

Preface

Child of a working class family, I was born in late 1950s. Less than a year before my birth, my family had to move to Athens, the capital of Greece, where ever since 1950 dozens of thousands of inner immigrants have been moving in. Abandoning their home villages for a better life, all these people had to sort out the new urban setting with limited material resources and social capital. So did my family; they had to adjust themselves into an unfamiliar social environment whose promise for upward mobility required much emotional energy and human cost. During my childhood I was occasionally witnessing quarrels between my parents and my ten years eldest brother over family issues mainly related to the coping with the harsh conditions of our everyday life. What was striking me, or what I currently think it was striking me, in those quarrels, particularly whenever career and life chances were involved, was my brother addressing fervently my father using the biblical saying *the sins of the fathers visit upon their children*. Upon this utterance I remember my father remaining speechless, with his facial expression revealing embarrassment and a hidden desperation and then suddenly every discussion was over. For many years I was at odds with these repeated episodes because I couldn't understand or imagine what the sins of my beloved father might be, and how was it ever possible for that hard working and honest man to commit any sin at all. Insinuations and silence on this didn't help much until my adolescence where I started to realize the meaning of the words 'occupation', 'resistance', 'resistance fighter', and 'exile' which were mentioned by both my parents rarely in the house. As soon as I realized that the meaning of those words was somehow about my father, I came to feel that there was actually no puzzle of a wrongdoing, no sin committed. On the contrary, although he was a resistance fighter he was sent to a detention camp shortly after the liberation from the Axis. While I was growing up, through my parental identifications and despite the fact that my father was hardly speaking about his past political doings and about politics in general, I found it unjust; in time, around this sense of injustice I discovered myself to almost naturally belonging to the community of the Greek Left, whatever the vagueness of the word might be. Nonetheless, the embarrassment at his face and the silence related to that biblical saying, which sounded like a verdict, were a bit of an unsettled reminder in my mind, a bit of a mystery.

At his 60s, when I was already a young man, he was ready to become somewhat more talkative about his experiences during the 1940s. Among others, I recall two things: first, he was emphatically saying that he 'did no harm to anyone' while in the resistance; second, he was describing the civil war as a big mistake and a drama. Then it didn't escape my notice that although he did not take part in the civil war in any conceivable way he was sharing the responsibility for this 'big mistake'. He was feeling guilty and humiliated and therefore he kept silent most of the time. Though he committed no wrongdoing he was feeling guilty because he identified himself with the defeated Left as a whole, as a declined imaginary community. The mystery was almost solved.

My father's state of mind reflected the mentality of an entire generation; the generation of the civil war whose experiences and memories were so much complicated, emotionally charged, and negatively marked that were condemned into silence, embarrassment and fear. Those experiences and memories spill over the next generation precisely because the Greek civil war was not just a personal drama for all those who took active part in it but a cultural trauma which was meant to affect the entire social body and the body polity for several decades. In this paper I

attempt to substantiate this claim by placing the war in its socio-historical and cultural setting. This is done by using and interpreting evidence from past historical, sociological and ethnographic research, on the one hand, and original qualitative interviews conducted for the purpose of this paper, on the other¹⁰⁵.

Historical context

The Greek civil war was Europe's bloodiest military conflict between 1945 and the collapse of Yugoslavia in 1992-5; besides, as a defining moment of the Cold War¹⁰⁶, it has been the most prolonged and traumatic experience of Greece since its establishment as a nation-state in 1830's. As every other civil war, it sprang out of a host of socio-historical and political cultural roots. Most of them are located in the confrontations of the interwar period, the most important of which are (1) the national schism between republicans and royalists, (2) the newcomers who fled the lands of Asia Minor vs autochthones, and (3) the Metaxas' dictatorship (1936) and the anticommunist legislation. To be sure, these divisions were much less intense than the intersecting cleavages which fueled the Spanish civil war (regional/ethnic differences, Catholics versus anticlerical groups, class conflicts). What is more, the Finnish civil war had a much more solid class basis thanks to the strong organizational unity of the workers' movement in Finland so that it can be seen as perhaps Europe's most clear-cut class war in the twentieth century (Alapuro 2002).

The national schism (*Ethnicos Dichasmos*), started with the different attitude of the King Constantine and the Prime minister Eleftherios Venizelos towards the powers of the Entente (Britain, France and Russia). The King insisted on neutrality whereas Venizelos opted for alliance with the Entente at the outbreak of the First World War. The real cause, however, lied in the unbridgeable differences of the two men with regards to political preferences. The politics of the King and of his supporters were deeply conservative whereas the politics of Venizelos were liberal and reformist. After internal political turmoil between royalists and republicans and pressure from Entente, the King without abdicating went into exile (1917) but returned to the throne in 1920 after the defeat of Venizelos in the national elections of a country exhausted after eight years of wars.

As a result of the 1919 peace treaty, in 1921 the Greek Army, under the command of Constantine himself, undertook a major expedition in Asia Minor which, however, was ill-fated. In August 1922 the Turkish Army under Mustafa Kemal in a counter-offensive forced the Greek troops out of Asia Minor altogether and demolished Smyrna which was virtually a city of Greek diaspora. About 1,500,000 refugees fled to Greece from Asia Minor. This "catastrophe" resulted into the abdication of the King, put an end to Greek irredentism and gave rise to the strain between refugee newcomers and autochthones. The frail economy of the country burdened by foreign indebtedness and the huge cost of waging wars for a whole decade was at pains to sustain the refugees most of which faced social hardship, discrimination and humiliations of all kinds.

¹⁰⁵ Thanks to my MA student Katerina Koronaki for her valuable contribution in this. We contacted eleven informants; eight of them are left minded, and three right minded. All of them took part in the civil war.

¹⁰⁶ Even more bloody, the Spanish civil war (1936- 1939) was the terrain of the confrontation between Fascism and anti-fascist forces. The defeat of the Left in that war heralded the domination of the Axis for almost a decade. The defeat of the Greek Left announced the sheer political and diplomatic domination of the USA in the country for three decades or so.

In the census of 1928 the Greek population had risen to 6,204,674 out of 5,016,589 in 1920. The large influx of the refugees set in motion a significant left-wing labor movement in the urban centers and an acute problem of agrarian reform in the countryside. Along with this there was a widespread anti-royalist feeling which resulted in the establishment of the First Greek Republic (1924-1936). Yet, due to the interwar economic depression and the persisting confrontation between royalists and republicans parliamentary democracy was suspended in 1936 by the dictatorship of the dedicated royalist General Ioannis Metaxas. The new regime, supported if not directed by the King himself, was successful enough in destroying the Left by implementing anticommunist legislation and taking such harsh measures as exile, imprisonment and repressive surveillance.

To the triple (German-Italian-Bulgarian) Axis occupation of the country, 1941-1944, a noticeable grass roots resistance was enacted; quite soon though it provided an opportunity for the leftist – mainly communist- political forces to organize themselves in a massive scale for the first time, inspired by the anti-imperialistic strategy of the Third International. This was in tandem with a spirit of resistance and the general leftward shift spread throughout the occupied Europe. In Greece and Yugoslavia the resistance developed into a massive emancipatory movement with internal discrepancies as well as impressive results against the occupation forces. It has to be noted, though, that one should not overdo with the resistance by any sort of idealization while analyzing the Greek or any other European country in the 1940s. In many countries a legend of an all-embracing ‘national’ resistance was constructed and forwarded immediately after the end of the war as a point of collective admiration which suppressed either the toleration to the occupation forces by many social strata or the dealings and deeds of collaborators during and after the war.

The Axis occupation in Greece led to a breakdown of state and society. It has been well documented that during the occupation the victims of the famine in winter 1941-2, caused by the blockade of the Greek ports by the British navy, the plunder of the natural resources by the occupation forces due to the lack of any serious system of their supplying, and the felonious mistakes of the public administration agencies responsible for the distribution of food, were in total more than the victims of the bombings, the guerilla war and the retaliation of the Axis troops¹⁰⁷. Though exact numbers cannot be defined, it is estimated that the victims of the famine are almost 100.000 (Fleischer 1986).

