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Mary Ikoniadou

'We Are and We Remain Greeks'<sup>1</sup>. The Radically Patriotic Discourse in *Pyrros* Magazine, GDR, 1961–1968

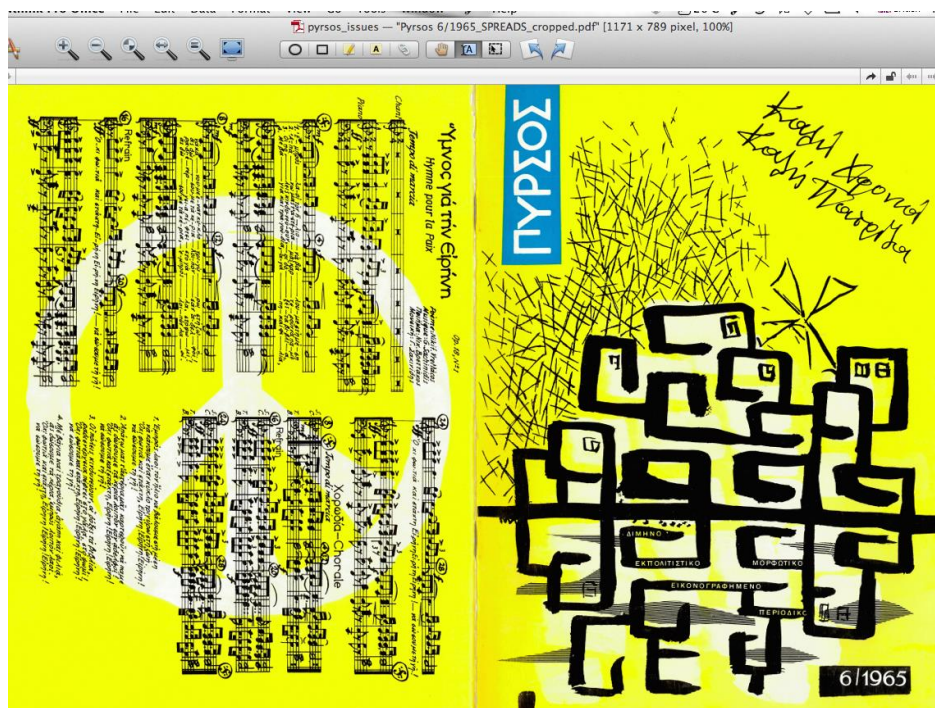


Figure 1. Front and back covers of *Pyrros*, Issue 6, 1965. Lyrics by Nikiforos Vrettakos. Reproduced by permission of the family of Nikiforos Vrettakos.

## Introduction

This chapter explores the ways in which *Pyrros* (Torch) magazine juxtaposed ambiguous and fragmentary images and texts concerning the Aegean landscape in its attempt to reclaim, perform and construct a left patriotic discourse. The study of *Pyrros* is situated amongst the politics, culture and everyday life of the 1960s, and is marked by the intense antagonism between Cold War ideologies. Within this climate, and following Khrushchev's 'peaceful coexistence', the outlawed Communist Party of Greece (*Kommounistiko Komma Elladas*, *KKE*) began to prepare the ground for its legalisation and to propagate the repatriation of the Greek political refugees who had been living in exile across the socialist states of Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union. *Pyrros* was an illustrated magazine, published between 1961 and 1968 in the German Democratic Republic (GDR). It was established by the KKE and was predominantly financed by the International Relations Department of the Socialist Unity Party of Germany (*Sozialistische Einheitspartei Deutschlands*, *SED*)<sup>2</sup>. Its editorial policy and art direction, which for the most part reflected the aims of the KKE, were largely targeted at young refugees in the socialist states. *Pyrros* played an important role in the formation of the patriotic discourse amongst the exiled Communist Left. The significance of the formation and circulation of left-patriotic rhetoric, particularly amongst the youth in the socialist states, has so far been under-researched, a lacuna that this chapter intends to fill.

Throughout this chapter, the term patriotism refers to both a category used by the subject in question and an analytical category. In particular, patriotism is used by *Pyrros* as well as by the Greek political refugees interviewed during this research. For these refugees, patriotism does not necessarily imply allegiance to the Greek state, and neither is it incompatible with proletarian internationalism. In this vein, the term echoes Eric Hobsbawm's (1991) writings on the Left's antifascist patriotism following the end of WWII. Hobsbawm argues that, at that time, the concepts of nation and class were inseparable and that, together with social transformation, they acquired a strong association with the Left. This was further reinforced by the later experience of anti-imperial struggle in colonial countries (1991: 145-148; see also Laxer, 2001: 12). Whereas for the subjects patriotism embodies a clearly defined concept based on first-hand experience, I construe left-wing patriotism as yet another version of nationalism, drawing on the literature discussed in detail in the section 'Radical patriotism and its racisms'.

The future of the nation, as Efi Avdela has shown, was indelibly linked in relevant debates during the Cold War with 'the struggle for youth' (Avdela, 2008). For *Pyrros*, an illustrated magazine which targeted young Greek political refugees in the socialist states of central and Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union, the challenge was further convoluted. The refugees were, in their majority, partisans of the defeated Democratic Army who fought in the Greek Civil War or/and members of the KKE who had to flee Greece in order to avoid persecution. Crucially, the refugees assigned to the GDR (approximately 1,250 in 1949) were almost exclusively children of the so-called 'children grabbing' or 'children-salvation' operations, one of the most controversial issues of the Greek Civil War<sup>3</sup>. The Greek political refugees were not allowed to return to Greece since the Greek government had deprived them of their citizenship rights and had confiscated their properties (Tsekou, 2013: 187 citing Alivizato). Their punishment, which the Greek state had declared by way of 136 resolutions (Vergeti, 1993: 25 citing Soutania, 1985: 69-72), continued officially until 1982, effectively 'closing the road of return to those who had lost their citizenship' (Tsekou, 2013: 188). By the 1960s, those children who had been brought up in the GDR constituted part of the second generation of Greek political refugees in the socialist states<sup>4</sup>.

