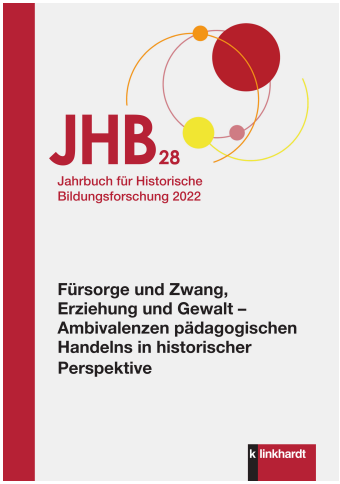
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Fürsorge und Zwang, Erziehung und Gewalt – Ambivalenzen pädagogischen Handelns in historischer Perspektive

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The Enforcement and Protection in the Paidopoleis of the Greek Civil War : The Education During the War

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The Enforcement and Protection in the Paidopoleis of the Greek Civil War: The Education During the War

Zusammenfassung

In unserem Artikel versuchen wir das Leben der Kinder zu skizzieren, die während des Bürgerkriegs in die griechischen Kinderdörfer verlegt wurden. Der griechische Bürgerkrieg, der nach dem Ende der deutschen Besatzung (1944) ausbrach und mehr als drei Jahre (März 1946 – Oktober 1949) dauerte, überzog das Land, insbesondere die ländlichen Gebiete mit Gewaltausbrüchen, führte zum Versagen staatlicher Institutionen und etablierte einen Status von Notstandsmaßnahmen, Unsicherheit, Angst, Armut und Elend, in dessen Folge große Spannungen in den sozialen Verhältnissen entstanden. In diesem Zusammenhang kam es zu einer der umstrittensten Vorgänge des Bürgerkriegs, nämlich zur Entwurzelung und Überführung von Kindern, zum einen in die Länder Osteuropas durch die Evakuierungsprogramme der Partisanen, aber auch in die speziellen Kinderdörfer der griechischen Regierung mit Hilfe der Armee. Der vorliegende Artikel konzentriert sich auf die Kinderdörfer, die während des Bürgerkriegs auf griechischem Territorium betrieben wurden – und zwar ab dem Sommer 1947 – als etwa 18.000 Kinder auf Initiative der Regierung von ihrem Wohnort entfernt und in 52 Kinderdörfern untergebracht wurden. Das Ziel war, wie es in offiziellen Regierungsdokumenten heißt, sie vor der Armut, Not und Gewalt des Krieges zu schützen. Gleichzeitig war laut derselben Quellen der Zweck der Kinderdörfer, die Kinder zu einer Ideologie des „Nationalbewusstseins" zu erziehen, in diesem Fall zu einem extremen Nationalismus. Durch die Untersuchung der damaligen legalen und illegalen Presse in offiziellen Archivquellen, sowie in privaten Dokumenten, erforschen wir die Widersprüche des täglichen Lebens in den Kinderdörfern; wir untersuchten Bemühungen, Kinder vor Kriegsgewalt zu schützen, aber in einem Kontext, der sowohl in seiner Organisationsstruktur als auch durch vorsätzliche ideologische Manipulation und nationalistische Erziehung gewalttätig war.

Paidopoleis, Bürgerkrieg, Trauma, Kinderschutz, Flüchtlinge

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Abstract
In our paper we attempt to illustrate the everyday lives of the children who were transferred to Paidopoleis during the civil war in Greece. The Greek civil war that followed the end of the German occupation (1944) and lasted 3 years (March 1946 – October 1949) resulted in a surge of violence in Greece, especially in the rural areas, rendered the smooth operation of Greek institutions impossible and established a new regime of constant and urgent measures, fear and poverty which led to tension among the social groups. Under these circumstances, one of the most controversial acts during the civil war took place, namely the transportation of children towards Eastern European countries by the rebels and towards the Paidopoleis by the Government, with the assistance of the army. Our paper focuses on the Paidopoleis that operated in the rural areas of Greece from the summer of 1947, when, under the Government's orders, approximately 18000 children were taken from their homes and settled in 52 Paidopoleis the aim of which was to protect them from the wretched living conditions and the violence, according to official state files. At the same time, according to the same sources, the Paidopoleis aimed at shaping the children's ideology into a deeply nationalist one. We aim to provide insight on the everyday life in Paidopoleis through the study of official archives, the legal and illegal press of that period and personal testimonies. We also studied the attempts to protect the children from the violence of war, amidst an environment that caused violence both in terms of brutality in the institutions and achieving an ideological brainwashing and manipulation towards in order to impose the nationalist ideology.

