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# Heroes or Outcasts? The Long Saga of the State's Recognition of the Greek Resistance (1944–2006)

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This article explores how the Greek state created and implemented the legislation relating to recognition of the National Resistance during three different transitional periods of the country's postwar history: civil war, dictatorship and democracy. The article's principal argument is that recognition served as the main tool for building consecutive national narratives not only of the resistance but also of Greekness, determining who was included in and excluded from the nation. By addressing one of the most loaded political issues in Greek society and politics in its entirety, this article revisits Greece's postwar history, highlighting the ruptures and continuities over a long period.

## Introduction

For Greek society the 1982 'Recognition of National Resistance' has been one of the most important and positive events of the Third Greek Republic (1974 to the present), Greece's most stable and democratic period in the twentieth century.<sup>1</sup> What made this law so significant was the fact that it officially recognised, for the first time, the largest resistance organisation – the communist-led left-wing National Liberation Front (EAM) and its military arm, the Greek Popular Liberation Army (ELAS) – which had been part of the National Resistance during the Second World War.

Although in many European countries the memory of national resistance functioned as a unifying narrative, in Greece the resistance was largely identified with the first phase or 'round' of the Civil War of 1946–9, a bloody armed conflict between the official army and the communists and its divisive legacy. The 1982 transformation of the resistance's legacy into an inclusive one – from an exclusionary nationalist legacy to a patriotic people's legacy – represented a major successful 'policy for the past', the term coined by Norbert Frei to define state-based processes relating to the national past that reflect a 'political dynamic' and are characterised 'by a high degree of societal acceptance – indeed of collective expectation'.<sup>2</sup>

However, two other major laws preceded the 1982 'recognition', forming part of the long postwar history of legislation regarding the Greek National Resistance. The first law was enacted during the 1946–9 Civil War (Emergency Law 971/1949) and the second during the 1967–74 dictatorship (Decree-Law 179/1969). Both laws recognised only so-called 'national' organisations and excluded the communist-led EAM/ELAS, which was labelled an 'anti-national' and traitorous movement, whose prominent role in the resistance allegedly masked its real goal of violently usurping power. The absence of these laws from public discourse reflects the success of the 1982 law's inclusive narrative, which contrasts with the previous two laws' exclusionary character.

<sup>1</sup> Public opinion polling by the Greek company Public Issue in 2007 and 2011 regarding the period 1974–1989, <http://www.publicissue.gr/3583/metapolitefsi2014> (last visited 1 June 2023).

<sup>2</sup> Norbert Frei, *Adenauer's Germany and the Nazi Past: The Politics of Amnesty and Integration*, trans. Joel Golb (New York: Columbia University Press, 2002), xii.

This article examines Greek state legislation on recognising the National Resistance by exploring these three major legal milestones, which regulated three different, independent recognition cycles between Greece's liberation in 1944 and 2006. The first law reflected the nationalists' victory in the civil war; the second law, the dictatorship's virulent anticommunism; and the third law, the Third Republic's democratisation efforts. The examination of these successive laws enables us to trace the development of the conflicts over Greek memory of the Second World War and explain their origins.

By analysing this long recognition process, we explore how consecutive governments resignified the nation and reinforced two powerful, long-lasting and conflicting Greek resistance narratives: that of a national fight on two fronts, against Nazism and communism, conducted by the army and 'national' (i.e. noncommunist) forces; and a united liberation struggle of all Greeks against fascism. By addressing one of the most loaded political issues in Greek society and politics in its entirety, this article revisits Greece's long postwar history as a whole, highlighting the ruptures and continuities in state policies on addressing the past and the relationship between politics and the resistance's legacy.

### Beyond Greek Exceptionalism

While its postwar trajectory has significant distinguishing features, Greece is not an exception to the European history of the Second World War and its aftermath. As Martin Conway points out, 'in many respects, the history of Greece between 1941 and 1949 can be regarded as a projection, albeit often in more extreme forms, of the history of much of Europe during that decade'.<sup>3</sup> Indeed, this period is crucial for comprehending the long process of the state's recognition of the National Resistance in Greece because it configured the postwar state and political system.

After the war, most European countries faced similar problems in transitioning from war to peace and legitimising postwar governments.<sup>4</sup> In Greece, however, the balance of power between political parties was severely disrupted, precipitating a large-scale fratricidal conflict. The Occupation (1941–4) and post-liberation period (1944–5), or what the Italians term the *dopoliberazione*, were pivotal in Greece's history because they created a substantially new political scene and a completely new political vocabulary.<sup>5</sup> During this period, the political space of the left and the centre was configured, while the prewar right had to be reconfigured to preserve its existence.<sup>6</sup> During the war, nationalism was also transformed into the exclusivist notion of 'national-mindedness' (*ethnikofrosini*).<sup>7</sup>

'National-mindedness' represented the Greek state's ideology from the end of the civil war until the dictatorship of the colonels (1949–74). It was an amalgam of radical anticommunism and the expression of an extreme nationalism strongly related to the Greek Orthodox Church's values and the ancient glory of the nation combined with liberal and Western Atlanticist perceptions. 'National-mindedness' was used to accommodate the new regime of power-sharing that brought together the forces of the right and the centre parties under the hegemonic guidance of the United States. As such, the country was divided between the nationally minded (*ethnikofrones*) and those deemed harmful to society (*miasmata*).

Greece's internal conflicts during the Occupation expressed many of the tensions between resistance movements and governments-in-exile that existed, but were sometimes less visible, elsewhere

<sup>3</sup> Martin Conway, 'Greek Exceptionalism or a Mirror of a European Civil War?', in Philipp Carabott and Thanasis D. Sfikas, eds., *The Greek Civil War: Essays of a Conflict of Exceptionalism and Silences* (London: Ashgate, 2004), 30.

<sup>4</sup> For the Belgian case, see Pieter Lagrou, *The Legacy of Nazi Occupation: Patriotic Memory and National Recovery in Western Europe, 1945–1965* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999).

<sup>5</sup> See Claudio Pavone, *A Civil War: A History of the Italian Resistance* (London: Verso, 2013), for the importance of the first phase in post-Second World War Italy.

<sup>6</sup> Ilias Nicolacopoulos, *I kachektiki dimokratia: Kommata kai ekloges, 1946–1967* [The Cachectic Democracy: Parties and Elections, 1946–1967] (Athens: Patakis, 2001), 29–33.

<sup>7</sup> Despoina Papadimitriou, *Apo ton lao ton nomimofronon sto ethnos ton ethnikofronon* [From a Lawful Nation to a National-minded Nation] (Athens: Savvalas, 2009), 209.

in Europe.<sup>8</sup> These tensions contributed to poisoning domestic politics to the point of sparking civil war in Greece as well as in other countries, such as Yugoslavia and northern Italy. A particular constellation of prewar divisions and endemic political instability that grew increasingly acute in the 1930s combined with the resistance's legacy – a vigorous resistance movement; the creation of state institutions of the 'people's power' in the liberated Greek countryside;<sup>9</sup> mass radicalisation; political fragmentation; and civil clashes – to profoundly transform the political landscape.

These developments, coupled with British influence – the resistance movement was largely armed and equipped from British sources; the exiled Greek government was in British-controlled Cairo; and the king was in London – and the growing influence of the Communist Party (*Kommounistiko Komma Elladas*; KKE), which threatened British plans for the return of the king to power and thus to keep communism at bay, led to an open civil war from 1946 and to the landslide victory in 1949 of the National Army, supported first by British and then by American forces, against the communist-backed Democratic Army of Greece (DSE), a conflict that caused more casualties and displaced more people than in the Second World War.<sup>10</sup> This three-year civil war, Europe's bloodiest between 1945 and the breakup of Yugoslavia, reflected the harsh social and political struggles that marked the 'European Civil War' and inverted many postwar European norms, including the politics of retribution.<sup>11</sup>

After the war, Europe embarked on a major historical experiment: the postwar justice meted out for collaboration and war crimes through lynch-mob justice, Allied tribunals and national courts. The Greek postwar anticommunist authorities, however, preferred to condemn or even execute resistance fighters from the communist anti-Nazi resistance.<sup>12</sup> In Greece and Italy, where violent resistance to postwar regimes lasted the longest, suspected leftists were incarcerated even as collaborators were released from prison.<sup>13</sup> Thus Greece's purges of collaborationists were limited, with the lowest purge rate aside from Italy. Only twenty-five collaborationists were executed in Greece from 1944 to 1949.<sup>14</sup> Over the same period, special military courts executed between three thousand and five thousand communists and their sympathisers.<sup>15</sup> Moreover, in Greece, hundreds of armed collaborationists were integrated into the state apparatus to confront the communist threat before the purges began in earnest.<sup>16</sup>

Reversing the politics of retribution changed the postwar political vocabulary. In postwar Greece, political prisoners or deportees were not the concentration camp survivors – most European countries' most important symbolic group and the resistance's real spokespeople in many ways, 'the best of the Nation' – but the EAM/ELAS combatants interned in domestic 'rehabilitation' concentration camps.<sup>17</sup>

<sup>8</sup> Hagen Fleischer, 'The National Liberation Front (EAM), 1941–1947: A Reassessment', in John O. Iatrides and Linda Wrigley, eds., *Greece at the Crossroads: The Civil War and Its Legacy* (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1995), 48–89.

<sup>9</sup> The resistance fostered a unique form of local direct democracy, the 'free Greece' zones with elected councils and people's courts organised by the EAM. See Giannis Skalidakis, *I Eleftheri Ellada* [Free Greece] (Athens: Asini, 2014).

<sup>10</sup> David Close, *The Origins of the Greek Civil War* (London: Longman, 1995), 106–13; Prokopis Papastratis, *British Policy towards Greece during the Second World War, 1941–1944* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984), 217; Amikam Nachmani, 'Civil War and Foreign Intervention in Greece: 1946–49', *Journal of Contemporary History*, 25, 4 (1990), 489.

