

Greek-German Relations during the Military Dictatorship in Greece (1967-1974)

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Datum, Ort: 06.10.2020–07.10.2020, digital

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The international digital symposium is part of the previous collaboration between the Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung (FES) and the Greek Archive for Contemporary Social History (ASKI) and follows on from their joint exhibition, which was shown under the same title as the symposium both in Germany and Greek (2017-2019). The aim of the symposium was to set a multiperspective input and to raise awareness for a quite insufficiently researched field, but also to demonstrate historical movements and acts of transnational solidarity in times of an increasing right-wing populism in Europe.

ANJA KRÜKE (Bonn) welcomed the plenum by recapping the past collaboration between FES and ASKI, which has resulted in first productive projects but would still require further scientific as well as public attention.

In his contextualizing opening lecture VANGELIS KARAMANOLAKIS (Athens) emphasized the impact of anti-dictatorial Greek immigrants and their German sympathizers in West Germany on the anti-dictatorial resistance movement in Europe and the building of a public critical discourse against the military dictatorship in Greece.

Despite efforts to achieve multiperspectivity the perspective of the perpetrators and their sympathizers within the military regime was underrepresented in this symposium. According to SPIRIDON PAPAIOANOU (Regensburg), who unfortunately could not join the symposium, research has not considered possible actors and allies involved in the military regime, which he attributes in his academic paper mainly to the accessibility of suitable sources. Initial results of his research point to the activity of Greek spies in

West Germany and links between the German police and the military regime. While some assumptions can already be made about the way in which the Greek Secret Service obtained information about their opponents, much less is known about the activity of the German police and intelligence services and their attitude towards the resistance.

According to DIMITRIOS K. APOSTOLOPOULOS (Athens), the analysis of the Federal Government's attitude towards the military regime reveals an ambivalent relationship, which is mainly characterized by the moderate attitude of the Federal Government towards the junta regime in Greece. Apostolopoulos emphasized this by pointing out that there were no significant interruptions in the diplomatic relations between the Federal Republic and the military dictatorship due to the fact that Germany wanted to secure its political and economic interests by linking Greece to the West. He recalls that this changed to some extent with Greece's withdrawal from the Council of Europe and Willy Brandt's assumption of the chancellorship in 1969, which was expressed in the Federal Republic's official condemnation of the military regime and, under Brandt's influence, contributed to the political isolation in Europe.

In a totally different approach, LOUKAS BARTATILAS (Weimar) demonstrated signs of solidarity during the junta regime using the example of support within the Academy of Arts in Berlin (AdK) that was provided to Ioannis Despotopoulos alias Jan Despo, a Greek architect and elected member of the AdK, who had a longstanding socialist background. Therefore, immediately after the military coup both, he and members of the AdK, showed their concerns through exchanged letters about the political developments in Greece, as Bartatilas emphasized based on written sources. He illustrated concrete support measures of the AdK members, which became apparent after Jan Despo's dismissal at the National Technical University of Athens in 1968 and the publication of Despo's book at the Academy 1973, which would still be a symbol of German-Greek cooperation.

Academic solidarity was also addressed by GEORGE ILIOPOULOS (Athens), who dis-

cussed issue Nr. 57 (1970) of the German scientific journal *Das Argument* titled „Revolution and Counter-Revolution in Greece“. This special issue deals with modern Greece and the military dictatorship. According to Iliopoulos, it goes beyond a superficial condemnation of the military dictatorship, but rather outlines a more in-depth investigation based on socio-political analysis of the overall situation and its possible historical development lines. Despite a certain thematic one-dimensionality by focusing on the class differences within Greek society the special issue would have disseminated a fairly accurate historical reconstruction of modern Greek history abroad and thereby drew further attention to the political situation in Greece as well as the anti-dictatorial resistance.

Two presenters focused on the actors within the resistance movement against the military dictatorship. CHRYSA VACHTSEVANOU (Bonn) pointed out that soon after the establishment of the junta regime in Greece, anti-dictatorship organizations were formed in the circles of the Greek diaspora. According to Vachtsevanou, this type of social mobilization took place particularly in the Federal Republic of Germany by Greek guest workers and students living there. She noted that the anti-dictatorial movement was also supported by various actions of German trade unions and parts of German society, which often led to diplomatic tensions between Bonn and Athens. As examples of support, Vachtsevanou referred to two radio stations in West Germany, *Deutsche Welle* and *Bayrischer Rundfunk*.

