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The Position of Oral History Testimonies from the “Child Refugees” in Macedonian Politics of Memory. Case Study: Testimony of a Child Refugee from the Greek Civil War

Abstract:

In Macedonian culture and remembrance, the children evacuated from northern Greek villages in 1948 by communist activists during the Greek Civil War and sent to socialist states in the Balkans and in Eastern Europe are known as „child refugees from the Aegean part of Macedonia.“ Such narratives, as part of a contested past, play an important part in the national politics of memory, usually as a tool utilized in the master narratives, but are not theoretically analyzed any further and lack further epistemic and educational presence in the historical curriculum. Thus, I am interested in the position of these oral testimonies in the politics of memory and their potential to challenge the politics of memory.

Keywords:

oral history, politics of memory, child refugees, Greek Civil War

Introduction

The Greek Civil War is considered to be the first internationalized war conflict after the end of the Second World War. The ideological clash of the warring parties represents a prelude to the age of the Cold War in Europe.¹ One of the most controversial topics arising from the history of the Greek Civil War is the evacuation program carried out by the partisans and the activists of the Communist Party of Greece in the spring of 1948. Greek and Macedonian children, aged from three to fourteen years (estimated numbers around 20.000 – 25.000) from the northern, rural part of Greece, endangered by military actions, were evacuated to socialist states in Eastern Europe.² The evacuation was justified not only with the humanitarian aspect, but also with a political and strategic aspect: reducing of the number of civilians and the food they consumed, as well as liberating parents, especially mothers, from child care at a time when they were needed to be mobilized and support the guerilla.

To further understand what prompted the evacuation, one must go beyond the conditions of war violence, and enquire into the direct consequences of the inter-ethnic conflict between the Slavophone Macedonians and the Greeks living on the territory of northern Greece.³ As James Horncastle summarizes,

¹ The Greek Civil War was a military and ideological conflict between the polarized political powers in the Greek society from 1943 to 1949. The first phase of the war (1943 – 1944) represents the initiation of the civil conflict, during the German occupation of Greece, while the government and the king were in exile. The resistance on Greek territory was dominated by the communist organizations EAM (Ethnikón Apeleftherotikón Métopon, National Liberation Front) and ELAS (Ethnikós Laikós Apeleftherotikós Strátos, National Popular Liberation Army), which opposed the right-wing organization EDES (Ellínikos Dímokratikos Ethnikós Strátos, Greek Democratic National Army). The second phase (December 1944 – January 1945) ended with the Treaty of Varkiza, which guaranteed a plebiscite for the state governance, amnesty, parliament, voluntary disarmament and penalty for the collaborators. The third phase (March 30, 1946 – October 1949) represents the eruption of the open conflict and its internationalization. EAM and the Democratic Army of Greece (DAG) received logistic support from Albania, Bulgaria and Yugoslavia up until June 28, 1948. On the other side, the Army of Greece was supported by Great Britain, and later by the USA and the methods of the Truman doctrine. Key battles were fought on the mountain Gramos and Vici, where communist forces were defeated. On October 16, 1949 the Communist Radio Broadcast proclaimed the end of the military actions and many of the partisans fled to Albania. See: Ričard Krempton. *Balkan posle Drugog svetskog rata* (Beograd: Clio, 2003), 129–151; Milan Ristović. *Na pragu Hladnog rata: Jugoslavija i građanski rat u Grčkoj (1945-1949)* (Beograd: Filozofski fakultet Univerziteta u Beogradu, 2016); David H. Close. *The Greek Civil War, 1943-1950. Studies of Polarization* (London: Routledge, 1993).

² The Communist Party of Greece wasn't the only party that evacuated children from northern Greece during the Civil War. In 1947, in a campaign by the Greek government and lead by the queen of Greece, around 18,000 children were sent to educational camps around Greece. The facilities were closed during the 1950s. Loring M. Danforth, Riki Van Boeschoten, *Children of the Greek Civil War: refugees and the politics of memory* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2012), 4–6.

³ Andrijana Teodorovic, *Refugees of the Greek Civil War: Ethnicity and Politics*, MA thesis (Budapest: Central European University, 2007), 62.

“the Slavophone Macedonian inhabitants of Greece were part of the larger unresolved Macedonian Question that had plagued European policy makers with respect to the disposition of the Balkans since the Congress of Berlin in 1878.”⁴ Greek nation-building politics since 1912, concerning the mentioned region, included nationalizing policies, prohibition of the use of Macedonian language in the public and private sphere, and in names and toponyms, and were accompanied by the administration’s harsh treatment of the minority.⁵ In turn, these state policies reinforced Macedonian ethnic identity among the Slavic group and made them turn towards the Communist party as the only power that had given them historical recognition and had championed the civic rights for ethnic Macedonians. Thus, when the ethnic animosities culminated during the Greek Civil War, the Greek state concluded that a firm national rule over the region south of the Yugoslav border must be established. According to Horncastle, the Greek government viewed the Slavophone Macedonians as a legitimate and long-term threat and sought to resolve the problem with a population exchange that resembled the Treaty of Lausanne in 1923, and similar plans were demonstrated before US representatives. The government’s plans for the “solution of the Macedonian question,” together with the military aid from the USA, were understood by many in the EAM and the DAG as preparation for some kind of larger extermination of the ethnic Macedonians.⁶ The political circumstances, the raptures in the communist movement and the aspects of ethnicity are important parts of the historical context in which the refugees were influenced to flee their country.

There are contesting memories of the evacuation. Some of the groups of evacuated children were trained and sent back to the war zones controlled by the Democratic Army of Greece.⁷ Other examples show the emancipatory potential given to the children by the evacuation program and the positive examples of the socialist states in accommodating and caring for the refugee children.⁸ Overall, the evacuation of the children represents the variety of narratives of the contested past that can be understood differently, the diverse remembrance of this episode in the Greek and Macedonian master narrative,⁹ and the different

⁴ James Richard Horncastle, *The Pawn that would be King: Macedonian Slavs in the Greek Civil War, 1946-49*, PhD diss. (Simon Fraser University, 2016), 4–5.

⁵ Evangelos Kofos, *Nationalism and Communism in Macedonia* (Thessaloniki: Institute for Balkan studies, 1964). See also: Anastasia N. Karakasidou, *Fields of wheat, heals of blood. Passages to Nationhood in Greek Macedonia, 1870-1990* (Chicago; London: University of Chicago Press, 1997).