Paidopoleis, civil war, trauma, child protection, refugees

1 Introduction

This paper deals with the Paidopoleis in Greece during the civil war when an initiative from the Greek government, the Welfare for the Rural Areas of Northern Greece, the army, and charities, removed approximately 18.000 children from their homes and moved to 52 Paidopoleis.[1]
Even though Greece was among the winners during World War II, the nation suffered a significant loss rendering its state devastating.[2] During the three and a half years of Occupation Greece lost almost 30% of its national wealth and approximately 7.5% of its population. The day after the emancipation of Greece, the country's socio-economic situation was ruined, profiteering, hyperinflation, and

1 Cf. Royal Welfare Fund 1956, p. 8.
2 Cf. Nikolinakos 1976, p. 66.

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the black market came into prominence, the British pound replaced the Greek currency, and the population was starving.[3]

A few years after World War II ended, Greece became the battlefield for the first confrontation of the Cold War, which was crucial for international developments in the following decades. The civil war between the Democratic Army of Greece (DSE) and the National Army (NA), which lasted for more than three years (March 1946 – October 1949), resulted in the formation of a sociopolitical scene that differed significantly from one of the pre-war years. A great part of the National Liberation Front (EAM), the main movement of opposition during the Occupation period was backed by the Communist Party of Greece (KKE) that had the support of the socialist countries that joined the DSE, whereas the NA, which was backed by the Government, had the support of Great Britain and, after 1947, the USA. The civil war took place mainly in Northern Greece, and it was rife with the violence of the social conflicts.

The war occurred in rural areas because the DSE, namely the revolutionary army, didn't threaten urban centers. The countryside became a battlefield for the second time in the 1940s, which caused waves of migration to the largest cities.

> "In a few years, hundreds of thousands of men and women, some willingly, others not, abandoned their villages: some joined the DSE, and the NA transported many more to cities to settle temporarily until the civil war ended".[4]

One of the most controversial topics of that period was the transportation of children by the revolutionaries towards eastern European countries and towards the Paidopoleis (children's cities) by the Greek government. The matter of the children constituted an additional reason for conflict between the two parties.[5]

Did the transportation of children to the Paidopoleis aim at protecting them from the dangers of the ongoing wars? Was it part of the welfare plan of the Greek government for children during the post-war period, or was their integration into the Paidopoleis a way to reduce the influence of the rebels on children? Was the protection of children merely a pretext like a denouncement of "Free Greece", namely a radio station of the rebels, states?

In this paper we will try to answer these questions by examing the Genika Arexia tou Kratous, the archive of the former Royal Places, in the Greek Literary and Historical Archive, the archive of Irini Kalliga in the Benaki Historical Museum, and the archive of Elli Zalokosta. We also studied oral statements of people who lived in Paidopoleis, as documented in books and researches relevant to this subject.

3 Cf. Stathakis 2010, p. 93.
4 Voglis 2009, p. 328.
5 Cf. Kliafa 2016, p. 3.

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The issue of the children started getting researched more closely during the last decade of the 20th century as, regarding the civil war, the Greek society was more or less silent for about half a century. Our research consists of testimonies, studies, articles, and books which have started documenting the children's issues during the war over the last twenty years.

We understand that the sources we used in this study and their authors shouldn't be considered an objective reflection of that period due to the potential ideological and philosophical biases. Those sources once had to serve some people's purpose. They lack information, deliberately or not, promote and add other information, and are subjective.[6] The government of that time, which was none other than the creator of the Paidopoleis and the Royal Palaces, influenced even the services that preserved these sources.[7] Using the interpretative method, we attempted to ask questions about the collected evidence to unravel their truth since we dealt with those files not as "the absolute proof of any truth, but the undeniable witness, the meaning of whom we must recover by asking questions".[8] In our research, we used oral testimonies of people that lived in Paidopoleis. Those testimonies bear differences as expected since they reflect the identities and backgrounds of each individual.[9] However, we consider that they can contribute to putting an end to the silent and unseen perspectives of historical events. They could also challenge the written historical data about themselves that they did not have the chance to write back then.[10]

The empirical research we have conducted on those archives was complemented by an interpretative process of recreating and comprehending the sociopolitical and ideological framework in which the Paidopoleis was established, with the aid of the interpretative method used in humanitarian and social studies.

2 The Great Victims of the War

The poverty and devastation that dominated post-war Greece were extremely damaging for the children. The images described in the educational press of that period were disheartening. "If someone looks at any school, rural or urban, they will see children naked, barefoot, devastated, and sick".[11] The war destroyed many families, disabled, and sickened many parents, preventing them from working. The war orphaned or separated children from their immediate family members.

6 Cf. Arvanitakis 2014, pp. 291–292.
7 Cf. Offenstadt 2007, pp. 38–39.
8 Farge 2004, p. 114.
9 Cf. Halbwachs 2013, p. 28.
10 Cf. Deacon/Mngqolo/Prosalendis as cited in Vlaxaki, 2021, p. 113.
11 Educational Inspection 1947, p. 446.

