

Ilektra Apostolou: A Greek female resistance fighter and a heroine of the left

Christina Chatzitheodorou

Abstract The Greek resistance fighter Ilektra Apostolou was executed on 26 July 1944, by the collaborationist security forces in Greece during the Second World War. Apostolou was a member of *Kommounistiko Komma Ellados* (KKE, Communist Party of Greece) and of *Eniaia Panneladiki Organosi Nevn* (EPON, United Panhellenic Organisation of Youth), and was involved in pre-war antifascist action. During the resistance, she tried to pass on the mentality she had developed from this early involvement to young women in EPON and *Lefteri Nea* (LT, Free Young Woman): that women would be liberated only by actively participating in social struggles. Her biography is examined with a critical eye, taking into consideration that it was largely written after the war. This means that it not only provides a factual representation of Apostolou: it also functions as a *lieu de memoire*, a site of memory. The politics of memory influences how her biography is constructed. The second part focuses on the memorialisation of Apostolou, examining it through the lens of intersectionality. Identity criteria – such as gender, race, age and political identification – and the changing relative significance attributed to them are important both for shaping and understanding, memorialisation processes. An intersectional approach seeks to reveal the hidden dimensions behind the memorialisation process. The last part focuses on Apostolou's post-war legacy and explores how her memorialisation was intertwined with political developments from 1944 to the present, with a particular focus on the contestation over Apostolou's memory between the right and the left at various points in modern Greek history.

The article draws on a combination of secondary and primary sources, the main primary sources being those found in the Educational Centre of Charilaos Florakis (Archive of the Greek Communist Party) and the Contemporary Social History Archives (ASKI).

Keywords Ilektra Apostolou, memorialisation, *Kommounistiko Komma Ellados*, KKE, Communist Party of Greece, Greece, resistance, civil war, feminism, women's equality, intersectionality

This article focuses on the Greek resistance fighter and martyr Ilektra Apostolou. Apostolou was a member of the *Kommounistiko Komma Ellados* (KKE, Communist Party of Greece) during the interwar period, and a participant in pre-war anti-fascist action during the Ioannis Metaxas dictatorship (1936-1941). During the Resistance (1941-1944), she was a member of *Eniaia Panneladiki Organosi Newn* (EPON, United Panhellenic Organisation of Youth), but she was eventually executed by the collaborationist security forces in Greece. The first part of the article focuses on the biography of Apostolou, examining her pre-war antifascist actions, and her imprisonment during the Ioannis Metaxas dictatorship, which crystallised and shaped her identity as an anti-fascist communist. It also explores Apostolou's resistance activities, and the ways in which she provided young women with the necessary tools to participate in resistance activities, particularly through *Lefteri Nea* (Free Young Woman), an all-female resistance organisation in occupied Athens, which preceded EPON. These interwar and war activities cannot be examined without a brief account of the context of women's engagement within the communist movement during the interwar period, and the communist position on women's issues at the time.

The second part examines Apostolou's biography and memorialisation through the lens of intersectionality. Identity criteria such as gender, race, age and political identification, as well as the ways in which their hierarchical ordering changes, are important for both shaping and understanding memorialisation processes. An intersectional approach seeks to reveal the hidden dimensions behind the memorialisation process. The final part will focus on Apostolou's post-war legacy, and the ways in which her

memorialisation has been intertwined with political developments from 1944 to the present, with a particular focus on the contestation over her memory between the right and the left – as well its changing nature – at various points in Greek history, right up to the present day. The article's aim is to demonstrate how Apostolou's myth was constructed after the Civil War, and the ways in which her memorialisation was shaped and altered over time in line with political history and developments in post-civil-war Greece.

The article is based on a combination of secondary and primary sources. However, any attempt to provide a biography of Ilektra Apostolou, and to reconstruct her life as a communist and resistance fighter from the sources, is complicated by the difficulty of separating out the details of her life from the myth of Apostolou that was constructed after the Civil War. Her biography is based largely on texts produced after her death, and this means that biographical facts about her life and elements from the construction of the Apostolou myth during her post-war heroisation often coexist together. One should therefore examine her biography with a critical eye, understanding it not only as a factual representation of Apostolou, but also as *lieu de memoire*, a site of memory: the politics of memory influence her biography. Her story was written by socially specific subjects, who had also participated in the communist resistance, and whose historical perception was not only closely related to their pre-war political mobilisations and their political identification but was also influenced by the consequences of the Civil War for those on the defeated side (i.e. exile, political imprisonment). The Greek primary sources originate from the Educational Centre of Charilaos Florakis (Archive of the Greek Communist Party) and the Contemporary Social History Archives (ASKI), both located in Athens.

When one examines Apostolou's biography, the crucial question of intersectionality emerges. 'Intersectionality' has for a long time been a key concept in feminist, women's or/and gender studies, used to explain a wide range of socially created disparities. Indeed, long before Kimberlé Crenshaw coined the term intersectionality as a specific political framework, in 1989, the notion it denoted had been used in other feminist work, on how women are simultaneously positioned as women and, for example, as black, working-class, lesbian, and/or colonial subjects.¹ As a concept it

emerged in Black feminist action and scholarship in the 1970s as a response to the dominance of white feminism, but it refers to an issue that has been at the forefront of worldwide feminist efforts for decades.² How should the division of human existence be properly explained, and how are experiences divided along racial, gender, sexuality, class and (dis)ability lines.³

Intersectionality facilitates a better theoretical understanding of the world. As a mode of critical theory, it emphasises a broader and more complicated ontology as compared to approaches that aim to reduce humans to one category at a time, for instance seeing women only through gendered lenses. Rather, it suggests that productive knowledge creation must understand social situations as relational, historically specific products of a number of contextual factors that interact with each other.⁴ The assumption that women represent a coherent group with identical interests and priorities, regardless of their class, religion, race, age, implies a notion of 'gender' that exists beyond borders, universally coherent, and neglects historical particularities.⁵ As Red Chidgey argues, while the concept of intersectionality has developed considerably within the field of humanities and social sciences, it remains underdeveloped within the interdisciplinary field of memory studies and could be further developed.⁶ Given that intersectionality makes apparent the various positionings that comprise daily life and the power relationships surrounding it, it is clearly a valuable conceptual tool for examining the biography and memorialisation of Apostolou, and for moving beyond essentialised, monolithic ideas about her identity – as in seeing her as either communist or Greek, for example: foregrounding 'one' identity marker cannot speak to the complexity of her existence. Indeed, those actors who remember her, are themselves comprised of multiple identities and embodiments, which in turn interact with the ways they remember Apostolou and her actions.