*Pyrros* was the only magazine amongst the refugees' publications to be addressed directly at youth, and to 'pay particular attention to children' (Editorial note, *Pyrros* 1/1961: 1). Its circulation in the socialist states fluctuated between 5,000-7,000 subscriptions per issue which, according to its editors, equated to 9.6% of the total number of refugees (ASKI, B279 F13/41/21: 2-3). It is important to note that *Pyrros* was also distributed to individuals and organisations of economic migrants and students in Western Europe, Canada and Australia. Its distribution in the capitalist states, which had reached a total of 1,152 issues in 1966, included Greece and Cyprus (ASKI, B279 F13/41/21: 6). As discussed above, *Pyrros*' twofold aim – to prepare its readers in the socialist states for future repatriation to Greece and to propagate the exiled Communist Left's patriotism – was addressed to a diverse readership. Despite this, the magazine sought to act as a unifying platform for the cultural exchanges of its readers whom it located symbolically together (Laclau and Mouffe, 1985), albeit in a relationship of antagonism with the Greek state and its alliance with the United States of America and the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO). In its task, *Pyrros* set out to reclaim the nation – its history and landscape – from the official anti-Communist doctrine of *ethnikofrosyni* (national-mindedness)<sup>5</sup>; to perform

the Greek Left's patriotism (within socialism and proletarian internationalist discourse); and to construct future national imaginaries for its readership.

In this chapter, representations of the Aegean landscape are analysed as prominent examples of *Pyrros*' design, which I argue is the site wherein the magazine's radical patriotic discourse unfolded. In doing so, I particularly engage with the work of Akis Gavriilidis (2007), who has offered the most comprehensive study on the subject of Greek Left patriotism throughout the second half of the twentieth century. In the following pages, I initially provide a brief summary of the magazine's content and examine its form, to argue that *Pyrros* reflected and produced the conditions in which the exiled Communist Left operated in the 1960s. Following a consideration of these conditions, and of the state policy of 'proletarian internationalism' of the GDR, where the magazine was produced, I discuss the Greek Left's patriotism, as defined by a number of scholars, especially Gavriilidis, and examine its relevance to the analysis of the magazine.

### **Fragments and ambiguities**

*Pyrros*' attempts to reclaim, perform and construct the nation emerged in its editorial policy and design, in its form and content. The magazine was distinguished amongst the refugees' publications not only for directly addressing the youth, but also because of its high production value. *Pyrros*' paper quality, use of colour, photography and graphics, along with the breadth of its content, resembled contemporaneous Western periodicals.

As outlined in its clearly defined editorial policy, which followed three demarcated strands, *Pyrros* aimed to: connect its readership to Greece; publicise the lives and professional achievements of the young Greek political refugees in the socialist states; and demonstrate its internationalist stance by featuring 'socialist progress' alongside the emergence of global anti-colonial movements. The magazine's expression of solidarity with liberation movements was very much in accordance with the socialist and, more specifically, GDR foreign and cultural policies of the 1960s. Equally important was *Pyrros*' preoccupation with the Cyprus issue (*Kypriako*), which followed the Greek Left's approach to the matter. Cyprus was the subject of two special editions (3/1964; 5/1966) featuring articles on the country's socio-political, cultural and everyday life of its people. Other special issues were dedicated to the National Resistance, the Greek War of Independence, Education and the

achievements of Greek political refugees. *Pyrros*' national, socialist and internationalist agenda did not prevent the magazine from covering a broad range of subjects. *Pyrros* regularly published literature and historical essays, and articles on architecture, interior design and fashion, food recipes and political cartoons.<sup>6</sup>

*Pyrros*' design, that is the arrangement of texts and images within the pages of the magazine, was constructed out of ambiguous visual images juxtaposed with textual fragments in a dialectical relationship with each other. The ambiguous nature of the images in *Pyrros* reflects their undefined temporality. The role of photographs, drawings and mixed media compositions is constructed in the magazine by the manner in which they are embedded in particular contexts. In other words, visual representations acquire meaning as a result of the texts that surround them – on the same page, across two pages or throughout a whole issue of the magazine. For the most part, these juxtapositions did not suggest a synthesis. Instead, they possibly invited *Pyrros*' readers to work through the contradictions and construct new meanings. In this sense, the design of the magazine echoes Walter Benjamin's imagistic writings on cultural history (Benjamin, 2002) in that it suggests a material and, at the same time, temporal, space in which ambiguous and disconnected past historical moments are juxtaposed with present events and (visual and textual) fragments that 'wish' for the future. It is within this ambiguous and fragmentary space, and as a result of these dialectical relationships, that *Pyrros* manifests its radically patriotic rhetoric. Such a dialectic relationship is evident in its representations of the Aegean landscape and its residents, which this chapter examines.

The breadth of its content, its specific conditions of production and distribution, through the synergies of East German and Greek Communists, and its consumption by diverse readers across Cold War borders, point to the complexity of the magazine. Its study as a cultural product therefore needs to adopt a fluid approach to culture through the identification of, 'complex organisations of people, ideas and objects' (Poole, 1997: 8). Deborah Poole's concept of 'visual economy' (1997), which does not imply a 'sense of shared meanings and symbolic codes that creates communities of people' (ibid), helps situate *Pyrros* within a context of diverse cultural exchanges. Under the fluid approach of visual economy, the analysis of *Pyrros* recognises the significance of the specific political and material conditions of the society in which the magazine was produced and read, in addition to the investment of value, meaning and desire that entered these processes across cultural

and national borders where political ideologies and representations intersected. It is to these varying influences on *Pyrros'* discourse that I shall now turn.

### **Greeks without a home country (*Griechen ohne Heimat*)**

Pyrros appeared at the intersection of the patriotic and internationalist discourses that constituted the core components of the ideology of the exiled Communist Party of Greece (KKE) and the official state rhetoric of the German Democratic Republic (GDR) in the 1960s.

Since the late 1950s more specifically, the strategy of the KKE aligned with the internationalist movement and its call for 'a parliamentary road to socialism' (Karabakakis, 1997) on the one hand, and with the Greek Left and its patriotic discourse, on the other. Represented by EDA (United Democratic Left) – the party that had united all the left-wing, pro-communist and progressive forces since the outlaw of the KKE in 1947 – the Greek Left proved its resilience, despite its violent suppression in the name of *ethnikofrosyni*. *Ethnikofrosyni* was the official state doctrine of the victors of the Civil War that had managed to infiltrate all aspects of social and political culture in Greece. The doctrine combined nationalist ideology with 'Communistophobia', incorporated Western values and constructed an enemy that was both internal and external, analogous to the USA's anti-communist Cold War ideology. Under these conditions, the Greek Left fortified its rhetoric by drawing on the public's anti-Western and anti-American sentiments in Greece, initiated as a result of the Cyprus issue. This marked the beginning of anti-Americanism in the country, according to which, US policy was perceived as the policy of a conqueror and was equated with Nazi occupation. This offered the Greek Left the opportunity to prove its own patriotism (Christofis in this volume; Kornetis, 2013; Lialiouti, 2015; Panourgia, 2009; Papadimitriou, 2006; Papadogiannis, 2015; Papathanassiou, 1994; Stefanidis, 2007; Tziouvas, 2011; Voglis, 2002; 2008).