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Based on evidence collected by the Agency of Social Welfare between 1945 and 1947, there were approximately 250.000 orphans, a small number of which were in state institutions, *orphanages*, kindergartens and prevantoria whereas forty to fifty thousand (40.000–50.000) children were considered unprotected. The majority of those children were between seven and fourteen years of age.[12] For the majority of the Greek population, the living conditions were dreadful. The hunger and the lack of basic goods to provide people with decent living conditions led to the prominence of many illnesses, especially for the children of poorer families. Tuberculosis patients were continuously increasing in numbers. The Greek representative in the Educators' Convention in London estimated that about three hundred thousand children in Greek schools either had tuberculosis or had recovered from it. This number looks even more outstanding if the total population of five million citizens of Greece is considered.[13] Trachoma, "namely the disease of the poor who live in suffering and dirt",[14] infested children even in their infancy and slowly blinded them. Due to poor nutrition, many children were rickety or suffered from dermal ailments. In Macedonia and Thessaly, malaria was severely threatening, and the health services could not deal with this situation due to a lack of medicine and funding. […] "oftentimes the doctor could only provide one quinine tablet per patient".[15]

According to a member of the Cultural Committee of the U. N., the diseases and the traumatic war scenes led to many children being irritable, overly sensitive, distracted, tired, and "behaving strangely".[16] The sustenance of the Greek children was of primary importance, but the foreign provision of UNRAs aid was running out while the civil war was still going on, and many soup kitchens had ceased their operation, resulting in the worsening of the children's health. The livestock units left in the country were not enough to cover the needs of milk and there was no capital for import.[17]

Schools throughout the country couldn't provide adequate learning environments, and their reconstruction was incredibly slow. A third of the primary schools were not operating until 1949 and among those were the single-grade schools of rural Greece, mainly because of a general sense of fear and insecurity triggered by the ongoing civil war in those areas.[18] According to the Ministry of Health, schools in the northern rural areas of Greece, Macedonia, Thrace, and Epirus, where the war mostly took place, were closed due to a lack of teachers.[19]

12 Ibid.
13 Modern Greek Education 1945, p. 7.
14 Stefanou 1948, p. 4.
15 Didaskalikon Vima 1947, p. 8.
16 Ibid.
17 Ibid.
18 Cf. Papadaki 1950, p. 34.
19 Cf. Modern Greek Education 1945 p. 16.

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Under the pressure of the civil war, the rural population of Greece left their homes, either willingly or forcefully, to settle in slums around the cities.
Because the residents of many montane villages of the country were willingly or unwillingly cooperating with the rebels by providing them with food and medicine, informing them of the NA's whereabouts and in some cases fighting on their side, the NA transported approximately 706.000 people from 1948 to 1949 to cut the rebels off any possible aid.[20]
The refugees were concentrated in slums and lived in unhygienic conditions. They were on the outskirts of large cities, in makeshift housing protected by chunks of wood, tinplates, plates of zinc, paper, or pieces of cloth, far from their jobs and properties, without light, sewer system, enough food, water, or even medical care and education for the children, who were wandering around the slums all day.[21]
In August 1948, 90.000 children lived in refugee camps, either with their families or alone, without any protection, on outskirts adjacent to the battlefields. Only 4.000 were receiving daily food rations, while no children could attend school.[22]
The health state of the children in the wretched villages was dramatic. They were very dirty because soap was hard to find. They also suffered from hunger and dermal illnesses caused by the war, such as trachoma and malaria. The percentage of those wretched by adenopathy and early symptoms of tuberculosis was severely high. They were all small-bodied with marked bodies and worrisome faces and appeared much older than they were. A picture that a smile could rarely improve, as stated in Unesco's "The book of needs".[23] Official sources called for the need to protect the children of rural areas, especially amidst a war, which was becoming even more violent.[24]

3 The *Paidopoleis*

Under these circumstances, the initiative of Queen Frederica in June 1947 to fund an organization, the Welfare for the Rural Areas of Northern Greece which also became known as "The Fundraiser", for the "rescue of the population that had been victims of gangs and especially those threatened with the enslavement of children"[25] undoubtedly led to the protection of the children against the impact of the war.

20 Cf. Laiou 2002, p. 80.
21 Cf. Margaritis 2005, p. 600.
22 Cf. Brosse 1949, p. 26.
23 UNESCO 1947, p. 51.
24 Cf. GAK, Archive of the former Royal Palaces, f. 1229: Journal of the 5th Convention of the Executive Committee of The Fundraiser "Welfare for the Rural Areas of Northern Greece", 04.07.1947, GAK, Archive of the former Royal Palaces, f. 1222: Report of Alexandra Mela to the Committee of Coordination of The Fundraiser for the Welfare of Northern Rural Areas, 15 August 1947.
25 ELIA, Archive of Eirini Kalliga: Alexandra Mela: The Chronicle, p. 6.

