

HEALTH CARE FOR REFUGEE CHILDREN DURING THE GREEK CIVIL WAR (1946-1949)

ZDRAVSTVENA SKRB O DJECI TIJEKOM GRAĐANSKOG RATA U GRČKOJ (1946.-1949.)

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SUMMARY

This paper focuses on physical and psychological traumas of children during and after the Greek Civil War (1946-1949). There were two evacuation programmes: one organised by the Greek Communist Party to seven countries of Eastern Europe and the other by the Greek government and Queen Frederica to children's homes (paidopoleis) in the country. The paper also argues that Greek refugee children experienced war terror and violence, voluntary or forced separation from their families, and institutionalisation for a shorter or longer time, and that both sides sought to provide shelter, food, medical treatment, and psychological support to the victims.

Key words: Children's evacuation; Greek Civil War (1946-1949); Paediatric care; Psychological traumas

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INTRODUCTION

Although the military conflict was over 64 years ago, the Greek Civil War persists in the national history, sociology, art, and literature. After almost forty years of silence following its end, its impact still continues to polarize the nation, judging by the recently published memoirs and studies of either the winning or the defeated party. The opposing views on the common trauma and its aftermath seem to reflect on any narration of these events, just like with the Spanish Civil War (Zafra 1989, 84-87). This war, ten years before the Greek, cost Spain a million dead and half a million expatriates. Among them, 30 to 35 thousand children were separated from their parents and expatriated not only to Western European countries (France, Belgium, and England) but much further (to Mexico and Soviet Union) by the Republican Government (Rempelakos, 2010, 34-43). However, the Greek Civil War followed the occupation by the Axis Powers, which resulted in extreme poverty. The similarities are impressive in spite of other differences between the two countries. Evacuation of children was first seen during World War I and became a strategy in the Civil Wars of Russia (1918-1920), Finland (1917-1918), Spain and Greece, as well as during the Armenian massacre (1915) and World War II, when 750,000 British children were moved from cities to the countryside. (Hassiotis, 2009, 204-218) (Starns, Parsons, 2002, 266-267).

One of the most controversial issues of the Greek Civil War, the one that caused the most acute disagreements and the greatest tensions is *paidomazoma* (Children's mass kidnapping). This term denotes the evacuation programme of the Greek Communist Party (KKE), in which children between the ages of 3 and 14 were taken from their villages to Eastern Europe without their families. A parallel evacuation programme was organised by Queen Frederica and the Greek government with the aim to improve the lives of refugee children in camps, the so-called *paidopoleis* (children's homes), throughout Greece. These two programmes of mobilisation of entire villages brought death, injury, disability, diseases, psychological trauma, and social and cultural loss. To make things even worse, children were drafted as soldiers in the armed conflict, which became a major topic in modern Greek historiography (Da Silva, 1985, 37-78).

Reports are scarce (Voutira and Brouskou 2000, 92-100; Vervenioti 2005, 101-123), and sources in the hosting countries incomplete. None of the refugee children wrote memoirs when they came of age, and only the recent studies (Lagani and Bondila, 2012, 21) and literary works with the memories

of the now adults that shed light on the experiences of the expatriate children or the *paidopoleis* children have broken the forty years of taboo.

THE HISTORICAL EVENTS

After the end of World War II, the political rift resulted in a civil war between the Democratic Army (DSE) controlled by the KKE and the National Army (ES) controlled by the Greek government. During the hostilities (1946-1949), the DSE controlled a region in the northern highlands of Greece bordering with Albania, Yugoslavia, and Bulgaria, which provided military as well as humanitarian support (Marantzidis, 2010, 29-51). In December 1947, the KKE announced the establishment of the Provisional Democratic Government of Greece (PDKE) (Close and Veremis 1993, 97-128). In the last days of August of 1949, partisans were forced over the border into Albania (Clogg, 2007, 139-141; Koliopoulos and Veremis 2004, 93-95).