⁶ Horncastle, *The Pawn that would be King*, 242. See also: Risto Kirjazovski, “The Situation of the Macedonian Minority in Greece after the Second World War,” *Macedonian Review* 24/1 (1994): 53–54.

⁷ Danforth, Boeschoten, *Children of the Greek Civil War*, 4.

⁸ See examples: Milan Ristović. *A Long Journey Home: Greek Refugee Children in Yugoslavia, 1948 – 1960* (Thessaloniki: Institute for Balkan Studies, 2000); Leonidas Rempelakos, Effie Poulakou-Rebelakou and Dimitrios Ploumpidis, “Health care for refugee children during the greek civil war (1946-1949),” *Acta med-hist Adriat* 12/1 (2014): 135–152; Misko Kitanoski, Giorgi Donevski, *Deca begalci od Egejska Makedonija vo Jugoslavija* (Toronto: Risto Stefov Publications, 2016).

⁹ The master narrative is a concept used by researchers for better understanding why

approaches towards the remembrance of these events by various “communities of memory” formed by the survivors.

In the Greek society, the term “evacuation” is considered wrong, and the term “pedomasoma” (“the gathering of children”) is used instead, with historical references to the Ottoman policies of the *devshirme* system (“child levy” or “blood tax”), or in this case “the kidnaping of the children.” At the end of 1948, the Greek government filed an official complaint to the United Nations (UN), claiming that Greek children were forcefully abducted and displaced, using terms such as “crimes against humanity and genocide.” The General Assembly of the UN established the Special Committee on the Balkans (UNSCOB) with the mission to inspect the case. After three months, the Committee filed a balanced report that didn’t confirm child kidnaping.¹⁰

In the Macedonian society, the events following the evacuation of the children are known as “the exodus of the child refugees from the Aegean part of Macedonia.” These historical events are an important part of the official Macedonian master narrative, thus the general approach towards the topic is dominated by the top-down strategy. Oral testimonies by the Macedonian child refugees represent a vital source for historiographical research and a powerful resource in the national politics of memory, especially after the breakup of Yugoslavia and the independence of the country in 1991. In this paper I am interested only in the evacuation of the Macedonian children¹¹ from northern Greece and the position of the topic in Macedonian politics of memory from the perspective of oral history.

My hypothesis is that the oral testimonies of the Macedonian child refugees challenge the official narrative and contest national top-down approaches and can make room for a deeper understanding of the historical events. At the same time, the use of oral history as a method is quite new in Macedonian national history concerning the topic of the child refugees. Wider knowledge about the

and which particular national narrative constructions came to dominate in different parts of Europe. It is through master narratives that people make sense of the past and identify with particular versions of the past. The critique of the master narrative does not entail any assumption about their eventual disappearance or dissolution. What is needed is a thorough analysis of the mechanisms and the circumstances of their perpetual construction and deconstruction. See: Stefan Berger, „National historiographies in transnational perspectives: Europe in the ninetieth and twentieth centuries,” *Storia della Storiografia* 50 (2006): 9.

¹⁰ Danforth, Boeschoten, *Children of the Greek Civil War*, 5–6; 54–60. See also: Erik Sjöberg, *Battlefields of Memory. The Macedonian Conflict and Greek Historical Culture* (Umeå: Umeå University, 2011).

¹¹ According to authors Loring M. Danforth and Riki Van Boeschoten, since 1912, when the region known as Greek Macedonia became a part of the Greek state, Greek authorities have used a wide range of names to refer to its Slavic-speaking inhabitants: “Bulgarians,” “Macedonians,” “Macedo-Slavs,” “Slavophones,” and “bilinguals,” to mention just a few. In the 1930s, the Greek Communist Party began using the names „Macedonians“ and “Slavo-Macedonians” interchangeably. Slavic speakers themselves have also used a variety of terms to refer to members of their ethnic group, from „Bulgarians“ and „Macedonians“ to more apolitical terms, such as „locals“ (“dopioi” in Greek and “tukašni” in Macedonian) and “ours” (“dikoi mas” in Greek and “naši” in Macedonian). Op. cit., 26.

theoretical basis of the oral history method could improve its position in the field and strengthen the critical approaches to the culture of remembrance.

Considering the theoretical and methodological framework of the paper, I start from the premise that oral history can open ways to explore the connection between an individual memory and the collective memory, especially in context of the transmission of identities. The existence of "places of memory," a phrase by the French historian Pierre Nora, has driven historians to think about the ways in which official historical narratives compete with other places of memory and identity transmission, namely the "collective memory." Michael Herzfeld makes a similar distinction between "istoria" ("history in general") as an instrument of state ideology and "istories" (histories or stories) as fragments of social experience and intimate social knowledge. The latter, he claims, are the very antithesis of official History.¹²

The used methods are of qualitative nature and include a narrative case study. I have conducted a desk research to collect textual and audiovisual materials on the position of oral history, both as a method and a testimony, in different projects with top-down or bottom-up approaches in Macedonian national historiography¹³ and in the domestic and diasporic culture of remembrance. I have consulted the literature and the published research relevant to the topic, mainly Macedonian and diasporic. For the case study, I have conducted and recorded an interview, using the method of oral history, with Zisa Hadjievski, one of the child refugees. The interview was conducted on November 15, 2019, in Bitola, North Macedonia, in the home of the interviewee. In the Appendix at the end of the paper I provide the full transcript of the interview.

In the first part of the paper, I will present the approaches to the culture of remembering the history of the Macedonian refugee children, accompanied with an overview of the position of understanding the oral history method and the oral testimonies theoretically. In the second part, I will present the case study, with examples that offer comparison with the conclusions from the first part, aiming to explore my hypothesis.

1. The position of oral history of the refugee children as method and testimony in Macedonian politics of memory

Oral history is one of the youngest methods in the historical science. It is also considered as an international movement among researchers, formalized in academia and academic journals from the middle of the 20th century onwards.¹⁴ Historians connect oral history with oral tradition to some extent, while

¹² Anna Green, "Individual Remembering and 'Collective Memory': Theoretical Pre-suppositions and Contemporary Debates," *Oral History* 32/2 (2004): 36. See also: Michael Herzfeld, *Anthropology Through the Looking-Glass: Critical Ethnography in the Margins of Europe* (Cambridge University Press, 1987), 41–46.

¹³ For a synthetic analysis and a critical overview of the development of theories and methods of history in Macedonian national historiography, see: Ulf Brunnbauer, "Serving the Nation: Historiography in the Republic of Macedonia (FYROM) after Socialism," *Historein* 4/4 (2003): 161–182.