ANTONIS SARANTIDIS (Athens) deepened the focus on the acts of resistance by Greek students abroad due to their role in mobilizing and organizing the anti-dictatorial resistance in Europe and therefore in building a public awareness for the criminal acts of the junta regime. As an example, he cited the European Student Conferences organized by the Greek Student Unions of Western Europe, which took place in Paris (1967), Lund (1969) and Copenhagen (1971). Besides the efforts to unify the European Greek student unions, Sarantidis mentioned that those conferences were also characterized by internal disagreements regarding the way of or-

ganizing and acting against the military dictatorship. Among other circumstances this would have been one of the reasons why there weren't any more conferences after 1971.

FRANK BÖSCH (Potsdam) referred to other West German actors and their involvement in the resistance against the junta regime: investigative journalists, the German boards of Amnesty International and the radio station *Deutsche Welle*. According to Bösch, these actors contributed to the efforts of public education about the military dictatorship by their way of gathering information and reporting. In the case of Amnesty International, Bösch noted that its German boards have had some political influence because of their role as a source of information for politicians, especially for the SPD. To some extent, *Deutsche Welle* reported critically about the junta in Greek language as well. These public critical reports increasingly led to diplomatic tensions between West Germany and the junta regime and, as Bösch concluded, challenged the sovereignty of the dictatorship.

Subsequent to this IOANNA VOGLI (Athens) focused on the importance of the anti-dictatorial press for the Greek resistance against the military dictatorship. These publications were issued by Greek parties, resistance organizations or individuals in exile and circulated throughout Europe as well as in the USA and Canada. They were written mainly in Greek and were therefore, according to Vogli, aimed at a Greek readership. Vogli attests these publications an important role for the resistance movement: they networked and informed anti-dictatorial resistance activists throughout Europe and signalled external solidarity to resistance activists in Greece itself, who received these publications as contraband.

In a comparative approach ANTÓNIO MUÑOZ SÁNCHEZ (Lisbon) talked about the Federal Republic of Germany's foreign policy stance towards the Salazar dictatorship in Portugal and the Franco dictatorship in Spain. According to Muñoz Sánchez, the SPD as the governing party pursued a moderate strategy towards the southern European dictatorships, in many respects similar to the „Ostpolitik“, in order to maintain a dialogue

and support a possible liberalization. As a consequence, West Germany's ambivalent attitude towards the dictatorships affected its relationship with the Iberian socialists: while those were criticizing the Federal Republic of Germany's diplomatic and economic relations with the Iberian regimes, they were also aware that the West German socialists were one of their biggest supporters in Europe in form of economic, political, and technical aid.

NIKOS PAPANASTASIOU (Athens) focused on Willy Brandt's foreign policy and pleaded for a comparison of the attitude of the Brandt government towards the Greek and southern European dictatorships. Similar to his approach towards the Franco and the Salazar regimes, Brandt's approach towards the Greek dictatorship could also be associated with the „Ostpolitik“. Papanastasiou emphasized Brandt's ambivalent attitude towards the Greek regime. While his government contributed significantly to the political isolation of the junta regime and supported the Greek resistance abroad, he avoided increased political pressure that might have led to a breakdown of the bilateral relations with Greece. Therefore, he would have maintained diplomatic relations with the junta regime, as evidenced for example by foreign policy meetings of SPD politicians in Greece during the Greek dictatorship.

In her paper CAROLINA REHRMANN (Jena), who could not join the symposium, deals with the common Greek-German memory culture using the example of documenta 14. The art exhibition documenta 14 was shown in 2017 at two locations in Germany (Kassel) and Greece (Athens) and is the most visited modern art exhibition of all times. Despite all its commercial success the exhibition, which also included works on the Greek resistance movement against the military dictatorship, had to face massive criticism, especially from Greek visitors.

DIMITRIS GARRIS (Athens) discussed the process and conditions of the heroization of the Greek resistance fighter Alekos Panagoulis, who carried out an unsuccessful assassination attempt on the Greek dictator Georgios Papadopoulos. Garriss emphasized that already during Panagoulis' lifetime, a certain amount of heroization began to take

place due to his unbending will to fight the military dictatorship. However, this heroic identity was still being negotiated and had not yet manifested itself but was rather represented by an ambivalent character. Garriss concluded that the mysterious death of Panagoulis, who was involved in a controversial car accident in 1976, was a turning point and an indicator of his long-term heroization in the Greek remembrance culture.

