and was employed in the factory KNECHT. There, they were making filters for cars and boats. Her husband was working at the foundry WIZEMANN together with his brother. His brother also had an accident. The cauldron exploded and he was burnt, but he put out the fire with the help of the others. He wanted to go to MERCEDES, but he was afraid. As Krystallenia recalls, “in 1970, Germany had a crisis, and they were firing the workers, you had to find a job and you couldn’t, some also returned, it was a crisis. So my husband thought, what will I do if they fire me? But he was very hard-working. He was helping other Greek workers; he was saying that they are his cousins to have them hired in the factory. Adam, really they are all your cousins?”

Elena at first was working with books, *Zeitungsroman*. She would put the numbers in order in a packet, and then they had a machine with which they pushed it, and the books were bound. They then took them to palettes in a truck and sent them away. She remembers her first impression, “when I first went there, I was thinking, *Virgin Mary*, now I’m working, and I will get paid? I was working, it was me, my husband and eight German women. I was working very quickly, far-far-far, and they were

⁴⁶⁶ Miller, “Her Fight”, 230-231.

standing in a line watching me, but I was very absorbed to look up. My husband yelled at me, eh look around you. When I turned my head, I saw, oh mommy, they were all looking at me with surprise!”

Then, she moved to KABEL, where they were making the rubber for the car windows. It was Akkord, and Elena couldn't make it. Her hand was not stable. The rubber would pass quickly in front of her, and she had to glue it. As a result, she was put in another position, working with a Scheifele, a stone-rasp which was whirling, removing the extra rubber. As she remembers, she was totally inexperienced about syndicalism, and as a result of a strike she soon got fired. She found a provisional job at the farmers' market. In the beginning, she was helping with the fruit boxes in the truck, but then she was also weighing the fruits. Proudly, she notes that she was competent even in this kind of work and never let herself be defeated, “I was very accurate! I always found a job. I was not slow, and I'm still getting angry with whomever begs, may God forgive me”.

However, after she got fired from the factory, she had a hard time finding a suitable job, because she had certain criteria. For example, when the Unemployment Office wanted to send her to a Lokant as a waitress, she bluntly refused. The second attempt was a vacancy in a tailor's, which to her regret she accepted, because it ended up looking like a madhouse. As she recalls, “the sewing machines, voooo, made me crazy, I could not stand the noise. I was there five months and worked five weeks. I was all the time on sick leave. I was working at the tailor's and went three times to apply to BAYER.”

Persistence and courage were definitely traits of Elena's character since she didn't quit the fight that easily. The second time she appeared at the BAYER's office, they already recognized her as a familiar face and the assistant took her in the office of “the big boss”. There, he tried to persuade her that for her own good, she shouldn't take over a position amidst chemical substances since she was already very pale and weak. However, she was not afraid or discouraged, she instead retorted, “put me through a medical test, and if something is wrong don't hire me”.

Indeed, when they hired her at BAYER, they told her to bring her documents in order to pass a medical exam. Nevertheless, she was in trouble, she still had her work permit registered at the tailor's...Thus, she came up with a trick. As she recalls with

humor, “I was divorced, but I put my wedding ring back on and I brought with me a friend to play my husband. I told them he was sick, and we needed to return to Greece. Indeed, they prepared everything and the next day I took my papers to BAYER. My friend told me, “you should have been an actress, not a worker!” The same happened again when they delayed the tax return from the tax office. I went there, pushed them and it worked right away”.

Elena is not hesitant of being self-sarcastic, using her height as a contrast to her wit. She recalls two episodes where men taller than her were taken by surprise by her attitude. When she was assisting her sister, who worked illegally at a spices’ market, someone called the inspector. A tall policeman came to check. As Elena words it, “I was very short, but I had courage. I told him, “Sir, go and check the thieves, we are not stealing, we are working here!” My boss blessed me for that!” The other episode took place at the cashier’s desk on a pay day. Elena was earning a lot of money, 2.000 DM per month. Thus, one day when they were getting paid, “there was a tall German guy behind me, and when he saw how much I was earning, he was speechless! I was half his height, but I was earning double than him! When I would go home, I would put the money on the sofa and divide it up, this for my daughter, this for the house instalment, this for savings”.

Finally, she was really satisfied with her new “dream job”, because she was surrounded by educated people who showed her sympathy and appreciated her work. She also has a vivid imagination and used two metaphors to describe the working environment at BAYER. According to Elena, they were wearing uniforms that covered all the body and the shoes, like when you are in intensive care at the hospital. They looked like astronauts! She repeated that “they had good manners; they knew how to behave. The maestro came and asked me if I had any degree to take an office position because he was sad to see me work standing all day. I was working in the lab; we would take the tubes and place them in the washing machine. My job was really good, but then my daughter grew up and I needed to return”.

In order to save money, Elena cooked at home and took with her some food in an enamel lunch box. Only if they would have fish or meatballs, she would eat at the cafeteria. Her being too thin worried her boss, who would kindly ask her if she had stomach trouble since she was eating a lot but putting on no weight. Moreover, the

BAYER factory was in Leverkusen, so it was far from Nippes, an outskirt of Cologne, where she was living at the time. As a result, she was always running, taking two trams and a bus, and waking up at five to be on time. Her boss, once again, would advise her to rent a place nearby, but she was afraid it was not healthy to live near the factory. Or he suggested her to buy a car. Through all of that, she would stoically reply that she was afraid, “ ‘ich hab Angst, viel Angst!’ I would say it in my way, and they would laugh. I was working with a Yugoslav woman, she was married with a German, and when I was to leave, she cried so much! Elena, don't go, don't leave us! And the Germans liked me a lot, they were making fun of me speaking German upside-down, I made them laugh”.

Elena soon became the unofficial representative of her colleagues, thanks to her natural talent of persuasion. She proudly admitted that “I was the most active in there, the others wanted me to tell the boss to leave earlier on Fridays. I told him I had a stomachache, and he would respond, ah ich verstehen, pause! And I would answer, ja,ja, we would leave at three, and he would hit the card for us at four. In BAYER, I had a great time. When the bosses had some celebration, they would also invite me. They were educated people, who respected you, they weren't...”.

Kostas, born in Alonia in 1950, was 23 years old when he first arrived in Cologne with an invitation and started searching for a job. First, he was living with his brother, and then he found a basement room without a toilet. Finally, he found a job as an electrician with the help of friend and worked there for eight months. Afterwards, he found a job in a company which was installing anti-fire systems. These systems had a small glass filled with alcohol, and when the temperature reached 50-60 degrees Celsius the glass would break. Kostas worked there almost a year and then found a job at BAYER. As he admitted, it was really prestigious to work in a big company like BAYER, where he stayed for eight years. There, he would work shifts every day and then would have a week free. Unlike others, Kostas didn't sleep all day because his philosophy was that sleep was lost life.

Upon his arrival in Cologne during the oil crisis, his first impressions were empty streets. As he recalls, “I was just one year in Germany and only we, the ones working, could afford going to work by car. The streets were empty, deserted! The oil was

cheap back then, it cost 0,70 DM per liter. Germany was very developed, more than any state. And there were many jobs available, very few were unemployed”.

He went on describing the working conditions in BAYER. Being a chemical factory, the workers wore masks, and once they even made him shave his beard, because the mask could not fit well. Despite the luring wages, the job they were required to do was dangerous and could end up being fatal. They would get into cauldrons with a full uniform, like a diver. It was very hot, and once he could not bear it and asked them to pull him out. Many of his friends who worked there for many years died from cancer.

He was scared to death one day when he failed to follow the safety measures, “once, I went to the basement to check for gas escapes, and I tightened the screws without wearing gloves. I see my hands and they were white. The maestro told me, what did you do, why weren’t you wearing gloves? And he gave me a cream to rub into my hands until the white stains would go away. I was rubbing them for one hour because they told me the chemical would be absorbed by my skin and would harm my blood! We were earning a lot, because we had the shifts and generally it was a big factory. We would take 150% of our wage for Christmas and 50% for Easter”.

In 1965, Kyriakos first worked at the DWM, Deutsche Wagon Machinfabrik in West Berlin. They had to complete a big order by the end of the year and needed manpower, but after four months they fired them without even informing them that they could apply for unemployment benefits. However, they paid them the rest of the wage for the months written in the contract. In the meanwhile, Kyriakos and his friend Apostolos from Thessaloniki found a house in Kreuzberg; it was a semi-basement without any heating! Kyriakos mixes humor with bitterness in his description, “when we were taking the bus, the Germans would open the windows because they hated garlic, and the maestro at our job would also take a step back to avoid the smell, but we were eating it to warm up...”

The two friends found a job in the factory STOCK making drills In the meanwhile, Kyriakos was taking evening courses in German and buying the Berliner Zeitung, and quickly he started to understand the language. A friend suggested him to change job and go to a factory where they were producing Baustelle (ready built wall panels). Indeed, there they asked for a pay rise of 1 DM. The employers accepted their demand but told them to keep it confidential. However, one day, a Greek unionist

from IG Metall, Poulias, recognized their contribution, because thanks to Kyriakos and his colleagues, everybody was paid more. After three months, Kyriakos moved to the construction sector where he earned a double wage, because it was Akkord. Kyriakos looks back at the good old days, “during winter, from October until early April, we couldn’t work because it was snowing, so were playing cards. We were paid, though, the 75% of our wage, we would take our 500 DM, those were different years!”.

Andreas and his colleagues were living in a Pastorhaus, where the priests used to live, but their boss rented it and furnished it with bunk beds. As he remembers, in the beginning they were fine, but when the workers brought their wives along, there was a mess and in one month the Traub was empty! Andreas was working in the fur industry and was full of curiosity to learn every single step of the procedure, and eventually made it through every stage. They started from 1,60 DM and they ended up earning 15-20 DM per hour. They were working many hours and getting so tired from stretching the skins that in the morning their hands would not open. They would fill the sink with warm water and rub their hands with soap to get softer. In the factory, everybody had their locker, and before going home every evening they would take a shower to get rid of the stink of the skins, put on their clothes and as Andreas adds, “some perfume, fsst, fsst, and we would go out like gentlemen”.

Andreas also recalls how strict the working conditions and the discipline was in his factory, because “on Monday you should wake up at 5-5:30 and at 5:50 be at the entrance and “dank” hit your card on the machine. If it was 6:05, they would not open the door for you, you would lose the day, go back home and sleep now!” This intimidating environment made him very skeptical of supporting strikes. When some Greek workers wanted to go on strike, the foreman would tell him to advise them that they would lose their job if they went on strike. However, they didn’t listen to Andreas. Their employers brought an interpret, a German who had lost his leg in the war, to announce that the five who went on strike were unwanted in Germany. Indeed, they expelled them in 24 hours, and they could not return for one year. As Andreas notes, “then, next year, Nikos from Kavala said how stupid we were, so poor and we wanted to go on strike. Because the Arbeitsamt would take the side of the factory and not of the worker. They would say, you don’t like it? A stamp in your passport and

back home! They would send away one, and ten would come. They were not doing favors”.

Andreas' wife, Niki, migrated from a village near Karditsa to West Germany among the first, in 1962. She first worked in a factory that made car accessories and worked at the lathe. A small piece of metal got into her eye, and she noted at the time of the interview that she still had it. After three years, she left and she moved to Einbeck, near Hannover. She worked at a company making televisions, fridges, furniture. As she remembers, “I was working Akkord in the assembly line with the televisions. Telefunken, Plaufen, Bosch. When they were firing the German girls from work, they kept me. We met with Andreas in '66, he was a friend of my brother, and thus we met. We married and had our twin girls there”.

Kitsa, after having worked in a hospital, moved to Hamburg. They were working at a fisherman's, but after finding some vacancies in NIVEA, she went for an interview with her younger sister. They asked them if they preferred Akkord and they said yes, because, as she claimed, they were not afraid of hard work. While waiting in the queue, they noticed that some employees were given a white apron and some a blue one. She was given a blue one, and she told her sister “you'll see, they'll take us as cleaners, and if so, I'll leave”. They told them that they were given blue aprons, because it was a dirty job. They were also given one white apron, in order to wear it when the bosses would come for inspection. In the end, they stayed at NIVEA for ten years.

Her position consisted in cutting rubbers for fridges, and as Kitsa recalls, “it needed strong arms. I had a big machine; I was responsible and I had an assistant. We were cutting the rubber and we should be careful to glue the rubber with the sponge and the paper. You should have fourteen eyes! In the beginning, I would faint from the smell of the glue, and my sister would warn me that they would fire me. It was a hard job, but later things got much better”.

The company was BEIERSDORF and the factory was huge with 5.000 workers, producing soaps, cosmetics, plasters etc. She also managed to bring her sister and her sister-in-law, who had an easier job, to pack soaps with the machine. Because she had her children waiting at home, she would work in opposite shifts with her husband so

that someone would keep an eye on them. Kitsa, quickly learned her duties and was even taking initiatives in order to make the workflow faster and smoother.

As she recalls, “the Germans appreciated our job. I don’t want to boast, but I was working very hard, and I wouldn’t even ask the engineer to change the knives of the machine. They would give us a paper to write down how much we produced that day, then the maestro would calculate and give it to the next shift. One day I just had few pieces to complete the order, so I took initiative to change the knives myself and I continued working. When they said stop, what are you doing there, I was frightened. They said we should change the knives, and when I told him that I did it already, he patted my shoulder and told me “Du bist Chef”. From then on, they did not come again to change the knives, I would do it myself”.

The same was true for Eleni and Theo, belonging to the older cohort born in the early 1930s. Both of them were working in Schweinfurt, 300 kilometres north of Munich. They were making Kupplung, gears for cars and even for aircrafts. Theo was handling a machine and sticking the pieces together. 700-800 pieces in eight hours. As he remembers, “some workers would cut their fingers, but I had the job as a game (san kompoloi). I made an invitation to my brothers and my wife. I started working in ’69 and took an early retirement when I was 60 years old in 1992. I did everything with my hands, great troubles”.

Theo had two shifts, from six in the morning to two in the afternoon and from two to eleven in the evening. He had in mind to be serious, save some money and return. His peaceful character made him popular among his colleagues, and he still cherishes this appreciation, “they all loved me there, all the Germans and all the foreigners. Even now if I go, they will say I’m the best man, the best man. I was the oldest of all, I started working there at 39, I was on the limit. I worked 22-23 years in my Abteilung. [...] I even took an unbefrist, an unlimited residence permit. I could stay all my life in Germany. Some Greeks were not regular with the documents, and they lost the unbefrist, but I was always careful, and I never upset anybody. The same there, the same here”.

Both husband and wife were very hard-working. Theo made an invitation to his two brothers, and the Germans would say referring to them “drei Brüder, ein Abteilung”. They were all working in the gears montage. The company was Fixford-Sachs. Theo

is proud of his wife, “she would make 700-800 pieces, every one of which weighed 10-12 kilos. They were huge. She would do hard jobs, but she had no trouble. Here we were working like dogs, so the working in Germany seemed like a game for us”.

Indeed, Eleni changed 2-3 machines and learned everything. As she underlines, “we retired from where we started, we were working, we were not complaining. That’s the way you should be, impeccable with your work. It was good, very good. Our job was hard, but here we were used to hard work, we were coolies (chamalides).”

Eleni still now appears to be split in two, between her native village in Greece and her adoptive village near Munich. When they left Germany, she wanted to stay. And when they left Greece, and she left her mom and her kids behind, again she didn’t want to go. When her husband sent her an invitation it was the last mission, in 1973. As she narrates, she was used to hard work, “it was alright for me, but what alright, they were irons, heavy stuff. There was a little dust, but you didn’t notice it. It was very noisy though. When I first entered, I told a Greek woman: Oh mommy, here it’s noisy! She told me I would get used to it and indeed. For one week they put German women to work our jobs, and they went to the maestro to complain that this was a man’s job. They said we can’t no more, but we were foreigners, and we didn’t speak”.

The factory they worked at had a mixed workforce. For instance, Eleni would fix the Kupplung, later the line would continue to a man who would add something onto the piece, it would go further and further and, in the end, they would put them in boxes to send them abroad. As Eleni admits, sometimes she had the impression that she was made to work, it was in her nature, almost a hereditary trait, “it was good, but we were working, we were working. They would bring the folders with the money, and they would give you, give me. The German girls were so enthusiastic; I just wanted to work. Our family is only made to work, we are such people”.

Sofia’s parents were first working in a tapestry industry and were living in a wooden house on top of it. It burnt twice. Once it was easily extinguished, but the second time they escaped from the iron ladder outside the building. In the meanwhile, the firefighters, the ambulance and the mayor came to help the only foreigners of their village!

Around 1968-69, they moved to another place, Ellwangen, where the big VARTA factory was located. Soon, they also moved from there, because her brother and her

sister-in-law lived in another town. There, there was a huge factory producing stoves and inox pots, and her parents took up employment together. Her father was a good cook, so if they would have an opposite shift, he would have the food ready for my mum. As Sofia reminisces, “in the beginning, they were both crying, they did not want to stay, they were saying one more year for the kids to finish school, to buy a house in Greece. Finally, they stayed 12 years in Germany. My dad became the right hand of his boss, he was always hard-working, willing, humorous. He would never say that he did not understand, he always said, ja,ja, ich verstehen! And then when his boss would ask him for his hat, he would bring him his coat instead!”

After finishing school, Sofia was studying at the Herret Pikula aesthetics school in Heidelberg and was also doing her traineeship in the Parfumerie Frosch. Her boss had five aestheticians, but Sofia quickly moved to the top in the shop. As she remembers, “my boss was really strict and old-fashioned, like the old German heads. But I became her favorite because I did some things that nobody had ever done for her. When she was sick, I rubbed her back with balsam. When I finished my traineeship and she hired me, I bought her an orchid and discussed with her the terms of my contract. She wanted to make me responsible for a stand in a Schlosshotel in Heidelberg, but with deep regret I informed her that we were going back to Greece”.

When Theopoula was fifteen years old, she couldn't work because she was underaged, and so she was enrolled for three years in a housekeeping school and for six months she started working in a hairdresser's. However, she told her dad that she couldn't work there anymore. It was the station's hairdresser, and it was very busy, they were dusting the floor all the time. Thus, she returned to Greece for six months to get some training at the Amarantos Hairdresser's School, but soon she returned to Germany. There, she worked for one year in a factory producing vacuum cleaners and massaging devices for fitness. Her duties consisted of rubbing the plastic out of the wires, so that they would be ready to be connected. Soon, her father took her to his factory, where she was working in the metallography, where they were developing photos on metallic plaques. Later, the director took her to the chemistry lab because, according to Theopoula, in the other department there were only men. She worked there two years, helping out, for example bringing the powder they needed from the other lab, sending metals through the air tubes etc.

Voula's young age and her work ethic also gained her the care of her employer. As Voula recounts, "they knew how hard-working I was, that I was never lazy. Whenever they would need me, I would stay from 7 in the morning till midnight. That day my boss took me home. We were making small metallic furniture accessories, the legs for tables and armchairs. Thus, when there was an order, the truck would wait until everything was ready. I would do them this favor, but I told them I couldn't go home alone so late. I was afraid, I was only 22 years old. So, the boss took me home and waited until I got inside the house".

Voula's husband, Petros, was a primary school teacher assigned a position at the Greek schools in the Federal Republic during the years of the junta rule. As he recalls, the procedure consisted of sending the necessary documents to Bonn so that their criminal record was verified. After getting the approval, they could begin their journey. However, it was taking really long, and the teachers had already resigned from their schools in Greece, and they were waiting with impatience for a response. They phoned the responsible, but he told them that they had to follow the procedure and wait for the papers to come. Anyway, Petros thought that it was impossible to wait longer because the reply might never come. Thus, he took his wife and his baby, and they soon started their journey clandestinely, without the necessary papers.

As Petros remembers, "the first night was really difficult. We arrived around 22:00, we did not calculate correctly, we had with us much luggage. We sat there in the station on the benches, and only fierce Turks would pass by. And I saw there a dark-haired girl, and I thought she should be a Greek. Indeed, I approached her, and I told her to please help us because I was the teacher for their kids, but I had just arrived and knew neither where to stay nor what to do". Thus, they took a taxi and they started looking for a hotel. However, the major problem was their young child, because the hotel owners did not want to risk having an infant sleeping on a hotel bed.

In Marktplatz, they found many hotels among which they chose Krone, owned by a Yugoslav. They pleaded him to take them in, and the lady told him in German, "you are also a migrant, have some understanding". Finally, Krone agreed, but he made them put some nylon on the bed to protect it from a potential accident. The next night they stayed at the hotel Kybele, where a girl who was secretary in the Greek labor

office was staying too. The next morning, they went to Bonn to the embassy, but the problem was that they both had a diplomatic passport and they could not work.

When Poppy first arrived in Stuttgart in 1970, she was working in a hospital for one year. Adapting to the new situation was the hardest part, because she would sleep in the same room with a Yugoslav and a Romanian woman in the hospital's dorms. She didn't know the language, they were foreigners, they would communicate with gestures. However, slowly, they started learning German.

As she recalls, her job at the hospital was easy, she would not get tired. Her job was to collect the plates from the patients or give them food and to prepare the tables for the doctors' breakfast. At first, it was difficult to learn where each doctor would sit and place there their napkin and their plate. That caused her some trouble, but all the doctors got to know her, they loved her, and they hugged her. As she says moved, "I will never forget that. Because I was crying, I was stressed, I was crying, crying. And the director, she was quite old, around 60 years old, she would squeeze me in her arms, "Oh, mein Poppy, mein Poppy, warum weinen?". I didn't know the language and I was crying. I was eating something, and they would wish me 'Guten Appetit', and I thought they told me to get up. And I would take my stuff and return to work, not to create a bad impression. But they would tell me 'nein, nein, sit down'. Both the nurses and the doctors loved me a lot".

Although the environment was friendly, she was earning only 400 DM per month, and thus she decided to leave. This first year, she was working as a tourist, but then she moved where her husband was working. The factory was called POWER, and it produced motors, fridges, ovens and washing machines. Her duties there required detailed work since she was sticking together cables wearing special glasses. From the start she was earning 800 DM per month there.

For Poppy, job security and a satisfactory wage were paramount. As she recalls, "here we used to have nothing, we were working all day in the fields. We would go to the fields before sunrise, and we would leave after sunset. All day long we were burnt under the sun. Is that good? And it would not pay you back, you would not have money. There, it wasn't your own business, but we knew we would get paid. We were working, it was tiring, but we knew we will get paid, we will have some rest during the weekend. Here we were working even on Sundays."

Aliki, also liked her job in the factory. In the beginning, she was placed at the section where the molds were cleaned through pressed air. Her elder sister told her it would be better there, since she would be sitting and using the blower. However, the interpreter took her to another big machine, away from the blowers, because she advised her it would be harmful for her lungs with all this dust. The first week, she could not complete the Akkord, the required pieces. However, as she proudly announced, “already from the second week in the factory I was producing more than the required, and the director loved me a lot. When I returned from Greece, I saw them twice. They invited me in their office, and I brought them some gifts. They told me it was the first time they were brought gifts from Greece. And they offered me coffee, sweets, everything!”

Aliki’s husband, Kostis, was one of the first guest workers, since he arrived in 1960 with a tourist visa. He found a job in STEMAC, a factory producing switches, sockets, cutlery, and dishes from porcelain. He was working there as an electrician. When a strike was organized in 1965, they fired around ten people and among them first were the foreigners. After that Kostis moved to POWER. There, they were producing cars for the Allies, cranes and other big tools. During those early years, he would never go to work on Monday, because on Sunday they were spending the night out with his friends. He also found out the trick of not validating the card. With this trick, “when on Saturday they would collect the cards and see that Monday was missing, I would say I forgot it. And always, always I forgot to validate on Mondays! Back then, they would believe it. If you wanted to take a sick leave, it was really easy. You would go to the doctor and say I have a stomachache, and he would give you 2-3 days off”.

In the meanwhile, he was asking for a pay rise, but they wouldn’t give him any and exasperated he resigned and started a business with trucks. First, he was driving foreign trucks to accumulate some savings and then he imported trucks, fixed them and resold them. He set up his company in Thessaloniki, on Monastiriou street, where the tractor factory ZITOR was. He would make the route Greece-Germany four times per month. He toured all of Germany until up to Flensburg, on the border with Denmark.

Kostis was a good driver and while living in Lauf-Pegnitz, every evening, when the train from Greece would arrive, many friends would ask to give them a ride to Nurnberg to pick up their relatives. A funny story stands out in his mind, when “once, there was an old lady among the people and when I asked her where she was going, she told me to Lauf, and thus I took her along. However, we couldn’t find at all the address she had written on a paper...I drove back towards Nurnberg, and I stopped in Röttenbach to ask in the police station. The officer took me to the map and showed me not one, but three Lauf! I went to the station in Nurnberg, and I asked a taxi driver. He told me how to find it, but I suggested he go first, and I follow. Indeed, we found the address, and I knocked on the door. A German woman answered, and I told her the name of the guy we were searching for. He was living in a hut in the rear of the house. I saw him lying on the couch and asked him: where is your mother? He answered she will come from Greece. I told him: now go out and pick her up because she is here! And he gave me ten DM for my service. I did the round of the region, and he was laying on the couch!”

V.C. THE IMPORTANCE OF BEING...FLUENT

When Kyriakos, born in Lesbos in 1942, first arrived in Berlin in the mid-1960s, he got to know a young German girl. Her mum grabbed him from his shoulder and was yelling at him, and the only thing he got was the word, bambino, bambino. She thought he was Italian and was telling him that her daughter was very young. At that moment, he understood he had to start learning German!

Kyriakos, his wife and his friend Apostolos, both of whom he met there, were the first Greeks to dance hasapiko in West Berlin. According to Kyriakos, they were so famous that they got invited to dance in a reception of the Greek embassy. West Berlin had dance halls with a capacity of 2-2.500 people. There was live music with 25-30 musicians, and there they danced. Those were the years '65-'70, and there were three bouzoukia in West Berlin. With the years, the Greeks would create families and wouldn't go out so much, but Kyriakos managed to balance both. He had his family, and, at the same time, he enjoyed the nightlife. In West Berlin, there were two-three cabarets like the Folie-Berger in Paris. The underground bar was called Klosterkeller, the nun's basement, because the customers were mainly single women.

Kyriakos is still quite a playful character, and his narration shows that he was a master of the Berlin nightlife. As he illustratively recounts, “every table had a telephone and a post so that you could call the number of the table you desired. You would say, hey there it’s number 200, sorry I don’t want you, I want to speak to your friend! Or you would write a note, put it in an air tube and it would be delivered to the table you asked for. It was the best night-club in the whole of Europe, it had water fountains on stage, many special effects! I danced with Miss Germany in the Europa-Center. I would buy the most expensive drinks, Metaxa cognac. When you have money in your pocket, you don’t care how expensive it is, you can get it...Those were different eras...”.

Andreas also emphasizes how beloved he was, almost indispensable to his German employers, since “when there was the Haltsarbeit they would fire people, but they loved me, so there was no chance they would fire me. The Germans treated me as a king (sta opa-opa). Both at work and during free time, good people. They all loved me there”. At the fur factory Andreas was working at, there were first some Italians, but apparently, they would create troubles, so they brought Greeks. As Andreas argues, the Greeks had something that you can say was bad or good: they were thirsty for work. This made a bad impression on the Germans. The Germans would produce 5 skins per hour for 10 DM. The foreign workers produced double to earn double, but the Germans told them ‘you will leave, but we will stay and to earn this wage we will be forced to produce more’. When they were supposed to take a leave in summer, the Greek workers in Andreas’ factory were working in order to earn a double wage. However, according to Andreas, “when Willy Brandt became chancellor, he issued a decree saying ‘people are not oxen’, ‘ist nicht Ochsen’. Thus, every worker should take a one-month leave”.

Kostas arrived in Cologne in 1972 and quickly noticed that the Germans had fun in a different way than the Greeks. The pubs were very popular among them. At nine in the morning the German would go to the pub to drink a beer and a Korn, a spirit made of wheat, to start the day! Kostas didn’t personally feel any racism in Germany. On the contrary, he said that the Greek workers sometimes provoked the Germans with silly jokes or insults.

Moreover, misunderstandings easily happened given the language gap. For instance, he remembered that “once, the Germans in BAYER were making fun of the Greeks and a guy, in order to challenge them, said that in Greece we call the pigs Germans. They almost fired him for that, it was a silly thing he said. It was very foolish of him. In the beginning, before I learned German, I was going to the pub of my friend and the German customers wanted to play with me. They were looking at me, saying something and laughing. I thought they were making fun of me, and I got mad and almost attacked them. Then, my friend came and talked to them, and he told me they just wanted me to be our friends. I calmed down and I understood that if you don’t know the language of a place it’s a bad thing”.

As far as his success with German women is concerned, Kostas was quite proud. As he said almost apologetically but wittingly at the same time, “look, when you are a 23-year-old young man, fresh and all...We were famous with girls those years. Plus, we had a car, which was a sign of affluence. In 1972, when I went to Germany there were many discotheques. We would go out with girls to nightclubs. When you have fun, there is no need to talk a lot anyway! There were special rooms with curtains, private spaces, where you could order a small bottle of whiskey and rest there with your girlfriend. We had fun back then, we would go out to dance in clubs with live music”.