<sup>11</sup> Enzo Traverso, *Fire and Blood: The European Civil War, 1914–1945*, trans. David Fernbach (London: Verso, 2016).

<sup>12</sup> Tony Judt, *Postwar: A History of Europe since 1945* (New York: Penguin Press, 2005), 48.

<sup>13</sup> Mark Mazower, *Dark Continent: Europe's Twentieth Century* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1999), 247–8.

<sup>14</sup> David Close, *Greece since 1945: Politics, Economy and Society* (London: Routledge, 2014), 19; Dimitris Kousouris, *Dikes ton dosilogon, 1944–1949* [The Trials of the Collaborationists, 1944–1949] (Athens: Polis, 2014), 593–4.

<sup>15</sup> Polymeris Voglis, 'Between Negation and Self-Negation: Political Prisoners in Greece, 1945–1950', in Mark Mazower, ed., *After the War Was Over: Reconstructing Family, Nation, and State in Greece, 1943–1960* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2000), 81.

<sup>16</sup> Mark Mazower, 'The Cold War and the Appropriation of Memory: Greece After Liberation', in István Deák, Jan T. Gross and Tony Judt, eds., *The Politics of Retribution* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2000), 214.

<sup>17</sup> Pieter Lagrou, 'Victims of Genocide and National Memory: Belgium, France and the Netherlands 1945–1965', *Past and Present*, 154, 1 (1997), 187–97. About 50,000 persons were interned in prisons or camps between 1947 and 1949. See Polymeris Voglis, 'Political Prisoners in the Greek Civil War, 1945–50: Greece in Comparative Perspective', *Journal of Contemporary History*, 37, 4 (2002), 529.

At the same time, in Greece – as in Poland, Albania and Yugoslavia – a virtual civil war within the resistance led both the left and the right to insist on their nationalist credentials.<sup>18</sup> Thus, both during and after the civil war, the right and the communist left strove to prove that they were the only legitimate representatives of the nation.<sup>19</sup>

Since purges of collaborators were limited and could not produce a new postwar morality, the legal process of recognising the National Resistance formed the backbone of the state's 'policy for the past'. The state constructed a new official narrative, not only about the resistance, but also about the nation and who deserved to be called Greek. Recognition promoted new definitions of the nation and new hierarchies between social groups: the so-called patriots received valuable symbolic and political capital (the heroes), while the leftists, perceived as 'anti-national' elements, were scorned and politically excluded (the outcasts). Thus, recognition was primarily a tool for inclusion and exclusion. But it also functioned as a welfare policy for those who were considered part of the nation and served to control and surveil those who were not.

As elsewhere, disputes over the meaning of the Second World War continue in Greece; the war 'retain [ed] its grip on memory and myth'.<sup>20</sup> The National Resistance is a site of memory that has concerned Greek society intensely and emotionally since the war ended. We suggest that this passionate debate was fuelled largely by the distortions created by the state recognition process – collaborationists or groups that had not participated in the resistance were recognised as resistance combatants, while the largest resistance organisation, the EAM/ELAS, was excluded and penalised. Thus, the Greek resistance's history cannot be fully understood without examining its postwar recognition. However, compared to the voluminous literature on National Resistance history, research on its official recognition has been limited, despite being the main process that defined the National Resistance as both 'national' and 'resistance'.<sup>21</sup>

Recently, some scholars have investigated the recognition laws as an autonomous subject, significantly contributing to our understanding of their political implications.<sup>22</sup> While these studies have

<sup>18</sup> Mazower, *Dark Continent*, 202.

<sup>19</sup> Tasoula Vervenioti, 'Proforiki istoria kai erefna gia ton elliniko Emfylio: I politiki sygykia, o erefnitis kai o afigitis' [Oral History and Research on the Greek Civil War: The Political Situation, the Researcher and the Narrator], *Epitheorisi Koinonikon Erefnon*, 107 (2002), 171.

<sup>20</sup> David Reynolds, 'World War II and Modern Meanings', *Diplomatic History*, 25 (2001), 469.

<sup>21</sup> See Iasonas Chandrinou, 'Ethniki Antistasi: Istorikes, politikes kai thesmikes ennoiologiseis apo to 1941 sto simera' [National Resistance: Historical, Political, and Institutional Conceptualizations from 1941 onwards], in Katerina Gardika et al., eds., *I makra skia tis dekaetias tou '40* [The Long Shadow of the 1940s] (Athens: Alexandra, 2015), 191–213; Eleni Paschaloudi, 'I Ethniki Antistasi ston epetiako charti tis metapolemikis Elladas' [The National Resistance on the Anniversary Map of Postwar Greece], in Stratos Dordanas et al., eds., *Katoxiki via, 1939–1945: I elliniki kai evropaiki empeiria* [Violence during the Occupation, 1939–1945: The Greek and the European Experience] (Athens: Asini, 2016), 415–35; Eleni Striftompola, 'Mathimata dimosias istorias apo to elliniko Koinovoulio: I periptosi tou nomou 1285/1982 "Gia tin anagnorisi tis Ethnikis Antistasis tou Ellinikou Laou enantion ton stratefmaton katosis, 1941–1944"' [Lesson of Public History in the Greek Parliament: The Case of Law 1285/1982 "For the Recognition of the National Resistance of the Greek People Against the Occupation Troops, 1941–1944"], in Andreas Andreou et al., eds., *I Dimosia Istorika stin Ellada: Chriseis kai katachriseis tis istorias* [Public History in Greece: Uses and Abuses of History] (Thessaloniki: Epikentro, 2015), 239–52; Vangelis Tzoukas, 'I anagnorisi tis Ethnikis Antistasis' [The Recognition of National Resistance], in Vassilis Vamvakas and Panagiotis Panagiotopoulos, eds., *I Ellada sti dekaetia tou 1980* [Greece in the 1980s] (Athens: Perasma, 2010), 133–6; Evanthi Chatzivasileiou, 'Esagogi' [Introduction], in Katerina Botsiou, ed., *Andreas Papandreou, I anagnorisi tis Ethnikis Antistasis (1982)* [Andreas Papandreou: The Recognition of the National Resistance (1982)] (Athens: Greek Parliament, 2010), 9–35.

<sup>22</sup> Giorgos Antoniou and Eleni Paschaloudi, 'To apso go prosopo tis istorias tholonei: i anagnorisi tis eamiki Antistasis kai to politiko systema (1945–1995)' [The Flawless Face of History Fades: The Recognition of EAM's Resistance and the Political System, 1945–1995], in Vasilis Gounaris, ed., *Iroes ton Ellinon: Oi kapetanioi, ta palikaria kai i anagnorisi ton ethnikon agonon 19–20 aionas* [Heroes of Greece: The Captains, the Brave Men, and the Recognition of the National Struggles, 19th–20th Centuries] (Athens: Hellenic Parliament Foundation, 2014), 257–331; and Vaios Kalogrias and Stratos Dordanas, 'I anagnorisi ton mi eamiki antistasiakon organoseon (1945–1974)' [The Recognition of the non-EAM Resistance Groups, 1945–1974], in *ibid.*, 181–256; Giorgos Antoniou and Eleni Paschaloudi, 'Remembering the Greek Resistance: Politics of Memory, Reconciliation and Oblivion', *Ricerche Storiche*, 1 (2014), 49–66.

been valuable, they have not provided a comprehensive overview of this long period's continuities and ruptures and many aspects remain uncharted, such as the left's ongoing demand for recognition and the link between recognition of the EAM's resistance (Law 1285) and previous legislation. Furthermore, the existing literature lacks a wider reflection on the very process of recognition as a political tool, not only for legitimising the state but also for nation building.

Our analysis draws on a variety of sources. The army oversaw the first two Recognition laws because it was one of the central political actors during the postwar period and the dictatorship. Thus, we explored the military archives of the Directorate of Reservists, Soldiers, Victims, and Disabled (DEPATHA), particularly the Archive of National Resistance (ANR), which houses the National Resistance Fighters Registers, related certificates and honorary awards. This was the first time that the Ministry of Defense permitted access to these archives for such an extensive investigation. We also conducted archival research at the Attica and Aegean Prefectures because they oversaw the recognition of resistance combatants after 1982. Finally, we explored a number of private and public archives, including the American School of Classical Studies at Athens, Gennadius Library Archives, and the Contemporary Social History Archives (ASKI), which includes the archives of the United Democratic Left (*Eniaia Dimokratiki Aristera*; EDA) as well as part of the archives of the Communist Party of Greece (KKE).

Finally, we examined the overall legislation that stemmed from implementing the sixty-five basic recognition laws; the legislation's benefits for ex-combatants; the documentation that resistance organisations and individuals provided for recognition; the resistance organisations that were recognised or rejected (537 in total); the records, announcements, newspapers and periodicals from veterans' resistance associations from across the political spectrum; Greek parliamentary records; and the press from 1946 through 2006.