HANS-PETER SCHUNK (Marburg) reflected on the way German print media reported about the military dictatorship in Greece. From the very beginning German print media had reported very critically on both the junta regime and the Federal Republic of Germany's moderate attitude towards it, thus helping to create an anti-junta atmosphere in public opinion. One exception was the reporting of the *Bayernkurier*, which, for example, criticized the broadcast of the *Bayrischer Rundfunk* regarding the military dictatorship as too left-wing. In addition, Schunk noted that the reports, which were based on extensive and investigative research, not only had an influence on the policy towards Greece, but also on later historiography, as he illustrated using the example of a *Spiegel* article, whose critical report on the junta regime served as evidence for historian Heinz A. Richter in his book on the junta 2013.

The final discussion gave an outlook on further necessary research. It was agreed that a comparative and transnational approach is needed, which considers the impact of other countries in Europe that were also providing important inputs for the Greek resistance movement. As far as categories of analysis are concerned, the focus should also be broadened by including the perspective of Greek migrants, especially female migrants. Furthermore, the language barrier should be overcome by making scientific results accessible through writing in English. In the closing words the importance of transnational solidarity was once again underlined on the occasion of the court decision after more than five years of trial against the neo-fascist organization Golden Dawn, which was banned by court order on October 7 2020.

Conference overview:

Anja Kruke (Head, Archive for Social Democracy, FES, Bonn): Welcome

Opening Lecture

Vangelis Karamanolakis (Vice-President of the Board of Directors of ASKI, Athens)

Panel I

Moderation: Ursula Bitzegeio (Archive for Social Democracy, FES, Bonn)

Spiridon Papaioanou (University of Regensburg): The Resistance against the Greek Military Dictatorship in Germany and the Role of the Police and Intelligence Services

Dimitrios K. Apostolopoulos (Modern Greek History Research Centre of the Academy of Athens): The Federal Government vs. the Colonels 1967-1974: A Controversial Relationship

Panel II

Moderation: Manos Avgeridis (National and Kapodistrian University of Athens)

Loukas Bartatilas (Bauhaus University Weimar): Architectural Solidarity Networks. The Support of the Akademie der Künste (West) to its Member, Architect Ioannis Despotopoulos, during the Greek Military Dictatorship

George Iliopoulos (National and Kapodistrian University of Athens): Solidarity through Socio-Political Analysis: The Journal „Das Argument“ on Modern Greece and the Military Dictatorship

Panel III

Moderation: Philipp Kufferath (Archive for Social Democracy, FES, Bonn)

Chrysa Vachtsevanou (University of Bonn, Editor of the Greek Department at Deutsche Welle, Bonn): Greek Diaspora against Colonels: From First Surprise to Anti-Dictatorship Movement

Antonis Sarantidis (National and Kapodistrian University of Athens): The Greek Students' Resistance against the Junta in Western Europe: The Case of European Student Con-

ferences (1967-1971)

Panel IV

Moderation: Chris Triantafyllou (National and Kapodistrian University of Athens)

Frank Bösch (University of Potsdam, Leibniz Centre for Contemporary History in Potsdam): Challenging Sovereignty. West German Activism against the Greek „Colonel's Regime“

Ioanna Vogli (ASKI, Athens): A European Map of Anti-Dictatorship Press Publications and Organisations with a Special Focus on Germany

Panel V

Moderation: Charalampos Karpouchtsis (Friedrich-Schiller-University, Jena)

António Muñoz Sánchez (Institute of Social Sciences of Lisbon University): The Role of the Federal Republic of Germany in the „Europeanization“ and Democratization of Portugal and Spain

Nikos Papanastasiou (National and Kapodistrian University of Athens): „Solidarity and Realpolitik?“ Chancellor Willy Brandt, the Colonels in Greece and the Dictatorships of the South

Panel VI

Moderation: Stathis Pavlopoulos (ASKI, Athens)

Carolina Rehrmann (Jena Center for Reconciliation Studies, University of Jena): Art as a Common Field for Memory? Controversies on documenta 14

Dimitris Garris (National and Kapodistrian University of Athens): Alekos Panagoulis. The Formation of an Anti-Dictatorial Hero (1968-1981)

Hans-Peter Schunk (University of Marburg): German Printed Media about the Greek Junta

Final Discussion

Moderation: Joachim Schlütter (FES, Bonn)

Tagungsbericht *Greek-German Relations during the Military Dictatorship in Greece (1967-1974)*. 06.10.2020–07.10.2020, digital, in: H-Soz-Kult

07.12.2020.