The formation of a socialist patriotic identity in the GDR -- following the state's de-Nazification -- was constructed around a narrative that promoted 'love for the socialist nation'. According to this rhetoric, 'socialist patriotism' was claimed in the history and the 'struggles of the German people' who were the victims of fascism and its victorious resistance fighters (Kattago, 2001; Rofouzou, 2010: 33, 374; Stergiou, 2001: 9; Stergiou, 2011: 115). Siobhan Kattago (2001) claims that historians in the GDR delved into German

history, emphasising past revolutionary moments and re-appropriating them as defining 'the myth of antifascism' (ibid). This process, the author argues, 'distorted the past unto a one-dimensional "us" (East Germans and Soviets) versus "them" (fascists and monopoly capitalists)' (2001: 82, 84, 87). Furthermore, this antagonism manifested in the GDR's cultural policy as the search for 'the people's' values and cultural productions, in the hope of undermining the unacceptable cultural influences of the (Nazi) past, while offering an alternative to Western, namely American, culture (Bathrick, 1995: 178; Richtoefen, 2009: 37).

The GDR's support for the Greek political refugees and the 'brother' exiled Communist Party of Greece (KKE) was situated within the state's proclaimed 'proletarian internationalism'. Solidarity with anti-colonial liberation struggles and with those (people or parties) opposing imperialism were intimately linked to the GDR's rhetoric of 'socialist patriotism' which included support towards non-German Communists living in the GDR (Bathrick, 1995; Behrends and Poutrus, 2005: 162; 2014: 12). In this context, the GDR's support to the Greek refugees, since their arrival in 1949 included the provision of health care, schooling and quotas for housing and university education. Yet, coupling patriotism with internationalism did not lack contradictions.

The Greek refugees were not recognised as German citizens in the GDR. Instead, as their official identity documents stated, they were 'Greeks without a home country' (*Griechen ohne Heimat*) (Rofouzou, 2010: 172; Stergiou, 2001: 10; Troebst, 2004: 681). As this was also the case in other socialist states where the refugees resided, Stergiou correctly observes that this 'perpetual impermanence that was becoming more permanent every year' would have had a significant psychological effect on the refugees, who had lost their citizenship and were considered by the Greek government to be 'enemies of the state' (Stergiou, 2001: 10). This impermanence, according to Katerina Tsekou, encouraged the Greek refugee children and youth, to vacillate between the host state and the country of origin. They felt different, and as a result did not assimilate to the indigenous population. They resisted cultural alienation, while at the same time held on to nostalgia and hope for repatriation (Tsekou, 2013: 189, 193).

By the 1960s, those youths who had arrived in the socialist states as children, or who had been born there, had a faint, or no recollection of Greece. Several studies (including this one) have outlined the fact that a large number of young political refugees had fully



integrated into the socialist states. They had created families, often with indigenous partners (*Pyrros*, interviews), and, as was the case across the socialist states, they had begun altering the population composition (Karpozilos, 2014: 84). The young refugees that featured in the pages of *Pyrros* and largely comprised its readership had graduated from universities, built academic careers and acquired established positions; they actively participated in economic production, as well as in the social and cultural life of the GDR. Some were growing distant from the political situation of a 'homeland' they had neither fought for nor visited (Rofouzou, 2010: 173; Stergiou, 2001: 14). Nevertheless, Rofouzou's study shows that these Greek children were brought up as Greeks and not as Greek-Germans and that, in their majority, they anticipated their repatriation to Greece (Rofouzou, 2010: 172, 173)<sup>7</sup>. This was in line with the patriotic discourse of the KKE, which I will now proceed to analyse in detail.

### **Radical patriotism and its racisms**

The extensive deployment of nationalist discourses by the Greek Left in the aftermath of the Civil War, according to several scholars, pivoted around the idea of the inherently resistant character of the Greek nation, which has struggled relentlessly against foreign oppression. Historian Antonis Liakos has identified that this 'popular reading of history', in which 'the Greek people were the victims of foreign intervention', was encouraged by 'the Marxist and anti-imperialist spirit of the time' (Liakos, 2001: 41). Its representation, according to historian Nikos Papadogiannis, 'revolved around the archetype of the lower class militant who struggled against the "exploitation" or "enslavement" (sklavias) of Greece' (Papadogiannis, 2015: 34). This patriotic narrative, according to historian Polymeris Voglis, had to be produced in the aftermath of the Civil War as a unifying discourse that did not exclude anyone, in order to legitimise the Greek Left against accusations of 'Slavocommunist treason' (Voglis, 2008: 64).

The identification of the 1821 War of Independence against the Ottoman Empire to the Greek Resistance against the Tripartite Occupation in the 1940s, and to left-wing mass mobilisation in the 1960s, illustrates the Greek Left's patriotic discourse at the time. Most significantly, these studies outline the requisite of the narrative according to which 'the Greek people', fought 'united'. The Left's systematic effort to reclaim the nation and

promote its version of patriotism occurred in Greece as well as across the whole of the Greek diaspora, both in the socialist states where the refugees resided and among Greek workers in West Germany (Papadogiannis, 2014). Given these claims, the 'inherent resistant nature of the Greek people', according to left-wing patriotism, reflected 'historical analogies' (Liakos, 2001: 41) and established connections and continuities.

The term radical patriotism, according to Akis Gavriilidis, refers to a strand of nationalism responsible for the formation of a new subjectivity for the Greek Left in the 1960s, in which national issues were promoted above all others, including class struggle (2007: 135). Within this discourse, the Greek Left was forced to 'forget the armed struggle' and redefine its role as patriotic, and so it began referring to the Resistance against the Occupation of Greece during the 1940s as 'National Resistance' (101). This reading of history was adopted as an ideological schema that proposed to handle the memory and, retrospectively, to suture the trauma of the loss of the Civil War. Gavriilidis asserts that, since the Greek Left was forming a national identity against foreign oppressors, such as the Nazis in the 1940s and the US and NATO imperialists in the 1960s, it was easier to construct and proclaim its adoration for the nation based on its 'inherently resistant' character (131).