The life and legacy of Ilektra Apostolou (1912-1944)

Thinking about a topic (women and anti-war/anti-fascism), from a certain place (Greece), and from a specific historical time (1930s-1940s) is inevitably coloured by the dynamics of that location at the specific time of the event. In the case of Apostolou, her family's social and economic

background (bourgeois), the time of her politicisation (1920s-1940s), her gender (a woman), all affected her participation in the struggle. She was born in Athens in 1912 into a bourgeois household, which enabled her to study at the German School of Athens. But despite her wealth and bourgeois upbringing, at the age of fourteen, in 1925, Apostolou joined the *Ommospondia Kommounistikou Neolaion Ellados* (OKNE, The Young Communist League of Greece). She distanced herself from her family's bourgeois lifestyle and hence from a certain model of (bourgeois) femininity that idealised women as pure, dutiful, maternal and restricted to private spaces. In her book about Apostolou, first published in 1961, the writer and journalist Dido Sotiriou – who also fought against the Ioannis Metaxas dictatorship and later became involved in the communist resistance – comments:

And when she had to choose, a little girl (kopelitsa) of 18 years old, between her bourgeois home with its easy, rosy life and the struggle with the oppressed (katatregmenous), the hunger, the nakedness, she chose the struggle. It was not easy to grow up with nannies and governesses and then to give it all up and share the bitter bread of the people, the bean soup, the breeding, the nudity, the shack, the breathless toil [of the people].⁷

In an article written in 1965 commemorating Apostolou's death and legacy, Melpo Axioti, a writer and member of the Communist Party of Greece, also mentions that Apostolou became involved in the Communist League as early as 1925. Axioti writes about an occasion when Apostolou was distributing leaflets in the street for the League: an acquaintance of her family passed by and, seeing Ilektra distributing leaflets for the party, asked what she was doing there: ““Shh,” the girl [Ilektra] nodded, “don't say anything to my family (*sto spiti*). I'm handing out leaflets.”⁸ Aura Partsalidou, also a member of OKNE between 1926 and 1933, wrote about meeting Apostolou in 1927, when she was only 15 years old and was already an OKNE member of the *Achrida* of Patisia-Nea Ionia.⁹ Partsalidou recalled that Apostolou always had *prokirikseis* (tracts on the position of an organisation) with her, and that she had had to sneak out of her family home to participate in OKNE. The young Apostolou would

wait for a chance to grab some food to give to persecuted members of her group, and then when she found would run away.¹⁰

In 1931, Apostolou officially became a member of the Communist Party of Greece. In 1934, she was the head of the Greek delegation to the Anti-Fascist and Anti-War Women's Congress, organised by the Women's World Committee Against War and Fascism, which took place in Paris. The congress was organised under the auspices of the communists, and was sponsored by the Communist International. It was dominated by communist women and brought together women of diverse countries in a common struggle.¹¹ In an article for *Rizospastis*, the newspaper affiliated with the Communist Party, Apostolou saluted the women of Greece:

I give you my word that, wherever I go, I will unite your voice with the voice of the women of the world. I will declare on your behalf that you are not prepared to allow a new war, that you will not allow the murderous work of fascism to proceed.¹²

Later in the article, she states that when she comes back from the congress, she will be able to pass on the experience of women comrades from around the world, 'the experience that will help us to fight, to organise our struggle better, the struggle of the women of our country, the struggle for freedom'.¹³

In her speech at the congress, Apostolou talked about the oppression of workers, particularly that of women workers in Greece, highlighting the double oppression of women by patriarchy and capitalism. According to Apostolou, workers were also under the oppression of both local and foreign exploiters. However, women, and particularly women land labourers, were more exploited in comparison to men as their wages were lower than men's while they also had the burden of housework on their shoulders.¹⁴ Apostolou's speech resonates with the contemporary work of the feminist scholar Silvia Federici, who (developing on from the work of earlier generations of feminist theorising) argues that women's subjugation is more than simply a cultural or/and material force, and that control over women's bodies is an integral part of capitalism. By not paying women at all for their domestic work, profit is made by seizing from women the value of what they make and are worth during their domestic

responsibilities: a system of patriarchy is thus an integral part of capitalism. Within the gendered division of labour, women constitute a core component of the work formation.¹⁵ As Federici writes, 'If femininity has been constituted in capitalist society as a work-function masking the production of workforce under the cover of a biological destiny, then women's history is class history.'¹⁶ According to this analysis, any attempt to separate capitalism and patriarchy is flawed.

Given that she is a historical subject, Apostolou's participation in the conference, along with her speeches, should be examined within the broader historically specific context of 1930s/1940s Greece. Her speeches not only reflected the concerns of the time; they also act as a mirror of the position of the communist movements in the 1930s, particularly the Greek Communist Party, regarding a woman's place in society. The majority of women who participated in the movement and the party were relatives of male cadres. Ilektra Apostolou was the sister of Lefteris Apostolou, who became the General Secretary of OKNE in 1924. Moreover, many women were spouses of male cadres and became involved in the movement at their husband's sides, which had the effect of denying them any autonomy regarding their intellectual selves – this is not, however, to diminish their actions and involvement in the struggle. As Tasoula Vervenioti argues, marriage with a comrade was the only option available for women working for the party. For many, given the powerful social contract of honour (*timi*) in Greek society at the time, marrying a comrade was their way out of family restrictions regarding their participation in the movement.¹⁷ Apostolou was married to Giannis Sideridis, also a member of the Communist Party, but she divorced him when he signed a *dilosi* (remorse declaration), a document repudiating his actions as a communist.¹⁸ According to the testimony of communist Chrysa Papavasileiou, Apostolou had married Sideridis as part of her effort to escape her family environment and its imposed restrictions, and to enable her to work for the movement more freely. This resonates if we consider Axioti's and Partsalidou's stories of Apostolou sneaking out of the house to work for the party, along with the fact that Apostolou divorced Sideridis when he signed the remorse declaration.¹⁹

Another factor affecting the position of women in the interwar period in Greece is the significant number of women who entered the labour

market, especially women who were refugees.²⁰ The new economic conditions resulted in a massive exodus of Greek women from the home, and an impressive increase in the number of women employed in various sectors of paid work. As a result of this change, women's paid work was understandably a major issue for women in the movement. The Party's position was shaped from these material conditions, which saw a considerable number of women working in what had previously been men's jobs. The Communist Party's approach regarding women's equality was closely related to this overall social change, underlining that the working class was an ally of women. The party, through its press and publications, highlighted both the need to organise working women in unions and the demand for special protection for working women, rejecting the view that achieving the right to vote would be a panacea for women's equality.²¹ According to an article in *Rizospastis*, for instance: 'the workers know of course that the bourgeoisie will not solve it [the woman's question], cannot solve it, and they feel that it is not a separate women's question but a part of the whole liberation movement of the workers and peasants.'²² Apostolou's speeches at the conference reflected these internalised ideas of women's specific needs and responsibilities, along with the communist approach to the subject that placed the question of women's equality within the broader strategy of the working-class movement. Women's rights and responsibilities largely concerned their distinct roles in society, defined principally by their roles as mothers and wives.²³ These internalised ideas about women's place in society and in the movement influenced the division of labour in the communist movement and the resistance: in the vast majority of cases, women assumed gender-specific roles and activities.

During the Ioannis Metaxas Dictatorship (1936-1941), Apostolou was in Thessaloniki, the second largest city in Greece after Athens, organising protests and strikes, and leading the drive for the participation of women in the organisation *Laiki Pronoia* (People's Welfare) to provide protection for the victims of the dictatorship.²⁴ Due to her participation in the struggle against the dictatorship, she was arrested and transferred to Averoff prison. She was released in 1938, only to be arrested again in 1939 while pregnant and about to give birth. When her baby was only seven days old, she was sent into exile on Anafi, a small island in the Cyclades. Kostas Mpirkas tells us that during her time in Anafi

Apostolou became an active member of the Political Prisoner Coexistence Group (Omada Simbiosis Politikon Kratoumenon) even though she had just had a baby. Apostolou was able to carry out both tasks, as a comrade and simultaneously a mother, 'as a true Bolshevik'.²⁵

