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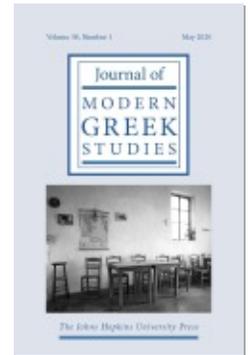
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Kateřina Králová, Karin Hofmeisterová

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The Voices of Greek Child Refugees in Czechoslovakia

Kateřina Králová and Karin Hofmeisterová

Abstract

The Greek Civil War officially ended in 1949 with the defeat of the communists; however, the battle over the interpretation of the conflict, its consequences, and the manner of remembering it is ongoing. In this context, we focus on the relation between two polarized master narratives of the Greek Civil War—the communist and the anticommunist—and personal accounts of former child refugees of the Greek Civil War living in the Czech Republic. Based on oral testimonies, we explore how narrators remember and convey the most contested issues related to their displacement, institutional care, education, political positioning, and social belonging as child refugees in Czechoslovakia. We claim that this shared community of memory outlived the times of narrative uniformity comforting its members by providing shared meaning to both their past and present, reinforcing their group belonging and preventing yet another uprooting within the Czech(oslovak) society. In this way, our study contributes to a better understanding of the ideologically-imposed interpretations of the consequences of the Greek Civil War and of the Czechoslovak history and minority politics.

Introduction

In the aftermath of the Second World War, Greece was in need of an almost total reconstruction after suffering heavy human losses and economic decimation due to the Axis occupation. Yet instead of postwar consolidation, the country drifted toward a civil conflict and yet another period of material destruction as well as the displacement and persecution of its inhabitants. The Civil War changed Greece physically, demographically, economically, politically, and socially, all the while eclipsing the experience of the occupation (Sakkas 2000, 202). The cleavages in modern Greek society and the extreme polarization of

Greek politics in the ensuing Cold War sealed almost half a century of ideological and geopolitical division throughout the world and established two opposing master narratives—one communist and one anticommunist.

The most controversial aspect of the conflict and the leitmotif of both master narratives was the evacuation of children from war zones in northern Greece by both the Communist Party of Greece (KKE) and the Greek authorities. While children included in the Greek government's evacuation efforts were internally displaced, others were sent from northern Greece to the Soviet bloc countries, Yugoslavia, and Albania by the KKE between 1948 and 1949.¹ After Yugoslavia and Romania, Czechoslovakia accepted the third largest number of child refugees, a total of 5,185 children from newborns to minors up to eighteen. About every fourth child was from the Slav-Macedonian-speaking community in Northern Greece.² Despite the initial expectations that their stay would be temporary, many never repatriated to Greece, instead settling permanently in the host countries. Those who did repatriate usually had to go through difficult bureaucratic procedures to reacquire Greek citizenship, possible only after 1982 and only if they were ethnic Greeks (Sarikoudi 2015, 313–316).³ Many refugees who identified as Slav-Macedonians settled in the Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia (Brown 2003, 33),⁴ and some refugees from the Greek Civil War re-emigrated to a third country where Greek diaspora existed (Tsivos 2012, 238–255). Due to repatriations and re-emigrations, the number of Greeks living in Czechoslovakia decreased greatly. According to the census conducted in 2011, only 2,043 persons in the Czech Republic declared themselves as Greek (Tsivos 2009, 336).

The displacement of Greek children—which, for many, turned into a lifelong exile—served as a propaganda tool for political rivals at the national level as well as in the context of the Cold War bipolarism. Greek authorities, their foreign supporters, and the KKE were well aware that after the Second World War, children's welfare had become a very sensitive issue (Zahra 2011, ix). They therefore invested great effort into legitimizing their own actions while discrediting those of their political opponents.

The KKE's evacuation program in particular was presented in expressive and symbolic, yet ambivalent, terms. While in the communist narrative it was called *pedosimos* or *pedofylagma*—i.e. child rescue or child protection—in the anti-communist narrative it was labeled *pedomazoma* (the gathering of children), an appropriation of the historically anachronistic denomination which Greek historiography often uses for the Ottomans' forced recruitment and Islamization of mostly Christian Orthodox boys. Following this narrative of *pedomazoma*, the royalist government claimed that Greek children

were deprived of their Greekness and even purposely Slavicized in communist countries. Since they were to be raised in a mostly atheist environment, they would also lose their religious affiliation to Greek Orthodox Christianity. In the anticommunist master narrative, child refugees were therefore presented as converts into enemies of their own nation (Bærentzen 1987).

The living conditions and educational practices in institutions run by representatives of rival camps in the conflict has been another intensely contested issue in opposing master narratives. The Greek authorities claimed that displaced children were maltreated and indoctrinated in the hostile communist ideology of the enemy. On the other hand, the KKE argued that, once evacuated to Eastern Europe, children were provided with the best social services, healthcare, and appropriate education, benefits hard to obtain in Greece due to social inequality. Thus, they presented the children as having much better prospects for personal development.

Both camps considered children to be the future of the Greek nation, which desperately needed qualified human resources after years of occupation. The question of child refugees' identity and attachment to Greece, therefore, played a crucial role in propaganda. Despite having diametrically opposed ideologies, the two political camps employed similar patriotic and nationalist rhetoric to symbolically link the fate of children to the wellbeing of the Greek nation (Voutira and Brouskou 2000, 98). In other words, communists as well as anticommunists embraced the motif of expected return to Greece and stressed the importance of maintaining a strong sense of Greek cultural identity among child refugees.

Since the children's fate as a symbolic category was the pillar of the master narratives promoted by the political rivals, the complex lived experiences of child refugees were intentionally ignored. Only segments of their individual stories were carefully selected so that they would not challenge but support the polarized "historical truths." Thus, personal accounts have hitherto been understood almost exclusively within these ideological contours.

For many years, scholars neglected this issue. In Greek historiography, only the fall of the Greek junta (1974), and especially the government of the Panhellenic Socialist Movement (PASOK) in the 1980s, opened a space in academia and the public sphere for discussion of the traumatic civil conflict and its consequences. An analogous situation may be observed in the former communist countries of Eastern Europe, where only following the fall of communism were scholars allowed to work freely with archival sources on contemporary history and to emerge from the hegemony of the communist master narrative. Since the 1980s, however, much research on the Civil War has been carried out by both

Greek and international scholars, often challenging the ideologically motivated master narratives.⁵ However, significantly less interest has been shown in the social impact of the war and in its history from below (but see Van Boeschoten 1997; Margaritis 2000; Vervenioti and Barbatsi 2003; Voglis 2014). Only recently has the focus of many researchers moved toward eyewitness accounts, as well as towards the anthropology of childhood and memory studies, as an important source for making sense of migration and refugeehood. The best example of this approach is the book by Loring M. Danforth and Riki Van Boeschoten entitled *Children of the Greek Civil War: Refugees and the Politics of Memory* (2012).⁶ Kateřina Králová and Kostas Tsivos dealt with the issue in a similar manner, examining Greek political refugees in communist Czechoslovakia in a volume based on mainly Czech-recorded oral testimonies (2012, 2015).

