Women in Left-wing Resistance Movements in Occupied France, Italy and Greece: Between Resistance, Gender, and Memory (1940-1945)

Christina Chatzitheodorou

Submitted in fulfilment in the requirement for the

Degree of PhD in War Studies

School of Humanities

College of Arts and Humanities

University of Glasgow

March 2025

Abstract

This thesis focuses on the participation of women in left-wing resistance movements during the Second World War in France, Greece, and Italy. Arguing that gender was essential in anti-Fascist resistance(s), the study explores how women's activities and the symbolics of feminine played critical roles in both the development and patterns of mobilisation of resistance movements on several levels. Their gender was central in the representations, modes of operation, discourses, experiences, and post-war memories of resistance. This thesis does not only examine women's resistance(s) as a Second World War event. Rather, it also focuses on the gendered memories of resistance in each country, the afterlives of the resistance, examining the resistance as *lieu de memoire,* revealing patterns and national specificities in the relationship between gender and resistance, and gender and memory. While women became involved in the resistance in similar ways under the common determinator of their gender in all three cases, their role in the resistance and the legacy that accompanied it after the war differed in each country due to the different political futures that awaited each country. The politics of memory in each country influenced how women framed and narrated their involvement in the resistance.

Table of Contents

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I believe this thesis is the ultimate culmination of various things and people who played an important role in my life: shaping me, and by extension, my research. First and foremost, I am thankful for my two families: first, I am thankful for my parents and twin brother, who always believed in me and helped me to achieve my goals. I am well-aware I would not have made it without them- it is a blessing to have parents that believe so much in you, even when you do not believe in yourself. Second, my second family- the one I chose sixteen years ago, my best friends, whose love and support over the last sixteen years we are together have made me the person I am today – without them, I would have never been here; my friends never shared my interest in history and yet whenever I asked them to listen to some random presentation of mine for university, from my undergraduate up until my PhD Viva, they were always there for me, listening. They taught me what real friendship and unconditional love mean, and for that, I am grateful.

Second, I would like to thank the comrades whom I organised with throughout these years. While the years of existing between archives and secondary sources altered the content of my thesis, I believe that the most important contribution to the content and methodology of this thesis came out of my political mobilisation in the last four years in the streets, with my comrades. While *active* in the political movement in Greece since I was in high school, my political mobilisation for Palestine for the last four years affected me not only as a human being but also as a researcher. Palestine, becoming the *cradle* of my political awareness and what shaped my militant identity transforming from an *active* leftist into a *political* one, influenced in turn the way I see and do research. I began this research in 2021 wanting to examine the communist/socialist resistance[s] as a historical event, an academic endeavour, without thinking too much into it. It was, however, Palestine that taught me that our research does not solely exist as a non-politicised topic of enquiry but rather, it always exists within the context of uneven power relations. A desire to remain objective and 'apolitical', just doing research for the sake of research– in a world where power relations shape every part of our lives – is a political choice, a choice of standing by the side of the oppressor. Through my involvement in the Palestine solidarity movement and my interaction with comrades- to whom this thesis is dedicated too, I understood that we do not exist solely as academics – and we should not solely exist as academics – and if our research does not speak to our activism for a more just world, a world where imperialism, colonialism, oppression, and fascism have no place, then our analysis remains always flawed, and even if it does not seem flawed, it is ultimately useless. In that sense, my research was shaped in

the streets as much as it was shaped by books. It became the product of the countless conversations with these same comrades, whose common goal for a better world affected my worldviews and changed me in ways that studying at university was never able to.

Last, I would like to thank my supervisors, Professor Maud Bracke, Professor Wendy Ugolini and Dr Alex Marshall for their support throughout the process. A special thanks to my primary supervisor Professor Maud Bracke, as I probably over-wrote and over-sent her material, but she made this process less painful than is supposed to be.

AUTHOR'S DECLARATION

The candidate confirms that the work submitted is his/her own and that appropriate credit has been given where reference has been made to the work of others.

This copy has been supplied on the understanding that it is copyright material and that no quotation from the thesis may be published without proper acknowledgement.

The right of Christina Chatzitheodorou to be identified as Author of this work has been asserted by her in accordance with the Copyright, Designs and Patents Act 1988.

Abbreviations

ANPI → Associazione Nazionale Partigiani d'Italia (National Association of Italian Partisans)

ARAC → L'Association républicaine des anciens combattants (Veterans' Republican Association)

CFT → Corps féminin de transmission (Women's Signal Corps)

CGT → Confédération Générale du Travail (General Confederation of Labour)

CGTU → Confédération générale du travail unitaire (United General Confederation of Labor)

CIF → Centro italiano femminile (Italian Women's Centre)

CLN → Comitato di Liberazione Nazionale (National Liberation Committee)

CNE → Comité National des Écrivains (National Committee of Writers)

CVF → Corps des Volontaires Françaises (Corps of French Female Volunteers)

DSE → Dimokratikos Stratos Ellados (Democratic Army of Greece).

EA → Ethniki Allilegguh (National Solidarity)

EAM → Ethniko Apeleutherwtiko Metopo (National Liberation Front)

EDES → Ethnikos Dimokratikos Ellinikos Sindesmos (National Republican Greek League)

ELAS → Ethnikos Laikos Apeleftherotikos Stratos (National People's Liberation Army)

EOXA → Ethnikos Organismos Xristianikis Allelegguhs (National Organisation of Christian Solidarity)

EPON → Eniea Panelladiki Organosi Neon (United Panhellenic Organisation of Youth)

ETA → Epimelitia tou Antarti (Support for the Partisan)

EZLN → Ejercito Zapatista de Liberacion Nacional (Zapatista Army of National Liberation)

FF→ Fasci Femminili (Women's Clubs)

FLN → Front de libération nationale (National Liberation Front)

FTP → Francs-tireurs et partisans français (Francs-Tireurs et Partisans)

FUCI → *Federazione universitari cattolici* (Federation of Catholic University Students)

GAP → Gruppi di Azione Patriottica (Patriotic Action Groups)

GDD → Gruppi di difesa della donna (Women's Defense Groups)

JC → Jeunesses Communistes (Young Communists')

KKE → Kommounistiko Parti Ellados (Communist Party of Greece)

KOA → Kommounistiki Epitropi Athinas (Communist Organisation of Athens)

LFDF → Ligue française pour le droit des femmes (French League for Women's Rights)

LN → Leuteri Nea (Free Young Woman)

MOI → Main-d'œuvre immigrée (Immigrant Labour)

OAS → Organisation armée secrète (Secret Army Organisation)

OKNE → Omospondia Kommounistikon Neolaion Ellados (Young Communist League of Greece)

OPLA → Organosi Perifrourisis Laikou Agona (Organization for the Protection of the People's Struggle)

OVRA → Opera Vigilanza Repressione Antifascismo (Organization for Vigilance and Repression of Anti-Fascism)

PASOK → Panelinio Sosialistiko Kinima (Panhellenic Socialist Movement)

PDEG → Panelladiki Dimokratiki Enosi Ginaikon (Women's Panhellenic Democratic Union)

PEEA → Politiki Epitropi Ethnikis Apeleftherosis (Political Committee of National Liberation)

PCF → Parti Communiste Française (French Communist Party)

PNF → Partito Nazionale Fascista (National Fascist Party)

PSIUP → Partito Socialista Italiano di Unità Proletaria (Italian Socialist Party of Proletarian Unity)

RAI → Radiotelevisione italiana (RAI)

SFIO → Section française de l'Internationale ouvrière (French Section of the Workers' International)

SOE → Special Operations Executive

STO → Service du travail obligatoire (Compulsory Work Service).

UDI → Unione Donne Italiane (Union of Italian Women)

UFF → Union des Femmes Françaises (Union of French Women)

UJFF → Union des Jeunes Filles de France (Union of Young French Women)

Introduction

From 1940 to 1945, women in European countries engaged in resistance activities against the Axis countries and their local collaborators. This thesis will investigate the involvement of women in left-wing resistance groups during the Second World War in Greece, Italy, and France. I will largely focus on the participation of women in *Ethniko Apeleutherwtiko Metwpo* (EAM- National Liberation Front), in the *Comitato di Liberazione Nazionale* (CLN-National Liberation Committee), with a focus on the left-wing groups under this umbrella organisation (Partito Comunista Italiano, Partito d'Azione (PdA), Partito Socialista Italiano di Unità Proletaria) the *Libération-Sud, Libération-Nord, and Franc-tireurs et Partisans* (FTP). The history of the resistance against the Axis occupation and their local collaborators benefits from an examination of women's participation in the partisan struggle through a comparative analysis. Even though the resistance movements varied importantly in size, composition, motivation and effectiveness during the Second World War,[1] the fact that this 'phenomenon' took place during the course of the Second World War against a common enemy, foreign occupiers and their local collaborators, and was part of a patriotic struggle, **a war of liberation[2] to resist** the occupiers and their local collaborators, favours a comparative analysis between different movements when examining the resistance in the European theatre.[3] Apart from the necessary language skills that allow such a comparative study through the consultation of primary and secondary sources, my selection of Greece, France and Italy is also based on additional characteristics that allow a comparative analysis of left-wing resistance between the three countries. In all three countries, the communist/socialist and more broadly left-wing resistance represented the strongest opposition force against the occupiers and their collaborators. Consequently, both through

[1] Robert B. Asprey, *War in the Shadows: The Guerrilla in History*, Volume 1 (Lincoln: iUniverse, 2002), 298. Despite their similarities, the societies where resistance emerged were far from identical and their difference political, social, and economic conditions had an impact on the resistance movements. How each country decided to link the various elements of the partisan warfare depended upon necessity. The German rule and Axis occupation varied considerably from one country to another, even from one area to another within the occupied countries. The topography of the region was also an important differing factor. Partisan warfare was facilitated in the mountains of Greece and North Italy. The cities of France and North Italy also offered possibilities for urban resistance. For more: Bob Moore, 'Comparing Resistance and Resistance Movements' in *Resistance in Western Europe*, ed. Bob Moore (Oxford; New York; Berg, 2000), 249-250.

[2] Claudio Pavone has examined how the Italian resistance was not solely a war of liberation, but a multi-layered conflict, which consisted of three interdependent conflicts: class war, patriotic war and civil war. For more: Claudio Pavone, *A Civil War: A History of the Italian Resistance* (London; New York; Verso, 2013). While this approach could also apply to Greece and France, recognising the aspects of civil strife and class grievances in all cases, this thesis will prioritise the examination of the resistance as a war of national liberation. Moreover, ethnic grievances and oppression were also important factors that influenced mobilisation in the resistance in certain regions especially in Italy and Greece, but it goes beyond the scope of this thesis to examine this due to space limits and language barriers as well.