Under these circumstances, the prewar ruling elites were almost totally discredited in view of their reluctance to undertake any serious resistance initiatives and their massive retreat to the Middle East. In this political vacuum, ordinary people took first efforts to keep themselves

¹⁰⁷ Even nowadays the expression “occupation syndrome” refers to precautionous and proactive consuming behavior based on the assumption that there might be no food in the near future. No doubt, the famine marked collective memory in a decisive way. It can be argued that up to a certain point the roots and causes of the civil war stem not so much from the above mentioned cleavages but from the dissolution of the Greek society during the Occupation period and the antagonisms, animosities and hostilities it gave rise to: collaborators, black marketeers and so on. To be sure however, one should not exaggerate with the long last destructive consequences of the occupation as these were used in the construction of the post war victimization of the nations involved. After the war, almost each country constructed a powerful myth about the unprecedented destructions it suffered by the enemy, suppressing thus from the public memory the thorns of collaboration, the toleration of the Jewish genocide and ethnic cleansings executed either by the Axis forces or the resistance, as well as alignment with the occupation forces. On top of this, one should not fail to underscore the incredible corruption with which the Marshal plan was implemented in Greece so that huge amounts of money to end up in private pockets, frequently in those of collaborators, fanatic anticommunists and the power elite. For these groups the blaming of the Axis for the post war misery of the country was an easy bypassing to get away with their own responsibilities (Fleischer 2008: 135 etc).

alive and to secure access to food; at a later stage a more organized pro-Allied resistance began mainly by communists. Acts of resistance and sabotage became frequent from the winter of 1941 by the *Ethniko Apeleftherotiko Metopo* (EAM: National Liberation Front), the major organization of the left and the communists (Tsoukalas 1969: chapter 4; Clogg 1979). EAM was by far the largest and more powerful organization which in 1942 formed its own military branch, the *Ethnikos Laikos Apeleftherotikos Stratos* (ELAS: Greek People's Liberation Army) pronounced as "Ellas", the name of the country itself. To be sure, the great majority of the people were not communists but very sympathetic to EAM and very many, including lots of women, joined it not only out of defiance against the German, Italian and Bulgarian occupation but also as an act of participation in social life from which have always felt excluded. According to Clogg (1979:150), «by the end of the occupation the membership of EAM has been variously estimated at between a million and two million».

Other resistance organizations such as the *Ethnikos Dimokratikos Ellinikos Syndesmos* (EDES: National Republican Greek League), initially of liberal democratic tendencies, soon developed an anticommunist orientation. Consequently, the resistance did not manage from the beginning to act in unison, apart from one or two major acts of sabotage in collaboration with British intelligence. Already in 1943 deadly battles and bloody skirmishes were taking place in the countryside and the Athens area between EAM/ELAS and various non-leftist organizations heralding thus the civil war which was to follow.

In March 5, 1946 Churchill announced his notorious "iron curtain" statement and in March 1947 the Truman Doctrine and the Marshall Plan were launched. These dates tally with two crucial incidents of the Greek civil war: March 30, 1946 is regarded to be the conventional date for the launching of the conflict; in September 1947, after consulting USSR, the Greek Communist Party decided to lead the war to its climax [the *limnes* (lakes) plan]. These correlations indicate the inexorable engagement of the Greek civil war with the setting out of the Cold war. As a matter of fact, the civil war in Greece was the first paradigmatic case where the USA, on the one hand, invoked the domino theory, and tested their credibility as the world leader against communism, on the other. From their part, Stalin and Tito handled the Greek case according to their mutual relations and the cross pressures exerted on them in the UN. For the USA, the confrontation with the Greek Communists (no political compromise and smash of the enemy) served as a model in their later entanglement in Guatemala, Lebanon, Cuba, Saint Dominican and Vietnam (Kolko 1994: 373-395, Coufoudakis 1981, Iatrides 2002).

It has to be stated emphatically that, seen in a historical perspective and from the vantage point of the present, the Greek civil war was a multifaceted phenomenon. First of all, it was a total war which involved armed and civilians, orthodox and unorthodox styles of military conflict. Second, with some sound exemptions, it was carried out almost exclusively in the countryside¹⁰⁸. Third, it was marked by great local particularities and exigencies. These have been recognized quite recently when certain scholars used alternative methodological tools in the study of the civil war: oral history, local memories and personal archives, discourse analysis and

¹⁰⁸ The Left in the cities survived the civil war with much less damage compared with the rural areas, and that explains why it scored quite high in the 1950s' general elections. In the 1958 election, particularly, the *Eniea Demokratiki Aristera* (United Democratic Left) received 24,4% of the vote and became the major opposition party. Unlike the Spanish case, while the civil war was waged in Greece the regime remained democratic. Paradoxically or not, even when executions were performed in late '40s and early '50s, the country was run by a center-right government. That government and those to come over the next two decades until the 1967 *coup de etat* were patronized by the USA embassy and acted according to double legal standards: an emergency legislation against the Left and a 'normal' rule of law for the rest, alleged to be nationally minded.

so on (Marantzides 2002; Kalyvas 2000, 2002, 2003; Sakkas 2000). Often, events in local context diverted from the great politics of the decision-taking headquarters and as a consequence the cleavages of the central political scene had little or even no impact on the local politics where personal and kinship relations and hostilities were of primary importance. It has been documented that, as the micro-foundation of the macro-structure of the civil war is more crucial than it was thought one or two decades ago, mediating mechanisms and procedures such as ethnic origins, religious attachments, local networking, family ties, local traditions, local violence, interpersonal relations etc play an important role for the recruitment to this or the other side of the conflict, the persistence of the commitment, and the selective incentives in participating or abstaining from the war (Margarites 1989: 507-9; Mylonas 2003).

The Greek civil war as a research topic. A rich but tormented bibliography

It has not been always easy to do research and make publications on the Greek civil war; for several decades it was a taboo of public life and scholars were reluctant to deal with it due to non accessible archives until early 1980s and suspicious or even hostile political climate. Systematic scholarly work started after the political changeover of 1974 (the collapse of the seven years military dictatorship), but took off in early 1990s by historians, social anthropologists, political scientists, sociologists and social psychologists. Gradually, the number of local and international conferences on the civil war has been growing up indicating thus that it is not a taboo any more (Dordanas & Michaelidis 2007). Ever since 1984, seventeen conferences have been organized mainly in Greece as well as abroad with the Network for the Study of the Civil Wars (http://www.elia.org.gr/civil_war_greek/index.htm), founded in 2000, to be one of the major actors in this sort of academic activity. Roughly speaking, the rationale of all this academic and scholarly activity has been the redirection of attention from the question “Whose fault was it?” towards the question “How did the civil war take place?” (Marantzidis & Antoniou 2004; Mazower 2000: 8).

Yet, the situation is somewhat more complicated; scholars not only dispute over definite aspects of the civil war but over the ways it should be studied. To my opinion, these disputes are indexical of the pertinently discordant effects of the civil war in many social *milieus*, the academics and the intelligentsia included. But let me be more explicit.

a) Respecting the duration of the civil war, for many years and as indicated above, the mainstream position was March 30, 1946 to August 29, 1949. Yet, this has been disputed lately and a ‘When it started vs When it ended’ controversy is taking place among political sociologists and historians in Greece. Among others, the criterion is what makes an armed conflict within a state into a civil war. This is a controversy that draws on from both the literature of the comparative studies of civil wars (Fearon & Laitin 2003, Sambanis 2002) and the retroactive stakes of the Greek political scene. For some, it is more appropriate to speak of civil military conflicts during the occupation period when one refers to the armed confrontations between ELAS and EDES in 1943, rather than of civil *war*. For them, a civil war presupposes a durable and large scale of military mobilization which actually occurred in the 1946-1949 period. In their point of view, the 1944 December events (*Dekemviana*) where a short but dreadful struggle between ELAS, the British troops and the newly formed Greek gendarmerie, staffed mainly by collaborators, sparked three months after the liberation, cannot be seen either as a civil war (Margarites 1989).