In this article, we deepen the knowledge of the lived experiences of child refugees from the Greek Civil War in Czechoslovakia and the ways in which a community of memory has been created and kept.⁷ We contribute here to the international literature on refugees from the Greek Civil War in the communist countries of Eastern Europe, and we extend existing scholarship in both theoretical and ethnographic directions. First, we provide a deep understanding of the relationship between master narratives and personal accounts as well as of the ambivalent nature of individual memories related to forced population movements. Second, we combine new insights from sources published only in Czech with our previous oral history research. Given the absence of similar research on former Greek refugee populations in other postcommunist countries, we rely on the unique collection of 20 unpublished and 42 published interviews accessible in the audio-visual collection of the *Memory of Nations* database. These interviews were conducted between 2009 and 2011 through our research project “Sixty Years After: Memory of Greek Civil War Refugees in Czechoslovakia, 1949–2009.” Segments of 20 interviews originally in Czech are directly quoted in this article.⁸

All interviews were carried out in the postcommunist Czech Republic and in the context of the emerging Greek economic crisis. Both factors could have influenced the way in which narrators remembered and retold their life stories to the interviewers,⁹ since oral testimonies are always embedded within wider social frameworks and reflect the interplay between past and present (Abrams 2010, 18, 69). Furthermore, the present may shape the evaluation and the coloring of the story (Portelli 2006, 38). We therefore assume that while the narrators’ socioeconomic standing in the postcommunist reality could have impacted the level of their alienation from the communist master narrative about Greek child refugees’ experiences, the negative portrayal of Greeks in

Czech public discourse due to the Greek economic crisis could have reshaped the interviewees' self-perception and their self-presentation of their identities and loyalties.

The research shows that, early on, in a period remembered by the eyewitnesses due to their young age only imperfectly, Greek child refugees in Czechoslovakia successfully absorbed and fully internalized the communist narrative. However, once they grew up and their memories became coherent, the imposed narrative became contested by marginal yet diverse narratives within Czechoslovak society that existed then as well as by opposing master narratives with which they were confronted during their visits to Greece after the fall of the Greek junta in 1974. Later on, they also faced alternative interpretations of the past in the postcommunist Czech Republic. Nevertheless, since the narrators in question were members of a particular group in institutional childcare—the so-called children's homes—they shared very similar experiences as children. Therefore, we claim that this shared experience led to the constitution of a genuine community of memory (Bellah et al. 2007), one that persisted even in times of narrative pluralism (Olick 2007, 3–4).¹⁰ Such a community of memory has comforted its members by adding shared meaning to both their past and present while reinforcing their belonging as a group and preventing them from yet another uprooting within a largely homogenized Czech(oslovak) society. Despite the overarching paradigm of return common to Greek refugees and the universal experience of forced migration (Sharif and Soo 2013, 3–4) physical repatriation became, for these narrators, more of an illusion than a real aim (Muggeridge and Doná 2006, 416).

We argue that, despite specific and intense ideological contouring of Greek children's displacement in the communist countries, the life stories of our interviewees, and the narrative preserved within the community of memory which they have created, show shared patterns of collective refugee experiences, similar to other forced movements of the twentieth century. The dialectics and ambiguity of displacement experiences, although not mutually exclusive, are clearly crucial and universally valid features. In this sense, we agree with Liisa Malkki (1995, 517) who claims that displacement should be seen as the flipside of emplacement, the transformative process entailing not only disempowerment but also empowerment.

Displacement in personal accounts of Greek child refugees

Most of the narrators whose interviews we worked with were born on the eve of or during the Second World War.¹¹ Due to their age, individual recollections of the Greek Civil War and the departure from Greece are nonlinear and fragmented, often limited to specific yet very strong images. Ilias Michopoulos (*1938) explains why he vividly remembers some scenes from this period: “Cruel times are remembered. Childhood traumas are deeply imprinted in your mind. We are surprised that we remember. The cruel moments and traumas stay in you and haunt you throughout your whole life.”¹² However, narrators stress that they did not understand what was happening to them at that time and why. Georgios Karadzios (*1941) summarizes feelings shared by other child refugees: “You remember that, because some horrors stick in a child’s mind, especially when you are four, five, six, or seven years old. You did not understand why there were young boys lying dead. You did not understand why it was actually happening.”¹³

As adults, most of the Greek child refugees have become aware of the contradictory interpretations of the KKE’s relocation plan as well as the controversy it has given rise to in Greece and internationally. Konstantinos Katsianikos (*1941), who has worked as a tour guide in the Czech Republic, states, “The children’s issue in Greece, it devastates them more than the whole Civil War . . . When you mention to a group of Greek tourists that you are from those children, immediately, there is an uneasiness.”¹⁴ The vast majority of narrators usually present the displacement neither as kidnapping nor as a purely humanitarian act but as an uneasy decision made in a wider context of emerging Cold War. They acknowledge that the KKE’s evacuation of children was influenced by ideological and strategic motives, but they do not contest its humanitarian aspect.

Sotiris Joanidis (*1939) is one of the few who reflects on the evacuation in a highly critical manner, stressing the KKE’s ideological intentions, which he sees as utopian: “They wanted to teach them [children] communism and then, as they would return to Greece, everything would flourish. It was a strange idea but they did it . . . They were taking kids from mommies who were still breastfeeding.”¹⁵ Others mostly admit that there were cases of voluntary and forced evacuation—depending on the local situation—while stressing that they did not experience the latter. Georgios Muratidis (*1936), for example, states, “Some call it *pedomazoma*, forceful gathering of children, maybe it was sometimes violent but I do not know about those cases.”¹⁶ None of the narrators remembers being personally taken against their parents’ will. Parents, however,

usually agreed with the collective evacuation of children only under an imminent threat (Danforth and Van Boeschoten 2012, 50). Their decision was thus not determined primarily by political convictions, even though many of them were sympathetic toward the Left.

The evacuation organized and officially announced by the KKE in the spring of 1948 mainly affected children from the border areas of northern Greece. They were divided into groups and typically accompanied by young adult women. They crossed the border with Yugoslavia, Albania, or Bulgaria on foot. Because of the air strikes by the Greek National Army and its foreign allies, they proceeded mainly at night; this only intensified their fear, which was combined with extreme physical exhaustion. Ilias Michopoulos, who on top of all of this had to take care of his younger sibling, recalls: “I was among them. Eighty children from our village Glykoneri marched towards the Albanian border. In a crowd. On foot . . . Our tears dried up.”¹⁷

Some Greek child refugees, however, escaped atrocities (committed mostly but not exclusively by the Greek National Army) by crossing the Greek border—either alone or, more often, with at least one of their parents—before the KKE started their evacuation plan. Angelos Jordanidis (*1935) went to Yugoslavia in 1947 after his family’s house was burnt down by the royalist army. He remembers: “I began to cry and I went by foot to the border with Yugoslavia, alone . . . In one week, my mother took the other children and joined me in Yugoslavia. From there, they took us to the camp where there were more of us.”¹⁸ Nikolaos Dumalas (*1942) also left his village with his mother in 1947, recalling, “Father was with [the] partisans, one day he came to tell my mother to hide since our enemies were about to arrive soon. He called them fascists. She [Nikolaos’s mother] therefore decided to join the partisans too . . . In one or two months, we crossed the border.”¹⁹

With the imminent defeat of the Democratic Army of Greece (DSE), most of the inhabitants from conflict areas eventually fled their homes. Sometimes partisans even forcefully evacuated entire villages. Aristidis Spiropoulos (*1943) moved with his mother, younger sister, and neighbors to Albania, where they were later transported to the Soviet bloc countries. He says, “We left in 1949 after we lost the [Civil] War . . . We walked at night, during the day we could not because American planes were looking for us and they were bombing us. So, we, who[ever] remained from our village and the others from the region of Grevena [northwestern Greece], we came to Albania with some, left the rest of our livestock and belongings.”²⁰