The first alarm about children's situation was the DSE's radio message on 29 January 1948 about the outbreak of a typhus epidemic at the border town of Konitsa, asking Yugoslav officials to take "care of the young children from the free zone who suffered from famine and other deprivations". The request was granted by the Yugoslav government (Danforth and Van Boeschoten, 2012, 44), (Ristović, 2000, 39); it was said that a limited evacuation had been previously applied to the children of Yugoslav dissidents, probably an idea of the Education Minister Mitra Mitrović. On 3 March 1948, the guerrilla radio announced that Greek children between the age of 3 and 14 years would be sent to Bulgaria, Yugoslavia, Albania, Romania, Hungary, Poland, and Czechoslovakia (Keesing's Archives 1948, 9217). The Greek government had been informed about these plans, and the Athenian press announced that "the Bandits are abducting children between the ages of 3 and 14". By then the term *paidomazoma* (forced gathering and evacuation of children) had already taken root. On 6 March 1948, the Greek government announced the relocation of 14,000 children from the "bandit-controlled areas" to *paidopoleis* (Baerentzen 1987, 128-129). From this point on, statements of both sides justifying the two evacuation programmes increasingly reflected the propaganda war. Moving thousands of children from the Greek countryside abroad without their parents had been quite unprecedented in Greek history. The children were accompanied by the so-called "mothers", female escorts who remained with them in the hosting institutions. In May 1948, the Greek Committee for Child Support (EVOP) was established, headed by

Doctor Petros Kokkalis (former professor of surgery at Athens University) (Tenta-Latifi, 2011, 216-217).

The Greek government rushed to seek help from international organisations such as the United Nations Special Committee for the Balkans (UNSCOB) and strongly advocated that these evacuations were in fact a strategy of kidnapping, genocide, and creation of Janissaries (an allusion to the *Devşirme*, during the Ottoman dominion). It accused the KKE of having abducted the children (Marantzidis, 2010, 142). The KKE, however, argued that the intention was to save the children, and that parents gave their consent (Margaritis, 2001, 605-614). Retrospectively, it is recognised that not all children were sent away to Eastern Europe with parental consent but “might have been taken despite the objections and reservations of their parents”, specifically those who were “mainly [...] hostile to any popular struggle” (Gritzonas, 1998, 78-79).

On 27 February 1948, the Greek government filed a formal complaint to the UNSCOB (UNSCOB 1948, 18, 29). UNSCOB, however, was prohibited from entering the host countries and could not confirm the allegations (Woodhouse 2012, 399-400). An exception is Kenneth Matthews, a BBC correspondent, who was granted to visit a hostel for 170 Greek children in Plovdiv, Bulgaria (Matthews, 1972, 181). The Greek issue was globalised and discussed at the UN on 27 November 1948. By an overwhelming vote of 48 against 6, it urged the neighbouring countries to stop any intervention (Woodhouse 2012, 399-400). Greece also requested that all children should be repatriated, but the efforts of the International Red Cross and international diplomacy remained unfruitful. Eventually, time solved the problem, as the children grew up, and started a family in the host countries (Jones 1985, 65-86). Gradually Greece relented from its request, and the fate of these children fell under decisive influence of the Cold War. Isolated cases of repatriation occurred only from Yugoslavia after the split between Tito and Stalin (Coufoudakis/Iatrides 1981, 278-288).

SUFFERING DURING THE GREEK CIVIL WAR AND AFTER

The Axis occupation was a very hard period for the Greek population, as normal life was disrupted. The number of abandoned children increased dramatically during the Axis occupation: 340,000 orphans were exposed to everyday violence and life-threatening circumstances. Their parents had been imprisoned or banished or were serving in one of the two opposing

armies. In the areas controlled by the DSE, children had to work: carry the wounded, prepare food, build fortifications, and transport supplies. Hunger and disease were rapidly spreading, and daily bombing (keeping the children in continuous terror) and village burning forced people to seek temporary shelters (such as caves). Children marched over snow-covered mountains, usually at night, to avoid air raids. Poorly clothed, carrying younger brothers and sisters on their backs, they suffered from famine, cold, and fear.

Memories about the suffering children have been saved in many personal testimonies and memoirs. One of the DSE partisans wrote the following:

14 April 1949: Today at dawn, a convoy of 1251 wounded, sick, and weak women and children arrived, and they have reached Mount Grammos against the severe weather conditions. And to think that there were as many as 160 kids! (Vladas 2007, 336)

The same author noted extraordinary suffering of young girls:

[...] we were told that they were recruited wearing their short skirts and had no coats to protect themselves from the wind and rain [...] Sometimes they had no soap to wash and lacked underwear and socks to change [...] Everyone heard about the girls who were bleeding and lacked the necessities for their situation (Vladas 2007, 153).