[3] Ralph White, *The Unity and Diversity of the European Resistance in Resistance in Europe 1939-1945: Based on the Proceedings of a Symposium Held at the University of Salford, March 1973*, ed. Stephen Hawes, and Ralph White (London: Allen Lane, 1975), 8.

recruitment and, in times, by chance, many women were found within these left-wing movements.[4]

Indeed, the focus of this study specifically on left-wing resistance movements concerns their revolutionary and progressive aims and to what extent these progressive movements challenged the gendered binary. Ralph White distinguishes between the 'conservative' resistance, which aimed at liberating the country from the occupiers to restore or recreate to a certain extent the previous regime, and the 'revolutionary' resistance, which aimed to transform the society along with the defeat of the Germans and their collaborators.[5] Communist, socialist and more broadly left-wing resistances were 'revolutionary' -to different extents- and aimed at transforming the future society along with the defeat of the Axis occupiers. In that respect, particularly from communist-led movements, this type of warfare aimed to radically change the structure of the state by force and redefine aspects of citizenship and nationhood.[6]

Here I need to add that while initially I wished to solely focus on communist resistance(s), throughout the course of my research, it became evident that such strict categorisations might suit post-war myths, but they do not represent a much more complex reality. In this direction, I fully recognise the important role of the communists and socialists in mobilising large parts of their respective populations, also due to their pre-war clandestine networks and know-how. Yet I use the term left-wing to signal both the variety of left-wing currents *and* the more complex identification with politics, where various identities co-existed.[7] Indeed, this is particularly evident in the case of Italy, where the 'antifascist identity', shaped in the long course of twenty years of fascism, encompassed a variety of political views, including liberal-socialist (*Giustizia e Libertà* founded in 1929, later *Partito d'Azione*)[8] and antifascist or/and communist Catholics (i.e*., Partito della Sinistra Cristiana*), and Christian Democrats. Equally, in Greece as well, on the initiative of KKE to "...to

[4] Donny Gluckstein, *A People's History of the Second World War: Resistance Versus Empire (*London: Pluto Press, 2012), 15.
[5] White, *The Unity and Diversity of the European Resistance in Resistance in Europe 1939-1945*, 8.
[6] Ian F.W. Beckett, *Modern Insurgencies and Counter-Insurgencies: Guerrillas and their Opponents since 1750* (London: New York, Routledge, 2001), vii.
[7] For instance, left-wing activism and more broadly antifascism did not exclude Catholics/Christians, both during the Interwar period and the resistance: Claudia Baldoli, "'With Rome and with Moscow': Italian Catholic Communism and Anti-Fascist Exile." *Contemporary European History* 25, no. 4 (2016): 619–43. http://www.jstor.org/stable/26294075; See also Alessandro Santagata, "Italy's Catholic Partisan: History and Narrative," *Modern Italy* 30, no. 2 (2025): 161–76. https://doi.org/10.1017/mit.2024.74; Santagata, *Una Violenza Incolpevole: Retoriche e pratiche dei cattolici nella Resistenza veneta* (Viella, 2021); Giorgio Vecchio, *Il soffio dello Spirito: Cattolici nelle Resistenze europee* (Viella, 2022).
[8] Marco Bresciani, *Quale antifascismo?: Storia di Giustizia e Libertà* (Carocci, 2017). Bresciani in his book also explores how the interest for GL's antifascism was shaped by the post-war Italian and European politics more broadly.

organise the forces of popular uprising for the national and social liberation of Greece…",[9] EAM was established by representatives of the KKE, the *Agrotiko Komma Ellados* (Agrarian Party of Greece), the newly formed party *Enosi Laikis Dimokratias* (People's Democracy Union) and the Socialist Party of Greece. In France too, various groups emerged without a clear political label by taking advantage of pre-war networks; for instance, the *Musée de l'Homme Network* was founded on the premises of the *Musée de l'Homme and* included individuals with leftist sympathies.

Within these left-wing movements that wished to alter their respective post-war societies or aspects of it, analysis of women's mobilisation is crucial to our understanding of contentious politics and social change. I will argue that these movements tested ideas about femininity and masculinity and redefined them based on a view of a more egalitarian society, with the emergence of 'new men' and 'new women'. This indeed becomes evident from various publications that assert the new roles for women working for EAM in Greece,[10] or through articles defending a socialist-type of motherhood in Italy.[11] Nevertheless, these movements did not challenge the pre-existing gendered system, leaving male privilege and established gender norms largely undisturbed.[12] As Margaret Weitz argues, despite the blurring of public and private life in the resistance, where women were allowed to move out of their responsibilities as wives and mothers, this does not imply that those social contract roles had evaporated post-war.[13]

The resistance further emphasised the gender-specific roles of masculine combatants and feminine non-combatants in all three countries. For these left-wing movements, their progressive stance on the role of women in society did not mean that they were free of contradictions, or that they managed to become completely egalitarian.[14] Emergency

---

[9] Γιώργος Πετρόπουλος, "Η ίδρυση του Εθνικού Απελευθερωτικού Μετώπου," *Ριζοσπάστης,* Σεπτέμβριος 27, 2001, https://www.rizospastis.gr/story.do?id=960864. See also: Πρακτικά 6ης Ολομέλειας της ΚΕ του ΚΚΕ, Ιούλιος 1941; See also: ΚΚΕ, *Επίσημα Κείμενα, Τόμος 5ος (1940-1945)* (Αθήνα 1973, ΕΚΔΟΣΗ ΚΚΕ ΕΣΩΤΕΡΙΚΟΥ).

[10] Κεντρική Επιτροπή του Εθνικού Απελευθερωτικού Μετώπου (Ε.Α.Μ.), *Πως πρέπει να δουλεύει η γυναίκα στο Εθνικό Απελευθερωτικό Μέτωπο* (1943).

[11] For instance, a socialist idea of motherhood differs from a bourgeois one and it is articulated in the newspaper 'La Compagna': 'La Famiglia', La Compagna: Giornale per la Donna del Partito Socialista Italiano di Unita Proletaria, 20 aprile 1945, Anno II, No. 1 Edizione Lombarda, p.1, Fondo Palumbo, Istituto Nazionale Ferruccio Parri, Milano.

[12] Margaret R. Higonnet, "Introduction" in *Behind the Lines: Gender and the Two World Wars* (London; New Haven, Conn; Yale University Press, 1987), 3.

[13] Margaret Collins Weitz, *Sisters in the Resistance: How Women Fought to Free France*, *1940-1945* (New York: J. Wiley, 1995), 4.

[14] Karen Kampwirth, *Feminism and the Legacy of Revolution: Nicaragua, El Salvador, Chiapas* (Athens, OH: Ohio University Press, 2004), 20; Penny Summerfield, "Gender and War in the Twentieth Century," *International History Review* 19, no. 1 (1997): 4.

circumstances altered notions of gender but these new ideas about gender were grounded in pre-existing social and cultural values.[15] As a result, and despite their progressive orientation and revolutionary aims, women participated in the resistance largely in gender-specific roles -as gendered subjects- in accordance with the gender norms of the time. Hegemonic gender norms and heightened nationalism pressured women into traditional roles –yet in the context of the war, occupation and resistance, women transgressed these gender norms, and these 'traditional' roles also acquired a political significance amid the risk involved.

Indeed, it would be wrong to diminish women's roles because women largely participated in the war largely through their traditional roles, following a gendered trajectory. The social upheaval provoked by occupation and resistance not only politicised domestic roles previously perceived as 'unpolitical', and private, but also provided myriad opportunities for women to transgress these roles and sourced them with an altered, political significance. By politicising their traditional roles, embedding themselves within their local/national context, these female resisters engaged in "resignifying those elements of nationalist discourse that reduce women to mere symbols of the collective to actively reimagine the nation as a space of equal citizenship."[16] In that sense, I will argue that despite not systematically challenging the gendered binary, the resistance provided women with new, gendered, forms of political mobilisation, previously unavailable and unimaginable to many of them, which was particularly the case for left-wing movements that wished to alter many aspects of post-war society, imagining more egalitarian societies.

This often-gendered binary has diminished the perception of women's contribution to the resistance, separating women into a non-heroic category compared to normative male heroism. In that respect, Nisa Göksel's work on Kurdish women's mobilisation argues that the mainstream approach of separating heroic/armed resistance and unarmed/ordinary resistance does not pay attention to the gendered intersections between armed and unarmed resistance. Instead, the latter examined the unarmed resistance of Kurdish women in the realm of the ordinary as an equally crucial segment of the revolutionary struggle.[17] Building upon Göksel approach vis-à-vis the Kurdish liberation struggle, this thesis also looks at both unarmed and armed resistance as equally crucial segments of the resistance struggle.[18] The role of the armed female partisan came along with many other modes of political

[15] Margaret R. Higonnet, "Introduction" in *Behind the Lines,* 5.
[16] Maha El Said, Lena Meari and Nicola Pratt, "Introduction: Rethinking Gender in Revolutions and Resistance in the Arab World" in *Rethinking Gender in Revolutions and Resistance: Lessons from the Arab World*, ed. Maha El Said, Lena Meari, and Nicola Pratt, (London, England: Zed Books, 2015), 13.
[17] Nisa Göksel, "Gendering Resistance: Multiple Faces of the Kurdish Women's Struggle," *Sociological Forum* 34 (2019): 1112–1115, https://www.jstor.org/stable/48558594.
[18] Ibid.

mobilisation typical for women during the resistance.[19] Similarly, women's unarmed resistance that tapped into their everyday roles in the context of the Second World War translated the effects of heroic into their ordinary struggle. The resister woman, who was embedded in everyday life, played a pivotal role in transforming the realm of the "ordinary" through her participation in the resistance struggle. By understanding the resistance as a struggle with both armed and unarmed components and by focusing on the *subject* and its creative agency, highlighting the choice of women to participate in the struggle, rather than the mode of mobilisation vis-à-vis arms, we could move beyond the gendered and hierarchical binaries that diminish the importance of women's unarmed resistance. By rethinking women's agency in the resistance, we are in a better position to recognise the importance of women's contribution to the disruption of hegemonic gender norms in both the public and private spheres through their alternative *stylised gender acts*.[20]

Going further, I argue that by replacing the attention from *the mode of resistance* to *the subject* who resists by taking a risk, we could better understand the resistance experience, regardless of armed or unarmed, as a pivotal moment for women's politicisation and examine their agency within the historically specific context and limitations of their time. Here, it is important to highlight the element of *causality* when it comes to joining the resistance or/and becoming involved in a specific resistance group and organisation, left-wing or not. Indeed, as Italo Calvino writes in the preface of his book *The Path to the Spider's Nest* "Chance alone had determined the side for which they were to fight."[21] Even if chance alone seems unconvincing and eliminates any element of choice in the equation *and* diminishes the active engagement to recruit by left-wing and antifascist clandestine networks, in practice, the choice to join, especially regarding previously unpolitical individuals, was influenced by the realities on the ground, the groups operating in each area, the family background and familial/neighbourhood/work networks and so on.[22] In any case, this does not diminish the agency of its participants amid the risk involved. The element of causality will become more evident regarding women's participation in Chapter 4, where I explored how women became involved in the resistance – or were "caught up" in its spider nest through their personal entanglements.