Personal accounts of child refugees deviate from the master narratives of the KKE’s relocation policy by contesting the clear division lines—saved versus

kidnapped—and describing different strategies of escape. It was not exceptional for child refugees to leave their homes with one of their parents (usually mothers) and not in an organized collective evacuation; this parent would either accompany them throughout the journey or at least up to a certain point. This was mainly the case for those who came to Buljkes, a town in Yugoslav Vojvodina, which served as the base of Greek political immigration until the Tito-Stalin split in 1948 (Banac 1995; Ristović 1997; Králová 2016b, 233–237). After that, children were transferred to pro-Soviet communist countries while many parents had to go back to fight in Greece or were sent to a different country than their children. For those separated, it often took years before they were reunited. Finally, in both master narratives, children have been depicted only as passive objects of the actions of adults; however, many narrators portray themselves as active agents in the process of deciding whether to leave or stay (Danforth 2003, 184). Sometimes, they even acted as the decision-makers, as the story of Angelos Jordanidis, who went to Yugoslavia alone only to be subsequently followed by his mother and siblings, suggests.²¹

The interviews clearly demonstrate that child refugees did not understand the displacement as kidnapping since their parents usually consented to their evacuation or even joined their children. In some cases, the narrators perceive themselves not as passive victims awaiting rescue but as active agents able to contribute to the decision whether or not to leave Greece, even if they realized that they were not the objects of a purely humanitarian project. On top of this, considerable trauma was associated with the moment of separation from parents and/or relatives. These ambivalent yet interconnected reflections on relief and trauma continued to be a characteristic thread in the testimonies when referring to the journey to Czechoslovakia.

The path to Czechoslovakia in personal accounts of Greek child refugees

Although the KKE officially claimed that by crossing borders children escaped the unbearable reality of loss and of suffering in wartime Greece, Greek authorities asserted that the worst physical and emotional deprivation took place only at the moment of leaving Greece and during the journey to the communist countries. Nevertheless, the testimonies suggest that as long as children were with their close relatives and friends, the departure from Greece was not understood as an imminent traumatic event but rather a continuation of hardship caused by the occupation and the Civil War. For children who left Greece in a collective evacuation, it was not the departure but the separation from their relatives which traumatized them. Ilias Michopoulos retrospectively explains,

“When we were with them [our mothers], we were happy. We were looking forward to escaping the war. When they left us, hard times began.”²²

All narrators state that by leaving Greece they escaped the violence and the constant fear of an omnipresent death. At the same time, they admit that their suffering from hunger and poverty did not cease at once. The living conditions, especially in neighboring Yugoslavia, Albania and, Bulgaria, where child refugees went first, were extremely poor. It took weeks or months—and, for particular individuals, even years—to reach Czechoslovakia, whether they went by train via Hungary, Romania, and the USSR or by boat from Albania through the Strait of Gibraltar and via Poland (Kadlecová 2012, 96). On their journey, child refugees were usually distributed to several provisional shelters and children’s homes of varying quality (Bontila and Lagani 2012). Angelos Jordanidis, when asked about the worst experience from his childhood, states, “We spent three months in an old monastery in the woods [in Yugoslav Macedonia]. We were hungry; they gave us one hot [bowl of] soup per day . . . However, lice were the worst, and I often think of it. They were marching like ants and biting us everywhere.”²³ Stylianos Kandaras (*1936) has a similar memory of his time in Macedonia, recalling mainly hunger: “We were begging for rain. When it was raining, we went to the forest to collect red slugs. We then cooked them in cans and ate them. That was the kind of hunger we experienced in Yugoslavia.”²⁴

Nevertheless, once child refugees got to Buljkes in Vojvodina, their living conditions significantly improved, even by comparison to life in northern Greece during the occupation and the Civil War. Vasiliki Michailidu (*1934), who lived in Buljkes for one year with her older sister, remembers: “We were fine in Buljkes. There, we even ate.”²⁵ Sotirios Pupakis (*1935), who left his village in northeastern Greece for Bulgaria with his siblings in 1948, recalls the situation in the children’s home in Botevgrad, where he spent one and a half years: “It was very poor but people tried their best to make us well. Parents were still fighting in Greece. Everything was missing, be it food, or school supplies.”²⁶ These interviews show that child refugees faced serious material hardship on their journey. At the same time, narrators stress the sense of solidarity and all the efforts made to assist them by the inhabitants of countries they went through.²⁷

For many narrators, leaving home was both a difficult experience and an adventure. Already on the way to Czechoslovakia, children found themselves in a completely different environment from rural and economically underdeveloped northern Greece. For the first time in their lives, they were encountering the conveniences of modernity. Many narrators recall when they first took a shower, saw a truck or a train, or got a glimpse of big city lights. Georgios Muratidis remembers, “In Durrës [Albania] I saw the electric light for

the first time because in Greece, in the mountains, we did not have electricity. We wondered and constantly turned the light on and off.”²⁸ Ilias Michopoulos has a similar story: “We were nervous because ninety percent of us had never seen a train. My grandfather told me fairy tales about dragons blazing flames. When the train was approaching, the chimney of the steam locomotive was puffing and spouting sparks. Someone said that dragon was coming. The whole crowd of children scattered in fear.”²⁹ The children’s transition from the rural world of their childhood to a new one—frightening and exciting at the same time—was symbolically completed upon their arrival in the final host countries where the conveniences of modernity became a part of the children’s everyday lives. This was especially the case in Czechoslovakia, which was more developed and industrialized back then, not only in comparison to Greece but also in comparison to other countries of the emerging Eastern bloc (Teichova 2013).

Institutional childcare as a formative experience for Greek child refugees

Immediately after their arrival in Czechoslovakia, the child refugees stayed for several weeks in reception centers.³⁰ They were examined by medical staff and got new clothes. None of the narrators mentioned suffering from hunger after their arrival. Sotiris Joanidis recalls, “Naturally, we came to Mikulov looking pretty shabby, in torn clothes and with nothing, so they first put some clothes on us, bathed us and, because we were full of lice, they poured DDT all over our heads. We ate, we ate six times a day, you know . . . And then we moved from one children’s home to another.”³¹ Over the next fifteen years, more than fifty different accommodation facilities, including nationalized castles and spa resorts in Bohemia and Moravia, were used as homes for Greek child refugees, who usually stayed until the end of secondary education in technical or grammar schools.³² Their supervision, regarding both curricula and leisure, was provided by the KKE in coordination with the Czechoslovak political leadership. Except for necessary contacts with Czech children at schools, they were purposely isolated from the outside world for ideological, political, and security reasons. The intentional separation of children from the Czechoslovak public also demonstrates that the KKE expected that the children would soon return to Greece and desired to nourish their Greek national identity; this contradicts the anticommunist narrative of the communists’ desire to de-Hellenize Greek child refugees. The process of integration into Czechoslovak society began only after the KKE realized that the communist revolution in Greece had failed and the refugees’ stay in Czechoslovakia would be longer than expected (Botu and Konečný 2005, 427).