Along with other political prisoners, Apostolou escaped from exile in Anafi in August 1942, to join the Resistance. She became the head of *Leuteri Nea* (LN, Free Young Woman), an all-female organisation affiliated with the *Ethniko Apeleutherotiko Metopo* (EAM, National Liberation Front) in Athens. LN was founded in May 1942, and was named by two pioneering women of their time, Maria Karagiorgis and Kaiti Zeuvou. The hymn of the LN is said to have been written by Apostolou. In this all-women's organisation, 'lessons' aiming to educate girls were delivered. For instance, the organisation's newspaper, *I Foni tis Neas* (The Voice of Young Woman), recounted the fourth lesson of LN, 'The Girl in Modern Society': 'The girl does not actually stay at home nowadays. Instead, she works in the factory, in the small business, in the shop, in the field, in the public municipal or private office, in a variety of liberal professions.'²⁶ Rossana Rossanda has identified in her work on women's involvement in the anti-fascist struggle in Italy that 'women arrived in the Resistance from two paths. There were those who were already politicised and politically active and those who had no experience whatsoever with doing politics, who constituted the grand majority.'²⁷ This can be applied to Greece too. Already politicised women, who had been involved in pre-war political movements – the first of Rossanda's two paths to antifascism – were the ones to mobilise and politicise the women following the second path. Apostolou, due to her previous anti-fascist action and political experience before the war, clearly belonged to the first group, and became a point of reference for young women in occupied Athens (1941-1944). Having political experience from before the war as an engaged communist, she tried to pass on the mentality to the young women of LN that women would be liberated only by participating actively in social struggles. Fofi Lazarou, a member of EPON, and a leftist for the rest of her life, talked of Apostolou's interaction with the younger girls through LN in a commemoration speech in 1965. She told the audience how Apostolou had tried to cultivate self-confidence in young girls' minds. She had insisted that women should take part in discussions and raise their voices,

expressing their opinions; and she had also insisted that women should participate in resistance activities, including protests and the distribution of the clandestine press, because, as she used to say: 'it is in the social struggles that we will win equality for women'.²⁸

After the integration of LN into EPON, Apostolou became part of the Central Council of EPON. Later, she became a member of *Kommatiki Organosi Athinas* (KOA, Party Committee of Athens), becoming head of the team responsible for producing propaganda material in Athens and organising demonstrations against the occupier and its local collaborators. Thus Fanis Mpartziotas, in his novel *Ilektra* (1984), describes the first Greek heroines of the resistance, Panagiota Stathopoulou and Koula Lili, as 'Ilektra's girls', meaning that they were mobilised and inspired by her.²⁹ In the largest protest held in Athens, on 22 July 1943, these two young women, both members of EPON, had stood up against German tanks. Stathopoulou shouted slogans against the draft of Greek men to Germany in front of a German tank, which then deliberately ran her over. When Lili saw Panagiota's dead body, she climbed on the tank and slapped the German for killing her friend. She was killed immediately.³⁰ The interaction between already politicised women, such as Apostolou, and previously inexperienced ones, such as Lili and Stathopoulou, in combination with a resistance movement that favoured a broader participation of women, provided women with an opportunity to break with tradition, challenge established ideas about women's place in the domestic milieu, and engage in previously unthinkable actions. The precariousness of life and the material conditions of war and occupation pushed them outside of what was conceived as their rightful place in society. Women who prior to the war had represented the stability of the gendered order, now re-negotiated their pre-war roles by greater engagement in the public sphere, a space largely prohibited to the Greek women of the 1940s.³¹

Ilektra was arrested on 25 July 1944, and thereafter tortured by collaborationist forces in the *Dieuthinsi Eidikis Asfaleias* (Special Security Directorate). According to *Rizospastis*, her assassins were Alexandros Lambou (who later became a lieutenant general of the Gendarmerie), with the help of Efsevios Partheniou and Minas Kathreptis. The conclusion of the forensic report on her death was indicative of the torture she had undergone. The report states that she had injuries caused by

whipping through different means (whip, chains, braided wire), along with injuries resulting from hanging from the armpits. The report also identified burns both prior and after her death. According to the report, her death was due to the beatings and injuries while the burns were characterised as minor.³² At the time of her arrest, Apostolou's daughter, Agni Sideridou, was living with family friends. In 1948 she was evacuated to Romania to live with her uncle, Lefteris Apostolou, and later to the Soviet Union, where she remained her whole life.³³

Immediately after Ilektra Apostolou's body was found, the *Organosi Perifrourosis Laikou Agona* (OPLA, Organisation for the Protection of the People's Struggle) ordered the execution of people who were collaborating with the occupation forces, as retribution for her death. Within a week (1 to 7 August) fifty people were killed by OPLA in Athens in acts of vengeance. A note was left on their bodies with Ilektra Apostolou's name and a number that increased along with the dead bodies: Ilektra 1, 2, 3 ...³⁴

Intersectionality, Ilektra Apostolou's biography and memorialisation by her comrades: challenging the dominant narrative

In the following section, I will examine the life and legacy of Apostolou through an intersectional analysis located in the specific historical context from within which Apostolou emerged as a symbol of resistance and a heroine of the left. By introducing intersectionality as a supplemental method of analysing Apostolou's memorialisation, I show how the works of cultural production commemorating Apostolou reflect the multiple and inter-connected factors that shaped the post-civil-war identity of the left. By writing back to remember their communist comrade, these authors aimed to create a counter-narrative against the dominant narrative of the right, which tried to erase the history of communist resistance during the Second World War by portraying them as traitors.³⁵ Further, by focusing on Apostolou's legacy in post-civil-war Greece and the ways in which this alters depending on who is remembering – as the two sides place differing levels of importance on Apostolou's various identity markers – I emphasise the significance of narratives both in identity making (and maintaining), and in the overall collective memory of a group. Maurice Halbwachs has

demonstrated that collective memory is socially constructed through a variety of interactions; and an individual's interactions with a group are central in determining what and how one remembers. A group's collective memory is ultimately shaped by the unique characteristics of the group and its particular experience: this is what gives rise to a shared memory and identity.³⁶ Each group has a unique collective memory that is distinct from the collective memories of other groups. It follows that there are as many collective memories in a society as there are groups and institutions.³⁷ Sune Haugbolle uses the term 'memory cultures' to refer to the different historical memories surrounding the Lebanese civil war, rather than using the term collective memory.³⁸ Similarly, the way in which the Greek Resistance and the Civil War are remembered is based on different memory cultures. Different narratives around the resistance and the Civil War highlight that the past is never fixed; instead, both the resistance and the Civil War are subject to retelling and restructuring, and this also applies to their most prominent actors. In the case of Greece, the two 'memory cultures' that emerged following the Civil War have influenced the representation of the resistance fighters.

It is important to understand the appropriation of Apostolou's legacy, and the differing ways in which she is memorialised, by groups across the broad political spectrum of post-civil-war Greece. The hierarchy and priority assigned to different identity markers differ according to whether she is seen as a communist-Greek female resister or as a Greek-national resister. To take an intersectional approach to memory and apply it to the memorialisation of Apostolou means investigating the historical roots of the value placed on different identity markers – how they are given priority, diminished in importance, or erased – and seeking an understanding of how hegemonic and normative understandings of these markers are re-produced in memory and counter-memory claims.³⁹ As Kaisa Ilmonen argues, 'intersectionality provides a kaleidoscopic vantage on the past, complicating monolithic versions of it'.⁴⁰ Thus the concept of intersectionality helps us to avoid monolithic representations of Apostolou's identity, and to better understand the way in which it changes according to the person or institution memorialising her, as well as the time of the memorialisation, and whether it is an individual or a group who remembers her.

For the left, following the communist defeat in the Civil War, and due to the dominance of the anti-Communist narrative of the history of the resistance, which lasted until the 1970s, the production of cultural works remembering Apostolou (literature, poetry, articles and speeches) was seen as an important part of their challenge to the dominant narrative. There were memory ‘battles’ over what constituted resistance, who was a resistance fighter worth commemorating, and who was a real patriot in the course of the resistance and the Civil War; and these battles shed light on the question of who decides who and how someone will be remembered and in what capacity.⁴¹ Konstantinos Charamis has argued that the left’s contestation of the official memory of the war, and voicing of its own version of events, came to fruition in 1982, when the National Resistance was recognised legally and morally; this paved the way for the recognition that the civil war was in fact a civil strife, and not a competition between the state and agents of the Soviet Union who sought to dismember the country by giving territories to evil neighbours, while turning Greece into a satellite of the Soviet Union.⁴² Yet resistance to the official narrative, as is evident from the memorialisation of Apostolou, existed prior to that, throughout the almost forty years that passed before the official recognition of EAM’s wartime resistance.