On the other hand, there are scholars¹⁰⁹, whose positions I tend to endorse, arguing that conflicts between Greeks during the resistance period can be regarded as civil war irrespective of their sporadic or intermittent nature, provided that contradictory and mutually exclusive socio-political projects lay behind them. A similar situation one can observe nowadays in Iraq where civil and inter-ethnic conflicts coexist with resistance to the American and British troops.

Another similar issue raised in the debate is whether the 1945-1946 right-wing violence which sprung after the Varkiza Agreement against the defeated followers of EAM/ELAS signals the beginning of the civil war (Mazower 2000: 6-7, 31-2). Among others, according to that agreement, signed in February 1945 as a result of the end of *Dekemvriana*, the guerilla units had to withdraw and surrender their arms. Subsequently, the offenses committed during the *Dekemvriana* were pardoned except 'common-law crimes against life and property which were not absolutely necessary to the achievement of the political crime concerned'. This clause provided the excuse to ultra-right and royalist bands for launching a mass-scale violence and terror against members, followers or even sympathizers of EAM/ELAS (Voglis 2000: 74-5). Nowadays, a considerable part of the right-wing historiography accepts the description of these events as "white terrorism", and a minimum of consensus seems to be formed around this. Yet, a crucial issue is raised, mainly by left-leaning scholars, as to whether that was a "unilateral civil war" – which was to be followed soon by the "bilateral civil war" –, or it can be seen as the real beginning of the civil war, pulling thus its opening date one calendar year backwards, i.e. 1945 (Koulouris 2000: 52-4).

b) By and large and for many years, the Greek scholars seemed to stay aloof or ignore the results of the international research on civil wars, remaining therefore highly Hellenocentric and ethnocentric rather than comparative and non-parochial (Mylonas 2003; Marantzidis & Antoniou 2004). Most interpretations were swept by the left-right cleavage and the imperatives of the Cold War. As a result, the ethnic dimensions of the war were overlooked as well; for instance, until recently, the vicissitudes of the Slavophonic population and the strategies of the Turkish-speaking groups during the war were particularly under-researched. Also, the extermination of about 100,000 Greek Jews has been hardly researched and analyzed systematically in most of scholarly works on the civil war.

c) Currently, a heated controversy between traditional historians who base their work chiefly if not exclusively on the study of archives and a respectable group of younger and post-revisionist scholars who bring in oral history, memory and local studies, and clinical approaches is taking place. The thrust of the dispute is about the appropriateness of the oral and local history methods and the possible disintegration of the field through topical approaches and piece meal studies. Most clearly, the traditionalist argument holds that scrutinizing written sources as opposed to oral testimonies is the right method to study the civil war to the extent that these sources are objective and not self-selected. Yet, the proponents of this argument tend to overlook that, very often, written documents are produced and distributed in an equally selective manner. In addition, they claim that by focusing on local histories and personal memories, revisionists conclude to a fragmentation of the subject matter, lose the macro-analytical perspective and contribute to the relativisation of historical reality. It should be noted that in this controversy both left and right-leaning scholars are involved in an intersecting way.

A clear-cut, though, distinction between left and right-leaning approaches can be found in the non academic bibliography on the Greek civil war. On the whole, it consists of propaganda

¹⁰⁹ As early as 1969, Andreas Papandreou (1969) explicitly stated that the Greek civil war started at October 1943 when ELAS troops attacked EDES.

material, veterans' memoirs, auto-biographies, biographies, diaries, illustrated texts, congresses and conventions minutes and the like (Koulouris 2000). Since the non-academic writings are closely related to the waving of political climate, researchers have distinguished two periods in the production of this sort of writings: (a) 1945 - 1974 where two out of three books published were anti-left; (b) 1974 – 2000s where four out of five books were left-minded (Marantzidis & Antoniou 2003, 2004). It is note worthy that almost half of the right-wing production was published within the first decade after the end of WWII, whereas most of the left-wing production appeared in the 1980s. On the one hand, this reflects the urge of the victorious right-wing hegemonic bloc to forward its own narration as soon as the war was over; on the other hand, the massive publication of memoirs and auto-biographies after the 1974 political changeover (the so-called *Metapolitefsi*) and especially after 1982, when the Socialist government recognized the national resistance, can be seen as a after-effect of the much more broader 'explosion of collective memory' and the rise of 'public history' which has been taking place since 1989 all around the globe (Voglis 2008; Panagiotopoulos 1997). In effect, there are two different perceptions of the Greek Civil War image, the post-war Civil War and the post-dictatorship Civil War perception.

To sum up, the bibliography for the Greek civil war is quite rich as it consists of a large number of books and writings¹¹⁰. Naturally, though, it is divided and tormented by controversial issues, overt and covert political antagonisms, and unsettled dilemmas.

Conceptual setting: The civil war as cultural-social trauma

The notion of “cultural- social trauma” has been forwarded systematically as a distinct cultural sociological concept referring to institutional changes, to the constitution of collective memory and to forms of collective action. Formulated alongside the tenets of a weak social constructionism, cultural-social trauma is meant to be “a memory accepted and publicly given credence by a relevant membership group and evoking an event or situation, which is (a) laden with negative affect, (b) represented as indelible, and (c) regarded as threatening a society's existence or violating one or more of its fundamental cultural presuppositions” (Smelser, 2004: 44). According to Alexander (2004: 1) cultural trauma occurs when members of a collectivity feel that they have suffered a horrendous event that leaves indelible marks upon their group consciousness, marking their memories for ever and changing their future identity in fundamental and irrevocable ways. From an intergenerational point of view, a cultural trauma is a “chosen trauma” in the way Vamik Volkan (2005) puts it; i.e. a large group's unconscious “choice” to add to its own identity a past generation's mental representation of a shared event that has caused a large group to face drastic losses, feel helpless and victimized by another group, and share a humiliating injury. Apparently, the fundamental elements of the cultural trauma theory are: memory, emotion, and identity. In this respect, cultural sociology joins hands with the sub-fields of memory, trauma and disaster studies. It is a complex area of theory and research which

¹¹⁰ It is indicative that between 1945 and 1999 a sum total of 576 books were published in Greek (Koulouris 2000).

straddles the micro and the macro¹¹¹, on the one hand, and the long and short duration of the historical time, on the other.

The Greek civil war is an exemplary case of cultural-social trauma of considerable duration and significance. As already mentioned, it is the bloodiest conflict Europe ever faced between 1945 and 1990. To be sure however, since there is no agreement as to when the civil war starts, and given the collapse of the official agencies of public administration responsible for social statistics during the occupation period and shortly after the liberation, there is no precise measurement of casualties. According to official estimations, the number of dead were 40.000 whereas according to unofficial estimations their number gets as high as 158.000 (Tsoukalas 1969: 89). Up to 100.000 members of DSE (*Dimokratikos Stratos Ellados*: Democratic Army of Greece), the successor of ELAS, crossed the northern borders and migrated in communist countries for several decades. Those of Slavic ethnic origin are not allowed to return and settle back even today. Needless to say that material disaster of all kinds was much larger. On top of these one has to add the unprecedented hardship the country faced from the moment it entered the World War II until the eve of the liberation. From 1940 to 1944 almost 8 per cent of the entire population was killed and 34 per cent of the national treasure was devastated (Tsoukalas 1969: 69). According to McVeagh, the Ambassador of the USA in Athens, in early 1946 the two thirds of Greece's population were fed with only 1.700 calories per day (in comparison to the 2.850 calories of the British); almost 30% of the population suffered by malaria while the percentage of tuberculosis was fifteen times higher than in Britain (Richter 1997: 434). Just after the end of the civil war in 1949 almost 10 per cent of the population (i.e. 700.000 people) were homeless refugees waiting to re-inhabit their wrecked villages. In effect, the WWII and the civil war devastated almost entirely the Greek economy and really ravaged Greek society.

All these had a profound impact on the way people got accustomed with all sorts of violence (Voglis 2002); we could argue that, on the one hand, the civil war rested on a culture of violence inherited from the occupation period (collective retaliations, mass executions, deportation of local population -especially in the region of Eastern Macedonia occupied by the Bulgarians-, burning of villages, public exposure of the corps), which was amplified by black as well as by red terror, on the other (Kalyvas 2002). Cruelties and atrocities from both sides and thousands of victims marked collective memories, hammered personal political identities and life projects, and changed the social fabric in a far reaching way.