The narrators' memories of starting out in Czechoslovakia are more concrete than those of the Civil War or their departure, which were often only mediated to them by teachers or older members of the Greek community. The complex recollections concerning the time narrators spent in the children's homes are characterized by a set of ambiguous, sometimes even contradictory, but shared experiences and feelings such as separation and solidarity, isolation and community, pain and joy, threats and new opportunities, powerlessness and strength.

Narrators ascribe the feeling of being isolated from the Czechoslovak society to the institutional setting in which they were housed. They also place it in the context of changing their former identity and their effort to create a new one in accordance with the KKE's intentions. Predominantly, however, they associate this feeling with family separation. The majority of child refugees either lost their relatives in the Civil War or were separated from them as a direct consequence of it. Since the KKE, following directions and methods introduced by the official Soviet educator Anton Semyonovich Makarenko, believed ideological education would be more effective in collective facilities, even those coming with close relatives were typically placed in children's homes, and their contact with family members was intentionally limited (Chábová 2010, 204). Siblings were purposefully assigned to different facilities. Konstantinos Katsianikos says, "As siblings, we came together. Then, they divided us into four different children's homes. I claim it was intentional because the ideological education was then easier."³³ Katsianikos interprets the traumatic experience of the sibling separation in ideological terms, with a clear understanding of the communist agenda. Georgios Karadzios recalls, "There were many children from our village, younger, older. We did not understand of course why they wanted to take us away from our parents. We understood nothing. It was stressful for the child's soul. One would be lying if they say it wasn't."³⁴

Not only family separation but also reunification remained etched in the memory of children as a painful experience. Although adult transports arrived in Czechoslovakia between 1949 and 1950, the internal reunification of families was hindered by the KKE's insistence on institutional childcare. The cross-border unification of Greek families, launched in 1952, was complicated administratively and bureaucratically, as well as hindered more generally, by the political tensions between states of the communist bloc. The initiative was only completed in 1955. The reunification policy of communist countries followed the principle that women were to move to the country where their husbands were living and children were to join their parents (Tsivos 2010, 60). The first contact with relatives after months or

even years of separation was traumatizing since parents and children were not always able to recognize one another, and it was difficult to re-establish close personal ties (Zahra 2011, 6).

Nikos Karagiorgis (*1940) was placed in Polish children's homes and came to Czechoslovakia only in 1954 thanks to the Red Cross's initiative to unify Greek families. He remembers meeting his mother after five years of separation: "I cannot describe it. I was thinking all the time about what it [the experience] would look like . . . I recognized her but she did not [recognize me]. My mother did not recognize me."³⁵ Angelos Jordanidis had a similar experience: "The Red Cross started to connect us with our families. When they called me, I went into a room where a lot of men in uniforms were sitting. I couldn't recognize my father."³⁶ Children's psychological estrangement from their families and natural environment thus became the crucial prism through which mass evacuations of minors from war zones were seen by both scholars and professionals in child-care.

Gillian Mann claims that separated children face profound physical and psychological risks and trauma. She further argues that, for those who cannot access family relationships, separation can have devastating social and psychological consequences (Mann 2005, 6). Greek child refugees refer to the period of separation as very difficult and painful; however, their overall memories of children's homes are mostly positive and the experience of institutional childcare is seen by all interviewees as beneficial for their future lives. Nikolaos Dumalas even claims: "[Children's] homes gave us a lot, I do not understand how someone can make excuses for himself because of the absence of parental care."³⁷ This can be partially explained by the fact that, for Greek child refugees, the negative impact of family separation was diminished by the establishment of protective factors, such as strong relationships with so-called substitute mothers, teachers, or group leaders within the community, as well as peer bonds and friendships.³⁸

This phenomenon can be understood in the sense of Winter's definition of "fictive kinship." Winter employed this term to describe ties that united survivors of the First World War and helped them cope with traumatic experiences. These ties were created on a social and experiential basis rather than on the basis of blood ties or marriage (Winter 1999, 40–60). Narrators, especially those who went through institutional childcare, tend to use the language of kinship to explain their close connection to other refugees. Georgia Zerva (*1946) elaborates on the bonds among boarders in children's homes in the following way: "We were like brothers and sisters. We, all children who grew up in children homes . . . There were brotherly relationships, sibling relationships."³⁹

A sense of group solidarity provided to them by the host country is another experience shared by most of the interviewees. Narrators often spontaneously express their gratitude to Czechoslovakia for accepting them as vulnerable refugees. Sotiris Joanidis stresses this point: “In Czechoslovakia, during the whole time—and it must have been really costly—they had taken care of us as if we were their own children, no doubt about that.”⁴⁰ Georgios Karanikos (*1934) claims, in nearly identical terms, “They treated us perfectly. What we needed, we had. They treated us as if we were their children.”⁴¹ Almost interchangeable testimonies concerning Czechoslovak aid may suggest, nevertheless, that these children were taught phrases to support the communist narrative of friendly and selfless solidarity, which a majority of narrators internalized. Underlining their gratitude to the host country can also be explained as a strategy through which many refugees seek to please the majority population and thus to “protect themselves” (Gambetta 2005). Finally, an overemphasis on gratitude can be understood as an expression of loyalty to the host country in which they decided to continue living—something not unusual among refugees (Ouzan 2018, 51, 245).

The KKE presented everyday life in children’s homes in terms of solidarity and devotion to children’s wellbeing. Eftihia Voutira and Aigli Brouskou, however, claim that the homes for Greek child refugees were run as “total institutions” which “are characterized by the authoritarian structure of all the social relations within them” (Voutira and Brouskou 2000, 99–100). They point out the importance of collectiveness, the suppression of individuality, personal histories, and social differences, and the demand for obedience. Konstantinos Katsianikos describes the strict order in children’s homes in the following way: “It was the intention, you lose your personality and individuality. Same clothes, same shoes, same number, everything the same.”⁴² Georgia Zerva is one of those who admit that not everybody took the daily routine well: “As concerns the preschool time it is sadder, I don’t want to say that they didn’t take care of us, not at all. But otherwise, as I said, first it was darkness, with a lot of fear inside . . . A military drill.”⁴³ However, Stefanos Simichanidis (*1945)—like many others—does not perceive the emphasis on the collectiveness and strictly set routine in negative terms: “To be honest, in children’s homes we had a really good living because they looked after us really well and there was this collective way of life. We were never bored. We would always do something.”⁴⁴

All narrators claim that they were treated well and that their living conditions significantly improved upon arrival in Czechoslovakia, compared both to Greece and to their experience in transit countries. Their negative or traumatic memories were mostly associated with family separation and reunification

yet were tempered by the quality of care and peer relations in the children's homes. Many interviewees mention having a hard time coping with the drill and absolute control over boarders. At the same time, they never question the overall positive effect of institutional childcare. This is despite the fact that it was bound up with a political socialization in a communist context—one demonized in the anticommunist narrative—which impacted their own characters and lives. Konstantinos Katsianikos stresses, “They raised us to be honest, obedient, disciplined, friendly, not selfish.”⁴⁵ The motive of becoming decent, moral and, hardworking people appears as a hallmark in all interviews. Thus, interviewees claim that, despite their experience of loss, separation, and hardship, they succeeded in re-establishing a normal life. This reflects the broader dichotomy between the narrators' common feelings of being powerless victims of their fate and the decisions of external forces, on the one hand, and a sense of empowerment, on the other.