Some young girls who were afflicted by haemorrhages or amenorrhoea returned to normal after 1-2 years, when they returned to the previous living conditions. Regarding their psychological situation, testimonies of their brothers in arms speak about their fears: “they wept and wailed [...] in battle, most put their head down and we had to look after them on top of all” (Kostopoulos 2001, 189).

One refugee child (now resident of Australia) remembers the week he spent in a camp shortly after entering the Albanian territory. Covered with fleas, he was transferred to another camp and housed with many other children, then put in a truck and transferred from Albania to Hungary. In Albania, children in a camp near Korçe were soon forced to beg for food or to eat orange peels or leaves of leeks (Lagani and Bondila 2012, 344-345). A girl aged 14 looking after the refugee children remembers how she lost a child in between two truck transits, only to find it - after an agonising search - hidden beneath the engine of one of the trucks (Lagani and Bondila 2012, 331). It seems that on the way to the border, some mules were available for the infants and sick and injured children. An unknown number of children

suffered hunger, cold, endless marches, and cramming in trucks and trains. Witnesses claim that many died or were lost along the way (Roditsas, 1948, 38).

ARRIVING IN EASTERN EUROPEAN COUNTRIES

The passage of children from Greece to the countries of Eastern Europe was possible only through Albania, Yugoslavia, and Bulgaria. These countries were forced to urgently transport the children further north for better care, using a common itinerary: transfer by trucks to Bitola (Yugoslavia) and then by train to other host countries (Danforth and Van Boeschoten, 2012, 48-54).

Every child seemed to carry the traumatic memory of their uprooting and change of lifestyle. Historians agree that the extended, over 30-year exile constituted a cultural trauma for all who participated in this tragic experience and affected their emotions, memories, and even their identities (Tsekou 2010, 123-125; Mazower, 2003, 25; Demertzis 2011, 133-162). During the journey, even if organised well, a great number of children had very little to eat, slept for weeks in makeshift shelters, and were infested by fleas and lice. If you add the hassle of laborious and distant travel, anxiety of separation from parents, siblings, relatives, and familiar environment of their village, poor sanitary conditions before and during transport, and finally malnutrition, it is no wonder that only one in ten children had no apparent health problem. “The medical and nursing staff of the host countries had to face a great challenge” (Gangoulias 2004, 95).

There is some evidence of the situation in which the newly arrived refugee children found themselves. A novelist and member of EVOP, Elli Alexiou recalls his experience from Hungary in 1948:

I saw them hungry, nude, their hair stuck like cement because they had not washed for months [...] We had many children with scabies, lice, and rheumatism, which had to be watched closely to avoid cardiac complications. We had some [children] with the nerves destroyed from war. Then I first heard the word “polemitida”, which is a kind of nervous breakdown (Lagani and Bondila 2012, 38; Margaritis 2000, 79, 83).

A refugee child remembers that upon arrival to Hungary, the wife of the Minister of Health and one Greek official could not stand the stench of 42 infants:

I remember that we had parasites, trachoma, scabies, tuberculosis, or lymphadenitis. When we came here in Csurgo, the doctors were the first to visit us. And some kids, I among them, were invited into the kitchen and were given scrambled eggs with sugar to get stronger. And they also gave us cod liver oil for strength. But I also remember that there were children who did not come out from beneath the table. They were speaking about the “milkman” and they were hiding from the “milkman” (a nick-name for the early-morning spying planes of the ES). They were always under the table. It was terrifying that these children were mental wrecks (Lagani and Bondila 2012, 332-333).

The representatives of the Yugoslav Red Cross describe a similar physical and psychological condition of children as *hopeless*. The children were “hungry, dirty, half-naked, barefoot, and terrified that they would be bombarded at any moment. The age of the children ranged between 2 and 17 years, although some babies were also among them” (Yugoslav Red Cross/Lagani 1996, 52). Another, Romanian account confirms the previous:

The train arrived. Kids got off looking like ghosts. They reminded us of the photos from Nazi camps. Weak, yellow, wrinkled, dressed in men jackets, sack strips for scarves, military uniforms and boots that can accommodate both of their feet. Like old men. People who came to greet them were freezing [...] Children were accompanied by nurses and women from their villages... For a long time since their arrival, the children would duck on the ground whenever a plane passed over Sinaia, stay put for a while, and then run for the basements (Rentis-Ravanis 1981, 17).