An intrinsic aspect of the Greek Left's radical patriotism, according to Gavriilidis, is its differentialist character. Initially conceived by French philosopher Pierre-André Taguieff (2001), differentialist racism describes a 'new' – as opposed to biological – form of racism that justifies exclusion and the fear of mixing between people of different cultural backgrounds<sup>8</sup>. Taguieff argues that differentialist logic implies – often subtly – the superiority of a group's own culture. The French philosopher Étienne Balibar, who has subsequently employed the term, re-asserts the 'harmfulness' of abolishing frontiers and mixing lifestyles, cultures, races and traditions (Balibar, 1991: 21), and emphasises differentialist racism's importance to continuity. Drawing on Balibar, Gavriilidis elaborates further on the Greek Left's expressions of cultural and historical continuity which, according to the author, manifested in the cultural productions of Elytis, Ritsos and Theodorakis in the 1960s. This 'connection between history and aesthetics', Liakos observes, 'was considered continuous and living in the language, the popular artefacts and the "spirit" of the people, beyond Western influences' (Liakos, 2008: 216). The Greek Left's 1960s version of differentialist racism, according to Gavriilidis, its obsession with culture, nature, and the fear

of, as well as resistance to, assimilation by other cultures, drew on the so-called Thirties Generation.

The Thirties Generation was (mainly) a literary movement of young bourgeois intellectuals who, traumatised by the Asian Minor catastrophe (Turkish War of Independence), and as a reaction to the sociopolitical landscape in Greece, set out to redefine Greek identity in the 1930s (Tziovas, 2002). Dimitris Tziovas claims that the Thirties Generation wanted to ensure a fruitful and equal dialogue with Europe that would create the conditions to allow Greek culture to enter the international terrain as equal, not simply as a descendant of Hellenism (Tziovas, 2002). For this reason, they proposed a scheme founded on the return to 'authentic Greek traditions', identification with 'common people', and the promotion of the mystical and aestheticised Aegean landscape. Tziovas' extensive research reveals that, in the discourse of the Thirties Generation, the search for identity, nationality and escape that took place in the Aegean were about collective psychology, national imaginary, and where the landscape (*topos*) was transformed into a cultural ideology (Tziovas, 2011: 395-396); according to Leontis, a form of 'aesthetic nationalism' (Leontis, 1995: 84).

The Greek Left in the 1960s, Gavriilidis asserts, turned to the ideology and aesthetics of 'Greekness' proposed by the Thirties Generation in order to construct a unifying national discourse against 'other' cultures. He claims that, for the Greek Left, culture functioned as nature, locking individuals and groups a priori into a genealogy (22). The Left's belief in the continuity of the Greek nation nourished its determination to preserve the nation's 'purity', evident in the language, customs and mores of the 'common people'. For the Left, according to Gavriilidis, 'the people' (*laos*) became an 'anthropomorphic subject of unified thoughts, statements and acts' (38), compressed to signify a concept 'in-between the nation and the working class' (49)<sup>9</sup>. In this context, the Greek cultural myth of origins (continuity), 'the common people' and the aestheticisation of the Aegean landscape replicated the 'fuelled with megalomania' and 'supremacy' scheme of the Thirties Generation. The triptych 'nation, soil and culture' which, as the author claims, manifested in the cultural productions and discourses of the Greek Left in the 1960s, clearly signifies its fear of assimilation and cross-fertilisation with other cultures. I shall now examine whether such conceptualisations of 'radical patriotism' and 'differentialist racism' apply to the representations of the Aegean in *Pyrros* magazine.

### **The eternal Aegean landscape**

Representations of the Aegean landscape and its people appear within most issues of *Pyrros* magazine. Often, the Aegean is portrayed devoid of people, 'bathed' in natural bright sunlight. Its 'harmony, light, and moderation' (Yalouri, 2001: 148) is presented in *Pyrros* through the azure-coloured sea, light and picturesque backstreets, island ports, quintessential houses and windmills. The eternal Aegean landscape is frequently depicted in bright dynamic compositions (Figure 1), or is printed as full-colour large photographs (Figure 2), on the cover of the magazine. These images, alongside *Pyrros*' prominent logo-type, designed to look like ancient Greek script, further fixed its name (Torch), and function, as a desired sign of national identity. In this sense, all of *Pyrros*' covers vindicate Gavriilidis' claim that the Greek Left in the 1960s firmly believed in the cultural continuity the nation (25). This 'monumentalisation of the landscape', in *Pyrros* produces a discourse of continuity 'in existence since the ancient times' (Carabott et al, 2015: 5).

*Pyrros*' portrayal of the quintessential Aegean architecture (the whitewashed houses, ports and windmills), presented as an 'interdependent part of the Greek landscape and geography' (Leontis, 1995: 125), further vindicates Gavriilidis' differentialist racist rhetoric. Gavriilidis claims that this glorification of culture alongside nature – in which both are particularly Greek – is attributed to an 'exclusive' connection with the eternal values of Hellenism (26, 31), which followed the aesthetic/ideological programme of the Thirties Generation. Hence, according to the author, such manifestations express *Pyrros*' belief in the superiority of the Greek race, over other cultures. In the pages of the magazine however, examples of Aegean architecture that embody 'exclusively Hellenic values' are, more-often-than-not, juxtaposed with examples of architecture in the socialist states, such as the construction of Stalin Allee in Berlin and the new housing provisions in Warsaw and the Soviet Union. *Pyrros*' 'celebration' of these architectural achievements in socialism complexify its differentially racist rhetoric. In this context, the representations of architecture in the Aegean, despite retaining their differentialist racist attributes by laying a claim on continuity, also signify the magazine's strategy of dialectically juxtaposing the Hellenic past with the socialist present, in order to form a new articulation for the future. It is evident that the emerging discourse proposes the repatriation of the exiled Greek Left –

equipped with its Hellenic heritage and socialist upbringing -- as ideally placed to drive the future progress of Greece.