As a total social event, therefore, the Greek civil war has been experienced as a cultural-social trauma because it affected collective memories, group consciousness, and the organizational principles of the Greek society, re-directing its orientation for more than three decades. It was not only caused by two almost mutually exclusive worlds; it created two opposed worlds as well. For 25 years the most overwhelming consequence of the civil war was the cleavage between the so called national mindful (*ethnikofrones*) and the defeated Left. This cleavage permeated not only the political realm but every single social, economic and cultural arena. It intersected with the above mentioned mid-war cleavage between royalists and republicans; thus the mid-war animosities were reinterpreted as much as the refugees from Asia Minor joined EAM massively. In late 1960s, at a time where parliamentary democracy seemed to get consolidated and the post-civil war regime to loose ties, the traumatic cleavage of the civil war was enhanced and over-determined by the trauma of the seven years military dictatorship

¹¹¹ As I have claimed elsewhere (Demertzis 2009), the affiliations between the psychoanalytic account of trauma and the notion of cultural-social trauma are more than it is usually admitted (Alexander 2004; 2003: 85-107).

(1967-74). The *coup d'état* blocked every outlet for the democratic incorporation of the 'non-nationally minded' in the political system; this would have normally occurred if the general elections scheduled for May 1967 took place. As I have written elsewhere (Demertzis 2006), fear and insecurity returned to the left-leaning strata of the population who had staffed and socially supported EAM, EDA (*Eniaia Dimokratiki Aristera*: United Democratic Left) and EK (*Enosi Kentrou*: Union of the Center), the parties which challenged the dominance of ERE (*Ethniki Rizospastiki Enosis*: National Radical Union), the governing right-wing party. On top of the cultural trauma of the civil war, there now came the trauma of the imposition of dictatorship and the humiliation of the defeated was not lifted but, on the contrary, accentuated.

For all its horrendous impact, it is my conviction that the Greek civil war was not an inevitable historical event; things could have happened otherwise and follow another direction. It is indicative that during the war the KKE (*Kommounistiko Komma Ellados*: Communist Party of Greece) forwarded twenty one different plans for peace, whereas the British and the Greek government offered more than six peace initiatives. Although those proposals were part and parcel of the pull and push power game at the military, political and international arenas, one can retroactively say that the actors themselves had some freedom and the discretion to choose another course (Sfikas 2002). Had all parties involved opted for a compromise as early as 1947 or even 1948, the likelihood is that the conflict would not produce deep going consequences in the Greek political culture.

Though its consequences came formally at an end in 1974, when democracy was restored, the communist party- clashed in the meantime-, was legalized, and all civil rights and liberties were reinstated, the social psychological effects of the civil war are still pertinent, albeit not to the same extent as ten or twenty years ago. It may be true that nowadays scholars and students approach the civil war in a more distanced way, but it is equally true that it hibernates in collective moods, political and national stereotypes, and social memory(ies). This can be discerned in the current elite and mass attitude towards the (Former Yugoslavian) Republic of Macedonia a considerable part of whose inhabitants consists of DSE fighters of Macedonian ethnic origin.

The discursive-symbolic construction and reconstruction of the civil war.

We know that an event, as destructive as it may be, will become or produce cultural-social trauma when connected to the structure and logic of social action. A cultural-social trauma involves the realization (with both meanings of the word, that is as becoming conscious of something and as something becoming real) of a common plight. It has to be defined collectively as such in order to influence the systems of reference of an entire society or, at least, of a significant part of it and change established roles, rules, *habitués*, and narratives. In other words, it has to function as a total social event and not just be the aggregate of numerous individual experiences. A dislocating traumatogenic event, for example, a civil war, does not in itself constitute a "trauma". In order to become "trauma", it has to undergo a process of social signification; namely, it has to be signified and become socially accepted and constructed as "trauma". In what follows I shall attempt to outline the regime of signification of the Greek civil war so as to mark out some distinguishing characteristics as well as commonalities with other civil wars.

The semantic designation of the war

If one wants to compare the Greek case with other civil wars in an effort to demonstrate its own particularities, one should point out the semantic designation of this war in its proper political cultural setting. Hitherto I have been referring to the Greek civil war making use of the English words ‘civil war’. Yet; one should bear in mind that in Greek there is no semantic equivalent to *civil war*; in fact, the Greek word which goes for *civil war* is *emphylios polemos* (internecine war, war within the same race). Civil war is premised on the notion of civil society and civil sphere; it presupposes individualized citizens who are organized along clashing collective goals and/or interests and contest over the definition of a society’s historicity, to use Touraine’s terminology. On the contrary, the Greek universe of political discourse cannot sustain linguistically the idea of inner-state war *qua* civil war precisely because it has been endowed with a variety of pre and anti-modern social significations. This is due to the traditionally weak civil society; i.e., the making of the Greek state and polity in the nineteenth century, including the parliamentary sub-system, took place principally in a non or, to be more accurate, an quasi-capitalist socio-economic environment (Mouzelis 1986, Charalambis & Demertzis 1993). As a consequence, Greek economic capital at large has been commercial rather than productive, and the socio-economic development has been thoroughly carried out by the state and not by a robust capitalist market. This model has made for the prominence of loose party structures, it has been conducive to clientelistic electoral politics and it contributed to an atrophic civil society (Demertzis 1997). More generally, in the absence of a deep rooted bourgeois culture, for more than a century, Greek society developed alongside the tenets of cultural nationalism and traditionalism rather than on political and socio-economic modernity, resembling thus what Riggs (1964) defines as “prismatic society”, i.e. a society with minimal differentiation and highly mixed structural functions. In other words, despite the modernization processes put forward since the last quarter of the 19th century, and the emergence of a still born class politics and interest intermediation in the inter-war period, the hegemonic political cultural setting within which the civil war took place was of a *Gemeinschaft* rather than of a *Gessellschaft* nature.

As a strong civil sphere was missing and the communal *habitus* prevailed it follows naturally that the armed conflict between Greeks in mid 1940s was designated as internecine rather than as civil war proper. It was meant as a conflict within the same national family, between men and women of the same blood, namely between brothers rather than between opposing life projects and mutually exclusive societal interests within civil society. For this very same reason in the Greek language “public opinion” is translated as “common opinion” (*koini gnome*), as an opinion shared by everyone and not as an opinion formed publicly.

As in other Balkan as well as eastern European countries, the nation-state in Greece, as a post-traditional mode of domination, is supported by what has been called cultural nationalism, i.e. an ideological discourse according to which the nation is far from being a human association premised on modernity’s civic liberties, but a particularistic ethno-cultural community of language, religion, tradition, race, habits, romanticized historical memories and so on (Kohn 1961: 329-30, 457; Sugar 1969: 19-20, 34-5; Mann 1992: 137-8; Demertzis 1996: 227-44). At a macro-level, this ethno-nationalist discourse provided an ultimate legitimacy of the societal order as long as it fosters a collective self-representation of Greek society as a horizontal and communal brotherhood.

No wonder, therefore, that although in 1943-44 and 1945-46 EAM as well as the anti-EAM bloc were warning about the large scale imminent civil war (*emphylios*), during the period of the actual fighting (1946-1949), both sides were cautious enough not to use the word *emphylios polemos* for the description of what they were taking part in. Had they employed such a semantic designation, they would discredit themselves as violators of the transcendental racial/national unity. To put it in another way: the constitutive civiclessness of the Greek civil war is explained by the moral, if not sacred, character of national community which imperatively precluded the actors from defining their doings in current time, as bloody and devastating as they might be, in line with the only available codification the universe of the Greek political discourse could offer them: as 'internecine war'. Instead, both sides demonized each other and thus they were creating symbolically the proper enemy to kill. As long as it was morally unbearable to take responsibility for the waging of an internecine war, each rival struggled symbolically for the de-humanization of the other drawing legitimacy from the consensual myth of national-communitarian unity.