[19] Ibid.
[20] El Said, Meari and Pratt, "Introduction," in *Rethinking Gender in Revolutions and Resistance,* 13.
[21] Italo Calvino, 'Preface' in *The path to the nest of spiders*, trans. Archibald Colquhoun (New York: Ecco Press, 1976), xix.
[22] Santo Peli examines the complex motivations behind the decision to join the resistance. For more: Santo Peli, *La necessità, il caso, l'utopia. Saggi sulla guerra partigiana e dintorni* (BFS Edizioni, 2022).

At the same time, examining the impact of the resistance beyond the binary emancipation/oppression provides a better understanding of the relationship between women's political memory of participating in the resistance movements and their post-war political involvement, with the 'resistance experience' representing a point of reference in the construction of their political identity. I will argue that the resistance experience enabled many of these younger women to become aware of their capabilities through their involvement in these movements. This is particularly the case for left-wing movements, where a largely non-politicised generation of women was able to meet and organise with women who had acquired political experience prior to the war, particularly communist. Through these experiences, feminine roles were open to resignification and transformation into more concrete political ideologies. The resistance experience made them rethink their position within society and their political and personal goals following the war, having acquired important organising skills. Participation in the resistance provided precedent to evolve into feminists and other political mobilisations after the war, building upon the new forms of political mobilisation that the resistance provided. In that sense, focusing on the resistance and women's participation in it as a one-time event does not explain the more complex impact on women's lives. In line with Karen Kampwirth's argument, the role of women in the resistance could be better understood if the resistance is understood as a movement rather as a point in time,[23] where a historical event is depicted as the sole responsible for the construction of political subjectivity. Kampwirth's insight provides a crucial frame for my analysis in understanding the resistance as a seed that led to the construction of political subjectivity for its female participants.

Methodology: A Comparative Approach Through Gender Lenses

Even though the participation of women in the resistance cannot be characterised as an understudied subject, there is yet no thorough comparative study of women's roles in the resistance through the framework of gender history. An important number of publications remain largely descriptive accounts of women's experiences during the war. As Karen Hagemann, Stefan Dudink, and Sonya O. Rose write vis-à-vis the development of scholarship on gender and war, most works consist of thorough and contextualised case studies with a rather narrow historical and geographical scope, which can also apply to the scholarship of women's participation in the resistance.[24] Indeed, several books and edited volumes provide

[23] Kampwirth, *Feminism and the Legacy of Revolution,* 5.

[24] Karen Hagemann, Stefan Dudink, and Sonya O. Rose, "Introduction: Gender and the History of War—The Development of the Research" in *The Oxford Handbook of Gender, War and the Western World since 1600* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2020) 19.

a chapter related to women's participation in the resistance, focusing on specific spatial, political, cultural, and social contexts. The absence of such a systematic comparative historical study, and the lack of engagement with concepts of gender history, has hindered the identification of broader historical patterns on the roles of women in contexts of war, civil war, revolution, and political violence.

War is a gendering activity and the subjects that participated in the resistance did so as gendered subjects, drawing upon pre-existing ideas about gender, masculinity, and femininity. This research will examine the dynamic tensions between gender norms and transgression, drawing on theories of gender, patriarchy, gendered agency, and war. The emergency circumstances of war and occupation de-stabilised all social institutions, opening opportunities for some women to change and sometimes strengthening existing concepts of gender. Women's participation in the resistance struggle was accompanied by the transgression of gender norms. Transgression here refers to the destabilising gendered behaviours that challenged ideas about women's roles and behaviour within the 1930s/1940s context, across three different societies. Indeed, women who participated in the resistance struggle transgressed gender norms that largely placed women in the private sphere and defined women as peaceful, unpolitical human beings and contested gender relations.[25] Within this study, gender transgression concerned not solely participating in battle, which represents an extreme transgression of expected gendered behaviour, but various practices and roles that went beyond the normative idea of gender and were considered legitimate in the context of war, occupation and resistance.[26] Indeed, the transgressive politics of the resistance challenged the private/public and non-political/political divides, since women participated in the resistance from roles and spaces that were previously conceived and depicted as private and non-political.

Despite the transgression of gender norms in this context, their gender remained central to the ways that women participated in the resistance, in their representations and discourse surrounding women's involvement, and even in the delayed interest in examining their role and contribution to the resistance post war. Hence, to study women in left-wing resistance movements through a gender lens means that women's experiences and gender transgression in these progressive movements are not examined in isolation from the wider

[25] Eileen Boris, Sandra Trudgen Dawson, and Barbara Molony, "Introduction," in *Engendering Transnational Transgressions: From the Intimate to the Global,* ed. Eileen Boris, Sandra Trudgen Dawson, and Barbara Molony (London: Routledge, 2020), 2, doi:10.4324/9781003050384.
[26] Ibid, 6.

societal gender order; rather, women's participation is analysed in relation to men and as part of identifiable gender power relations.

This thesis is meant to serve as a model of analysing the resistance and its memory as reflections of gender politics, exposing systems of gender and gender relations. With the use of original primary source material in Italian, French, and Greek, women's resistance(s) will be situated in specific material conditions, cultural norms, and social practices in each society. The plural form of the word resistance emphasises both the variety of movements that existed and their emergence in different socio-political contexts despite their shared characteristics and similar modes of operation, patterns of mobilisation and participation under the common denominator of gender. At the same time, it reflects the different legacies and memories surrounding these gendered resistance(s) based on who remembered, when and under what historically specific circumstances across three European societies, whose pre-war context and post-war paths differed considerably.

In that respect, this thesis will not only examine women's resistance in the context of the Second World War. Rather, it will also focus on aspects of the gender-specific memory of the resistance in each country. This is not solely a personal choice to examine women's memories of the resistance but rather a methodological one. While women became involved in the resistance in similar ways under the common determinator of their gender in all three cases, their role in the resistance and the legacy that accompanied it after the war differed in each country due to the different political futures that awaited each of them. The resistance memory and its gendered aspects changed throughout the years, along with political and socio-cultural developments in each country. Women's memories themselves became subject to resignification in the context of second-wave feminism after 1970, which involved a re-examination of women's roles in the resistance in retrospect. Until the 1970s and 1980s, the conventional history of the so-called Second World War typically neglected to include a gender viewpoint or focus on women's experiences during the war.[27] From the 1970s

[27] It goes beyond the scope of this part to examine the historiography of the resistance on a full scale. The comparative nature of the study and the variety of sources used requires more focused literature review on women involvement in the resistance. Regarding the Second World War in France: Olivier Wieviorka, *Histoire De La Résistance: 1940-1945* (Paris: Perrin, 2013); Henri Michel, *Histoire De La Résistance en France (1940-1944),* 4th ed. (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1965); François-Georges Dreyfus, *Histoire De La Résistance: 1940-1945* (Paris: Fallois, 1996); Chris Millington, *France in the Second World War: Collaboration, Resistance, Holocaust, Empire* (London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2020); Peter Davies, *France and the Second World War: Resistance, Occupation and Liberation* (Routledge, 2000); Robert J. Young, *France and the origins of the Second World War* (Palgrave, 1996); Regarding the Second World War in Italy: Tom Behan, *The Italian Resistance: Fascists, Guerrillas and the Allies* (London; New York;: Pluto Press, 2009); Pavone, *A Civil War*; Roberto Battaglia, *Storia Della Resistenza Italiana*, vol. 129 (Torino: Einaudi, 1970); For Greece: Υπουργείο Εθνικής Αμύνης Γενικό Επιτελείο Στρατού, *Αγώνες και νεκροί του Ελληνικού Στρατού κατά το Δεύτερο Παγκόσμιο Πόλεμο, 1940-1945* (Αθήνα: Γενική Διεύθυνση Ιστορίας

onwards, under the impact of May '68 and with the rise of feminist movements in Europe and their demands, the focus shifted to questioning the place of women in this underground resistance movement and re-evaluating their role in the Resistance.[28] The historically specific inclusion of women in the historiography of each country demonstrates the importance of examining the resistance not only as an irregular, national war of liberation but as a post-war site of memory.

Gendered Resistances, Gendered Memories

As mentioned, the second part of this research draws attention to the resistance as not merely an irregular war but also as a post-war *lieu de memoire,* documenting both women's experience during the war, while also examining the many and different afterlives of the resistance as informed by gender, placing the narrations in the specific historical context they emerge.[29] Exploring memory and narrative vis-à-vis the resistance through gendered lenses is crucial in order to unravel women's war and resistance experience in a more holistic way. I specifically examine their 'written' memories as they appear in women's post-war memoirs and autobiographies. Through a double reading of memoirs and autobiographies, I provide an analysis of gendered modes of representation of the resistance in these memoirs. While contested memories of the resistance and its post-war legacies in each country have been thoroughly researched,[30] its gender-specific dimensions remain largely understudied.[31] Yet any attempt to reconstruct the experiences of these women as resistance

---

Στρατού, 1990); Αντώνης Ι. Κοράντης, *Πολιτική και διπλωματική ιστορία της Ελλάδας, 1941-1945* (Αθήνα: Εστία, 1987); Spiros Tsoutsoumpis, *A History of the Greek Resistance in the Second World War: The People's Armies* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2017); Σόλων Γρηγοριάδης, *Ιστορία της Σύγχρονης Ελλάδας, 1941-1974*, 1ος Τόμος: Κατοχή-Δεκεμβριανά 1941-1945 (Αθήνα. Polaris, 2009).

[28] Laurent Douzou, "La construction de la catégorie de genre dans les Résistances antifascistes sur le pourtour méditerranéen" in *La Résistance à l'épreuve du genre : Hommes et femmes dans la Résistance antifasciste en Europe du Sud (1936-1949),* Laurent Douzou & Mercedes Yusta (Dir.) (Presses Universitaires de Rennes, 2018), 24.

[29] For the notion of *lieu de mémoire :* Pierre Nora, "Between Memory and History: Les Lieux de Mémoire," *Representations*, no. 26 (1989) : 7–24, https://doi.org/10.2307/2928520.