As we saw above, Elena knew how to impose respect in her workplace despite her seemingly fragile stature and her young age. However, in the dark streets of Cologne, it was another story. As she narrates, “my life was all upside down. Luckily, I was brave, and I had no fear at all. In the beginning, I was an idiot, and when my husband would leave the house, I would go and look for him. Virgin Mary, the Germans would fall on me, ein Drink, ein Drink, komm, komm hier, ein Drink! Virgin Mary, I thought, they would put me down, I was so young! I went three times, and that was it! I told myself, let him be killed...But I wouldn’t sleep, I would hear the shoes of the drunkards on the pavement “sar, sar, sar” and I was thinking, now he is coming, now he is coming...I would not sleep all night”.

Elena managed to earn the sympathy of her colleagues, because she also made an effort to learn German and use it, even if she was making mistakes. In that way, she was able to get onto the same wavelength as the Germans and understand their sense

of humor. She remembers that when she was in the hospital to give birth to her daughter on April 1st, they thought it was a “Schertz”, a practical joke for April Fool’s Day! She was not bothered either by their teasing, because she understood it was their way of breaking the ice. For instance, they would tease her for having her hair always in order, they would say, “do you hang your head when you are sleeping?”.

Her colleagues were there for her also in times of trouble. Besides, she was living in the same place for ten years, and they spent half the day together at work. As she remembers, “when in ’73 there was turmoil in Greece, I was upset. I had bought the house in Thessaloniki, and I didn’t know what would happen. Normally, I would paint my nails, I would put lipstick on my lips. During this period, I didn’t. My German colleagues would come to me and ask “hast du Brief genommen?”, did you get a letter? And I would answer “Ja, ich hab, ich traurig”. ‘Richtig’, they would answer”.

As is expected, people from different ethnic backgrounds sometimes got along better than co-nationals. Kitsa remembers that she was collaborating very smoothly with a Spanish woman. Although it was not her job normally, Kitsa was packing one of the three pieces coming out of the machine so that they finished their Akkord faster, the required pieces of the day. In the other shift, she was working with another Spanish woman, and they were quarrelling all the time. When she came back from her return visit to Spain, she brought Kitsa a doll dressed in the flamenco costume. In return, Kitsa knitted different stuff for them. When she would finish the Akkord, she would start knitting in the factory. Sometimes, when they had an evening shift and it was Friday, they even ordered pizza and ate all together with the door man. As Kitsa concludes, “we had a nice time at work, people appreciate you there”.

Theo was working together with Turks, they were doing the montage and he was sticking the gears together. He was telling them in Turkish, “abi-abi”, quickly. And they would reply, no, slowly, “yavaş- yavaş”. When they would see Theo had nothing to stick, they were working faster to reach the Akkord. They would tell him, “Theo, today we go slowly to have power for the eight hours”. As Theo remembers, “one day there was a Turkish journalist in the public bus, they were coming quite often. I understood, I talked to him in German and told him that there were many Turks, we were working together in the factory, and we were friends. My colleagues heard it and

appreciated it. One of them invited me to his wedding, but I didn't go because I thought I would be odd among the Turks. But then, he would scold me at the factory, he would tell me, Theo, why you didn't come, I would have had you as a king".

Theo's wife, Eleni, was really satisfied with the good manners and the effectivity of the Germans in offices, banks etc. Nevertheless, the general impression she got from the locals in the region of Bavaria was not optimal, since as she emphasizes, "the Germans in Munich are Bavarians, harsh people. They don't tell you good morning! Where we were living it was a bit better, but still, I don't believe that they have the same reaction towards generosity. For example, would they share the tomatoes from their garden?". However, she appreciated the German discretion, which she missed when she returned to her native village in Greece. As she complains, "here I don't like at all the gossip, the one gossips about the other. We should all see ourselves and our families and not the others. I never had any idea about the others, this is stupid. I don't like it!"

As for gender roles and nationality traits, Eleni has her strong views. According to her and the commonly held views in the Greek community, "the German men make good husbands, but there are also some who are drunkards and spend the night on the benches. However, German women want their husbands to be a slave and do all the chores, wash the dishes. That's what we were saying there in Germany for the Greeks who married German women".

Andreas shares the same view with Eleni. He admired German girls, who were more modern than Greek girls. They were smoking, they were sitting in cafes. They would walk in the streets and flirt with them. However, as he admits, "when we wanted to get serious and get married, we were searching for a Greek girl. The ones who married German girls would get a divorce the next year. They would have a kid and then separate. At the first quarrel they would get their suitcase and move out!"

Krystallenia's daughter, Theopoula, also emphasizes that "the Greek parents in Germany did not want their children to have affairs with Germans, to marry a German. They wanted a Greek. So, you would either find a Greek there or come to Greece and find a guy here. They did not want to mix the races. Not only with Germans, even with others like Italians or Yugoslavs". Indeed, Theopoula followed

the pattern! She met her Greek husband in a wedding during a return visit to her native village for the summer.

As far as friendship and not romantic love was concerned, Eleni was less critical. In fact, she managed to make long-lasting friendships. For example, even she was away from Bavaria for more than 25 years. Her landlady's daughter called her to inform her that her mother died. Eleni was really sad and tried to articulate her grief in the few things she could pronounce in German. They spent happy moments together in the common courtyard they shared. As she remembers "her son, Manfred, didn't want to go to the factory, and he would grill chickens in the Volksfest. We were also going there and sometimes he was doing barbeque in the common courtyard. He was drinking a lot of beer, and when his beers were over his mum would not give him money to buy more. We had a box and my husband was not drinking at all there, so we would give him some".

Sharing food, drinks and exchanging gifts brings people together. Eleni was apparently a good listener and gave precious advice to her younger friends, like a Russian girl, Angelika, who was her colleague. As she remembers, "she would come next to me when our shift was over, and we went downstairs to get washed and dressed to leave. She was telling me about her mother-in-law. You get to know them, and you love them". She was also more experienced, so her colleagues respected her and followed her example, like Alfonsa, an Italian woman. Eleni narrates that "we had to make some more pieces for the day, but when you were there many years, you would learn some tricks. I would say, Alfonza, enough, we are tired. And she would tell me, if you say enough, it's enough".

Apart from the workplace, the neighborhood was also a place of inter-ethnic contact and the poor living conditions brought people together. For example, the house Krystallenia and her family found after much effort looked like a garage. In Mühlhausen, they found an attic, the one and only they could find. As Krystallenia remembers, "it was easier to find a place when you had a dog, rather than when you had a child [...] In our block of flats, we were renting the attic. You would open the window and see only sky. There were some Greeks and an Italian girl, a Yugoslav woman with her husband. I would ask her, Conchita, what did you cook today? Pasta, spaghetti. Every day, what could the people do? It was hard, eehh!".

Most of the narrators referred to their relations with their landlords with flying colors. For example, Kitsa returned to Germany for a visit, and when her landlady learned of it she phoned her brother and told him she was waiting for them. Kitsa describes her as a beautiful and educated woman, whose husband was in a wheelchair because of an accident. They were very good friends, and for the occasion she prepared a big lunch and all the tenants ate together.

There was also an old lady, living in the same block of flats, who was helping Kitsa a lot. For the time between the couple's shifts, when she needed to leave for work and her husband was not home yet, she would keep an eye on the children. And because she knew Kitsa was tired from her job, she would take a wipe and clean all the square glasses of the windows. In return, Kitsa would cook for her, and she would call her mama like her kids. She was living alone in a small room, and Kitsa wanted to take her with her to Greece. One summer morning, Kitsa's little daughter saw her in her dream and told her mother, "mom, Frau-Annie is dead", and indeed they got a letter announcing her death.

Poppy argues that it depends on the personality of every person to easily make friends with people from different backgrounds. She had friends who were German, Yugoslav, Greek; she always had friends and never enemies. As she remembers she was quite an exception. At the factory she was working, there was "a German woman, and the Germans would not approach you easily. They would say, foreigner, Gastarbeiter, she loved me a lot. A neighbor, Margot was her name, invited me to her house. An Italian woman also invited me to her house. I was telling the other Greeks, and they were wondering how it worked for me and not for them. When the German woman had her baby, I bought them a gift. And my landlady loved me a lot and she moved out, she preferred from all the Greeks who were staying there only us to take her house. Maybe it was because, when her son visited me, I offered him coffee, water and my special cake, Napoleon. I had a clean house, tidy, everything counts. They were impressed".

Voula followed her husband, who was a primary school teacher detached from the Greek schools of the Federal Republic. For one month, she worked in an industry called BRIGHT making crystals. She was the only Greek there in the packing department, together with German women. At the ovens' department, where they

would fix the crystals when it was still boiling hot, there were many workers from the island of Rhodes. She quickly learned to speak German at work, because all her colleagues were German. Only during the break, the so-called Vesper (break or pause) around 10am, she would chat with the guys from Rhodes. Voula learned the job easily, she just had to be careful what to write on the labels on the boxes.

After one month she returned to Greece and left her son with her mum. Once back, she found a job in another factory, where again there was only another Greek man apart from her. In that factory, she was working again in the packing with German women and an Italian woman from Sicilia, as she was telling her. But she couldn't count or write correctly, so Voula was helping her. However, once she made a mistake, and the maestro asked Voula what went wrong. In a demonstration of solidarity, Voula took over the mistake, saying that it was her fault. The maestro understood she was lying to cover for her colleague, but in the end her Sicilian friend was given a second chance. She was also caring towards the younger members of the factory's workforce. As she remembers, "during the break we would eat some bread, but I never ate mine, because there was a boy whose father was a drunkard, and I would give my bread to him. In the other factory again, there was a girl around 15 years old, Elvira, and again I would give her my bread".

After the factories, she found a job in a self-service restaurant. The owners were Germans, but their son-in-law was Persian. During the break, he would come and ask her what she was eating. He would take a piece and tell her, "schmeckt, schmeckt!" (it tastes good). Thus, Voula would always bring extra food for them. They had a girl who loved her a lot, and she would say "I want to go for a walk with the Greek". The same happened with their granny, who was around 100 years old, but very elegant. Every week she would go to the hairdresser's and put a thin net with strass on her hair. She would again pick Voula to take her to the hairdresser's, and she even invited her to her house, despite the fact that "that is not very common for them".

Her German landlady also loved her very much. When Voula's mum brought her grandson to Germany, their landlady paid them a visit bringing them gifts. She told Voula, "I won't come tomorrow, because I will be at the window seeing them leaving and I will be crying". This landlady was a refugee from Poland after the war, and she shared her sad stories about her young self, walking barefoot in the snow. Not all her

neighbors were equally kind though. As Voula remembers, “I also had some single old ladies as neighbors and a woman with a child, who would tell me Grüss Gott (good morning) with a fake smile. They were very mean, and everything bothered them. However, I will never forget it. I don’t know what to think about them, when it was St. Nicolas Day, they all brought and left outside the door a paper cone full of gifts for my son. As the proverb say, first you burn me, then you balm me with oil...”.

Sofia’s parents were the only Greeks in that German village near Nurnberg, so the Germans would ask them if the snow was white in Greece as it was there. “They were expecting to see Helen of Troy, and they saw people from mountainous villages”, as Sofia humorously notes. The first period of adaptation to the new environment was quite harsh for the 12-year-old Sofia. As she deplores, “that was internally unbearable. They say that children forget easily. You forget nothing. You cry quite a lot, mainly at Christmas and Easter and celebrations, and you write letters ... I met a Turkish lady from Çorlu, who was my mum’s colleague in the factory, and when I had my blues, she would take me for Friday and the weekend to her place and we would eat and play together”.

After her schooling, Sofia moved to Heidelberg to continue her studies in order to become an aesthetician. There, she met her best friend, a Turkish girl from Istanbul, whose parents had been living for many years in Switzerland. They were the top among the 80 students of their department. They were shy, studying a lot, trying out their make-up skills on each other. They were like sisters. One memory stands out in Sofia’s mind, it was when “my parents and her parents came to Heidelberg to see us and we ate together, we went for a walk together, they were like siblings. Both my parents were speaking Turkish fluently. They hugged; they were walking side by side. Amazing, I can’t describe it to you. Once we were at a café, and a journalist asked us how we were friends because we were supposed to be enemies, the one from Turkey and the other from Greece. But I told him that we are the example of friendship, because people have nothing against each other, the interests and the politicians divide us. We have so many things in common with them. I had also other friends, one from Belgrade and another from Spain, but I was best friends only with my Turkish friend”.

While she was studying in Heidelberg, Sofia was living as an au pair hosted by an American family. The husband was an accountant in Washington and came to serve at the American base in Heidelberg. The family loved her so much that in the end they suggested her to follow them to the US. They took a big road trip together. They drove through Austria, all the way to Bari, then to Greece, where they visited her family in Kavala, taking them to the beach and the gardens. In Metsovo, the locals gathered around them, and they told her in their dialect to stay one more day so that they could organize a feast in their honor. On the way, knowing how dangerous the road was, Sofia covered her head with a blanket! When they finally arrived in Athens it was 3pm, a boiling hot July afternoon. However, it was his dream to see the Acropolis and he defied the sun to show them around and spoke non-stop.

V.D. GREEK TO GREEK

Andreas' impressions about the politics in the host country are quite comic. He describes the West German chancellors as caricatures, while the thirst of Greeks for work, as he argued in a previous sub-chapter, was seemingly equal to their thirst for politics! Let's follow his short account, "first there was Adenauer in power and then came Erhardt always with a cigar. He was short and fat, like a barrel. It was election period, and Erhardt came to give a speech. We went to the Maassenstrasse and saw almost no German people, only the Greeks were there! We were curious to see him."

Krystallenia's daughter, Theopoula, remembers that they had many contacts with relatives. One of her cousins was playing football in the local Greek team, and her family would often participate in their soirées. Greece was as one in their minds, and "when you would hear that someone comes from Greece or Serres, you would feel as if you were very close with them, as if they were from your village. There were many people from Samothrace, Evros, Drama, Serres, Kavala and Katerini".

As Eleni remembers, they would often go to the dancing gatherings organized by various Pontic associations. Apart from these folklore events, she was also keen to take advantage of all the offers of an advanced capitalism, like shopping malls with electric stairs, where you could buy everything, even Greek cheese, olives, whatever you desired. She would take her two best friends of ten years, the one from Kavala and the other from Serres. They would take the bus from the village on the outskirts of

Munich and would indulge in the city center. As a couple, though, Theo and Eleni preferred to save money and wouldn't go to restaurants very often.

Kostas' parents visited their son and daughter-in-law in Germany. His communist father ate for the first time hamburgers at McDonalds in Leverkusen! In Kaufhof, they first saw automatic escalators and were very impressed, because in Greece there were only such stairs in Omonoia in Athens. His father would go to a friend's house to play together 66, a card game, and his sister also visited them with her children. As for excursions, every Christmas, Kostas would close his restaurant and would take his wife for a trip to Bavaria. There, he had a German friend who owned an inn, so they spent some nights there enjoying the breath-taking views of the snowy mountaintops.

Elena had troubles in her family life because of her husband's tendencies for alcoholism. Thus, she was mostly alone in facing situations like pregnancy and birth giving. When Elena gave birth to her daughter, her husband came to the hospital to see her three days later. He was drunk and his face was scratched. Her daughter was a beautiful baby, the nurses loved her. When he went to see the baby, they wouldn't show him his daughter.

Contrary to Elena's resilience, her family was quite frail. As she narrates, she brought her sister and her husband to work in Germany, but they just stayed three months. Her husband was drinking a lot, so he couldn't work, and her sister was working in a spice market, but she couldn't bear it, she was sneezing all the time. She was working there without papers, and Elena was helping her because she didn't speak any German.

Her husband's alcoholism prevented Elena from having a normal social life. For example, they couldn't go out to restaurants or for a walk. During the weekend, she would go out for window-shopping, or she would go to the park and sit on the benches. When she divorced with her husband, her brother insisted that she live with him and his wife. Elena stayed with them just a couple of years because she preferred her independence.

Despite her sociable character, Elena opted to have only one or two friends because she didn't want many to know her secrets. She was very good friends with her flat mates, whom she even visited during the summer holidays in Greece. Elena confides that, "I was careful to make friends that had no husband, because I was afraid that something could happen, you never know...". Due to all this stress and trouble, Elena

suffered from insomnia. Thus, in the weekend she would take a pill to sleep, and her flat mate would make crepes and invite her to eat together. Her other friend was a hairdresser, and she made her hair permanent with rollers.

Kitsa's friends and colleagues helped her as well. As she admits, in the beginning, she was a bit afraid because she didn't want to marry a stranger so quickly. Her fiancé was very handsome, they called him Kakavas, like a popular Greek actor of the 1960s. It all happened very quickly, in a single day, and Kitsa was still confused when she returned to the hospital she was working at in Stuttgart. The other 32 girls working there from Spain, Italy and Greece were all jealous when she announced she had gotten engaged. Seeing her indecisive, they told her 'if you don't want him, let us take him!' When she finally took the decision to take the step, she had to be brave and leave everything behind. As she reminisces, she almost made a spectacular escape, "how would I leave the job, they would not allow me...So I ran away! The girls helped me, they gave my suitcase through the back door to my fiancé and brought me to the main door. I was wearing a robe and underneath my clothes. I threw the robe off and I left with my fiancé!"

Initially, Kitsa also had troubles with her extended family. After leaving the hospital in Stuttgart, she was staying at her uncle's place, but her aunt was a mean woman. Kitsa's fiancé picked her up and suggested to go out to a restaurant. As Kitsa remembers, "my stomach was growling (in Greek she used the phrase "it played the mandolin"), and I put aside my shame and told him 'to be honest, I'm hungry, let's go and eat'. We went to a Greek tavern and when we returned, although it was not late and I could hear voices from inside the house, my aunt didn't open the door for me. Thus, my fiancé, furious, asked his cousin to host me for some days. I stayed there one-two weeks in the end, and he stayed in the Heim with his other single roommates".

In the meanwhile, her mum responded to her letter and scolded her for having found a husband so quickly in Germany despite the fact that many boys wanted to marry her back in their village. As Kitsa told me furiously, "of course, they all need a slave!" For the first couple of years, her husband was a bit jealous of her, and for the occasion Kitsa offers us her self-portrait, "in the end I wasn't a güzelim (it means 'my beauty'

in Turkish), I was a simple, but hardworking and honest girl. In the past, I didn't allow anyone to even hold my hand".

In Welzheim, the village Poppy and her family were living in, the Greeks had their community, and her husband was elected secretary for some time. They were united and Poppy is nostalgic of those years. They organized balls, organizing soirées after some football match. They went to Stuttgart, France and Switzerland for day trips by coach. For the dancing events, Germans would also join. They also exchanged visits for anniversaries and birthdays. On Sunday, her husband would go to the kafeneio, and she would do the chores or sew dresses. She had a sewing machine at home from her landlady, and at first, she started making dresses for herself. Then, her friends also wanted some. They brought her the textile, and she would sew a dress for 25 DM. There were no Greek restaurants in their village, but they would go to a German restaurant and eat schnitzel served with lettuce. The men would drink beer, and the ladies would drink lemonade, because as Poppy comments "we weren't very modern back then." At home, they had a radio, a pick-up and jukebox with 6-7 discs.

Aliki was also talented in sewing, and the Greek community of their village took advantage of her skills to sew the Greek flags for the celebrations. Actually, it was a lot of work, since she did it all by hand, having no sewing machine. Aliki appears very satisfied with her life in Germany. She contemplates the excursions they took with their children to the forest by car, where they would play and run carefree. Once, they also went to a ski resort with her mother-in-law, and as Aliki looks back, "it was all white, like a dream! We had a great time in Germany, and the ones who said they didn't like it, they lie".

Aliki's husband, Kostis, was elected cashier, and that's how they were taking care of decorating the rooms for celebrations and for Christmas balls. Although they were very active, they weren't really fighting for politics, because anyways they could not vote there, as Kostis admits. Below is the story of how his political activity started, one night after midnight!

As Kostis recounts, "there were elections in the community, and they managed again to make two parties. One night, around 1 am they come and knock on my window. They had come to convince me to join their party. The elections were on Sunday, and they wanted me to take the women workers with my omnibus for the 3-4 km from the

“Lages” they lived in to the place where the elections would take place. I knew those women, because sometimes together with a friend we were selling bananas and other food supplies to them. Anyway, I even gave to some of them the one DM required to subscribe and vote. In the end, our party won the elections. One guy from our party, a Pontios from Drama told me that the day before the guys from the opposite party approached him and bribed him for 500 DM. And he asked me naively, isn’t it possible to take the 500 DM and vote for you anyway?”

Kostis is still now a person with a refined sense of humor, and during the interview he did not hesitate to tease his wife or to be self-sarcastic. We can easily imagine him making the following practical joke to his royalist flatmate married with a leftist woman, coming from the same village as Kostis, who became Kostis’ “partner in crime”. As he recollects, “one night, I told his wife that I would make fun of him, and indeed I hung a poster of George Papandreou over their sofa. He came back drunk and sat on the sofa but noticed nothing. I started provoking him, though, saying that he was not a real royalist and that he had a poster of Papandreou in his living room. He saw the poster, he tore it down and started swearing at me, while me and his wife were laughing. He took a knife from the kitchen, but at the crucial moment he needed to piss, so I took him to the toilet still laughing!”.

According to Sofia, who was a teenager growing up in various villages of West Germany, “the Greeks in Germany were very united, but also there was much gossip, because they had a low educative level in the villages and the factories. [...] Saturday afternoon there was a Greek film, and the cinema was packed. Mostly they would go to gossip, about whom you are, beside whom you sit. Her boyfriend kidnapped her, she was engaged ... Things that I hated, I was a totally different type. I loved books, operas, I was reading the newspaper. Imagine I had a book entitled “how to make friends”, and they thought it was talking about boyfriends... Everywhere where there were Greeks there was a Greek tavern where they would gather, play cards and tavli and drink some ouzo”.

Sofia found herself much better fitted to the cosmopolitan city of Heidelberg, where she moved to study. However, again there were times where she felt like a misfit. As she recounts, “I met a lot of people there, I tried my luck with the Greek students, but we had different habits. Once we went to a disco called Catacomb, and as soon as I

went downstairs, I smelled something like lentil soup. I thought apart from drinks, they would sell food as well. I was 20 years old and I was so naïve! When I asked, they told me “actually it’s not lentil soup, it’s weed”. It took me time to understand, but then I never went again. There was another nightclub, where you would knock on the door window and say Ra, the god of Egypt, as a password. There we met two German guys, who bought us drinks etc., and then at 2am they wanted to take us home. I used my ingenuity to get rid of them!”

Among the people she met in Heidelberg were some of the first PASOK candidates. Apparently, they didn’t make the best impression on her. “Unwashed, unshaven, dirty, starved, and wearing their polo neck blouses. They wanted to ‘awaken’ us in relation to the political situation in Greece”.

For different reasons, the young Kostas, a member of the Lambrakis youth as a technical school student in Thessaloniki, didn’t make politics his priority. As he said, “when I went to Germany in ’72, I didn’t notice either the EDA with Elias Iliou or the Center Union with George Mavros. Everybody turned to PASOK. Anyway, in the first couple of years, I didn’t care about anything in Germany. I was young, I was 23 years old. I wanted first to live! Because we were deprived of many things in Greece, mainly in the countryside. We were stigmatized, the system was after us. We were deprived of a lot. We were thirsty for life!”

When Kostas took his first leave, he returned to Greece only to coincide with the Turkish invasion to Cyprus! He went to the camp, but they didn’t recruit him. His father encouraged him with his calm. He kept repeating, “don’t be afraid, there will be no war!”, while everybody was crying. His father-in-law became also another role-model for Kostas. When he met his wife, after some time after they had been together, he told her it was time to meet her father. And as Kostas humorously reminisces, “as soon as we entered the house, I saw on the table the newspaper Rizospastis! Such a relief!”

It didn’t take Kostas a long time to be “recruited”, because he couldn’t help arguing with people he viewed as enemies of the people. As he remembers, “In Leverkusen, there was an Italian café where all kinds of people would gather. There were some fascists, junta supporters and I would quarrel with them. I was not yet organized within any party. But one day, a guy with glasses approached me and told me, “young

fellow, can we have a word?”, and right away I was convinced to join the KKE. I was ready anyway; it wouldn’t take much effort!”

CHAPTER SIX: LEAVING DEUTSCHLAND: METAPOLITEFSI AND RETURN MIGRATION (1974-1989)

The period of democratic transition in Greece coincides with the recruitment halt in the Federal Republic of Germany and thus changing priorities of both countries regarding migration. After 1972, a constant fall in the numbers of Greek Gastarbeiter was noted, paralleled with a flow of return migrants. The Federal Republic adopted a policy of family reunification and gradual integration of the existing migrants. The economic difficulties of the global oil crisis put significant pressure on the West German society, who started reconsidering its openness to foreigners, while authorities problematized their status and adopted more restrictive measures.

In Greece, since 1974, renewed hopes for democratization and normalization worked as a pull factor for the Gastarbeiter. More than that, older workers had already reached their goal to save enough money for investments in their homeland. Others were tired by the intensive industrial work and were interested to turn to entrepreneurial activities. Urbanization and tourism created opportunities for investment of their savings, while the Greek state tried to offer them incentives or just failed to provide welfare provisions for the ones who decided to stay.

After the experience of mobilization during the dictatorship, members of migrant communities felt empowered to advocate for their rights. During this last period, they expressed their agency in gatherings and communiques to the Greek authorities, demanding better education opportunities for their children, voting rights and incentives for return. Greece's accession to the European Economic Community was a long process, which gradually offered to the Greek Gastarbeiter the right to free movement.

In contrast with the first years of Gastarbeiter migration, when mostly governments took decisions determining the *modus operandi*, the process of return migration was a more complex one. Being a less collective and more independent decision, return migration was an issue that intrigued Greek social scientists. Either considering the returning Gastarbeiter as agents of change, who could contribute to the modernization of the country, or empathizing with their obstacles to re-integration, social scientists contributed greatly to the visibility of this group, who was otherwise no longer a priority.

VI.A. METAPOLITEFSI, WHAT'S IN A NAME?

The end of the examined period, 1989, marked the reconciliation of the opposing political forces of the whole postwar period. More precisely, the Coalition Government introduced on 30 August 1989 a bill, which officially defined as “Civil War” the period from the departure of the Occupying Forces through 31 December 1949, instead of “symmoritopolemos” (*bandit insurgency*). Thus, for the first time in Greek post-war history, the Democratic Army of Greece was formally recognized, and all resistance fighters were given the right of pension.

In 1989, most of the documents produced through police surveillance and citizen collaboration were destroyed in an industrial incinerator just outside of Athens and in public squares throughout Greece. The event was organized as an act of reconciliation to “abolish the consequences of the civil war”⁴⁶⁷. It was the end of a long process of democratization, which started with the fall of the dictatorship in 1974.

Karamanlis returned from Paris to head the newly emerging Greek democracy in July 1974. The close identification of NATO and the United States with the dictators gave rise to widespread anti-American and anti-NATO feelings among the population⁴⁶⁸. The drawing-up of a new constitution, the legalization of the Communist Party and a referendum on the monarchy were among the top priorities of the government. The referendum took place on 8 December 1974 and 69.2 per cent of the electorate voted for the abolition of the monarchy⁴⁶⁹.

In the “trial of the instigators of the 21st of April 1967 coup”, the colonels were convicted and received heavy sentences. Moreover, Karamanlis’ strategy in foreign policy was threefold, aiming to bind Greece to Western Europe, to limit US influence, and to strengthen Greece’s security vis-à-vis Turkey⁴⁷⁰.

Karamanlis’ newly founded party, called Nea Demokratia (New Democracy), obtained 54,4% of the votes. The Center Union and the New Forces participated in the elections on a common list. The two wings of the Communist Party had split in 1968, but in 1974 they presented a common electoral ticket, the United Left (Enomeni

⁴⁶⁷ Katherine L. Pendakis, “Living in the File”: Kinship & Political Surveillance in Post-Civil War Greece. *Surveillance & Society* 15, no. 2 (2017): 306.

⁴⁶⁸ Pedaliu, “A Discordant Note”, 116.

⁴⁶⁹ Kevin Featherstone, and Dimitris Papadimitriou. *Prime Ministers in Greece: The Paradox of Power*. Oxford ; New York: Oxford University Press, 2015, 54.

⁴⁷⁰ Anastasakis, “Greece’s Cold War”, 476-477.

Aristera). Andreas Papandreou created the Pan-Hellenic Socialist Movement (PASOK) in September 1974, which received a 13.58% of the votes⁴⁷¹.

According to David Close, after 1974 the political parties were still led by politicians active in the 1940s. The cadres of the KKE fought for the same unresolved social issues, and for them an election campaign in the provinces meant reunions with old comrades in arms⁴⁷². As Pollis suggested, “the transition became a restoration, a return to the status quo ante; a reaffirmation of the traditional official ideology, a perpetuation of the traditional social structure and of the existing socio-economic system, but now within a constitutional framework”⁴⁷³.