### The Aegean 'people'

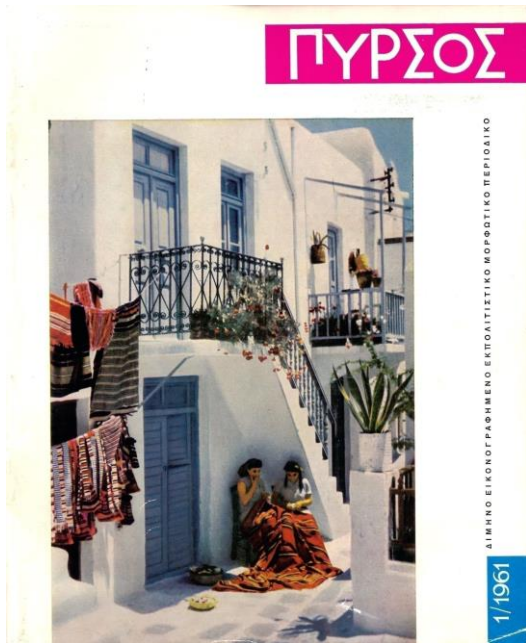


Figure 2. Front cover of *Pirsos*, Issue 1, 1961.

*Pirsos*' radical patriotic rhetoric, as exemplified in its representations of the Aegean, is further elaborated in the magazine's portrayal of its 'people'. Here, the Aegean is no longer a symbol of eternal beauty. Instead, it becomes the backdrop to the lives of poor, but hard-working, inhabitants who are frequently presented as 'abandoned by the state', or 'left behind by the effects of economic migration'. The Aegean 'people' featured in *Pirsos* since its very first issue (Figure 1). On the photograph of its first cover, *Pirsos* depicts two young women protecting themselves from bright sunlight under the shadow of a quintessential Aegean balcony. The young women are working on traditional rugs (*koureloudes*) and, as other Penelopes, they seem to be stood still in time, waiting for their destiny to play out. Unlike Penelope, however, their workload is not merely an excuse for passing the time, but hangs heavy on a clothesline next to them.

The men and women depicted in *Pyrros* work as farmers, beekeepers, fishermen and sponge divers; they make a living in what the magazine claims are 'difficult and backward working conditions'. *Pyrros* declares that the purpose of these portrayals is to introduce its readership to 'the Greek people', to 'bring them closer to Greece'. Notably, the element of gender that comprises 'the Greek people' should not be underestimated in these representations. However, it can be assumed that, within these representations, *Pyrros* equates the 'Greek people' with the lower social strata (thereby vindicating Gavriilidis), as a concept that lies in between the nation and the working class. Most significantly, 'the people' are positioned in antagonism to the Greek state.

The Greek people featured in *Pyrros*, are often referred to as 'our people'. In one of its articles (Figure 3), which calls for Amnesty (for the political prisoners of the Greek Civil War) and for the release of the 'Acropolis hero' (sic), Manolis Glezos<sup>10</sup>, we read:

'Yet our people (λαός), the tortured but unenslaved, patriots and freedom-lovers, those who prioritised the interest of the homeland over their own, those who chose death over kneeling in front of the occupier, cannot tolerate the imprisonment of the Glory of Greece (Manolis Glezos), to be abused and vilified by those who during the whole of Greece's struggle against the fascist dragon, called anyone who carried guns against Germans, a traitor' (*Pyrros* 1/1961: 4-5).

Towards the end of the article, *Pyrros* focuses on the 'sentimental and fighting spirit' of an eighty-year-old woman who, despite the Greek state's repression, had signed a petition for the release of Glezos. The woman claims that her act was a small contribution 'towards the foundations of peace and love across the world' (ibid). While this passage embraces a humanist and internationalist discourse, a leitmotiv throughout the article – and in *Pyrros* on the whole – it also vindicates Gavriilidis' arguments: 'our people' are 'inherently resistant' and have remained 'unenslaved'. Gavriilidis notes that 'our people' functions as an ambiguous proclamation, since it both excludes and includes the speaker (38). Yet, the exclusion of the speaker in *Pyrros* also signifies a distance. This is frequently employed in the magazine to refer to those over there, in Greece. A possible interpretation is that 'our people' are those that 'we' – the refugees in the socialist states – need to support and even liberate, especially upon repatriation. In fact, the denouncement of what is inflicted upon

'the people' is frequently found in *Pyrros*' reports of liberation struggles around the world (including Cyprus). This position also indicates the GDR's influence on the magazine. In the 1960s, the proclamation of 'internationalist solidarity' with 'the people' – indicating 'the oppressed' – was a (broader) socialist rhetoric, particularly prominent in the GDR. Ultimately, *Pyrros* declares solidarity, while simultaneously constructing a (national) 'us' against a (foreign) 'them' (Kattago, 2001). As Gavriilidis writes, *Pyrros* formulates a unifying discourse by which to counterbalance class struggle.

*Pyrros*' representations of the Aegean people include tourists as well as the rich and famous. For the most part, the magazine reflects a broader discourse in the 1960s, in search of the 'lost naturalness and innocence of the Greek landscape' (Tziovas, 2011: 397). In *Pyrros*, these grievances are visually and textually represented as the 'exploitation of the azure Greek islands', which are 'sold to the various Onassis of the world', or, 'host Niarchos' parties' (1965/6: 28-29)<sup>11</sup>. Meanwhile, as one of the articles suggests, the poor inhabitants of the Aegean were excluded from accessing the sea as a place for leisure. Even though *Pyrros*' representation of the Aegean echoes the Thirties Generation's search for authenticity, its aim, moreover, was to react against the influx of upper-class tourists and the Greek state's commodification of space (2011); in short, it aimed to counter attack and 'double negate' the Greek state.

Still, the proclaimed internationalist intentions of the magazine expressed no concern over the condition of the workers and fishermen – 'the people' -- residing in Ismir, Ayvalik or elsewhere along the Turkish coast of the Aegean. The magazine's references to the Turkish population are almost exclusively related to the Cyprus issue. In *Pyrros*' reports, those Turkish-Cypriot farmers and workers who had to abandon their houses and land suffered equally to the Greek-Cypriots, since they were all victims of British and US imperialist and divisive strategies (5/1966; 4/1964; 5/1964). Gavriilidis claims that the Greek Left expressed its territorialisation in the 1960s as a result of its belief in the 'purity' of the nation, which manifested in its fear of assimilation by 'others' that it ended up excluding (30). It is worth noting that the exiled Communist Party of Greece (KKE) feared political isolation in Greece, stemming from its 'support for Macedonian separatism in the interwar years'<sup>12</sup> (Stefanidis, 2007:56), as this would further endanger its attempt to reclaim the nation from *ethnikofrosyni* and its repatriation to Greece. Nevertheless, this significant silence in the absence of the Turkish from the coastline of the Aegean implies that the radical patriotic

connotations of the representations of the Aegean in *Pyrsos* acquired a differentialist racist character. In sum, according to *Pyrsos*, the Aegean was quintessentially a Greek landscape.