The first group of the Greek children to go to Czechoslovakia reached the railway station of Parkan in Slovakia in April 1948. The children arrived in poor condition: weak and hungry, dirty, full of scabies, and with psychological traumas. After assignment to several institutions they were bathed and medically screened for any hospital emergencies. Overall, the country welcomed 4,500 children. In autumn 1948, the Prime Minister of the PDKE Markos Vafeiadis asked the Czechoslovakian authorities to group the children in the smallest possible number of centres, but the doctors warned of potential risks of epidemic outbreaks such concentration entailed and decided to distribute them in 8-9 centres (Botou/Lagani and Bondila 2012, 141-143).

The general idea was to quarantine the children upon their arrival and to provide necessary medical care. Most of the children were in a pitiful state. An adult recalls his arrival in Bulgaria:

There were doctors dressed in white [...] They burnt our clothes, gave us a shower, and cut our hair[...] if you had a scabies, they put yellow ointment on

you, sulphur, I think; it burned, but what could we do? We couldn't cry; they were all foreigners. Many years later I thought, "That's the way they treated the Jews"[...] they were told to take a shower. We didn't know what would come down on us: water or zyklon? (Danforth and Van Boeschoten 2012, 119-120).

There is only one table summarizing the state of health of children when they arrived in the countries of destination according to the data of the Health Services.

- Children who suffer from lung disease 26.0%
- Children who suffer from bronchial asthma 17.5%
- Children who suffer from nerve disorders 10.5%
- Children who suffer from scabies 14.0%
- Children with no apparent illness 10.5%

[this is a broadly known report of all the Eastern European countries regarding the total number of Greek refugee children (Gritzonas, 1998, 89)]

An excerpt from the report of 23 April 1949 by Meszaros Jandor, a physician practicing at the nursery of Visegrad in Hungarian People's Republic, additionally illustrates the desperate situation of the children he had received a year ago:

... on 23 April 1948, I was on the Robert Karolyi Street to receive 111 Greek children and transfer them to the 'Gisela' resort in Visegrad. When I saw the kids in front of me, it was a terrible picture of misery. Children wore tattered clothes and had scratch wounds on their hands and faces. Each child was a reflection of the horrors of war. I found that all without exception had lice. Most children had pimples, psoriasis, and other skin diseases. Fifty-five children had bad teeth, 27 glandular fever, four hypertrophic tonsils, 26 had various dermatological problems, two umbilical hernia, and one a dwarfism (Lagani and Bondila 2012, 291-292).

In his memoirs, an author recalls some of the names of the affectionate doctors and nurses who worked at the Bulgarian Red Cross (BRC), regretting that he could not remember all of them (Gangoulias 2004, 106). The refugee camp administration had always considered children's health top priority, as the instructions for teachers testify:

We must be vigilant about their health. The democratic countries that host them take care of the nutrition and health of the children. They show their love and care by any means available. They take care that the children are

in no want. But we also have to take care of their cleanliness and teach them good hygienic habits and physical exercise (Gangoulias 2004, 128-129).

HEALTH IMPACTS ON REFUGEE CHILDREN IN EASTERN EUROPE

One issue that initially puzzled the host countries was the length of children's stay. The East European countries expected that it would be limited and that all the children would return home after the civil war (Hradecny/Lagani and Bondila 2012, 103). However, when the DSE was defeated, it became clear that the camps would remain for an indefinite time.

One of the difficulties in evidencing children was completing their records; in cases where the exact birth date of the child was uncertain, the doctors had to assess their age. The immediate consequence was that children in the same school class significantly varied in the level of knowledge, abilities, and skills. Without family support, the non-Greek speaking staff was at odds with assessing the psychological impact of children's institutionalisation over long time. In addition, immersed in the social and cultural environment of the host countries, a certain number of Greek children acquired the host language and culture, severing their ties with Greece.