In the same spirit, Andreas Papandreou had initially proclaimed that the new democratic regime of 1974 under Konstantinos Karamanlis was nothing but the continuation of the colonels’ dictatorship in disguise, nothing more than a “change of (Natoist) guard”⁴⁷⁴.

PASOK corresponded to the need to develop in Greece a socialist but non-communist party that would represent the 'non-privileged' and the rapidly growing middle class⁴⁷⁵. In 1977, it won 25.34% of the votes and it eventually came to power in 1981, receiving 48% of the vote⁴⁷⁶. The main goal of the party was the socialist transformation of society through PASOK's 'third road to socialism'⁴⁷⁷.

PASOK in its so-called “contract with the people” published in 1981 included a social program for the migrants. According to it, the final goal was the return of the Greek migrants and their harmonious social, economic and cultural integration in the homeland. Before that, the PASOK government would take measures to create certain circumstances in order to facilitate this return.

⁴⁷¹ Sotiropoulos, “The Authoritarian Past”, 455-56.

⁴⁷² Close, “The Road to Reconciliation?”, 262-265.

⁴⁷³ Pollis, A. “The impact of traditional cultural patterns on Greek politics.” *Επιθεώρηση Κοινωνικών Ερευνών* 29 (1977), 13. doi:<https://doi.org/10.12681/grsr.330>

⁴⁷⁴ Kostis Kornetis. “Public Memory of the Transitions in Spain and Greece: Toward a Change of Script?” in M. E. Cavallaro and K. Kornetis (eds.), *Rethinking Democratisation in Spain, Greece and Portugal*, St Antony’s Series, 2019, p.74-75.

⁴⁷⁵ Theodore A. Coulombis, “PASOK’s Foreign Policies, 1981-89: Continuity or Change?” in Clogg, Richard (ed.) *Greece, 1981-89: The Populist Decade*. Palgrave Macmillan, 2014, 126.

⁴⁷⁶ Lykourgos Kourkouvelas, “Monitoring the Rise of a Radical Force: The British Embassy in Athens and the Ascent of the Greek Panhellenic Socialist Movement, 1974–1981.” *Southeast European and Black Sea Studies* 17, no. 3 (July 3, 2017): 487. <https://doi.org/10.1080/14683857.2017.1293600>.

⁴⁷⁷ Christos Lyrintzis, “PASOK in Power: From 'Change' to Disenchantment” ” in Clogg, Richard (ed.) *Greece, 1981-89: The Populist Decade*. Palgrave Macmillan, 2014, 29.

For PASOK, the Right, “responsible anyway for the hemorrhage of emigration, showed no interest in helping this dynamic part of Hellenism to solve the multi-faceted problems concerning the unequal treatment, the difficulties in the process of adaptation in the social environment of the host country and their children’s education”. On the contrary, PASOK was ready to engage in dialogue and negotiation with the host countries to achieve bilateral agreements guaranteeing the migrants’ personal, political and social rights according to the values of the Conventions and Directives of the International Labor Organization and other international bodies.

As far as the politics towards repatriation is concerned, PASOK aimed at the migrants’ settlement (finding a job, recognition of their diplomas and professional specialization, financial aids etc.) and the solution of matters concerning social security and integration (e.g. education, army service). A Repatriation Service was envisaged in order to plan and implement the specific measures, in collaboration with the migrant communities and the returnees.

The government of PASOK introduced a National Health Service, made the first moves towards decentralization, liberalized family law and eased the repatriation of political refugees⁴⁷⁸. The process of national reconciliation culminated in 1989 with the formation of a coalition government between Nea Dimokratia and the Alliance of the Left and Progress⁴⁷⁹.

PASOK’s economic policy was marked by increases in public spending, expansionary policies, and a policy of redistribution⁴⁸⁰. After 1981, the empowerment of rural or previously unprivileged social strata meant that for the first time they felt that they had a voice and could exercise some influence⁴⁸¹. Large sections of society enjoyed an unprecedented prosperity with the rise of private savings and the massive consumption of imported goods thanks to the allocation of state funds⁴⁸².

In October 1985, the PASOK government introduced a package of austerity measures designed to save the economy from collapse and later obtained an EEC loan toward

⁴⁷⁸ Featherstone and Papadimitriou. *Prime Ministers in Greece*, 78-80.

⁴⁷⁹ Lyrintzis, “PASOK in Power”, 37.

⁴⁸⁰ Anastasakis, “Greece’s Cold War”, 478.

⁴⁸¹ Tziovas, Dimitris. “From Junta to Crisis: Modernization, Consumerism and Cultural Dualisms in Greece.” *Byzantine and Modern Greek Studies* 41, no. 2 (October 2017): 285-286. <https://doi.org/10.1017/byz.2017.4>.

⁴⁸² Lyrintzis, “PASOK in Power”, 38.

that end⁴⁸³. After 1985, the economic malaise was indicated by rising unemployment, high inflation rates and sluggish economic growth⁴⁸⁴.

The spread of electrification, the return of graduates from the urban centers and the impact of tourism on some rural areas fundamentally transformed their residents' attitudes toward material goods⁴⁸⁵. With the emergence of consumer culture in Greece, the popular was increasingly associated with material culture, lifestyles and light entertainment⁴⁸⁶.

Concerning the rights of women, the government of PASOK revoked repressive family law and declared legal equality between women and men. Civil divorce was legalized and the institution of dowry was abolished. In 1986, PASOK also liberalized the extremely restrictive abortion law⁴⁸⁷. There was a new gradual distance from authoritarian politics, moralism, the central place of the Orthodox Church, and socioeconomic hardships⁴⁸⁸. As Balampanidis suggests, "the European democratic *acquis* was presented as a guarantee for the newly established democratic institutions and relative autonomy from the United States"⁴⁸⁹.

On 28 May 1979, Greece signed the Treaty of Accession to the European Economic Community (EEC) in Athens. Accepting Greece was the only remedy to dispel anti-Western feelings and facilitate the Greek government's efforts to keep the country within the Western fold⁴⁹⁰. The expectation that EEC competition would provide a healthy shock for Greece was encapsulated in Karamanlis' statement that in taking Greece into the Community, he was throwing the Greeks into the sea to see whether they could swim⁴⁹¹. Greece's economy was still based on many pre-capitalist

⁴⁸³ Kapetanyannis, Vasilis. "The Left in the 1980s: Too Little, Too Late" in Clogg, Richard (ed.) *Greece, 1981-89: The Populist Decade*. Palgrave Macmillan, 2014, p.84-85.

⁴⁸⁴ Close, "The Road to Reconciliation?", 268-269.

⁴⁸⁵ Kostis, Kornetis, Eirini Kotsovoli, and Nikolaos Papadogiannis. *Consumption and gender in Southern Europe since the long 1960s*. London: Bloomsbury. 2016.

⁴⁸⁶ Dimitris Tziovas, "From Junta to Crisis: Modernization, Consumerism and Cultural Dualisms in Greece." *Byzantine and Modern Greek Studies* 41, no. 2 (October 2017): 285-293. <https://doi.org/10.1017/byz.2017.4>.

⁴⁸⁷ Anastasakis, "Greece's Cold War", 496.

⁴⁸⁸ Avdela et al., "From Virginity to Orgasm", 325-326.

⁴⁸⁹ Ioannis Balampanidis. "The Abduction of Europa: Europeanism and Euroscepticism in Greece, 1974–2015" in M. E. Cavallaro and K. Kornetis (eds.), *Rethinking Democratisation in Spain, Greece and Portugal*, St Antony's Series, 2019, p.98.

⁴⁹⁰ Eirini Karamouzi, "The Only Game in Town? EEC, Southern Europe and the Greek Crisis of the 1970s" in Rajak, Svetozar, Konstantina E. Botsiou, Eirini Karamouzi, and Evanthi Hatzivassiliou, eds. *The Balkans in the Cold War*. London: Palgrave Macmillan UK, 2017. <https://doi.org/10.1057/978-1-137-43903-1>, p.231.

structures, it had an inflated public sector and a very high percentage of self-employed artisans⁴⁹².

The main pro-integrationist forces continued to be the mainstream Right, while KKE became even more entrenched in its orthodoxy and the most critical of Greece's accession. Once in power, PASOK moved from hardline ideological to a new emphasis on defending Greek interests within the EEC⁴⁹³.

A Deputy Ministry for Greeks Abroad acquired explicit constitutional sanction in Article 108 of the 1975 Constitution. In adopting a "welfare mentality", the state obliged itself constitutionally to "care for the life of Greeks abroad and the preservation of ties with the Mother Country. It also cares for the education and social and professional advancement of Greeks working outside the state". The General Secretariat for Greeks Abroad was founded in 1982 (Law 1288/1982, Article 13) in the then Ministry for the Presidency of the Government, its mission being to care for the protection of the rights and interests of Greeks Abroad⁴⁹⁴.

In 1984, PASOK published a leaflet before the elections destined to the migrants and political refugees, advertising what "the Change" did for them. According to it, "thirty months were enough to draw a new line of national pride and social justice. The Right considered emigration as a blessing. PASOK believes that emigration causes a huge loss of productive powers for the country and creates many social problems for the migrants and their families. For this reason, the PASOK government took direct measures for the migrants, who were expecting a solution for years, while it also created solid requirements for their return to the homeland. A proof of its interest towards the solution of their problems is also the creation of a Vice-Ministry of Greek Diaspora".

VI.B. TO KILL A JUNTA'S BIRD

⁴⁹¹ Susannah Verney, "From the 'Special Relationship' to Europeanism: PASOK and the European Community, 1981-89" in Clogg, Richard (ed.) *Greece, 1981-89: The Populist Decade*. Palgrave Macmillan, 2014, p.132.

⁴⁹² Diamandouros, "Politics and Culture", 14-17.

⁴⁹³ Verney, Susannah. "An Exceptional Case? Party and Popular Euroscepticism in Greece, 1959-2009." *South European Society and Politics* 16, no. 1 (March 2011): 56-57&61-62. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13608746.2010.538960>.

⁴⁹⁴ Michael Damanakis, "The Metropolitan Centre, the Diaspora and Education." *Hellenic Studies* 13, no.2 (2005), 38-40.

After 1974, the Karamanlis government had to secure the smooth transition to democracy. The majority of the parties adopted a moderate stance on the issue of transitional justice, while resistance organizations and the left-wing press demanded ‘dejuntification’⁴⁹⁵. As Haralabous suggests, “the trials of the junta leaders were a performance in which the Colonels were made to appear as radically “Other”. [...]They allowed for the social sphere to situate itself in a history of overt opposition that it had not inhabited under the regime itself”⁴⁹⁶.

George Matzouranis, in his book published in 1974, was blunt about the quality of people that the junta recruited to promote their kind of “Helleno-Christian” ideals. Those people were “all types of scum: human traffickers, gamblers, drug addicts”. However, the radicalism was so deeply rooted in the staff of the embassy and the consulates, that after the democratic transition the purge was superficial. Months after the fall of the dictatorship, its symbol, “the bird of the dictatorship”, a phoenix reborn from its ashes, was still hanging from the balcony of some Greek Consulates in West Germany⁴⁹⁷.

Vasos Mathiopoulos wrote about the existence of the pro-junta “Union of Greeks in West Germany”, which was characterized by the German Ministry of Interior as an extreme-right organization. This union had many members throughout West Germany, who were receiving financial aid from the junta and with whom many teachers were collaborating. Even after the fall of the junta, there were still portraits of the colonels in some classrooms. The commerce attaché in Bonn Salvanos and the education attaché Kotsmanidis were collecting information about democratic citizens and hiring teachers only according to their submission to the junta⁴⁹⁸.

As far as the Greek Ministry of Labor local offices were concerned and given their role during the dictatorship as secret information services, only fourteen members of their staff were removed in July 1974, but returned again to Germany after the elections. The Minister of Labor, Laskaris, emphasized that the role of the Greek Ministry of Labor local offices was to offer services to the migrants, to cater for their

⁴⁹⁵ Sotiropoulos, “The Authoritarian Past”, 449–50.

⁴⁹⁶ Chloe Howe Haralambous, “Making History (Disappear): Greece’s Junta Trials and the Staging of Political Legitimation,” *Journal of Modern Greek Studies* 35,no. 2 (October 2017), 329-330.

⁴⁹⁷ George Matzouranis, *Ellines ergates sti Germania (Gastarbeiter)*, Athens, Gutenberg, 1974, p.312-313.

⁴⁹⁸ *To Vima*, 30/3/1975,p.9.

amusement and for any disputes with their employers and not to interfere in political activities. Furthermore, the minister encouraged the Greek migrants to enlist in the German trade unions to protect their interests and acquire syndicalist conscience⁴⁹⁹.

Mathiopoulos commented on the disinterest of the government to de-juntify the state authorities in West Germany, in the last three years after the fall of the junta they were still staffed with junta supporters and the genuine democrats like Spyros Kyrou were targeted. Moreover, the Greek program of the Bavarian Radio run by Ioannidis, Nikolakopoulou, Romas and Petroyannis got no support from the Greek television⁵⁰⁰.

As the KKE Deputy Gontikas denounced in the Parliament, pro-junta ambassadors remained in their posts. “I am a genuine fascist”, that was what Korantis the general consul in Frankfurt stated to the journalists during the junta period. The KKE Deputy Kappos denounced specific officers who served the military regime and functioned against the migrants’ interests. For example, the pro-junta Frankfurt’s consulate clerk, Politis, denied the issue of certificates, stating that some Greek migrants’ passports were cancelled due to anti-junta actions.

In the same consulate, the pro-junta clerk Georgiadis in 1975 rejected handing in the files of Greeks in Frankfurt to the vice consul. The consul in Baden, in the local government’s proposal for the guest workers to leave the country, simply suggested to avoid the massive return. When Kappos asked from the government to care for the resolution of major problems faced by the Greek migrants in the FRG, the Vice Minister of Foreign Affairs, Stavropoulos, contented to state “the Greek government cares and want to care for them”⁵⁰¹.

A worker in West Germany, Sotiris Kordas, in an open letter to the ministers of Interior and Public Order complained that on the 1st of May 1976 the authorities delayed him for the first time for 3 hours at the borders without any reason. The same happened on the 15th of April 1978, when, after they filled in the entrance card, they called him, took his passport and called him for a body control. When he asked why all of this, they replied: “Go down to the ministry and they know. Maybe for

⁴⁹⁹ *To Vima*, 2/7/1975,p.5.

⁵⁰⁰ *Ta Nea*, 22/4/1977,p.5.

⁵⁰¹ *Rizospastis*, 23/3/1977,p. 8.

subversive activity”. However, his activity had been against the dictatorship of 21st April 1967⁵⁰²!

The Verbund Griechischer Gemeinden [Association of Greek Communities in Germany, Ομοσπονδία Ελληνικών Κοινοτήτων] (OEK) was founded in 1965 in Stuttgart and its purpose has been the study of problems the Greeks face in Germany and the improvement of their place in society. It also holds a seat on the World Council of Hellenes Abroad (SAE), the assembly of Greek Diasporas⁵⁰³.

The Association of Greek Communities charged the government for the exclusion of the Greek migrants from the national elections. The Spaniards and the Portuguese were voting by correspondence, the Italians were getting free railway tickets to return and vote and the Greeks needed to pay everything from their own pocket to return to Greece and vote. Moreover, the elections took place during a period when the workers had already taken their leave. The only thing that interested the Greek government were the remittances of the Greek workers, concluded the announcement⁵⁰⁴.

In 1979, representatives of the Association of Greek Communities visited Athens in the framework of the campaign “vote for the migrants”. They handed in a memorandum to the President of the Parliament and to the political parties and organized a press conference in the Grand Hotel. The migrants asked to have their fares covered to vote in Greece or to be given the opportunity to vote in the consulates⁵⁰⁵.

After, 1974, the Association of Greek Communities had about 40.000 members, whereas the rightist organizations remained under 10.000, and the Orthodox church only a formal organization. Additionally, the Greeks also established regional associations, e.g., for Cretans, people from Thessalia or Pontos. During the dictatorship and up to 1982, the Greek Communities Union was dominated by the Communist Party, KKE. However, following the development of PASOK, the majority switched towards it⁵⁰⁶.

⁵⁰² *Rizospastis*, 7/5/1978, p.6.

⁵⁰³ Tseligka, Eleni. *From «Gastarbeiter» to European Expatriates*, Bern: Peter Lang UK, 2019, 88-89.

⁵⁰⁴ *Rizospastis*, 11/11/1977, p.5.

⁵⁰⁵ *Rizospastis*, 5/4/1979, p.11.

⁵⁰⁶ Dietrich Thranhardt, “Patterns of Organization among Different Ethnic Minorities.” *New German Critique*, no. 46 (1989):22-24. <https://doi.org/10.2307/488312>.

In 1983, the KKE Deputy in the European Parliament, Efraimidis, demanded that the West German government recognize the Association of Greek Communities as an official representative of the Greek migrants in West Germany. It was active for 17 years and had a membership of 100.000 Greek workers. However, the German authorities had characterized it a leftist extremist group⁵⁰⁷.

Ulrike Schoeneberg examined whether ethnic organizations segregated the immigrants or whether they served as mediating institutions. She concluded that this depended on the basic orientation of the ethnic organization toward the host country. The most marked division among the associations appeared in the question of whether Greek children should attend German or Greek schools. After a long struggle, the proponents of separate schools had their way⁵⁰⁸.

VI.C. ILLITERATE BILINGUALS?

In the early 1970s, the DGB began to assert that the schools were creating and reproducing an underclass, because over 60 percent of the immigrant children did not leave school with a graduation certificate⁵⁰⁹. Czarina Wilpert writing in 1977 was concerned with the equality of chances provided to the children of foreign workers, given that necessary financial support to guarantee education and training was lacking. Social unrest, deviancy, and disillusionment among the majority of disadvantaged migrant youth were her predictions for the future⁵¹⁰.

For Greeks in Germany, the period from 1974 to late 1981 was the most dynamic of all with regard to education, since parents took initiatives to set up Association of Parents Federations at State (*Land*) level⁵¹¹. Greek communities in Germany insisted on the preservation of their national schools, they held protest marches and even hunger strikes for Greek schools. The Greek Embassy in Bonn issued a report

⁵⁰⁷ *Rizospastis*, 3/7/1983, p.11.

⁵⁰⁸ Ulrike Schoeneberg, "Participation in Ethnic Associations: The Case of Immigrants in West Germany." *The International Migration Review*, Vol. 19, No. 3, Special Issue: Civil Rights and the Sociopolitical Participation of Migrants (Autumn, 1985),423-424.

⁵⁰⁹ Barbara E. Schmitter, "Trade Unions and Immigration Politics in West Germany and Switzerland." *Politics & Society* 10, no. 3 (1981): 330.

⁵¹⁰ Czarina Wilpert, "Children of Foreign Workers in the Federal Republic of Germany" *The International Migration Review*, Vol. 11, No. 4 (Winter, 1977), 483.

⁵¹¹ Michael Damanakis and Michael Kanavakis, "Greek Education in Germany." *Hellenic Studies* 13, no. 2 (2005), 215-216.

claiming that more than 40,000 students were attending Greek schools in the Federal Republic⁵¹².

Parents wanted their children to retain as much as possible of the Greek language and culture in order to prepare for a possible return migration, either as a family unit or to enable potential students to enter the Greek university system. The school became a site of ‘ambivalent integration’ for second generation Greek-Germans⁵¹³.

In the meanwhile, the office of the labor attaché in Bonn announced the results of exams for the children of Greek guest workers to study for free in technical schools in Greece. The youth will be interns of the OAED⁵¹⁴. This was an initiative of the junta that continued also after the transition to democracy.

The Labor Center of Thessaloniki sent a letter to the government stating that more attention had to be paid, because the Greek youth in Germany were adopting the German habits without any Greek education. According to them, the issue was both moral and national. The Greek youth would not stay abroad forever. Thus, it was advisable to avoid losing contact with their homeland, because their abandonment would mean de-Hellenization and Germanisation. Anyway, the 200.000 Greeks in Germany offered a lot to the Greek economy and had any right to demand from the state to take care of their children’s education⁵¹⁵.

A main column in the newspaper *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung* was dedicated to the absence of education for the foreign kids in the German schools. After stating that the Greeks were the ones most interested in the education of their children, they admitted that according to a survey made by the German state only half of foreign pupils in German schools would finish primary school⁵¹⁶.

Vasos Mathiopoulos read in the liberal newspaper *Die Zeit* about the actions of the Education Inspector Zaras. He did not obey the decisions of the West German Ministry of Education, but on the contrary obeyed the wishes of the Greek Embassy in Bonn. He would go every two years to Offenbach, would inspect for 2-3 minutes

⁵¹² Thranhardt, “Patterns”, 22-24.

⁵¹³ King, Russell, Anastasia Christou, and Jill Ahrens. “‘Diverse Mobilities’: Second-Generation Greek-Germans Engage with the Homeland as Children and as Adults.” *Mobilities* 6, no. 4 (November 2011): 488.

⁵¹⁴ *Rizospastis*, 23/10/1976, p.2.

⁵¹⁵ *Ta Nea*, 12/6/1976, p.12.

⁵¹⁶ *Ta Nea* 19/4/1977, p.5.

every class and would state that he was very pleased. Nevertheless, the parents complained that the teachers did not have even basic German language skills⁵¹⁷.

In 1977, the Greek-German Education Union was founded in Athens for the education of Greek pupils returning from West Germany. Most of those kids were “illiterate bilinguals”. When they returned to the Greek school system, they gave exams and were integrated into the adequate class with exemption from the lesson of Greek language. The union had no support by the Greek government and to cover its expenses got financial support from German companies etc. It collaborated with the Center of Returnees and sent a report to the Ministries of Education and of Interior to

The Greek and German trade unions, GSEE and DGB, sent a report to the minister of Education. They asked for the creation of a bilingual, harmonized education with the close co-operation of Greek and German teachers. They concluded that otherwise those students were “condemned to unskilled labor in the future”⁵¹⁸. Parents did not hesitate to take extreme steps in order to ensure their claims were heard. For instance, in late May 1980, in Wuppertal, 140 Greek workers went on a hunger strike to push regarding the introduction of Greek classes in the local schools for their children⁵¹⁹.

A trans-ministry working group was created to study the problems of the migrants’ children. The report mentioned that measures were needed for the activation of the UN declaration for the rights of children, the assurance of the unity of families, the care for the education in the pupil’s native language, social care, minimization of discrimination and equal chances in the education system⁵²⁰.

More than 90 per cent of all immigrant workers acquired their German almost exclusively through contact with fellow workers, neighbors, and friends. It was only in 1974 that the West German Ministry of Labor established a central institution to co-ordinate and promote language courses for foreign workers. In 1979, about 1800 courses with about 25,000 participants were supported in the Federal Republic and

⁵¹⁷ *Ta Nea*, 12/5/1977, p.9.

⁵¹⁸ *Ta Nea*, 10/8/1978, p.12.

⁵¹⁹ *Makedonia*, 29/5/1980, p.1.

⁵²⁰ *Rizospastis*, 19/3/1980, p.9.

West Berlin, but this meant that a little under one per cent of the adult foreign population was attending a course⁵²¹.

According to Damanakis and Kanavakis, the Greek communities were composed of a majority of Greeks who were integrated into German society and strove for social advancement. Yet, on the other hand, there was a minority of Greeks who rallied around Greek-only schools and subsequently managed to monopolize the interest of Greek governments and absorb the greater part of funds⁵²².

Until the beginning of the 1980s there were three objectives concerning the education of foreign children, namely the integration of the foreign children into the German educational system, the motivation of return migration or the preparation of foreign children simultaneously for integration into German society and for reintegration into their country of origin⁵²³.

Anyway, more often than not, the migrants were lost in the complex bureaucracy needed to enroll their children at school or bring them to West Germany as dependents. Theo and Eleni not only faced some obstacles, but also sarcasm from the side of the Greek authorities. As Theo remembers, “the Greek labor office didn’t help me when I brought my son to Germany, and on top of it made fun of my idea of bringing my son to study in Germany. In the end, my German landlord helped me, and I enrolled my son in the Goethe Institute for three months of intensive German courses. Later, he was employed for six months in the technical school of our factory, where they were doing handmade metalworks, like ashtrays. He had to do something, because I had him under my auspices, and the police did not allow him to stay otherwise. After those six months, he went to study in Nurnberg”.

VI.D. HALT AND GO

In 1965, the Federal Republic of Germany adopted a new Aliens Act, which replaced the one still in effect dating from 1939⁵²⁴. On Bavaria’s initiative, the Länder (states) introduced a series of “Principles for the Granting of Residency Permits” (*Grundsätze*

⁵²¹ Ingeborg Gutfleisch and Bert-Olaf Rieck. "Immigrant workers (Gastarbeiter) in West Germany: teaching programs for adults and children." *World Yearbook of Education: Education of Minorities 22* (2005): 345-346.

⁵²² Damanakis and Kanavakis, “Greek Education in Germany”, 221-22 .

⁵²³ Ursula Mehrländer, "Second-generation migrants in the Federal Republic of Germany." In Rogers, Rosemarie(ed.) *Guests Come to Stay: the effects of European labor migration on sending and receiving countries*. Routledge, 2019, 167-168.

⁵²⁴ Schmitter, “Trade Unions”, 329.

für die Erteilung der Aufenthaltsberechtigung) in 1969. The principles called for a five-year maximum stay for all foreigners⁵²⁵.

In 1973, the DGB published a call for a reform of the Aliens Act, mainly criticizing the fact that the issuing of residence permits was up to administrative discretion and that the rights of migrants to political activity were limited. Nevertheless, the permanent employment of migrants should lead neither to a real immigration nor to a naturalization⁵²⁶.

As Alexander Clarkson suggests, “in the ideological context of the Cold War the threat to German–guest worker relations the officials feared most was communist infiltration. The fact that the moderate German Left also shared such concerns could have weakened the position of politicized guest workers even further. For the SPD and the mainstream trade unions, communists and other exponents of extreme left ideology were rivals for the support of their own electoral and intellectual base”⁵²⁷.

For sociologist Knuth Dohse, the organizational structure of trade unions and the political orientation of foreign workers would also be affected by a polarization between the foreign and the West German workers due to the rising unemployment. In 1980, almost 20 percent of foreign workers already thought that German trade unions only worked in the interest of German workers⁵²⁸.

The protests against the reduction of child benefit for migrant families in 1974 developed into a dynamic movement also demanding voting rights for migrants. Although the unions founded internal working committees for foreign workers, they were still obsessed with the paradigm of integration instead of the elimination of the special status of the foreign workers⁵²⁹.

⁵²⁵ Triadafilos Triadafilopoulos, and Karen Schönwälder. “How the Federal Republic Became an Immigration Country: Norms, Politics and the Failure of West Germany’s Guest Worker System.” *German Politics and Society* 24, no. 3 (2006): 11-12.

⁵²⁶ Simon Goeke, “The Multinational Working Class? Political Activism and Labor Migration in West Germany During the 1960s and 1970s.” *Journal of Contemporary History* 49, no. 1 (January 2014): 171-173. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0022009413505665>.

⁵²⁷ Clarkson, Alexander. “Home and Away: Immigration and Political Violence in the Federal Republic of Germany, 1945-90.” *Cold War History* 8, no. 1 (February 2008): 2-3&10. <https://doi.org/10.1080/14682740701791193>.

⁵²⁸ Knuth Dohse, “Foreign workers and workforce management in the Federal Republic of Germany.” *Economic and Industrial Democracy* 5 (1984), 506.

⁵²⁹ Goeke, “The Multinational Working Class?”, 180-181.

On the 18th of January 1974, a reportage in the emission "Zum Beispiel Sie" ("For example you") of the Bavarian television engaged with the topic of jobs and xenophobia. The title "Diese Arbeit macht ein Deutscher nicht" ("A German does not do this job") echoed Hartmut Berghoff's view that the Gastarbeiter worked the additional hours Germans spent in schools and colleges. They moved into jobs at the lower end of the labor market so that Germans were able to climb to the middle and top rank.

The guest worker's perspective of a better life back home was gradually being replaced by the immigrant's outlook, who was beginning to put down roots in his new environment. The contradictory political line pursued by various governments failed to make it clear that the foreign population had become a permanent part of West German society⁵³⁰.

The reporter asked various guest workers trying to get different answers about their situation. The first interviewee, to the question "how is the work? Do you find that a good job?", answered honestly but with a fatalist attitude, "I am a foreigner, it doesn't matter. Construction site, street sweeper, other job [...] I don't care". He had been a street cleaner for nine years, and his colleagues were three Germans and six Turks. His family also lived in West Germany, and his wife was working as well in order to increase their family budget.

The reporter moved then to the usual meeting place of the Gastarbeiter, the train station. There a circle of men discussed and answered his questions. The most eloquent among the workers said that "the employer is happy with the foreigner, but people don't want to. The Germans don't want the foreigners to stay here. Because everyone thinks the foreigners are bothering us or something". To his colleague's comment that not all Germans were the same, he retorted that 80% of them were thinking like that.