Ideologically biased education in personal accounts of Greek child refugees

According to many narrators, re-establishing normal life was possible thanks to, among other things, the education provided by their host country. Sotiris Pupakis, who was of school age during the occupation of Greece and the Civil War, states: “We came from Greece where schools did not function, especially in the countryside. During the occupation, teachers left, there was no state authority to pay them. Children thus remained without schooling . . . There were no books, no pens because there was no normal life.”⁴⁶ Child refugees came to Czechoslovakia from underdeveloped rural areas of northern Greece where school education was an extreme luxury. According to Czechoslovak statistics from 1948, almost 60 percent of them were illiterate (Botu and Konečný 2005, 94; Králová 2016a, 100).

The KKE asserted that illiteracy and a lack of professional human resources were the main obstacles to Greece's postwar reconstruction and its further development and modernization. Therefore, the education of a new generation of Greeks was presented in the communist master narrative as a crucial task of the KKE as well as of Czechoslovak authorities regulating the refugee programs. Georgios Muratidis, who became a turner [worker in a metal factory], recalls the pressure from the KKE to study: “Ours [the Greek community] exercised pressure, the KKE exercised pressure, you had to study. I did not want to, I wanted to earn money. The functionary came and I got told off. ‘You are going to study,’ he said.”⁴⁷ Despite initial displeasure, he later appreciated the benefits of his technical education. According to him, the level of education distinguished

Greek child refugees from their peers in Greece: “The KKE told us that we would go somewhere where we would study. It was all true,” claims Muratidis. “Our peers in Greece, they did not have even basic schooling, nothing, and we, who wanted to study, could. It was true, we cannot say that they lied to us.”⁴⁸ Georgios Karadzos, who became a cardiac surgeon and later chief of cardiology, also acknowledges the education and professional opportunities Greek child refugees got in Czechoslovakia: “I consider the fact that we got to Czechoslovakia as a great advantage. It was a good place for personal development. Neighboring states were not so developed and well-equipped concerning machine industry, universities, education, etc.”⁴⁹ In this manner, narrators follow the communist master narrative that, had they stayed in Greece, they would not have studied or become as successful in their professional life. Some of them consider the living conditions and professional opportunities for Greek Civil War refugees in Czechoslovakia much better in comparison to Greece as well as to other communist countries. Therefore, many of them consider themselves lucky.

At the same time, narrators often emphasize that, besides the indisputable opportunities offered to them by Czechoslovakia, personal effort was needed for them to benefit in this respect. They stress that since they were disadvantaged compared to their Czechoslovak peers—above all in a linguistic sense—they had to study and work even harder. Thanks to their capabilities, in combination with their diligence, they were eventually able to build successful careers. Georgios Muratidis, who was employed by one of the biggest Czechoslovak producers of bicycles, recalls: “I started as an assistant but in six years I became a foreman because I was diligent.”⁵⁰ Giorgios Sideridis (*1943), who trained as a car mechanic, similarly claims: “The director assistant complained that most of Greeks [machinists] moved away and new workers did not even come close to them in capabilities and decency.”⁵¹ Considering that the interviews took place during the Greek economic crisis when the dominant public discourse in the Czech Republic portrayed Greeks as “lazy freeloaders” sponging off the European Union, the passionate insistence on being hard workers, often indispensable for the Czechoslovak economy, could be seen as the narrators’ defensive reaction to the new situation (Huleja 2013). The negative labeling of Greeks in the Czech public sphere following the economic crisis was unprecedented in its intensity. During the existence of Czechoslovakia, given that Czech interaction with Greece was rather limited, the perception of Greece and Greekness oscillated between a romanticized image of the ancient cradle of European civilization nourished by the accustomed tradition of classical education, on the one hand, and the notion of a Balkan wilderness, on the other (Dostálová 2010; Hradečný et al. 2015, 669–680; Mazower 2002, xxix).

In the anticommunist master narrative, it was maintained that the education did not contribute to their personal and career development but served as the most effective means to indoctrinate them, and thus as a way to destroy Greece. From an ideological perspective, the education was indeed considered crucial and a key instrument for introducing the communist master narrative. At first, the KKE supervised schooling as such. The Czechoslovak Ministry of Education took full responsibility for the education of Greek immigrants in 1951/52. The curricula, textbooks, and structure of classes were adjusted to the objectives of the KKE and the Czechoslovak communist regime, reflecting the political situation and being modified accordingly over time (Bontila 2010, 115; Bontila 2012, 37–53). Thus, Greek child refugees were exposed to an ideologically biased education from both the KKE and the Czechoslovak communist regime, becoming more indoctrinated and militarized than the Czechoslovak youth in those days (Hradečný 2000, 36).

Narrators have vivid memories of attempts to raise them with communist ideals. Most of them, however, consider ideological education neither as indoctrination nor as a negative experience, thus confirming that the political efforts fell on fertile ground. The motive of communist propaganda mainly appears in interviews as anecdotes from children's homes. Sotiris Joanidis comments on his repetitive drawing assignments with a smile: "We knew how to do Stalin, his beard, his bust . . . We competed who did Stalin in the most beautiful way . . . It was so easy to draw Stalin."⁵² Ilias Michopoulos has similar recollections: "In the children's home, I used to write slogans that the year 1949 would be the year of the great Greek victory. I drew Marx, Gottwald [leader of Communist Party of Czechoslovakia (1929–1953) and president of Czechoslovakia (1948–1953)] and Stalin."⁵³ Georgios Karadzos describes how he benefited from the ideological training he was exposed to: "At the med-school, we studied many other things. We had Marxism, history of KSČ [Communist Party of Czechoslovakia]. I had political preparation from my life experience. I came unprepared to the KSČ history exam and everyone said I cannot pass. I came, they asked me to compare the KKE and the KSČ, so I told them exactly the truth and I got an A."⁵⁴ The quotation from Georgios's interview, similar to many others, implies that child refugees often accepted the communist master narrative in full or in part as a reality they rarely contested. Even though some admit that they later realized the ideological bias of education in children's homes as well as in Czechoslovak schools, such awareness did not negate the benefits they got from the Czechoslovak educational system, which they typically praise for its high quality.

Interviewees usually claim that they could sober up, so to speak, from the absolute and uncritical idealization of communism only after being integrated into Czechoslovak society. Konstantinos Katsianikos comments on a picture of himself with other Greek child refugees: “You see, we were such small commies . . . Later, when they put us together with Czech children, it had an immediate effect on us. We improved our knowledge of the Czech language a lot and most importantly we came into contact with different outlooks on life.”⁵⁵ Some narrators refer to the splits and purges in the KKE in 1956, triggered by a broader process of de-Stalinization, and later, in 1968, by tensions between reformist and pro-Moscow fractions within the KKE, as the moments of disillusion with communist politics.⁵⁶ Yet, they associate the dissatisfaction with relationship difficulties, caused by a political schism, that they or some of their family members, usually politically active male relatives, encountered, rather than the ideology or the system itself. Some interviewees also complain about the behavior of particular officials—both Greek and Czechoslovak—whom narrators often call “bad communists.” Stylianos Kandaras criticizes the Greek communist leadership for only being driven by personal interests: “They fought together for the same idea and then . . . they changed.”⁵⁷ Pavlos Kevrekidis (*1937) similarly argues, “There were not the right communists, everyone was opportunist, a human being is guilty, not the idea.”⁵⁸