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An Executive Committee, many prominent figures of the socioeconomic life of that period, and people of the church, who took part in this committee's variations, operated the organization. In addition, the 'Appointed Ladies', volunteers from high social classes with experience in charitable work also played an important role. The Fundraiser was dealing with large amounts of money coming from donations, mainly from taxation on luxury goods and spectacles.[26]
The Fundraiser's schedule involved gathering the lost children and the orphans in Paidopoleis and locating them in safe areas. The Red Cross would help with the children's transportation and allocating besides with the medical care of the patients.[27]
The attempts made in Greece matched those of most European countries as part of a general reconstruction plan for Europe after WWII. For the ethical and economic reorganization of the nation, it was necessary to rehabilitate those lost children that the war forcibly separated from their homes and families.[28]
Towards the end of the 19th century, when a reorganization and improvement of the educational systems in Europe took place, the government's contribution to the education of the country's future citizens became a priority. The nation's goals aligned with the well-being of the children as they were considered its source of power.[29]
After WWII, children became the symbol of the goals for the restructuring of Europe. Many European countries funded a series of welfare measures and officially established children's rights. At the same time, they claimed the right to interfere more with family matters. During the Cold War, when opportunities for children were considered an essential factor for a country's general development, the conflict between the countries under the influence of the Soviet Union and those of Western Europe extended further to the decisions for the welfare of children.[30]

4 When the State Protects

In the case of children's transportation during the Civil War, a significant number of children were indeed rehabilitated in the Paidopoleis willingly, even if it was per the request of their families who were unable to fulfil their basic needs and believed that the Paidopoleis could ensure a better future for their children as it would provide them with homes, food, water, medical care, education and goods which were not a given for most people in the rural Greece of the 1940s.[31]

26 Cf. Vervenioti 2021, pp. 439–440.
27 Cf. ELIA, Archive of Eirini Kalliga: Alexandra Mela: The Chronicle, p. 12.
28 Cf. Zahra 2011, p. 332.
29 Cf. Venken/Röger, 2015, p. 200.
30 Ibid.
31 Cf. Hasiotis 2013, pp. 189–191 and GAK, Central Service/Archive of the former Royal Palaces f. 1214.

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The matter of sustenance in a country with people striving for survival was crucial and became an object of criticism and conflict. Were the children appropriately fed? Even though the reports of the Paidopoleis leaders and the Appointed Ladies mentioned that there were some issues with the supply of food at times,[32] the members of The Fundraiser strongly supported that the provided food was enough, the children ate well, and any word for lack of food was untrue. Their diet consisted of four meals and included meat three times a week, pasta, rice, fish, vegetables, legume, fruits, and sweets,[33] as stated in official State sources.

The Welfare for the Rural Areas of Northern Greece report from 1948 to 1949 mentioned the approximate distribution of 32.660.000 food rations for those children during that period. Their diet consisted of about 2700 calories daily, and it was determined based on the possibilities to find food, the children's age, and the seasons of the year.[34]

It is notable that whatever issues were mentioned in those reports were very difficult to publish as the creation of the Paidopoleis was to protect children from the rebels, according to official statements. The image of a government striving to save its children could not be spoiled by news regarding issues with the children's clothing, food, housing, and education.

The archives we studied presented the hygienic conditions and medical care as good as the provision of food. Michael Pesmatzoglou supported in his report about the work of the Welfare for the Rural Areas of Northern Greece during 1948–1950 that in those two years, there was no epidemic within the Paidopoleis. He considered the documentation of only the death of eight children as an indicator of the favorable living conditions of the Paidopoleis.[35]

Concerning schools, the children of Paidopoleis had to receive a very basic education, according to the plan of the Ministry of Education. The children attended public schools in the areas in which the Paidopoleis belonged.[36] Those who were too young to go to school were kept busy by educational activities with the guidance of counselors (they were women).[37]

The schools of Paidopoleis had detached teachers from public schools.[38] There was a focus on the children's physical wellness, which resulted in the hiring of PE

32 Cf. The first convention of leaders of the Paidopoleis 956, p. 15,00, 21, 38, GAK, Archive of the former Royal Palaces, f. 1222: Program for the creation of a Paidopolis in Macedonia, 11.07.1947; f, 1214, To Mr. Minister of Social Welfare, 6/9/1948, f. 12414, To E. S. P. D. E., 23.07.1948.

33 Cf. The first convention of leaders of the Paidopoleis 1956.

34 Cf. ELIA, Archive of Eirini Kalliga: Alexandra Mela, The Chronicle. p. 62.

35 Cf. Eleftheria, 04/03/1950, pp. 4–5.

36 Cf. GAK, Archive of the former Royal Palaces, f. 1229: Journal of the 34th Convention of the Executive Committee of The Fundraiser "Regulations for the operation of Paidopoleis", 14.06.1948.

37 ELIA, Eirini Kalliga, The first convention of leaders of the Paidopoleis, 1956, pp. 74–75.

38 Cf. GAK, Archive of the former Royal Palaces, f. 1231: Circular number 6, "Training of boarders in Paidopoleis", 13.09.1948.