Unable to follow a binary discourse of civil society, the contenders adopted a moral and nationalistic binary discourse evading thus to identify their conflict as internecine war. For the Right, on the one hand, the 1944 December events were assigned as rebellion and their opponents were just rebels against the legal national government. Besides, the 1946-49 conflict was a war against bandits and outlaws (*symmoritopolemos*), a war against communist bandits who betrayed their country by pursuing to cut off a part of it and annex it to the Soviet bloc or offer it to the Slavs. The latter was premised by the anticipation that the DSE and its government (*Proisorini Demokratiki Kivernisi*: Interim Democratic Government) would serve Bulgaria's geo-strategic ambitions, after the Soviet Union's proposal at the Peace Conference of 1946 that western Thrace, actually a Greek territory, should be conceded to the then socialist Bulgaria. To be sure, a couple of years before, as an occupation force, Bulgaria projected the annexation of the north east Greek Macedonia and put into practice a systematic plan of de-hellenization of the region. On top of that, three years later, at January 1949, the Greek Communist Party decided for the autonomy of Macedonia and the self-government of the Macedonian People. Although that decision was canceled five months later and proclaimed as an 'error', it gave to its opponents a perfect opportunity for propaganda and blame attribution.

For the Left, on the other hand, the 1946-49 inner-state conflict as well as the December events was described principally as "people's liberation war", "people's democratic struggle", "people's self-defense", "armed struggle of DSE", "armed struggle", or plainly "struggle". The opponents of the Left were monarchists-fascists and reactionaries who gave up the country to British and American troops, whose presence was interpreted no less than a "second occupation". Only after the December events the left-minded press referred sporadically to the possibility of an "internecine tearing" caused and led, as it were, by the British.

Apparently, these semantic designations on both sides were the necessary symbolic arms which prepared the actors to hate and kill the enemy and to be ready to get killed themselves. Via an adversarial meaning-giving process, both sides were defending the nation, albeit in a different fashion; namely, the Right was defending the restoration of the national unity whereas the Left was concerned for the liberation and the reconstitution of the nation. For their advocates, both projects were of outmost significance that awarded legitimacy to violent and brutal actions, and moral superiority to each side's own self-contained political outlook. At the end of the day, the paradox is that although everybody knew perfectly that the war they were waging was among Greeks no one dared to call it internecine war (Elephantis 2003: 96-7,143).

Actually the above mentioned semantic designation of the Greek civil war should come as no surprise; in many other cases of civil wars one can observe the same terminological civiclessness premised on the different dependency path of each country with respect to political modernity. To use a few examples, the word in Serbian/Croatian *bratocibilački rat* which means internecine war or war between brothers (armed conflict between Yugoslav peoples during the WWII and conflict within national communities later on). The Polish equivalent of the civil war is *Wojna Domowa* which means ‘domestic war’; in the feudal era, civil war in Japanese was 内乱 = Nairan (internal unrest) whereas in the present era was 内戦 = Naisen (internal fight, internal war). As ‘internal fight’ civil war is understood in the Chinese as well (内战 = 内战). In Czech there are two terminological versions of the concept: the colloquial version is *občanská válka*; when it comes to the struggle with the collaborators in the WWII, *Građanski rat* is the literary translation of ‘civil war’. Similar but not identical is the terminological designation of the Finnish civil war; until 1970s, where the consensus politics had prevailed and the sharp memories of the war were alleviated, civil war (*kansalaissota*) was very much in use by the defeated Social Democrats, and class war (*luokkasota*) was in currency by left-wing socialists and Communists. The victors of the war named it ‘war for Freedom’ (*vapaussota*), or ‘war for liberation’ (as against the Russian imperialism). Contrary to the Greek case, the Reds in Finland were using ‘civil’ or ‘class war’ during the actual fighting in 1918 (Alapuro 2002).

The memorization of the civil war

After the war was over and for the decades to come, the semantics and the political vocabulary changed. Here one should distinguish two periods where a symbolic battle for the hegemony of the public memory has been taking place:

(a) During the period 1949-1974, the official account of the Right as well as the account of the right-minded man of the street had been still that of *symmoritopolemos* (war against bandits) or rebellion. On the contrary, as early as 1957 the KKE used for the first time the word *emphylios polemos* with regards to the 1946-49 inner-state violent clashes. Until then, the party’s elites were speaking of ‘liberating war’ or even ‘revolutionary’ war; especially in the countryside, people of the Left were speaking of the “second guerilla war” (*deftero andartiko*). In fact, that was a devastating period for the Left which was not only defeated in the war but it has been politically excluded and marginalized until 1974. The KKE was banned and the ideology of *ethnikofrosini* (national-mindedness) was dominant in every single sector of the public sphere. Against this, and probably as part of a defense mechanism and as part of a symbolic struggle, the official Left and its ordinary supporters as well the anti-monarchist camp gradually adopted wholeheartedly the term *emphylios polemos* as a tragic phase of contemporary Greek history whose victim is the Greek people *in toto*.

(b) From 1974 onwards a spectacular change took place in the memorization of the civil war. With the restoration of democracy and especially after the 1981 general elections, when Socialists, led by Andreas Papandreou, took office for the first time in the country’s history, and after the legal recognition of the resistance (Law 1285/1982), *symmoritopolemos* was virtually banned from the public and official political language of the Right. This was the aftermath of the unprecedented long lived hegemony of a leftward political culture, endowed with plenty nationalist-populists overtones and anti-americanism. Since then *emphylios polemos* has been univocally used in public speeches, in political documents, even in legislation and jurisprudence. Consequently, according the 1863/1989 Law , *symmoritopolemos* was officially replaced by

emphylios polemos whose duration was defined from 1944 to 1949. Besides the word ‘bandits’ (*symmotites*) was replaced by ‘Democratic Army’ (*Dimokratikos Stratos*). That law was enacted by the three-month coalition government of the Right-wing party of *Nea Demokratia* (New Democracy) and the Left-wing party of *Synaspismos* (Left Coalition) and apparently had great symbolic impact with respect to the abrogation of the civil war consequences.

Seemingly, along these symbolic battles a politics of oblivion was gradually put into effect. In the remainder of this section I shall refer to some crucial constituents of this politics:

(i) With respect to the historical/official memory, the date of the end of the civil war (1949, August 29th) has never been celebrated as a National Day. Of course, there were a number of minor and local celebrations and political rituals with reference to the communists’ victims, but the end of the civil war as such was not commemorated in any substantial way, as it was the case in Franco’s Spain. Likewise, for all the devastation incurred by the WWII, in Greece May the 8th is not celebrated as the end of the Big War. Instead it is the 28th of October, the day of the beginning of the victorious Greek-Italian war, which is celebrated as a National Day¹¹². Since the end of the WWII almost coalesces with the beginning of the civil war, the winning national elite didn’t wish to connect the two events (Voglis 2008).

(ii) More so than it already was in the fifties and sixties - with the exception of the seven years dictatorship (1967-1974) whereas references and allegations to the civil war were made more often-, an effective by-passing of the civil war from the official memory was accomplished in 1982, shortly after Papandreou’s government took office (see above). The official recognition of the resistance of various groups and of course EAM was characterized as ‘National Resistance’ which is ever since officially commemorated in November 25, with not much enthusiasm though; that day in 1942 a major sabotage against the Axis was accomplished in common by ELAS and EDES. Typically the recognition was conferred to the individual resistance fighters who were awarded an appropriate title and pension. Apparently, a mythologization had been taking place since the period of resistance (1941-4) was cleaned up from any disturbing stains of internecine conflict and radical -if not virtually revolutionary-, projects, subjugated entirely to the nationalist discourse. Sometimes, the retroactive recall of the resistance period is accomplished through metaphysical and almost religious metaphors; one of our informants said: [... *whoever lived that era, whether today is in the right of left side, is like receiving the Holy Communion, as if one drinks fresh water from a source, it is something you get power from...*](woman, aged 84). By this token, the old names of hundreds of streets and squares all over the country were changed overnight into ‘National Resistance’. In a prominent and historic square in the center of Athens a great statue was erected dedicated to ‘national reconciliation’. In contradistinction, the public commemoration of the civil war is rare and sporadic, inflicting sometimes embarrassment and bitterness. A ritual of great significance for the ‘nationalization’ of the resistance and the promotion of ‘national reconciliation’ was the ceremonial and widely mediatized burning of hundred of thousands, if not millions, of police files of the so-called ‘non-nationally minded’ citizens which took place in 29.08.89 in spite the objections of Greek historians.