Interviews reveal that while the splits within the KKE were of extreme importance to the narrators, the Prague Spring and subsequent occupation of Czechoslovakia by armies of the Warsaw Pact in August 1968, although crucial for Czechoslovak society and individuals’ understanding of communism, did not significantly affect the positioning of former Greek child refugees vis-à-vis the communist regime and ideology. The interviewees—although socially and economically well established in Czechoslovak society—seemed to be emotionally detached from their host country’s wider political development.⁵⁹ Most of them claimed to be neutral in relation to the occupation of Czechoslovakia and its consequent so-called normalization—i.e. the consolidation of conservative streams within both the Czechoslovak communist party and the KKE. Georgios Karanikos, for example, recalls, “I was neither in favor of invasion nor against it. I was rather neutral. If they had attacked Greece, I would have rebelled, but not that I would be a fanatic, no.”⁶⁰ Sotirios Pupakis states, “Unlike Czechs, I did not take it too seriously.”⁶¹ He also remembers being criticized by his Czech colleagues and friends for such a position. Only a few interviewees condemned the invasion but tend to see it as one of the mistakes natural to any political regime.⁶²

Political changes after the fall of communism were reflected by narrators in more emotional ways since they represented a radical challenge to their worldview, which remained significantly influenced by communist ideas. Hence, the vast majority of interviewees accepted the end of the communist regime with difficulty. Their reaction can be partially explained by the falling socioeconomic standing of the working class, to which most of them belonged. Aristidis Spiropoulos, retired at the time of the interview, asks, “Are you free when you cannot buy something for your grandchildren?”⁶³ Nikolaos Tsametis (*1942) adds, “The unemployment, beggars, and homeless began. I liked the previous system more, it was more just.”⁶⁴ Nevertheless, some have preserved a politically leftist orientation despite being economically successful. Stasis Prusalis (*1948), who set up his own business in cultural production (film and music), even became an active member of the post-Cold War Communist Party of Bohemia and Moravia (KSČM).

Although the narrators stressed that they experienced uneasiness adjusting to the new ideological framework of values resonating in the wider Czech society, they also admitted that inside their social groups, be it the former Greek child refugee community or the workers’ circles within which most of the narrators built their careers and social life, they could still share very similar worldviews without being marginalized or misunderstood. Additionally, although a critical review of the communist past has been prevalent in Czech public discourse since the democratic transformation period, the sense of nostalgia for the old regime has remained strong in a significant part of Czech society, and the successor of KSČM has been an important factor in the political scene of the Czech Republic (Stegmaier and Vlachová 2009).

The notion of “home” in personal accounts of Greek child refugees

Greek child refugees’ political, cultural, and national sense of belonging, together with their perception of home, was another highly contested theme in both master narratives. The KKE claimed that, thanks to institutional childcare and education, it preserved the Greek national consciousness among child refugees who became true patriots, serving as the hope and future of the Greek people. Anticommunist narratives, on the contrary, presented them as denationalized and converted into traitors. By leaving the fatherland, even if involuntarily, they were not regarded as sincere patriots and were therefore deprived of their citizenship (Roudometof 2002, 124).

All narrators claim that in children’s homes in Eastern Europe, they were led to patriotism and love for their homeland. Athanasios Kesidis (*1943) asserts,

“We were raised to be patriotic. They were telling us that we are Greeks and we have to live in Greece. I heard it from the beginning.”⁶⁵ For this purpose, the KKE retained the right to teach in their native tongue, be it Greek and Slav-Macedonian, Greek history, or geography. Children were also provided with news from Greece (Macáková 2012, 128). Georgia Zerva, the author of a Greek-Czech dictionary, recalls, “In children’s homes, once a week we had a course called News taught in Greek. We knew what was happening in Greece.”⁶⁶ She admits that the news was often one-sided, yet she believes that it was important for keeping in contact with their homeland. Furthermore, Greek national holidays were celebrated in children’s homes, and Greek folklore was introduced collectively. Stasis Prusalis stresses, “Without children’s homes many of us would not know our language and maybe, we would have forgotten our customs and traditions”⁶⁷

Since the KKE and most of the adult Greek refugees believed that their exile was only temporary, the majority of Greek child refugees did not apply for Czechoslovak citizenship. Also, Czechoslovak laws did not recognize dual citizenship, and therefore giving up on Greek citizenship was seen as giving up on the return to Greece.⁶⁸ A few of the child refugees later decided to change their citizenship for pragmatic reasons. Georgios Karanikos explains, “I could not travel, so I applied for a Czech passport. I have it but only because of my family.”⁶⁹ The idea of repatriation often influenced narrators’ private networks. Georgia Zerva, for example, recalls, “I wanted to go to Greece, I believed that as soon as I got the education I would repatriate. Therefore, I wanted only a Greek boyfriend. That kind of thinking we had back then.”⁷⁰ Georgia’s memory, as well as that of many others, points to a reluctance to enter into intermarriages for patriotic reasons.⁷¹ It also implies that child refugees understood education and professionalization not only as their own personal development and a chance to change their social status but also as an obligation to their homeland.

All narrators thus admit that they internalized patriotic narratives promoted by the KKE and older members of the Greek community. They dreamed of repatriation; however, once legal return to Greece was possible, they stayed behind for various reasons, usually work or family ties. Nevertheless, the decision also stemmed from worries of yet another uprooting or loss since the imagined homeland often clashed with the reality that confronted the narrators when they visited Greece for the first time. Aristidis Spiropoulos remembers, “They were telling us about the meadows, the forests, the water in Greece and the fields. ‘It was the biggest and the most fertile land,’ they said. When we came and saw it . . . these are such tiny things.”⁷²

Additionally, as their exile seemed indefinite, interviewees developed a strong attachment to the Czech Republic.⁷³ Georgios Karanikos says, “I feel at home here [in the Czech Republic] where I have been living for forty years. In Greece, I feel at home too, through the music and so on. When I remember the native village—such desire. Yet, when we are there, we say ‘we wish to be home.’ Home is already here.”⁷⁴ This amplifies the notion that, for former Greek child refugees who live in the Czech Republic, Greece nowadays embodies a symbolic homeland to which they are emotionally bound but to which they no longer aspire to repatriate. Still, they declare their Greekness and continue cultivating their widely popular cultural traditions and folklore. Narrators thus challenge the anticommunist master narrative by claiming that neither the KKE nor the Czechoslovak communist regime aimed to deprive them of their national consciousness. On the contrary, they assert that they were raised to be sincere patriots and to maintain their native tongue and traditions. Once child refugees, they subsequently became part of the everyday social life in Czechoslovakia, but they have never been fully culturally and ethnically assimilated. In this way, they have developed a sense of dual loyalty to both host country and country of origin. Although loyalty to more than one state has historically elicited negative public reactions (Waldinger and Fitzgerald 2004, 11), the narrators do not believe that this is the case either in Czechoslovakia or the postcommunist Czech Republic. Hence, the narrators claim that they could feel at home in the Czech Republic while preserving an emotional attachment to Greece and Greekness.

Conclusion

The Greek Civil War was followed by deep divisions within Greek society and the diaspora together with ideological tensions arising from the Cold War, which gave the impetus to a “memory war” over how the civil conflict and its consequences would be remembered. Two opposing master narratives—the communist and the anticommunist—each promoting their hegemony, have dominated the public memory of this tragic period in Greek history for many years. For its sensitivity, the children’s issue became one of the main themes in both master narratives. However, the cognitive experiences of child refugees themselves have largely been ignored.