Before 1974, memorialising Apostolou can be understood as a way of demanding changes to the memory landscape surrounding the resistance. People who participated in the memorialisation aimed at promoting their own narrative as opposed to the governmental, dominant one. During that time, left-wing centres and communities sought to explain the historical reasons for the right’s resistance to changing the anti-Communist narrative that had been shaped by post-war *ethnikofrosyni* (national mindedness). As touched on earlier, the post-civil-war state saw communist resistance fighters as un-Greek and traitors of the nation, refusing to see the resistance of the EAM as patriotic.⁴³ Within Greece, this effort to change the narrative was closely related to the *Enniaia Dimokratiki Aristera* (EDA, United Democratic Left). Outside Greece, exiled communists living in Eastern bloc countries started working on collecting testimonies from former resisters and publishing texts related to the resistance experience.⁴⁴ Memorialising Apostolou was part of their effort to promote the narrative that the EAM were the true patriots who

had fought and died for Greece. A number of former resisters memorialised Apostolou from exile – from Romania, Eastern Germany and the Soviet Union – and through various means, such as press articles or through the radio. In 1964, for instance, Melpo Axioti published an article commemorating Apostolou's death from East Germany, where she was being compared to figures like Rosa Luxemburg. Axioti wrote: 'and on her tomb we should engrave that saying she liked: "dead Bolsheviks are respected not because they died but because they never die"'.⁴⁵ By drawing a parallel between Apostolou and the communist Rosa Luxemburg, while emphasising Ilektra's martyrdom, Axioti glorified Apostolou's communist identity as a true patriot who had died for Greece. The same article was then republished in 1970 in *Eleutheri Patrida*, a newspaper founded by political refugees in exile in Italy.⁴⁶ The republishing of the article in 1970 further highlights Apostolou's continuing identification as a communist comrade: the aim is, through the commemoration of Apostolou, to draw a parallel between her own communist fight against the Occupation and its collaborators and the communist struggle in exile during the Regime of the Colonels (1967-1974). In both cases, the positionality of the subjects who remember Apostolou (East Germany in the 1960s, Italy in the 1970s, as political refugees in both cases) is crucial for understanding which identity marker is prioritised and to what purpose her memory is being mobilised.

The articles by Partsalidou and Axioti from the 1960s cited earlier were written to commemorate Apostolou's death. In 1965 Axioti's article for the magazine *Elliniki Aristera* (Greek Left) used the title *Ellinida* (Greek Woman) to memorialise her comrade and to present her as martyr. By reconstructing Apostolou's life and legacy, Axioti also wished to challenge the dominant narrative that framed the communists as 'anti-national' subjects and traitors to Greece. A number of left-wing poets also commemorated Apostolou and her acts during the resistance. For example, Yiannis Ritsos, a well-known communist poet, wrote a poem for Apostolou in August 1944 following her martyrdom, which was also republished in the collection *Tragoudia tis Antistasis* (Songs of the Resistance), published by Nea Ellada in Bucharest, in October 1951, and in *Rizospastis* in July 1976.⁴⁷

*When, with burns and whips, your tormentors
asked you: 'What is your name?'
'Greek [woman]' you answered.
When they asked you: 'And what is your family?'
'The Communist Party of Greece', you said.
When they asked you: 'What is your last wish?'
'Death to fascism – you answered –
'Freedom for the people of Greece.
Freedom for the people of the whole world.'
And you became a great light, and you shone all over,
upright, burning torch
before the standing Liberty [Lefteria].*

*Our Electra, –
no, then. You are not gone.
You were never absent from the struggle,
you will never be out of our memory.
At this hour
we swear in your name:
Freedom.
In your name we swear:
Vengeance.
In your name we swear:
To be like you.⁴⁸*

Asimakis Panselinos, a socialist poet and novelist, also wrote a poem about Apostolou: 'Ilektra, Ilektra, you are Greece as whole, land of raging blessing. Greece, Greece, you raised your hands and showed people to be human.'⁴⁹ In both poems, Apostolou's identity as a communist does not exclude her love for Greece and her identity as a patriot. In Ritsos's poem, Apostolou pays the ultimate price for her struggle against fascism, dying for her country. In Panselinos's poem, Ilektra Apostolou is used as a symbol of Greece; she has become the representation of Greece due to her heroic actions and sacrifice, the woman who taught people how to be human with her uncompromising stance.

Commemoration of Ilektra as a heroine of the resistance: from and beyond polarisation

The torture and subsequent death of Apostolou at the hands of Nazi collaborators made her a martyr and a symbol of resistance in war-time Greece. Given that Apostolou was murdered two months prior to the liberation of Athens, just before the Civil War, her martyrdom was quite naturally connected to the communist side during the Civil War.⁵⁰ She had after all been an engaged communist, a member of the KKE prior to the war, and a member of the EAM during the resistance. This 'appropriation' of her memory by the communist side does not mean that her 'Greekness' was downplayed as an identity marker. Rather, the opponents in the Civil War, the left and the right, battled over the narrative and competed over the definition of a true patriot. In addition to the sources previously mentioned, this battle is also evident in the popular version of the conversation between Apostolou and her torturers in the Special Security Directorate. As commemorated in the poem by Ritsos, she allegedly declared: 'My name is Greek. I live in Greece. I serve the Greek people (elliniko lao)';⁵¹ Apostolou's Greek identity is not diminished but put in the spotlight. Patriotism and love for Greece on the one hand, and participation in the communist struggle on the other, were not mutually exclusive: they coexisted and complemented each other. Apostolou's communist identity was intertwined with a patriotism that manifested itself in her participation in the resistance struggle. As Margarite Poulos argues in a broader context, the new 'names' under which each side became known were a manifestation of this competition for legitimacy in the eyes of Greek society. The names of the left-wing wartime resistance organisations were EAM, the *Ethniko Apeleutherotiko Metopo* (National Liberation Front), and ELAS, the *Ethnikos Laikos Apeleutherotikos Stratos* (Greek People's Liberation Army), but ELAS was renamed as the *Dimokratikos Stratos Ellados* (DSE, Democratic Army of Greece). For its part, the *Kyvernitikos Stratos* (Government Army) became known as the *Ethnikos Stratos* (National Army). As the right sought to reclaim the rhetoric of national interest, the KKE/DSE usurped all things 'democratic' (as well as the DSE, there was the Provisional Democratic Government/PDK, and Panhellenic Democratic Union of Women/PDEG); there was an effort to

downplay the party line of communist ideals, and to promote the DSE as the truly patriotic option for the Greek people.⁵²

Moreover, the increasing polarisation of Greek society following the liberation and during the Civil War should be understood within the context of the developing Cold War and the more broadly polarising narratives that accompanied it. The Greek opponents had to place their patriotic discourse within this broader context. Between 1946 and 1949, the national stakes were high, and the war between the conflicting sides was conducted at many levels – discursive, symbolic, and with bodies; no one was immune from this, including women. This need for legitimacy led *Ethnikos Stratos* to launch a robust campaign claiming that the KKE, and later DSE, were ultimately agents of Soviet imperialism and traitors of Greece. This framing allowed the *Ethnikos Stratos* to present itself as protecting Greek national identity and territorial integrity against communist plans to transfer parts of Greece to the Slavs.⁵³ By describing communists as traitors who wanted to ‘sell’ parts of Greece to the Slavs in Yugoslavia and Bulgaria, it aimed to reduce their Greekness and delegitimise them in the eyes of Greek society.