A third man commented that their experience in the job market had to be "exactly the same as those of Germans. Because we are Europeans just like the Germans. Or do we have 2nd class people be the guest workers? [...] You cannot say that as Germans we are 1st class, and the Turks and Greeks are 2nd class. Then we have no

⁵³⁰ Klaus Larres and Panikos Panayi. *The Federal Republic of Germany since 1949: politics, society, and economy before and after unification*. Longman, 1996, 35-36 and 59 and 67.

problem. Or we have the same problems as the Germans. Or not? [...]All foreigners go, go back to the south, back to your homeland." It's not that easy. Here in Germany, there are 3 million foreigners. It is not that easy"⁵³¹.

Kurt Mayer writing in 1975 drew the conclusion that foreign workers and their families would eventually have to be accepted as permanent immigrants, given their indispensable role in the economy. The capacity to absorb and integrate immigrants would be quite flexible once a country's population realized its necessity⁵³². Dealing with the question of multiculturalism, Panayi argued that Germany functioned with a monocultural concept. As a consequence, nearly 10% of the population of the country remained alienated from the political decision-making process⁵³³.

As Lauren Stokes suggests, “after the 1973 recruitment stop and a separate 1974 law reforming the child benefit system, family migration was persistently narrated as a form of selfish ‘welfare migration’ [...] insinuating that foreign families were held together by welfare rather than by emotional bonds. The image of the ‘child benefit migrant’ became part of the case for increasingly restrictive migration policies throughout the late 1970s and 1980s”⁵³⁴.

In 1970, Georg Albrecht submitted a 25-page-long explanation of the lawsuit of a Greek woman and her sick children, who were threatened with expulsion for their alleged welfare dependence. Many different bodies of law were binding for the West German state, placing serious constraints on its power to expel. The ‘social and constitutional state’ that Albrecht invoked meant that welfare was not an act of mercy, but something to which immigrant workers earned entitlement⁵³⁵.

The 1973 halt on recruiting non-EEC nationals, referred to as the Anwerbestopp, had the contrary effect of leading many foreigners to stay in the country. In 1978, the West German Parliament approved the establishment of a Commissioner for the

⁵³¹ <https://www.br.de/mediathek/video/gespraeche-mit-gastarbeitern-1974-diese-arbeit-macht-ein-deutscher-nicht-av:5a3c52c8185c080018d1866a>

⁵³² Kurt B. Mayer, “Intra-European Migration during the Past Twenty Years”. *The International Migration Review*, Vol. 9, No. 4 (Winter, 1975), 447

⁵³³ Panikos Panayi, “The Evolution of Multiculturalism in Britain and Germany: An Historical Survey.” *Journal of Multilingual and Multicultural Development* 25, no. 5–6 (September 15, 2004): 477–78.

⁵³⁴ Lauren Stokes, ‘An Invasion of Guest Worker Children’: Welfare Reform and the Stigmatisation of Family Migration in West Germany, *Contemporary European History* (2019), 28, 373–374.

⁵³⁵ Jannis Panagiotidis, “The power to expel vs. the rights of migrants: expulsion and freedom of movement in the Federal Republic of Germany, 1960s—1970s.” *Citizenship Studies* 24, no.3(2020), 301–318.

Promotion of Integration of Foreign Employees and their Families, affiliated with the Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs⁵³⁶.

In 1979, the Kühn Memorandum proposed policies to address settlement and naturalization, a move from *ius sanguinis* to *ius soli*. However, in the late 1970s, when the settlement of guestworkers became more and more obvious, both the CDU and the CSU framed the integration of guestworkers as the 'foreigner's problem' (Ausländerproblem)⁵³⁷.

On March 15, 1979, on the occasion of the visit of the Greek Minister of Defence, E. Averoff, to Bonn, the prime minister, Karamanlis, addressed the following letter to Chancellor H. Schmidt: “(the family benefits) are of great political and psychological importance for my country. As you understand, it will be very unpleasant for me to appear in the Greek Parliament apologizing for the Accession Agreement, instead of praising it as a fact that proves the solidarity and sympathy of the Greek countries to the Community”.

In his response, Schmidt was honest about the difficulties West Germany was facing at the time. As he wrote, “in the social sector of the Federal Republic of Germany, as you know, as a result of the global financial crisis, we are facing major problems both in terms of job creation and in terms of social integration [...] I am optimistic that we will find solutions that will adequately take into account our mutual interests. We did this during the regulation of the issue of the transitional period until the implementation of the free movement. It will also be possible for the child allowance”⁵³⁸.

From 1980 to 1982, the pressure of public opinion in favor of restricting the number of incoming foreigners and the latent hostility toward foreigners constantly increased. Following the change of government in the autumn of 1982, Chancellor Kohl of the Christian-Democratic Party declared that migration policy was one of the four priorities of the "program of urgent tasks". In November 1983, the Remigration

⁵³⁶ Maren Borkert and Wolfgang Bosswick, “The case of Germany” in Giovanna Zincone, Rinus Penninx, Maren Borkert(eds.), *Migration Policymaking in Europe: the Dynamics of Actors and Contexts in Past and Present*, Amsterdam University Press,2011, 98.

⁵³⁷ Thomas Faist, “How to Define a Foreigner? The Symbolic Politics of Immigration in German Partisan Discourse, 1978–1992.” *West European Politics* 17, no. 2 (April 1994): 56-57. <https://doi.org/10.1080/01402389408425014>.

⁵³⁸Κ. Svolopoulos(ed.), *Κωνσταντίνος Καραμανλής: Αρχείο, Γεγονότα & Κείμενα*. Konstantinos Karamanlis Foundation, vol.11, 1997,p.60-61.

Assistance Act was passed, it was based on the principle of voluntary return⁵³⁹. It envisaged three basic instruments to motivate return: financial incentives, reduction of return barriers and consultation of potential returners⁵⁴⁰.

From about 1980, the multicultural society was held up against a resurgent and aggressive nationalism⁵⁴¹. The contradictory political line pursued by various governments failed to make it clear that the foreign population had become a permanent part of West German society⁵⁴².

The 1984-93 annual data of the German Socio-economic Panel (SOEP) were being collected by the Deutsches Institut für Wirtschaftsforschung (DIW). The SOEP contained a large subsample of migrants from Italy, Turkey, Yugoslavia, Spain and Greece with a long duration of residence. Yugoslavs had stronger intentions to remain permanently, while the opposite was true for the Greeks. There were differences in the economic situation between host and home countries, in political situations and in the measure of cultural distance or national identity, which positively affected return propensities⁵⁴³.

Of the guest workers in the representative sample studied by the Bundesanstalt für Arbeit (1973) who had been in the Federal Republic for more than 11 years, almost 50 percent wanted to stay for good. On the contrary, of those who had been in the Federal Republic for more than 15 years, 83 percent wanted to stay for good. In 1980, in the survey of the Ministry of Labor and Social Order, although 75 percent of the respondents said that they were "planning to return", a full 80 percent of this group who had given the positive answer were then unable to elaborate on their plans by stating a likely year of return⁵⁴⁴.

The 1966-67 West German recession caused a decline in out-migration and a return flow. After 1971 there was a continuous and rapid decline in emigration numbers:

⁵³⁹ Ursula Mehrlander, "Federal Republic of Germany: Sociological Aspects of Migration Policy," *International Migration Review* 27, no. 1 Supplement (January 1993): 189-193.

⁵⁴⁰ Christian Dustmann, Samuel Bentolila and Riccardo Faini, Return Migration: The European Experience, *Economic Policy* 11, no. 22 (Apr., 1996), 221-222.

⁵⁴¹ Karen Schönwälder and Triadafilos Triadafilopoulos. "The New Differentialism: Responses to Immigrant Diversity in Germany." *German Politics* 25, no. 3 (July 2, 2016): 370. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09644008.2016.1194397>.

⁵⁴² Larres and Panayi. *The Federal Republic of Germany since 1949*, 35-36 and 59 and 67.

⁵⁴³ Dustmann et al., "Return Migration", 232-233.

⁵⁴⁴ Friedrich Heckmann, "Temporary labor migration or immigration? Guest workers in the Federal Republic of Germany" in Rosemarie Rogers(ed.) *Guests come to stay : the effects of European labor migration on sending and receiving countries*. Boulder, 1985, 81.

Annual return migration exceeded emigration during 1966–1967 and for every year since 1974⁵⁴⁵. In the first three months of 1975 the return migration was 25% bigger than emigration (5.239 to 4.111). Normally, it would be a reason to celebrate, but now it created many problems with the prospect of more returnees⁵⁴⁶.

The Greek government's definition of a returning migrant concerned one individual who spent a minimum of one year abroad and who was intending to stay in Greece for at least one year⁵⁴⁷. Immigration covered only Greek citizens permanently residing abroad, thus ignoring counting as returnees Greeks returning with foreign passports or Greek citizens returning after an absence of less than one year⁵⁴⁸.

Greek return migration data were generally sketchy. Official figures on return began in 1968 and showed a steady increase to reach a peak of 34.200 in 1975. The number of returns was declining steadily since the late 1970s. By the late 1980s, around 250.000 had re-entered Greece since 1974⁵⁴⁹.

The reasons for this increase were the limited possibilities for saving, problems of mental and bodily health, reunion with their children left behind, desire for their children to begin or continue their studies in the home country⁵⁵⁰.

In 1975, out of the 225.000 officially employed Greek workers in the Federal Republic, 20.000 were unemployed. This number represented the 8% of the total, which was the biggest percentage among the other foreigners who had an average of 6.3%⁵⁵¹.

The employment of Greeks in Germany reached a peak in 1972 of 270.000, which was equal to about one-third of employment in Greek industry and construction. In the two years since September 1972, the number of Greeks employed in Germany fell by about 15%. OECD in 1975 predicted that even when the recession would be over,

⁵⁴⁵ Christos Nikas and Russell King. "Economic Growth through Remittances: Lessons from the Greek Experience of the 1960s Applicable to the Albanian Case." *Journal of Southern Europe and the Balkans* 7, no. 2 (August 1, 2005): 236-7.

⁵⁴⁶ *To Vima*, 20/7/1975, p.9.

⁵⁴⁷ Russell King, "Return Migration: A Neglected Aspect of Population Geography." *Area* 10, no. 3 (1978): 176.

⁵⁴⁸ "The Meaning, Modalities and Consequences of Return Migration." *International Migration* 24, no. 1 (March 1986): 78-79. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1468-2435.1986.tb00103.x>.

⁵⁴⁹ Fakiolas and King. "Emigration, Return, Immigration", 174.

⁵⁵⁰ E. Panayotakopoulou, "Specific Problems of Migrant Women Returning to the Country of Origin, Particularly as Regards Employment and Social Services." *International Migration* 19, no. 1–2 (January 4, 1981): 219. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1468-2435.1981.tb00224.x>.

⁵⁵¹ *To Vima*, 18/5/1975, p.10.

countries of immigration in Europe would not accept great numbers of foreign workers. Thus, the foreign exchange receipts from this source would stagnate, and the productive apparatus at home would not be able to provide sufficient jobs⁵⁵².

From the 15th to the 17th of May 1975, the Greek prime Minister Karamanlis paid an official visit to the Federal Republic of Germany. Upon his arrival at the military section of the Cologne-Bonn airport, he was given a very warm welcome by the Minister of Foreign Affairs of West Germany, H. N. T. Genser.

Afterwards, Karamanlis addressed a greeting to the Greek workers of West Germany: “Compatriots, I convey to you the warm greeting of the homeland. I am sure that your thoughts are always turned with emotion towards the homeland. I know, after all, from personal experience what nostalgia means, and that the geographical distance, instead of being weak, strengthens the mental ties with our land. You live in a strong, spiritually rich and materially advanced country. And with your daily toil you also participate in its progress. [...] And when you return home, armed with the knowledge, material and spiritual supplies that you gain here with your hard work, you will have every opportunity to contribute more actively and more directly to the progress of the homeland and to the prosperity of the people”⁵⁵³.

The Minister of Labor Laskaris, in his message on the Bavarian Radio in May 1975, stated that despite the measures taken by the government, there were significant problems in the absorption of the return migration. The returnees created problems of housing, employment, health insurance and education, given that the infrastructure was limited mainly in the countryside. Return in rural areas would inevitably create internal migration towards the cities. Given that the situation of the labor market in West Germany was alarming with 20.000 unemployed Greek migrants, the Greek government denied the massive return of the migrants and wished the smooth pace of it to continue also in the future⁵⁵⁴.

In 1976, the Minister of Labor Laskaris accepted the invitation of the Federal Republic to visit the country and made some statements before he left regarding the purpose of his visit. One aim he had to accomplish was to materialize the promise of

⁵⁵² OECD (1975), *OECD Economic Surveys: Greece 1975*, OECD Publishing, Paris, p.14-15&50. https://doi-org.eui.idm.oclc.org/10.1787/eco_surveys-grc-1975-en.

⁵⁵³ Svolopoulos (ed.), *Κωνσταντίνος Καραμανλής*, 381-382.

⁵⁵⁴ *To Vima*, 18/5/1975, p.10.

the Greek government to be beside the workers, in order to live their problems from up close, to listen to and examine their issues and to bring the warmth and the interest of the homeland to their side. After the exposure to their problems, the task will revolve around how to relieve, help and support our expatriated brothers until the moment they return again to the homeland⁵⁵⁵.

Upon his return, the minister gave a short press conference regarding the results of his meeting with the West German Minister of Labor. He underlined that there was no danger at all for a massive return. This anxiety about the problems that would result from a mass of returnees was widespread. However, as the minister stated proudly, this danger did not exist anymore. He was also very satisfied with the absolute understanding and friendship the West German side showed throughout his visit. In his view, the Federal Republic might go through a period of temporary difficulties, which it calculated would last until the following spring. Nonetheless, it showed the utmost understanding regarding the Greek guest workers⁵⁵⁶.

In 1976, the representative of the Greek workers in the DGB Elias Chatziandreou responded in an interview about the ongoing return migration and its consequences. He assured the interviewer that there was no real danger of a massive return of the Greek Gastarbeiter. In his view, the Greeks are not the workers that the Germans want to see leaving their country and their factories, given that, compared to other nationalities, they showed great adaptability, could be easily trained and usually lived in harmony with their surrounding environment. Programs and plans that would face the returnee, not as a bare holder of remittances, but as a personality who has all the good will and necessary skills to contribute to the progress and the industrialization of the country.

Regarding Greece's accession to the EEC, Chatziandreou predicted that it would offer a new quality in the character of intra-European migration. First of all, the Greeks employed abroad would have equal rights and a full coverage and would not be foes of the yellow press and its exaggerations. He emphatically underlined that "it is important that the Greek side ensures the freedom of movement for its workers, because anyway this will not increase emigration, but on the contrary, it will force the local employers and industrialists to offer wages and benefits that would remove any

⁵⁵⁵ <https://archive.ert.gr/15303/>

⁵⁵⁶ <https://archive.ert.gr/23379/>

strong material motive towards out-migration. Without it, few Greeks would leave our beautiful homeland”⁵⁵⁷.

Greek workers, already established in the EEC countries, would enjoy the same rights from the moment of accession as the workers of the EEC countries. Family allowances would be paid to family members, perhaps immediately after accession. Intra-Community freedom of movement for workers would apply after the end of the transitional period of seven years. During this transitional period, the Community accepted almost all Greek claims for family members and family allowances of Greek workers already established in the member countries⁵⁵⁸.

In a press conference, the members of the Association of Greek Communities appeared skeptical of the government’s optimism concerning the EEC membership, because there was no guarantee that this evolution would alleviate unemployment. From 1974 to 1977, a total of 90.000 migrants had returned, out of whom 10.000 ended up unemployed⁵⁵⁹.

Despite many obstacles, discriminations and frustrations, a high proportion of guest workers and their families would not return to their home countries, unless they would be forcibly repatriated. Federal policies remained ambivalent and contradictory, and threats in the form of political references to repatriation and deportation for petty offences added greatly to the foreigners' feelings of insecurity⁵⁶⁰.

A migrant writing a letter from Siegburg to the newspaper *Rizospastis* emphasized the constant stress that unemployment and a consequent non-renewal of the residence permit inspired in the migrants. As he wrote: “we are living under the fear of getting fired and with the insecurity of what is waiting for us once back in the homeland. Many family dramas have happened because of unemployment or the non-issuing of a work permit to the child or the mother, when the unemployment benefits also stop for the father of the family”⁵⁶¹.

This sense of fear, insecurity and precarity was responsible for the “gastritis neohellenica”, as Greek anesthesiologist in Hannover Dr. Athanasios Legas noticed.

⁵⁵⁷ <https://archive.ert.gr/11983/>

⁵⁵⁸ Svolopoulos (ed.), *Κωνσταντίνος Καραμανλής*, 414&416-417.

⁵⁵⁹ *Rizospastis*, 24/6/1977, p.7.

⁵⁶⁰ P. N. Jones, “Guestworkers and their spatial distribution”. In Wild, M. T.(ed.) *Urban and Rural Change in West Germany*. London: Croom Helm, 1983,101.

⁵⁶¹ *Rizospastis*, 22/6/1977 p.7.

The miner Kostas Seilnakis stated that “inside the communities, our clubs, we try to counteract the problems of unemployment and discrimination. However, we have no support from the Greek Consulates. They tell us that it is not their business. We are expecting from the Greek government the creation of vacant positions in Greece, so that we can return. This is the migrants’ demand: work in Greece. Living abroad is insupportable. We are all sick.” The worker Kaiti Mitsikoglou emphasized that “discrimination and racism is a way to expel us from Germany. There are night clubs, cinemas, discotheques where the entrance to Greeks is prohibited. In the factories many Germans avoid talking to us or if they tell us something, it is that we are taking their jobs...”⁵⁶³.

A growing insecurity among the Gastarbeiter often resulted in over-hastened emigration decisions with alarming economic and social results. As a consequence, problems with the social security of the return migrants in the country of origin incurred, because many surrendered their claims to the German security system by deciding to return⁵⁶⁴.

The agreement between the governments of Athens and Bonn included two possibilities for the Greek workers who wished to return to Greece. According to the first option, after two years the returnees could receive the sum of the contributions, they had been paying to the German pension fund. The sum returned is equal only to what the employees had paid and not the contributions paid from the part of the employers, which were equal in amount. The second option was that they would renounce to receiving the money and thus would retain their retirement right from Germany.

The office of the labor attaché in the Greek embassy in Bonn sent out advice to the social workers, trade unions, the Greek program in the Bavarian Radio and the Greek press published in West Germany. The advice concerned the insurance rights of the Greek workers, since many “intermediary offices” took advantage of the confusion and made profit to the detriment of workers⁵⁶⁵.

⁵⁶³ *Rizospastis*, 24/12/1982.

⁵⁶⁴ Heiko Korner and Ursula Mehrlander. “New Migration Policies in Europe: The Return of Labor Migrants, Remigration Promotion and Reintegration Policies.” *International Migration Review* 20, no. 3 (1986): 673. <https://doi.org/10.2307/2545711>.

⁵⁶⁵ *To Vima*, 29/12/1979, P.2

The Ministry of Labor characterized the pace of return migration from West Germany (25.000-30.000 people per year) as smooth and desirable. However, it denied the information that the German authorities would take indirect measures to encourage return like the non-renewal of work permits, no unemployment benefits, or prime given for return⁵⁶⁶.

VI.D. (RE)TURNING IT AROUND

The French human geographer Emile Kolodny spent his early career studying the island communities of the Aegean, learnt Greek to interact with his narrators and travelled thoroughly throughout Greece in the 1960s. Starting in 1974 and for four years, he frequented coffeehouses owned by Greek migrants in Stuttgart, attempting to understand how the community life was organized and what was the typology of people one could encounter in those places.

Before him, the Greek journalist George Matzouranis, beginning in 1966, faced many obstacles in his effort to collect testimonies to get a satisfactory sample for his book published eventually in 1974. As he wrote commenting on his fieldwork, “the doors do not open easily. First at the state offices, in the statistic service. [...] then you return to the migrants. They are afraid of the repercussions of answering even the simplest and most innocent questions. The only solution is working at the factory, staying at the dorms, participating in the community, the trade unions, the sports club. To break the ice, to gain trust ... All those are necessary materials to study a great problem. Thus, we can't say it's over. It's just the beginning”⁵⁶⁷.

Likewise, Kolodny also described his tenuous efforts to gain their trust. Because the naïve farmers and fishermen were now industrial workers in a foreign environment, and the recent experience of the junta made them even more suspicious of intruders. He never carried a tape recorder with him but listened carefully amidst the beer drinking and noise of the coffeehouse and then rushed home exhausted to note down all of what he had heard that evening.

His main focus was Bad Cannstatt, on the outskirts of Stuttgart, hosting one fifth of the 14.000 Greeks living in Stuttgart, mixed mostly with Yugoslavs and Turks, and

⁵⁶⁶ *To Vima*, 22/4/1977, P.8

⁵⁶⁷ George Matzouranis, *Ellines Ergates stin Germania (Gastarbeiter)*, Athens, Gutenberg, 1974, 307-308.

less Italians, Spanish and Portuguese. In the first part of his research, he tried to situate and contextualize the Greek kafeneio, which borrowed its clientele and food from the Greek tradition and its equipment and style from the German Gaststätte. After defining the reigning atmosphere in the kafeneion, its owners and waiters, he moved into discussing with the workers at different times of the day.

He constructed the stories he heard in the form of evolving life stories, since his narrators were still moving back and forth between Greece and the Federal Republic, depending on job opportunities and family events. His target group were migrants from Samothrace, an island in Northern Greece, opposite of Alexandroupolis, where he travelled often. During these four years and later, he kept tracing the movement of his interviewees, who became his friends, and what stood out was their dilemmas regarding return migration.

Migration was also a family business, thus he described what were the strategies his narrators used to survive and thrive during their migration journey. He commented also on mixed marriages, unemployment, retirement and social troubles, like alcoholism and gambling. Although the Gastarbeiter were his main focus, he moved beyond this closed circle to other Greeks living alongside them like teachers, students and shop owners who left the factories to invest in the third sector.

Sometimes his tone was didactic, and he used his anthropological lens to search for remnants of the traditional lifestyle he encountered in the Greek space among the Gastarbeiter of West Germany. Despite the romanticism of this effort, it is important to follow the simultaneous alteration of people exposed to different habits and lifestyles and the evolvement of their homeland in their absence, and especially because of their absence and their remittances.

Emile Kolodny also wrote a monography on Néokaisaria, a small village near Katerini founded in 1928 by refugees from Pontos, and Stuttgart between 1975 and 1977. His study was part of a bigger research project run by CNRS since 1975 concerning the labor migration from six Mediterranean countries to the Federal Republic. Between 1962 and 1973, Macedonia and Thrace provided 53% of the total migrant workers to the Federal Republic. In 1973, a total of 406.394 Greek citizens

lived on West German soil and after four years of crisis, at the end of September 1978, their number declined to 305.523⁵⁶⁸.

Kolodny attempted a small ethnographical description of the changing lives of the villagers of Neokaisaria. They started as children of small landowners and evolved through their proletarianization in West Germany into residents of a developed country. Through the acquisition of mobile and immobile property, they could afford a more affluent lifestyle, manifested through the modern equipment of their seemingly modest apartments: domestic appliances, a Mercedes car, smart outlook and expensive food.

Kolodny had the chance to experience the amalgam of tastes the migrants had to offer in their dinners: roasted chicken with potatoes, salad, feta cheese and olives, beer and, instead of Turkish coffee, the more modern filter coffee with milk, in tune with the new habits of the host country. Despite the fact that many of the migrants managed already in the 1970s to have enough savings to buy a flat or a shop and equipment, the decisive step to return required much thought and involved much hesitation. The main motives to return would be more often the loss of employment by one of the spouses or the schooling of the children⁵⁶⁹.

The impact of the migrants' remittances, according to Kolodny, was more discreet in the villages and more pronounced in small cities and towns, like Katerini. The old buildings and shops of a Balkan outlook were replaced by tall blocks of flats in béton armé and modern stores. The traditional grocery shop selling all kinds of food became a specialized store for electronics, and the local coffeeshop turned into a fashionable café. On the shelves of every shop, you would find products with the label "made in (West) Germany" and, on the streets, taxis of the brand Daimler-Benz. Thus, the provincial Greek town was covered with a German varnish.

There were some who wasted their salaries in taverns, some more established and integrated who managed to become specialized and thus hesitated to leave their position in the fear that they would never find a similar one in Greece and there was

⁵⁶⁸ Emile Kolodny, "L'émigration macédonienne vers l'Allemagne Fédérale : le cas de Néokaisaria (Pierie)." *Méditerranée* 41, no. 1 (1981): 21-22. <https://doi.org/10.3406/medit.1981.1972>.

⁵⁶⁹ *Ibid*, 30-32.

also the mass of indecisive, emerged in an annual “va-et-vient” and in a deep and never-ending temporariness⁵⁷⁰.

Juliet du Boulay conducted her ethnographic fieldwork in rural Greece for nearly twenty years. Her first visit to the village of Ambeli in Evoia was in 1966 and until the publication of her article on dowry in 1983, there was a significant transformation of social attitudes, also under the influence of mass emigration. For example, in 1966 the only two unmarried men who remained were considered to be "stupid" (χαζοί), because they had preferred village life to emigration. However, the supply of grooms was less than the demand, first because of the emigration of the young men from the mountains, and secondly because in any case the definition of a "good" bridegroom had shifted to include only plainsmen. Thus, grooms were well known to be "few" (λιγοστοί).

The men on the plains were well placed to take advantage of the new opportunities presented by roads and mechanization in the lowlands, which often though required capital. Wage labor and small cash enterprises in the plains created a corresponding change in the dowry, making it a vehicle for entry into a consumer society. A woman was worth whatever her dowry was worth, and the important element in the marriage transaction was no longer honor or the intrinsic characteristics inherited from the kindred, but cash⁵⁷¹.

As the OECD advisors also noted in 1978, “Greek households considered real estate as the safest and more profitable asset to hold, and this preference was reinforced by general social attitudes and traditions. In the absence of a more determined policy of industrial development, the authorities have in the past frequently fostered housing investment as the easiest means of maintaining the economy on a high growth path”⁵⁷².

Using official migration figures for the early 1970s and employing the Greek Statistical Service’s classification of settlements into rural, semi-rural and urban, Lianos found in his survey dating back to 1975 that, while 53% of recorded emigrants left from rural areas, only 35% of them return back to them. And on the contrary,

⁵⁷⁰ Ibid, 34.

⁵⁷¹ Juliet du Boulay, “The Meaning of Dowry: Changing Values in Rural Greece.” *Journal of Modern Greek Studies* 1, no. 1 (1983): 262-263. <https://doi.org/10.1353/mgs.2010.0051>.

⁵⁷² OECD (1978), *OECD Economic Surveys: Greece 1978*, OECD Publishing, Paris, p.33-35. https://doi-org.eui.idm.oclc.org/10.1787/eco_surveys-grc-1978-en.

although only 36% initially left from urban areas, upon return 59% of the returnees settled in urban areas⁵⁷³.

Returnees considered themselves as a nouveau riche class, since they were no longer peasants and had little wish to go back to working the land. Nevertheless, in rural areas, the only alternatives were small-scale agriculture, part-time jobs or unemployment. In urban areas, they could choose the informal sector, petty services or the tourist industry, utilizing both their foreign savings and their language experience⁵⁷⁴.

Many tourist enterprises were small family-owned or individual firms. Often, they were funded by incomes earned in industry, civil service or agriculture. In some less developed regions, hotel services were part of household work, run mainly by female labor and providing a comfortable second income. Since the early 1970s, such facilities mushroomed around the country and their status was often semi-official.⁵⁷⁵

Return migrants have been defined as agents of change, since they change their home regions consciously, they reflect on and compare their positions within their host and home countries and through this reflection, start to envision necessary changes in their home regions⁵⁷⁶.

Often, return was prompted by hopes of better job opportunities in their country of origin. Nonetheless, low wage levels would not permit the family to have the same living standards as it used to have in the host country. Moreover, migrants who returned following a long period abroad could find themselves in a society that was different from the one they left⁵⁷⁷.

Usually, reintegration problems of the return emigrants caused by false expectations, estrangement, illness and a lack of realistic, economic plans for the future added up to the problems of the returnees⁵⁷⁸. The Solidarity Centre for Return Migrants was

⁵⁷³ Theodore P. Lianos, "Flows of Greek Out-Migration and Return Migration." *International Migration* 13, no. 3 (1975): 131.

⁵⁷⁴ Judt, *Postwar*, 343.

⁵⁷⁵ Margarita Dritsas, "The Advent of the Tourist Industry in Greece during the Twentieth Century" in Franco Amatori, G. Jones, A. Colli(eds.), *Deindustrialization and Reindustrialization in 20th Century Europe*, Milano: Franco Angeli,1998, 198.

⁵⁷⁶ Robert Nadler, Zoltán Kovács, Birgit Glorius, and Thilo Lang, *Return Migration and Regional Development in Europe: Mobility against the Stream*. London, 2016, 369.

⁵⁷⁷ Lepore, Silvia. "Problems Confronting Migrants and Members of Their Families When They Return to Their Countries of Origin." *International Migration* 24, no. 1 (March 1986): 100-101. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1468-2435.1986.tb00104.x>.

founded in 1979 in Athens and Thessaloniki with the support of the Church. It published a survey according to which 26.8% of the returnees had psychological problems, while high percentages suffered from spine problems, digestion system problems and respiratory problems.