Testimonies in this article from former Greek Civil War child refugees who have been living in the Czech Republic and who went through institutional childcare importantly complement the picture of the KKE’s controversial relocation policy and the living conditions of child refugees in host countries. They also demonstrate interconnections between master narratives and memories of

lived experiences. Since most narrators experienced the departure from Greece at a very young age, their recollections of this period are fragmented. They were not able to rationally understand the causes and consequences of the situation in which they found themselves. To make sense of the events and to connect particular pictures from their memory into an understandable story, they tend to internalize parts of the communist master narrative presented to them mainly in the children's homes. The impact of the communist master narratives on narrators' memory is most obvious when they present the KKE's evacuation and its consequences in a rather general manner and try to explain it as a historical event. However, as demonstrated by the evidence presented here the more specific and personal their memories become, the more they deviate from both master narratives and the strict divisions between them. The testimonies challenge the hegemony of the competing master narratives by showing the negative as well as positive aspects of narrators' lived experiences and by referring to the often ambiguous feelings connected to them. Additionally, although the displacement of Greek children has been specific in terms of extreme ideological contestation and its influence on narrators' memories, the personal accounts reveal the shared and more universal patterns of refugeehood implying simultaneous experiences of "victimization and practices of overcoming it; grave loss, severe disruptions of life, and radical challenges to identity, as well as processes of regaining control of life and reconstructing place and identity" (Korac 2009, 8).

Finally, the narrators' testimonies show very similar features despite differences of education, occupation, or social status. This allows us to conclude that the former child refugees in the Czech Republic were not just a specific subgroup within the Greek political emigration in Czechoslovakia, strongly bonded together by shared experience, but developed into a community of memory. The time narrators spent in children's homes where the communist master narrative was introduced was critical in shaping their political opinions, social attitudes, and habits. The children's homes also became the dominant social framework wherein the individuals recall and reconstruct their past. In the case of the interviewees, the previous subjective reflections of each individual child refugee, their political preferences, their living conditions, and their diverse professional experiences at the moment of their interview obviously influenced the importance and quality they attributed to their past experiences. However, the overall interpretations of turning points in the lives of Greek child refugees in Czechoslovakia as a community of memory tend to converge through all the interviews.

NOTES

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¹ While the Leftist sources usually state a lower number, the Greek government always mentioned 28,000 (Danforth and Van Boeschoten 2012, 46).

² Adult refugees of the Greek Civil War who came to Czechoslovakia mostly in 1949–1950 settled in the two regions of Moravia and Silesia. According to statistics from 1950, there were 12,095 refugees in Czechoslovakia—6,910 adults and 5,185 children. 6,752 were of Greek origin while 3,785 were Slav-Macedonians (Tsivos 2010, 55; Hradečný 2000, 43).

³ Between 1947 and 1963, the Greek authorities issued 136 decrees on the basis of which 22,266 refugees from the Greek Civil War lost their Greek citizenship (Tsivos 2012, 247).

⁴ Approximately 1,300 refugees who identified as Slav-Macedonians opted for emigration from Czechoslovakia to Yugoslavia (Tsivos 2009, 319).

⁵ For pioneering work in their field of research see Bærentzen, Iatrides, and Smith 1987; Close 1995; Iatrides and Wrigley 1995; Mazower 2000; Voutira and Brouskou 2000; Clogg 2002; Voglis 2002; Kalyvas 2006.

⁶ Other authors working with testimonies narrowed their research to Greek refugee communities, in particular in East European countries (e.g. Tsekou 2010; Fokasz 2013; Lampropoulos 2014; Troebst 2004, 2005).

⁷ In accordance with the practice of Czech historiography, and in compliance with the archival material available, we use the term “Greek child refugees” to denote the entire community, except in cases where the most significant non-Greek ethnic group among refugees, Slav-Macedonians, is mentioned as a separate entity. In the article, we exclusively focus on child refugees of the Greek Civil War who experienced institutional child-care since we presume that they were the most intensively exposed to the communist narrative through an ideologically tinged education, and the interconnections between their personal accounts and the master narrative will be deeply influenced by this specific life-experience.

⁸ The complete collection is available in the digital database *Memory of Nations (MoN)*, http://www.pametnaroda.cz/?locale=en_GB (accessed 6 April 2017). For this study, we selected only interviews with Greek child refugees of Greek ethnicity. We took into consideration various factors, including the refugee’s place of origin, the way they got to Czechoslovakia, their education, and the variety of occupations they held—from industrial workers to doctors and university professors—in order to shape as complex a picture of the experience of Greek child refugees as possible. Although we also intended to keep the personal accounts we employed balanced in terms of gender, testimonies from male narrators are much more numerous since they were more willing than women to share their memories of displacement and political opinions. Furthermore, Greek women used to marry mostly within the Greek community and many eventually repatriated to Greece. Although Slav-Macedonians comprised a significant part of Greek Civil War child refugees, we did not include them in the study for the following reasons. First, the sample was limited, as only four of the total of 62 interviewees were of Slav origin. More importantly, we claim that they represent a specific subgroup within the community of memory

whose memories differ from those of narrators of Greek ethnicity, especially concerning their relationship to Greece and the construction of an idealized homeland. The association between the two groups deserves a detailed analysis.

⁹ Every person has several life-stories which very much depend on the position in which the narrator sees him-/herself and how he/she wishes to be seen by others (Mücke and Vaněk 2015, 117).

¹⁰ For more about the concept of “community of memory,” see for example Halbwachs 2009; Connerton 1989.

¹¹ Some narrators modified their names either to stress their Greekness or to adjust them to Czech linguistic rules (Kadlečová 2012, 98; Botu and Konečný 2005, 40–43). We transcribe names as stated in the narrators’ IDs at the time of the interview.

¹² *MoN*, “Sixty Years After”—interview with Ilias Michopoulos, Prague, 9.10.2010.

¹³ *MoN*, “Sixty Years After”—interview with Georgios Karadzos, Semily, 5.22.2010.

¹⁴ *MoN*, “Sixty Years After”—interview with Konstantinos Katsianikos, Prague, 11.17.2010.

¹⁵ *MoN*, “Sixty Years After”—interview with Sotiris Joanidis, Krnov, 6.26.2010.

¹⁶ *MoN*, “Sixty Years After”—interview with Georgios Muratidis, Zlaté Hory, 6.20.2010.

¹⁷ *MoN*, “Sixty Years After”—interview with Ilias Michopoulos, Prague, 9.10.2010.

¹⁸ *MoN*, “Sixty Years After”—interview with Angelos Jordanidis, Bohdaneč, 7.14.2010.

¹⁹ *MoN*, “Sixty Years After”—interview with Nikolaos Dumas, Prague, 5.13.2010.

²⁰ *MoN*, “Sixty Years After”—interview with Aristidis Spiropoulos, Krnov, 6.19.2010.

²¹ *MoN*, “Sixty Years After”—interview with Angelos Jordanidis, Bohdaneč, 7.14.2010.

²² *MoN*, “Sixty Years After”—interview with Ilias Michopoulos, Prague, 9.10.2010.

²³ *MoN*, “Sixty Years After”—interview with Angelos Jordanidis, Bohdaneč, 7.14.2010.

²⁴ *MoN*, “Sixty Years After”—interview with Stylianos Kandaras, Karviná, 7.12.2010.