(iii) If officially the national resistance was forwarded as a ‘chosen glory’ (Volkan 2005), and even if the official, not to say hegemonic, attitude was that of silence and forgetting, at the level of collective/popular memory and living political culture the situation has been quite more complicated. As Halbwachs (1992: 172, 182) Connerton (1989: 38-99) and Aguilar (1996)

¹¹² For quite different reasons, the Baltic countries do not celebrate the 8th of May either; for them the real liberation came on 1991 when the Soviet empire collapsed.

rightly argue, collective memory is by definition multifaceted and divided alongside the lived experiences and local memories of different groups and individuals who witness and shape historical events, notwithstanding their traumatic potential. At the level of unofficial collective memory, therefore, the civil war has been recollected antagonistically until the early 1980s. Even if until then the political discourse implied silence on the matter, the undercurrent interpretations were sharply incommensurate (Voglis 2008)¹¹³. A divided collective memory emerged not only alongside the binary opposition between Left and Right but in accordance to a variety of local animosities and struggles amidst which frequently the roles of victims and perpetrators were mixed and interchanged.

(iv) It is misleading to draw too sharp a line between the official/public and the collective/popular memory; in the on-going hegemony process bridges are built and various kinds of overlapping are formed. By and large, on both sides silence about the civil war is the dominant attitude. With some exceptions, even nowadays the mnemonic community of the defeated Left is built around the resistance rather than the civil war. This is repeatedly observed in numerous testimonies and narratives, and is documented in the qualitative interviews conducted on the occasion of this paper. Half of the left minded informants were more than reluctant to use the word *emphylios polemos* (civil war); as one of them mentioned: [... *well the civil, I do not want to say the word, war between the Democratic Army and Governmental Army from '46 to '49 is the continuation of the national resistance ...*] (man). According to another one, [... *gradually, after 1946 the resistance against the British in the beginning and against the American afterwards has been named civil war*] (man).

The mnemonic community of the victorious Right is equally embarrassed with the civil war; I already mentioned that its victory was never celebrated as a national fest. A taboo issue is the Greek Security Battalions, which were collaborators of the German troops; during the December 1944 events they were the backbone of the anti-EAM forces and soon after most of their members joined the National Army against DSE in order to escape legal prosecution for war crimes. Actually, unlike other European countries¹¹⁴, in Greece the punishment of collaborators was extremely poor and they survived precisely because they served the anti-communist cause (Haidia 2000). In addition, large parts of the newly formed post-war ruling class were has roots in collaborators and black market dealers during the occupation or usurpers of Jewish property. As a consequence, these things are preferable to suppress than to recall, let alone to be pride of. All in all then, in both Left and Right community of memory and political discourse the fatal 'national tragedy' of the civil war has been systematically juxtaposed to the 'epic of national resistance'.

This politics of oblivion bears witness two defense mechanisms Smelser (2004) underscores as to cultural-social trauma: 'displacement' and 'projection' with regards to the attribution of responsibility and the rationalization of trauma. The 1946-49 civil war is ultimately interpreted as the outcome of British and US intervention in Greek political life; the December 1944 events, let alone the 1943-44 conflicts between ELAS, EDES and the Greek Security Battalions are scarcely mentioned openly. Scapegoats, expiatory victims, and conspiratorial explanations of history have been more than frequently employed to identify causes and consequences of the civil war. For instance, in 1945, the secretary-general of the KKE

¹¹³ Among others, this is evidenced in the proliferation of the left-oriented publication of memoirs, auto-biographies, and diaries referred to above.

¹¹⁴ In France, for instance, until 1945 almost 10.000 'traitors' were killed with no trial. Later on, 1.600 were executed according to death verdicts (Fleischer 2008: 235).

(*Kommounistiko Komma Ellados*: Communist Party of Greece) Nikos Zachariadis denounced the previous secretary-general and the majority of the party's central committee for the December events, and in turn Zachariadis himself was officially denounced by his own party later on (1957) for the waging of the civil war. Hundreds of executive members who disagreed with the official decisions were physically exterminated by the party's death squads OPLA (*Organosi Perifrourosis Laikou Agona*: Organization for the Protection of the People's Struggle); the accusation was spying and petty bourgeois mentality. To mention bypassing that the acronym OPLA sounds the same with the Greek word arms; it is more than obvious that this was a living metaphor designating death.

Apart from that, and in the years to come after the war, the self-representation of the Left was that of the expiatory victim. The public memory of the leftward side selected the innumerable atrocities it suffered by the so called "white terrorism" of the Right between 1945-1946 as well as the unbearable prosecutions they endured during and after the war (executions, exile, imprisonments, rapes, tortures, social marginalization etc); at the same time however, they repressed or even disavowed their own malpractices, atrocities, and responsibilities¹¹⁵. Likewise, the Right has been more than reluctant to memorize about 5000 of its opponents executed by the extraordinary courts-martial and nearly 70000 prisoners and exiles who were convicted from 1947 to early 1950s. Yet, the public memory of the Right selectively detains the 'red terror' and the communists' crimes.

Besides, the attribution of responsibility for the civil war to the British and the Americans is a classic example of the conspiratorial explanation of history, quite common in the Greek populist political discourse, either Left or Right¹¹⁶. Under these terms, Greeks *in toto* are the expiatory victims of the foreigners. Another similar defense mechanism is the double tendency of remembering and forgetting. For one and the same traumatic event as the Greek civil war, precisely because it constitutes a field of competing interpretations and significations, there is, on the one hand, the demand to "leave everything behind us" on the name of 'national reconciliation'; on the other hand, however, there is the injunction to "preserve our historical memory" forwarded principally by the Right. Both options are cases of unsuccessful mourning and, paradoxically, in spite of been profound political options, they depoliticize the civil war itself by subsuming it into the nationalistic universe of discourse. The adversarial political identities of the opponents of the 1940s are symbolically transfigured to extend that (a) any revolutionary or counter-revolutionary potential of the civil war has been systematically suppressed from the public discourse and the popular memory; (b) the opponents were discursively endowed with non-political, nearly metaphysical, traits: noble defenders of the race and the nation, on the one side, and selfless and benign patriots who chase the reactionary servants of imperialism, on the other side. Even the bridging of the opposition described as 'reconciliation' instead of 'compromise' has its own significance; actually, 'reconciliation' is the counterpart of internecine war as it presupposes two formerly homogenous parts which only temporarily have been put apart. On the contrary, devoid of any value or moral echo,

¹¹⁵ There is ample evidence that even among the women political prisoners, the fighters who "held gun" were set apart and seen cautiously since the line of the party was that its members in prison were detained because of their opinions and not because of their doings.

¹¹⁶ Likewise, the dominant account of the civil war in today's Finland resides in the seemingly inconceivable revolt of a part of the people "against itself" by projecting the cause of the war outside the nation. Reds were "infected" or "misled" by the Russians to betray their own fatherland (Alapuro 2002).

‘compromise’ is a political concept premised on power relations and convergence of strategic projects in a public sphere (Kotarides – Sideris 2002: 117-8).

As a matter of fact, the above described politics of oblivion did not contribute to a sort of *Vergangenheitsbewältigung*, i.e. a systematic reappraisal and collective process of coming to terms with the past. Yet, this is not a Greek peculiarity; in all countries that took part in the WWII there are some dark aspects in the way they treat their past. For instance, for many decades in France a sort of national amnesia surrounded the Vichy issue and it was suppressed or unacknowledged that the great majority of the French gave credence to, or were aligned with, Petain and his regime. In equal measure, in Latvia it is denied that the biggest and perhaps the most competent non-German military force embedded in the Nazi troops during the WWII consisted by Letts and that among the most fanatic defenders of Hitler’s shelter in the combat of Berlin were Letts fighters. One of the most successful management of public memory ever in the post war European history is Italy’s self-characterization as victim and enemy of the Germans based on the national myth of the good Italian (*Italiani brava gente*) and a veil of silence obscuring that only at the very end of the war Italy declared the war to Germany, purging thus all war crimes and atrocities its troops committed in hands with the Nazis (Ricoeur 2004: 449-52; Fleischer 2008: 196, 209, 234, 246-7). To press the point further, the encomium of the resistance as opposed to the civil war in Greece is part and parcel of a collective myth and a hegemonic strategy for the definition of the public and collective memory. During the first post war years and later on, in many if not all Western and Eastern countries, the legend of an instant, popular and mass resistance to the axis served as a symbolic means for: (1) national (re)union, (2) purging of plenty anti-Semitic atrocities hidden behind the Holocaust, (3) forging a common European identity (Fleischer 2008: 228, 236; Antoniou and Marantzidis 2008: 14-5). Greece, torn apart by Occupation and a civil war, could not be an exception.