### Nostalgia for the future in the Aegean



Figure 3. Pages 4-5 in *Pyrsos*, Issue 1, 1961. Poem by Kostis Palamas, reproduced by permission of the Secretariat of Kostis Palamas Foundation.

The representations of the Aegean landscape published in *Pyrsos* were also reflective of nostalgia, a sentiment that was as much constructed by the magazine as desired by its readers. Beyond their serenity and their 'particularly' Greek nature (warmth and sunlight), their culture (architecture) and their traditional (albeit underdeveloped) representations, these images brought to mind Greece's past, reflected its contemporaneous present, and imagined its future. The women who worked on their embroidery, protected from the sun under the balcony, in the previous analysis, and the old woman who loads a sack onto the back of a donkey against a typically Aegean landscape in Figure 2 are affirmations of such concurrent temporalities. It can be argued that these ambiguous representations invited contemplation and excited the imagination of *Pyrsos*' readers as well as constructed their desire to be transported there, to take their place in the landscape. In one such example, the caption underneath a photograph of two older women washing a pile of rugs in the sea, shifts the attention from the depiction of backwardness and fixes the meaning of the image to that of nostalgia for the future. It asks, 'Is this our mother washing the rugs while



awaiting our return?' (6/1966). For *Pyrros*' readers, these were 'the landscapes of return, filled with expectations' for the future (Bender, 2001: 81); in other words, expectations of 'things being in place' (ibid). According to Gavriilidis, these expressions of nostalgia were the Greek left's attempts to revive (relive) the past, before the loss of the Greek Civil War or, put differently, to return to a time before the trauma, with an opportunity to correct it retrospectively.

As discussed in this chapter, the meaning of *Pyrros*' representation of the Aegean is rendered visible, or radically altered, by its juxtaposition with other elements in the magazine. It is through the assemblages of different fragments that new formations appear and radical patriotic meanings arise.

My Aegean, I would even burn those poor beloved papers,  
[...] in the cauldron of the steamship that would bring me earlier to you.<sup>13</sup>

For example, the poem 'Nostalgia for the Aegean' (see extract above) is juxtaposed on the same page of the magazine with two equally short poems entitled 'Generations of Communism' and 'Roots and Wings' (5/1963: 15). Whereas the poems' expressions of nostalgia, and national and socialist identity, are evident in their titles, it is also pertinent to remark on the effect of their juxtaposition of nostalgia (for Greece) with (the experience of) socialism. It is through this juxtaposition that *Pyrros*' unifying discourse arises. The magazine's socialist patriotic rhetoric addresses, and therefore attempts to unify, its older and younger readers. It evokes, while at the same time instils, the desire for repatriation, by associating nostalgia with the Aegean landscape. In doing so, it possibly states that the exiled Communist Greek Left regards the Aegean as Greek, despite the accusations of *ethnikofrosyni* that Communism was mutually exclusive with loyalty to the Greek nation.

## Exile and hope in the Aegean



**Figure 4.** Front and back covers of *Pirsos*, Issue 6, 1967. Photograph of the Aegean island (left) by Erich and Katja Arendt, reproduced by permission of Rimbaud Verlag. Poem by Fotis Aggoules, reproduced by permission of Triantafyllos Mylonas.

*Pirsos* does not shy away from depicting the other Aegean; that is, a site of exile islands and political prisoners. From its launch until the end of its circulation in 1968, the magazine fiercely accused the Greek state of injustices inflicted upon those that fought for the 'country's independence', during the 'National Resistance'. *Pirsos* published reports from the exile islands as well as prisoners' memoirs, poetry and artworks. It called for amnesty, launched petitions addressing the Greek diaspora within and outside the socialist states and urged the international community to support its demands, especially following the establishment of the Colonels' dictatorship in 1967. As Voglis writes, 'Since the second half of the 1940s, the Greek state had subscribed to the theory "of the permanent civil war" in which the country had become 'an archipelago of punishment', with only a short 'liberal intermission' between 1964 and 1965, before returning to a 'new campaign of terror, arrests, prosecution, torture and imprisonment of its leftist political opponents' (2002: 224). During these years, hundreds of thousands of 'political subjects' 'were deported and tortured' on exile islands in the Aegean before either signing a loyalty certificate 'or dying'

(Panourgia, 2010: 207; Voglis, 2002: 224). The representation of the Aegean as a site for the persecution of the Greek Left in *Pyrros* carries a number of radical patriotic connotations.

In the pages of the magazine, this 'other Aegean' is (re)produced in poems that compare its islands to 'graves in the middle of the sea' (Pieridis, 6/1961: 12-13). The notorious exile prison island of Akronafplia is depicted in bold black strokes, behind prison bars (2/1965: 19-20). In those photographs of the Aegean that are juxtaposed with texts on injustices and the imprisonment of the Left, the weather changes dramatically from its usual bright and warm sunshine, to windy conditions and high waves (6/1961: 12-13). The exile island of Gioura hides behind a barren rocky seascape (4/1967: 8-9) while during the military junta, its high security prisons are shown in aerial photographs, taken illegally by a German photographer (6/1967: 2-7). These depictions of the Aegean in part refute Gavriilidis' argument, according to which the Greek Left's nostalgia was based on an image of 'another Greece', of 'an imaginary Greece' that had all the characteristics of 'a good mother'. This 'other Greece', according to the author, was unlike that which had imprisoned and suppressed them, as it was 'herself' a victim of 'foreign powers' (82-83). *Pyrros* recognised and antagonised its 'bad mother', but juxtaposed it with the imaginary, young, beautiful woman who awaited her loved ones to return (Figure 2).