As for the problems of the second generation, social workers of the center commented that “those kids pass through an identity crisis, because in Germany they feel and they are called Greeks and in Greece they feel like and are called ‘Little Germans’”. Finally, the staff underlined that the adaptation problems had to do with the situation in the host country. Thus, the lack of confidence, the insecurity, the aggressiveness, the exaggerated introversion, the difficulties in Greek language and the low performance at school were the main characteristics of those kids, many of whom faced psychological or psychopathological problems⁵⁷⁹.

The majority of those who returned either failed to make an adjustment to the new environment or acquired skills which were irrelevant to the Greek labor market, due to their lack of heavy and advanced industries. Some returnees, dismayed by the low salaries and social status of the industrial workers, felt compelled to either join others in marginal service activities or re-emigrate⁵⁸⁰.

The continuous rapid increase in living standards and the decreasing unemployment and underemployment associated with emigration masked the need to deal fully with the structural problems of industry⁵⁸¹. The absence of government policy for transferring remittances deprived the country of the opportunity to make the best out of them⁵⁸².

Migrants’ beliefs about their home country were based exclusively on information provided by informal social networks, creating a gap between expectations and reality at home⁵⁸³. Reintegration into a small community was easier, because returnees found

⁵⁷⁸ Korner and Mehrlander. “New Migration Policies in Europe”, 673.

⁵⁷⁹ *Rizospastis*, 18/11/1981,p.5.

⁵⁸⁰ Xideas, “A Study of the Determinants of Migration”, 89-90.

⁵⁸¹ OECD (1978), *OECD Economic Surveys: Greece 1978*, OECD Publishing, Paris,p.33-35. https://doi-org.eui.idm.oclc.org/10.1787/eco_surveys-grc-1978-en.

⁵⁸² Nikas and King. “Economic Growth through Remittances”, 251-252..

⁵⁸³ Maria Dikaiou, “Present Realities and Future Prospects among Greek Returners.” *International Migration* 32, no. 1 (January 1994): 38-39. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1468-2435.1994.tb00514.x>.

themselves again among relatives, friends and acquaintances. Generally, the less time they spent abroad, the better were the chances for readaptation and reintegration⁵⁸⁴.

The feeling of a second failure and the idea of re-emigration as a safety valve could be a source of conflict for the entire family. Even slight social activity in the country of emigration resulted in the generation of warm personal ties in the working environment, with friends or neighbors⁵⁸⁵.

After 1982, many returning migrants experienced a deterioration in working conditions. Jobs were hard to find, wages were lower and working conditions poorer, while many migrant women were confined to home and the raising of children⁵⁸⁶.

Elena returned to Greece in 1978 for her daughter. She had left her village since 1968, when she was only 25 years old, after an arranged marriage with a Greek man already working in Germany. She gave birth to her daughter in Germany, but because of the hectic lifestyle of Cologne and her divorce, she preferred to leave her daughter to her mother back in Greece. However, her mother got older and tired after ten years of her grand-daughter's upbringing. Elena understands her frustration but is also critical of her mother's conservatism, "my mum would constantly say I can't no more, she has boys as friends, I can't control her. Old-school minds...". For one year after her return, she settled in her mother's house, where her brother also lived on the upper floor. Elena would always cook meat, so when she left her mother would say that she spoiled her eating meat every day.

Being a young, divorced woman in a village made Elena quite popular among the men, and, as she admits, she had many offers for an arranged marriage. Nonetheless, she picked a man who had no children. Her reasoning was that she had just lived two years together with her ex-husband, so now it was time to start afresh, to start a new life. In any case, Elena had her own money, and she could be independent. As she narrates with humor, but also furious, "sometimes I say that God gave me years to live, so that I sustain others! My first husband had no money, I gave them a dowry of

⁵⁸⁴ E. Panayotakopoulou, "Specific Problems of Migrant Women Returning to the Country of Origin, Particularly as Regards Employment and Social Services." *International Migration* 19, no. 1-2 (January 4, 1981): 220-222. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1468-2435.1981.tb00224.x>.

⁵⁸⁵ Lepore, Silvia. "Problems Confronting Migrants and Members of Their Families When They Return to Their Countries of Origin." *International Migration* 24, no. 1 (March 1986): 102-103 and 107-108. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1468-2435.1986.tb00104.x>.

⁵⁸⁶ Dikaiou, "Present Realities", 36-37.

9.000 drachmas. When I was living here with his family, I was shopping for them, then in Germany again he had no spoon at home! I built from scratch three households, like the birds who destroy their nest and build it again. If I write a book, one is not enough, I had many troubles...That's why my face is full of wrinkles, like the map of Greece!"

When she came back from Germany, she was supposed to get a high pension. However, she withdrew the money of the retirement, because of her compassion. Her ex-husband had bronchitis, a problem with his lungs, so she used the money to buy him a car, because he made it worse by driving a motorcycle. The secretary of the pension office in Germany advised her to keep her pension rights, because she would have profit in the future. But Elena was thinking, "will I live that much, in the end? Because my father died young, so maybe I will also...Will I gift my money to the state?"

However, her new husband was unemployed, and the family had expenses. Never defeated, Elena asked around and she was advised to get enrolled in the farmers' insurance program, the OGA⁵⁸⁷. Luckily, she also had the rent of the house she bought in Thessaloniki, as an investment of her savings in Germany. Still, that was not enough, so Elena took up seasonal jobs in the fields. She was cropping almonds, walnuts, sugarcane, potatoes, whatever was available. She would pay 21.000 drachmas per semester to be insured by the OGA. This way, she is now getting a basic pension of 520 euros per month.

Kitsa enjoyed the appreciation of her superiors in the factory of BEIERSDORF. One day, she was called to the director's office. There, they announced her their intention to send her to Athens as responsible of a department. Although Kitsa's enthusiasm was great, there was a third person to consider, and that was her mother-in-law! As Kitsa regretfully remembers, "she put in a veto and and thought that if I would go to Athens, I would cheat on my husband. The minds were backwards. Thus, we moved to Thessaloniki, where we had bought a house already, but I did all kinds of jobs and I suffered a lot, until I got a pension".

⁵⁸⁷ OGA was founded in 1961 in accordance with basic law number 4169 its initial purpose being to grant old-age/widow's pensions, as well as to provide the population employed in agriculture with healthcare services. seen in http://www.oga.gr/EN/index_en.php.

The pension she is actually receiving nowadays is half-Greek and half-German. Respectively, the German is higher considering that she only worked there ten years and in Greece thirty years. Luckily, Kitsa kept her pension rights intact, contrary to her sister, who receives no pension, because she withdrew her retirement money. When Kitsa and her family returned from Germany, she worked in various jobs: in a tobacco warehouse, in a fisher's, in an ironing company. Her husband found a job in PEPSA, a company producing car exhausts. He worked there 35 years, until retirement, and he found that job through her cousin's husband.

When they returned from Germany, Kitsa and her sister invested in a bakery in Neapoli, in West Thessaloniki. However, it was very far to commute every day, and her sister was still in Germany, so Kitsa was alone to keep it. During that period, she also had her little daughter sick in the hospital, so as she remembers, "I was fed up and I decided to give everything up and sell the store. Here in Thessaloniki, I had hard times, I would go to work in the tobacco warehouses near the bridge of Stavroupoli amidst the fields. I would take the taxi with a co-worker every day before sunrise, and we would walk through the fields to get to work and start at six. We were always looking around; we were very afraid".

Kitsa also worked in an iron press, where her body suffered from the hot vapor and her skin had bubbles. In order to be faster and more flexible, she was not wearing her apron while leaning against the hot iron press. One day, she was all wet because the bubbles had popped, and her boss came to check. As she remembers, they were a couple, very kind employers, who appreciated her a lot.

When Aliki and her family left Germany in the late 1960s, there was no Greek school for their children. Although a year after a new school was established, Aliki argues "but how can you go back? Anyway, we weren't greedy, to have this, to have the other. We just wanted to sustain our family, to have some security. We bought a little flat and we lived there peacefully". They returned and settled in Thessaloniki, where her husband Kostis set up his own business of truck exports.

The main problem for Poppy and her family was the schooling for their son. There was only a Greek class for two and a half hours per week. As she assures me, they didn't want their child to remain illiterate, they had just one child. At the same time, there was a redistribution of fields in their village, offering land to the landless. Poppy

had no land, so they had a right to take some. Moreover, there were rumors that the factory they were working for in Germany, POWER, would shut down, and they would all be fired. Thus, all in all they stayed in Germany four and a half years; they returned in 1974.

In the end, Poppy's family settled in Thessaloniki, because they calculated that in the village, they could not sustain themselves with the income from the fields, given that the prices of cotton and fruits were very low. When they returned, they brought back savings worth 500.000 drachmas. They rented a house, and we opened a store in Neapoli (West Thessaloniki, the same neighborhood where Kitsa opened her bakery). It was a bookstore with books, toys and cosmetics. In the beginning it was making a lot of profit because they had many customers. Nevertheless, some years later, when the supermarkets opened, they had everything in gross and cheaper. As Poppy concludes, "this destroyed us".

Some years later, her son returned to Germany to the same place they had been, and he found a job in AUDI. Before this, he had been working in Greece in the Public Electricity Company (ΔΕΗ) with a temporary contract. Having a relative working in STAYER, a factory making buses and trucks, Poppy wanted to find a job there for her son too. However, her son preferred to give a chance to Germany first. Poppy's daughter was born in Greece after their return, in 1977.

Sofia's parents bought a little flat in Drama, where they returned and lived the last years of their life. Her mother took care to send her children back to Greece first and then she returned. As Sofia remembers, later, even if they wanted to, they could not go back, because things had changed in Germany. For instance, in 1977, when she went to renew her residence permit, she faced a disrespectful behavior. She went to the Immigration Office and the clerk had his lunch break, "he was eating his egg and he said, 'anyway don't bother, you won't get any permission, you will all go back to your countries!'. A lady at her office told me that if you had concluded ten years of stay in Germany, you could stay forever and you could go anywhere you preferred. Because when there was unemployment, they implemented a system of zones. They would send you only where there were vacancies, and they would give priority to Germans. Moreover, they would offer every family of foreigners 10.000 DM to return to their country".

However, when Sofia first returned to Greece, she had an equally bad impression. She worked some months in a very modern gym with a pool, yoga and sauna. Then, she got married. For 3-4 years she did not work, and this led her to anti-depressants. One day, she took the big step to throw them all away and started working again in a room at her house. Later, when her kids were teenagers, she opened an institute in the city center, her specialty being massage. She bought all the equipment in Germany, and they are still like brand new. The same with all the appliances she bought there for her parents' house. Her parents died and the appliances are still there, the MIELE washing machine and the AEGE oven!

As Sofia confides, her greatest loss through her relocation was her professional development. At least, she is proud that she managed to offer the best education to her own children. As she reminisces, “what I learned in Germany professionally had light years of difference with the situation in Greece. It took me time to get used to the Greek mindset and lifestyle. There, I knew yes was yes and no was no, there was trust. On the contrary, here I had trouble, and mainly in my relationship with my husband, so we ended up divorcing after sixteen years. I succeeded at least in one thing in my life, to offer to my children the best education, what I was deprived of with the change, by leaving my country. I could have been a scientist, because I loved reading. I didn't, but still I managed to get away from being a plain worker with nothing. My work saved me, because I became independent, and I sustained myself and my children”.

Kyriakos worked ten years in the biggest buildings in West Berlin. He worked in the Kuhlhaus, in the Kennedy-Schule in Zellendorf, in the Klewerk for a recycling industry. He also worked in the Ku'dammkare (Kurfüstendamm), the theatre, and also at the first anti-atomic bunker in Berlin. However, as Kyriakos recalls, the constructions' sector, once a very lucrative profession, lost its prestige due to the mass employment of unskilled workers, mainly from Turkey, who would work for much lower wages. In the meanwhile, Kyriakos met a German man, Klaus, who owned a canteen and advised him to open an Imbiss as well. Indeed, Klaus helped him with the paperwork, and as Kyriakos boasts, “I was the first Greek in Berlin to open such a business. I took a loan and opened this business in May 1976. After my initiative, also my friends Stratos and Apostolos and his brother-in-law Zacharias opened their own

Imbiss. After two years I opened a second Imbiss, and in the third year I opened a biergarten.”

As Maren Möhring suggested in her work about foreign food in the Federal Republic of Germany, between 1975 and 1985, the number of foreign restaurants doubled from around 20,000 to 40,000. Establishing one’s own business often was the only way to make a living in Germany, also for family members who kept coming to the Federal Republic in the wake of family reunification policy. To start their own businesses, migrants had to have the stamp (Vermerk) that indicated that they were not allowed to become self-employed removed from their documents. The decision lay with the Aliens Department (Ausländerbehörde)⁵⁸⁸.

The final decision, however, was left to administrative discretion. Food stalls and pubs were refused particularly often for they were not regarded as establishments that significantly contributed to the local economy. A Greek applicant who wanted to open up a food stall in Berlin in 1973 was informed that in Steglitz, where he planned to establish his snack-bar, a multiplicity of restaurants and food stalls already existed⁵⁸⁹.

Kyriakos was a clever businessman, because he would buy stores at a low price and then resell them to make a profit. He invested this money to build his house on Lesbos from 1980 to 1989. He was forced to open his first shop in the name of a German person, because the clerk responsible for the permission to open a business denied him the required document. This German middleman blackmailed him, but Kyriakos blackmailed him back! Almost like in a spy movie, Kyriakos had recorded all their discussions. As he jokes, “the Turks had beaten him up and sent him to the hospital, I would send him to prison!”⁵⁹⁰.

In the meanwhile, Kyriakos did not give up his rights so easily and went to a lawyer. They went to the courts against the West German state, because he was denied the right to open a business. Finally, he won the trial after two years, so then he registered the stores under his name. However, in the end, he took a pension only for the ten years he was working in the constructions. As he admits, “I made this mistake not to

⁵⁸⁸ Möhring, Maren. “Food for Thought: Rethinking the History of Migration to West Germany Through the Migrant Restaurant Business.” *Journal of Contemporary History* 49, no. 1 (January 2014): 219&222. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0022009413505666>.

⁵⁸⁹ Ibid, 223-224.

⁵⁹⁰ Interview with Kyriakos.

pay for insurance when I had my stores. But I thought that instead I could invest this money in Greece and make my business there”.

His clientele was German, but he didn't keep the pub for many years. The reason was not financial, on the contrary he made a big profit. However, he had other kinds of troubles, because “the women would flirt with me when they got drunk, and my wife didn't like it. [...] In '79, after having the pub for one year, my wife gave me an ultimatum, either her or the pub...The neighbors were gossiping, but I never cheated my wife. I told myself you won't go with a customer. But my wife wouldn't believe me. All that because one Saturday night a woman entered the pub.”

This woman was an actress and singer of mixed Italian and Belgian origins. She asked Kyriakos if she could just sit in the corner playing her guitar, but then she wanted to come and play every Saturday. Kyriakos found himself in confusion: she was seeing a huge Italian guy, Bruno, but she confessed her love to him and promised to take him with her touring the world on cruises. Kyriakos had to put up some boundaries, and thus he “told her to halt, because I was married, and I loved my family. She was not discouraged, though! Every night she would wait for me to walk me home for this half kilometer. But I was clear, I told her to forget about it, because all of my life was at stake. During this period, my wife was also pregnant. So, I sold the pub, and it was all over”.

From 1980 until 1989, Kyriakos was building his house in a village neighboring his native one on Lesbos island. In 1980, he had just sold a store in Berlin and had one million drachmas to invest. When he went to the village coffeeshop and he met his old friends, he asked them for advice. Kyriakos picked this place to build, because when he was 17-18 years old, he had some friends there and he thought it was the only dry place by the sea. He knew already that in the future he had to build his house there. However, he still regrets he trusted his friends, because as he laments, “there were so many empty land fields, and they sent me here, to the most difficult person ever with whom I spent seventeen years in the courts!”

Generally, the "early days" of Greek gastronomy in the Federal Republic can be traced back to the mid/late 1970s. Some facilitations under the law on foreigners existed from the late 1970s and finally the accession of Greece to the EC in 1981

meant that the prohibition of self-employment ceased to exist and made it possible for Greek citizens to easily obtain a business license⁵⁹¹.

Kostas and his wife, with their joint budget earned by working in factories for almost a decade, opened their first store in early 1981. They opened it as a partnership with his wife's cousin for one year, and then they parted, and Kostas opened another restaurant. Kostas reminisced with humor about these first entrepreneurial efforts, "whoever opened a restaurant there had no idea of customer service. When you have no clue, you have no clue! But you know the work wakes up the worker, indeed! I was in debt because of the restaurant, but still I applied to open a gyros place, which I refurbished on my own because we had no money left. I opened it in the name of someone else, and it saved me. It still exists, it's a gold mine in Welheim. Then, I sold it and opened the same gyros in another village, and again it was a gold mine! Luck, good judgement, say whatever you want..."

Many of the early Greek restaurants were a mix of Greek kafeneion and German pub, in parallel, Greek-run restaurants emerged, which almost without exception aimed at German customers. However, clearly more successful were the restaurants specializing in Greek cuisine, initially targeting the Greek population but also increasingly meant for Germans⁵⁹².

When Kostas opened his first restaurant, the Greek customers would only create trouble. They would come 7-8 people together and they would only order some orange juice or water. On top of that, they would discuss, disagree and shout. Thus, Kostas just kept the correct ones and ousted the others because they would chase away the rest of his clientele. According to his personal experience, the Greeks and generally the foreigners were also not good employers, because the Germans respected the laws and insured their employees, but the rest only did so if they really need them.

As Kostas admits he had a vice to build new shops for the thrill this offered him. However, once a store was sold and until the opening of the new one, they would spend the money. In 1993, they rented a biergarten in Brühl, in Phantasieland, where they served 100 tables in the garden. Some days they would sell 500 liters of beer,

⁵⁹¹ Maren Möhring, *Fremdes Essen*. München: Oldenbourg Wissenschaftsverlag, 2012, 841. <https://doi.org/10.1524/9783486717792>

⁵⁹² *Ibid*, 363-364.

2000 glasses per day! They had 4-5 waiters, their wives in the kitchen and some helpers. As Kostas regrets, “but I exhausted my wife⁵⁹³!”

Kostas received a German pension, mainly for the years he had worked at BAYER. On the contrary, his wife is not retired yet, because as her employer, he didn't insure her since in Germany they were not obliged to pay for retirement. As he admits, “we did stupid things when we were young, but then we also continued doing them! You don't think of the future. We had money at hand, and we didn't calculate, it was evaporating...Someone once told me to pay for retirement, because money finishes, but the pension is not over. Indeed, I had a truck full of money and now it's all gone! At least, I have a clear conscience that I spent my money, and nobody fooled me. Because many returned and invested in partnerships here in Greece and their partners tricked them”.

Generally, Kostas considered that the guest workers' big mistake was the idea of returning to Greece, instead of investing in Germany. He had nothing against returning, yet they could still receive money from their investments there. However, there was an obstacle that hindered them from investing in Germany, namely undeclared profits. Thus, they couldn't use it in Germany, and they brought it to Greece. If they had declared it as an income (at some point he was earning 10.000 DM per month!), they could have bought property there.

Kostas insisted that “it was a silly thought, always to focus our attention on Greece. We stayed there 40 years, and now we are 70 years old and have no appetite for anything...I could have stayed here from the start, I was an electrician, I was specialized, so I could have been hired by the Public Power Corporation (ΔΕΗ). In the beginning, people were poor, they had problems, but later the Greeks were better off. In the metapolitefsi, there was some affluence, PASOK distributed benefits. You couldn't say you brought something from Germany, they also had it there. Plus, they wouldn't let you pay anything, they would invite you instead”.

After returning from Germany, Kostas and his wife settled for seven years in their newly built house in his native village. Later, they returned again to Germany for seven more years, but Kostas had troubles adapting to a life deprived of socializing.

⁵⁹³ Interview with Kostas.

He almost got depressed and as a remedy he took long drives, “a walk of 70 kilometers”, as he sarcastically noted. In his early seventies, Kostas was glad to be back in his village again, where he had his garden and could see his friends every day.

As we already saw in the previous chapter, Kostas, approached by some party cadres in an Italian cafe, soon joined the Greek Communist Party. According to Kostas, the 1970s were the best years of the party’s presence in West Germany, because they distributed the newspaper Rizospastis and the DKP in West Germany was strong. Very often, they would make gatherings, grill souvlakia and sell vouchers for fundraising. When the House of the People, KKE’s headquarters in Athens was being built they sent from Germany 80 million drachmas.

As Kostas remembers, “the KKE was controlling the community of Cologne for many years. In Leverkusen, it was mainly controlled by PASOK. There were many kovas in West Germany back then. I once served as a kova secretary, and in Cologne I was member of a committee (ακτιδική επιτροπή). The fall of the Soviet Union destroyed us, otherwise we would be very strong now...When I was in Germany, I didn’t notice the existence of PAK resisting the junta, but only later as PASOK. As KKE we were very strong in West Germany, we were defying PASOK”.

In 1977, the party asked for help for the elections. Since Kostas had no money, his comrades lent him 400 DM, and he came with his Alfa Romeo all the way to his village to get organized for the electoral campaign. They found a closed house, whose owners were fur-makers in Kastoria, and they allowed them to break the door and use it. Indeed, they broke the door and what they saw was a big courtyard. The women stormed with brooms, they cleaned, they prepared everything, they made coffee. They also found some speakers, they installed them, and they were playing resistance songs (antartika).

As Kostas relived the moment, “on the opposite side of the street there were the PASOK offices, they were organized, they were not spontaneous like us. But really, they had the exact same songs, they played the exact same cassettes! We were very active, in ‘77 or ‘81 we were after the 17% of votes, they were nice years. We were writing slogans on the walls, we had the Party youth that would climb and glue posters everywhere, I feel nostalgia for those years, it was really pleasing to us to fight for a cause!”

Naturally, Kostas was bitter with the Greek state and its care for the Gastarbeiter, since “Greece never did anything for us, not a single penny!” He emphasized time and again that it never offered anything to the Greeks in West Germany. On the contrary, the workers were sustaining it with all the remittances they were sending.

Andreas might owe his disillusionment with politics to the poor treatment the authorities offered to a returnee like him. It took them two years to give his newly established fur industry water supply and three years to connect electricity. As Andreas concludes, “when I came to Greece, there were crowds in the streets, the poor fellows were gathering. And what would happen? All the politicians once elected would be corrupted and leave the people poor, closing the factories where they were working”. It is not the best country for investments. When we first came during the junta, they were giving loans to support entrepreneurs. These were good years both in Greece and in Germany. Now it is wild, you cannot trust anyone. Whenever you go, you should be careful!”

CHAPTER SEVEN: ALL'S WELL THAT ENDS WELL? MEMORY AND LEGACY OF THE GREEK GASTARBEITER

VII.A. AKKORD TOUCHED A CHORD

Already from the early sixties numerous popular songs themed on the increasing flows of emigration appeared. The most well-known singer, who tied his name with the painful and tortured stories of separation, was Stelios Kazantzidis. Stelios Kazantzidis, in particular, acquired extraordinary popularity after 1955 and became the most influential musician of *laiko* until his early retirement in 1965. He recorded hundreds of songs, performed with spectacular success in nightclubs and at concerts, and acquired the status of a social hero.

Kazantzidis was extremely popular among the lower strata of the city and the country and managed to create a strong emotional and symbolic bond with a large proportion of his listeners. The singer created a ritual art of symbolic healing and protest, which responded to the accumulated social suffering of large sections of the Greek people. His songs, and more generally the grieving *laiko*, became the main public outlet for the articulation and recounting of experiences silenced by the official narratives of both the state and the Left⁵⁹⁴.

Stories of migration were omnipresent in Greek cultural production from the folk songs to the popular music of the 1960s–1970s. Thus, “a folk song about migration from the nineteenth century came to inhabit the same cultural space as a story about refugees from Asia Minor in 1922, a popular song from the 1950s and a film about Greek immigrants in Germany in the 1960s. The sticking glue was the idea of ‘common fate’ and ‘common experience’ of a unified ‘migrant Greekness’”⁵⁹⁵.

The main topoi that permeated the lyrics of those early songs were the suffering of the migrants’ family, especially their mother or spouse, the difficulties that the hard work posed to them and the contrast of the cold atmosphere, literally and metaphorically, with the warmth of the homeland. Moreover, quite usual was the personification of migration as an evil spirit who took away from the national body its best particles and

⁵⁹⁴ Leonidas Economou, “Sentiment, Memory, and Identity in Greek Laiko Music (1945-1967)” In Dafni Tragaki(ed.) *Made in Greece: Studies in Popular Music*, 2019, 24-25.

⁵⁹⁵ Dimitris Papanikolaou, “Repatriation on Screen: Cinema, National Culture and the Immigrant Other since the 1990s” in Dimitris Tziouvas (ed.)’, *Greek Diaspora and Migration since 1700*. Ashgate: Aldershot, 2009, 258-259.

the glorification of patience which would reward both the expatriates and the ones left behind with a quick reunion.

Here, we should note that in the majority of those popular songs the gender of the migrant was predominantly male, and the workers were often characterised as “kids“, “guys“, “folks“. The stereotype of the hard-working breadwinner and head of the family was thus consolidated, ignoring the high numbers of young women who also migrated to West Germany, leaving behind their families.

First, we can have a quick look at the hits of the 1960s sung by Stelios Kazantzidis. In 1961, workers were already leaving “to the factories of Germany and the mines of Belgium“. In 1963, the song cursed migration, because “it is horrible to be a migrant, away from your loved ones, a stranger among strangers“. The simple form of these songs and the emotional atmosphere of lament were reminiscent of the funeral folk songs from Epirus, under the umbrella term of *moiroloi*. George Matzouranis in his 1974 book *Greek workers in Germany*, quoted an adapted version of such a lament in tune with the current tragedy of depopulation: “come out, my mother, and yell in all the neighborhoods/all the girls present to dress in black/ migration split us and took our kids/ their poor bodies are tortured in Germany/ to win their children’s bread“⁵⁹⁶.

In 1964, two Kazantzidis songs reflected on the limited choices of the migrant and the dead end they very often found themselves in. The first goes as follows: “in the train Athens-Germany/ in the third class, seated in a corner/ I leave behind me my black past/ and I leave towards the unknown/ poor and hurt.” The second song was even more pessimistic, depicting the migrant trapped between a dark past and a grimmer future: “bitter as poison/ is the passport/ I took to go abroad./ But what can I do/ oh the poor/ in front of me I have a cliff/ and behind me a black stream. ” In 1965, a song emphasized the hard work of the guest worker, who was “working like a dog,/ to send some money back/he spends sad days/nights bursting into tears/and only then rejoices/when he receives a letter.”

The years 1966-67 were a period of recession in West Germany and a flow of return migration inspired some hope for the eventual reunion of the migrants with their

⁵⁹⁶ The verses in Greek as quoted by Matzouranis: «έβγα μάναμ’ και φώναξε σ’ όλους τους μαχαλάδες/ πόσα κορίτσια είναι δω τα μαύρα να φορέσουν/η ξενιτειά μας χάρισε, μας πήρε τα παιδιά μας/στη Γερμανία σέρνονται τα άμοιρα κορμιά τους/να βρουν τα μεροκάματα να ζήσουν τα παιδιά τους».

families, this time for good. For example, the darkness of sleepless nights could finally alternate with the light of a dawn, when the migrant would return and bring joy to their weeping mother and lonely father. As we can observe, the social criticism of those songs was entrenched in the bitterness of the migrant's experience. Although it was emotionally charged and subtle, it was not direct and blunt, as was the case of the more politically engaged songs we will study in the next paragraphs.

The album "Letters from Germany" composed by Mikis Theodorakis in lyrics by Fontas Ladis was written in the spring of 1966. It was performed by George Zografos in the Lycabettus theatre in Athens in early September 1966 in the First Week of Greek Music. The reaction of the conservative government and the press was virulent, and eight out of the thirteen songs were censored. Finally, they were out again in 1975 in two versions by Minos and Lyra Records.

The concerts took place the 1st and 2nd of September 1966, and the following day the conservative newspaper *Acropolis* published an article entitled "A week of vulgar music by the Lambrakis movement leader". The article accused the composer that instead of real, authentic music he offered to his audience political propaganda and vulgarities. According to *Acropolis*, among the songs there were some with clearly subversive content against the state and the police and proclaiming a revolution. They were also insulting the newspaper, but in its eyes such insults from "enemies of the Nation, are an honor to our newspaper".

After Theodorakis' response that he could bring the issue to the courts, *Acropolis* republished his whole text "for its readers to judge his mental condition!" The newspaper evaluated the composer's statements as arrogant and ridiculous threats and pointed out that selling out a theater of 30.000 seats was not that much of a feat, since the vulgar nature of his songs could easily have allowed Theodorakis to attract an audience of 130.000.

What stands out from those engaged songs is the subtle or open, but anyway obvious criticism towards the fake promises of the authorities, the loyalty of the worker to its party, as for example in the verse: "oh mommy, don't you worry/and I know who who/I know the ones who love me/I know who I love". Moreover, some songs of the album by describing the daily life of the migrants, like their gathering in a Greek

coffeehouse, target the efforts to infiltrate them through the distribution of free newspapers backing the Greek government.