¹⁴ Lynn Abrams, *Oral history theory* (New York: Routledge, 2016).

anthropologists and ethnologists frequently use oral history in field work to acquire multilayered and comprehensive knowledge when data is missing. Oral history is usually used as a good method for creating collections of narratives and testimonies dedicated to history's "fine print": marginalized groups, workers, women, ethnic groups, etc. The use of oral history is welcomed especially when learning about historical conflicts and conflicted groups in the community because it offers multiperspectivity when the official (national, state) narrative cannot find space for those histories and narratives.¹⁵

The intersection of the historiographical and personal narratives, together with relevant "places of memory" dedicated to the culture of remembrance around the child refugees from the Greek Civil War, is active in the Macedonian society, and beyond, in the societies of the states that accommodated the child refugees, but also elsewhere, in the "communities of memory" that exist in the diaspora where some of the refugees settled. "Communities of memory" represent transnational networks where the culture of remembrance and commemoration functions are helped by the digital world and are present in the diasporic public sphere. In the communities of memory local and transnational agents interact in the field of collective memory.¹⁶

The development and the position the oral history method, when the Macedonian refugee children are concerned, can be traced from the end of the 20th century onwards. Oral testimonies can be found in many forms of records, such as narrative publications or audio and audio-visual records, in Macedonian, Greek and English languages (less often in other languages, like Polish and Hungarian). The role of this art in the field can be divided into three phases of development: the first phase, of impromptu use of the method, under the term "testimonial materials" (from the 1950s to the beginning of the 1990s); the second phase, distinguished by the proliferation of the forms and methods relevant for the culture of remembrance of child refugee histories and the documentation of their life-story oral histories (during the 1990s); and the third phase (2000 – today), which represents the crystallization of the use of oral history as a method, using structured and planned interviews recorded in audio or audiovisual form.

In the first phase, the forms of oral testimony often overlapped with other forms, such as autobiographies,¹⁷ personal journals, private archives, press interviews, documentary TV programs and TV interviews (usually hosted by the Macedonian Radio Television),¹⁸ recorded oral story-telling. Oral testimonies

¹⁵ Green, „Individual Remembering and ‘Collective Memory’: Theoretical Presuppositions and Contemporary Debates,” 38.

¹⁶ Danforth and Boeschoten, *Children of the Greek Civil War*, 8.

¹⁷ See examples of autobiographies and testimonies: Kitanoski, Donevski, *Decata begalci od Egejska Makedonija vo Jugoslavija*, 219.

¹⁸ See examples of the genre between documentary and oral history: *Tuglesh*. Directed by Kole Manev (Skopje: Vardar film, 1977), available online, accessed February 2, 2020 <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kFDJM52eWrc>; *Grcka deca*. Directed by Radivoje Lola Đukić (Belgrade: Zvezda film, 1946); *Bratska pomoc*. Directed by: Mihajlo Lalik, George Skrinin (Belgrade: Zvezda film, 1950); *Po dolinata na Vardar*. Directed by Jovo Kamberski, Trajce Popov (Skopje: Vardar film, 1950).

also appeared in the form of the so-called "information givers" who worked with researchers on publications dedicated to local histories of the places inhabited by Macedonians in northern Greece.¹⁹ The common trait of all the forms is the spontaneous use of oral history, embraced only as oral testimony and storytelling.

The second phase is marked by the research work initiated by domestic and diaspora associations and clubs of child refugees.²⁰ In this period, with the appearance of various events, conferences and meetings, the number of collections of oral histories grew, and the collections were accompanied by various publications and audio-visual recordings.²¹

In the third phase, oral history is approached systematically and methodologically in research,²² in projects (of state institutions, civil societies, or through mutual cooperation of many agents of memory) of documenting, archiving and recording testimonies and using oral history as a tool in top-down approaches in the politics of memory,²³ but also in making bottom-up documentary movies

¹⁹ See examples: Sokrat Panovski, *V'mbel* (Skopje: Zdrzenie na decata begalci od Egejskiot del na Makedonija, 2002), 289–292. The author uses unpublished sources in the form of: memories by Krsto Bezov, autobiographical notes by the comitague Lazo Purovski, recorded storytelling by former inhabitants of V'mbel, born in the period 1900 – 1915: Nikola (Koljo) and Stefa Panovski, Dana Purovska Panovska, Ljuba Sultovska. The author presents "information providers" as unpublished sources in the form of storytelling from over a hundred former citizens from the village of V'mbel.

²⁰ For the chronology of the formation of different clubs and associations of the child refugees in Macedonia and in the diaspora and their meetings, see: *Association of Refugee Children from the Aegean part of Macedonia*, http://macedonianhistory.ca/news/begalci_2_timeline.html (accessed 5.2.2020).

²¹ See example: Macedonian Welfare Workers' Network of Victoria, *From War to Whittlesea: Oral Histories of Macedonian Child Refugees* (Victoria: Politecon Publications, 1999).

²² See examples: Katerina Mirchevska, Dimitar Ljorovski, Ljubica Jancheva, *Hronikina selata vo Kostursko* (Skopje: Drzaven arhiv na Republika Makedonija, 2018); Katerina Mircevska, "The oral history transformed into writing: Chronicles of Kastorian's Villages," (paper presented at the international scholarly symposium "Balkan historiography and contemporary challenges," Institute of National History, Skopje, November 2018); Lidija Stojanovik-Lafazanovski, Ermis Lafazanovski, *The exodus of the Macedonians from Greece: women's narratives about WWII and their exodus* (Skopje: Euro-Balkan, 2008).

²³ See examples of top-down approaches: "Recording, photographing and archiving of the video materials and interviews with Macedonian banished from Aegean Macedonia in the 20 century," Project of the Government of Republic of Macedonia and the Ministry of Culture, realized by Cinematheque of Macedonia in cooperation with the Institute of National History, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Office of the President of Republic of Macedonia, the associations of Macedonians from the Aegean part of Macedonia "Nezaborav" and "Makedon." As part of the project, 427 interviews were recorded in Macedonia, 93 in Canada, 128 in Australia, 42 in Europe and 24 in the USA, in the period 2010-2011. The result of the project is a three-part documentary serial: *Witnesses from Aegean Macedonia*. Directed by Atanas Chupovski (Skopje: Cinematheque of Macedonia, 2012), available online, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=t8olJFQepM8&list=PLwia9bIDCn7gI-yvz_oCp6ryrsTpFXUdQy&index=3 (accessed, 2.2.2020); *Witnesses, America*. Directed by Marija Dzidzeva (Skopje: Cinematheque of Macedonia, 2016). DVD; Documentary series in six parts *Aegean Macedonia*. Directed by Dimitar Orovcan-

where the key role is given to the very interviews and oral testimonies.²⁴ The third phase is also distinguished by great accessibility, given the use of new media and the internet as a channel for free access and content-sharing that allows greater connection in the communities of memory.²⁵