### Liberation 1944: The Coexistence of War and Peace

Ending a war is complicated, especially when guerrilla warfare is involved. In 1944, a paramount issue in Greece was the need to recreate the national army, which had been dismantled after the capitulation of Greece in 1941, in order to secure state control of the armed forces. Within this process, the official promise to recognise resistance combatants became an important tool for negotiating with the armed guerrillas. From the beginning, disarmament and recognition were connected. On 20 October 1944, the military commander in Herakleion, Crete, ordered local guerrilla leaders to surrender their weapons and return to peasant life. He accompanied his order with a promise: 'The homeland expresses gratitude to the brave guerrillas for their sacrifices . . . Every leader of a guerrilla group [must keep] a record of the men who served with gallantry, so that it can be submitted on time for moral and material compensation'. That promise was made by an official from the government-in-exile in Cairo, headed by King George II, which was about to return to Greece in an effort to reinstate the Greek authorities, who lacked both an army and the means of persuading the guerrillas to surrender control.<sup>23</sup>

Although both wings of the fragile Government of National Unity, established in September 1944 and led by liberal Prime Minister Georgios Papandreou, wanted to reestablish the Greek army, the communist-led resistance organisation of EAM/ELAS aimed to create a national army that would include its guerrilla forces, while the rest of the political forces, which dominated the government and enjoyed British political support, strove to end communist influence. In the weeks immediately after liberation, the issue of recognition was mainly raised by noncommunists to argue that ELAS should be demobilised honourably. The communists focused on purging Nazi collaborators, which, beyond its moral necessity and alignment with European trends, was the most effective way of ensuring their permanent exclusion from the new army and the postwar state in general.<sup>24</sup>

<sup>23</sup> 'I patris den tha tous lismonisei' [The Fatherland Will Not Forget Them], *Niki* (Herakleion), 20 Oct. 1944, 2.

<sup>24</sup> See Dimitris Kousouris, 'From Revolution to Restoration: Transnational Implications of the Greek Purge of Wartime Collaborators', in Liora Israël and Guillaume Mouralis, eds., *Dealing with Wars and Dictatorships: Legal Concepts and Categories in Action* (The Hague: T.M.C. Asser Press, 2014), 149–51.



At the end of November 1944, negotiations over the army between the communists and the prewar political establishment – mainly liberals but also pro-royalists – collapsed. The situation escalated to the so-called December events (*Dekemvriana*), an armed battle between EAM/ELAS and a coalition that included noncommunist resistance organisations, collaborationist organisations, and state forces such as the gendarmerie, also accused of collaboration. The latter were supported by the British army, whose intervention was crucial. The battle raged in Athens for over a month and resulted in the EAM/ELAS's defeat by Greek and British troops. The subsequent Treaty of Varkiza ended the conflict and dismantled all guerrilla bands, communist and noncommunist alike. However, the disarmament was only partial. Some EAM/ELAS combatants hid their weaponry, while anticommunist bands found ways to conceal their armed activity. For example, the National Republican Greek League (EDES), which had the second largest guerrilla army, and 'X', a pro-royalist, semi-collaborationist Athenian group, both became political parties and expanded their networks to include local collaborationist groups seeking protection.<sup>25</sup> Just months after Greece's liberation, a yawning chasm emerged between the communists and all the other political forces, shifting much of the latter closer to the collaborationists.<sup>26</sup>

Because the negotiated disarmament of the guerrilla groups was largely nominal, particularly in rural areas, 'a sort of miniature counter-revolution' continued the mass persecution of the leftists involved in the resistance.<sup>27</sup> Nevertheless, the EAM formed a political coalition with active front organisations, which had considerable strength in the unions, thus retaining political influence. In December 1945, the EAM organised a massive public rally to demand recognition of its part in the resistance, which meant amnesty for its members who were accused of crimes during the Occupation.<sup>28</sup>

As the EAM was marginalised from the central political scene, the dominant political forces had to reach a new political consensus on the resistance and decide whether the resistance should be omitted entirely from public discourse, a view that was promoted by pro-royalists but intensely criticised by liberal circles.<sup>29</sup> For liberals, the resistance represented important moral and political capital that they did not want to relinquish. The reconstituted national army also took an active interest in the resistance; it began to gather evidence and formed a military committee to prepare an official record of resistance organisations. Evidently, military circles strongly believed that after a war they were entitled to control the entire process of honouring these fighters.<sup>30</sup>

### What Unites Us? The Parliamentary Battle over Resistance on the Way to Civil War

After the first postwar elections on 31 March 1946, the Greek parliament began officially defining the National Resistance. From the start, the royalist majority and the liberal opposition engaged in a moral battle. Communists as well as other minor socialist and agrarian parties, which had abstained from the elections, denouncing widespread episodes of left-wing voter intimidation, were excluded from these debates. The first point of friction concerned the very meaning of the resistance, whether it should be described as the entire nation's collective effort or whether its leaders should be recognised personally.

<sup>25</sup> Nikos Vafeas and Vangelis Tzoukas, 'I politiki klironomia tou EDES: To Ethnikon Komma Ellados (1945–1950)' [The Political Legacy of the EDES: The National Party of Greece (1945–1950)], in Polymeris Voglis, et al., eds., *I epoxi ton rixeon: I elliniki koinonia sti dekaetia tou 1940* [The Era of Ruptures: Greek Society in the 1940s] (Thessaloniki: Epikentro, 2012), 255–75; Spyros Papageorgiou, *O Grivas kai i X: To chameno archeio* [Grivas and X: The Lost Archive] (Athens: Nea Thesis, 2004), 506–11.

<sup>26</sup> Andreas Gerolymatos, *An International Civil War: Greece, 1943–1949* (London: Yale University Press, 2016), 219.

<sup>27</sup> William H. McNeill, *The Greek Dilemma: War and Aftermath* (New York: J. B. Lippincott, 1947), 199.

<sup>28</sup> 'O pallaikos sinagermos ston Panathinaiko, 200.000 laou vrontophonaxan ti thelisi tou ethnous' [The People's Rally in Panathinaikos, 200,000 Expressed the Will of the Nation], *Rizospastis*, 25 Dec. 1945, 1.

<sup>29</sup> 'Antistasis' [Resistance], *Eleftheria*, 22 Mar. 1945, 1.

<sup>30</sup> DEPATHA, ANR, file 36, 'EOE RAN', General Konstantinos Ventiris's Report on the National Action of Greek Women and the Award of Moral Rewards to Them, 27 Nov. 1945; on the Military Committee, see Speech of Trifonas Triantafylakos, Greek Parliamentary Records (hereafter GPR), Session 17, 27 Oct. 1948, 93–4.

The liberals wanted to expose the king as detached from the Greek people's suffering and solely concerned about his throne.<sup>31</sup> For their part, the royalists often accused prominent liberal leaders of war-time collaboration with the communists based on anti-royalism, paving the way for the communist insurgency.

The parliamentary confrontation reflected postwar Greece's central dilemma: Would postwar political legitimacy depend on the National Resistance's political capital, or would it stem from more traditional sources, such as the Crown? The answer was not clear. On the one hand, even royalists understood that the National Resistance was a considerable weapon for the territorial demands that Greece was about to make at the International Paris Peace Conference as it underlined Greece's constant struggle on the side of the Allies. On the other hand, the liberals realised that if the National Resistance acquired a central political value, this would greatly benefit the Communist Party.

Eventually, on 23 July 1946, the parliament unanimously passed the 7th Resolution, 'On the Recognition of the Actions of the National Guerrilla Groups as a War Act Worthy of the Homeland and Worthy of the Nation's Gratitude'.<sup>32</sup> It was a working compromise between the two parliamentary rivals amidst imminent international challenges. More importantly, it expressed the groups' unity against the communists. The conservative government finally acknowledged resistance fighters, provided they could prove that they had acted 'nationally', that is, lawfully, according to the orders of the royal government-in-exile and the British army's Middle East Command.<sup>33</sup> The EAM/ELAS was denounced as an unlawful movement since it had clashed with the Middle East Command, during the December events. Thus, the EAM/ELAS was excluded from the nation, and 'National Resistance' could only mean noncommunist resistance. The government also moved to criminalise left-wing activities and the Communist Party with a series of laws that criminalised its political activity as a threat against the 'existing social system', as Emergency Law 509/1947 stated, including death sentences that marked the beginning of the civil war.<sup>34</sup> Indeed, the parliamentary debate over the specific details of the 7th Resolution took place throughout the civil war, until its end in 1949.

The first issue that had to be addressed was the former guerrilla leaders' growing demand to battle the communists.<sup>35</sup> However, in 1947, the army was given total control over dealing with the communist threat. Thus, 'national' (noncommunist) guerrilla leaders, a powerful social and political subject in the making, lost an important tool for negotiating with the state. The second issue was whether the National Resistance's initial definition as the battle against the Occupation forces should also incorporate the fight against communists, which would lay the groundwork for recognising collaborationist units, including the infamous Security Battalions, which had been established in 1943 by the collaborationist government to fight against the resistance under the command of the German army.<sup>36</sup> The third matter was whether the law should honour all resistance groups equally or prioritise guerrilla warfare. Last, there was the pressing question of what kind of gratitude Greece owed its former combatants and whether it should be expressed symbolically or include material benefits, namely pensions for veterans and killed or disabled victims' families.

Thus, recognition of the resistance became a field of competition among several sociopolitical groups and state institutions. The government had to navigate carefully and produce a law that would satisfy most of these groups without relinquishing its own political power. By September 1949, when Emergency Law 971/1949 'On Granting Moral Awards to the National Guerrilla Bands

<sup>31</sup> 'O logos tou thronou' [The Royal Speech], *Eleftheria*, 14 May 1946, 1.

<sup>32</sup> Government Gazette (hereafter *GG*), 229, v. 1, 31 July 1946.

<sup>33</sup> As Kalogrias and Dordanas observe, this was an indirect way of legitimising the government-in-exile politically and ethically ('I anagnorisi', 201).

<sup>34</sup> See the 3rd Resolution 'Emergency Measures for Public Order and Security', *GG* 197, v. 1, 18 June 1946; Emergency Law 509, 'Security Measures of the State, the Constitution, the Social Regime, and [Measures] to Protect the Freedoms of Citizens', *ibid.*, 293, v. 1, 27 Dec. 1947.

<sup>35</sup> See Evangelos Kousais's proposal for a special militia, GPR, Session 48, 22 July 1946, 517.

<sup>36</sup> See Tasos Kostopoulos, *I aftologokrimeri mnimi: Ta Tagmata Asfaleias kai i metapolemiki ethnikofrosyni* [The Auto-censored Memory: The Security Battalions and Postwar Nationalism] (Athens: Filistor, 2005).

and the National Organisations of Internal Resistance' was ratified, the end of the civil war had established Greece's power structure. The army – already a central political actor – had been given full control over the recognition process.