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teachers.[39] At the same time, many schools in Greece were either not functioning, functioning poorly, or lacking teachers. The school buildings and the equipment were in poor conditions like they were in the rest of the country. Many schools took place in soup kitchens, warehouses, or churches,[40] even though they lacked the necessary standards to become classrooms. Books, notebooks, and pencils were collected through donations or provided by the Ministry of Education and were not enough for all the children.[41]

Classes for the children who could not attend school during the past year amidst the war started in the summer of 1948.[42] There were also professional technical shops.[43] The Fundraiser created specialized shops like sawmills, small textile industries, and shoemakers to realize its goals by providing the children with knowledge necessary for their future lives. The specialized shops prepared children for technical schools and also had them produce vital goods for everyday life in the Paidopoleis.[44] The children contributed to the smooth operation of the Paidopoleis in an attempt to teach them about discipline, obedience, work ethics, character-shaping, and improve their self-esteem, as well as promote order when it comes to running a home or being part of society.[45]

The children that scored high grades could continue their education in junior high school. Those who didn't score high grades attended professional technical shops if they were boys or other technical schools[46] if they were girls, which reflects the social position of women of that time.[47] That measure provoked sentiments of discontentment and disappointment.[48] The Fundraiser realized the government educational politics of the government aimed at the enhancement of the professional and technical education in the country so the children, especially those of rural areas, would have acquired the proper knowledge to contribute to the restructuring and improvement of those lands to deal with the waves of migration towards

39 Cf. GAK, Archive of the former Royal Palaces, f. 1214: report of Nita Siniosoglou and Katerina Ksidi to the Special Office for the Medical care for Greek children, 14.07.1949.

40 Ibid.

41 Cf. Hasiotis 2013, pp. 189–191 and GAK Archive of the former Royal Palaces f. 1214.

42 Cf. GAK, Archive of the former Royal Palaces, f. 1231: Circular number 18, To all the Paidopoleis, 26.07.1948.

43 Cf. Boeschoten/Loring 2015, pp. 254–259.

44 Cf. Hasiotis 2013, p.189–191, and GAK, Archive of the former Royal Palaces f. 1214.

45 Ibid.

46 "The candidates for the technical schools needed to have the following qualities: a) to be good Greeks, b) to be between 16–19 years old, c) to have finished primary school, to have shown good manners and towards religion, parents and teachers and d) to love the field of practice they wish to follow." (GAK, Archive of the former Royal Palaces, f. 1229, Circular number 33, Professional training of refugee children)

47 Cf. Anagnostopoulou 2003, p. 31.

48 Cf. Boeschoten/Danfrth 2015, pp. 283–284.

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the cities. Despite the hindrances, some children managed to enter *Universities*,[49] which would have been impossible if they remained in their homes, based on their testimonies.[50] Many children shared the sentiment that their living conditions were better in the Paidopoleis, and their memory of that place remained positive.[51] Despite the subjectivity of information from state archives and personal testimonies, it is difficult to doubt that the Paidopoleis offered protection to the children during such a crucial period in Greek history. They were offered living conditions and education that were probably absent in their homelands, since a decade of continuous wars had destroyed the country's economy and had impoverished its citizens, especially those of distant montane areas.

It is also difficult to doubt that the state's motive was not entirely about helping the children.

The measures to help the children had additional motives. They were considered to be of great value in post-war society,[52] and their "rescue" from the rebels and their subsequent transportation abroad was a matter of dominance for the government and served its political scheme.

In post-war Europe, there was an uproar regarding the ownership of lands that came under the control of rebels, the local elite, or foreign forces for some periods.[53] In this way, the protection of children indicated that the Greek government could control the rural areas.

5 When the Government Dictates

The government opted for the children to settle in camps rather than families to ensure better medical supervision, ethical behavior, and education.[54] This measure seems justifiable considering the wretched state of most families in Greece at that time. However, the way the Paidopoleis operated and the children's daily schedule was undoubtedly oppressive and controlling on some levels.

The Paidopoleis operated partially per military standards. There was daily raising and lowering of the Greek flag in an official, mandatory and oppressive manner. Their homes and clothing resembled the military standards, as they were all identical.[55] The Paidopoleis forced children to be disciplined and respectful towards

49 ELIA, Archive of the Royal Welfare, Decade Report 1947–1957, p. 41.
50 Cf. Anagnostopoulou 2003, p. 36.
51 Cf. Boeschoten/Danforth 2015, pp. 254–259.
52 Cf. Vervenioti 2009, p. 83.
53 Cf. Mazower 2004, p. 17.
54 Cf. GAK, Archive of the former Royal Palaces, f. 1229: Journal of the 29th Convention of the Executive committee of The Fundraiser "Welfare for the Rural Areas of Northern Greece" 08.03.1948.
55 Cf. Hasiotis 2013, pp. 189–191; GAK, Archive of the former Royal Palaces f. 1214.

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people of higher authority, which was also apparent from the uniformity of their clothing.[56] The strict hierarchy governed the relations between the children and the staff of the institutions. The "spirit of authority and distance" was dominant. The staff ordered, and the children followed.