In the course of using oral history as a method in the history of the child refugees, a few main topics have prevailed and recurred in almost every testimony: the topic of the separation from the home and the family, the topic of the so-called “mothers” (guardians and leaders of the children’s groups during the evacuation); the topic of the existence of a partisan/activist/national hero in the family, the topic of unrecognition (of ethnical, local or national identity, of private property, of pain and suffering); the topic of the “idealized martyrdom;” and the topic of emancipation during the stay in socialist countries expressed in the “first time” experiences.²⁶

For a better understanding of the position of the oral testimonies in Macedonian politics of memory, one must consider theoretically deconstructing the topics dominant in child refugee discourse. For such a deconstruction, I recommend the anthropological theories and concepts on the perspectives on migration, either sedentary or cosmopolitan, to explain the topic of “the exodus” and the contesting examples of emancipation or eternal homesickness for the lost home; and the anthropological concept of the “spectrum of coercion,” to explain the parents’ consent in allowing their children to be evacuated and the contesting examples of supporting or defying communist activists and ideology. On one hand, these theoretical concepts can help in understanding how the topics of martyrdom and eternal exodus can become prevalent in the politics of memory as elements that can be easily used in mobilizing the national audience; on the other hand, theoretical concepts can make more room for a deeper understanding of the survivors’ life stories.

The main and formative elements in the identity of the child refugees are their migration and displacement from their settlements, their experiences during the migration routes and the political circumstances that transformed them into refugees. The perspectives on migration in anthropology and in migration studies are delivered by two main concepts: the sedentary perspective and the cosmopolitan perspective.²⁷

ec, Igor Hristov (Skopje: Macedonian Radion Television, 2017), available online <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=H9gcLDlpGQk&list=PL0593EA17559F9789> (accessed 2.2.2020).

²⁴ See examples of bottom-up approaches: *The children from 1948*. Directed by Snezana Dinevski, (Toronto: The Association of Refugee Children from Aegean Macedonia, 2004), available online https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wNyfqVx-F5MM&fbclid=IwAR2wjHWnt03Qz1B4n78wbC7UJ3WP_iQHiWhCtOa6buwQk3WzPHkjYWvOgVQ (accessed 2.2.2020).

²⁵ Canadian Macedonian Historical Society’s project is an excellent example, available on the Society’s official webpage <http://macedonianhistory.ca/media.html> (accessed 2.2.2020) its official video channel <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UC8VUZoN43vRcPBkPwGVJ34A/videos> (accessed 2.2.2020).

²⁶ The presence of the topics is minutely explained and analyzed in Danforth, Boeschoten, *Children of the Greek Civil War*, 117–159.

²⁷ Authors that have proposed the concept: Carol A. Breckenridge et al., eds., *Cos-*

According to the sedentary perspective, the identity of an individual is grounded on the territory that represents his or hers birthplace, and by gaining the status of a "refugee" the individual is considered uprooted and becomes a double outsider: in the fixed territory that could not be accessed anymore and in the land of emigration where they are considered an alien/foreigner. The sedentary perspective is often criticized by contemporary anthropologists as it holds nationalism as its fundamental principle, according to which people that have the same culture and identity should all live together on one territory, and in the long run this perspective gets closer to seeing refugees as "national problems" in the lands to which they emigrated. Also, according to the sedentary perspective there is almost no possibility of building an identity and continuing cultural traditions and habits away from one's birthplace.²⁸ The sedentary perspective has shown to be incompatible with the globalized world where groups and communities are always on the move and the groups in the diaspora are always in mutual contact.

According to the cosmopolitan perspective, subjects are not naturally connected to their homelands. According to it, migrants and refugees are not seen exclusively through the prism of helpless martyrdom, but are instead seen as political subjects with their own voice and agency. The cosmopolitan perspective finds emancipatory potential in the exile from the place of birth, that doesn't have to be permanent suffering.²⁹

In the case of the child refugees I accept the position held by Loring M. Danforth and Riki Van Boeschoten, according to whom none of the perspectives on migration should be taken in the extreme, neither the idealization of the birthplace, because of its problematic position in contemporary anthropology, nor the romanticizing of exile and the global diaspora, because it leads to instability and shifts the focus away from the importance of permanent and safe housing.³⁰

In the oral testimonies of the Macedonian child refugees, the sedentary perspective is more dominant. The language used in oral histories is dominated by words and phrases such as "exodus," "removed from the village/the house/

mopolitanism, (Durham: Duke University Press Books, 2002); See also Homi K. Bhabha, "The World and the Home," *Social Text* 10/2-3 (1992): 141–153.

²⁸ The author with special interest in the theoretical analysis of the sedentary and cosmopolite perception is Liisa Malkki. See: Liisa Malkki, "National Geographic: The Rooting of Peoples and the Territorialization of National Identity among Scholars and Refugees," *Cultural Anthropology* 7/1 (1992): 24–44; Malkki, "Refugees and Exile," *Annual Review of Anthropology* 24 (1995): 495–523; Malkki, *Purity and Exile: Violence, Memory, and National Cosmology among Hutu Refugees in Tanzania* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1995); Malkki, "Speechless Emissaries: Refugees, Humanitarianism and Dehistoricization," *Cultural Anthropology* 11/3 (1996): 377–404.

²⁹ The cosmopolitan perspective of migration was proposed by the authors: Ajrur Appadurai, *Modernity at Large: Cultural Dimensions of Globalization* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1996); Carol Breckenridge, Arjun Appadurai, "Editors' Comment: On Moving Targets," *Public Culture* 2/1 (1989): i; Danforth and Boeschoten, *Children of the Greek Civil War*, 188.

³⁰ Danforth and Boeschoten, *Children of the Greek Civil War*, 17; 187–93; 196; 202; 208; 215; 216. See also: Loring Danforth, "'We Crossed a Lot of Borders': Refugee Children of the Greek Civil War," *Diaspora* 12/2 (2003): 169–209.

the mother,” “abandoning the horrors,” and “abandoning the birthplaces.”³¹ The cosmopolitan perspective is not non-existent, but it is expressed in a subtler manner, and usually in the context of integration in the new countries and at last in Macedonia³² (for those who settled in Macedonia). The cosmopolitan perspective can be found in the testimonies about education, finishing a course, or learning a trade, especially in the stories of earning higher education degrees, in experiences about new hobbies, new clothes and modern lifestyle different from the one in the villages.