[30] Phillip, Cooke, *The Legacy of the Italian Resistance* (Basingstoke : Palgrave Macmillan, 2011), doi :10.1057/9780230119017 ; Μάγδα Φυτίλη, Μάνος Αυγερίδης, και Ελένη Κουκή *Η δεύτερη ζωή της Εθνικής Αντίστασης: Πρακτικές αναγνώρισης και αποκλεισμού 1944-2006* (Αθήνα: Θεμέλιο, 2022); Henry Rousso, *Le Syndrome De Vichy De 1944 à Nos Jours* (Éditions du Seuil, 1990).

[31] Along with post-war personal memoirs, autobiographies and testimonies, post-war films also played an important role in shaping the resistance as *lieu de memoire* with gender-specific aspects. In the 1980s-1990s, films focusing on women's participation in the resistance were released. For example, Jacques Renard's *Blanche et Marie* (1984) tells the story of the resistance from the perspective of two women, one older (Blanche) and one younger (Marie). The story demonstrates how previously unpoliticised women became involved in the resistance through family networks as the clandestine nature of war benefited such close relationship networks. Certain movies also focus on those few, *exemplaires*, women rather than the perceived as ordinary and, by effect, unknown ones. For instance, Claude Berri's film *Lucie Aubrac (1996)* tells the story of how Lucie Aubrac rescued her husband Raymond from prison and how she managed to deceive the occupiers and the authorities. The film was the most expensive French production in 1996, its year of release. Graeme Hayes argues regarding the film that Berri's interpretation of events further marginalised women's participation in the resistance. This becomes evident from the opening of the film, where Raymond Aubrac becomes the focal point when he blows up a train. Despite Lucie being the alleged subject of the film, the

fighters from the sources cannot be separated from the historically specific context in which these sources appear. Thinking and remembering about a topic (women, war and resistance), from a certain place (Greece, Italy, and France), and from a specific historical time (post-war, during the 1960s, 1970s, 1980s, and onwards) is inevitably coloured by the dynamics of that location at the specific time of the event[32] and the positionality of the former resisters who remember through various forms of oral and written testimonies, including autobiographies, and personal memoirs, among others.

In all three countries, due to the delayed interest in exploring women's involvement in the resistance, women's contribution to the resistance is largely based on texts produced after the war, and hence, any reconstruction of women's experience and the broader societal post-war legacies surrounding the resistance in each country often coexist together. Indeed, most of these women authors write from a certain distance from the resistance, while their writing is also filtered by their gender-specific experiences of their writing present. Indeed, through a double reading of personal memoirs and autobiographies, I do not only tell (her)stories of a small group of women who narrated and wrote down their memories, but I also explore wider cultural histories of the gendered politics of memory in each country and the changes since the aftermath of the war.

As I will show, the memory of the resistance was quite differently negotiated in the case of Greece as compared to the cases of France and Italy due to the different post-war political path, which influenced, in turn, women's memory and writing. The Greek Civil

---

opening focuses on an act of male heroism that represents the militarised version of the resistance, while the majority of women participated in non- militarised forms/civile resistance. Moreover, no attention is paid to Lucie's resistance actions that are not directly related to her connection with Raymond. Berri's film emphasised Lucie's ideological commitment as primarily romantic, defining her action in relation only to a masculine subject, refusing to see her actions as an autonomous intellectual self. However, organising prison escapes was important to Lucie's broader Resistance operations. See more: Graeme Hayes, "Resistancialism revisited: masculinity and national identity in Claude Berri's Lucie Aubrac (1997)," *Studies in French Cinema* 1, no. 2 (2001): 109, 115. In Italy, the female martyrisation as the ultimate sacrifice to the nation is portrayed in Roberto Rossellini's Roma, città aperta (Rome, Open City) (1945). As Alan R. Perry argues, "The woman-martyr as war hero may appear quite contradictory but it is through this figure that the significance of heroic victimization in the Resistance comes to full life." For more: Alan R. Perry, "Literary and Cinematic Representations of Sacred Italian Resistance Memory: The Holy Partisan-Martyr as Hero," *Forum Italicum* 33, no. 2 (1999): 439. Yet despite Pina's death as the ultimate sacrifice in the name of Italy, the film does not examine women's roles in the resistance and their contribution outside of the victimisation narrative. It was only during the 1970s that films with female protagonists explored women's contribution as active participants in the resistance and war of liberation. Particularly, in 1976, Giuliano Montaldo released the film *L'Agnese va a morire*, based on the homonym book by Renata Viganò, where the protagonist's (Agnese) involvement in the resistance is explored and can be best summed up in Comandante's words (cited both in the book and movie): "You know, I regret not telling her what I think of her. I never gave her much satisfaction. At least make her realise how much she helped us, how useful she was; what she did for the company (compagnia/ military unit), for the party, for us." Renata Viganò, *L'Agnese va a Morire*, 4th edition (Torino: Einaudi: 2014), 225.

[32] Largely based on a previous article of mine: Christina Chatzitheodorou, "Ilektra Apostolou: A Greek Female Resistance Fighter and a Heroine of the Left," *Twentieth Century Communism* 25, no. 25 (2024): 22-51.

War (1944-1949) and the Communist defeat that followed the resistance polarised and divided the Greek society in a more profound way than was the case for France and Italy, which resulted in an intense anti-communist government until the fall of the right-wing dictatorship known as *Chounta ton Sintagmatarchon* (Regime of the Colonels) in 1974. Contrary to post-war left-wing and antifascist resistance myths in Italy and France, EAM's resistance to the occupiers was framed as treason and was not incorporated into Greece's national memory. The dominant anticommunist narrative had an impact on the historicisation of the resistance until 1974 when the fall of the dictatorship paved the way for a more inclusive history of the resistance in Greece in the early 1980s, matching what was already constructed -and was under question- in the other two countries.[33] This influenced women's memory in Greece, as this thesis will show. Therefore, post-war sources, with an extensive focus on personal memoirs of female resisters, are examined in the second part of the thesis with a critical eye, understanding women's narrations not only as a factual representation of their lives and activities during the war but also transmitting the "cultural and symbolic import of their stories,"[34] as *lieu de memoire,* a site of memory, where the politics of memory in each country influenced how women framed and narrated their involvement in the resistance.

Thus, this thesis will examine the intersections between female resisters' lived experiences and competing discourses about resistance and gender, which were produced both during and after the war. It also explores how women engage with, appropriate, reject, or ignore these gendered discourses about them. Throughout, it reflects upon the shifting importance that resisters have attached to gender as a frame for understanding their resistance experience at different points over the years, with their framing and articulating of their experiences from the 1940s, the 1980s, to the present day differing considerably. By understanding and comparing the actual roles female participants played across three different societies during the Second World War and their post-war gendered representations, resignifications, and memorialisation, this research will contribute to the history of resistances in a transnational manner.

---

[33] The Resistance and the Civil War were and remain both contentious topics that continue to elicit heated debates and shape the Greek people's historical consciousness and memory. As such, the limited research on the issue is also shaped by the polarised memory of the Greek resistance, the Civil War that followed and the victory of the conservative right-wing side over the Communist one. As Polymeris Voglis and Ioannis Nioutsikos argued, the disputes and contested memories surrounding the 1940s are not limited to academics; they also extend to the public realm, since this decade formed the Greek people's historical consciousness and memory. For more about the historiography of the (Greek) resistance and the debates surrounding it: Polymeris Voglis and Ioannis Nioutsikos, "The Greek Historiography of the 1940s. A Reassessment," *Südosteuropa* 65, no. 2 (2017): 316.

[34] Luisa Passerini, *Fascism in Popular Memory: The Cultural Experience of the Turin Working Class* (Cambridge University Press, 1987), 4.

Many important questions regarding the role of women in the resistance and their post-war memory continue to remain unanswered. The more specific questions I aim to answer in this thesis are: What differences can be identified in the way women contributed to partisan groups in those three case studies? Were women able to assume the same roles as men did, and carry weapons? What were the expectations of these women for participating in gender-integrated movements, as far as we can reconstruct it from the largely post-war sources? Under which circumstances did women assume combat roles in these partisan formations? For those who did carry weapons, how were they seen by their male counterparts? Given the progressive and radical ideology of communist-led organisations, were women treated as men's equals by the partisan groups in which they fought? Did Marxist and progressive ideology have an impact on pre-existing gender norms and determine the role of women in these movements? How did the post-war myth of the resistance affect the memories of women resisters, along with the different socio-political developments in each country? What does the comparison of personal memoirs reveal about the different post-war legacies of resistance and women's memory? How were women themselves, as both active participants in the resistance and social subjects influenced by memory, remembered and narrated the resistance? By illuminating the intricacies that surrounded the women's participation in the resistance and the post-war (gendered) legacies in the aforementioned case studies, this thesis aims to highlight both similarities and differences between them. This study, through an integrated and thematic approach based on gender theory, will identify the junctures and disjunctions between the three different cases, where important insights can emerge related to both the nature of war through a gendered lens, and the post-war gender-specific memory of the resistance in three different societies. Based on both Second World War archival material and post-war sources, it investigates these women's post-war narrations, and how they remember their resistance roles.

Historiography of the Resistance, Women, and Memory

As mentioned, until the 1970s, women's participation in resistance activities was largely understudied due to the abovementioned reasons that surrounded the historiography of the resistance. Nevertheless, since the 1970s, both the Italian and French historiography of the resistance, and to a lesser extent, Greek historiography, have paid considerable amount of research to the role and contribution of women in it.