> "The facilities were organized like the army. We were all divided into groups, 'the units', with commanders and counselors. Every morning we had to stand in front of our bunk. The discipline was strict. We would wake up early like, in the army, they were waiting outside with whistles and had us do physical training, make our beds, and wash up. At noon we had to be in bed, and if we were not silent, we were forced to clean the toilets like in the army. Our bunks were of the military type, one above the other", says a boarder in the technical school of Leros.[57]

The children were always in formation, in trips, cinema, theatre, monuments, and even within the Paidopoleis. They moved in lines to go to school while singing patriotic anthems. They could only tell the time by the ringing bell, and they had no clocks or calendars. They were never idle. They were always doing homework or participating in team activities and had no personal space or time for themselves.[58] A greater authority had control over children's time, and they could do nothing to affect that. They were "little soldiers" that would have to behave a certain way all day and were punished per military standards to "fix" their character's flaws.[59] The cold, mandatory, forceful, and oppressive nature of life in Paidopoleis, combined with the lack of personal space and time rendered them a complete dominant state over the children's lives by an invisible authority, which caused feelings of discontent among the children, "… we were all concentrated like in military camps, we did everything in groups. We could not do anything individually" says a child of that period. However, he was not opposed to that kind of collective life "if 70% of our days were miserable, 30% were joyful when we did group activities that were not mandatory".[60] Even though the methods of operation in the Paidopoleis resembled those of the experiential education of John Dewey, the army-like system the children had to follow renders that resemblance untrue since it completely disregarded the main idea of the children's agency.

As per their creator's statements, the Paidopoleis aimed at shaping the character of the children to fit the "healthy" values of the nation and at protecting them from the influence of the communist ideology.[61] What is worth mentioning is that when

56 Cf. Papazahariou, 1956, p. 100.

57 Cf. Boeschoten/Danforth 2015, pp. 250–251.

58 Cf. Hasiotis, 2013, pp. 189–191; GAK, Archive of the former Royal Palaces f. 1214; Daliani/Mazower, 2004, p. 113.

59 Cf. Papazahariou 1956, pp. 106–107.

60 Cf. Boeschoten/Danfrth, 2015, p. 266.

61 Cf. GAK, Archive of the former Royal Palaces, f. 1214: Journal of the 52nd Convention of the Special Office for the Medical care for Greek children, last speech of the Director-General Lampros Boulalas, p. 5, 23.06.1949.

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the children were to be returned home in the summer of 1949, those who had parents who were leftists, executed, imprisoned, or exiled were excluded from this repatriation to not be influenced and become rebels.[62] They expected the children to contribute to the dissemination of the imposed narrative against the enemies in the rural areas and to pass their nationalist ideology to the rest of the people in their homelands.

This ideology was anti-communist. At that time, Greece was one of the western countries against communism, despite being surrounded by communist nations. However, it was also a country that recently reclaimed its freedom, and the main force that helped in that achievement was the National Liberation Front (NLF), which considerably consisted of communists. During and after the civil war, the government's political plan focused on the need to militarily and ideologically defeat the NLF, the conservative social class manipulation, and the silencing of those who supported the NLF.[63] The language of nationalism, characterized by an overly aggressive anti-communist strategy was under the conservative ideology in most areas of Greece.[64] The attempt of nationalists to create a unified ideological front led to an ideology based onpre-capitalist values and values that served a society of military discipline.[65]

During the Cold War, the opposing ideology and values to the socialists who aimed for equality were that of the Christian civilization, which was considered able to become the link for the western countries contributing to the emergence of a unified western society. The direction toward a common Christian civilization, which prevailed during the entirety of the 1950s, both within Greece and internationally,[66] led the Greeks to vision a Christian-centric Greek civilization.[67] It aimed to correlate Greece with Christianity and shape the entire society following Christian values and etiquette.[68] Christianity would become the governing force and the base for the sociopolitical development of Greece.

Indirectly, the projects of nationalism were part of all aspects of Greek life, and the language in educational contexts served that ideology. Thousands of minors in the Paidopoleis were taught based on the principles of the nationalist ideology. Christian organizations and Sunday schools interfered with the everyday life of the Paidopoleis,[69] while the education of children based on the values of a Christian civilization was rife with anti-communist propaganda. Most institutions had political and religious training twice a week.[70] Christianity and anti-communism were deeply

62 Cf. IAMM/458. Archive of Elli Zalokosta: f. 2: Executive Committee to the Paidopoleis.
63 Cf. Bournazos 2009, pp. 9–10.
64 Ibid., pp. 11–12.
65 Cf. Theodorou 2019, pp. 142–143.
66 Cf. Gousidis 1989, p. 51.
67 Cf. Siganou 2008, p. 106.
68 Cf. Maczewski 2002, p. 59.
69 Cf. Hasiotis 2013, pp. 189–191; GAK, Archive of the former Royal Palaces f. 1214.
70 Cf. Daliani/Mazower, 2004, p. 114.