Records from Hungary (Lagani and Bondila 2012, 291-292) included information on diseases such as scabies, skin diseases, lung diseases, rheumatism, and malnutrition that were treated successfully. There is also a reference by an adult Greek refugee to the health status of children in the kindergartens. Physicians cared for all children, sending simple cases of illness to convalescent facilities and serious cases to the nearest hospitals. From 1952 to 1954, a severe eye epidemic (probably trachoma) struck the children of several kindergartens. A significant contribution to the fight against the disease is attributed to Dr Strilisz, the director of the Ophthalmology Clinic of Goyhant, who organised treatment and visited the children every day. [Another outstanding figure was the Director of the Ophthalmology Clinic of Debrecen (Psimmenos/Lagani and Bondila 2012, 314-315). On the other hand, refugee children in Romania remember the time they spent in Calimanesti, where a typhus epidemic broke out, and hunger was so severe that children were forced to catch turtles and snails and strip leaves of trees in order to have something to eat (Danforth and Van Boeschoten 2012, 71).

Problems for the refugee children were the weather (because they crowded in camps for too long) and malnutrition (poor diet and unfamiliar cuisine). Despite great efforts of the host countries, deaths from typhoid and

diarrhoea were inevitable, and the trachoma epidemic became endemic (Manoukas 1969, 90-91).

According to the reports of the Yugoslav Red Cross, in some homes children had no clothes or shoes or underwear (Ristović 2000, 41-42). In Czechoslovakia, the start of the school year 1952-1953 caught the Greek pupils without warm clothing (coats, scarves, gloves) and shoes, but the problem was solved with the proceeds from a fundraiser among Greeks (Botou/Lagani and Bondila 2012, 154).

One psychologist witnessed the following:

The children have suffered psychological traumas and it will take many years and work for them to heal [...]we found that an excessive amount of bread was consumed considering the number of children. The administration even suspected embezzlement, until they discovered the cause: children were hiding the bread! They were sneaking slices out of the dining room and hid them in the pillows or boxes and bags which they buried. When we asked a child why he did it, he timidly replied: "in order to have bread tomorrow" (Rentis-Ravanis 1981, 24-25).

Testimonials about the difficulties for adequate feeding of children in Bulgaria are the activities of the children themselves to find extra food (grapes, corn) with personal searching in the forests and the villages. Therefore, the children became actively engaged for their own survival (Danforth and Van Boeschoten 2012, 71; Halliday Piel 2012, 393-418).

The most sensitive and emotional children became disoriented after they lost touch with the traditional way of living in their villages. The lack of a role model in the adolescence years left a permanent mark. The absence of the parents was painful, but the majority of the refugee children and now adults confessed that they felt this absence most deeply when they had to make critical decisions about their future (Van Boeschoten/Mazower 2003, 122-141). However, the prevalent opinion among the Civil War authors is that the greatest psychological challenges the children had to face were those of not returning home, deprivation from the family environment, and institutionalised childhood.

REFUGEE CHILDREN IN GREECE

“Bandit-stricken” was a term for a large segment of the population who left their land voluntarily or were forced to move to the ES evacuation areas. Crowds of refugees fled from the war zones to major towns and lived in camps and huts surrounded by mud and garbage. This is how the press described the tragedy, especially of the child population:

Lamia, a city with 20,000 inhabitants, received 35,000 refugees from the partisan areas, who were housed in a miserable manner... Tents and huts were erected, and goats, cattle, and pigs (the last surviving remnants of their estate) were roaming in the mud... (Gritzonas 1998, 86)

The press also tried to alert politicians and the public to the lurking diseases:

A father, victim of partisans, came crying to our offices, carrying a seven-year-old child with fever, suffering from tuberculosis, trying to find it a bedding (Baerentzen 1987, 128-129).

The Ministry of Social Welfare announced on 31 March 1949 that the number of orphans and abandoned children reached 340,000. On the other hand, the daily caloric intake for the Greek population was an estimated 1,700 per person (compared to 2,850 for the British population) in 1946, according to the USA Ambassador in Athens McVeagh (McVeagh/Iatrides 1980, 236-290).

In her memoirs, Queen Frederica (Queen Frederica, 1971, 137) writes that she took the decision to establish homes for children in response to *paidomazoma* (Baerentzen 1987, 137-138). On 10 October 1947, she started a fundraiser whose aim was “to take care of the refugees and the orphans...” This fundraiser financed the establishment of the first seven *paidopoleis* in 1947, food distribution centres in various cities, and of two training schools. These centres were also used as “re-indoctrination camps” for young partisans who had been captured by the ES and for repatriated refugee children (Danforth and Van Boeschoten, 2012, 80).