In France, Laurent Douzou has argued that women's representation in the French historiography of the resistance, although "regularly celebrated, the part played by women in the resistance was not clearly established before the 1970s and 1980s, at the very moment

at which the Women's Liberation movement was becoming both visible and influential."[35] Hanna Diamond, Paula Schwartz, and Danièle Voldman also began working towards filling the gap in the historiography in the 1980s and 1990s.[36] Yet Jean Marie Guillon, who presented a historiography of the resistance in December 1993 at the Toulouse Colloquium and concluded on its shortcomings, said that "the participation of women is still not historicised in a satisfactory manner."[37] In the 2000s, Andrieu also addressed many aspects regarding the involvement of women in the resistance, focusing both on the various activities that women assumed during the resistance and the female participation as a topic of historical research.[38]

More recently, other aspects of the resistance and women's participation have been explored. For example, Catherine Astol- Lacour examined communist resistance and the engagement of women in the left-wing movements in northern France. She observes that, although women's resistance was crucial to the survival of the movement, it was not easily identifiable, also because it was largely restricted to the private sphere (their homes-résistance au foyer).[39] Much of her focus is largely on the repression of communist resistance and its gender-specific aspects, which demonstrates how indeed women assumed equal risks as men despite their gender-specific roles.[40] Moreover, Luc Capdevila focused particularly on women who participated in military formations and the discourses around women's mobilisation in the resistance and the side of 'France Libre'.[41] Jean-Pierre Martin also examined the role of women in the resistance during the Second World War, arguing that their commitment to liberation pushed towards their (electoral) equality with men following the war.[42] Sébastien Albertelli examined what has been described as external resistance and women's participation in it through the first women's military unit in the history of the

[35] Laurent Douzou, "A Perilous History: A Historiographical Essay on the French Resistance," *Contemporary European History* 28, no. 1 (2019): 102, https://doi.org/10.1017/S0960777318000619.
[36] Hanna Diamond, *Women and the Second World War in France, 1939-1948: Choices and Constraints* (New York; Essex; Pearson Education-Longman, 1999); Paula Schwartz, "Partisanes and Gender Politics in Vichy France," *French Historical Studies* 16, no. 1 (Spring 1989): 126-151; Danièle Voldman, *Hommes et femmes dans la France en guerre (1914-1945)* (Payot, 2003).
[37] Cited in Hélène Chaubin, "Femmes dans la Résistance méditerranéenne," *Clio. Femmes, Genre, Histoire* 1, (1995) :1, mis en ligne le 01 janvier 2005, URL : http://journals.openedition.org/clio/514 ; DOI : https://doi.org/10.4000/clio.514.
[38] Claire Andrieu, "Women in the French Resistance: Revisiting the Historical Record," *French Politics, Culture & Society* 18, no. 1 (2000): 13–27, http://www.jstor.org/stable/42843092; Claire Andrieu, "Les Résistantes, Perspectives de Recherche," *Le Mouvement Social*, no. 180 (1997): 69–96. https://doi.org/10.2307/3779349.
[39] Catherine Astol-Lacour, *Le genre de la Résistance. La Résistance féminine dans le Nord de la France* (Paris, Les Presses de Sciences Po, 2015), 127-156.
[40] Ibid, 157-194.
[41] Luc Capdevila, "La mobilisation des femmes dans la France combattante (1940-1945)," *Clio* [En ligne], 12 | 2000, mis en ligne le 24 mai 2006, consulté le 17 septembre 2023. URL : http://journals.openedition.org/clio/187 ; DOI : https://doi.org/10.4000/clio.187.
[42] Jean Pierre Martin, *Femmes dans la Résistance - Aux armes, citoyennes !* (Nouvelles Editions Sutton, 2015).

French Army. Precisely, the *Corps Féminine*, created in London in 1940 and renamed the *Corps des Volontaires Françaises* (CVF) the following year, had more than six hundred in its ranks between 1940 and 1944, joining Charles de Gaulle in London.[43]

However, and despite the increased interest in women's involvement in the resistance, as Claire Andrieu has argued, understanding women's participation is not always easy due to the various forms the resistance took. Despite the difficulties in shedding light on women's acts during the war, studies examining women's participation in the resistance and its various aspects shed light on this usually 'invisible' resistance of 'ordinary' women.[44] To illustrate this, Fabrice Maerten rhetorically asks about the ways women were involved in the resistance in Belgium, "And if that's the case -the case being a gender-specific resistance where women participated only partially from the private sphere-, isn't the form of struggle most favoured by women simply a reflection of their position in society at the time?"[45] Indeed, women participated in the resistance by appropriating their roles as mothers, wives, and, more broadly, as gendered subjects, and by appropriating the stereotypes associated with them. As Douzou affirms, the best way to understand women's involvement in the resistance is not by asking *if* women resisted *as much as* men did but rather *how* women resisted.[46] Posing the question in that way helps us avoid comparisons and generalisations between men and women and examine their creative agency in participating in the struggle, whose material conditions differed in the context of the Second World War, and whose involvement in the resistance was inevitably coloured by the cultural and gender norms that emerged.

Moreover, much of the attention on women's involvement presents as an insider's look at women's experience during the war, without explaining the social meanings behind the activities during the war and the post-war discourses surrounding these activities. Many books focusing on women in the French resistance remain largely descriptive and provide a simple narration of events and experiences.[47] For example, as Andrieu writes, Laurence Thibault's book and Margaret Collins Weitz's book on the subject offer a lot of information and valuable testimonies but do not necessarily provide an in-depth analysis of the narratives

[43] Sébastien Albertelli, *Elles ont suivi de Gaulle - Histoire du Corps des Volontaires françaises* (Perrin, 2020).
[44] Cited in Douzou, "A Perilous History," 102.
[45] Fabrice Maerten, "La Résistance, une école d'émancipation pour les femmes ? La réalité nuancée du Hainaut belge," in *Femmes et Résistance en Belgique et en zone interdite* (Lille : Publications de l'Institut de recherches historiques du Septentrion, 2007), 167.
[46] Laurent Douzou, "La Résistance, une affaire d'hommes ?" *Les Cahiers de l'Institut d'Histoire du Temps Présent*, Identités féminines et violences politiques (1936-1946), no. 31. (octobre 1995): 24, DOI : https://doi.org/10.3406/ihtp.1995.2311.
[47] For example: Jean-Paul Lefebvre-Filleau, *Femmes de la Résistance, 1940-1945* (Monaco: Éditions du Rocher, 2020).

surrounding the resistance or/and a sociological analysis.[48] Several books contain interviews with former resisters where they narrate their resistance experience and are rich in narrative, extremely valuable for exploring the female experience. Following the war, archival institutions also focused on accumulating first-person accounts regarding women's participation. For instance, the *Unione Donne Italiane* (Union of Italian Women – UDI) has several women's accounts in Italy gathered after the war; in France, the collection of Marie GRANET: oeuvre inédite "Le rôle des femmes dans la Résistance" in the *Archives Nationales de France*, an unpublished manuscript on women's participation in the resistance and personal testimonies on the subject, also contains numerous women's personal testimonies, gathered following the war up until the early 1970s.[49] However, these testimonies have not been properly analysed to provide an in-depth examination of the overall impact of the resistance experience on women's lives and identity, while there is also lack of solid analysis regarding the formation of (gendered) narratives, situating the emergence of sources themselves within their historically specific moment.

In the same pattern, several books focus on interviews with former resisters. Monique Saigal's book contains interviews by women of different backgrounds and affiliations who participated in the resistance, including interviews with communist, Jewish, and other women.[50] Despite their importance in understanding women's experience in the resistance as well as women's reflections on how the resistance is understood and framed while looking back, these first-person narrations in personal memoirs, oral testimonies, and interviews for edited volumes remain largely descriptive.[51] In cases, they tend to frame women's resistance by focusing on one aspect of their identity or/and prioritising certain identity markers (i.e., age, marriage status, political identity, ethnicity) over others. Margaret Rossiter, for example, argues that for married women, participation in resistance activities was a way to assume their family responsibilities,[52] which role-wise remains true. Yet women's creative agency was manifested through the assumption of their traditional roles in the context of

[48] Andrieu, "Women in the French Resistance," 15-16. See also Weitz, *Sisters in the Resistance;* see also Laurence Thibault, *Les femmes et la Résistance*, préf. Jean-Louis Crémieux-Brilhac (Paris: Association pour des études sur la résistance intérieure : Documentation française, 2006).
[49] I could not find the exact dates of the gathered testimonies, but Garnet donated her work in the archives in 1979, while the inventory mentions that it includes manuscripts of various works by Marie Granet, published between 1957 and 1974 and gathered testimonies for that purpose. For more: 397 AP, Fonds Marie Granet Archives Nationale, http://www.archivesnationales.culture.gouv.fr/chan/chan/AP-pdf/AP-thematique-historiens-et-erudits.pdf.
[50] Monique Saigal, *Héroïnes françaises, 1940-1945 : courage, force et ingéniosité* (Monaco : Éditions du Rocher, 2008).
[51] For instance, books such as: Sophie Carquain, *Nous étions résistantes* (Alisio, 2020) provide useful primary source material through the interviews that can be further analysed regarding the narratives surrounding the resistance.
[52] Margarete L. Rossiter "Le Rôle des femmes dans la Résistance en France," *Guerres Mondiales et Conflits Contemporains,* no. 155 (1989) : 54, http://www.jstor.org/stable/25730596.

clandestine war. In the same pattern, Rita Thalmann argues that due to women's position in (French) society, young women were the ones who became involved in resistance activities.[53] Yet many older women became involved in less visible activities that are more difficult to both identify and measure. In times, the emphasis on one identity marker or point of recognition, such as age, while it can provide valuable insights, it cannot necessarily speak to the complexity of women's experience and even diminishes their contribution and their creative agency.

Indeed, a more holistic, intersectional,[54] understanding of women's identity is crucial to understanding how the intersection of such differences interacted with participation in the resistance. Factors such as age, gender (and, at times, race/ethnicity-related differences depending on the region),[55] all interacted with each other and affected women's entrance and modes of mobilisation in the resistance (i.e., working-class women participated in the resistance in different ways than bourgeois middle-class women/ women with prior political activity before the war arrived in the resistance differently than nonpolitically experienced women). In the context of the resistance, these differences were instrumentalised by women themselves to achieve a number of goals. Women appropriated this intersection of differences to their advantage in order to 'pass' and deceive the occupiers and their collaborators or/and played on certain gender stereotypes to demand concessions from the occupying authorities.

Moreover, French scholarship tends to focus on a few, 'famous' or exceptional, women who participated in the resistance. The edited book, under the direction of Laurence Thibault, examines the different roles assumed by both 'ordinary' and militant women. However, as the author mentions in the beginning, this work cannot cite all the women who participated in the resistance activities. As mentioned, this is a result of the nature of activities women assumed during the resistance and the underground nature of clandestine engagement. Hence, the book limited its concentration to the most well-known women who became involved in the resistance through various forms and engagements.[56] Paula Schwartz rightly argues that by focusing on certain women, *les femmes heroines* and *les femmes*

[53] Rita Thalmann, "L'oubli Des Femmes Dans l'historiographie de La Résistance," *Clio. Femmes, Genre, Histoire*, no. 1 (1995): 22-23, http://www.jstor.org/stable/44668330.
[54] On the notion of intersectionality: Kimberlé W. Crenshaw, "Demarginalizing the Intersection of Race and Sex: A Black Feminist Critique of Antidiscrimination Doctrine, Feminist Theory and Antiracist Politics," U. Chi. Legal F. (1989): 139–167, https://scholarship.law.columbia.edu/faculty_scholarship/3007/. See also: Ann Phoenix and Pamela Pattynama, "Intersectionality," *European Journal of Women's Studies* 13, no. 3 (2006): 187.