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connected since the battle against communism were painted as a type of crusade for the salvation of faith. Were these goals achieved peacefully, or was violence inflicted upon the children? Official files didn't document violent incidents, but children of the Paidopoleis referred to the use of violence. Traganos K. in "Travelogue to the Paidopolis of Ziros" highlights that "some children were beaten up a lot with wooden planks by unsuitable educators. Those were the minority. The rest of the teachers and staff came in between and stopped any instances of violence."[71] Another boarder mentioned that, despite being treated well in general, there were cruel punishments like teachers encouraging the students to spit on a child who was not that well behaved.[72] Examples like the previously mentioned didn't appear in the authoritative people reports, and The Fundraiser didn't utter a response about those cases. In general, the official educational policy of the government was against physical abuse. However, the children suffered physical and emotional abuse, with the latter being more frequent, according to documented statements.

Many children of the Paidopoleis came from violent missions of transportation by the National Army in areas that were deemed "dangerous". We do not possess enough evidence to claim that the government ordered the violent integration of children in the Paidopoleis, but many children were undeniably forced to integrate without their or their parents' agreement, especially when the soldiers showcased extreme behavior. In many cases, parents were not willing to hand over their children to the authorities,[73] whereas others directly refused to let their children in the Paidopoleis.[74] It is worth noting that the children of women who were imprisoned or exiled for joining the rebellious front were transferred to Paidopoleis despite their mothers' wishes to remain with relatives[75] and couldn't communicate with them.[76]

Those children had to deal with grave issues in the Paidopoleis. Since they came from northern Greece, where the rebels maintained control for a significant time, one of the goals of the state's educational program regarding their "spiritual growth" was to instill the Nationalist ideology.[77]

The Paidopoleis instigators stated that when the Paidopoleis closed and the children returned to their homes, "the abandoned children of the gangsters, collected and rescued from the danger of the communist filth, were returned with an uplifted spirit and mind".[78]

71 Fafaliou 2020, p. 245.
72 Cf. Papadimitropoulou 1977; Fafaliou 2020, p. 245.
73 Cf. GAK, Archive of the former Royal Palaces, f. 1214: Zarifis' report, Paparigopoulos to the Coordinating Committee of Medical Care for Greek children, 21.06.1948.
74 Cf. Hasiotis, 2013, pp. 189–191; GAK, Archive of the former Royal Palaces f. 1214.
75 Cf. Daliani-Karampatzaki, as cited in Farfaliou 2020, pp. 170–171.
76 Cf. Fafaliou, 2020, p. 185.
77 Cf. ELIA, Archive of the Royal Welfare, Decade Report 1947–1957, p. 39.
78 ELIA, Archive of Eirini Kalliga: Alexandra Mela: The Chronicle, p. 12.

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The majority of them were conflicted concerning their ideological and sentimental stance on the concepts of nation and religious faith. The Paidopoleis aimed to safeguard the children from the rebels, the ideological influence that the communist ideas would have on them, even more, if they came from leftist families.[79]
The rebels were described in nationalist speeches as malicious enemies of the nation from the inside, agents of the Slavs, atheists, and sworn enemies of the Greek and Christian values. The children had to erase them as their parents. They had to betray their parents, who betrayed the nation and abandoned God. They were considered filth that poisoned the nation. Their children had to go through a process of cleansing. They had to renounce them, remove themselves from them and adapt to the nation's standard to which they owed their existence and protection.
Those children not only had to deal with their significant loss and the forced erasure of their past, but they also had to deal with being targeted as possible future traitors. Their identity was under attack, and the psychological abuse they had to endure worsened the trauma caused by the ongoing war. The Fundraiser staff supported that there was no discrimination among the children. They were not separated into children of rebels and children of nationalists. However, testimonies prove them wrong.

> "They always chose the children of rebels for physical labor", and "we, the children of rebels, were treated differently, not only by the authorities of the Paidopoleis but the rest of the children were manipulated into turning against us as well. Do you know what it feels like to be at such a sensitive age and be told: "You lost your parents. Who killed them? The rebels. Look, the parents of this kid were like that", "the counselors were asking the children in the chamber in front of everyone what their father was killed from. You would fight with someone in the chamber of 25 children and they would say: "why are you shouting? Your father was a communist!"[80]

Another group of children who faced hardships in the Paidopoleis was those who came from communities of northern Greece that spoke Slavic, Turkish (but not the Muslim ones), and Albanian.
The identity of those kids went through a big crisis of conflict. The nationalist ideas were a mental exile for them as they were excluded from the supposed national unity the nationalists expressed. The nation was considered to consist of people sharing the "same blood", meaning they had shared characteristics that defined their strengths and weaknesses and were inherited throughout the generations.[81] The children, who were from different cultural backgrounds, had to be "Hellenized". It was

79 Cf. IAMM/458, Archive of Elli Zalokosta: f. 2: Executive Committee to the Paidopoleis, Athens, 20.07.1949.
80 Boeschoten/Danforth 2015, pp. 265–267.
81 Cf. Kalliafas 1949, pp. 10–11.