The children’s issue enforced the political controversy in 1948 because until then, children followed the movements of the general population in military evacuations with their families, while since then many children separated from their families were hosted in institutes opposite to the family political ideology. By 1950, the fifty-four *paidopoleis* all over the country counted 20,000 children. After the end of the conflict, many of them returned to

their families, but a certain number of orphaned or separated children were housed in nine *paidopoleis* that remained until the end of the 1950s and exceptionally the 1960s and the 1970s. Some parents were forced to leave their children in *paidopoleis* due to great economic difficulties of raising children in large families after nearly ten years of war and poor prospects of employment. Poverty bent possible ideological differences and forced parents to beg for a place in a *paidopolis* to ensure food, clothing, and education for their children. An orphan girl suffering from osteomyelitis spent three years in a hospital in Thessaloniki, and doctors arranged to have her placed in a *paidopolis* nearby as the only solution (Danforth and Van Boeschoten 2012, 94). It seemed reasonable for anti-communists and supporters of the conservative party to fully endorse the *paidopolis* solution and show their gratitude to the Queen.

On their arrival to a *paidopolis* children were bathed, their hair cut, received new clothes, and were examined by physicians. Physicians also participated in the preparation of food and training courses, and supervised the growth and recovery of the children (Hassiotis, 2013, 253). Dr Drimpetis of the *paidopolis* “Saint Paul” in Ekali (Athens) said that children with health problems who after treatment and standard hygienic measures started to receive 2700-3000 kcal diets per day soon recovered. In the *paidopolis* “Iosifogleio” (Athens) that hosted refugees from Western Macedonia, health and convalescent facilities, staffed by a physician and two nurses, were also highly successful. The diet followed the same model: five meals a day in desired quantities. The *paidopolis* “Papafeion” (Thessaloniki) operated as a transit centre for refugee children, where specialists, namely a dermatologist, ophthalmologist, and a paediatrician examined all children before they moved on to any other *paidopolis*. Severe disease cases were transferred to hospitals or detained in the infirmary.

There is a record from the *paidopolis* “Saint Irini” (Thessaloniki) that 90% of the 600 children refugees from many parts of northern Greece were diagnosed lymphadenitis. According to David (1949, 85-90), in addition to physical diseases many of the children suffered severe psychological traumas from witnessing the murder of their parents.

SANITARY CONDITIONS IN THE PAIDOPOLEIS

One head of a *paidopolis* described the first arrivals as “wild men who could never be educated”. They had to learn how to walk in shoes, take

showers, brush their teeth, and use toilets.: *The children had to be civilized from ignorant peasants into model citizens. They looked like animals... they had to learn how to sing the national anthem and say their prayers. They even had to learn how to celebrate Christmas.* Danforth and Van Boeschoten 2012, 109)]. Initially, the living conditions were difficult; children came “with scabies, anaemia, and lymphadenitis”. With time, their health improved, if one is to judge from monthly body weight measurements. Scabies disappeared, lymphadenitis was under control, but the deaths of two toddlers were the reason to separate toddlers (2-6 years) from the older children to have them closely monitored and well fed. Food supplies, equipment, and conditions soon improved, and care was taken for educational needs (Danforth and Van Boeschoten 2012, 98-99).

In the *paidopolis* “Saint Helena” (Epirus), which was overwhelmed by a large number of refugees, the representative of the International Red Cross objected that the food rations were small. He was satisfied with the explanation that the rations were limited, but that any child could ask for more food freely, but when he visited the infirmary he found 12 children with acute gastroenteritis: it seemed that the visiting parents gave them spoiled sweets.

On 17 March 1948, the *paidopolis* “Saint Alexander of Ziros” (Epirus) expected to receive 65 children from an orphanage that had to be evacuated immediately due to the military operations of the DSE. The new kids arrived with two trucks, but instead of 65, there were 68: three girls stowed away on the truck and refused to go back. Incidents such as this were pretty common. The kids had lice and were dirty; they were sprayed, bathed (some for the first time in their lives), and dressed in new clothes and shoes. In the summer of 1948, this *paidopolis* had to be evacuated urgently, and the children were taken to Athens only to return to Ziros in July 1950 (Danforth and Van Boeschoten 2012, 98-105).