[55] This can be argued about previously marginalised communities in North Greece.
[56] Thibault *Les femmes et la Résistance*.

exemplaires, we end up adopting a historical approach that reproduces the "official" male-centred history. Such an approach further reinforces the idea that the resistance was simply of a military nature.[57] In France, this focus on certain 'femmes exemplaires' concerns women, such as Lucie Aubrac, Berty Albercht, Charlotte Delbo, Germaine Tillion, Geneviève de Gaulle-Anthonioz, among others. This focus on a few 'heroines' women also influenced the production of personal memoirs, and which will be examined in this thesis, as the first women to tell their story through personal memoirs were the ones largely seen as 'femmes exemplaires'. Lucie Aubrac, as Donald Reid calls her, "the essence of France [was] revealed in the Resistance,"[58] wrote her personal memoir only in 1984,[59] which further manifests the reduced interest in women's 'side of the story' prior to the 1970s/1980s.[60]

Academic conferences were also organised from the 1970s and continue up until today with the aim of exploring women's involvement in the resistance. From the mid-seventies, and as mentioned under the effect of the May '68 and of the new wave of feminism, survivors of deportation and former resisters, such as Charlotte Delbo, Anna Langfus, Germain Tillion, Brigitte Friang, began to break the silence and started 'narrating' their resistance and deportation experience. The first large-scale initiative in this direction was the Colloquium of the Union of French Women organised in 1975 at the Sorbonne on "Women in the Resistance", with several important testimonies also used in this thesis.[61] Another conference took place in Berlin, organised by *Mémorial de la Résistance allemande de Berlin* and the *Mémorial du Maréchal Leclerc de Hauteclocque/Musée Jean-Moulin*, in 2001, that addressed several (gendered) aspects of the resistance in France. Moreover, several documentaries released during the 2000s focused on women's involvement in the resistance, such as the *Soeurs en résistance* (2002) or the short TV series *Femmes de l'ombre* (2002).

Regarding the Italian historiography, examination of women's involvement in the resistance is extremely rich and began as early as 1954, when the women's commission of the Turin *Associazione Nazionale Partigiani d'Italia* (ANPI - National Association of

[57] Paula Schwartz, "Résistance et Différence Des Sexes : Bilan et Perspectives," *Clio. Femmes, Genre, Histoire*, no. 1 (1995):74, http://www.jstor.org/stable/44668333.
[58] Donald Reid, "French Singularity, the Resistance and the Vichy Syndrome: Lucie Aubrac to the Rescue," *European History Quarterly* 36, no. 2 (2006): 201.
[59] Reid also mentions that Aubrac did not become the porte-parole of the resistance in the 1950s and 1960s, when the myth of France as a nation of resisters was strong. Aubrac assumed this role only when this particular aspect of the resistance was questioned, and France was portrayed as nation of non-resisters. See more: Reid, "French Singularity, the Resistance and the Vichy Syndrome," 201-202.
[60] As it will be demonstrated later in this thesis, Aubrac writes her memoir at the time for her own specific reasons as well.
[61] Out of 17 historical works dealing with this subject, 13 date from after 1971; the other 4 appeared between 1948 and 1971. See more : Thalmann, "L'oubli des femmes dans l'historiographie de la Résistance," 5, DOI : https://doi.org/10.4000/clio.513.

Italian Partisans) published a book on Piedmontese women's contribution to the fight for liberation. The book provided details on the various women who were killed and deported. Yet the book was widely forgotten up until the 1970s, when women's contribution to the resistance as a topic of interest assumed more importance.[62] Indeed, as Maria Teresa Sega writes, a first shift in the historiography takes place at the time with Franca Pieroni Bortolotti's research on female partisans in the region of Emilia. In the same period, Anna Maria Bruzzone and Rachele Farina also interviewed Piedmontese female partisans.[63]

Jane Slaughter's book, published in 1997, focuses on the female roles in the resistance in Italy.[64] As Perry Wilson wrote, its main aim is to analyse how these roles contributed (or they did not) to women's emancipation, and hence, it does not delve into the gendered narratives regarding the roles of women. [65] The chapters dedicated to the different roles do not focus on gender theory to analyse a variety of issues related to female participation in the resistance, such as the instrumentalisation of feminine symbolics to gain an advantage over a superior opponent or to ask for concessions from the occupiers and their collaborators. Moreover, beyond the dipole of change/emancipation and continuity/oppression, former resisters narrations of their experiences demonstrate the more complex impact of the resistance experience in their lives. In the same pattern, Benedetta Tobagi's book on women's participation in the resistance explores the various roles, activities, motivations of women in the resistance following the capitulation of Italy in 1943, along with aspects related to the memorialisation of female participation in the resistance through the integration of extremely interesting and useful primary material and testimonies. Even though the book does not include a deeper analysis of how gender was instrumentalised in several roles (i.e., *staffette*) in the resistance by using secondary bibliography on gender, it becomes evident in the examined testimonies, which are extremely rich in narrative.[66] Elena Porciani's book examines the representation of women resisters, the *staffette*, the female fighters in the literature of the resistance.[67] Tom Behan's book on the Italian resistance explores a variety of topics, including a chapter focusing on the participation of women and the significance of their activities. For instance, Behan finds that in the mountains, women were the ones to get involved in the resistance first. Women fed and hid

[62] Cooke, *The Legacy of the Italian Resistance*, 72.
[63] Maria Teresa Sega, "Essere donna nell' esercito di Liberazione," in *Resistenza: La guerra partigiana in Italia (1943-1945),* a.c.d. Filippo Focardi e Santo Peli (Carocci, 2025), 116.
[64] Jane Slaughter, *Women and the Italian Resistance, 1943-1945* (Denver: Colorado: Arden Press, 1997).
[65] Perry R. Wilson, "Women, War and the Vote: gender and politics in Italy, 1940–46," *Women's History Review* 7, no. 4 (1998): 618.
[66] Benedetta Tobagi, *La Resistenza delle donne* (Torino: Einaudi, 2023).
[67] Elena Porciani, *Le donne nella narrativa della Resistenza. Rappresentazioni del femminile e stereotipi di genere* (Villaggio Maori, 2017)

Italian and Allied troops in 1943 when they walked out of prisons in large numbers, which exposed them to German reprisals.[68]

Moreover, as Wilson argues, in order to examine the intricate and frequently conflicting concrete and symbolic meanings of the war for Italian women, Anna Bravo and Anna Maria Bruzzone's book pays close attention to gender, including the idea of masculinity, and makes a much-needed attempt to move away from the oversimplified classifications that have plagued some resistance historiography.[69] As Scwhartz writes, "If 'gender' tends more and more to replace 'women' in the historiography, it is not only to integrate women into a more complex reality but to avoid posing the Man (white, middle-class Western man) as a reference point *par excellence,* against whom we 'situate' the other."[70] Marina Addis Saba's book also pays attention to the different forms of resistance in Italy. Women were part of every aspect of it, from participating in protests, transferring guns, and distributing the press, to the more militarised forms of the *resistenza*.[71] Saba briefly mentions the gender-tagged roles that women assumed in the partisan movements. The percentage of women who decided to take arms and participate in *la lotta armata* was a minority due to social conventions that saw women associated with family life and motherhood.[72] Yet, as already explained, these studies do not always conceptualise women's creative agency in the resistance and do not thoroughly look into the profound effect on their individual and collective consciousness regarding their perceptions of gender, and the overall impact it had on laying the ground vis-à-vis their political subjectivity, post-war achievements and mobilisation.[73]

A considerable number of books in Italy focus on the resistance in specific geographic regions.[74] In the Italian case study, this is also a result of the spread of historical institutes dedicated to the Italian resistance throughout Italy.[75] Contrary to the centralization of archives in France and, to a smaller extent, in Greece, this decentralisation has allowed an examination of women's experience in the resistance in various geographical areas, from large cities to small villages, which has also contributed greatly to the representation of more

[68] Behan, *Fascists, Guerrillas and the Allies,* 162.
[69] Wilson, "Women, War and the Vote," 619.
[70] Translation my own. Cited in Paula Scwhartz, "Résistance et différence des sexes : bilan et perspectives," *Clio. Femmes, Genre, Histoire*, no. 1(1995): 69.
[71] Marina Addis Saba, *Tutte le Donne della Resistenza* (Milano: Mursia, 1998).
[72] Ibid, 92-94.
[73] Jomarie Alano, "Armed with a Yellow Mimosa: Women's Defence and Assistance Groups in Italy, 1943-45," *Journal of Contemporary History* 38, no. 4 (2003): 617.
[74] Silvana Presa, *Donne guerra e Resistenza in Valle d'Aosta* (Aosta: Le Chateau Edizioni, 2016); Maria Alberta Sarti, *La donna piemontese nella Resistenza* (Torino: Tip. Agat, 1986); Iolanda Crimi Giacobbe, *Donne siciliane nella resistenza* (Catania: Circolo Anna Frank, 1962).
[75] For a map of the Institutes around Italy: Istituto Nazionale Ferruccio Parri, "La rete degli istituti," https://www.reteparri.it/chi-siamo/la-rete-degli-istituti-insmli/.

'ordinary' women in each region. Regional studies on the participation of women in the resistance are useful to understand local particularities and remain important given that the conditions of occupation varied not only from one country to another but also from one area to another within the occupied territories. Such studies have highlighted the heterogeneity of political and social contexts, revealing both affinity and diversity. For instance, Bruna Bortolotti's book on the involvement of women in the resistance in Emilia-Romagna provides a thorough analysis of the experience of women during the resistance, including testimonies by former resisters.[76] Another regional study that focuses on the region of Liguria provides several articles that focus on women's activities in several contexts, from the resistance in the factories to the schools and the mountains.[77] Bruna Bertolo's book focuses on Piemonte,[78] while other studies also focus on Mantua,[79] Vicenza,[80] Valle d'Aosta,[81] Tuscany,[82] and Venice,[83] among others. Written by historians interested not only in the gendered aspects of the resistance but also in local history -usually because they might have some connection to the place they are writing for- they provide a more equal representation of the 'ordinary women' in the resistance than it is the case for France and Greece, where the focus on the few 'exemplaires' women is more prevalent. Equally, the more diverse geographical focus and, simultaneously, the deepening of local particularities facilitate the deconstruction of unifying resistance/occupation myths. Indeed, each city follows different temporalities of resistance depending on the specific situation in which it finds itself. For instance, Iara Meloni's book focuses on the gendered memories of former resistance female participants in the city of Piacenza. The memories of the former resisters go hand in hand with the specific circumstances of the city during the war and occupation, including the time of liberation.[84] Building upon the rich contribution of Italian historiography to the resistance, it allows the introduction of new concepts and insights in the cases of France and particularly Greece, where the historiography is not equally

[76] Bruna Bortolotti, *Le donne nella Resistenza antifascista e la questione femminile in Emilia-Romagna: 1943-1945* (Milano: Vangelista, 1978).
[77] Slaughter, *Women and the Italian Resistance, 1943-1945*, 160. For more: Giuseppe Benelli, *La donna nella Resistenza in Liguria* (Firenze La nuova Italia, 1979).
[78] Bruna Bertolo, *Donne nella resistenza in Piemonte. Infermiere, staffette partigiane, madri coraggio, deportate, combattenti, martiri* (Sant'Ambrogio di Torino: Susalibri, 2014).
[79] B. Fiori Verona, *La donna mantovana nella Resistenza* (Sometti, 2010).
[80] Sonia Residori, *Sovversive, ribelli e partigiane. Le donne vicentine tra fascismo e Resistenza (1922-1945)* (Cierre Edizioni, 2021).
[81] Presa, *Donne guerra e resistenza in Valle d'Aosta*.
[82]Laura Antonelli, *Voci dalla storia. Le donne della Resistenza in Toscana tra storie di vita e percorsi di emancipazione* (Pentalinea, 2006);
[83] Maria Teresa Sega, *Eravamo fatte di stoffa buona. Donne e Resistenza in Veneto* (Nuovadimensione, 2010); Bellina, Luisa, and Maria Teresa Sega. *Tra la città di Dio e la città dell'uomo. Donne cattoliche nella Resistenza Veneta*. Istituto Veneziano per la Storia della Resistenza e della Società Contemporanea & Istituto per la storia della resistenza e della società contemporanea della Marca trevigiana, 2005.
[84] Iara Meloni, *Memorie resistenti. Le donne raccontano la Resistenza nel Piacentino* (Le Piccole Pagine, 2015).

developed, despite the very important contributions, both in terms of narrative and analysis, examined later by Tasoula Vervenioti, Margarite Poulos and Janet Hart.