Fontas Ladis in the preface of the album in 1975 commented about the reception of the songs in 1966, and although the youth liked them, they also managed to shock the public opinion because they dared to talk about taboo issues like drug use or sexuality. The song *Mitsos from Farsala*, has as a protagonist a gangster selling drugs, having a girlfriend of color and driving a black limo. Two songs expose the stereotype of the hyper-sexualised Southerners; “a blond from Wiesbaden/ she loves the Greeks/ because they know how/ to be strong and manly in bed” or “the wife of the boss/ always stares through the glass/ and she fancies the workers”.

On the other hand, sex work and prostitution are also mentioned in a song that compares the few savings of a factory worker and the fortune a “woman with brains” can make. Apparently, there is a wordplay with the socially acceptable and timid “woman with brains” in the conservative Greek society and the new standards of a profitable lifestyle in the West.

The idea of the advanced West is, however, strongly criticised for its dark sides and mainly for its fascist elements, which still circulate freely in the form of former SS soldiers who are now street-sellers whispering threats, or pub dwellers yelling insults. More precisely, in the song with the ironic title *Prosperity*, the final verse goes “God saves the Germans/ God saves their system/ which vomits Reich/ olaria-olala”. The war had ended two decades ago, but its memories were still fresh. When a worker met a man wearing a swastika under the fold of his vest, he provoked him to “wear it openly/ if you are a man/ like back then in Greece/ when you were beating up babies”.

Last but not least, the issue of inter-ethnic contacts and solidarity among the different nationalities is depicted in a song dedicated to the joint strikes that “Greeks, Turks and Italians do/for two Spaniards who died in the mines”. A common prayer by a priest and an imam was needed to bless their struggle!

As Fontas Ladis wrote, the reaction from the conservative flank was predictable, given that the songs did not just touch the sensitive chord of their puritanism, but mainly their class instinct. However, the official Left also did not receive the songs positively but rather showed indifference. His bitter comment for his generation was

that it never reached adulthood, since their efforts for a democratic Greece were cut short by the dictatorship⁵⁹⁷.

In the cover of the record, Fontas Ladis noted for the decade between the first and the second circulation of the album: “in the meanwhile, many things and at the same time nothing changed in the life of this country. Migrants set out and leave and others return from Germany, Belgium, Canada and Australia. The needs of the big monopolies in the advanced capitalist countries and especially in Germany are that sometimes they ask for new flows of migrants and sometimes -as it happens lately- they threaten the foreign workers with mass dismissals and forced repatriation”⁵⁹⁸. In the last edition of the album in 2016, Fontas Ladis wished that a time would come when his songs would not resonate with reality...

As Dimitris Papanikolaou suggests, “while the dictatorship had favoured a cheap and shamelessly populist Greek bouzouki version of laiko, the return to a deeply informed appreciation of the older rebetiko seemed once again refreshing and defiant”⁵⁹⁹.

Savvopoulos’ song entitled “The Shack”, included in his 1975 music album *Ten Years of Songs*, suggested that all of Greece was an unending shantytown. It was a country where “the people, the people on the sidewalks/ looking for bread rings and lottery tickets/ herds, herds, herds at the ministries/ applications for Germany”. For Savvopoulos, the people cited gathered at the stadiums, the cafes and the billiard places, gossiped, played cards and only afforded to take a look at the newspapers hung outside kiosks.

As we can expect, the fall of the dictatorship signaled a new age for the politically engaged song, and the year 1974 was a very productive year with two albums concerning migration. More specifically, the album *Robinsones* included the songs “The factory” and “The lamp on my forehead” and was composed by Apostolos Kaldaras together with George Samoladas’ lyrics. In the first song, the protagonists are a couple waking up at 5 am to go to their morning shift. They should be patient

⁵⁹⁷ Fontas Ladis, *Grammata apo tin Germania* (in Greek), Metronomos, Athens, 2016.

⁵⁹⁸ <https://www.ogdoo.gr/diskografia/diskoi-pou-den-ksexasa/ta-grammata-apo-ti-germania-tou-miki-tou-ladi>.

⁵⁹⁹ Papanikolaou Dimitris, *Singing Poets: Literature and Popular Music in France and Greece (1945-1975)*. Routledge, 2007, 108&132-133.

one more year before they are able to return to their 5-year-old children waiting for them back home, like a sparrow in a nest. The second song described the hardships of the miners' work that provided their employers with gold but only daily bread to the workers.

The second album that saw the day in 1974 had the telling title "Metanastes" ("Migrants"). It was composed by Yannis Markopoulos with lyrics by George Skourtis. On its cover the album was described as "a songs' cycle, a bitter dedication by the composer to the people, mostly from the countryside, who left their homeland to find a better life and became workers in the foreign industrial centres of the developed countries of the world".

The class consciousness of those songs was obviously developed, since they presented the alienation of the foreign guest worker through them having no name and just a number to signal their existence in the factory. In the frantic pace of the akkord production the worker had no time and no courage left to talk to his colleagues, as the song "I fabrika" (The Factory) illustrated: "the factory never stops/ it works night and day/ and what's the name of my co-worker/ and of the crazy Italian/ neither can I ask/ nor breathe can I".

As we noticed already above, more and more after the recruitment stop and the family reunification, working couples replaced the single young men of the previous decade. In a touching song of the album, a mother suffers from being apart from her children: "I'm speaking of my children and I'm sweating/ I haven't seen them for a year and I'm melting/ Their grandma writes me they're asking/ to where the trains from the station are departing".

In an article dating 16th of January 1979 in *Rizospastis*, the singer Lakis Chalkias described his tour in Stuttgart, West Berlin, Cologne and Hannover. The program consisted of songs by composers like M. Theodorakis, G. Markopoulos, Hr. Leontis, D. Moutsis, M. Loizos in the first part. The second part consists of rembetika from Vamvakaris, Kaldaras, Tsitsanis and finally folk songs from different places⁶⁰⁰. The singer stated that "the artists should take a positive stance towards them and help them properly. I'm sure that they will all gather around the Greek Communities, and they will develop a great cultural movement. Thus, the youth will be saved from de-

⁶⁰⁰ *Rizospastis*, 16/1/1979.

Hellenization, the American lifestyle and the corruption of the socio-political system in which they live”⁶⁰¹.

Yannis Markopoulos toured the Federal Republic in concerts organized by German scientific and cultural associations and associations of Greek students, scientists and migrants staged in big concert halls. With the motto “Equality, Reconciliation, Education”, Yannis Markopoulos and his 18 membered band toured from the 18th of October to the 8th of November in twelve West German cities. He stated that his main aim was “above all the communication with the Greek migrants, the victims of a harsh reality of struggle and exploitation. It is known that the profit-making bands, which appeared in West Germany, apart from very few exceptions, oversaw the workers who work and are lost in the big industrial centers. This is why my effort will meet its goal only if it passes through messages of responsible musical criteria”⁶⁰².

The young singer Maria Farantouri organized an even more ambitious tour in 18 German cities in 1982, before going to other destinations like Stockholm, Brussels, Los Angeles, New York, Chicago, Toronto and Montreal⁶⁰³. The next year, in May 1983, Farantouri took a three-week tour of the Federal Republic with Zülfü Ömer Livaneli, a Turkish composer, poet, lyricist and interpreter, whose works were banned in Turkey at the time. The issue of Americanisation returned in Livaneli’s statement that “this once successful synthesis of Arabic, Persian, old Turkish and Byzantine elements seek to restore the Turk to the music of his country and to incorporate current trends, since in Turkey the term westernity was pushed into a single formula, which was then used as a master copy.” In those concerts around Germany the two artists’ goal was to tackle *“national narrow-mindedness and xenophobia and change the world as best we can”*⁶⁰⁴.

To return to the star of the 1960s Stelios Kazantzidis, a 1987 song of his still echoed the disillusionment of the migrant, who is a pendulum between their homeland and their adoptive country: “in this place I love/ there is no hand to hold/ and I emigrated /but found no cure/so I came, my homeland, to see you/despite you hurting me”.

⁶⁰¹ *Rizospastis*, 24/2/1979, p.4.

⁶⁰² *Rizospastis*, 10/10/1980.

⁶⁰³ *Rizospastis*, 21/4/1982, p.4.

⁶⁰⁴ *Der Spiegel*, 2/5/1983, issue 18.

VII.B. LITERALLY INSPIRING

George Matzouranis (1931–2017) was born in Athens from parents of Sifnian origins. After finishing his studies at Panteion University, he decided to deal with journalism. In 1957 he left for the Belgian Congo, sent as the correspondent for the newspaper *To Vima* to record the struggle of the Africans against the Belgian colonialists. He continued his postgraduate studies at the University of Munich, and he returned to Greece in 1974. The same year, his book *Greek Workers in Germany* (*Έλληνες Εργάτες στη Γερμανία*) was released. As the author wrote in the preface of the book, the material was collected in the period 1966-67 and 1969-1974 and it was used for a scientific publication in 1969.

In the preface of the book, the journalist Kostas Hatziargyris praised the book for its author's love for the people and his capacity to empathise with the big mass of commoners who struggle and suffer and always hope for a better future. In his view, this book was not only a documentation, but also a work of art for posterity. In the end of the book, the author described how he made this book possible through a long fieldwork of participative observation: “are we done? The map of West Germany has 34 underlined cities. The car ran 70.000 km. Six different factory cards during the study breaks. Four stays in heims and in five dorms. The result: 300 pages, a journal, a few hundred metres of recording tape filled with interviews. And most of all many friendships and acquaintances”⁶⁰⁵.

Matzouranis also commented on the pressures that the surveillance posed to the migrants already before the dictatorship. He described the opposed forces as follows: from the one side, there are the authorities who attack and police the migrants' activities, and from the other side, the migrants themselves who get organized in order to defend their rights. According to Matzouranis, plenty of migrants chose to live a totally basic, quasi-antisocial life, to give up all their rights, abstain from trade unionism and learning German and never participate in collective cultural or political initiatives. Thus, as Polychronis already noticed in his 1964 report: “when meeting migrants, one finds disillusioned, fearful people, always under the state of inner guilt, considering themselves responsible only for work, without any rights in society and

⁶⁰⁵ George Matzouranis, *Ellines ergates*, 307-308.

having the impression that any complaint would result in arrest, dismissal, expulsion and pressures for their relatives back in Greece”⁶⁰⁶.

In the same year, 1974, Vassilis Vassilikos (1934-), the author of the novel *Z*, published a collection of stories concerning the Greek diaspora in the years of the military dictatorship. The title *Fifty-fifty*, according to Vassilikos, was a metaphor for the type of life in-between the two countries. Here, we will have a look at the short story *The worker and the emission 20.20'*, which tells the story of a Greek worker, who was almost “married” with the Greek radio program of the Bavarian Radio. Every day he experienced the same excitement while waiting for the jingle: “whipping the air with the antenna, I’m waiting to hear the jingle (not anymore the song “I am a little shepherd”, but “away in the plains”), and from the last note of the castaneta until the sound of the shepherds’ clarinet there is a crucial break of silence [...] This silence that lasts a bit more than a leap of the heart beat in an instant is capable of bringing me panic in the thought that my emission is drowned in a storm of the airs.”

Following the fall of the Greek Junta and after a total of 28 years in exile in Eastern Europe, Dimitris Hatzis (1913-1981) returned to Greece in 1975 and published in the following year his novel *The Double Book (Το Διπλό Βιβλίο)*. As we read in *Rizospastis*, “the novel *The Double Book* followed the experiences and the thoughts of a Greek Gastarbeiter. The main messages of the book are the alienation, the defeat and the decadence of a world that stands in between the old and the new, the collective and the individual, the traditional and the modern”⁶⁰⁷.

The problem of *nostos* or return penetrates the book. For Chatzis *nostos* is a state of mind in the exiled individual, which is not necessarily tied to one place⁶⁰⁸. The main character ended up with the following conclusion, after comparing his feelings with the homesickness of others: “and I’ll tell you that I’ve been away from Greece for four years now, but never once, not once, have I felt that longing for my country. I don’t even know what that kind of homesickness would feel like. The way I see it, my country is not a fatherland to me in the way Spain is to those silly Spanish girls, or

⁶⁰⁶Ibid,311.

⁶⁰⁷ *Rizospastis*, 6/2/1977, p.8.

⁶⁰⁸ Gerasimus Katsan, ‘Be it Ever so Humble’: Nostalgia for Home and the Problem of Return in Post-War Greek Novels in Dimitris Tziouvas(ed.) *Greek Diaspora and Migration since 1700: Society, Politics and Culture*, Routledge, 2009, 208-209.

Greece to my fellow Greeks who are wracked by longing, the way my pal Skouroyiannis longs for that village of his, Dobrinovo. I'm never back in Sourpi, never at the bus stop where Anastasia stood waiting for me, never at the main square in Almiros where our Sunday movie theater used to be, or at the lumberyard, or down at the canteen in Volos where the boss used to take us. I don't see myself there. I don't want to go back. I am, I guess, a man without a country.”

The author Loula Anagnostaki (1928-2017), sister of the poet Manolis Anagnostakis mentioned above, published her play *The Victory (H Níki)* in 1978. The play is set in an industrial town in Germany, where Nikos, his elderly mother and his sister, Vaso, attempt to survive and adjust in a new reality. The play begins with “assimilated” Greek immigrants in Germany and ends with the image of their untenable return to the homeland⁶⁰⁹.

“The play is a daring comment on the political dead ends of Greece’s contemporary history. As the playwright herself has declared, the characters carry with them all the distinctive characteristics of the primitive Greek family, which unfold through acts of murder and betrayals as well as their mutual attempts to protect each other, through the depiction of persistent experiences of a never-ending social wretchedness”⁶¹⁰.

The writer Petros Markaris (1937-) published and directed the theatre play *The Guests (Οι Φιλοξενούμενοι)* in 1981. The play begins with the announcement of the recruitment agreement between the governments of Greece and Germany. Act One shows how Greek farmhands decide to emigrate to Germany, how they are selected by the authorities, and how they are shipped to Germany. In the play Markaris does not hide his Marxist sympathies in his depiction of Greek guest workers who are subjected to medical examinations by German doctors in postwar Germany. Markaris compares these examinations to the kind concentration-camp prisoners were subjected to by Nazi doctors during World War II. In Act Two Markaris portrays the hardships of the Greek guest workers in various West German cities, especially their struggles to unionize and their efforts to get German citizenship. Markakis portrays the “internal” affairs of the Greek immigrant community in Germany, showing that it is not only the host country that exploits the immigrants.

⁶⁰⁹ George P. Pefanis, “The Greek Emigrant Experience between 1945 and 1980 in the Plays of Petros Markaris and Loula Anagnostaki.” *Journal of Modern Greek Studies* 25, no. 2 (2007): 218. <https://doi.org/10.1353/mgs.2008.0009>.

⁶¹⁰ <http://www.greek-theatre.gr/public/en/greekplay/index/playview/284>.

Markaris ultimately shows how Greek guest workers were gradually integrated into German society. As their children attend German schools and their fluency in German improves, Greek becomes a second language to them. Markaris suggests that German citizenship is the next logical step for the integration of Greek guest workers into German society to give them a chance for equal treatment in the future. The return of these guest workers and their children to Greece is not a viable alternative. They feel estranged from the evolving institutions and culture in Greece, and the Greeks of the homeland do not recognize the repatriated Greek guest workers because they have changed so much⁶¹¹.

The writer and political activist Lili Zografou (1922-1998) published her book *Your vagabond wife* (*Η γυναίκα σου η αλήτισσα*) in 1984. The story revolves around Aristos, a Gastarbeiter in West Germany, who returns to his village only to face an enormous pressure from his family environment to show them his German wife, in their eyes the real token of a migrant's success. Frustrated and cornered, Aristos invents a lie, telling his relatives that his pregnant German wife awaits him in Athens. After trying his luck and failing in finding a German woman to present to his family in dark circles of human trafficking, he returns to West Germany. There, he will indeed meet a German woman, whom he will marry. Totally naive, he ignores his new wife's political extremism, until the moment they both get arrested for terrorist activity. Aristos will get released literally from the prison and metaphorically from his confusing petit-bourgeois, provincial luggage. The whole experience will push him in an intellectual leap, a reflection on the meaning of his life and his position in the world.

VII.C. MOVI(E)NG STORIES

Filmed during the dictatorship and censored by the regime, the film "Open Letter" (*Ανοιχτή Επιστολή*) by George Stamboulopoulos narrates the story of a young middle-class man, born during the time of the German Occupation. The film, which was smuggled at the Locarno Film Festival in 1968, won the International Federation of Film Critics' Federation (FIPRESCI) award and was also screened in Cannes at the *Rencontres Internationales du film pour la Jeunesse* and in Paris by the *Cinematheque Française* in the same year.

⁶¹¹ Pefanis, "The Greek Emigrant Experience", 214-216.

In the opening scene, a group of kids play in the street during the Nazi Occupation. They launch a paper balloon filled with their dreams. Among the children was Dimitris, now aged 30. Nothing has changed since then. In Greece, all the old obstacles barring the progress and development of the individual were still there. Insoluble financial problems halted his studies and forced him to seek “temporary” employment as a junior accountant in a small factory. Eight years later, he has the same insignificant job.

His parents, pressed by the harsh economic reality, are unable to escape the day-to-day struggle to make ends meet and unintentionally trap their son in their fatalistic mentality. The bankruptcy of the factory where he was working and his encounter with an activist teacher pushed him to follow the path of emigration. In the final scene, he bids farewell to his country and his compatriots, who are metaphorically trying to spell the word freedom written on a blackboard⁶¹².

Rainer Werner Fassbinder (1945-1982) is widely known as a catalyst of the New German Cinema movement. His experimental inventiveness with the antiteater began in 1968 with “Katzelmacher”⁶¹³. Fassbinder himself played Jorgos, a Greek guest-worker who is recruited to work in a small town in Bavaria. The youth circulate rumors that Jorgos might be a communist, that he stinks, and that he is not a Christian, reproducing the fascist discourse of demonization of difference⁶¹⁴. While the men immediately gang up against him and use physical violence, the women's responses are more ambivalent. When a Turk is hired by his firm, Jorgos turns out to be as much of a racist as the Germans⁶¹⁵.

The film comments on the exoticization of the foreign guest workers, who appear as over-sexualised. Back in the years of the Third Reich, the Gestapo was very uneasy with the Greek forced laborers recruited in the years 1942-1943. As Mark Mazower describes, “they had a habit of hanging around shops and farms where the men were thought to be absent. To the dismay of the authorities, the Reich's women continued to turn a deaf ear to their warnings . No wonder the German police saw Greek

⁶¹² <https://online.tainiothiki.gr/film/anoikhte-epistole-open-letter/>

⁶¹³ Brigitte Peucker, *A Companion to Rainer Werner Fassbinder*. Wiley, 2012,69.

⁶¹⁴ Katrin Sieg, *Ethnic Drag: Performing Race, Nation, Sexuality in West Germany. Social History, Popular Culture, and Politics in Germany*. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2002, 160-164.

⁶¹⁵ Thomas Elsaesser, *Fassbinder's Germany: History, Identity, Subject*. Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 1996,46.

workers as nothing but a headache [...] In the words of another report, 'the difficulties that have occurred with the Greeks have been greater than the anticipated benefits'.⁶¹⁶

In the early years of the labor recruitment, many male migrants got married into the local population and created competition against local men in the marriage market. However, with increasing family unification and resulting changes on the intra-ethnic marriage market, binational weddings decreased. The concentration of foreigners in specific regions and professions accelerated the pace of intra-ethnic marriages⁶¹⁷.

People from very different contexts converge within a small area, and thus, in Fassbinder's films the guest worker does not have the option of withdrawing to a private space, to his own living space; instead, he is obliged to sleep in crowded or provisional sublet rooms or here one night, there the next, or he wanders through the streets, parks and bars. The film "Katzelmacher" also addresses the theme of escapism when Marie (Hanna Schygulla), the guest worker's temporary girlfriend, dreams of moving to a Greek island with him – to a place where, as she says, "everything is different"⁶¹⁸.

"Reconstruction" (*Αναπαράσταση*) was Theo Angelopoulos' (1935-2012) first feature film in 1970. As Michael Wilmington skillfully encapsulates the message of the film, "this homage to film noir reveals two key obsessions at once: the Greek land and the crimes buried in it. This crime is tied to the landscape, the bleak village of Vista in Epirus. Ruminant on that land, the film suggests, and you will discover tragedies below - like the husband's corpse in "Reconstruction", buried under a garden row of onions"⁶¹⁹.

Angelopoulos returned to Greece in 1964, where for three years he was a film critic for the leftist newspaper *Dimokratiki Allaghi*. During the period of the dictatorship, Angelopoulos made his first feature film, shot in stark black and white. In *Reconstruction*, the judicial reconstruction of the crime never actually takes place to avoid the camera from deceptively taking the place of the eyewitness. The film won

⁶¹⁶ Mazower, *Inside Hitler's Greece*, 77.

⁶¹⁷ Bernhard Nauck, "Immigrant families in Germany. Family change between situational adaptation, acculturation, segregation and remigration", *Zeitschrift für Familienforschung* 19, no.1 (2007), 37.

⁶¹⁸ Anna Schober, *The Cinema Makers: Public life and the exhibition of difference in south-eastern and central Europe since the 1960s*. Bristol, 2013, 146&157-159.

⁶¹⁹ Michael Wilmington, "Theo Angelopoulos: Landscapes, Players, Mist" in Andrew Horton (ed.) *The Last Modernist: The Films of Theo Angelopoulos*, Westport, CT: Praeger, 1997, p. 60.

awards at the 1970 Thessaloniki Film Festival and received some notice at the Berlin and Mannheim festivals⁶²⁰.

The film was based on a real story of a murder in 1968 in Polyneri Thesprotias. A police investigative team was sent to the village to stage a reconstruction of the murder of a man who returned to his village after working in Germany as a Gastarbeiter. While his death at the hands of his adulterous wife and her lover is restaged, a news crew follows the breaking news story. The murder story and its reconstruction become a parable for the disruption of a community and a nation. Barren landscapes in black and white suggest the overwhelming loss experienced in rural areas. The village's population declined in 30 years from 1.283 to 85 inhabitants.

In a booklet published by the Greek Film Centre for a 1998 London retrospective of his films, Angelopoulos speaking with the late German film critic Florian Hopf specifically about *Reconstruction* says that for him, "the film is an elegy for a land rotting away, abandoned by its inhabitants. [...] The Colonels prefer, these days, to see all their opponents leave the country. All my friends, for instance, live abroad...unless they are in prison. It is for them that I made *Reconstruction*. For all those who have already left and those who are about to. And there is something else. Epirus has a rich and very old history and culture, its roots going back to antiquity. It is terribly sad and upsetting to watch impotently as so many people are leaving this land, for once they go away, a whole civilization ceases to exist⁶²¹".

Eleni, the protagonist, "in a highly symbolic move crushes her husband's suitcase with an ax and carries a sack of his belongings up the mountain where she burns them. What follows is a series of actual documentary interviews about the life of guest workers in Germany done in voice-over while the image of the village remains on-screen. The male interviewer asks why each individual goes to Germany". Answers include "Life is better there," "I will grow fat and pretty in Germany," and "We can go to cinemas there. " One old man speaks about the village in the old days: "It was good

⁶²⁰ Dan Georgakas, "Angelopoulos, Greek History and The Travelling Players" in Andrew Horton (ed.) *The Last Modernist: The Films of Theo Angelopoulos*, Westport, CT: Praeger, 1997, 28-29.

⁶²¹ Dan Fainaru (ed.). *Theo Angelopoulos: Interviews*, University of Mississippi Press, 2001, p.3-4.

then, there was work and play. But we will die, and the village will be empty. This will not be good for the cities either"⁶²².

Andrew Horton draws a comparison between Eleni and the classic figure of Clytemnestra. He notes that "as Eleni is being taken away from the village by the police in a Jeep at the end of the film, she is literally attacked by a screaming pack of old women in black sounding very much like Furies. By the film's end, Eleni is arrested, betrayed by her lover, and hounded by village harpies, appearing in their fury to be upholding the constricting patriarchal customs of rural Greece"⁶²³.

Three years later, on the 24th of December 1973, the comedy "The Charlatan" with Thanassis Veggos and directed by Errikos Thalassinos premiered in Athens. The scenario told the story of a migrant in West Germany, who works hard to support his father and sister back in Greece. He loses all his savings when his bank goes bankrupt and is left penniless. Having no money for a ticket, he hides in a fridge-truck and arrives in Athens refrigerated. Once in Athens many companies try to convince him to promote their fridge-trucks.

The most distinctive scene of the film is the moment of bankruptcy of the bank. The protagonist arrives in front of the bank, where people are gathered and are shouting, while two policemen block the way into the offices. An old lady is crying, and the protagonist is in a hurry to extract his marks, he even came in his dirty working clothes. He pushes through the crowd and a man scolds him, but the protagonist apologizes and says he is in a hurry to return to the homeland. Here, we should note that all the atmosphere is reminiscent of the Third Reich, since the policemen's uniforms look military-like and the protagonist tells them in broken German: "Herr Kommandant, ich Greek arbeit. Extract-en mein marken. Bank-en. Verstehen? Ah, want-en return-en mein homeland-en. Verstehen?". The policemen answer, "verstehen nicht" and push him down the stairs.

At the bottom of the stairs, a man grabs him and tries to explain to him irritated that they all lost their savings because the bank became bankrupt. The naive protagonist says, "how is the money lost? why did the bank not save them in another bank?". When the protagonist finally realizes what is going on, he runs up the stairs again and

⁶²² Andrew Horton, *The Films of Theo Angelopoulos: a cinema of contemplation*. Princeton University Press, 1997, 95.

⁶²³ Horton, *The Films of Theo Angelopoulos*, 45.

shouts to the policemen who block his way: “one moment, you guard dogs! my money! Ten years Arbeit! Ten years I melt in the mines to work for you. Verstehen? I worked my guts out working for you! I was working ten years for you like a pack animal! Not you, I am the pack animal. Please let me pass to the cashier, he will recognize me. Every Saturday I was coming, and I was counting the money for the deposit, dang, dang! Let me pass, may God forgive your Adolf’s sins!”. The policemen threw him down the stairs once more yelling “raus”. He then joins the old lady crying together and retorts to his old teacher saying bitterly: “teacher, do you hear me, we are losers once again, teacher!”.

Crying at his poor slum, where he lives with his German girlfriend, he reflects on all the sacrifices he made for ten years in order to save up the money he ended up losing. His father had been sending him parcels with food, and his sister had been expecting the money for her dowry, but now he feels awful to return empty-handed. He deprived himself of all joys, he was just window-shopping, never eating, drinking, going to the movies or even paying for a candle in the church or a simple pleasure, like a piece of gum. He was just depositing every single penny! Exasperated, he takes his suitcase and, despite the begging by his girlfriend, packs his things to return once and for good.

The film depicted an actual misfortune for the guest workers, since apart from individuals, there were also big banks who led them to disaster. For instance, the infamous IOS during the dictatorship with a huge advertising campaign misled thousands of foreign and Greek workers to transfer their deposits from other big German banks to IOS in Germany. The Herstatt Bank in Cologne in a rich advertising campaign promoted its unique high interests. However, it went bankrupt, and after the interference of the state and the creditors a very small percentage of the savings of the foreigners would be given back. The Greek banks gave higher interests, but as far as the dictatorship was in power, the Greeks made very limited deposits in Greek banks. After the metapolitefsi, there was a timid move towards deposits in the Greek banks in Germany. However, the great capital summing up to 3 billion marks was placed only in German banks⁶²⁴.

⁶²⁴ *Makedonia*, 24/3/1977, p.3.

In the 13th episode of the documentary called “The spirit of the race” (Το δαιμόνιο της φυλής) produced in 1976 by the Greek national television ERT, the reporter Nikos Rizos goes to Stuttgart and collects interviews from various types of Greek migrant workers⁶²⁵.

The speaker kicked off the show with a contrast between the blood thirsty Third Reich and the modern and developed Federal Republic saying that “in the memory of many of us, Germany may still be imagined as Hitler's country [...] About 40 years after those dark years, the Federal Republic of Germany looks like a huge construction site, where the industry, together with the reconstruction, is accelerating its steps faster and faster”.

This frantic orgasm of development required the imported workforce of the South, which worked like gears in a machine. As the speaker said, “so work our compatriots, hard work for a better tomorrow in the homeland”, echoing their dream for an eventual return. The first person the reporter interviewed was a street fruit seller from a village in Kavala. He occupied the same corner spot for three and a half years and was successful due to his adaptation to the German mentality.

According to him, the most important is “the way of work, the program and the good work and the good behaviour towards the customers”. Moreover, one had to adapt also to the fast pace of the urban lifestyle, since “the ones who are in a hurry, one wants to go to work, another wants to catch the train, another the bus, the Strassebahn, they grab something from here”. The Greek specialty that captured the taste of Germans was summer fruit and mainly peaches, of which he sold 10 tons in one year.