### A Land of Discontent: Resistance Veterans and Law 971/1949

Emergency Law 971/1949 formed the basis for all subsequent resistance-related legislation. Rather than a symbolic act of inclusion and reconciliation, the legislation was designed as a tool for ostracism. The whole process, which occurred between 1949 and 1965, was primarily concerned with preventing the recognition of any 'anti-national element'.<sup>37</sup>

What qualified as an 'anti-national' element was determined by numerous preconditions that targeted the EAM/ELAS. For instance, the law required 'national behavior during December 1944', a political criterion that had nothing to do with Greece's struggle against the Axis powers.<sup>38</sup> Thus, the legislation defined both the nation and the resistance according to the ruling parties' memories of the 1940s. Political opponents of the government-in-exile and postwar governments became 'enemies of the nation', while loyalty to the state – even by former collaborationists – could be honoured as membership in the National Resistance. Unlike other European legislation, Greek law did not clearly exclude collaborationists, only deserters and 'anti-national' actors.

Beyond excluding the EAM/ELAS, the legislation first sought to limit the guerrilla leaders' widespread influence and then to empower the recognised leaders of resistance organisations in a controlled manner. By law, the committee could only examine applications from organisation leaders, not individuals. Recognition was a formative process that accepted, denied and created resistance leaders. Subsequently, it entitled the leaders to file membership lists. Throughout Greece, the recognition process established or consolidated local power networks and sparked feuds among those who claimed leadership in their territories.<sup>39</sup>

Moreover, recognition was a formative process for the resistance groups themselves because the law demanded coherence and structure. Resistance groups were separated into three major categories: National Guerrilla Bands, National Organisations of Intelligence and Sabotage, and National Internal Organisations. Applications required information on each organisation's history, hierarchy and structure, logistics, area and timeline of activity, relationship with the Allied forces and the government-in-exile and links to other resistance groups.<sup>40</sup> To meet the requirements and successfully obtain their groups' recognition, applicants had to create coherent and therefore selective stories about a complicated, controversial past. That process, with its restrictive rules but often flexible and shady implementation, could reject relevant documentation or overlook its absence. Thus, it gave resistance leaders the opportunity to form narratives about their past and receive official validation.

While Greek legislators attempted to create a coherent narrative of mass Greek resistance, excluding the EAM/ELAS left a vacuum because no other organisation had had so many members or such wide-ranging activity and dispersal throughout the country. The narrative of a nationwide nation-minded guerrilla movement was based on the EDES and its military branch, the National Bands of Greek Guerrillas (EOEA), despite the fact that it had been active mainly in northwestern Greece.<sup>41</sup> Its leader, Napoleon Zervas, was recognised as the National Resistance's General Leader and the military

<sup>37</sup> The Recognition Committee's first record is dated 25 June 1949. Through 11 Nov. 1965, there were 192 records of the committee's sessions. DEPATHA, ANR, Original Records 1–16 to Committee Records DL 4439/1964.

<sup>38</sup> Recognition Committee's first record, 25 June 1949, *ibid.*

<sup>39</sup> American School of Classical Studies at Athens, Gennadius Library Archives, Georgios N. Papaioannou Papers, Section IV, Recognition of the National Resistance, Disputes and Conflicts of Resisters, files 19–24.

<sup>40</sup> DEPATHA, ANR, Supporting Documents for Recognition, Circular Order 252, 27 Oct. 1952.

<sup>41</sup> See Vangelis Tzoukas, *Oi kapetanioi tou EDES stin Ipiro, 1942–1944* [Captains of EDES in Epirus, 1942–1944] (Athens: Estia, 2013); *EDES 1941–1945* [EDES, 1941–1945] (Athens: Alexandria, 2017).



recognition committee accepted twenty-five EDES groups from around the country, including local committees without resistance activity and independent groups under its aegis.<sup>42</sup>

The initial resistance legislation failed to achieve a consensus among those defined as national-minded veterans as it failed to provide the symbolic and material awards, such as pensions, that they believed they deserved in recognition of their significant national contributions during the Second World War. As recognition became a military process that granted medals and promotions, it affected the balance of power among army officers. The military leadership's support for a highly restricted, controlled process antagonised ex-combatants. While constant pressure from leaders, resistance associations and politicians resulted in extending application deadlines and, eventually, the official recognition of 108 organisations with over 75,000 members, a sense of injustice and dissatisfaction remained.<sup>43</sup>

That discontent came mainly from former guerrilla leaders who were prominent, politically influential local elites, and they pressured the committees to recognise more members than the groups actually had. For leaders, presenting an organisation as having hundreds or thousands of members maintained power networks. The unequal treatment of applicants, which depended on their lobbying power and ties to the military committee, fomented constant grievances.<sup>44</sup> Applicants who really had participated in the war were rejected, while nonexistent groups were approved and exaggerated membership numbers were tolerated. Additionally, the recognition of infamous Axis collaborators caused angry debates in the press and even violent outbursts in the parliament.<sup>45</sup>

The perception that recognition and its benefits were insufficient was common to groups with different political leanings within and beyond the 'national' sociopolitical space. Although the benefits were expanded by connecting resistance legislation to laws for war victims and included grants/subsidies for land purchase, housing and promotions for army members and public servants, they did not satisfy the veterans' major demand for a large pension programme and were regarded as mainly moral, not material. For many, the promise of recognition remained unfulfilled if the measures failed to deliver a major social welfare policy. Meanwhile, former EAM/ELAS members experienced extreme persecution and discrimination.<sup>46</sup> Their demand for recognition – voiced through public protests and campaigns, special features in the press and books – which meant their acceptance as part of the nation, eventually combined with contemporary international developments, including decolonisation and the peace movement, to find support across the political spectrum and prompted loud calls for democratisation.

### Resistance Recognition as a Demand for Democracy (1950–1967)

Across Europe, the Cold War shaped histories and memories of the Second World War. Two interconnected but distinct discourses emerged: antifascism and antitotalitarianism.<sup>47</sup> In Greece, the

<sup>42</sup> See the cases of the EDES Keas, a committee of local elites on a small island near Attica that was not active during the Occupation and the EDES OM (Tsenoglou), a police spy network that was included retroactively in the EDES groups, DEPATHA, ANR, files 112 'EOE EDES Keas', 21 'EOPD Tsenoglou' and 23 'EOPD Omiros Tsenoglou'.

<sup>43</sup> DEPATHA, ANR, List of the Recognised Organisations of National Resistance under Emergency Law 971/1949.

<sup>44</sup> Crete, where the recognition process included long-lasting conflicts among putative resistance leaders, offers many eloquent examples. See the Petrakas case, DEPATHA, ANR, files 46 'EAO-EOE Petraka' and 94 'EAO-EOE East Apokoronas, West Rethymno, P. Petraka'.

<sup>45</sup> For example, the National Hellenic Army (EES), a guerrilla group in Greek Macedonia, which was armed by and collaborated with the Germans, was recognised as a resistance organisation in 1950 and its leader, Konstantinos Papadopoulos, was elected MP from 1946 to 1967. Many former resistance combatants and army officers strongly opposed his visible presence in postwar political life. DEPATHA, ANR, files 23 and 23A 'EES'; 'Dosilogoí stin ERE' [Collaborators in the ERE], *Eleftheria*, 13 Dec. 1964 to 6 Feb. 1965; Stratos Dordanas, *Ellines enantion Ellinon* [Greeks Against Greeks] (Thessaloniki: Epikentro, 2006), 245–85; *I germaniki stoli sti nafthalini* [The German Uniform in Mothballs] (Athens: Estia, 2012), 230–72.

<sup>46</sup> Neni Panourgia, *Dangerous Citizens: The Greek Left and the Terror of the State* (New York: Fordham University Press, 2009).

<sup>47</sup> Lagrou, *The Legacy*, 262–91.

ideology of national-mindedness that dominated the post-civil war period accorded with the West's Cold War discourse. The anticommunism that polarised Greek society generated powerful political and ideological identities.<sup>48</sup> In that context, Greece's 'policy for the past' reflected both a certain view of the national past and a strategy of governmentality. Past actions and relationships were penalised, as the 1940s were seen through the distorting lens of 'three rounds' of communist treachery. For the state, the resistance period represented the first round – preparation for the communist attack; it was followed by a second round, the December events; and it culminated with the third round, the civil war and the KKE's most serious attempt to seize power. The post-civil war state considered communists to be un-Greek and 'eternal enemies of the nation'.<sup>49</sup> The state's repressive practices sought to control and prevent subversive behaviour by 'rehabilitating' or marginalising those who were perceived as 'national outcasts'.

Although the civil war's consequences dominated postwar politics and society in Greece, throughout that period there were developments that challenged the narrative of national-mindedness. In fact, the new era started with two consecutive centre-left governments, led by liberal army general Nikolaos Plastiras. Plastiras promised peace, reconciliation, amnesty and the 'forgetting' of the contentious past in order to move on, but after two brief terms he left office in October 1952. During his tenure, some of Plastiras's deputies stressed the need to recognise the EAM/ELAS as part of the National Resistance. Plastiras himself favoured distinguishing among the thousands of 'purely patriotic' EAM/ELAS members and its communist leadership.<sup>50</sup> Eventually, those attempts were stymied by the government and the powerful right-wing opposition, both of which pointed to the evils that the communists had caused during and after the Second World War. In 1952, the torch was passed to Alexandros Papagos, the army's commander-in-chief during the 1940 Greco-Italian War and the Greek Civil War. His electoral victory initiated a period of right-wing exclusionary dominance, which continued with his successor, Konstantinos Karamanlis, and the National Radical Union (*Ethniki Rizospastiki Enosi*; ERE) until 1963.