The experiences of the child refugees vary when the question of how they left the villages and how much their parents consented is concerned. Different perceptions exist in the memory about the necessity of the evacuation and the activities performed by the communist activists. The opinions given in the oral histories vary from negative ones about the “communists” and “communist propaganda,” to the evacuation being “the most humanitarian action that could have been done.” According to anthropologist Anthony Richmond and his concept of the “spectrum of coercion,” in war conditions there is no possibility of having a “freedom of choice” as there is in peaceful conditions, and individuals (civilians) make decisions under the influence of complicated power relations and of varying extents of autonomy and dependence.³³

This concept can be useful in dealing with the contesting experiences, where on one side there is the fear of famine, dying in the war, being ravished, expressed in oral histories almost always with a very similar description: “we were watching the airplanes circling in the sky above us” (the constant feeling of the tension of war); and on the other side there are the experiences on the parents’ side and their fear of “revenge from the communist party” if they deny cooperation with the evacuation program.

Theoretical analysis with an interdisciplinary approach deconstructs simplified and essentialist discourse. The insight offered by theoretical concepts can explain the ways in which individual memories and oral testimonies interact with the master narrative and the collective experience. In the second part, I will try to show examples that demonstrate how the use of the oral history method

³¹ See example: Kitanoski, Donevski, *Decata begalci od Egejska Makedonija vo Jugoslavija*, 40–43.

³² Historically speaking, “Macedonia” refers to a geographical and historical region of the Balkan Peninsula. Its boundaries have drastically changed throughout history. Today, it includes parts of modern-day Bulgaria, Greece, Serbia, Kosovo, and the Republic North Macedonia. The territory of the present-day North Macedonia was in 1913 the last part of the Balkans ruled by the Ottoman Empire. In 1919, Macedonia entered the Kingdom of Yugoslavia under Serbian jurisdiction and without any administrative autonomy. In 1945, Macedonia was defined as the People’s Republic of Macedonia within the framework of Yugoslavia. After the breakup of Yugoslavia, Macedonia declared independence on 8 September 1991 and was admitted to the UN on April 8, 1993 as the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia (FYROM). With the Agreement of Prespa, signed in June 2018 by the Syriza-led government of Greece and the Social-Democratic ruling coalition of what was then the Republic of Macedonia, the country changed its name in North Macedonia.

³³ Anthony Richmond, *Global Apartheid: Refugees, Racism, and the New World Order* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1994), 8.

can challenge the dominant politics of memory towards the testimonies of the “child refugees.”

2. Case study

Zisa Hadjievski was born on March 7, 1932 in the village of V'mbel,³⁴ Greece. He was evacuated to Yugoslavia and after the migrations settled in Bitola. For most of his life he worked in the workshop “Avtoremont” in Bitola, where he advanced to the position of manager. Today he is retired and lives comfortably in his family house. His testimony focuses on three main topics: the evacuation from the village, the routes of his migration through thirteen different places where he stayed for short periods of time, and his longest stay, the one in Croatia. As a subtopic here I recognize his memories of being a child migrant and his migrant education; and his settlement in Bitola after successfully integrating into the society.

His testimony is dominated by the cosmopolitan perspective on migration expressed through two aspects: the fear of war and the need for salvation, and through the descriptions of the successful integration after the migrations:

“Being a child-refugee for me represents... the existence of some problem, or the coming of some trouble, and one having to flee. To be saved, everyone wants to be saved from that problem, and so on. This caused people to get prepared, to run from the war. Now, a decision was made by the leadership, in every village with an appointed leader, to prepare the children, from babies to sixteen-years-olds, to be sent to other countries, and those from seventeen and older, to become fighters.”³⁵

As his greatest personal success he mentions his earning of higher education and the fulfillment of his dream of „achieving something greater in life“:

“In the magazine of the expatriates – “Macedonia” – there was an article about me and my success, about starting at the bottom and becoming a manager. When the workers appointed me as a manager. Back then, in every firm, the workers’ council decided about the management [He is referring to the practices of ‘self-management’ in socialist Yugoslavia, IH]. That’s how I became a manager.”³⁶

Traces of trauma can be noticed in his testimony, connected with the day of departure from the village. They are expressed through the unbearable experiences of parting from family members:

“The separation was... How could I describe it? Well, there was this little church, St. Athanasius, all separations took place there, and so did this one. And we all hugged our parents, but I didn’t hug my grandmother, I didn’t hug her and that left a mark on me ‘till this day. I remember that with great discomfort still today.”

³⁴ V'mbel/Moshohorion, municipality of Smrdesh/Krystallopiqi, district of Lerin/Florina, (21°07' x 40°39'), see: Todor Hristov Simovski, *Atlas na naselenite mesta vo Egejska Makedonija* (Skopje: Institut za nacionalna istorija, 1997), 14. For the history of the village and the inhabitants see: Panovski, *V'mbel*.

³⁵ Zisa Hadjievski, interview with the author, November 15, 2019.

³⁶ Ibid.

In the testimony I encounter the so-called “first time” experiences during the migration. The experiences resemble parts of the cosmopolitan perspective on migration, expressed through the metaphor of “initiation rites” in the new – modern, different from the native – world. The “initiation rites”³⁷ are common in oral histories of child refugees, especially because of the distinct ritualistic elements, such as washing oneself with water, burning the old clothes and being given new clothes:

“We came to Bitola and we were accommodated in some school... I think it was the Nursing School, up on the ceiling, in a room with small windows... For lunch we had only marmalade, without bread. We spent the night there... then went for a walk in the city, and then we heard something. It was music! Songs, on the radio! We had never listened to a radio before, we didn’t even know what a radio was. When we were told about the radio we were amazed. Yes, indeed. There was no such thing in our village.”

“When we stepped on the docks, cars were waiting for us, and took us straight to the baths. To wash ourselves, to have a shower. After the bath, we searched for our old clothes, they were gone! We asked, where are our clothes? We were told: ‘There are the clothes, they are now yours. We have thrown the old ones out, they were no good.’ And it was true. All the way to here we hadn’t changed, the old clothes were from the village. And then we changed.”