The affect dimension during and after the war was over

It was mentioned above that a host of left leaning non academic literature about the civil war and the resistance was produced after 1974, when the democratic regime was restored, the communist party(ies) was recognized, and the ‘national resistance’ was legally acknowledged. Most of this literature was written by prominent actors of the 1940s. One of the central concerns of these writings was the reconstitution of the official memory of the Left and therefore the re-articulation of the left identity within the new political cultural setting. This was accomplished by the overstatement of the communists’ contribution to the resistance and the understatement of their accountability for the civil war. In the new political cultural setting and the new structure of political opportunities and constraints, the mnemonic discursive strategy of the communist left was entangled into a symbolic antinomy: by claiming the glory of the resistance they were no longer morally defeated, while at the same time they were still the victims of the post civil war state of political affairs. This antinomy has been/is grounded on two mutually exclusive mnemonic vectors: on the one hand, the silencing of the old sharp opposition to the class society, i.e. the ultimate stake of the communists’ civil war, and the affirmation of the national society they wanted to be part of, on the other. Effectively, this antinomy was premised on a particular sort of emotional reflexivity. By ‘emotional reflexivity’ I mean a sort of emotional dynamics, a capacity, to negotiate relationships by changing the structure of feeling and, therefore, how others feel within these relationships. It is a process in which social actors have feelings about and try to understand and alter their lives in relation to others (Holmes 2008). Accordingly, the

defense of the resistance was/is meant to de-stigmatize the Greek communists as traitors and national outcasts, while at the same time it was a symbolic means for transforming the trauma of humiliation they experienced after the defeat in the civil war into a full blown pride that deserves to full fledged citizens. The de-stigmatizing emotional reflexivity has been carried through a justifying discourse guided by a militant testimonial zeal (Panagiotopoulos 1994) which, as a rule, framed the Greek communists as martyrs of the homeland during the occupation and innocent victims of a revengeful state. It is not accidental that some of our reviewed subjects used the word 'Golgotha' in order to describe their experience as victims of the war, i.e. a religious metaphor via which their activities acquire a non-political trait. Just only recently very few intellectuals of the Left deviate from this justifying discourse by discretely referring to the civil war as a strategic political option carried out by the Greek Communist Party in the 1940s and not as a fatal tragedy of the Greek people as a whole.

The mnemonic discursive strategies of the Left and its emotional reflexivity cannot be properly interpreted unless taking into account the emotional consequences of the defeat in the civil war as well as the left emotional *habitus* during the decades before the war. To start from the latter, one should take into consideration that almost from the beginning the political socialization of the Greek communists was carried out in an emotional climate of self-asserted marginalization. As an aftermath of the Bolsheviks' revolution, the Greek Communist Party was founded in 1918. From early on, the party as an institution and its individual members were at pains to comply with the official policies of the state as they departed from the directions of the Third International which were followed faithfully by the party in line with the Marxist-Leninist creed. In 1920 it strongly opposed the irredentist war in Minor Asia denouncing it as imperialist and adventurous. In 1924 it supported the 'unified and independent Macedonia and Thrace' propagating the idea of a working class revolution in Greece and the Balkans (see above). During 1929, the year of the great recession, in tandem with popular sentiment it organized plenty militant rallies and strikes which resulted in severe casualties and deaths. In 1930 it unsuccessfully declared general political strike and advocated the establishment of the soviet regime in Greece.

The repressive apparatuses of the state responded harshly to these political projects by prosecuting hundreds of party members. What is more, the 1936 Metaxas dictatorship denounced the communist party as illegal; almost 2000 of its members and cadres were arrested or exiled and approximately the entire network of its organization was demolished by the secret police. Those who remained free had to follow strict conspiracy rules in their contact to each other and in their private everyday life.

Given the quasi religious adherence to the communist utopia, these experiences and practices had contributed to the shaping of an emotional climate and *habitus* of strong group mindness, suspiciousness against real or alleged police agents, traitors and revisionists within the party ranks, disciplinary solidarity, as well as a mentality of the righteous or even expiatory victim. By and large, this emotional *habitus* was reactivated during the resistance and after the defeat in the battle of Athens in December 1944 and the 1946-49 civil war. In effect, it was a defense mechanism for coping with disappointment and humiliation. Yet, it could not shield the defeated all the way through the process of humiliating self-negation imposed by the post-war regime (Voglis 2000).

It was mentioned above that thousands of people were arrested, exiled, imprisoned, murdered or executed from the December events and thereafter. In addition to the battleground, a moral and emotional war was taking place as well. All detainees in prisons or places of exile

were pressed to sign declarations of repentance in which they recanted their political ideas and the Communist party itself. This method of demoralization was applied for the first time during the Metaxas dictatorship but during the civil war it developed into an industry of recantation. In thousands of cases, with my father's being one of them, these declarations were signed after long and painful processes of physical and psychological torture. What is more, these declarations were widely publicized in the local and national press as well as in the small village communities the repentants were coming from; those who signed were forced to prove their true repentance by informing against comrades, sending public letters repudiating communism, and by joining the military police confining and torturing their former comrades and friends. As one of our informants said [... *violence was immense, psychological mainly but physical as well ... the moment I was forced to sign they commanded us to take an oath and to write three letters ... one to the priest of our parish, one to the gendarmery of our region ... and another one addressed to the newspapers ...*] (man, aged 83).

Through this mechanism these people were 'reformed' into nationally minded citizens and willy-nilly negated their past identity as moral and political subjects (Voglis 2000: 76-7). Not a few could not stand a humiliation of this kind and committed suicide; a very tough emotional cross-pressure was exerted on all those who signed but did not alter their belief in the communist cause as they were stigmatized by both the authorities and the party itself. Activating the reflex syndrome of suspicion, the party organization treated these people not as politically defeated and physically exhausted subjects but as sinful and compromised individuals who could not manage to defend the moral superiority of the party.

After the civil war was over thousands of left-wingers who were morally cancelled, politically marginalized, socially stigmatized and personally exhausted, forced to find refuge in the big cities. For them, as well as for their immediate descendants, defeat functioned as a 'cultural trauma', as a painful event whose retroactive processing in memory and discourse caused disruptions and reconstructions in their collective identity. Essentially, there was no place for left-wingers in the public sphere, who were treated as second-class citizens. Their political marginalization caused them fear, anger, embarrassment and angst.

Essentially, until the end of the 50s, the space for any strongly worded discourse challenging the post-civil war establishment was extremely narrow. But since the beginning of the crucial decade of the 60s that space widened as, on the one hand, the 'Union of the Center' party (*Ενωση Κέντρου*) challenged the dominance of ERE (the right-wing dominant party) and, on the other, the economic development in the tertiary and manufacturing sector allowed for the massive and very fast accession of the domestic migrants to the labor market. There existed, however, an unbridgeable contradiction: while economic incorporation continues and creates the conditions for social consensus and the gradual de-EAMification of the petit bourgeois masses (Charalambis, 1989: 196), the structure of the post-civil war state (palace, army, national-mindedness, etc.) did not allow for the lifting of their political exclusion. The petit bourgeoisified civil war defeated, already incorporated in the market and the consumerist way of life, demanded moral recognition and political representation. In the new socio-economic environment their fear gradually gave way to resentful indignation. It was precisely because their social opportunity structure had changed and therefore they were able to express the accumulated emotional energy and transform the feeling of indignation to a material-political force: where else could the massive social rallies of the period be based and in what other way could they be expressed, if not in a mixture of indignation and hope?