However, the emergence of a strong leftist opposition and a new centrist political force contributed to questioning the civil war-based divisions in politics and society. In the 1958 elections, the Unified Democratic Left (EDA) became the major opposition force.<sup>51</sup> As the only legal noncommunist leftist party, the EDA was the main political representative of the EAM/ELAS's legacy. At the same time, the EDA retained close ties to the illegal Communist Party in exile and amplified the voice of its adherents in Greece. During the 1950s, the EDA collaborated with figures from across the political spectrum, many of whom were renowned for their resistance activity. To an extent, this cooperation stemmed from common discontent over the resistance fighters' postwar fate and their growing demands for 'real recognition'.<sup>52</sup> However, the government reacted fiercely to the EDA's success, initiating a period of further state repression of its opponents in the form of prosecutions, trials and political violence.

<sup>48</sup> Ioannis D. Stefanidis, *Stirring the Greek Nation: Political Culture, Irredentism and Anti-Americanism in Post-War Greece, 1945–1967* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2007), 30; Antoniou and Paschaloudi, 'To apso go prosopo', 52.

<sup>49</sup> Dimitris Kousouris, 'Fyletikis diastaseis tou antikommounismou stin Ellada sti dekaetia tou 1940' [Racial Dimensions of Anticommunism in Greece in the 1940s], in Efi Avdela et al., eds., *Fyletikis theories stin Ellada* [Racial Theories in Greece] (Herakleio: University Publications of Crete, 2017), 313–32.

<sup>50</sup> Nikolaos Plastiras, 'To EAM kai to ethnos' [The EAM and the Nation], *Eleftheria*, 30 Nov. 1952, 1; Katerina Dede, *O syntomos politikos vios tis EPEK. I anadysi tou Kentrou sti metemfiliaki Ellada* [The Short Political Life of the EPEK: The Emergence of the Centre in Post-Civil War Greece] (Athens: NHRF/IHR, 2016), 213–20; Eleni Paschaloudi, *Enas polemos choris telos: I dekaetia tou 1940 ston politico logo, 1950–1967* [A War Without an End: The 1940s in the Political Discourse, 1950–1967] (Thessaloniki: Epikentro, 2010), 172–94.

<sup>51</sup> See Ioanna Papatthanasidou, 'Oria kai dynamiki tis entaxis stin prodiktatoriki EDA: Apopeira katagrafis tis arithmitikis emveleias, tis geografikis katanomis kai tis koinonikis synthesisis tou aristerou plythismou' [Supporting EDA: An Attempt to Map the Left-wing Populace in Greece], *Epitheorisi Koinonikon Erevnon*, 86 (1995), 21–82; Katerina Labrinou, *EDA, 1956–1967* [EDA, 1956–1967] (Athens: Polis, 2017).

<sup>52</sup> Contemporary Social History Archives, Athens (hereafter ASKI), Archive of the Unified Democratic Left (EDA), file 221, Committee for the Restitution of National Resistance, 1959–1961.

The second development that changed Greek political culture in the 1960s was the founding of the Centre Union (*Enosi Kentrou*; EK) in 1961, which united the centrist political space. The Centre Union, led by Georgios Papandreou, the first prime minister of liberated Greece, accused the government of using autocratic methods and unfair electoral practices and creating a powerful parallel state (*parakratos*). During this time, a number of parastatal groups – some of which were recognised as organisations for resistance veterans and victims – ruled parts of rural Greece. The Centre Union appealed to left-wing voters and won two back-to-back elections in 1963 and 1964.

Claiming part of the resistance's legacy and accusing the right of harbouring collaborationism, Papandreou turned two anniversaries, the liberation of Athens and the Gorgopotamos operation, into national holidays. The latter – in which the Gorgopotamos bridge was blown up – represented a rare moment of national unity, because both major resistance groups, ELAS and EDES, had participated in it under British command. This attempt was also a response to the EDA's effort to make the anniversary of the establishment of the EAM the National Resistance's official anniversary, as the EDA criticised the government for appropriating the National Resistance's legacy.

The emergence of the Centre Union and the EDA aroused a broad public debate over the National Resistance.<sup>53</sup> For the left, this discussion provided an opportunity to change the official narrative of the resistance, which two bodies had been attempting to do since the end of the 1950s: the exiled KKE's history department in Bucharest and the EDA's resistance bureau in Greece. Their aims were similar and included data gathering and creating an ambitious National Resistance publishing program.<sup>54</sup> Through publications, memorial ceremonies, rallies, campaigns with veterans from across the political spectrum and establishing front organisations, such as the Panhellenic Union of National Resistance Fighters, the EDA pressured the state to recognise the left-wing resistance and accept the communists as part of the nation's past and present. Additionally, the communists attempted to internationalise the Greek case through its affiliation with the International Federation of Resistance Fighters (FIR).

Resistance veterans, the 'troublesome heroes', as Lagrou terms them, played a central role in the communists' efforts.<sup>55</sup> Resistance agents emerged during war but shaped their identities during peace, through their individual and collective action as participants 'in a social group constructed for the purpose of commemoration'.<sup>56</sup> Experiences of struggle, persecution and suffering moulded left-wing veterans' identity and mentality. They drove the demand for 'real recognition', which peaked in 1964–5. Internationally, 1965 – the twentieth anniversary of the end of the Second World War – symbolizes the end of the Cold War's antifascist and antitotalitarian memories and the gradual transition from the era of heroes to the era of victims, a shift accompanied by more self-critical or even revisionist narratives in many European countries.<sup>57</sup> In Greece, the July 1965 'palace coup', when Papandreou's government was overthrown as a result of his conflict with King Constantine II, ended a democratic reform process which was poised to enact a new recognition law and led to the 1967 military coup.

### Dictatorship, 1967–1974: Ensuring State Continuity without Rupture?

In post-civil war Greece, the army's intervention was always a possibility. When the coup finally occurred on 21 April 1967, it paralysed the country's dynamic civil society. While left-wing resistance veterans' associations, mainly affiliated with the EDA party, were dismantled almost immediately, many non-left resistance associations and their leaders rushed to welcome the 'National Revolution

<sup>53</sup> Manos Avgeridis, 'Debating the Greek 1940s: Histories and Memories of a Conflicting Past since the End of the Second World War', *Historiein*, 16, 1–2 (2017), 8–46.

<sup>54</sup> ASKI, Archive of the EDA, Resistance Bureau, files 213–20; Archive of the KKE, History Department, files 239–314.

<sup>55</sup> Lagrou, *The Legacy*, 19–78.

<sup>56</sup> Jay Winter and Emmanuel Sivan, 'Setting the Framework', in Jay Winter and Emmanuel Sivan, eds., *War and Remembrance in the Twentieth Century* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 10.

<sup>57</sup> Lagrou, *The Legacy*, 15; Stefan Berger, 'A Return to the National Paradigm? National History Writing in Germany, Italy, France, and Britain from 1945 to the Present', *Journal of Modern History*, 77, 3 (2005), 629–78.

of 1967.<sup>58</sup> Their stance was partly determined by their deep-seated anticommunism, a feature that they shared with the new regime, which presented itself as the nation's saviour from the new 'red threat'.

At first, the dictatorship did not seek to appropriate the memory of the resistance, but its stance shifted in 1968 following a clash with the king over who would control the state. Thereafter, the dictatorship promoted the image of a regime with wide popular acceptance. On 20 June 1968, the government reshuffled its cabinet and proudly presented six of the ten new members to the general public as ex-resistance combatants. Their résumés highlighted their activity during the Occupation as *ipso facto* evidence of their bravery and willingness to serve the nation without personal rewards.<sup>59</sup>

One month later, on 23 July 1968, the dictatorship's leader, Georgios Papadopoulos, visited Ioannina to participate in the EDES anniversary, a calculated publicity stunt that was widely covered by all the news media. The EDES veterans' association president named him the National Resistance's honorary leader. As such, Papadopoulos gave a public speech, claiming that the '1967 revolution' represented the reincarnation of the National Resistance. The national government, he said, was aware of the problems that ex-combatants had faced in the previous decades and he announced the government's decision to 'recognise National Resistance' by giving its veterans the same privileges that army soldiers enjoyed, notably pensions.<sup>60</sup> On 26 April 1969, the government issued Decree 179/1969 'On National Resistance'. Instead of establishing rules for distributing pensions, however, the decree restarted the recognition process from scratch. Each organisation had to submit a new application, as if Emergency Law 971/1949 had never existed.

While the 1949 law had provided the legal framework for excluding left-wing organisations, the new law explicitly denounced the left in general as the enemy, equating it with the Occupation forces. The legislation expanded the resistance's timeframe through 1949. For the first time, the paramilitary bands that had hunted down communists until the end of the civil war could claim resistance fighter status.<sup>61</sup> Article 21 of the law also redefined the resistance's 'enemy' to include 'communism in any form and manifestation as well as those who have served communism since the liberation of the country'. To a degree, the 1969 law responded to the ultraconservative anticommunist circle's criticism of the 1949 law as insufficiently severe and therefore enabling communists to take advantage of it.<sup>62</sup>

Meanwhile, the law's definition of communism as the enemy also excluded from recognition those who had 'served communism by any means' after Greece's liberation. This formulation denied recognition to anyone who was deemed as cooperating with the left between 1944 and 1969. After the coup, this vague description could include any of the dictatorship's opponents, even royalists.<sup>63</sup> The dictatorship was radically redefining the nation in even more exclusionary terms.

While the new committees largely adhered to earlier recognition decisions and previously recognised organisations retained their status, they now recognised organisations that submitted applications for the first time, as well as new independent divisions of already recognised organisations. As a result, the number of recognised organisations increased from 108 to 246, but the number of recognised fighters dropped significantly. Under the 1949 law, 75,000 veterans had been recognised, but only 41,250 additional veterans were recognised by the 1969 law.<sup>64</sup> The new regime eagerly expanded the imagined National Resistance map with all kinds of organisations but remained cautious about awarding titles that granted people pensions.