“We were accommodated in the hotels, in double rooms, with white sheets, with new pajamas, we were amazed. We had a good time there, the food was good and sufficient.”³⁸

In the course of the story there is a special presence of sentences and words that describe conditions of hunger, starvation, insufficiency of food and water, trading of food for other supplies, impossibility of contacting parents, wearing wet clothes on the body for a long time and similar material conditions. In relation to the politics of memory, the testimony offers interesting insights about the integration in Bitola as a place of final settlement and beginning life from scratch.

On one side are the memories of the state institutions offering help with employment and help in accustoming to the new community, and on the other side are problematic and subtle or even hushed memories about the integration of the refugee children in Macedonian cities, followed by fear, prejudices, doubt about the “newcomers,” “the others,” “the foreigners,” usually called “the Aegeans.” All this manifested in the formation of ghettos, as there were special homes for the children, as well as city spaces where families and grown-up individuals settled:

“I arrived in Bitola by train. I got on the station with two more men. All that each of us had was a small suitcase, a few rags and one winter coat. We started searching for a place to stay. We had nowhere to spend the night. The day turned into night, and we were still asking around if there was a shelter for the ‘Aegean refugee children.’ We were told that there was a home for Aegean

³⁷ For the “first time” experiences and the “rites of initiation” in the new modern environments see: Danforth and Boeschoten, *Children of the Greek Civil War*, 234–236.

³⁸ Zisa Hadjievski, interview with the author, November 15, 2019.

infants called 'Lazo Trpovski'. We went there to ask the manager to let us in for the night, to stay temporarily. He was against us staying in the home because we were 18-19 years old, he was afraid of us going out at night and bringing girls: 'Sorry, I cannot let you in.' We begged him, telling him we have no way out, and eventually he let us in. We stayed there not for two or three days, but for three months."³⁹

During the story, the plural form of address and description is dominant. The collective movement and group identity was vital for the survival of the refugee children during their migration and the sharing of a collective experience also forged the "solidarity in pain." The testimony ends with a historical contextualization of the humanitarian crisis and the catastrophes that happened in the last decade, and that are related to migrant crises in populations hit by war.

The oral history method is useful in identifying topics and subtopics in historical narratives that help in gaining multiperspectivity in learning about contested past. The interviewee's answers that connect the case study with the hypothesis about the oral history method as something that challenges the politics of memory, and with the points from the first part of the paper, formulate the following conclusion.

Conclusion

The development and position of the oral history method, regarding the Macedonian refugee children, can be followed from the end of the 20th century onwards, from impromptu gathering and use of oral testimonies, to a more systematic use of the method in the last decade. I conclude that the use of oral history as a method in the Macedonian context is still missing the proper theoretical understanding and that is mostly reflected when the topic is evaluated with top-down approaches in state-sponsored projects. The use of the anthropological perspective on migration as cosmopolitan and the use of the concept of the "spectrum of coercion" can be useful when deconstructing essentialism, revisionism and romanticizing of the child refugee narratives, all common in national memory politics.

The case study conducted for this research, the oral testimony of Zisa Hadjievski, has shown that the theoretical concepts and perspectives on migration are useful in understanding contesting memories and different personal experiences within the collective experience, especially when dealing with the topics of trauma and integration into the new national environments. In almost all researched testimonies, as well as in the pointed out examples from the case study, I see a combination of the cosmopolitan and the sedentary perspective on the migration and the displacement of the "child refugees." The cosmopolitan perspective features elements such as the emancipation gained through education in the socialist states and the "first time experiences" that were non-existent in the old homes. Interesting points yielded by the case study are the various examples of the subtle or explicit discrimination towards the "Aegean refugees" that settled in the socialist Macedonia, from the fellow ethnic Macedonians.

³⁹ Ibid.

These experiences are not present in the official politics of memory, despite the top-down approaches of the politics of memory almost always concentrating on the aspects of martyrdom. This brings me to the sedentary perspective on the migration which is dominated, in the researched testimonies and in the examples from the case study, by the distressing memories of separation from family members and distressing material conditions during the migration. Maybe the crucial elements of the sedentary perspective are the impossibility of “returning home” and the remembering of the village homes as the “lost ideal.” The consequence of using the sedentary perspective in the politics of memory to a more extreme degree would be the mobilization of national audiences towards a wanted political or cultural aim, and also, stripping down the agency of the child refugees and representing them as eternal helpless victims.

Oral testimonies of personal experience, with the proper use of the oral history method, come to interact with the collective experience and thus the power balance is shifted in the system of the politics of memory, where the power for interpreting the past is on the side of groups of interest and the approaches are mostly top-down. Theoretical understanding of the use of oral history makes room for multiperspectivity in learning about historical conflicts and simultaneously advocates bottom-up participation in the culture of remembrance.

Appendix: Transcript from the interview with Zisa Hadjievski⁴⁰

Author: Please introduce yourself. Right after that please recall some of your childhood memories.

Zisa Hadjievski: I am Zisa Hadjievski, I am 87 years old and I live in Bitola. I remember my childhood from the days when I attended a Greek school... when I was in the first grade... and after the school was over, we played children's games. There was a moment, it was the second day in school, when I made some mistake, I can't remember what... the teacher told me to climb the desk, and I did, and when she said “Hold out your hands,” I did, and she spoke to me in Greek, and she spanked me. I remember those moments. Also, there were moments where airplanes flew above our village, during our play time, and we were afraid of the aircrafts, scared of bombing, and we would hide under some tree, or in an alley, and so on.

A.: What is your place of birth?

Z. H.: I was born in the village of V'mbel, municipality of Lerin, district of Kostur. V'mbel is close to the Albanian border. Close to the village of Vrbnik and the town of Bilishta.

A.: Who were your parents? How many of you were there in your close family?

Z. H.: My parents were good people, honest people, they took care of the family, especially of the children. They were hardworking people, and along with the agriculture and husbandry, some worked in trade and with crafts.

⁴⁰ The original language of the interview is Macedonian. The interviewed person speaks in the local dialect. The interviewee was informed about the purpose of the interview and has given consent to publishing his oral testimony.

My grandfather, Koljo, was a craftsman, a mason. My father, Vane, besides agriculture, worked as a shoemaker. He was a good one, he learned from a professional craftsman in the village of Breznica. He worked as a shoemaker in the village. He repaired shoes, he even made new shoes. I didn't wear *opinci* like other children did, I wore shoes. My grandmother was a housewife, she looked after the children, she looked after us. And my mother, besides being a housewife, was also a worker, she worked in the field. The names of the family members were: Grandpa Koljo, Grandma Sofija, my father Ivan, my mother Lena. We were three brothers: the eldest – Risto, I was the middle child – Ziso, and the youngest was Yoti, Panayot.