Equally, the communist side appropriated the ‘resistance’ myth to their benefit, to showcase their participation in the struggle for freedom against the ‘traitors’ who had collaborated with the occupying forces at the expense of the Greek people. Women were part of this discourse, and their patriotism and devotion to their country was exemplified by their participation in the EAM/ELAS struggle against the occupiers. In such a context, Apostolou’s memory was instrumentalised by the communist side to boost their legitimacy as the true patriots fighting for freedom.

In a pamphlet on Apostolou published in 1950, the DSE commemorated her as ‘the symbol of all women who died for Greece’;⁵⁴ and newspapers affiliated with the DSE during the Civil War commemorated her death on each 26 July. The newspapers *Partizana* (Woman Partisan), *Maxhtria* (Woman Fighter) and the *Partizanes of Vitsi* (Women Partisans of Vitsi) all dedicated their front pages to the commemoration of her death, expanding on her ‘sacrifice’ for Greece at the hands of collaborators. Similarly, the front page of the newspaper *Maxitria Mali-Madi* was entirely dedicated to commemorating Apostolou, under the title ‘A Memorial to Ilektra’. The memorial referred to Apostolou as a heroine

of the Greek people, an uncrushable (*anelegkti*) communist.⁵⁵ *Women Partisans of Vitsi* stated that ‘... Ilektra lives and leads us in our hard struggle which is the continuation of her own struggle’.⁵⁶

As Polymeris Voglis and Yiannis Nioutsikos have argued, the events of the 1940s in Greece created a long shadow of polarisation between the right and the left, which to a certain extent continues to this day. The Resistance, the Triple occupation and the Civil War are still contentious topics that spark heated discussion. The debates on the 1940s are not limited to academics; they also circulate in the public realm, given that this decade was extremely significant in forming the Greek people’s historical consciousness and memory.⁵⁷ Indeed, the fact that the resistance to the Axis occupiers was followed by a Civil War for a long time prevented the creation of a ‘resistance myth’ (equivalent, say, to that of the French Resistance), according to which the whole ‘people grecque’ had fought the occupier. The Civil War and the defeat of the communist side made the construction of a similar myth of a unified resistance impossible. Rather, each side wished the glory of the resistance for themselves and accused the other side of treason and collaborating with the enemy (with the enemy changing depending on the side).

This polarisation also affected the memorialisation of the resistance fighters. Memorialising is not about presenting a straightforward narrative about the past; as Norman Saadi Nikro argues, it is ‘rather a restless series of experimentations with alternative forms of structures of narrative, of remembering, of temporality, and of subjectivity and identity’.⁵⁸ The works of cultural production aimed at remembering Apostolou existed within this polarised context: the ideological attachment of each side to different narratives of war, treason and liberation influenced their works and shaped their literary language, and led them to place differing emphases on the range of potential identity markers for Apostolou. As a result of the communist defeat, Greek historiography between the end of the Civil War and the collapse of the military regime in 1974 was largely controlled by the right. History and the politics of memory were instrumentalised to serve the narrative of anticommunism and *ethniko-frosini*.⁵⁹ In the immediate aftermath of the Civil War, Apostolou was not commemorated by the right and remained closely associated with the communist resistance, commemorated mostly in left-wing circles.

The polarisation between the right and the left briefly hardened during the military dictatorship (1967-1974), known as *Diktatoria ton Syntagmatarxon*. The Greek Junta exiled a number of communists to islands such as Gyaros and Leros, including former resisters who had returned to Greece in the early 1960s, as well as other democratic elements. However, the fall of the dictatorship in 1974 paved the way for a less polarised memorialisation of the resistance; as Voglis and Nioutsikos argue, it marked the beginning of a new historical epoch for the study of the resistance. The strengthening of democracy and freedom that followed the fall of dictatorship, as well as institutional reform to the Greek state, political cultural liberalisation, and the legalisation of the Communist Party (which had been outlawed since 1947), created the possibility for a reassessment of the 1940s and its memorialisation. The actions of the resistance during the Nazi occupation were not seen as reflecting divisions in Greek society, but rather as an element of unity.⁶⁰ What the French managed to build after the Liberation – the myth that the whole French nation had been fighting in the resistance for liberation – the Greeks only started building after the fall of the dictatorship in 1974.⁶¹ The resistance lost its revolutionary and political dimensions in favour of an ‘inclusive’ narrative that aimed at uniting all Greeks, highlighting their patriotism and courage while also excluding a small minority of collaborators.⁶²

Nevertheless, and despite the ‘retreat’ of anticommunism after the fall of the dictatorship in 1974, the Resistance and the Civil War remained contentious topics within Greek society. The 1940s defined Greek political consciousness, shaped society’s political identity, and continues to shape the memory of the Greeks.⁶³ Even though the construction of a collective myth had begun, the people who had fought and become active subjects in the resistance and Civil War remained ‘convinced of the validity of their private memories from the war’, and committed to the ideologically polarised narratives that surrounded the war.⁶⁴ In addition, the legal recognition of the communist parties did not necessarily mean that the resistance legacy of the left was also accepted. As Magda Fytily argues, in practice the 1974 reconciliation meant that the communist parties would remain legal as long as they did not refer to what was still considered their ‘anti-national’ past.⁶⁵ In 1982, when the EAM’s role in the National Resistance was

officially recognised, enabling the incorporation of the left-wing resistance into the national myth, a more concrete reconciliation was to emerge. Thus the memorialisation of Apostolou through works of cultural reproduction, from the end of the Civil War until today, functions as much more than a project of self-understanding; it operates as a series of acts of contestation, that seek to (re)structure the values of Greek society, and the significance it places on different aspects of its history; and to reproduce specific modes of identification – which always change in accordance with the context within which they appear.⁶⁶ In that sense, Apostolou continues to exist in Greek political memory as a Greek national resister, but also as a communist female resister and a heroine of the left.

Almost eighty years after the torture and execution of Ilektra Apostolou by Greek collaborationists, her memorialisation as a communist/national resister/heroine continues to be shaped by the cleavages that characterise(d) Greek society. The hierarchy of identity markers regarding her participation in the resistance alters according to political affiliation and/or identification with certain political ideals.

This can be seen in the event organised by the Central Organisation of the Communist Party of Greece in Attica to commemorate the anniversary of Apostolou's death in July 2022, which was held in Elpidos Street, the site of her murder. Reporting on the event, *Rizospastis* quotes KKE Central Committee member Christina Skaloubaka's statement that Apostolou's source of strength and motivation, despite her exile and imprisonment, was her unswerving devotion to the cause of the working class and the belief that the exploitation of man by man should be abolished.⁶⁷ Later in the article, her communist past, path and beliefs are further emphasised, and are portrayed as a valuable source of lessons for communist women. Through her exemplary life, Apostolou had been able to show that communist ideology and practice could raise women.⁶⁸

In a similar vein, in the 'About Us' section of their website, the Politikos Xoros Ilektra Apostolou (The Political Space of Ilektra Apostolou) tell us that they chose this name to honour Apostolou, whom they characterise as a 'communist militant' and member of the Communist Party; her contribution to the working-class struggle is highlighted, and they argue that her uncompromised dedication to the struggle was what prompted the Nazi collaborators to torture her in the way they did.⁶⁹

The polarisation expressed through emphasising different identity markers becomes even more evident when comparing a commemorative article published in the right-wing newspaper *Proto Thema* in 2022. Here, the identity of Apostolou as a Greek (a 'national') female resister is emphasised, while her involvement in the Greek Communist Party and the working-class struggle has only secondary importance. Apostolou is described as an important fighter of the National Resistance, and as having made a significant contribution to women's rights.⁷⁰

On the other hand, *Imerodromos*, a left-wing publication, commemorates Apostolou's birthday in an entirely different fashion: 'The *communist, the heroine of our people*, who was murdered under horrible torture in July 1944. We honour her memory with respect. She was born on this day in 1912.'⁷¹ The right-wing *Proto Thema* stressed her activities as a national resister and as a woman heroine of the Greek resistance, but *Imerodromos's* first characterisation of Ilektra is 'the communist'.⁷² Nevertheless – even though struggles over the different memories surrounding the Resistance continue, and in consequence influence how actors remember and which identity marker is prioritised, a more unified myth of the Greek resistance is also becoming evident, in that the memorialisation of Apostolou is itself a common theme. The fact that a right-wing newspaper remembers Apostolou, recognising her as a 'national resister', is demonstrative of this. Apostolou is regularly commemorated by left-wing parties and collectives through a variety of means, but several right-wing publications also commemorate her and call her a 'heroine'. As the Second World War and the Civil War that followed recede in time, so too do the strict identifications with each side.