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considered that the education in the Paidopoleis could be "a starting point for them to learn the Greek language, history and the virtues of our race".[82]
The nationalists described the Greek nation as messianic, going through the centuries unchanged and having one goal: to civilize the barbarian tribes that surrounded it. Those surrounding nations, especially the Slavs, were considered unable to create a "higher human culture".[83]
In the case of bilingual children, the attack on their identity was extended to prohibit them from using their mother tongue. Within the framework of a program for the erasure of the "barbaric languages", the children had to renounce a part of their identity to be accepted among the rest of the Greeks.[84]
Trayan Dimitriou, a Slavic-speaking border of the Royal Technical School of Leros recounts:

> "We were kept separate in an environment in which the only option you had was to speak Greek. We could not use any other language. Of course, at that time they would not call it Macedonian because… it was common to call the Macedonians 'filthy Bulgarians'. So, the Macedonians became 'filthy Bulgarians', 'traitors', 'Slavs' or communists… Our parents were the target. When we would return we would have to be the ones to show them the light and save the nation. They always debased the environment in which we grew up. On one side they tried to humiliate us and make us believe we belonged in that group of people and on the other side they tried to persuade us that we were better than that".[85]

Both the children of leftist families and the bilingual children in the Paidopoleis were regarded as having committed the original sin from which they had to be cleansed by proving their faith and devotion to the nation and Christianity and renouncing their families.
According to the nationalist narrative, the children were in the Paidopoleis because the nation was confronting enemies who wanted to eliminate the Greeks biologically and had to rescue and protect its children. The nation had to take the role of a parent to stop the removal of children from the national body since their actual parents could not or were deemed unfit to fulfill this role. "When the nation becomes a parent, the actual parents disappear".[86] According to the authorities' words of that time, the children primarily belonged to the nation, not their families, which started an outrage abroad, as organizations and groups of people who had nothing to do with socialism regarded it as an absolutist ideology.[87] Limiting the personal space

82 GAK, Archive of the former Royal Palaces, f. 1227: Report of Eleni Ntaountaki to the Executive Committee, Athens 28.04.1948.
83 Cf. Kalliafas 1949, p. 40.
84 Cf. Boeschoten/Danforth 2015, p. 143.
85 Boeschoten/Danforth, 2015, p. 251.
86 Dubinsky as cited in Boeschoten/Danforth 2015, p. 145
87 Cf. Hasiotis 2013, pp. 189–191; GAK, Archive of the former Royal Palaces f. 1214: 3rd Mission Report of Lamia. 14.07.1949, p. 282.

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and time of the children in the semi-military operation of the Paidopoleis received an additional meaning. The persons' dreams, feelings, and passions had to succumb to the needs and commands of the nation that dominated and oppressed its citizens. The life and future of the children were linked to the nation's future, rendering their wishes insignificant compared to the country's goals.

6 Conclusion

The attempt to write about even a part of the Paidopoleis history, the combined effort of understanding and evaluating the sources and the oral evidence is a complex and risky undertaking. We tried to draw information from a core of evidence that revolved around subjectivity, like the beginning and end of the war.

In the end, what was the situation of the children in the Paidopoleis? It is difficult to provide a definitive answer because that requires a deep understanding of the living conditions and drawing conclusions from multiple and often conflicting evidence, whose evaluation bears undeniably the subjectivity of a modern outlook due to the used methods. The archives were mainly traces of evidence, and from that, we had to mentally recreate the multifaceted reality of that period by analyzing the events and understanding them in depth. This process becomes even more arduous if we consider that the events of that period are a historical "trauma" for modern society to face. A usual narrative is not agreed upon regarding those events by the majority of the Greek community.

The Paidopoleis historical data is relatively recent, and it had to resurface in a society that has decided to uncover and deal with its past while also redefining its identity in the modern world. In the cases of the entirely conflicting sources we came across on the life of children in the Paidopoleis, we opted for the stance of the historian who:

> "will oftentimes be suspicious to their friends, to their political party: the historian will be the person who, out of pleasure, wants to complicate things, feels empathy for the enemy, shows the opposite side of the coin and takes the most difficult, or at least the bravest decision".[88]

To what degree did the children's education in the Paidopoleis fulfill the purpose of protecting them, and to what degree was this purpose undermined through practices of violent commands on the children that satisfied the government's wishes? These questions are difficult to answer. Many researchers conclude that the family and social environment from which the children came and to which they returned played a vital role in the decisions they later took as adults. In any case, the attempt of the society to protect, guide, and often manipulate the children affected them but did not single-handedly define their lives, since it was met with a strong will for self-identification.

88 Marrou 2006, p. 401.

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