A.: How would you define the term child refugee? How did you become a child refugee?

Z.H.: Being a child refugee for me represents... the existence of some problem, or the coming of some trouble, and one having to flee. To be saved, everyone wants to be saved from that problem, and so on. This caused people to get prepared, to run from the war. Now, a decision was made by the leadership, in every village with an appointed leader, to prepare the children, from babies to sixteen-years-olds, to be sent to other countries, and those from seventeen and older, to become fighters. The separation was very sad. Indeed. From the village of V'mbel we were fifteen children. Before the day of fleeing came, we gathered near the church, to organize ourselves concerning the food, the water, the clothes, etc. Besides, one question was left: who should be responsible for our group? Everyone agreed that I should be responsible for the children and to take care of everything: the food, the water, everything that was needed on the way, if the problems ought to arise...

A.: Please describe the moments of separation from your family.

Z.H.: The separation was... How could I describe it? Well, there was this little church, St. Athanasius, all separations took place there, and so did this one. And we all hugged our parents, but I didn't hug my grandmother, I didn't hug her and that left a mark on me 'till this day. I remember that with great discomfort still today. We went along, towards Smrdesh, and they, the parents, lit candles in the church as a good omen for our farewell. As for my younger brother Yoti, otherwise his full name was Panayotis, his group was also sent in March, with the same ceremony, in front of the little church, and they were sent to Romania. My brother Yoti remained in Romania right until he come back to Macedonia.

A.: Can you reconstruct the trajectory of your migration? Please recall the means of transportation, the places of accommodation, nutrition and living condition during the migration.

Z.H.: Our route was the following: we departed at seven o'clock from V'mbel, then we arrived in Smrdesh, and there we were joined by groups of children from Kosinec, D'mbeni, Kosanitca, Krchishta. We all gathered there. We continued on the road till Breznitca and we were again joined by more children. From Breznitca we continued 'till the crossroads between Lerin and Prespa. The first village we passed was Rulja. Then we went on towards Prespa, still on Greek territory. On the way we made some rest, we paused for 10-15 minutes, there were grownups that were leading us, yes.

And so, we reached Prespa, the last village we passed was German, close to the border 'Markova noga,' the Greek border then with Yugoslavia, and Macedonia. They surrendered us to the government representatives, they were soldiers who took us... We were caught by a heavy rain there, but still we passed the border and reached Ljubojno. Close to the border was also the village of Dupeni, but because it was higher in the mountain, we passed it and reached Ljubojno. In Ljubojno we were accommodated in houses, but most of us were in this huge house. We all gathered together, boys and girls. Our clothes dried on us. We spent the night there, when we woke up in the morning, our clothes were dry. We were given some food. It wasn't enough, but we endured. We went out into the nature, walking around, and we stayed in Ljubojno for fifteen days. On the fifteenth day, military trucks came, we were loaded onto them and went for Bitola.

We came to Bitola and we were accommodated in some school... I think it was the Nursing School, up on the ceiling, in a room with small windows... For lunch we had only marmalade, without bread. We spent the night there... then went for a walk in the city, and then we heard something. It was music! Songs, on the radio! We had never listened to a radio before, we didn't even know what a radio was. When we were told about the radio we were amazed. Yes, indeed. There was no such thing in our village.

We got back for the night, and early in the morning, it was maybe four o'clock, we were woken up and taken to the railway station. A freight train was waiting for us, with cargo wagons, with small windows, we were all loaded, we started wondering, where are we going?! The train took off, we passed Prilep and stopped at the train station Brailovo. It was the biggest center where children were accommodated, children from all groups stayed there, some were coming, others were leaving. There were wooden barracks, we stayed in them, we slept in them... In the morning we were given food, for breakfast and for lunch also... There was some food left, and the chef called us for seconds. We were all so hungry, we ran for it! I found myself in the first row. From all that pushing, I was pushed into the kettle. It was a mess. We also went into the nature to find some more food. And so, we stayed in Brailovo for a month.

A new group was about to come. And we were moved to another village, Slepche. It was close to Brailovo, but we weren't in the village exactly, but in the monastery. We were accommodated in the monastery... and we stayed there... there were monks, we worked a little on the monastery property and they give us some food. We also went down to the village, asking the villagers to give us some job, and to give us lunch in return. And we stayed there for a month. Then we were sent back to Brailovo! They told us that we were going to be sent on to Matka. Matka was near Skopje. The trucks came, we were loaded on them, and we passed Skopje and reached Matka. There was this building, for the workers that built the power plants on the river Treska, near Mavrovo. The building was empty so we stayed there. Again, there was a monastery where we were fed.

The river Treska had a lot of stones from the blasting work done for the power plant. And they made us work there, to extract stones from the river, and we were given some money. We spent a lot of time in the monastery... While in Matka, we got in touch with our parents. They were still in our village; the Civil

War was still going on. We sent them letters, that's how we contacted them. To buy a stamp or envelope, we needed money. We gave our pieces of bread to children with more money so they would give us money to send a letter.

We were informed to prepare and leave for Petrovec, near Skopje, to pass the military drill and join to the army of fighters. When our parents found out, the plan failed, they protested in front the party authorities, the plan was aborted and we stayed in Petrovec. We weren't sent to be fighters in the Civil War, because of the example with the children displaced in Romania: all of them were sent to the battleground and died. Yes, indeed. They were only children, they couldn't know what war was, and so on. After that, we stayed in Petrovec for a short time.

Macedonia was then a poor country. There was not enough food, not enough clothes, not enough child-care, not enough education infrastructure. After some agreement was reached, we were preparing to leave for Croatia. And so, some old buses came, we were loaded... They drove us pass Skopje, then there was the train, we got on the train and reached Belgrade. We spent the night there to get some rest. We were given food by the Red Cross and sometime in the morning, around ten o'clock we left for Croatia.

A.: Describe the living conditions, the accommodation and the education in Croatia.

Z.H.: We reached Rijeka, on the docks a boat was waiting for us and took us to Crikvenica. It was a tourist town, there were only hotels. There was also a small village and a football stadium. When we stepped on the docks, cars were waiting for us, and took us straight to the baths. To wash ourselves, to have a shower. After the bath, we searched for our old clothes, they were gone! We asked, where are our clothes? We were told: 'There are the clothes, they are now yours. We have thrown the old ones out, they were no good.' And it was true. All the way to here we hadn't changed, the old clothes were from the village. And then we changed. From there they took us to a restaurant, for supper. We were many and they put us in a queue in the dining hall. But because we were starving, we got back in the queue more than once.