Since the establishment of the military junta (1967), *Pyrros*' representations of the 'eternal' and 'metaphysical' Aegean as symbols of the inherently resistant character of the Greek Left, united with other oppositional voices, democratic as well as liberal, within and outside the socialist states. On the cover of the last issue of 1967, a graphic composition of prison bars, carrying the wish for a free and democratic Greece in the following year, is juxtaposed with a black and white photograph depicting the vastness and beauty of the Aegean landscape (Figure 4). The Aegean's calmness is however disturbed by the poem that appears underneath it. Written by the folklore poet Fotis Aggoules, the text describes an island that calls the poet closer, only to remind him of his broken wings. In the second verse, the poet descends into a valley of lilies and lemon flowers, but ends up being chased by dogs and has his heart torn apart.

The island that invites but causes pain illustrates a familiar, albeit dramatic, representation of the repression and sense of exclusion of the Greek Left, addressed to those readers who were already familiar – and possibly identified – with the tragic life of its poet. Fotis Aggoules was a Communist partisan who was imprisoned and tortured in the

1940s. As Papadogiannis (2015) has found out, Aggoules was first tortured by the British colonial authorities in Egypt and then by the Greek anti-Communist government in the aftermath of WWII (2015: 129). It is noteworthy that at the time of the Colonels' dictatorship, *Pyrros* continued to turn to the Aegean in search of a symbol to represent national struggle. Its 1967 front and back covers portrayed the continuous resistant nature of the Greek Left and its martyred role in the country's history, further validating its radical patriotic discourse.

Significantly, the composition of the cover of the magazine, typical of *Pyrros*' layouts, proposes a suture of fragments belonging to different historical times. It juxtaposes folklore – the cultural productions of 'the people' – in Aggoules' poem; the ambiguous, in its temporality nostalgic image of the beauty of the Aegean; and modernity, in the dynamic colourful graphic composition. In *Pyrros*' juxtapositions, the past does not precede but rather comes to activate the present. Together, they create an image that carries a 'dream' for the future (Benjamin, 2002). They bring to mind Melpo Axioti's novel, entitled 'My house'. In the novel, the refugee author describes the 'welding together' of her nostalgia for her birthplace on the Aegean island of Mykonos with her contemporaneous reality in the socialist states, represented by the technocratic plans of her protagonist, who is a mechanic. It is this welding of the fragmented in exile psyche of the author that allows her to dream of her repatriation (1957).<sup>14</sup>

Altogether, in light of the Greek Left's history of suppression and exclusion from the country's national body, the design of the 1967 cover – an image composed by Greek political refugees in the GDR during Greece's military dictatorship and just a month prior to the split of the KKE (1968) – expresses all these contradictions. Here, *Pyrros* brings together past and present, joy and pain, despair and hope, imprisonment and freedom. In the final analysis, *Pyrros* does not stir away from the Greek Left's radically patriotic discourse in which the struggle is national and its essence, inherently resistant. However, it does so by the juxtaposition of historical fragments, 'in a rearticulation of past and present (Brown, 2001: 172). In this space, the exiled Communist Left has a role to play. The open Aegean horizon can be read as generously offering that hope.

## Readership and reception

*Pyrros*' diverse readers varied in their reception of the magazine's representations of Greekness. Its target readership – young political refugees in the socialist states who had no direct experience of Greek landscapes – often employed its representations of the Aegean landscape as a visual aid; as illustrations to narratives they encountered or imagined. For them, the Aegean was a learned – rather than lived – memory. Greek landscapes, on the whole, generated knowledge of the Greek 'topos' for the youth; they functioned as required lessons in topography and, as Artemis Leontis (1995) shows, communicated the process of 'mapping the homeland'. The role of these representations of 'the homeland' – whether as fabricated memories or as genuine desires – did not belong to the past, but actively shaped and influenced the present and the conditions of exile in the 'host' socialist states in which they were viewed and shared (Poole, 1997). Therefore, these representations offered the magazine's young readers a 'temporal plane' in which to project their desires and construct their collective imaginary. In other words, the youth legitimised their identity by means of memories, elaborating a (national) narrative (Antze and Lambek, 1996: xxiii). Similar to memory operation, these juxtapositions – however intentional – produced a new image out of the coming together of fragments of the past, the present and the imagined future (their wish for repatriation). They impacted on the formation of the (young) refugees' lives and their understanding of the Greek Left's past, present and future.

For the majority of the older (first) generation of refugees, however, these entanglements of images and texts of the Aegean were not just imposed by *Pyrros* but were also 'valued' and 'desired' (Poole, 1997), at least by those whose correspondence with the magazine has been preserved. Several such letters request 'more colourful images of Greek landscapes', 'from our homeland'. The refugees congratulate the magazine on its 'national', and 'wonderfully Greek' (*ellinikotato*), colour (ASKI, 1961, B279 F13/41/14), which 'brought some light' to the 'inadequately' lit central and northern Europe (ASKI, B254 F131670). Their letters expressed the importance of accessing 'a corner of the homeland' (ASKI, B254 F131670) and of being reminded of Greece and the places in which they were raised, together with the customs and mores of the country (ASKI, 1961, B279 F13/41/14).

Characteristically, a refugee in Czechoslovakia proclaimed her gratitude for the first cover of *Pyrros* (Figure 2), which 'transported her in time and space' and reminded her of her older sister and her friends who worked on their embroidery during the hot summer

months (ASKI, B279 F13/41/14). Subsequently, it emerged that, for the older generation of refugees, these representations were more than mere attempts to forget or correct a trauma (Gavriilidis, 2007), or at least this was not exclusively their impact. They were also about turning back the time to their youth, to idealised projections of their lost (to war) youth, and possibly allowed them to access a space from which they had been excluded. Beyond aestheticised nationalist representations, the Aegean, and other Greek landscapes featured in *Pyrrosos*, were also physical places that had been viewed, visited or lived in by the magazine's readers in the past; they were embodied experiences. Their photographic translation in the magazine signified their historical past, to use Elizabeth Edwards' words, and carried 'a certain formation of affective memory' (Edwards, 1999: 226).