It is evident that the memorialisation of Ilektra Apostolou is not stable: the meaning of her memory is not fixed, nor is it shaped only by the past. The historically specific circumstances and positionality of the subject who is remembering influence the ways in which she is remembered. Memory shifts, and so too does the significance of the various identity markers within a hierarchy that is shaped and reshaped by past and present circumstances. As Nikro argues with regard to the significance of what is remembered (and, I may add, how it is remembered): 'the significance of what is remembered can never be stabilised, but remains contingent on how others variably recall and orient themselves

to the past.⁷³ Society, artists and politicians, through their processes of cultural production and language use, remember Apostolou in ways that are shaped by how they place themselves in the past, through a specific positionality and identity.

Conclusion

Ilektra Apostolou is a resistance fighter whose memory lives on in contemporary Greek politics. The way she has been memorialised has been shaped and reshaped through the different periods of Greek modern history, and is also structured by the major cleavages that have characterised and continue to shape Greek society. Because of her commitment and experience as a communist and anti-fascist, Apostolou entered the resistance as an already politicised woman, identifying with communist ideals. This was a crucial basis for her ability to mobilise young (unpoliticised) girls during the resistance through the all-female organisation of *Lefteri Nea*. During the period of Greek resistance to the triple occupation, Apostolou's identity as a Greek heroine was emphasised by EAM. However, the following period of civil war was characterised by a fierce discursive battle between the two sides, which led to the instrumentalisation of the way resistance fighters were represented, based on the interests of each side. For the right, the communists, including women, were nothing but traitors who wanted to sell parts of Greece to the 'Slavs'. For the communists, the right represented the traitors who had collaborated with the occupying forces (Italian, German and Bulgarian) during the war and become puppets of British interests when it ended. In this context, Apostolou's memory was instrumentalised to serve the communists' narrative, and she was celebrated as a true patriot. Following the Civil War, she became a heroine of the Greek left – as is evident in articles and poems commemorating her participation in the communist struggle – but she was also seen as a heroine of Greek national resistance, representing the whole Greek nation that had fought and died for the liberation of Greece. The relative importance given to her different identity markers by those invoking her memory varies according to the identity and positionality of the people who wish to remember her.

Christina Chatzitheodorou is a PhD student at the University of Glasgow, focusing on women's participation in left-wing resistance movements during the Second World War in Greece, Italy and France. Born and raised in Greece, she studied International, European and Area Studies at Panteion University of Social and Political Sciences in Athens, and completed her master's in War Studies at King's College London. She is also a Graduate Teaching Assistant at the University of Glasgow. She speaks fluent Greek, English, French, Italian and Spanish, and a bit of Portuguese and Turkish, and is learning Arabic. She is interested in irregular warfare, political violence, women's participation in warfare and social movements, twentieth-century gender history and intersectionality.

Notes

- 1 Kimberlé W. Crenshaw, 'Demarginalizing the Intersection of Race and Sex: A Black Feminist Critique of Antidiscrimination Doctrine, Feminist Theory and Antiracist Politics', 1989: https://scholarship.law.columbia.edu/faculty_scholarship/3007/. Ann Phoenix and Pamela Pattynama, 'Intersectionality,' *European Journal of Women's Studies* Vol 13, no. 3, 2006, p187.
- 2 Sirma Bilge argues, rightly in my opinion, that intersectionality has been colonised by neoliberal regimes, despite being initially focused on transformative and counter hegemonic knowledge creation, and the radical politics of social justice. A depoliticised intersectionality is beneficial to neoliberalism, as identity-based radical politics become transformed into corporatised diversity tools used by dominant groups to achieve a variety of ideological and institutional aims. For more: Sirma Bilge, 'Intersectionality Undone: Saving Intersectionality from Feminist Intersectionality Studies', *De Bois Review* Vol 10 No 2, 2013, pp405-7. Contemporary feminist academic discussions on intersectionality that attempt to depoliticise the term move away from the 'raison d'être' of intersectionality and its integral aim for radical social justice-oriented change.
- 3 Shahrzad Mojab and Sara Carpenter, 'Marxism, Feminism, and "intersectionality"', *Journal of Labor and Society*, Vol 22 No 2, 2019, p275.
- 4 Phoenix and Pattynama, 'Intersectionality', p187.
- 5 Chandra Talpade Mohanty, *Feminism Without Borders: Decolonizing*

- Theory, Practicing Solidarity*, Durham & London: Duke University Press, 2003, p21.
- 6 Red Chidgey, 'Intersectionality and Memory Activism', in Yifat Gutman and Jenny Wüstenberg (eds), *The Routledge Handbook of Memory Activism*, London: Routledge, p65.
 - 7 Dido Sotiriou, *Ilektra: Apo tin Aneti Zoi stin Ypertati Thisia gia ton Lao kai tin Patrida*, Athina: Kedros, 2014, p29.
 - 8 Melpo Axioti, 'I Ellinida', *Ellhniki Aristera, Miniaia Politiki Epitheorisis E.D.A*, No 25-26, August-September 1965, pp119-20: <https://askiarchives.eu/rec.aspx?id=3079>.
 - 9 In communist parties, 'achtida' is a level of party organisation hierarchically superior to the grassroots organisation.
 - 10 Ayra Partsalidi, 'Eikosi duo xronia apo ton iroiko thanato tis Ilektras Apostolou. Anamniseis tis Ayras Partsalidi', in *H Aygi: Kathimerini dimokratiki efimerida tou laou*, 26 July 1966, p1: <https://askiarchives.eu/rec.aspx?id=2580>.
 - 11 Mercedes Yusta Rodrigo, 'European Feminisms in the Face of Fascisms', *Encyclopédie d'histoire numérique de l'Europe*: <https://ehne.fr/en/node/12315>.
 - 12 Ilektra Sideridi, 'Sto dromo gia to Parisi: To taksidi tis antiprosopeias ton Ellinidwn Gynaikon sto pagkosmio antipolemiko synedrio,' *Rizospastis, Organo tis Kentrikis Epitropis tou Kommounistikou Kommatos tis Elladas (E.T.K.D)*, No 145, 5 August 1934: <https://askiarchives.eu/rec.aspx?id=6669>.
 - 13 *Ibid.* The congress was predominantly Western since the majority of the participants came from the West. For more on this topic: Jasmine Calver, *Anti-Fascism, Gender, and International Communism: The Comité Mondial des Femmes contre la Guerre et le Fascisme, 1934-1941*, London: Routledge, 2022, pp100-2. In the context of an article foregrounding intersectionality, it is worth noting that the anti-war congress and Apostolou herself were products of their time, theorisations and preoccupations. The congress was Eurocentric in nature, despite some work against Italian colonial ambitions in Ethiopia and the Japanese aggression in China in the context of the Second Sino-Japanese War (1937-1945). As Calver argues, as a predominantly European organisation, when the World Committee Against War and Fascism had to navigate colonialist discourses and practices, it projected its colonialist ideas upon the non-European Other. For more: Calver, 'The Global Campaigns of the Comité mondial des femmes Contre la Guerre et le Fascisme', in *Anti-Fascism, Gender, and International Communism*, pp118-148. This is