We were lodged in the hotels, in double rooms, with white sheets, with new pajamas, we were amazed. We had a good time there, the food was good and sufficient. But we were missing school. So we stayed in Crikvenica until April the next year. It was 1948, and in April 1949 we were moved to Zagreb. We were placed on the periphery of Zagreb, [a place] called Stenjevec. There was this villa, called Villa Fumič. We were accommodated there.

The manager of the villa was a very capable man and he really cared for us. He organized everything for us so we could start working. We were sent to work in a steam boiler factory called "Jedinstvo." We worked there as locksmiths, mechanics, molders and so on. But we still missed theoretical education. One learns a trade with four hours of practice and four hours of theory. Because we missed theoretical education we stopped working, and Macedonian authorities were informed about the situation, and asked to send educational representatives.

They sent us an educator from Macedonia. He taught us Macedonian language, history and geography. It was the time to start the new school year. Because we didn't feel like working in the factory, our teacher asked us what

trade we would like to choose to learn. In my group, we all wanted to become mechanics. He asked around and soon we were sent to Samobor.

Samobor is a beautiful town. There was a glass factory. It was close to the Slovenian border. We were accommodated in a building on “Gajeva ulica” no. 43. I still remember the name. There we also had an educator. We started our course: four hours of theory, four hours of work in car mechanic workshop. I always strived for more education. I liked learning. In the schoolroom I always set in the front row. I soon mastered the Croatian and the Serbian languages. And our teacher would always send me to do a task she needed done. We had practice hours. We spent four hours with our chief mechanic.

My grades at the end of the school year were as follows: a “5” in all theoretical subjects, and one “4” in the subject of practical training.⁴¹

So, practice wasn’t my best side. When we finished the second year of the course, the school was over for us. We could not proceed to the third year because of our age. We were considered grownups and we should have finished with schooling. Then we were asked if we wanted to stay in Croatia or to go back to Macedonia. We decided to go back to Macedonia. Our educator organized our leave to Skopje.

A.: Why did you decide to leave Croatia for Macedonia? Please describe your arrival in Macedonia and the integration into the new community.

Z.H.: We decided to go back to Macedonia so we could be near our birthplace. We still thought that it was possible to return there. But that didn’t happen. My wish was to go and work in Bitola. To be closer to the village where I was born. The authorities allowed that.

I came to Bitola. I was sent to the Employment Agency and they found me a job in “Avtoremont.” I was immediately admitted. The manager said to me: ‘I am giving you ten days to accommodate and learn the city, after that come and start working.’ It was October 21, 1952. I arrived in Bitola by train. I got on the station with two more men. All that each of us had was a small suitcase, a few rags and one winter coat. We started searching for a place to stay.

We had nowhere to spend the night. The day turned into night, and we were still asking around if there was a shelter for the ‘Aegean refugee children’. We were told that there was a home for Aegean infants called ‘Lazo Trpovski’. We went there to ask the manager to let us in for the night, to stay temporarily. He was against us staying in the home because we were 18-19 years old, he was afraid of us going out at night and bringing girls: ‘Sorry, I cannot let you in.’ We begged him, telling him we have no way out, and eventually he let us in. We stayed there not for two or three days, but for three months.

A.: What were your main ambitions and challenges after settling down in Bitola?

Z.H.: In Bitola, after my work day, I continued with evening school. Because of the war, there were irregular schools. The group consisted of some twenty students. All of us learned after our working hours. We finished the course. Then again, I was dreaming of bigger achievement. I found out there was

⁴¹ In the mentioned school grading system, the numerical grades “5” and “4” resemble the grades “A” and “B”, respectively, from the American grading system.

the Higher School of Economy in Prilep. Today I feel proud of myself, because I succeeded in all I wanted. I met my girlfriend, Milica Petre Trpkova, and we got married. In the magazine of the expatriates – "Macedonia" – there was an article about me and my success, about starting at the bottom and becoming a manager. When the workers appointed me as a manager. Back then, in every firm, the workers' council decided about the management. That's how I became a manager.

A.: Did you lose any family members during the war? Was there a family reunion with other family members in refuge?

Z.H.: In the war I lost three family members: my brother Risto, he died as a partisan in March 1945, before the end of the Second World War. He didn't live to see the victory. Then, my grandfather Koljo, he went to Poland and soon he passed there. My grandma Sofa, she didn't cross the border to go to Poland with my parents and grandpa, she stayed on the border because she wasn't able to walk any more. When grandpa went back to look for her, Albanian guards told him that the border was closed by the Greeks: 'It is over.' And he turned back. No one knows what happened to her and when she died.

When my parents came to Skopje, they spent ten days in Idrizovo court, to be identified and examined. On the tenth day I went to take them for Bitola. They asked me to stay in Skopje. I'd already been in a relationship with my girlfriend and said that we were leaving for Bitola. They agreed. It was June 1956. In 1957 I did the same procedure to take my brother Yoti and bring him to Bitola. Now everyone that was left from the family gathered in Bitola.

A.: What is your personal message from your experience as a child refugee?

Z.H.: Our Golgotha, of the child refugees from Aegean Macedonia, should never happen again. Never again should small children suffer anywhere in the world. Unfortunately, we see things like that every day: war, migrants, suffering children, dying on the sea and so on. Things like that are still recurring. There is no peace.

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Položaj svjedočanstava usmene povijesti „djece-izbjeglica“ u makedonskoj politici sjećanja. Studija slučaja: Svjedočanstvo djeteta-izbjeglice iz Grčkog građanskog rata

Sažetak:

U makedonskoj kulturi i sjećanju, djeca koju su 1948. za vrijeme Grčkog građanskog rata komunisti evakuirali iz sela na sjeveru Grčke i poslali u socijalističke države na Balkanu i u Istočnoj Europi danas su poznata kao „djeca izbjeglice iz egejskog dijela Makedonije“. Takvi narativi, kao dio sporne povijesti, igraju bitnu ulogu u nacionalnoj politici sjećanja, obično kao sredstvo koje se koristi za izgradnju metanarativa, ali ih se dalje od toga teoretski ne analizira niti oni drže epistemičko i edukacijsko mjesto u povijesnom kurikulumu. Stoga, zainteresirana sam za poziciju tih oralnih svjedočanstava u politici sjećanja i njihov potencijal da ospore politiku sjećanja.

Ključne riječi:

oralna historija, politika sjećanja, izbjeglička djeca, Grčki građanski rat