Even though less developed than local history studies on the resistance, the decentralisation of archives in Italy regarding the resistance has also facilitated attention on specific ethnic/linguistic/religious particularities based on each region's specific sociopolitical history and demography. Few studies focus on the linguistic minorities and their role in the resistance. For instance, a conference took place in Udine in 2008 focusing on linguistic minorities and resistance in Friuli-Venezia Giulia.[85] Matteo Petracci's book focuses on the participation of a group of Somalis, Eritreans, and Ethiopians, who were previously called to perform as figurants at the Mostra delle Terre d'Oltremare, the largest colonial exhibition ever organised in the country. After the armistice of 8 September 1943 and the break-up of the State, some decided to join the groups of anti-fascists, soldiers, prisoners of war and civilian internees who were organising themselves in the Monte San Vicino area. Through testimonies and archival documents, the author reconstructs the path of these partisans, recounting their experiences, the possible motivations behind their choice to join the resistance, and their resistance experience in the Mario Band.[86] In a different direction, Andrea Martocchia examines the contribution of the Yugoslavian partisans in the Italian resistance; prisoners in the approximately two hundred fascist detention camps in Italy until September 8, 1943, once freed, they made an effective and decisive contribution to the Italian resistance, spreading from Tuscany to Umbria, Marche, Abruzzo, and Puglia.[87] Although these aforementioned studies do not specifically address women's participation in the resistance, the focus on both colonial subjects and Yugoslavian partisans demonstrates the richness of the bibliography regarding the resistance in Italy and the diverse experiences of the various resistance subjects through contextualized case studies on specific geographical regions and themes. This 'richness' could pave the way for more thorough studies to understand women's participation in the resistance, focusing on multiple identities and without foregrounding solely their gender identity. For instance, another aspect explored in Italy concerns the participation of Catholic women in the resistance, also according to

[85] Minoranze linguistiche e resistenza: Friuli-Venezia Giulia, Italia, Europa : Atti del Convegno : Udine, 8 e 9 maggio 2008.
[86] Matteo Petracci, *Partigiani d'oltremare. Dal Corno d'Africa alla Resistenza italiana* (Pacini Editore, 2020).
[87] Andrea Martocchia, *I partigiani jugoslavi nella Resistenza italiana. Storie e memorie di una vicenda ignorata* (Odradek, 2011).

geographical region.[88] For instance, the *Movimento femminile della democrazia Cristiana* examined the role of Catholic women in resistance activities.[89]

This decentralisation of archives in Italy also allowed archival institutions focusing on several other aspects of the resistance to flourish. An archive dedicated to the filmography of the resistance was established in Turin in 1965. Paolo Gobetti, who participated along with his mother Ada Gobetti in the resistance in the antifascist *Giustizia e Libertà* formations, was responsible for the idea: at the end of the film festival promoted for the twentieth anniversary of the resistance, the latter decided to start collecting and preserving the films that had been presented at the festival. Thus, the National Film Archive of the resistance project was formally founded in February 1966.[90] Around the same time, the first documentary focusing on the role of women in the resistance was released: Liliana Cavani's documentary *La donna nella Resistenza* was made for *Radiotelevisione italiana* (RAI) in 1965.

Furthermore, several conferences from the 1970s and onwards examined the roles and motivations of women in the resistance more thoroughly beyond essentialised narratives of victimhood and sacrificial motherhood. For example, a conference focusing on the participation of women in the resistance took place in 1978 in Pisa.[91] In the 1990s, within the broader context of Italian historiography examining the intra-state violence between Italians, conferences started focusing on the progression from fascism to the resistance; in 1998, a conference in Bondeno examined the opposition of women to the fascist regime and later their participation in the resistance.[92] From the 1990s until the present day, several conferences focused on the role of women in the resistance in specific geographical regions, largely organised by the institutes responsible for the memory of the resistance in each region, further facilitating the focus on local particularities.[93]

Yet, as is the case in France, many books remain largely descriptive, providing testimonies by former female resisters without a more thorough analysis of the social meaning behind these gender-specific activities and the instrumentalisation of their gender or the memorial afterlives of

[88] For instance, Luisa and Sega, *Tra La Città Di Dio e La Città Dell'Uomo.*
[89] Movimento femminile della democrazia Cristiana, *Donne cristiane nella resistenza* (Condividi, 1956).
[90] For more: Archivio Nazionale Cinematografico della Resistenza, "Chi Siamo," https://ancr.to.it/chi-siamo/.
[91] Donne e resistenza: atti del convegno: Pisa, 19 giugno 1978.
[92] Donne contro: protagonismo delle donne e soggettività femminile tra guerra, fascismo e resistenza: atti del convegno Bondeno, 10 marzo 1995.
[93] For instance: Istituto varesino per la storia dell'Italia contemporanea e del movimento di liberazione, e Luigi Baggiani, *Mezzo secolo fa: guerra e resistenza in provincia di Varese* (Milano: Angeli, 1995); Tempesta, Lisa. *Storie di donne in guerra e nella Resistenza atti del Convegno Provincia di Treviso, sala Bruno Marton, 8 e 15 marzo 2005*. Treviso: ISTRESCO, 2006.

their gendered resistance.[94] Their resistance experience is described without paying attention to gender as an identity marker, with the need to expose the gendered system of politics and the discourses behind it. For example, Anna M. Bruzzone, and Rachele Farina's book provides testimonies by twelve former female resisters from Piedmont.[95] The testimonies provide a window into the experiences of these women and remain extremely valuable to understanding the participation of women in the resistance. Nonetheless, much less attention has been paid to how their gender became instrumental in several activities throughout the war or how women experienced/gave meaning to their experience as a gendered phenomenon. Indeed, this instrumentalisation was present in activities where women played on the gender stereotype to deceive, pass, and transfer information, guns, and ammunition. Women who, in their large majority, acted as *staffette* appropriated certain stereotypes related to their gender to successfully carry out their responsibilities. Moreover, what was conceived as a woman's duty, simply being a caring human-being and taking care of the household, was also instrumentalised to demand various concessions from the occupying and collaborative authorities. Indeed, previously non-political roles were transformed into ones with a political meaning, carrying a risk, and hence, prone to reprisals by the occupiers and their local collaborators. The rather descriptive narrative vis-à-vis the participation in the resistance obscures, at times, the transgressive nature of these gendered acts in terms of challenging the gender norms of the time.[96] Yet these aspects are rarely examined in a thorough way by drawing upon gender theory and placing them within a broader historiography of gender, insurgencies, and social movements.[97]

The historiography regarding the participation of women in the Greek resistance is more recent and less developed, primarily through the work of three historians.[98] Prior to the 1980s/1990s, even though several works focusing on the Greek resistance contained

---

[94] For instance: Ilenia Rossini, *Un fiore che non muore. La voce delle donne nella Resistenza italiana* (Red Star Press, 2022).

[95] Anna M. Bruzzone, and Rachele Farina, *La Resistenza taciuta. Dodici vite di partigiane piemontesi* (Bollati Boringhieri, 2016).

[96] Based upon Houri Berberian, "Gendered Narratives of Transgressive Politics: Recovering Revolutionary Rubina," in *Age of Rogues: Rebels, Revolutionaries and Racketeers at the Frontiers of Empires*, ed. Ramazan Hakkı Öztan, and Alp Yenen (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2021), 57.

[97] One exemption that thoroughly examines these instrumentalisation of feminine symbolics to pass concerns Juliette Pattinson's book on women working for the SOE in occupied countries: Juliette Pattinson, *Behind Enemy Lines: Gender, Passing and the Special Operations Executive in the Second World War,* Cultural History of Modern War Series (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2007).

[98] Τασούλα Βερβενιώτη, *Η γυναίκα της Αντίστασης*; Τασούλα Βερβενιώτη, *Διπλό Βιβλίο: Η Αφήγηση της Σταματίνας Μπαρμπάτση* (Αθήνα: Κουκίδα, 2017); Τασούλα Βερβενιώτη, Γραφές γυναικών για τον ελληνικό Εμφύλιο: οι συλλογικές μνήμες και η αμνησία *σε Η Εποχή της Σύγχυσης: Η Δεκαετία του '40 και η Ιστοριογραφία* (Αθήνα: Εστία, 2008); Poulos, *Arms and the Woman*; Poulos, "Politiques d'égalité des sexes après la Résistance : repenser le pouvoir dans la Grèce en guerre civile" im *La Résistance à l'épreuve du genre*; Hart, *New Voices in the Nation*; Hart, "Women in the Greek Resistance: National Crisis and Political Transformation," *International Labor and Working-Class History*, no. 38 (1990): 46–62, doi:10.1017/S014754790001019X.

references to women's involvement, the role of women in it was absorbed into the general discussion of the resistance as a movement.[99] For example, there are several references in the memoirs of well-known resistance male cadres of the 'adartissa' (trans. female partisan), about which there is little or no commentary. Kostis Karagiorgis, a leading member of the Communist Party of Greece (KKE) and a former partisan, in his journal, refers briefly to the participation of women in the EAM.[100]