The next interviewee of the reporter is a young lady from Katerini doing her traineeship in a beauty salon in Stuttgart after six months of studies and a total of ten years in West Germany. Her plan was to stay a couple of years to acquire more experience in the field and then return to Greece. She stated that the German beauty care standards were high, because most women had sensitive skin and thus required special treatment.

A student of aeronautics was also interviewed and mostly talked about the social life of Greek students in Stuttgart, who often met workers too. In his experience,

⁶²⁵ <https://archive.ert.gr/34248/>

definitely every student during the holidays worked for a while in some factories, although a student could live more cheaply in Germany because there were student dorms, cafeterias and student entertainment. He was positive that there was “absolute contact as students, as individuals and as a Greek student association with all workers. That is, joint events which both students and workers attend”. Some of his classmates were children of those workers, anyway.

The gatherings of Greeks took place in the so-called kafeneion, and the reporter did not miss out on interviewing the owner of one in Stuttgart. His impression was that after the 1973 crisis the situation became unstable for the workers. As he stated, “at the moment, the Greeks who do not have jobs have some difficulties. Here in Germany the jobs were closed, and most of the Greeks leave because of the crisis they encountered here. Nevertheless, others live here. They stay safe”. He appeared proud for his compatriots, who showed a hard-working ethos connected with the famous *filotimo*. However, there were also some who got addicted to gambling and lost most of their savings this way.

The last interviewees of the reporter were a man who for twenty years established his own business of used truck export and one of his assistants who worked as a driver. The boss was satisfied with his endeavors, since he managed to have his own house, and the investment he put into his business had definitely paid off. The driver was more reluctant to take a position, because he considered that he had a very narrow responsibility, just taking the trucks through the customs, without knowing the details of the different transactions.

Lefteris Xanthopoulos (1945-2020) directed the 45-minute-long movie “Greek Community of Heidelberg” (Ελληνική Κοινότητα Χαϊδελβέργης) in 1976. It was funded exclusively by the Greek workers and students in Heidelberg. Its main aim was to raise awareness among the public opinion about the problems of the workers. Its first stop was the International Film Festival in Thessaloniki. The Greek Community of Heidelberg was founded in 1974, and the director was following its progress by interviewing the workers in the coffeeshops. Based on that material he

prepared the scenario, which received the approval of the community's administration and was then funded by donations⁶²⁶.

The film narrated the initiative taken by workers to create their own community in Heidelberg because of the limitations they were experiencing in the realms of the government controlled community that existed already. The initiators of the new community admitted on air that the greatest obstacle they encountered was the suspicion and the doubt that the constant surveillance inspired in them. When the first nucleus of workers and students went around the Greek cafes of the area to spread the idea of the community, they faced much reluctance and fear.

In the workers' minds, the community they proposed sounded like a communist organization. Joining it could have grave consequences, mainly due to the denunciation to the authorities, who could remove their passports or get them fired or expelled. Nevertheless, gradually they realized that a collective effort was the only way to ensure their demands were heard. They all agreed that several challenges and especially their poor language skills and their ignorance of the legal system made it almost impossible to revendicate their rights individually.

The story of a woman worker is illustrative of their disorientation throughout the different stages of migration. Back in Greece, she was working all day long in the cotton fields for bare survival. The cotton pickers were paid by the kilo, and thus they were working in the fields from dawn to dusk without water and only with one meal. Her work could not provide her the money she needed for her dowry, and thus she took the decision to spend a couple of years in West Germany, put some money aside and return to Greece to get married.

Eventually, nothing was as smooth as promised because the factory work was really hectic and hard, the money she earned was only enough for her expensive rent and knowing no German alienated her from her new environment. As she said, "after work, I would lock myself in my room, I could not go shopping because I would not know the way back home. I placed a landmark to remember the way back".

Moreover, the problem of the second generation is mentioned in the film through the interview of a 16-year old boy. He came to West Germany in 1965 and lived there

⁶²⁶ *Ta Nea*, 7/9/1976, p.2.

with his family a whole eleven years. He attended the German school and was not at all prepared to return and settle in Greece, as his unemployed father wanted. The chances of this boy to integrate once back in Greece were slim, since he was illiterate in Greek and had no support network.

The film also underlined the efforts of the Heidelberg Greek community to cover up the insufficient Greek education through free courses offered on a voluntary basis. The constant complaint of all the interviewees was that they were conceived only as senders of remittances, as a mark and not a person with needs. The negligence of the schooling issue meant that their children could not exploit any of their potential for upward mobility, but rather they would be a second generation of guest workers, illiterate and thus exploited like their parents.

Anyway, the dilemma of return tortured the first generation throughout their stay in the Federal Republic. Although they experienced the insecurity of a potential dismissal due to the crisis, they were equally reluctant to return to Greece, remembering all the hardships that made them leave in the first place. As the years went by their expenses and responsibilities also increased, as the majority of them had to care for their children's future.

As one interviewee bitterly commented, "it's like we workers, we don't have a place in the sun. We are like oxen who work, but when we get old, they get rid of us". Apart from the material anxieties, the psychological pressures were also considerable. A worker in his tenth year admitted that despite being able to feed his big family back in Greece, he paid the price of loneliness. When he returned for holidays, his youngest child did not even recognize him, he said on camera, apparently moved.

Another worker complained that the living conditions in the factory dormitories reminded him of the facilities of a prison. The rooms were small, crammed with bunk beds, without any privacy or calm. The different work shifts of their roommates, loud voices and talks, or music allowed no time for real rest. Nostalgia for their familiar places and faces, the narrow village paths and the sense of community made them often suffer from psychosomatic symptoms, like stomach and heart disease and nervousness.

The short film "George from Sotirianika" (Ο Γιώργος από τα Σωτηριάνικα) directed in 1978 by the same director, Lefteris Xanthopoulos, dealt with the absurdity of

belonginess of the taverna owner George. George wears a fur coat, but in the photos he prefers to wear foustanela and tsarouchia. He promotes all the clichés about Greece: sea, dance, song, sun⁶²⁷. The director followed his protagonist, George Kozompolis, throughout his daily routine in West Germany but also during a return visit to his village Sotirianika, near Kalamata, in the Peloponnese. There he interviewed the locals about the past, present and future of the village, which suffered from depopulation, due to the mass emigration of the two previous decades.

In 1988, Theo Angelopoulos directed the film "Landscape in the Mist" (Τοπίο στην Ομίχλη). A girl of about eleven and a boy of about five run toward the camera. Later, as they sleep in the corridor of the train going to Germany, we hear Voula's voice-over letter that she "dreams" to her father: "Dear Father, we are writing to you because we are coming to find you. We have never seen you, but we miss you. We talk about you all the time. Mummy will be upset when she discovers we are gone. Deep down inside we love her, don't think we don't. But she doesn't understand anything".

Thrown out of the train for having no ticket, they meet their uncle. When the uncle thinks that the children are safely out of hearing range, he offers the stationmaster a cigarette and explains, "There is no father. There is no Germany. It's all a lie. She didn't want to tell them that they are illegitimate." ⁶²⁸ In the end of the film, little Alexander says, "Wake up, it's light. We're in Germany". Voula says she is afraid, but her little brother replies, "Don't be afraid. I'll tell you the story: In the beginning there was darkness, and then there was light". The two siblings begin to walk through the mist toward a tree, they run, and they embrace the tree in an open ending⁶²⁹.

⁶²⁷ *Rizospastis*, 17/11/1979, p.4.

⁶²⁸ Horton, *The Films of Theo Angelopoulos*, 146-147.

⁶²⁹ *Ibid*, 156-157.

CONCLUSION

In autumn 1962, the Press Office of the SPD collected a series of articles about the situation of the Greek guest workers in the Federal Republic, penned by the journalist Vastos Mathiopoulos. Mathiopoulos, born in Athens in 1928, concluded his legal studies in Bonn, where he defended his thesis on the early socialist movement in Greece. He worked as correspondent for various centrist newspapers, like *Eleutheria*, *Makedonia*, *To Vima* and *Ta Nea* in Bonn, and he also presented the Greek radio program of Deutsche Welle. The latter was the main source of non-censored information for the audience in Greece during the military dictatorship of 1967-1974.

Mathiopoulos in this series of articles presented the early years of the intra-European labor migration with sensitivity and sympathy for the farmers who suddenly found themselves in the biggest industrial centres of Western Europe. Instead of a dry report of the events, Mathiopoulos attempted to situate this new emigration wave, contextualise it and interpret it. He first compared it with the previous transatlantic emigration, because as he wrote:

“It has always been the endeavor of some of the Greek people to seek their fortune abroad - especially in the USA, Canada and Australia. The money transfers from these emigrants to their relatives in their home countries contributed to the increase in foreign currency in the country and helped the needy rural population. Mostly self-made, the Greeks in the second generation acquired the citizenship of their second home, and there were 15 million Americans of Greek descent in the United States.”

However, the new type of emigration was of a more temporary character, and it was included in the new conditions created through the process of European integration and the free movement of people and goods in the EEC. Thus, “the Greeks who come to Germany agree to return to their homeland after a certain period of time, in order to put the knowledge, they have gained there in the service of the economic development of their country.”

Nonetheless, the desire for the contract to be signed as quickly as possible was based on the Greek side of the vague hope that an increasing wave of emigration would free the country from the problem of the unemployed and underemployed. In the early 1960s, out of a population of 8.5 million, over 800.000 were underemployed and around 300.000 were unemployed.

Mathiopoulos was critical of the spontaneity and roughness of the Greek side in accepting any terms for the bilateral agreement, without calculating the consequences. If the Greek government was striving for a workers' policy with regard to foreign opportunities, then this at least required appropriate planning and preparation. On the contrary, the Greek Ministry of Labor was mostly interested in the relief of the congestion budget of unemployment benefits. Moreover, they were betting on the flow of foreign currency through the migrants' remittances.

The migrants came to a country where completely different economic, climatic and social factors determined life and where the people's mentality was also very different from that in Greece. The majority of the workers - around 85 percent - came from the farming families of the small villages of Macedonia and Thrace. They had never worked in industry before. Suddenly, they found themselves in a world of the most modern, partly automated factories, when some had never even seen a machine in their life.

Mathiopoulos occasionally visited various German factories for his articles, and he gathered mostly positive comments about the "sociological structure of the workforce". More precisely, the qualities of the Greek guest workers were that "they are clean, responsible and economical workers. They show solidarity with one another and, despite language difficulties, take their own initiative. They are easy to steer, and, above all, they are willing to work. [...] The Greek workers have an indestructible work ethic. They prove to be true sons of their country, also in the Federal Republic"⁶³⁰.

If Athens had adopted the German considerations on the economic development of Greece, it would have been possible to keep the overwhelming emigration within natural limits and to build new production centers in Greece. This would have also made it possible to stem the rural exodus into the cities, and the Greek workers would have been spared resettlement in a foreign country with disadvantages for their physical health and psychology.

As Mathiopoulos bitterly suggested, "the right moment seems to have been missed to harness the unused Greek labor potential with the help of foreign investments for the

⁶³⁰ Sozialdemokratischer Pressedienst Tagespolitik-Kommentare-Auslandsberichte, SPD Pressedienst p/xvii/278 Bonn, 16 Oktober 1962.

production of one's own country [...] The workers who have now emigrated to the Federal Republic were able to contribute to increased work performance in their hometowns. With regard to these people, it remains the task of the Greek government to ensure that, when they return to their homeland, they can use the experience they have gained in the Federal Republic for the benefit of their own country's economic development”⁶³¹.

As far as the selection of the Greek candidates, Mathiopoulos accused the Greek Labor Ministry of becoming a plain “employment broker, since it has practically limited itself to the position of an employment agency and only collects the numbers required by the German side without any planning. [...] Thus, the country has already started feeling the shortage of the necessary workforce”. Moreover, the burden of long-term unemployment and underemployment regularly led the candidate guest workers to sign the collective work contracts, without being aware of the resulting consequences⁶³².

The OECD experts warned already in 1962 that there should exist “in principle an optimum level of emigration which should not be exceeded - a level beyond which further emigration losses would undermine the vigour and balance of the population. To be effective, any development program will require some redistribution and above all retraining of manpower for new jobs”⁶³³.

Using these early observations on the *modus operandi* that the Greek government had to follow, we realise that journalists, social scientists and the migrants themselves through their associations incarnated Cassandra shouting in the void. Although subsequent Greek governments were conscious of the needs and the priorities of emigration policymaking, they were drowned in their quasi-irrevocable Cold War obsessions, inhibiting them from thinking and acting soberly. Emotions like fear, anxiety and even panic informed the decisions of the sending state, which was far from neutral or unbiased towards its *Gastarbeiter*.

⁶³¹ Sozialdemokratischer Pressedienst Tagespolitik-Kommentare-Auslandsberichte, SPD Pressedienst P/XVII/212, Bonn, 18 October 1962.

⁶³² Sozialdemokratischer Pressedienst Tagespolitik-Kommentare-Auslandsberichte, SPD Pressedienst P/XVII/215 Bonn, 23 October 1962.

⁶³³ OECD (1962), *OECD Economic Surveys: Greece 1962*, OECD Publishing, Paris, p.39 https://doi.org.eui.idm.oclc.org/10.1787/eco_surveys-grc-1962-en.

The guest workers' sense of temporariness set them apart from settled migrants. Guest workers were aware of their settlement limitations in the receiving state as it was clear that they would not be allowed to extend their stay beyond the duration of their work contracts. As a result, their days abroad was a mere countdown towards the day of return and all efforts were focused on facilitating that return⁶³⁴.

The Greek state conceived its Gastarbeiter as a tool to achieve high development through their remittances and professional skills without any cost from its part. Transforming farmers into a working class was a risky experiment, and thus much attention was given to their civic obedience. In no case is there a Greek exceptionalism in that.

On the contrary, many times, the Greek case shared commonalities with the rest of Southeastern Europe, even in a reversed way. For instance, as in the Yugoslav socialist state, the legacy of the war and the civil war formed the postwar political apparatus and penetrated all levels of social interactions. The concerns about potential infiltration of their workers abroad equally alarmed the Yugoslav and the Greek governments.

As Sara Bernard wrote for Yugoslavia, “the maintenance of the socialist way of thinking, sociability and solidarity was fostered through more substantial support to institutionalise their free time and cultural and socialising initiatives, including sport and leisure”⁶³⁵.

Through its anti-communist apparatus, the Greek state blocked access to migration for an important segment of the Greek population. However, the alternative ways open to candidate migrants sabotaged the authorities’ scrutiny of the candidate profiles and created headaches for the Greek consular authorities on the West German soil. Potential communist infiltration was a constant fear of the bureaucrats and thus took priority over the accommodation and welfare offered to the Greek Gastarbeiter.

With a particular focus on German policies and attitudes toward immigrants, Christopher Molnar argues that considerations of race played only a marginal role in German attitudes and policies towards Yugoslavs. Rather, the history of Yugoslavs in

⁶³⁴ Tseligka, *From “Gastarbeiter”*, 98-99.

⁶³⁵ Sara Bernard, *Deutsch Marks in the Head, Shovel in the Hands and Yugoslavia in the Heart: the Gastarbeiter return to Yugoslavia (1965-1991)*. Studien zur Sozial- und Wirtschaftsgeschichte Ostmitteleuropas (28). Harrassowitz Verlag: Wiesbaden, 2019,195.

postwar Germany was most profoundly shaped by the memory of World War II and the shifting Cold War context⁶³⁶. In the Greek case, too, the shadow of the Nazi Occupation was present, despite the efforts of both governments towards reconciliation.

Since the end of the Second World War, the former enemies put the past behind them and opened up new pathways of political rapprochement and commercial exchanges. The labor recruitment agreement was not signed in a vacuum but was an integral part of the country's constant lookout for foreign investments, markets for its products and willing bankers for its loans.

When the bilateral labor recruitment agreement was signed in Bonn in 1960, Greece had high expectations. Not only the Greek economy would be relieved by the pressures caused by high unemployment, but it would also benefit by the remittances the migrants would send back home and the eventual skills they would acquire during their "exchange" in the West German industrial environment.

At the same time, Greece envisaged its accession to the European Economic Community and searched for useful allies who could propagate for its sake. Greece's accession to the European Economic Community was a long process, which gradually offered to the Greek Gastarbeiter the right to free movement.

Like Spanish and Portuguese workers who faced prosecution by the authoritarian regimes of their countries and were targets of propaganda and surveillance, the late sixties found the Greek Gastarbeiter's homeland ruled by a military dictatorship since the 21st of April of 1967. Surprisingly or not, after the first shock, more continuities than ruptures reigned in the handling of the Gastarbeiter question.

The authoritarian regime of the colonels brought to a peak the already existing divisions among the Greek Gastarbeiter. One of the most active networks of resistance to the junta was organized on West German soil, using the experience and the connections of trade unionists, students and workers. On the opposite side, traditionalists and anti-communists found the junta to be a generous sponsor of their

⁶³⁶ Christopher A. Molnar, "Imagining Yugoslavs: Migration and the Cold War in Postwar West Germany." *Central European History* 47, no. 01 (March 2014): 138.
<https://doi.org/10.1017/S000893891400065X>.

activities towards the protection of both their native and adoptive countries from the red danger.

The same goes for the period of democratic transition in Greece, which coincides with the fall of Franco's and Salazar's dictatorships and the recruitment halt in the Federal Republic of Germany. Since 1974, renewed hopes for democratization and normalization worked as a pull factor for the Gastarbeiter. More than that, older workers had already reached their goal of saving enough money to make investments in their homeland. Others were tired due to the intensive industrial work and were interested in turning to entrepreneurial activities. Urbanization and tourism created opportunities for investment of their savings.

In retrospect, we could say that for the Greek case the Gastarbeiter system, as it was conceived as a temporary employment project, worked the way it was planned. Most of the people who migrated through this scheme returned to the homeland and supported it with their remittances and with investments in their native places and the big urban centers of the country. In this light, it was a successful device to the profit of the Greek economy.

Politically, the migrants also contributed to the democratic consolidation of the country by supporting materially and morally the new emerging political powers, by resisting the Greek military junta and by acquiring precious syndicalist experience in the framework of a developed industrial economy. Stranded in a foreign country, they also came together, and they developed the virtues of self-organization, they created their own publications, fundraisings and advocated for their visibility.

However, the problem lies in the inadequate macro-structures of the sending country, which became also the receiving country upon return migration. The promise of an industry capable of absorbing the skilled returnees never materialised and their return took place in a random, unorchestrated way, where the Greek governments took minimal support measures and just let things happen, as they did already in the first phase, when out-migration slipped their control. As in the recruitment process of the early 1960s, when Greece had almost no negotiation power in regulating the way the emigration would take place, the same happened in the late 1970s, when the pressing conditions in West Germany pushed Greeks to leave without any safety net provided by the Greek governments.

There are several leitmotifs that are present throughout the whole period at the level of discourses, but also in every-day reality. One of them is the eternal problem of unemployment. In the early Cold War, the Greek government used the safety valve of the Gastarbeiter system to void the poor countryside from its unemployed youth, who, in its frustration, could be potentially threatening to the established social order. In the late '70s and early '80s the revolutionary fever of the democratic transition was fading. Despite Greece's accession to the EEC, the rise of socialist powers in the government and the distribution of welfare benefits, unemployment remained a headache for the Greek authorities, who had no concrete plan on how to re-integrate the returnees in the labor market.

Additionally, despite the mutations in the political spectrum, there was a remarkable constancy in the way migration was framed in the public discourse. Throughout the whole period, the Left, which consisted of the banned Communist party which was legally recognised after 1974 and the more moderate EDA and its successors, used the metaphor of the slave-market to describe the shady conditions of the Gastarbeiter migration. From the first wagons filled with workers to the last strikes of the migrants, the leftist press was there to document and exhibit the situation, interview the protagonists and propagate their causes, always placing the fate of the migrants to the wider struggles of the world proletariat.

The same continuity is noticed in the opposite camp, the nationally-minded press, or generally the printed media representing the Right and the Center, in all its transformations throughout the period. For them, the main topos was the demographic concern caused by the emigration of the healthiest part of the population. As the Greek governments of the interwar period were settling the 1923 Asia Minor refugees in the border regions of Epirus, Macedonia and Thrace, now the same areas were the reservoirs of the departing emigrants. Geostrategic calculations in areas bordering countries of the communist side of the Iron Curtain made the media deplore the haemorrhage and ask for measures to support the countryside. Naturally, emigration was part of a bigger debate concerning the transformation of the country from a frugal, rural-based economy to an urbanized and consumerist society.

The Greek Gastarbeiter never made up a niche, a hermetically closed social group. On the contrary, the phenomenon of rural exodus and migration had the effect of an earthquake for postwar Greek society. Almost everybody was affected somehow by it. On a more personal level, this meant that by having relatives, friends or neighbors who migrated to West Germany, one could be at the receiving end of letters, gifts and imported commodities, or even western social attitudes. On a more abstract level, the average Greek was also affected by the consequences of Gastarbeiter migration, reading about it in the press, listening to the songs that lamented their fate or eating at a returnee's restaurant.

As is examined for the Turkish case, guest workers faced a paradox: "individuals who lived three thousand kilometres away in Turkey and had never set foot in Germany, from government officials and journalists to even the poorest of villagers, all staked a claim in proposing a more fluid conception of what it meant to be German, one based not only on being German by blood"⁶³⁷. Representations and imagined communities played an important role in the migrants' sense of belonging.

Unfairly, migrants are viewed in a bipolar way, either as ossified and detached from the social realities of their homeland or as agents of change with a duty to modernize their place of origin and bring back all things Western. Other scholars have suggested that they came to occupy a kind of "third space" or a "remaking of a microcosm" of their native village society in their particular segment of urban Germany⁶³⁸. Spatial proximity presented the opportunity of replicating some of the ambience of their homeland, not only through patronage of local shops and cafés, but also through the use of the mother tongue⁶³⁹.

No matter how collective the measures destined for them or shared the pressures they faced, every migration journey was unique. Naturally, this does not translate into a trivialisation of the Gastarbeiter experience. They did not act in a vacuum, on the contrary, their fate was formed by the overarching schemes of their time.

⁶³⁷ Michelle Lynn Kahn, "The Long Road Home: Vacations and the Making of the 'Germanized Turk' across Cold War Europe." *The Journal of Modern History* 93, no. 1 (March 1, 2021): 149. <https://doi.org/10.1086/712801>.

⁶³⁸ King, Russell, Anastasia Christou and Janine Teerling. "Idyllic Times and Spaces? Memories of Childhood Visits to the Parental Homeland by Second-Generation Greeks and Cypriots." *Working Paper* 56, Sussex Centre for Migration Research, University of Sussex, July 2009, 25-26.

⁶³⁹ P. N Jones, "Guestworkers and their spatial distribution". In Wild, M. T.(ed.) *Urban and Rural Change in West Germany*. London: Croom Helm, 1983, 84 & 97.

As George Matzouranis, the Greek John Berger of the Gastarbeiter question, wrote with great empathy and sensitivity: “they are the creation of the highest endeavors of capitalism. They come from the south. They are poor and underdeveloped. They are cheap and obedient. To abandon their country and come to Germany, a contract with a regular wage suffices. To abandon their home and be squeezed in a dorm. To abandon their family, their relatives and friends and be strangers among 60 millions of strangers. To abandon their agricultural activities and be integrated in heavy industry from one day to another. To abandon 300 days a year the sun, to live 300 days a year in the dim. The rich Europeans only have to call them. And they will come. They just need to nod. And they will leave. Nobody will complain about their sufferings. They are offered cheaper than the fruits, vegetables and the tobacco. They travel with transit visas, without custom controls.”

The author also suggested that the Gastarbeiter faced common problems beyond the specificities of each national community, since they left their countries for the same reasons and would also return with the same prerequisites. Their new life was an earthquake, and the only thing they could do was to get used to the idea of the vibrations. They resisted but didn't get used to it. As Matzouranis concludes, “the Greeks were asked, and their answer is valid for all: nobody wanted to become a migrant”⁶⁴⁰.

Why there is no place in the official memory for the Greek Gastarbeiter? My assumption is connected with the way their return migration took place. Despite their massive flight and emigration in a quasi-organised way, the returnees were never a specially designated group, but they were rather dispersed and employed on their own initiative. Moreover, contrary to other groups who also returned to Greece in the end of the Cold War, like political refugees from the Eastern Bloc, the Gastarbeiter had not a shared identity, a distinct status or political affiliation.

In this way, the injustice is double towards them. In the first place, they existed as an unacknowledged minority, being excluded from the decision-making that directly concerned them. Nowadays, more than sixty years after the first Greeks arrived as labor migrants in West Germany, their experience and memory still remain undiscovered, excluded from the official memory and the public discourse in Greece.

⁶⁴⁰ Matzouranis, *Ellines ergates*, 7-8.

In 1986, the sociologist Stephen Castles felt the need to write an obituary for the Gastarbeiter, stating that “the guest-workers systems of Western Europe are dead, except for the use of seasonal workers in France and Switzerland. The guest-workers are no longer with us; either they have gone, or they have been transmogrified into settlers and marginalized into ethnic minorities”⁶⁴¹. In 2006, Castles revisited the topic, arguing for an eternal return of the Gastarbeiter, a resurrection⁶⁴².

In the meanwhile, Europe experienced new challenges and dilemmas in its migration policies, questioning European solidarity. For example, the massive brain drain towards North and Western Europe as a consequence of economic stagnation in the European South due to the depression of the 2010s. Connected to that, old racialised stereotypes were reactivated and denigrated the South as a stagnated, underdeveloped land of corruption and backwardness. The refugee crisis of 2015 with its shock effect and shameful images of drowned families and crumbled detention centers brought to the surface moral considerations ignored for decades. The new realities of platform workers and their shady regulation by sovereign states in the tensed post-pandemic world are also here to stay.

This thesis asked who were the Greek Gastarbeiter? What did the Greek state do for them? How was their agency expressed? It hopefully offers food for thought about postwar Greek and European history through the dire straits of migration regulation. Its main ambition is to add nuance in the black-and-white bipolar of the migrant presence either as a win-win situation or as a problem causing headaches to policymakers. Above all, this research project has the character of an homage and a rescue.

As Walter Benjamin wrote in the *Theses on History*, “every image of the past that is not recognized by the present as one of its own concerns threatens to disappear irretrievably”. In my mind, the dialectic moments between the Gastarbeiter past and the present times are plenty and the lessons to take equally so...

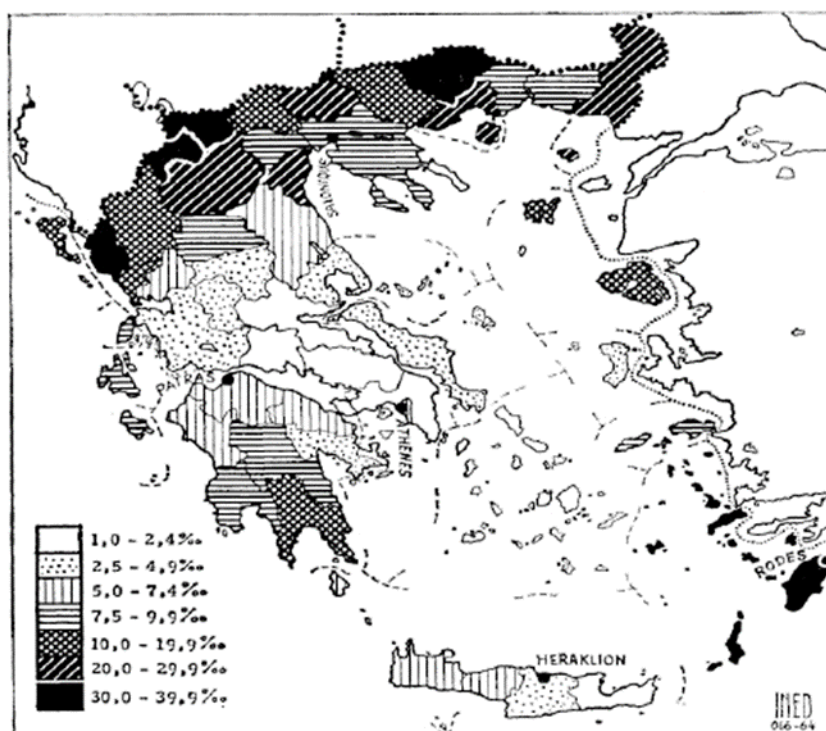
⁶⁴¹ Stephen Castles, “The Guest-Worker in Western Europe - An Obituary.” *International Migration Review* 20, no. 4 (1986): 775. <https://doi.org/10.2307/2545735>.

⁶⁴² Stephen Castles, “Guestworkers in Europe: A Resurrection?” *International Migration Review* 40, no. 4 (December 2006): 741–66. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1747-7379.2006.00042.x>.

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Some of the earliest publications on the Greek Gastarbeiter question: a 1965 illustrated booklet about their working conditions, a 1971 study about migration as a psychological and socio-economic problem, George Matzouranis' 1974 classic, Kollarou&Mousourou empirical study on return migration dating back to 1982 and Emile Kolodny's ethnological account of Greek Stuttgart published in Greek in 1985.