evident in the preoccupations of the conference in 1934. In Apostolou's correspondence to the *Rizospastis* newspaper during the conference, the lack of attention to issues of colonialism becomes apparent in the conclusion drawn by the representatives of the World Committee of Women: 'The task of the congress is to take the decisions that will allow us to better organise the forces of women all over the world against war and fascism.' For more: Ilektra Sideridi, 'O pagkosmios synagermos tw'n gynaikon', *Rizospastis, Organo tis Kentrikis Epitropis tou Kommounistikou Kommatos tis Elladas (E.T.K.D)*, 10 August 1934, No 150: <http://askiweb.eu/index.php/el/psifiako-apothetirio-aski-2>. The class/gender nexus was thus prioritised over other forms of oppression. Racism as a form of colonial oppression and its close relation to the rise of fascist and Nazi ideologies were not challenged. Equally, the privileged position of Western white women and their role in oppressing non-Western subjects were not topics of particular interest during the conference. Indeed, it was only during the 1960s and 1970s that European antifascists beyond the Eastern Block began more broadly to perceive fighting fascism and fighting colonialism as the same struggle.

- 14 Ilektra Sideridi, 'I Ergazomeni Gynaika tis Elladas ston agona: Olokliros o logos tis s. Ilektras Sideridi sto Pagkosmio Antipolemiko kai Antifasistiko Synderio tw'n Gynaikon', *Rizospastis, Organo tis Kentrikis Epitropis tou Kommounistikou Kommatos tis Elladas (E.T.K.D)*, 15 August 1934, No 155: <https://askiarchives.eu/rec.aspx?id=6749>.
- 15 Reagan, *Intersectional Class Struggle*, pp128-9.
- 16 Silvia Federici, *Caliban and the Witch: Women, The Body, and Primitive Accumulation*, Autonomedia, 2017, pp63-4.
- 17 A woman's behaviour was based on a specific set of ethical standards. Behaviour that violated these ethical standards (i.e. marriageable-age women who circulated outside the house without a male chaperon) brought shame not only to themselves, but to their male family members, in that they were considered to be responsible for protecting the honour of their female members. See Janet Hart, *New Voices in the Nation: Women and the Greek Resistance 1941-1944*, London, Ithaca: Cornell University Press, pp153-5.
- 18 During the Metaxas Dictatorship, the declaration of remorse and renunciation of communism (declaration of remorse for short) was a document drafted and signed by people accused of communist activity. By signing and making it public, the state authorities would stop their persecution, as well as the detention in prisons and places of exile of those who had already been imprisoned, convicted or deported.

- 19 Tasoula Vervenioti, *I Ginaika tis Antistasis: I Isodos ton Gynaikon stin Politiki*, Athina: Ekdoseis Koukida, 2014, pp62-3.
- 20 Within this context, the marginalisation of certain groups in Greek society in the interwar period and their participation in EAM during the war are closely related. Previously marginalised groups that participated in the resistance movement during the war also identified with other cleavages (i.e. linguistic/ethnic identifications), along with their Greek identity. For instance, in Athens, Greek Rum refugees, residents of the refugee areas (Kokkinia, Kaisariani, Nea Ionia), who were seen as lesser Greeks in comparison to ‘natives’ when they arrived from Turkey after the Greco-Turkish War (1919-1922), were among the most active members in EAM and their active participation in the ranks of EAM cannot be understood without first understanding their material conditions in the interwar period. Equally, Slavic minorities in North Greece became active in EAM, who were also marginalised in the Greek political arena prior to the war. This active participation in the ranks of EAM of linguistic/religious/ethnic minorities or other communities that felt marginalised in the wider society cannot be understood without understanding EAM’s revolutionary aims in relation to reshaping the nation and citizenship. EAM envisioned a new society with the expansion of citizenship to previously marginalised groups, including women and refugees. Even though it goes beyond the aim of this article to examine the participation in the resistance of previously marginalised groups and their distinct characteristics and positionality, it is evident that intersectional analysis is needed to better understand the material conditions of these marginalised groups who participated in EAM as their only means to escape their previously marginalised status.
- 21 Tonia Kafetzaki, ‘Ginekia Amfisvitesi kai Komounistiki Stratefsi: Ergazomenes Ginaikes se Mesopolemika Pezografimata kai Arthra tis Galatias Kazantzaki’, *Mnimon* 25, 2003, p55: <https://doi.org/10.12681/mnimon.768>.
- 22 Foula Porfirogeni, ‘I Ginaika stin Simerini Kinonia’, *Rizospastis: Organo tis Kentrikis Epitropis tou Kommounistiko Kommatos Elladas*, 29 March 1934: <https://askiarchives.eu/rec.aspx?id=6299>.
- 23 Karen M. Offen, *European Feminisms, 1700-1950: a Political History*, Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 2000, p22.
- 24 Popi Xekalaki, ‘Ilektra Apostolou: Me to Paradeigma tis Zois na Anoigei Simera Dromous’, *Rizospastis*, 25-26 July 2020, p22: <https://www.rizospastis.gr/story.do?id=10875019>.

- 25 Kosta Mpirka, *Ilektra Apostolou: I Athanati Iroida tou Ethnous*, Athina, 1978, pp23-4.
- 26 'To Koritsi sti Sygxroni Koinonia', *Foni tis Neas: Organon tis Ethnikoapeleutherotikis Organosis LEYTERINEA*, ar. fyllou 6, Athens, 26 December 1942, Vivliothiki-Archeio Charilaos Florakis, Epimorfotiko Kentro KKE, Athens.
- 27 Rossana Rossanda, *Le altre: conversazioni a Radiotre sui rapporti tra donne e politica libert , fraternit , uguaglianza, democrazia, fascismo, resistenza, stato, partito, rivoluzione, femminismo*, Milano: Bompiani, 1980, p145.
- 28 Speech of Fofi Lazarou in a commemoration event for Ilektra Apostolou in the women's prison (Averoff Prison) in 1966. Despite the fact that the event had not been given permission by the authorities, a number of other women who had participated in the resistance spoke, including Roza Invrioti, Dido Swtiriou and Avra Partsalidou. See: 'Ilektra', Omilia tis Fofis Lazarou stin Kryfi Ekdilosi pou Pragmatopoiithike gia tin Ilektra Apostolou, Archeio Fofi Lazarou, Fakelos 5, Ypofakelos 3, Archeio Sygchronis Koinonikis Istorias, Athens.
- 29 Fanis Mpourtziotas, *Ilektra: Aderfi tou Kommatos Mas (Mia Iroiki Epanastatiki Zoi)*, Athens, 1984, p160.
- 30 Dimitris S. Krikos, 'I Politeia tin Agnoei', *Rizospastis*, 26 February 1999: <https://www.rizospastis.gr/story.do?id=3762932>. See also *Rizospastis*, 'Itan kai tote Ioulis ...', 27 July 2003: <https://www.rizospastis.gr/story.do?id=1890461>.
- 31 See also Jennifer Purcell, 'The Domestic Soldier: British Housewives and the Nation in the Second World War1: British Housewives and the Nation in the WWII', *History Compass* 4, 1, 2006, p153.
- 32 Eksegersi, '78 Xronia apo ton martyriko thanato tis kommounistrias Ilektras Apostolou', 26 July 2022: <https://eksegersi.gr/istoria/78-chronia-apo-ton-martyriko-thanato-tis-kommoynistrias-ilektras-apostoloy/>.
- 33 Nikos Pournaras, 'I Figadeusi sto Eksoteriko tis Mikris Agnis, koris tis Ilektras Apostolou kai i Simvoli tou Zachariadi', *Katioussa*, 22 August 2019: <https://www.katioussa.gr/istoria/i-fygadefsi-sto-ekso-teriko-tis-mikris-agnis-koris-tis-ilektras-apostolou-kai-i-symvouli-tou-n-zachariadi/>. See also Agni Sideridou, 'Protochronia sto Interdom', Athinaiko-Makedoniko Praktorio Idiseon, 16 December 2016: <https://www.amna.gr/print/135623>.
- 34 Iasonas Chandrinou, *To timoro cheri tou laou. E drasi tou ELAS kai tis OPLA stin Katechomeni Proteuoussa 1941-1944*, Athens: Themelio, 2012, p238.