<sup>58</sup> For a list of 279 dissolved organisations and unions, see *Ta Nea*, 5 May 1967, 7; 'Ekatonrades sincharitirion minimaton pros tin kivernisi' [Hundreds of Congratulatory Telegrams to the Government], *Ta Nea*, 29 Apr. 1967.

<sup>59</sup> 'Aneschimatisthei i kyvernisi' [The Government Was Reorganised], *To Vima*, 21 June 1968, 1.

<sup>60</sup> 'Diexagomen kai toran ethnikin antistasin' [We Are Still Conducting the Struggle of National Resistance], *Ta Nea*, 29 July 1968, 1, 8.

<sup>61</sup> For a list of the recognised organisations, including twenty-five paramilitary bands, see DEPATHA, List of Recognised Organisations of National Resistance Based on ND 179/1969.

<sup>62</sup> See speech by Larissa MP Dimitrios Hatzigiannis (Social Democratic Party), GPR, Session 66, 25 Feb. 1948, 795.

<sup>63</sup> Kalogrias and Dordanas, 'I anagnorisi', 245.

<sup>64</sup> DEPATHA, ANR, List of Recognised Organisations of National Resistance Based on ND 179/1969, June 1980.

Although public critique of the recognition process was limited under the dictatorship, many recognised ex-combatants felt that the initial promises about pensions had not been honoured. In 1970 pensions were granted to disabled veterans and the families of fallen soldiers, but their time in the resistance was not pensionable and many existing privileges such as provisions that made it easier for their children to go to university were abolished. Angry letters flooded the newspapers.<sup>65</sup> Again, the announcement of recognition created expectations that went unfulfilled.

The most serious challenge to the military committees' decisions occurred in 1971 when Komninos Pyromaglou, a prominent EDES leader who had cooperated with the EDA, appealed to the Council of the State to annul the recognition of Thessaly's most brutal armed band during the civil war, the Nationalists of South East Thessaly.<sup>66</sup> As Pyromaglou testified, its leader, the notorious Grigoris Sourlas, had not participated in 'national activity', as proved by the fact that in 1946 the Ministry of Public Security had declared him an outlaw and demanded his surrender. Although the Council of State postponed examining this case until the fall of the dictatorship, the episode showed that even under authoritarian control, recognition of the National Resistance continued to arouse public debate.

The dictatorship faced even more criticism over recognition from abroad. In November 1971, international newspapers including the London *Times* and *Washington Post* published a letter by American Senator Lee Metcalf describing the dictatorship's inner circle as former Nazi collaborators and expressing outrage 'that one nation in the NATO alliance refuses to honor Greek resistance fighters or respect those who died fighting the nazi invaders'.<sup>67</sup> The letter also claimed that on assuming power Papadopoulos had issued a decree that 'the time spent in the Security Battalions would count towards pensions'.

Indeed, members of the Security Battalions were recognised individually as resistance fighters, since many who had joined noncommunist guerrilla bands were later drafted into the Security Battalions. In other instances, members of collaborationist bands were recognised as resistance fighters, as in the case of the EDES department in Macedonia, a practice that had been introduced by Emergency Law 971/1949.<sup>68</sup> Moreover, since 1946 the families of fallen Security Battalion soldiers had received military pensions just like those of fallen members of regular army units.<sup>69</sup> In fact, Decree 179/1969 excluded the Security Battalions from recognition because they were part of the regular army, and the law only addressed voluntary organisations. Of course, the dictatorship continued to provide pensions to members of the Security Battalions, albeit not as members of the resistance but as members of the regular army, complying with a common pre-dictatorship practice. Nonetheless, the impression that the dictatorship had endowed collaborationists with resistance fighter status became widely accepted, thus discrediting the law as a mere manoeuvre that allowed the dictatorship to honour Nazi collaborators.<sup>70</sup>

Ultimately, the dictatorship intended the 1969 law as a gesture to so-called national-minded citizens to emphasise their common past. However, the effort generated disaffection instead of unity. It allowed the dictatorship's opponents to ascribe past mishandling of the recognition process to the dictatorship alone. After the dictatorship fell, those who demanded recognition of the left-wing resistance attributed long-standing anticommunist provisions solely to the dictatorship's 'fascist character'. Demands for recognition therefore reappeared, with new force, as demands for democratisation.

<sup>65</sup> 'Tekna agoniston Ethnikis Antistasis' [Children of National Resistance Fighters], *Ta Nea*, 16 Nov. 1971, 11; 'Peplanimeni I ermineia tou nomou' [Misguided Interpretation of the Law], *Ta Nea*, 18 Nov. 1971, 11.

<sup>66</sup> 'Prosfigi palaiou antistasiakou' [Appeal of an Ex-Resistance combatant], *To Vima*, 7 Apr. 1971, 8.

<sup>67</sup> 'Senator Says Greek Leaders Aided Nazis', *Times*, 17 Nov. 1971, 9.

<sup>68</sup> Conversely, Kalogrias and Dordanas maintain that this was a new practice introduced by the dictatorship. 'I anagnorisi', 256.

<sup>69</sup> Emergency Law 1119, GG 118, v. 1, 23 Mar. 1946. See also Ministry of Finance statement on pensions for members of the Security Battalions, GPR, Session 13, 20 Oct. 1948, 68.

<sup>70</sup> Leonidas Kallivretakis, 'O Georgios Papadopoulos, ta Tagmata Asfaleias kai i X' [Georgios Papadopoulos, the Security Battalions and X], *Archiotaksio*, 8 (2006), 109–47.



**Metapolitefsi: Ruptures within the Continuities (1974–1981)**

In July 1974, following the dictatorship's collapse amid the crisis created by Turkey's invasion of Cyprus, the military handed over the reins of power to conservative politician Konstantinos Karamanlis and Greek democracy was restored. As in all transitions from authoritarian regimes to democratic ones, the new democratic state had to shift the boundaries and patterns of social and political inclusion and exclusion; in the process, Greece experienced both social and political continuities and discontinuities.<sup>71</sup>

However, the regime change – known as *Metapolitefsi* – did not generate a climate of consensus with regard to Greece's traumatic past; quite the opposite. Since all parties had strong historical identities, the past became a field of intense political confrontation.<sup>72</sup> Even the formation of new parties, such as Konstantinos Karamanlis's New Democracy (*Nea Dimokratia*; ND) and Andreas Papandreu's PanHellenic Socialist Movement (*Panellinio Sosialistiko Kinima*; PASOK), were strongly connected to the past in terms of membership as well as historical identity. ND maintained and reinforced its anti-communist past, while PASOK tried to form a left-wing identity by recalling the communist-led resistance.<sup>73</sup> For their part, the communists had already split into two parties (the KKE and KKE Interior) in 1968; each of them claimed the resistance's legacy and celebrated the anniversary of the EAM's founding separately.<sup>74</sup>

When Karamanlis took office in 1974, his government enacted some democratic reforms. These included restoring the democratic 1952 Constitution, holding the referendum that led to the monarchy's abolition, partially 'de-juntifying' the state apparatus, trying the 1967 coup's 'ringleaders' and legalising the communist left. Nonetheless, the government retained the post-civil war state's anti-communist discourse.

Repealing the ban of the communist parties was the sine qua non for the country's democratisation and Europeanisation.<sup>75</sup> However, the right's stance on the communist left had not changed. ND still considered leftists to be traitors; the government was willing to forget that treasonous past but under no circumstances would ND incorporate the communist left's past into the nation's history.<sup>76</sup> As Minister of Interior Konstantinos Stefanopoulos asserted, 'Greeks would never forgive those who had taken up arms against the Nation'.<sup>77</sup>

The right did not want to incorporate the left into Greece's 'national' resistance narrative because it was still clinging to its own version of that history. ND did not believe that a civil war had taken place but rather a 'contra-bandit' war; the government believed that the 'bandits' who had left Greece after the war were 'fugitives'.<sup>78</sup> Accordingly, the ND government maintained and reinforced all the divisive commemorations of the national past, including the events of December 1944, the end of the civil war, and even the battles between the Security Battalions and ELAS forces in Meligalas. For the right, these

<sup>71</sup> Alexandra Barahona de Brito, 'Transitional Justice and Memory: Exploring Perspectives', *South European Society and Politics*, 15, 3 (2010), 360–1.

<sup>72</sup> David Close, 'The Road to Reconciliation? The Greek Civil War and the Politics of Memory in the 1980s', in Philipp Carabott and Thanasis D. Sfikas eds., *The Greek Civil War: Essays on a Conflict of Exceptionalism and Silences* (London: Routledge, 2004), 257–78; Peter Siani-Davies and Stefanos Katsikas, 'National Reconciliation after Civil War: The Case of Greece', *Journal of Peace Research*, 46 (2009), 559–75.

<sup>73</sup> Christos Lyrintzis, 'Political Parties in Post-Junta Greece: A Case of Bureaucratic Clientelism?', in Geoffrey Pridham, ed., *The New Mediterranean Democracies: Regime Change in Spain, Greece and Portugal* (London: Frank Cass, 1984), 106.

<sup>74</sup> See Kostis Karpozilos, 'Transition to Stability: The Greek Left in 1974', in Maria E. Cavallaro and Kostis Kornetis, eds., *Rethinking Democratisation in Spain, Greece and Portugal* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2019), 182.

<sup>75</sup> Karamanlis stated that 'the KKE's legalisation was a necessary measure for equating ourselves [Greeks] with the democratic countries of the West. If I hadn't done it, we would not have been able to convince our European partners of the sincerity of our efforts to restore democracy in Greece'. Quoted in Eirini Karamouzi, *Greece, the EEC and the Cold War, 1974–1979: The Second Enlargement* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014), 23.