Yet, under the prospect of losing control in the parliamentary elections scheduled for May 1967, April's *coup d'état* in effect blocked every outlet for the democratic incorporation of

the not nationally minded in the political system and cancelled the mood for further massive protests. On top of the cultural trauma of the civil war, there now came the trauma of the imposition of dictatorship. So there was formed a belief in the fatality of political inequality and marginalization and the impossibility of its overcoming. The humiliation of the defeated in the civil war was not lifted but, on the contrary, accentuated. As I have argued elsewhere (Demertzis 2006), the main consequence of the dictatorship in terms of cultural trauma analysis is that the contradiction between the desire for political and moral recognition and the powerlessness to impose it, combined with the chronic and traumatic reliving of endless vindictiveness, hostility and indignation, produced a deep-rooted *ressentiment*. Based on Max Scheler (1961) I regard *ressentiment* as an unpleasant moral feeling without specific addressees, which operates as a chronic reliving of repressed and endless vindictiveness, hostility, envy and indignation due to the impotence of the subject in expressing them in social practice. To the extent that dictatorship overturned the democratizing potential of the mid 1960s, it can be argued that a significant portion of pre-dictatorial resentment qua moral indignation, during the dictatorship dematerializes and is transformed into *ressentiment*. The injustice of political marginalization and the post-civil war establishment were perceived to be an inescapable fate leading to an experience of impotence and inferiority. However, as soon as PASOK took office in 1981 and the lower middle strata stemming from the defeated in the civil war (the ‘non privileged’ in Andreas Papandreou’s populist rhetoric) found themselves integrated into the political system, *ressentiment* gave place to vengeance precisely because it could be released and acted out publicly. Party mass clientelism (Lyrintzis, 1984) and the ‘green-guards’ (PASOK’s cadres who dominated in trade unions, the public sector and state mechanisms) were the compensation for the ‘stony years’ of the political marginalization. But apparently vengeance cannot be the only emotion stemmed from Papandreou’s policies favorable to the former political and social outcasts; many must have experienced disappointment combined with bitterness, a kind of half hearted satisfaction, when the National Resistance was recognized and they received, by law, a pension for their contribution to the country. What two of our interviewed said about it might reflect a more widespread mood: [...they got me in trial for high treason ... us who fought the Germans ... they give me a 320 euros pension ... this is the way they compensate us ... can you imagine? ... here we had the greatest resistance throughout Europe...] (man, aged 85). [... we risked our lives and this makes us proud ... those memories are great but painful, it is the most patriotic and heroic I’ve ever lived. Well, nowadays I am looking at my self, my house etc, I’ve become a petty bourgeois like others] (man, aged 83).

Overall, sixty years after the end of the war, our left minded informants experience retroactively a fusion of negative and positive feelings: rage, resentment, anger, disgust or even hatred together with pride, moral satisfaction and responsibility spring out from their narrations.

Contrary to what currently passes as left leaning common sense with regards to the civil war trauma, I want to argue that this war was traumatogenic to the right side of the Greek political spectrum as well.

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Conclusion

Stemming from a personal interest and in pace with the fundamental tenets of cultural trauma theory, i.e. identity, memory, emotion, a (re)interpretation of the Greek civil war was attempted throughout this paper. This interpretation was based primarily on the already existing impressive research literature, partly on findings from original qualitative research, and to some extent on comparisons between the Greek and other civil wars. After sixty years, that war still ignites Greeks' political psyche, maybe not so fervently as the former decades. The main reason why this cultural trauma has repercussions after so many years is the partial failure of the politics of oblivion pursued by both sides (silence, 'nationalization' of the resistance, forgetting/manipulated public memory). Alike other countries, in Greece, a systematic reappraisal and a coming to terms with the past has not been generated. As a result, despite the claims of national reconciliation, the issue of forgiving has not been raised seriously as yet.

Forgiveness is crucial to the cultural trauma theory because a consistent concept of trauma, as a living metaphor, refers to a dynamic process which includes both the traumatic element itself *and* the process of its healing. Forgiveness is part of the healing process, an integral element of mourning. Certainly, to forgive is not to forget, nor is it denial or disavowal. Forgiveness entails transformation of negative emotions based on strong will, a will to start anew, a gesture quite opposite to vengeance. Forgiveness is never predicted, as it comes out of free will and frees both doer and sufferer from the relentless automatism of a vicious cycle (Arendt 1958: 236-241). What is more, forgiveness can be offered unconditionally only by those (previous victims) who are able to punish perpetrators (Ricouer 2004: 470). But who exactly is the victim and who is the perpetrator in the Greek civil war? Who is supposed to forgive whom?

This question was unthinkable ten years ago due to the unshaken hegemony of the left minded accounts of the civil war. Today, whoever utters this question has: (a) to steer clear from negationism and historical revisionism (which is not identical with revisionist historiography); (b) to deconstruct the commanded forgetting of the civil war and the mythology that surrounds the so called 'national resistance'; (c) to promote a spirit of 'difficult forgiveness'. Certainly, it will be a long process which ultimately concerns the next generation, my generation, as the real participants in the civil war are passing away. Yet, it might be less painful and it may leave room for a mutual request for and offering of forgiveness.

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Revolutionary Trauma and Representation of the War: the Case of China in Mao's Era

For millions of Chinese who had the misfortune to live during the span of the War of Resistance Against Japan (1937-1945), their personal experience must have been unbearably traumatic and painful. During the 8 years of the war, China lost three million lives in combat, and the civilian casualties is estimated to be about twenty million¹¹⁷. And the heinous nature of the war atrocity committed by the invading army must have left indelible marks on memories and consciousness of millions of war victims, of which the Nanking Massacre and the crimes of No. 731 Special Forces are but two particularly atrocious cases. Such massively shared suffering and injustice, however, as vivid as it must have been in each war victims' minds, remained ultimately private and individual: for many years after the building of the new state, it seldom if ever, found its way into the public sphere of expression.

Why is this the case? One of the goals of this chapter is to delve into this curious phenomenon and to seek explanations from a cultural sociological point of view. As scholars of cultural trauma powerfully demonstrated, even widely shared suffering and injustice of enormous scale are not collectively traumatic in themselves, I argue that the horrendous misery and mass destruction brought by the war was never able to be translated into a cultural trauma for the collectivity; not only has there not been a successful trauma process occurring, the significance of the war was largely diminished by the triumph of other cultural traumas that had been powerfully constructed.

My tasks in this chapter are therefore twofold. First, I attempt to reconstruct a grand narrative constructed in Mao's era that tells the people about the modern history of China which eventually leads to the building of the new state. I argue that the new national collectivity was built through the successful construction of a cultural trauma, a trauma of the old society when all the evil forces joined together to inflict injury and unbearable pain upon Chinese people. At the core of this 'grand' collective trauma, there was the more intensified and heightened trauma-drama of class struggle, where the evil perpetrators in the old society were 'condensed' and 'epitomized' into an absolute evil of class enemy and the unspeakable pain and suffering of the proletarian victims were recreated and relived by a broad sphere of people, who were solidly united into a new class collectivity via a strong symbolic and emotional identification with the victims.

My second task is to examine how the experience of the War of Resistance Against Japan fits into this grand narrative. Tracing the representation of the war in the public sphere of Mao's China and analyzing its relation with the grand narrative, I argue that the depiction and interpretation of the war is to certain extent determined by the intrinsic logic and strength of the

¹¹⁷ There perhaps has never been an accurate statistic of the loss of lives and numbers of casualties caused by the War of Resistance against Japan in Chinese society since the end of the War. There seems to be several official versions of estimation on both sides of the Taiwan strait, by the Nationalist government and the PRC government respectively; but none could claim to be THE most precise estimation. In general, the most widely spread version in PRC is that the cost of lives amounted at least up to twenty millions. The number I quoted came from estimation from the Nationalist government in Taiwan, as made clear in an article written by Chiang Kai-shek's son in memorization of the ex-president who led the war of resistance.