- 35 Extremely helpful on shaping my argument here has been Marta-Laura Cenedese's article '(Instrumental) Narratives of Postcolonial Rememory: Intersectionality and Multidirectional Memory', *Storyworlds: A Journal of Narrative Studies*, Vol 10 Nos 1-2, Summer-Winter 2018, pp95-116.
- 36 Nicolas Russell, 'Collective Memory before and after Halbwachs', *The French Review*, Vol 79 No 4, 2006, p796.
- 37 Maurice Halbwachs and Lewis A. Coser, Introduction, in *On collective memory*, Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 1992, p22.
- 38 Sune Haugbolle, *War and Memory in Lebanon*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010, p8.
- 39 Chidgey, 'Intersectionality and Memory Activism', p66.
- 40 Kaisa Ilmonen, 'The Poetics and Politics of Intersectionality: Trauma and Memory in Caryl Phillips' *The Lost Child*', *Ariel: a review of international english literature*, Vol 52 No 3-4, p221.
- 41 Sharon Crozier-De Rosa and Vera Macki, 'Mobilising affect and trauma: the politics of gendered memory and gendered silence', *Women's History Review*, Vol 31 No 6, 2022, p904.
- 42 Kostantinos Charamis, "'Nothing and no one has been forgotten": commemorating those who did not give in during the Greek civil war (1946-1949)', *Cahiers de la Méditerranée*, 70, 2005, p1.
- 43 Magdalini Fytli, Manos Avgeridis and Eleni Kouki, 'Heroes or Outcasts? The Long Saga of the State's Recognition of the Greek Resistance (1944–2006)', *Contemporary European History*, 2023, p10.
- 44 Manos Avgeridis, 'Debating the Greek 1940s: histories and memories of a conflicting past since the end of the Second World War', *Historiein*, Vol 16, No 1-2, 2017, pp18-9.
- 45 The article was first published as part of Axioti's book, published in 1945 under the title *I Ellinides Frouroi tis Elladas*, O Rigas: Athens, 1945; Melpo Axioti, 'Ilektra Apostolou: Sta 20 Chronia apo ton Thanato tis Ilektras', *Pirsos Dimino Eikonografimeno Ekpolitistiko Morfotiko Periodiko*, No 3, 1964, pp34-5: <https://askiarchives.eu/rec.aspx?id=40204>.
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- 49 Panselinos Asimakis, *Ilektra*, Archeia Synchronis Koinonikis Istorias: <https://askiarchives.eu/rec.aspx?id=52715>.
- 50 There are different perspectives relating to the starting point of the Civil War: the left argues that the starting point of the conflict was in 1946, placing it after the end of the Second World War. On the contrary, the right argues that the civil strife began earlier, during the Triple (German, Italian, Bulgarian) occupation in 1943-1944, as clashes between different groups had already emerged during this period. Clashes between different resistance groups had actually started prior to 1946, but efforts for reconciliation were made, and the intensity of the clashes changed dramatically after liberation in 1944. This is evident from the press of the time: after liberation, attitudes changed, and both sides seemed to be preparing for civil war and engaging in a battle over narratives. For more: Nikos Marantzidis and Giorgios Antoniou, 'The Axis Occupation and Civil War Bibliography: Changing Trends in Greek Historiography: 1941-2002', *Journal of Peace Research*, Vol 41 No 2, 2004, p224.
- 51 Mpirka, *Ilektra Apostolou*, p19.
- 52 Margaret Poulos, *Arms and the Woman: Just Warriors and Greek Feminist Identity*, New York: Columbia University Press, 2014, p253.
- 53 Ibid, p255.
- 54 Dimokratikos Stratos Ellados, 'Ilektra: Simvolo olon ton Ginaikon pou Epesan gia tin Ellada', 1950: <http://askiweb.eu/index.php/el/psifiako-apothesirio-aski-2>.
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- 57 Polymeris Voglis and Yiannis Nioutsikos, 'The Greek Historiography of the 1940s. A Reassessment', *Südosteuropa*, Vol 65 No 2, 2017, p316.
- 58 Norman Saadi Nikro, *The Fragmenting Force of Memory: Self, Literary Style and Civil War in Lebanon*, Cambridge: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2012, p6.
- 59 Voglis and Nioutsikos, 'The Greek Historiography of the 1940s', p318.
- 60 Ibid, p321.
- 61 For the 'resistance myth' in France: Olivier Wieviorka, *Histoire de la resistance, 1940-1945*, Perrin, 2013, pp640-50.

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- 63 Ibid, p333.
- 64 Haugbolle, 'Public and Private Memory of the Lebanese Civil War', p202.
- 65 Magda Fytily, "Including the "Nation's Enemies": The Long Politics of Recognition and Restitution during the Third Greek Republic (1974-2006)', *Journal of Modern Greek Studies*, Vol 40, No 1, May 2022, p201.
- 66 Based on Nikro, *The Fragmenting Force of Memory*, pp10-13.
- 67 *Rizospastis*, 'St' onoma sou orkizomaste, Ilektra Apostolou, oi gynaikes ston agona me to KKE', July 2022, pp23-5: <https://www.rizospastis.gr/story.do?id=11775582>.
- 68 Ibid.
- 69 Politikos Choros Ilektra Apostolou, 'Poi oi Eimaste (Keimeno Aftoparousias)': <https://ilektraapostolou.wordpress.com/blog/>. In Greece, when groups and collectives are founded and/or merge, they write a self-presentation text, stating their political identity, political goals and the political means of achieving them.
- 70 *Proto Thema*, 'Ilektra Apostolou, I iroida tis Ethnikis Antistasis kai ypermachos ton dykaiomaton ton gynaikon me to tragiko telos', 21 August 2022: <https://www.protothema.gr/stories/article/1275906/ilektra-apostolou-i-iroida-tis-ethnikis-adistasis-kai-upermachos-ton-dikaiomaton-ton-gunaikon-me-to-tragiko-telos/#Comments>.
- 71 *Imerodromos*, 'Ilektra, St Onoma sou Orkizomaste ...', 21 January 2023: <https://www.imerodromos.gr/ilektra-apostolou-st-onoma-soy-orkizomaste/>.
- 72 To understand the full extent of the polarisation that exists within the Greek society in regard to the resistance, the Civil War and the communist defeat, right up today, the comments under the different newspaper articles with different political affiliations are worth reading. For instance, some of the comments one encounters referring to communists during the Resistance and the Greek Civil War in right-wing publications refer to communists as 'ανθέλληνας' (Anti-Greek) and 'προδότες' (Traitors).
- 73 Nikro, *The Fragmenting Force of Memory*, p30.