DISCUSSION

There are several similarities between the two refugee programmes. Each was motivated by a combination of humanitarian and political concerns. Each side was taking care of children endangered by military operations in their villages. Each tried to educate the children according to their own political model. The KKE was educating a generation of factory workers and engineers, loyal to the party, and keen on bringing a new socialist order to the country. The Greek government, in contrast, was raising loyal subjects

to the queen, who would observe the traditional values of Greece (family, religion), and contribute with their work to the country's modernisation.

Families gave or hid their children according to their political views. Those who opposed the evacuation programme escaped from their villages to areas controlled by the opposite side. The nearly 80 children's homes in the countries of Eastern Europe and 54 *paidopoleis* in Greece were very similar, as children on either side were raised under military regime and in a highly political environment. Although sanitary conditions and the physical health of the children on either side were poor, given the post-war economic difficulties, the most severe consequence was the psychological scar (Santa Barbara, 2006, 891-894) that has persisted sixty years later.

Some similarities may also be observed between the Spanish children of Auxilio Social and the Greek children of the Queen's *paidopoleis*; both forbade the use of other than maternal language (only Castilian in Spain) and both were successful in their political and religious indoctrination. Hygienic conditions, sufficient food, health care, education, and entertainment were critical for the children to adopt the desirable models, most of them out of gratitude, as they had no alternative recourse. However, the children of parents on the defeated side remained suspicious and changed their views as soon as they were reunited with their parents.

CONCLUSIONS

There are, however, two important differences between the experiences of children evacuated to the *paidopoleis* and children evacuated to Eastern Europe. The first is that the *paidopoleis* children remained in the familiar cultural environment and spoke their maternal language. The exiled children found themselves in a foreign-language environment (they learned the language pretty soon), and even though Greek teachers kept them in touch with their mother tongue, a high percentage adopted the culture of the host country as they moved on to high school or university. Even though the refugee children embraced these changes, often for the better, they did consider their early separation from the family a traumatic and tragic experience.

The second fundamental difference is for how long they remained separated from their families. The *paidopoleis* children returned home in less than two years. The children in Eastern Europe had to wait long before repatriation. By the end of 1951, only 300 children, all from Yugoslavia, returned to Greece and by the end of 1958, only 5,000 more had been repatriated,

although many of the children had found their parents abroad. Some of the refugees who had been evacuated as children in 1948-1949 returned to Greece only after 1981. In other words, most spent their entire childhood away from their families.

To conclude, whatever the ideology behind them, both evacuation programmes were similarly scarring for the refugee children.

ABBREVIATIONS

| | |
|---------------|---|
| KKE | Greek Communist Party [Kommounistiko Komma Ellados] |
| EVOP | Greek Committee for Child Support [Epitropi Voitheias gia to Paidi] |
| DSE | Democratic Army of Greece [Dimokratikos Stratos Ellados] |
| ES | National Army [Ethnikos Stratos] |
| PDKE | Provisional Democratic Government of Greece [Prosorini Dimokratiki Kyvernisi Ellados] |
| UNSCOB | United Nations Special Committee for the Balkans |
| BRC | Bulgarian Red Cross |
| QF | Queen Fundraiser |

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SAŽETAK

U ovom se članku govori o fizičkim i psihičkim traumama djece tijekom i nakon Građanskog rata u Grčkoj (1946.-1949.). Organizirane su dvije velike evakuacije djece: jednu je organizirala Grčka komunistička partija, raseljavajući djecu u sedam zemalja istočne Europe, a drugu grčka vlada i Kraljica Frederica, smještajući djecu u domove (paidopoleis) unutar zemlje. U članku se raspravlja o tome da su djeca trpjela ratne strahote i nasilje, dobrovoljno ili nasilno odvajanje od obitelji i institucionalizaciju na kraće ili duže vrijeme te da su obje strane pokušavale pružiti siguran smještaj, hranu i medicinsku i psihološku skrb žrtvama rata.

Ključne riječi: *evakuacija djece; Građanski rat u Grčkoj (1946.-1949.); pedijatrijska skrb; psihološke traume*