<sup>76</sup> 'Oloi miloume gia lithi... Ta kommata ekfrazoun gia proti for a ti gnomi tous' [We Are All Talking About Oblivion... The Parties Are Expressing Their Opinion for the First Time], *Ta Nea*, 9 Dec. 1978, 12.

<sup>77</sup> GPR, Session LD, 28 Nov. 1975, 1148.

<sup>78</sup> Speech of ND Deputy D. Theoxaridis, GPR, Session XB, 28 Feb. 1985, 4866–7.

celebrations represented the defence of democracy and liberty against communist efforts to impose totalitarianism. But for socialists and communists, these commemorations represented a continuity of the civil war's divisions, hate and resentment.<sup>79</sup>

ND endeavoured to ensure that integrating the communist parties would not entail altering the right's interpretation of the 1940s, according to which discrimination against the communists had not taken place.<sup>80</sup> For that reason, they refused to recognise the EAM/ELAS as part of the resistance,<sup>81</sup> abolish the dictatorship's decree-law or permit the unconditional repatriation of civil war political refugees, as demanded by both the communist parties and the newly founded PASOK.

However, above all, the communists and socialists wanted to make the National Resistance a focal point of national history. PASOK, the communist parties, local authorities, various resistance veterans' associations and even some well-known right-wing politicians repeatedly broached the topic of recognising the resistance. Between 1974 and 1981, the issue was addressed by parliament alone on nineteen occasions, only to receive the same answer each time: the matter was closed, and a new debate 'would open up an unsettling discourse that would kindle passions that have been dormant for years'.<sup>82</sup> The opposition responded to this effort to shut down the discussion by asserting that the dictatorship had recognised the Security Battalions and, in so doing, had distorted the National Resistance's meaning. 'The state had honored the traitors, not the heroes'.<sup>83</sup>

Meanwhile, the ND government essentially continued the dictatorship's escalation of anticommunism by recognising paramilitary groups – which had brutalised the communists during the civil war – as resistance organisations. In total, 8957 members of various right-wing resistance organisations were recognised between 1974 and 1980.<sup>84</sup>

### Creating a New and Inclusive Myth (1981–1989)

PASOK, another new political force that emerged after the dictatorship, built its left-wing credentials around the communists' perennial demands, especially recognition of the National Resistance.<sup>85</sup> The Greek socialists' triumphant rise to power in 1981 changed the state's memory policies. It created a new political space for new actors and old social actors who had been disenfranchised by the exclusionary postwar system.<sup>86</sup>

The PASOK government first abolished all formal civil war commemorations and, after three historic parliamentary sessions on 17, 18 and 19 August 1982, it passed a law that incorporated the

<sup>79</sup> 'ND: Nai, sti lithi, alla oxi sti monoplevri politiki ekmetallesi' [ND: Yes, to Oblivion, But not to One-sided Political Exploitation], *I Kathimerini*, 9 Nov. 1981, 1; Magda Fytli, 'Lotofagoi kai Irostratoi: mnimes tou '40 ston politico logo ton kommaton kata ti dekaetia tou80' [Lotus-eaters and Herostratus: Memories of the 1940s in the Political Discourse of the Parties During the 1980s], in Manos Avgeridis et al., eds., *Metapolitefsi: I Ellada sto metaichmio dio aionon* [Transition: Greece on the Verge of Two Centuries] (Athens: Themelio, 2015), 29–39.

<sup>80</sup> Antoniou and Paschaloudi, 'Remembering', 59; Eleni Paschaloudi, 'I sygkrotisi tou politikou logou tis Dexias kata tin prota metapoliteftiki periodo' [The Formation of the Right's Political Discourse During the First Transitional Period], in Vangelis Karamanolakis et al., eds., *I Metapolitefsi '74–'75. Stigmes mias metavasis* [The Transition '74–'75: Moments of Transition] (Athens: Themelio, 2016), 123.

<sup>81</sup> 'The National Resistance has been recognised. The Resistance question is deemed to have ended'. Declaration of the Vice Minister of Defense Ioannis Katsadimas, GPR, Session PZ, 27 Feb. 1976, 3045.

<sup>82</sup> Declaration of the Minister of Defense Evangelos Averof, GPR, Session NH, 20 Jan. 1976, 2030.

<sup>83</sup> Declaration of Amalia Fleming, GPR, Session LB, 31 Aug. 1978, 999.

<sup>84</sup> DEPATHA, ANR, List of Recognised Organisations of National Resistance Based on ND 179/1969, June 1980.

<sup>85</sup> Rori Lamprini, 'Apo to dosilogo Mitsotaki sti nea Varkiza tou 89: I mnimi tis dekaetias tou 40 ston politico logo tou PASOK' [From Collaborationist Mitsotakis to the New Varkiza Treaty of 1989: The Memory of the 1940s in the PASOK's Political Discourse], in Riki Van Boeschoten et al., ed., *Mnimes kai lithi tou ellinikou Emfyliou Polemou* [Memories and Oblivion of the Greek Civil War] (Thessaloniki: Epikentro, 2008), 293–310.

<sup>86</sup> Nikos P. Diamantouros, 'PASOK and State-Society Relations in Post-Authoritarian Greece (1974–1988)', in Speros Vryonis, ed., *Greece on the Road to Democracy: From the Junta to PASOK 1974–1986* (New Rochelle, NY: Caratzas, 1991), 25–6.

communist-led resistance into national history.<sup>87</sup> In this context, the National Resistance became an almost abstract concept. It was patriotic, united and purged of collaborationism, internecine conflicts and social and political stakes and based on a broader, more inclusive definition of the nation.

Despite PASOK's efforts to present the resistance as a national, broadly inclusive phenomenon, the right reacted strongly to the 1982 law. The ND deputies walked out of parliament, angrily denouncing the bill as a 'shameless attempt to whitewash communist crimes during and after the war' and they promised 'to repeal it as soon as they came to power'.<sup>88</sup> To further clarify its position, ND made its presence felt at all right-wing commemorations, even though the celebrations had been officially abolished.<sup>89</sup>

At the same time, the PASOK government abolished the dictatorship's law but not the 1949 law. That meant that two different laws were in effect at the same time, which caused a great deal of confusion. For instance, the semi-collaborationist organisation 'X' was recognised under Law 971/1949, which remained in force, while Law 1285/1982 excluded those who had collaborated with the Occupation forces.<sup>90</sup> The recognition of the resistance in a democratic context also implied the democratisation of the recognition process. Civil servants and veterans would be responsible for overseeing that process in each prefecture. Those who wanted to be recognised had to demonstrate their resistance activity by providing formal documentation, as well as two formal statements from previously recognised resistance veterans.<sup>91</sup>

The recognition process started in 1985. The process was so slow that many of the elderly veterans died before receiving the recognition status. In addition, the process was decentralised; there were fifty-four recognition committees scattered around the country, which caused numerous problems. At the same time, leftist veterans were not the only ones who applied for recognition; previously recognised veterans from the 'national' organisations did as well. The latter also wanted to receive the new benefits, particularly pensions, despite the fact that the 1982 repeal of Decree-Law 179/1969 had not prevented former collaborationists and paramilitary members from continuing to receive pensions and other benefits.

The newly recognised resistance veterans had demanded this kind of material restitution and, as early as 1982, the PASOK government had announced plans to implement it.<sup>92</sup> But it was only in 1985 that Law 1543 established retirement pensions for disabled resistance veterans and their families. However, ND MPs argued that '[r]emuneration is being sought for those who fought against democracy and their pensions [come] at the expense of democracy!'<sup>93</sup> ND deputies continued to invoke 'red terror' and communist crimes and they justified collaborationism on the grounds that it had stopped the communist threat.<sup>94</sup> According to the new ND leader Konstantinos Mitsotakis, who was elected in 1984, the post-civil war right-wing regime had been more democratic and moderate than the PASOK government.<sup>95</sup>

<sup>87</sup> GG 328, v. 1, 23 Nov. 1981; Chatzivasileiou, 'Eisagogi', 9–35.

<sup>88</sup> Declaration of ND leader Evangelos Averof, GPR, Session K, 17 Aug. 1982, 638–40.

<sup>89</sup> Giorgos Antoniou, 'Oi giortes misous kai oi polemoi tis dimosias mnimis (1950–2000): Apo to trafma ton ittimenon sto trafma ton nikiton' [The Hate Commemorations and the Public Memory Wars (1950–2000): From the Trauma of the Defeated to the Trauma of the Victors], in Nikos Demertzis et al., eds., *Emfylios Polemos: Politismiko Trafma* [Civil War: Cultural Trauma] (Athens: Alexandria, 2013), 231.

<sup>90</sup> General Archive of the Attica Prefecture, ANR, Record of the Recognition Committees that rejected 'X' as a collaborationist organisation, 1 Dec. 1989; Statement of Panhellenic Association of Fighters and Friends of National Organisation 'X' to Prime Minister Konstantinos Mitsotakis against the rejection of its members, 14 June 1990.

<sup>91</sup> GG, Presidential Decree 379/1983.

<sup>92</sup> 'Sintaxeis stous antistasiakous' [Pensions for Resistance Combatants], *Eleftherotypia*, 19 Aug. 1982, 1.

<sup>93</sup> Speech of ND Deputy Anastasios Balkos, GPR, Session RH, 21 Mar. 1985, 5588–9.

<sup>94</sup> ND Deputy Isaac Lavrentidis, GPR, Session RIA, 27 Mar. 1985, 5675; 'ND: Kyrigmata kai kritiki gia Politexneio, Gorgopotamo kai Dekemvriana' [ND: Sermons and Criticism of the Polytechnic, Gorgopotamos and Dekemvriana], *Ta Nea*, 12 Nov. 1987, 7.