It is noteworthy that critical letters, as well as positive, towards the magazine are available, including an array of political refugees' responses to *Pyrrosos*' radical patriotic rhetoric. Foula Hatzidaki's letter to the magazine is a case in point.<sup>15</sup> In (an invited) criticism to the launch issue (1/1961), this respected author and member of the Communist Party of Greece (KKE) responded with fierce criticism. In her view, the magazine's abundant 'national colour' and (over)use of folklore were unacceptable. In her letter 'she protests as a communist and as a simple person', for what she considered a 'political mistake'. Instead of 'so much national colour and tradition', she suggested that *Pyrrosos* featured the proletariat, which was also part of 'the people' (λαός). For Hatzidaki, *Pyrrosos* was out of touch with reality and current events; it was 'too folklore' and should instead have been engaging with the international climate and the 'burning' issues of the times (ASKI, 1961, B251 F13/13/59). As her letter proves, refugees' reactions to the magazine's radical patriotic rhetoric varied, especially with regard to the ways in which they represented class divisions in Greece. Ultimately, however, *Pyrrosos*' aim was to construct a collective identity for all of its readers; a 'we' that unified them in their 'desire' for repatriation to Greece.

### **Concluding remarks**

The analysis of *Pyrrosos*' representations of the Aegean landscape in this chapter contributes to scholarship on the Greek Left's efforts to reclaim the Greek nation in the 1960s, and clearly demonstrates that it unfolded not only in Greece but also in the Greek diaspora. It argues that *Pyrrosos*' design of dialectically juxtaposed ambiguous and fragmentary images

and texts revolved around the demand for repatriation of the exiled Greek Communists to their countries of origin. It shows that this was in line with the GDR's ideology of socialist internationalism, which did not aim at eliminating national identities. In this respect, Greek political refugees in East Germany – and in socialist states on the whole – were expected to retain a Greek national identity. The magazine's conditions of production, circulation and reception, evaluated through the fluid concept of visual economy, identify its context of complex cultural exchanges.

The chapter demonstrates that *Pyrros* reproduced the radical patriotism of the Greek Left based on the notion that the Greek 'people' – a concept resting between the nation and the working class – were victims of foreign oppression who have been inherently resistant. However, despite *Pyrros'* aim to suture patriotism with internationalism (as the analysis drawing on the work of Gavriilidis outlines), the magazine reproduced an element of differentialist racism, since it neglected the existence of other 'national cultures'. Although such discourse was complex and far from uncontested by the exiled Greek Communists, it was largely desired by *Pyrros'* readers, who encouraged its efforts to propagate Left patriotism and prepare the ground for repatriation.

## Notes:

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1. Extract from Dimitris Hatzis' speech during the refugees' festival in Bulgaria. According to *Pyrros'* report, Hatzis distinguished the Greek political refugees as not a "part cut-off and isolated from Greece" but as "a part of Greece itself, the Greece that lives and works and creates abroad" (*Pyrros*, issue 2, 1967:25).
2. Unlike all other magazines produced at the same publishing house, *Pyrros* did not carry any advertisements. Its costly production relied on 25% of its revenue (subscription sales), and funding provided by the SED.
3. Figures regarding the refugees vary, according to the sources. The total number of adult refugees was approximately 77,000. Rofouzou (2010) writes that the number of refugee children who arrived in the GDR was approximately 1,000. These children were between the ages of six and ten and were accompanied by a few young adults between the ages of fifteen and twenty, as well as some older women and teachers (Rofouzou, 2010: 165).
4. For sources on the children refugees of the Greek Civil War, see Boeschoten, 2000; Boeschoten and Danforth, 2012; Danforth, 2003; Lagani and Mpontila, 2012; Troebst, 2004; Vassiloudi and Theodorou, 2012; Vervenioti, 2002; Voutira and Brouskou, 2000.
5. For more detail on *ethnikofrosyni*, please see Nikos Christofis' chapter in this volume.
6. The breadth of content material in *Pyrros* magazine reflects the breadth of its contributors, who were often its own readers, together with intellectuals and renowned authors such as Dimitris Hatzis, Elli Alexiou and Melpo Axioti. It also reflects the diversity of its readership.
7. It is worth noting that young scientists in the GDR formed an association (*Verein der Griechischen Wissenschaftler*), with the aim of developing their Greek language skills in anticipation of their repatriation (Rofouzou, 2010: 173).
8. The 'newness' of the concept has been challenged by some scholars. Robert Miles (Miles, 1993: 40-41), for example, claims that even the 'old' racisms included a 'reference to the cultural or national character and to uniqueness' (Wodak and Reisigl, 1999: 181).
9. It should be noted that Gavriilidis largely constructs his argument on the Greek Left's differentialist racism in response to the work of Marxist historian Nikos Svoronos (2004, initially written in the 1960s according to historian Spiros Asdrachas). Gavriilidis accuses Svoronos for the formation of a historiographical schema that professes national unity through continuity of the Greek language, customs and mores of 'the people', with a fear of assimilation by 'other' national groups. However, Svoronos (2004), who indeed outlines the cultural and historical continuity of Hellenism and its 'ability to assimilate and incorporate foreign elements', not only avoids, but also highlights the different ways that class consciousness impacted on the formation of the Greek national consciousness and nation-building in the 18th century. As historian Spiros Asdrachas' introduction assesses (2004), the Marxist historian proposes that the 'resistant character' of Hellenism was not homogeneous but conflicting, since it was embraced by different economic institutional and intellectual environments (2004: 16).
10. Manolis Glezos, who in 1941 became the symbol of the resistance because he hauled down the swastika flag from the Acropolis (Vogliis, 2002: 202), was also an MP with EDA (United Democratic Left) and the editor-in-chief of its newspaper, *Avgi*. His persecution and subsequent imprisonment under the accusation of espionage from 1958 until 1962 – part of the Greek state's 'anti-leftist campaign' – mobilised Greece and 'a worldwide movement of



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leftist solidarity' (Stefanidis, 2007: 219).

11. 11. The Onassis and Niarchos families are two of Greece's multibillionaire shipping tycoons.
12. 12. The KKE had advocated Macedonian separatism between 1924 and 1935 in particular.
13. Extract from the poem *Nostalgia for the Aegean* by Anonymous, *Pyrros* 5/1963:15. Author's translation.
14. I would like to thank Artemis Leontis for reminding me of the novel's similarities to my interest in the juxtapositions in *Pyrros*.
15. 15. Foula Xatzidaki (1905–1984) was a respected author and member of the Enlightenment Committee of the Communist Party of Greece. She was initially a member of the Committee's 'department for literary publications' (1951–1953), and then of its 'Literary Circle' (1953–1965). She published – as a co-author with Elli Alexiou – through the refugees' publishing mechanism in the socialist states. She was married to Miltiadis Porfurogenis and lived in Budapest.

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