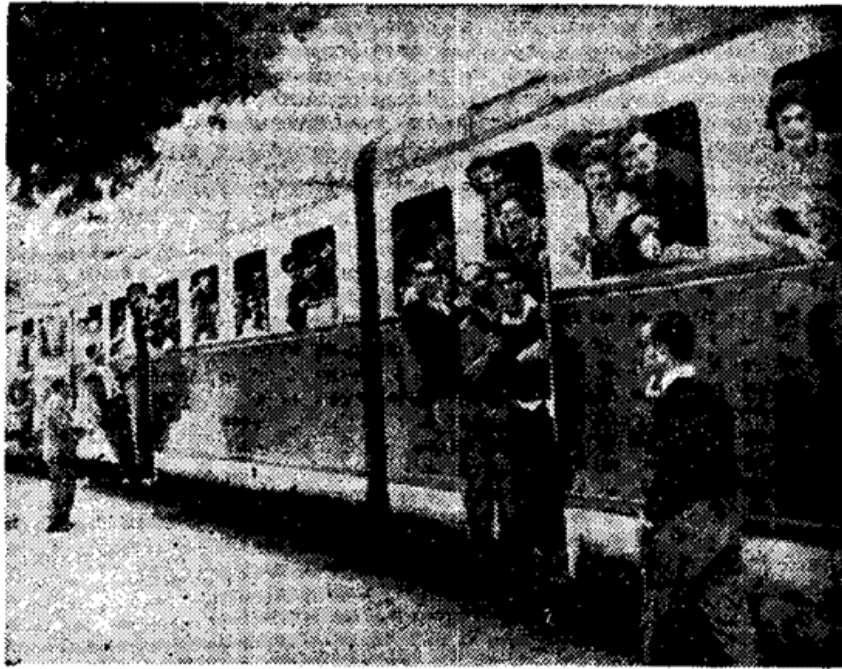
Carte n° 1. — Taux d'émigration en 1962.

TABLEAU III. — ÉMIGRANTS SELON LA DESTINATION ET LES RÉGIONS DE DÉPART (%)

	États-Unis	Canada	Australie	Belgique	Allemagne	Autres	Total
Grand Athènes.....	10,6	5,9	8,0	1,3	46,3	27,9	100,0
Reste Grèce cent....	11,7	7,5	22,9	10,5	37,1	10,3	100,0
Péloponnèse.....	10,6	15,8	41,0	0,7	23,5	8,4	100,0
Iles Ioniennes.....	5,6	4,8	23,2	2,6	44,8	19,0 ⁽¹⁾	100,0
Épire.....	1,4	0,3	4,4	5,5	84,7	3,7	100,0
Thessalie.....	1,9	1,7	4,2	3,6	81,6	7,0	100,0
Macédoine.....	1,5	1,6	8,2	5,3	77,8	5,6	100,0
Thrace.....	0,2	0,1	0,5	16,6	70,5	12,1 ⁽²⁾	100,0
Iles Égéennes.....	9,5	3,8	43,3	6,9	19,0	17,5 ⁽³⁾	100,0
Crète.....	3,8	4,6	10,8	11,2	56,0	13,6 ⁽⁴⁾	100,0

⁽¹⁾ Iles Ioniennes : 6,7 % en Suisse, 6,4 % en Italie.
⁽²⁾ Thrace : 7,1 % en Turquie.
⁽³⁾ Iles Égéennes : 6,8 % en Afrique.
⁽⁴⁾ Crète : 6,1 % en Italie.

Map of Greece with percentages of emigration by prefecture in 1962. Source: Kayser, Bernard. "Nouvelles données sur l'émigration grecque." *Population* 19, no. 4 (August 1964): 712.

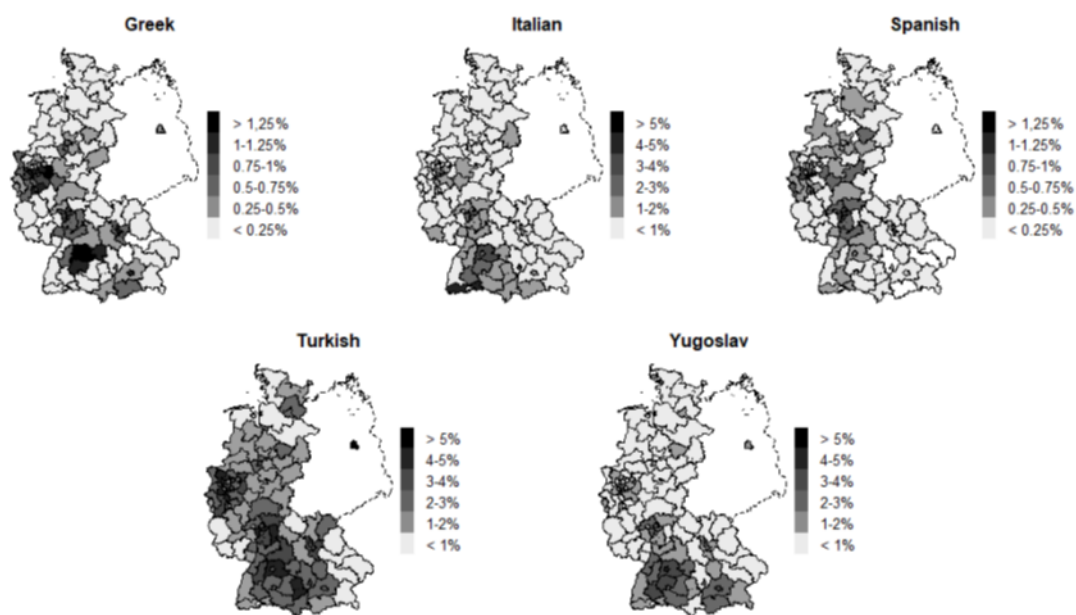


Τό τραίνο φεύγει υπερφορτωμένο μέ έλληνικά νιάτα γιά τή Γερμανία.

“The Greek workers in Germany do not consider returning anymore?”. Source: *Ta Nea*, 2/2/1966, p.9.



Farewell scene at the Thessaloniki railway station. Source: *Makedonia*, 13 January 1973, p.7.



Notes: Share of ethnicity in the total population of the region (*Anpassungsschicht*) of residence, 1985. Source: Institut für Arbeitsmarkt und Berufsforschung (IAB). Own calculations of ethnic concentrations for 103 *Anpassungsschichten*. Figures based on a historical GIS datafile of the Federal Republic of Germany from the Max Planck Institute for Demographic Research and the Chair for Geodesy and Geoinformatics, University of Rostock (2011) and Bundesamt für Kartographie und Geodäsie (2011). Seen in: Danzer, Alexander M.; Feuerbaum, Carsten; Piopiunik, Marc; Woessmann, Ludger (2018) : Growing up in ethnic enclaves: Language proficiency and educational attainment of immigrant children, SOEPpapers on Multidisciplinary Panel Data Research, No. 1010, Deutsches Institut für Wirtschaftsforschung (DIW), Berlin

Foreigners in West Germany, by Selected Nationalities, 1961–1980 (Numbers in Thousands)

Nationality	1961	1968	1971	1976	1978	1980
Greeks	42.1	221.8	407.6	353.7	305.5	297.5
% of all foreigners	6	11	10	9	8	7
Italians	196.7	454.2	630.7	568.0	572.5	617.9
% of all foreigners	29	23	16	14	14	14
Spaniards	44.2	175.0	287.0	219.4	188.9	180.0
% of all foreigners	6	9	7	6	5	4
Turks	6.7	205.4	910.5	1,079.3	1,165.1	1,462.4
% of all foreigners	1	11	23	27	29	33
Yugoslavs	16.4	169.1	701.6	640.4	610.2	631.8
% of all foreigners	2	9	18	16	15	14
Other	380.1	708.7	1,028.9	1,087.5	1,138.9	1,263.7
% of all foreigners	55	37	26	28	28	28
Total	686.2	1,942.2	3,966.2	3,948.3	3,981.1	4,453.3
% of foreigners not employed	33	43	35	51	52	53
% of all workers	1.2	3.3	5.8	6.4	6.6	7.2

Source: Böhning (1980: 36) and *Statistisches Jahrbuch für die Bundesrepublik Deutschland* (various years).

Areas of Discrimination Perceived by Immigrant Groups in West Germany, (Percent giving Positive Replies)

Area	Greeks	Italians	Spaniards	Turks	Yugoslavs
Housing	70	74	67	87	61
Job security	55	60	66	87	34
Working conditions	72	76	73	92	74
Wages	50	41	48	65	44
Social benefits (unemployment, child benefits, etc.)	50	40	61	66	64
Treatment by the authorities	45	26	37	51	36

Source: Kremer and Spangenberg (1980: 117)

Gross Outmigration from Greece: Migration to Four
Major Countries of Destination, 1955-1977^a

Year	Countries of Destination				Total
	Germany	Australia	Canada	United States	
1955	.7	9.1	2.2	6.9	30
1956	1.3	7.8	4.4	9.0	35
1957	1.5	6.0	5.0	1.8	30
1958	2.0	4.5	4.9	3.8	25
1959	2.5	5.5	4.5	2.5	24
1960	21.5	8.3	4.7	3.6	48
1961	31.1	8.0	3.9	3.5	59
1962	49.5	11.9	3.6	4.5	84
1963	64.7	13.0	4.4	4.6	100
1964	73.3	16.0	4.2	2.3	106
1965	80.6	18.6	5.5	2.8	117
1966	45.5	13.1	6.3	12.2	87
1967	9.7	7.9	5.8	11.8	43
1968	20.2	9.9	4.9	9.8	51
1969	54.4	9.9	4.6	12.7	92
1970	65.3	8.0	3.7	11.5	93
1971	40.0	7.0	2.6	8.3	62
1972	26.7	3.7	2.3	6.6	43
1973	12.8	2.5	2.7	6.0	28
1974	8.3	2.8	2.5	6.3	25
1975	7.3	1.0	2.0	4.6	20
1976	6.8	1.1	.9	4.2	20
1977	7.8	.5	.7	3.0	17
Total	633.5	176.1	86.3	142.3	1,239

Source: Statistical Service of Greece, *Statistical Yearbook*, various years.

Note: ^a Numbers in 1,000s.

Seen in: Theodore P. Lianos, "Greece: Waning of Labor Migration," *International Migration Review* 27, no. 1 Supplement (January 1993): 250.

Return Migration to Greece between 1960 and 1977 from
Major Immigration Countries^a

Year	Germany	Australia	Canada	United States	Total Return
1960	11.1	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.
1961	14.8	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.
1962	12.9	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.
1963	22.9	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.
1964	39.6	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.
1965	39.9	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.
1966	52.9	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.
1967	46.8	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.
1968	8.9	2.3	.6	1.0	18.9
1969	9.1	2.0	.8	1.5	18.1
1970	11.5	3.2	1.1	2.0	22.7
1971	11.8	4.2	1.3	1.8	24.7
1972	13.5	4.2	1.2	1.4	27.5
1973	11.5	3.1	.9	1.5	22.3
1974	15.4	1.3	.6	1.5	24.5
1975	24.5	1.1	.8	1.9	34.2
1976	22.4	1.2	1.1	1.9	32.1
1977	7.8	.5	.7	.9	12.6
Total	377.3	23.1	9.1	15.4	237.6

Source: Statistical Service of Greece, *Statistical Yearbook*, various years; the estimates for 1960–67 from N. Polyzos, "Consequence of Return Migration to Greece" (1970) Mimeo.

Notes: ^a Numbers in 1,000s.

n.a. = not available.

Seen in: Theodore P. Lianos, "Greece: Waning of Labor Migration," *International Migration Review* 27, no. 1 Supplement (January 1993): 251.

Net Migration between Greece and the
Main Immigration Countries, 1960–1977^a

Year	Countries				Total
	Germany	Australia	Canada	United States	
1960	10.4	-	-	-	-
1961	16.3	-	-	-	-
1962	36.6	-	-	-	-
1963	41.8	-	-	-	-
1964	33.7	-	-	-	-
1965	40.7	-	-	-	-
1966	-7.4	-	-	-	-
1967	-37.1	-	-	-	-
1968	11.3	7.6	4.3	8.8	32.1
1969	50.4	7.9	3.8	11.2	73.9
1970	53.8	4.8	2.6	9.5	70.3
1971	28.2	2.8	1.3	6.5	37.3
1972	13.2	-.5	1.1	5.2	15.5
1973	1.3	-.6	1.8	4.5	5.7
1974	-7.1	1.5	1.9	4.8	.5
1975	-17.2	-.1	1.2	2.7	-14.2
1976	-15.6	-.1	-.2	2.3	-12.1
1977	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	2.1	4.4
Total	259.7	21.5	14.4	57.6	233.0

Source: Statistical Service of Greece, *Statistical Yearbook*, various years; the estimates for 1960–1967 from N. Polyzos, "Consequences of Return Migration to Greece (1970). Mimeo.

Note: ^a Numbers in 1,000s.

Seen in: Theodore P. Lianos, "Greece: Waning of Labor Migration," *International Migration Review* 27, no. 1 Supplement (January 1993): 252.

	TOTAL	Schleswig-Holstein, Hamburg	Niedersachsen, Bremen	Nordrhein-Westfalen	Hessen	Rheinland-Pfalz, Saarland	Baden-Württemberg	Bayern	Berlin
1957	1.731								
1958	2.735								
1959	3.984								
1960	12.885								
1961	40.595								
1962	65.821								
1963	102.210								
1964	143.859	1.799+2.183	8.378+1.026	47.981	14.537	3.327	37.784	25.908	936
1965	181.658	4.567	12.044	61.567	17.915	4.000	47.695	32.283	1.587
1966	196.247	5.293	12.930	66.466	18.757	4.462	51.319	34.700	2.320
1967	146.817	4.164	8.592	49.486	14.318	2.984	40.196	24.964	2.113
1968	136.191	3.861	7.336	46.040	13.120	2.691	38.307	22.742	2.094
1969	174.348	4.973	9.450	57.047	16.206	3.507	49.037	31.260	2.868
1970	229.379	6.556	13.013	75.000	21.025	5.233	61.896	42.418	4.238
1971	261.592	7.756	15.246	87.948	24.148	5.785	67.472	47.474	5.763
1972	269.689	7.694	15.177	91.956	25.708	5.669	68.829	48.269	6.387
1973									
1974									

	TOTAL	Schleswig-Holstein, Hamburg	Niedersachsen, Bremen	Nordrhein-Westfalen	Hessen	Rheinland-Pfalz, Saarland	Baden-Württemberg	Bayern	Berlin
1975	203.629	5.604	10.205	69.707	19.705	4.223	54.967	34.553	4.609
1976	178.800	1.667+3.201	8.660+558	61.138	17.744	3.305+175	47.735	30.483	4.091
1977	162.495	1.486+2.914	8.052+498	55.288	16.107	3.058+159	43.729	27.473	3.704
1978	146.792	1.349+2.742	7.471+458	48.849	14.909	2.745+155	39.860	24.757	3.464
1979	140.139	1.291+2.659	7.259+428	46.367	14.303	2.631+143	38.228	23.485	3.306
1980	132.980	1.159+2.626	6.835+427	43.833	13.714	2.556+144	36.666	21.848	3.149
1981	123.767	1.067+2.488	6.295+381	40.671	12.325	2.463+145	34.453	20.373	3.048
1982	115.581	1045+2.344	5.753+349	38.082	10.697	2.221+140	32.653	19.386	2.882
1983	108.800	976+2.085	5.349+317	35.136	10.911	2.187	31.005	17.948	2.733
1984	98.041	947+2.007	5.127+289	33.237	9.754	2.135+143	24.292	17.360	2.750
1985	102.936	935+1.854	4.958+283	32.175	10.366	2.037+144	30.290	17.133	2.761
1986	101.592	926+1.789	4.842+291	31.328	10.283	1.984+135	30.142	17.131	2.741
1987	100.913	872+1.786	4.855+274	30.836	10.257	1.969+141	30.081	16.992	2.850
1988	98.759	848+1.709	4.569+273	29.483	9.950	1.917+134	29.917	17.114	2.845
1989	101.652	852+1.730	4.575+274	30.098	10.281	1.950+135	30.824	18.096	2.835

Table of Greek migrant population in the Länder of the Federal Republic of Germany, composed with data presented in the Statistical Yearbooks of the years 1960-1989. The Yearbooks are distributed with the permission of the Federal Statistical Office through the website: <https://www.digizeitschriften.de/en/dms/toc/?PID=PPN514402342>.

QUESTIONNAIRE FOR THE SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEWS

When and where you were born? **Πότε και πού γεννηθήκατε;**

How many members and what was your family's financial situation? **Πόσα μέλη είχε η οικογένειά σας και ποια ήταν η οικονομική της κατάσταση;**

What education did you take? **Τι εκπαίδευση έχετε λάβει;**

Did you or any member of your family take part in World War II/Civil War? **Πολεμήσατε εσείς ή κάποιο μέλος της οικογένειάς σας στον πόλεμο του '40 ή στον Εμφύλιο;**

Were you or any member of your family prosecuted/exiled/imprisoned etc.?

Εσείς ή κάποιο μέλος της οικογένειάς σας φυλακιστήκατε ή εξοριστήκατε;

At what age did you enter the world of work? **Σε τι ηλικία ξεκινήσατε να δουλεύετε;**

B.1. Was it a difficult decision to leave your country and work abroad? **Ήταν δύσκολη απόφαση να φύγετε στο εξωτερικό;**

Were you single or did you have your own family, when you left? **Ήσασταν ανύπαντρος/η όταν φύγατε;**

What was the most decisive factor that made you take the decision (survival, prospective social status, rumours)? **Ποιος ήταν ο πιο κρίσιμος παράγοντας που σας έκανε να φύγετε(επιβίωση, κοινωνικό κύρος, φήμες)**

Who told you about working abroad (friends, family, media)? **Ποιος σας πρότεινε να δουλέψετε στη Γερμανία (φίλοι, οικογένεια, Τύπος)**

What was the reaction of your environment when you announced your decision? **Ποια ήταν η αντίδραση του κύκλου σας όταν τους είπατε ότι θα φύγετε στη Γερμανία;**

Did you already have any friends or family working abroad? **Είχατε ήδη φίλους ή συγγενείς που δούλευαν στη Γερμανία;**

Did the political situation in your country influence your decision? **Η πολιτική κατάσταση της Ελλάδας συνέβαλε στην απόφαση να φύγετε;**

Did you consider it a quick and necessary expedition abroad or did you make long-term plans to stay abroad? **Το θεωρούσατε μια σύντομη παραμονή ή κάνατε μακροπρόθεσμα σχέδια;**

B.2. What were the requirements to work abroad? **Ποιες ήταν οι προϋποθέσεις για να σας προσλάβουν;**

Was it necessary to be over 21/ to have working experience/ to have finished army obligations/to have social insurance or work permit for abroad/passport? **Ήταν υποχρεωτικό να είστε άνω των 21, να έχετε κάποια επαγγελματική εμπειρία, να έχετε κάνει τη θητεία σας, να έχετε άδεια παραμονής ή διαβατήριο;**

Was it necessary to have clear police statement? **Ζητούσαν πιστοποιητικό κοινωνικών φρονημάτων; Είχατε κάποιο πρόβλημα με αυτό;**

Were there specific recruitment days? and how many times per year and where? **Υπήρχαν συγκεκριμένες μέρες συνεντεύξεων; Πόσες φορές το χρόνο και πού; Εσείς από πού περάσατε;**

Who were the members of the selection committee? **Από ποιους αποτελούνταν η επιτροπή επιλογής;**

Were you examined by doctors? From the state or the companies? **Εξεταστήκατε από γιατρούς; Ήταν Γερμανοί και τι εξετάσεις σας έκαναν;**

Did you sign any contract? What were the terms? **Υπογράφατε κάποιο συμβόλαιο όταν σας διάλεξαν; Τι όρους είχε;**

Would you have any trouble if not keeping the terms? **Αν δεν τηρούσατε τους όρους είχε κάποια συνέπεια;**

Did you have to pay any money for fees, travel, papers? **Χρειάστηκε να πληρώσετε κάτι για την έκδοση των πιστοποιητικών ή για το ταξίδι;**

If yes, how did you find this money? **Αν ναι, πόσα και είχατε οικονομίες γι' αυτόν τον σκοπό;**

Did you start alone or had a friend or family member going abroad with you? **Ξεκινήσατε μόνος/η ή με κάποιον συγγενή ή φίλο;**

How did you travel: by train or ship? **Θυμάστε κάτι από τη διαδρομή; Τι σκεφτόσασταν;**

C.1. What was your very first impression from the new country? **Ποια ήταν η πρώτη-πρώτη εντύπωση από τη Γερμανία;**

Was there something specific that you liked or disliked from the first moment? **Υπήρχε κάτι συγκεκριμένο που σας άρεσε ή δεν σας άρεσε από την πρώτη στιγμή;**

Was it anyone to welcome you and explain you some things? In which language? **Πού φτάσατε; Ήταν κάποιος εκεί να σας υποδεχτεί και να σας εξηγήσει κάποια πράγματα; Σε ποια γλώσσα;**

Did you have any friend working already at the same city/country as you? **Είχατε κάποιον φίλο ή συγγενή στην πόλη που πήγατε;**

In which city/country did you work? **Σε ποια πόλη εγκατασταθήκατε; Πώς έλεγαν το εργοστάσιο που δουλεύατε;**

Where did you stay? The company had dormitories/you rented a room? **πού μένατε; Η εταιρεία είχε δωμάτια ή μένατε εκτός;**

Πόσα πληρώνατε το μήνα και τι συμπεριλάμβανε η τιμή;

Did you have roommates? From which country? **Είχατε συγκατοίκους; Από ποια χώρα;**

What was the equipment of your rooms? **Τι εξοπλισμό είχαν τα δωμάτια;**

Were there any rules about the chores/the visits etc.? **υπήρχαν κάποιοι κανόνες σχετικά με ώρες κοινής ησυχίας, επισκέψεις, δουλειές;**

Did you eat at home or at the canteen? **Τρώγατε στο σπίτι ή στη καντίνα του εργοστασίου;**

What was your impression of your living space? **Πώς σας φαινόταν ο χώρος που μένατε;**

C.2. What was your first impression of your working space? **Ποια ήταν η πρώτη εντύπωση από τον χώρο εργασίας σας;**

Can you remember your first day at work? **Θυμάστε την πρώτη μέρα στη δουλειά;**

Can you describe the factory? **Μπορείτε να περιγράψετε το εργοστάσιο;**

Was it anyone there to explain the rules and show you around? **Υπήρχε κανείς να σας εξηγήσει τους κανόνες και να σας δείξει τις εγκαταστάσεις;**

Who were the first persons you met? **Ποιοι ήταν οι πρώτοι που συναντήσατε;**

Was the job very specialized, in line production? **Δουλεύατε ακκόρντ;**

Did you have to interact with others or the job was automated? **Μπορούσατε να μιλάτε με τους διπλανούς σας ή δεν ακούγατε τίποτα;**

Was it difficult for your standards? **Ήταν δύσκολη η δουλειά;**

Was it dangerous? Did you have to take any protection measures? **Ήταν επικίνδυνη; Έπρεπε να παίρνετε κάποια μέτρα ασφαλείας;**

Have you ever had an accident? **Είχατε ποτέ κάποιο ατύχημα;**

Did you take any compensation? **Πήρατε κάποια αποζημίωση;**

Have your work influenced your health condition? **Επηρέασε η δουλειά την υγεία σας;**

Αντιμετωπίζατε κάποια ψυχολογικά προβλήματα;

C.3Did you have anyone to assist you or superintend you? **Είχατε κάποιον επιστάτη;**

What were the relations with him/her? **Τι σχέσεις είχατε μαζί του;**

Were your colleagues antagonistic? **Πώς τα πηγαίνατε με τους συναδέλφους σας;**

Have you ever met your boss? **Συναντήσατε ποτέ το αφεντικό σας;**

Did you ever take part in a strike? **Πήρατε ποτέ μέρος σε απεργία;**

Did you know your rights? **Ξέρατε τα δικαιώματά σας;**

Were you member of any workers' union? **Ήσασταν μέλος σε κάποιο σωματείο/συνδικάτο;**

How many hours did you work per day? **Πόσες ώρες δουλεύατε τη μέρα;/ Σε βάρδιες;**

Did you often overwork? Were these hours paid? **Κάνατε υπερωρίες; Τις πληρωνόσασταν;**

What was your wage and how it was paid to you? **Τι μισθό παίρνατε; Πόσα στέλνατε στην Ελλάδα; Και σε ποιον;**

Did you have insurance? **Ήσασταν ασφαλισμένος;**

Did you have health care?

How many days leave could you take? **Πόσες μέρες άδεια σας έδιναν;**

Did you have to give a reason to take a leave? **Έπρεπε να δηλώσετε κάπου το λόγο που ζητάτε άδεια;**

Did you stay at the same factory or did you change? **Μείνατε όλον τον καιρό στο ίδιο εργοστάσιο;**

How did you find out chances for employment? **Πώς μαθαίνατε για κενές θέσεις εργασίας;**

C.4. How would you characterize your routine? **Πώς ήταν η ρουτίνα σας;**

Did you feel tired/alone/uncomfortable?

What was the most pleasant and the most annoying thing in your routine? **Ποιο ήταν το πιο ευχάριστο και το πιο δυσάρεστο πράγμα στην καθημερινότητα;**

Did you feel comfortable in the urban environment?

How did you use your free time? **Είχατε ελεύθερο χρόνο κι αν ναι τι κάνατε;**

What were your relations with your colleagues/roommates?

Did you go out to the cinema or a pub/shopping?

Did you do any sports?

Did you eat out? Did you like the local cuisine? **Τρώγατε ποτέ έξω;**

Do you have a clear image of the daily life of the locals?

Did you have a clear image of the political situation in the country? **Ξέρατε πώς ήταν η πολιτική κατάσταση στη Γερμανία;**

Did you understand and speak the language? **Μιλούσατε καθόλου γερμανικά;**

Did you have relations with any locals/in which language did you speak? **Είχατε σχέσεις με τους ντόπιους;**

How and how often did you communicate with your family back home? **Πόσο συχνά μιλούσατε με την οικογένεια στην Ελλάδα; Πώς;**

Were you informed about the political situation in your country of origin? **Ξέρατε πώς πάει η πολιτική κατάσταση στην Ελλάδα;**

Did you send the money you earned back home? How and how often?

Did you encourage others to come and work abroad with you? **Ενθαρρύνατε και άλλους να έρθουν στη Γερμανία;**

Did you have anyone visiting you/Did you make any new friends or love affair? **Ερχόταν επισκέψεις από Ελλάδα; Κάνατε εκεί καινούριους φίλους;**

D.1. Did you have to quit your job for any reason (family issues, health problems)/Did you quit and return later? **Παραιτηθήκατε για κάποιο λόγο(οικογενειακά/θέματα υγείας); Επιστρέψατε αφού παραιτηθήκατε;**

Did you stay longer than you have planned? **Μείνατε πιο πολλά χρόνια απ' ό,τι είχατε αρχικά σχεδιάσει;**

Were you satisfied with what you earned? **Τα χρήματα που βγάzaτε ήταν ικανοποιητικά;**

What was the feeling when you were leaving the country? **Πώς νιώσατε όταν φεύγατε από τη Γερμανία; Φοβόσασταν κάτι;**

What was the feeling when you got back? **Πώς νιώσατε όταν επιστρέψατε;**

Was the atmosphere very different/unfamiliar than in the past? **Είχε αλλάξει κάτι από τότε που φύγατε;**

Did you see your birthplace in a different way and if yes how?

Είχατε αλλάξει κι εσείς;

Did you have any problem reintegrating in the pace of life and in social life? **Είχατε πρόβλημα να συνηθίσετε τον νέο τρόπο ζωής;**

Did you continue your old job or did you find a new one? **Τι δουλειά βρήκατε; Συνεχίσατε την παλιά σας ή κάποια καινούρια;**

Did you invest the money you earned in real estate/car/commodities? **Πού επενδύσατε και με τι σκεπτικό;**

Did your social status changed compared to before? **Σας βλέπαν διαφορετικά οι συγχωριανοί/συμπολίτες σας;**

Has the hierarchy in your family changed during your absence? **Όσο λείπατε έγιναν αλλαγές στην οικογένειά σας;**

Did you feel comfortable with the changes? **Τι σας ενόχλησε και τι σας ικανοποίησε περισσότερο με την επιστροφή σας;**

E. How would you characterize your experience abroad? **Πώς θα χαρακτηρίζατε την εμπειρία σας στη Γερμανία;**

If you had the chance would you go again? **Θα ξαναπηγαίνατε;**

Do you regret anything you did or you did not do? **Μετανιώνετε για κάτι;**

Would you advice a young boy or girl to go abroad to work? **Θα συμβουλεύατε κάποιον νέο να βγει στο εξωτερικό;**

What you consider the greatest gain and what the greatest loss? **Τι κερδίσατε και τι χάσατε;**

Do you think this experience made you who you are now? **Σας άλλαξε η όλη εμπειρία;**

Do you keep in touch with any friends you made abroad? **Κρατάτε καθόλου επαφές;**

Do you have any interest about the country you spent some years of your life? **Όταν ακούτε Γερμανία στις ειδήσεις σας τραβάει την προσοχή;**

Did you visit it again as a tourist? Πήγατε καθόλου σαν τουρίστας;

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