<sup>95</sup> Ilias Nicolacopoulos, 'I eklogiki epiroi ton politikon dynameon' [The Electoral Influence of the Political Forces], in Christos Lyrintzis and Ilias Nicolacopoulos, eds., *Ekloges kai kommata sti dekaetia tou 1980* [Elections and Parties in the 1980s] (Athens: Themelio, 1990), 212.

### A Vote Industry? (1990–2006)

New Democracy never recognised the EAM/ELAS's incorporation into the new narrative of a united National Resistance, much less the group's primacy in it. In this context, the ND government attempted to downplay the EAM/ELAS role in the resistance; instead, it highlighted the 'national' resistance and its combatants' demands. This diminishing of the communist left's role in the resistance took place through its questioning of the practical application of resistance legislation and the logic of restoring and granting privileges to resistance combatants. Thus began a period of impugning and overhauling the process that had recognised the communist-led resistance.

For ND, 'the process of granting resistance pensions has been turned into a major political and moral scandal after some turned the National Resistance into a vote industry'.<sup>96</sup> Deputy Prime Minister Tzanis Tzannetakis claimed that the National Resistance's recognised combatants reached the impressive figure of 300,000, but that number included several people who were only two or three years old at the time of the Occupation.<sup>97</sup>

The PASOK government was aware of the irregularities and malfeasance in the recognition process since 1987, as official DEPATHA documents indicate. There were accusations that resistance veterans' associations and crooks had falsified the entire process: seven- to nine-year-old children were recognised as resistance veterans and resistance veterans' associations issued false certificates and testimonies in exchange for payment. The right-wing veterans' associations also accused the recognition committees of recognising only EAM/ELAS members and rejecting right-wing resistance combatants.<sup>98</sup>

The number of recognised resistance combatants and pensioners was the main point of contention among the government, the opposition, and resistance combatants. The unusually high number of left-wing veterans recognised through 1990 (220,000) gave the ND government the perfect excuse to withdraw resistance pension entitlements.<sup>99</sup> Law 1976/1991 cancelled the pensions of 58,000 resistance veterans and farmers and 'froze' the authorisation of new pensions. The law triggered a storm of protest from the opposition and resistance veterans' associations.<sup>100</sup>

Despite ND's accusations, the total number of recognised left-wing combatants (220,000) until 1990 was modest compared to how many right-wing combatants had been recognised under the previous laws (116,000), since EAM/ELAS was the largest resistance organisation by far. Moreover, the earlier recognition laws had also recognised children under fifteen years old as resistance veterans.<sup>101</sup> Resistance was an ill-defined, flexible category, and laws were unclear about who counted as a resistance fighter and what constituted an act of resistance.

As was to be expected, reorganising the institutional process provided ND with an opportunity to recognise their own. The ND government not only refused to withdraw the pensions of right-wing veterans who had been granted them under the previous laws; it also changed the composition of the recognition committees by appointing new members to them. It was not uncommon for a veteran of a communist-hunting paramilitary organisation – who had been recognised by the dictatorship's law – to determine the recognition status of an EAM/ELAS resistance fighter.<sup>102</sup> ND also granted allowances to those who had been injured in the 'war against bandits' (i.e. the civil war) whose pensions had been cancelled.<sup>103</sup>

<sup>96</sup> 'Epanexetasi ton anapirikon sintaxeon, perikopi ton antistasiakon' [Review of Disability Pensions, Reduction of Resistance Combatants], *I Kathimerini*, 4 Aug. 1991, 12.

<sup>97</sup> 'Agonistes ... eton dio' [Fighters ... of Two Years Old], *Ta Nea*, 16 Jan. 1990, 7.

<sup>98</sup> Statement of the right-wing veterans' association EOEAE EDES N. ZERVA to DEPATHA, 5 July 1990. Antoniou and Paschaloudi reached the same conclusion ('To apogon prosopo', 310). However, our investigation shows that in Attica in 1987 and 1988, for instance, most applicants who obtained recognition were EDES members.

<sup>99</sup> For figures, see DEPATHA, ANR, Ministry of Defense briefing paper, 5 Feb. 1991.

<sup>100</sup> 'Salos gia tis sintaxeis' [Turmoil Over the Pensions], *Ta Nea*, 1 Aug. 1991, 40.

<sup>101</sup> DEPATHA, ANR, Ministry of Defense briefing paper, 29 June 1987, and 5 Feb. 1991.

<sup>102</sup> DEPATHA, ANR, Statement of PEAEA (Panhellenic Union of National Resistance Fighters) Ilias to DEPATHA, 8 July 1991, regarding G. Zaras, leader of the paramilitary band Mixed Posse Zara.

<sup>103</sup> GPR, Session NB, 9 Mar. 1990, GPR, 1374; 'Epanaxorigountai sintaxeis se thimata symmoritopolemou pou katargithikan to 1950' [Pensions that Were Abolished in 1950 Are Being Subsidized for Victims of the Civil War], *To Vima*, 15 Dec. 1991, 41.

The ND's main argument was that only those who belonged to leftist parties had been recognised as resistance combatants, while ND members had been excluded. Indeed, all resistance veterans' associations, both on the left and the right, were essentially branches of political parties,<sup>104</sup> and the government appointed the members of the recognition committees. However, despite some grains of truth about the politicisation of the recognition process, the ND accusations reflected the right-wing historical perception of the resistance as a struggle against the communists.

Although PASOK regained power in 1993, the government waffled for a long time before proceeding to reinstate the veterans' pensions. In 1995, Law 2320 restored most pensions and accepted responsibility for irregularities and malfeasance. Nevertheless, veterans' associations, local deputies and patrons pressured the authorities to complete the legislation for resistance veterans and conclude the recognition process. Elderly veterans – including many women who, until the 1989 'national reconciliation' between the left and the right, had feared that acknowledging their EAM/ELAS participation could have negative consequences<sup>105</sup> – waited over ten years to receive responses to their applications. Thus, in 2002, recognition committees were still evaluating applications from 1989.<sup>106</sup> On 29 December 2006, sixty-two years after Greece's liberation, the recognition committees finally completed their work. The end of the third cycle of recognising the National Resistance coincided with the biological death of the combatants' generation.

## Conclusion

In postwar Greece, constructing a national memory to glorify the resistance required including the vigorous communist-led movement and reinforcing the communists' demands for greater participation in postwar political affairs. The political and social capital that the anti-Axis struggle had generated became a double-edged sword for the postwar state, whose conflict with the communists escalated in the mid-1940s. Consequently, recognising the National Resistance became part of a problematic, barely manageable past and a divisive *topos* connected to Cold War discourse. Thus, recognition continued to be one of Greek political life's thorniest problems during the second half of the twentieth century. For decades, defining and redefining the National Resistance, and by extension the nation, served as the anticommunist *raison d'état*.

In Greece, as in many other European countries, communists had comprised the largest and the most dynamic part of the resistance and fought for an ideal that traditional patriots saw as 'anti-national'. By leading resistance movements and making a huge sacrifice, communists finally joined the legitimate political nation and were recognised as stalwarts of the resistance, even if they proved to be 'troublesome heroes'. In France, the Fourth and Fifth Republics were perceived as the resistance's political legacies. The Italian postwar First Republic was explicitly legitimated as the fruit of the labours of resistance and antifascism and the protagonists of the resistance played a prominent role in postwar politics, despite the partisans' violent uprisings in the north in 1945. However, from 1947 on, West European governments started to re-demonise communists as the 'enemy within' and ejected them from government as postwar reconstruction rhetoric transmuted into anticommunist 'containment'.<sup>107</sup>

In 1982 Greece recognised the communist resistance by 'nationalising' it, similarly to the process that had occurred in most West European countries after 1945; it developed a patriotic memory of the war that included the entire society.<sup>108</sup> The Greek recognition process was, thus, similar to the

<sup>104</sup> POAEA was affiliated to PASOK, PEEA to KKE, PSEEA to KKE Interior, EOEAE EDES N. ZERVA to ND. Only the Movement of the United National Resistance 1941–44 was an independent one since it had members from all political spectra, although it was considered mainly an influence of KKE Interior.

<sup>105</sup> General Archive of the Attica Prefecture, ANR, Individual Recognition Files.

<sup>106</sup> DEPATHA, ANR, 454.1, Ratification decisions 2007–2009.

<sup>107</sup> Geoff Eley, *Forcing Democracy: The History of the Left in Europe, 1850–2000* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), 294, 300.

<sup>108</sup> Lagrou, 'Victims', 194–5.



recognition processes that other European countries – including Italy, France and Belgium – followed, since they all focused on reshaping politics and society and preserving the public order. Even its length was not unique; the recognition process in Italy and the Netherlands also lasted until the 1980s.<sup>109</sup> Nevertheless, Greek legislation was different because it excluded communist resistance combatants from recognition from the very beginning and for a long period of time based on the equation it drew between communism and Nazism. The Greek state thereby allowed collaborationists to be recognised as resistance combatants, which is a largely unique phenomenon, at least for pre-1989 Europe.

Finally, the creation of the Greece of Resisters – a mythical, all-encompassing national resistance movement – represented the necessary step toward a new, inclusionary national narrative for sustaining the newly established democracy. As Greece demonstrates, consensual national master narratives are indispensable for transitioning from war to peace and from an exclusionary political system to an inclusive one. The 1982 law's broad – but not unanimous – public acceptance indicates that the resistance's legacy was successfully transformed into an inclusive *topos* to serve that transition. Once this consensual master narrative was consolidated, it was the historians' turn to unravel and historicise its abstract, 'mythical' nature in an ongoing process with different objectives and practices, conflicts and silences, and political and social implications.

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<sup>109</sup> Direzione Generale Archivi [General Direction of Archives], 'La Legislazione per il riconoscimento della Resistenza e dei partigiani', <https://www.partigianiditalia.beniculturali.it/la-legislazione/> (last visited 1 June 2023); Lagrou, *The Legacy*, 77.

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