²⁵ *MoN*, “Sixty Years After”—interview with Vasiliki Michailidu, Karviná 7.13.2010.

²⁶ *MoN*, “Sixty Years After”—interview with Sotirios Pupakis, Ostrava, 11.4.2010.

²⁷ *MoN*, “Sixty Years After”—interview with Sotirios Pupakis, Ostrava, 11.4.2010; *MoN*, “Sixty Years After”—interview with Ilias Michopoulos, Prague, 9.10.2010; *MoN*, “Sixty Years After”—interview with Aristidis Spiropoulos, Krnov, 6.19.2010.

²⁸ *MoN*, “Sixty Years After”—interview with Georgios Muratidis, Zlaté Hory, 6.20.2010.

²⁹ *MoN*, “Sixty Years After”—interview with Ilias Michopoulos, Prague, 9.10.2010.

³⁰ Most child refugees came to the reception centers in Mikulov or Brno-Malomeřice in the southern Moravia region. Only one transport with 805 Greek child refugees was redirected in May 1948 from Mikulov to the reception center in Všebořice by Ústí nad Labem in northern Bohemia (Botu and Konečný 2010, 190).

³¹ *MoN*, “Sixty Years After”—interview with Sotiris Joanidis, Krnov, 6.26.2010.

³² Children were placed almost exclusively in the Czech territory, both in Moravia and Bohemia. Only a few temporary facilities functioned in Slovakia (Botu and Konečný 2010, 192–193; Hradečný 2000, 27).

³³ *MoN*, “Sixty Years After”—interview with Konstantinos Katsianikos, Prague, 11.17.2010.

³⁴ *MoN*, “Sixty Years After”—interview with Georgios Karadzos, Semily, 5.22.2010.

³⁵ *MoN*, “Sixty Years After”—interview with Nikos Karagiorgis, Krnov, 6.19.2010.

³⁶ *MoN*, “Sixty Years After”—interview with Angelos Jordanidis, Bohdaneč, 7.14.2010.

³⁷ *MoN*, “Sixty Years After”—interview with Nikolaos Dumas, Prague, 5.13.2010.

³⁸ Mark Mazower came to a similar conclusion while working with the research of Mando Dalianis dealing with the psychical adaptation of children who were separated from mothers held in the Averoff women’s prison in Athens. According to their findings, most of these children

turned into adults in good physical and mental health. Seeking an explanation, they focused on what they saw as “protective factors” (Dalianis and Mazower 2000, 102).

³⁹ *MoN*, “Sixty Years After”—interview with Georgia Zerva, Prague, 5.25.2010.

⁴⁰ *MoN*, “Sixty Years After”—interview with Sotiris Joanidis, Krnov, 6.26.2010.

⁴¹ *MoN*, “Sixty Years After”—interview with Georgios Karanikos, Prague, 7.9.2010.

⁴² *MoN*, “Sixty Years After”—interview with Konstantinos Katsianikos, Prague, 11.17.2010.

⁴³ *MoN*, “Sixty Years After”—interview with Georgia Zerva, Prague, 5.25.2010.

⁴⁴ *MoN*, “Stories of the 20th Century”—Stefanos Simichanidis, Krnov, 12.2.2009.

⁴⁵ *MoN*, “Sixty Years After”—interview with Konstantinos Katsianikos, Prague, 11.17.2010.

⁴⁶ *MoN*, “Sixty Years After”—interview with Sotirios Pupakis, Ostrava, 11.4.2010.

⁴⁷ *MoN*, “Sixty Years After”—interview with Georgios Muratidis, Zlaté Hory, 6.20.2010.

⁴⁸ *MoN*, “Sixty Years After”—interview with Georgios Muratidis, Zlaté Hory, 6.20.2010.

⁴⁹ *MoN*, “Sixty Years After”—interview with Georgios Karadzios, Semily, 5.22.2010.

⁵⁰ *MoN*, “Sixty Years After”—interview with Georgios Muratidis, Zlaté Hory, 6.20.2010.

⁵¹ *MoN*, “Sixty Years After”—interview with Giorgios Sideridis, Brno, 6.29.2011.

⁵² *MoN*, “Sixty Years After”—interview with Sotiris Joanidis, Krnov, 6.26.2010.

⁵³ *MoN*, “Sixty Years After”—interview with Ilias Michopoulos, Prague, 9.10.2010.

⁵⁴ *MoN*, “Sixty Years After”—interview with Georgios Karadzios, Semily, 5.22.2010.

⁵⁵ *MoN*, “Sixty Years After”—interview with Konstantinos Katsianikos, Prague, 11.17.2010.

⁵⁶ For more on the splits within the KKE in the Czechoslovak context, see Králová 2012.

⁵⁷ *MoN*, “Sixty Years After”—interview with Stylianos Kandaras, Karviná, 7.12.2010.

⁵⁸ *MoN*, “Sixty Years After”—interview with Pavlos Kevrekidis, Brno, 11.26.2010.

⁵⁹ Unlike the case of Hungary where—as Van Boeschoten 2010 argues—many Greek refugees who integrated into the Hungarian environment were aware of the negative effects of the Stalinist period and became connected to the so-called golden youth who played an important role in the revolutionary year 1956, the narrators in question were not involved in Czechoslovak political development.

⁶⁰ *MoN*, “Sixty Years After”—interview with Georgios Karanikos, Prague, 7.9.2010.

⁶¹ *MoN*, “Sixty Years After”—interview with Sotirios Pupakis, Ostrava, 11.4.2010.

⁶² The sample of Greek refugees who decided to repatriate to Greece could yield a different picture, however, as many of them belonged to the families of reformists; this deserves further research.

⁶³ *MoN*, “Sixty Years After”—interview with Aristidis Spiropoulos, Krnov, 6.19.2010.

⁶⁴ *MoN*, “Sixty Years After”—interview with Nikolaos Tsametis, Ostrava, 11.4.2010.

⁶⁵ *MoN*, “Sixty Years After”—interview with Athanasios Kesidis, Brno, 12.10.2010.

⁶⁶ *MoN*, “Sixty Years After”—interview with Georgia Zerva, Prague, 5.25.2010.

⁶⁷ *MoN*, “Sixty Years After”—interview with Statis Prusalis, Ostrava, 11.4.2010.

⁶⁸ According to census results from 1991, only 30.9% of the Greeks in Czechia were Czech citizens, 0.3% (10 persons) were Slovak citizens, and 68.8% were categorized as “foreign citizens without citizenship” (Sloboda 2003, 14).

⁶⁹ *MoN*, “Sixty Years After”—interview with Georgios Karanikos, Prague, 7.9.2010.

⁷⁰ *MoN*, “Sixty Years After”—interview with Georgia Zerva, Prague, 5.25.2010.

⁷¹ As the return to Greece seemed to be beyond reach, the number of intermarriages slowly increased. Since the late 1970s and 1980s, intermarriage prevailed, with Greek men mostly marrying Czech women (Botu and Konečný 2005, 367; Tsvios 2010, 136).

⁷² *MoN*, “Sixty Years After”—interview with Aristidis Spiropoulos, Krnov, 6.19.2010.

⁷³ Since the vast majority of them have lived on the territory of today's Czech Republic, they claim attachment to the Czech Republic rather than to Czechoslovakia.

⁷⁴ MoN, "Sixty Years After"—interview with Georgios Karanikos, Prague, 7.9.2010.

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