Since the 1980s and 1990s, several authors have attempted to fill the gap in the understanding of women's engagement in resistance. Janet Hart and Tasoula Vervenioti have filled this gap through the consultation of primary sources, including conducting interviews during the 1990s of former resisters and female partisans. Vervenioti's book on the women of the resistance, published in 1994, provides a thorough sociological analysis of the phenomenon, starting from women's position in Greek society in the 1920s.[101] In the vein, Janet Hart's book on the participation of women in the Greek resistance describes how women's lives were affected by the resistance, expanding its focus post-war until 1964.[102] Margaret Poulos' book *Arms and the Woman: Just Warriors and Greek Feminist Identity* also dedicates a chapter to the participation of women in EAM and *Ethnikos Laikos Apeleutherotikos Stratos* (ELAS-Greek People's Liberation Army) with references to the women "warriors", examining more thoroughly the narratives surrounding the female partisans.[103] Moreover, Peter Chimbo's article provides a brief historical and sociological examination of Greek women's resistance operations against the Axis powers.[104] Yet several aspects of the Greek resistance remain understudied to the present day. An issue concerns the lack of a specific focus on ethnicity and race. Within this context, race/ethnicity related questions, and the marginalisation of certain groups in Greek society prior to the resistance have not been adequately addressed, let alone gender/race intersections. However, to understand women's involvement in EAM/ELAS, we need to first understand how certain marginalised groups that participated in the resistance and identified with other religious/linguistic/ethnic categorisations, in times along with their Greek identity, decided to join the ranks of EAM. For instance, in Athens, Rum refugees, residents of refugee areas (prosfigikes perioches) such as Kokkinia, Kaisariani, Nea Ionia, who were seen less as

[99] Peter D. Chimbos, "Women of the 1941-44 Greek Resistance against the Axis: An Historical and Sociological Perspective," *Atlantis* 28, no. 1 (2003): 28.
[100] Margarite Poulos, *Arms and the Woman: Just Warriors and Greek Feminist Identity* (Columbia, 2010), 179.
[101] Βερβενιώτη, *Η γυναίκα της Αντίστασης.*
[102] Janet Hart, *New Voices in the Nation: Women and the Greek Resistance, 1941-1964* (Cornell University Press, 1996).
[103] Poulos, *Arms and the Woman,* Chapter 4.
[104] Chimbos, "Women of the 1941-44 Greek Resistance against the Axis."

Greeks (called Turkish seeds) in comparison to "natives" (gigeneis/ntopioi) when they first arrived from Turkey as a result of the Greco-Turkish War (1919–1922), were some of the most active members in EAM in refugee areas.[105] Moreover, refugee women, due to the dire economic and living conditions they experienced upon their arrival from Turkey, had to enter the workforce in large numbers earlier than the bourgeois "native" Greek women and, therefore, this prior politicisation and involvement in the working-class struggle had an impact on their resistance activities- with some having formed a class consciousness already before the war.[106] Equally, Slavophone minorities in North Greece became active in EAM and were also marginalised in the Greek political arena prior to the war. As Janet Hart explains, this active participation in the ranks of EAM of linguistic/religious/ethnic minorities or other communities that felt marginalised 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 these marginalised groups, including women and refugees.[107] Even though it goes beyond the aim of this thesis to examine the participation in the resistance of previously marginalised groups based on their ethnic or/and linguistic characteristics, it is evident that an intersectional analysis is necessary to better understand women's participation in EAM as their only means to escape their previously marginalised status.[108]

The Greek case remains understudied compared to the Italian and French cases for reasons also related to the Civil War and the communist defeat and their impact on historiography. Research on EAM was hindered by the portrayal of its members as 'traitors/spies on the service of the Soviets' by the right-wing post-Civil War state. Moreover, unlike Italy, there are no studies examining women's involvement based on i.e., different geographical regions (with the exception of one focusing on women's testimonies from Florina, North Greece)[109] as is the case in Italy and much less in France or i.e., focusing on women's religious dogma as an identity marker and how this might have interfered with their participation in the resistance.[110] Moreover, women's participation in groups other than

[105] Based on Chatzitheodorou, "Ilektra Apostolou," 22-51.
[106] Margarite Poulos' recent book examines this intersection of refugeehood, gender and revolutionary subjectivity: Margarite Poulos, *Refugee to Revolutionary: A Transnational History of Greek Communist Women in Interwar Europe* (Vanderbilt University Press, 2024).
[107] Hart, *New Voices in the Nation*, 103.
[108] This paragraph is largely based on Chatzitheodorou, "Ilektra Apostolou," 22-51.
[109] Γεωργία Κηπουροπούλου, *Μαρτυρίες γυναικών της Φλώρινας στην εθνική αντίσταση (1941-1944) Η σημασία της συμμετοχής τους στη διαμόρφωση της εθνικής και της έμφυλης ταυτότητάς τους* (Ηρόδοτος, 2019).
[110] Overstressing the religious affiliation of these women also demonstrates how such identities were either overstressed or imposed post-war for various memory-related reasons. In Italy, for example, by highlighting the Catholic identity marker of its participants, such studies also wished to re-appropriate the post-resistance myth, which was primarily communist/socialist/left-wing. In Italy, the 'antifascist' identity included a wide

EAM remains unexamined.[111] For instance, the participation of women in the right-wing all-female organisation Spitha,[112] or the other organisations such as the *Ethnikos Dimokratikos Ellinikos Sindesmos* (EDES - National Republican Greek League) have not received any attention in comparison to women's involvement in the communist-led National Liberation Front, for reasons also associated with the politicised nature of the resistance and its legacy, which since the 1980s has justifiably been reappropriated as the legacy of the Left.[113] In that sense, both due to my positionality as a Greek national whose knowledge of the Greek resistance remains much more profound compared to the Italian and French cases and due to the comparatively understudied topic of women's participation in the resistance in Greece, my research makes a greater contribution to Greek historiography compared to Italian and French historiographies. Moreover, especially by approaching the Greek case study from a comparative perspective, I demonstrate the much more radical character of the Greek communist-led resistance regarding the mobilisation of young women in the ranks of EAM and the challenging of gender norms in 1930s/1940s Greek society.

Overall, despite the increased number of publications related to female's participation in the resistance movements, comparative studies continue to be rather scarce. An edited anthology by Douzou and Yusta Mercedes that addresses a range of interconnected topics relating to gendered resistance, such as the gendered memories of the resistance or the gender-specific character of the resistance activities, is one of the few exceptions. The edited volume focused on the roles and activities of women in the antifascist struggle between 1936 and 1949 in several countries of the European South, including France, Italy, Spain, Greece, and Algeria. Despite different sociopolitical contexts, the comprised volume demonstrates the existing similarities in the examined case studies on the basis of gender. This transnational volume, which comprises several articles focusing on different aspects of the resistance, argues that gender was central in the way women engaged

range of people, including devoted Catholics and liberals, while the left-wing as an identity marker did not necessarily clash with the Catholic.

[111] I presented a paper related to the topic in a conference held in Antwerp in September 2024: Christina Chatzitheodorou, "Resistance & Contested Memories: The Resistance of all-female group Spitha in Occupied Athens (1941-1944) and the Post-War Oblivion," Changing Perspectives on Resistance during the Second World War, *University of Antwerp.*

[112] Spitha in various publications emphasised the need for women to remain away from politics. In one of its proclamations, it mentions, "Today, Spitha works ethnically, always quietly, modestly, working for Greece, because "everything for Greece" is its motto. Again, *far from politics because its members distrust it*." see more: 'Γυναίκες και Πολιτική', Γυναικεία Οργάνωση Σπίθα, Αθήνα, Ιούλιος 31, 1945, Αρχείο Σπίθα, Γενικά Αρχεία του Κράτους. In a conversation with the niece of Loukia Metaksa, Ioanna Phoca, the latter told me that women in SPITHA decided to stay away from politics due to the distrust they had towards them. From the documents I examined during my fieldwork, it appears that Loukia Metaxa, the niece of the dictator Ioannis Metaxas, who founded Spitha, wished to continue the work of Spitha post-war, although she repeated a non-politics clause for the organisation.

[113] Regardless of one's opinion's if these organisations should be classified as resistance ones, the examination of women in them can reveal important insights about the impact on the formation of identity.

in the resistance and antifascist activities, how they were represented, the narratives, and their gender-specific experiences.[114] However, an important gap in the literature concerns the lack of comparative studies, largely because of language barriers (particularly the small number of scholars speaking Greek).[115]

Sources

This thesis will focus on both primary sources and secondary literature. Women's participation in the resistance will be investigated through a comparative analysis by focusing on extensive archival records and other primary sources (memoirs, autobiographies, diaries, newspapers, oral history recordings) in Greece, Italy, and France, and secondary sources in English, Greek, French and Italian. For the purposes of this thesis which aims to examine the gendered resistance both as a Second World event and a site of memory, I have consulted and used a variety of sources, spanning from Second World War documents and clandestine press, archived oral testimonies, post-war interviews, along with autobiographies and personal memoirs by former resisters. During my three and a half years of research, I visited various archival institutions in the three countries, where I largely consulted archival documents, clandestine press, and post-war articles and various personal testimonies on and by former resisters. First, in Greece, I visited the Social and Contemporary History Archives (ASKI), along with the Educational Centre of the KKE "Ch. Florakis", where most of the archives I eventually used were located. I also visited the General Archives of the State, Hellenic Historical and Literary Archive (ELIA), Benaki Museum, and the Diplomatic and Historical Archives Service in the Ministry of External Affairs, all located in Athens. I also visited the ELIAS' branch in Thessaloniki, North Greece, where I consulted Maria Beikou's oral interview with the historian Vervenioti. In France, I visited the Contemporaine, the National Archives, the Campus Condorcet, the Bibliothèque Marguerite Durand, the Bibliothèque Nationale de France, and the Service Historique de la Defense, all located in Paris. Most of the archives I used were located in Contemporaine, while I was able to consult clandestine press online through Gallica, the digital library of the Bibliothèque nationale de France. In Italy, I visited various cities as almost each city in the North has its own institute dedicated to the study of resistance. I began my research in the city of Milan, where I visited the Istituto Nazionale Ferrucio Parri, and the Unione Femminile Nazionale. In Turin, I visited Istituto piemontese per la storia

[114] Douzou and Mercedes, "Introduction" in *La Résistance à l'épreuve du genre,* 9.
[115] This paragraph is largely based on my review of the book : Christina Chatzitheodorou (2025), "La Résistance à l'épreuve Du Genre: Edited by Laurent Douzou and Mercedes Yusta. Rennes: Presses Universitaires de Rennes, 2018, 250 Pp, Paperback, 25.00 €, ISBN 978 2 7535 7568 4." National Identities, June, 1–4. doi:10.1080/14608944.2025.2515759.

della Resistenza e della società contemporanea "Giorgio Agosti" (ISTORETO). In Rome, I visited Unione Donne Italiane. For the case of Italy too, I was able to consult clandestine press online through the *Banca dati della stampa clandestina italiana 1943-1945,* an initiative of the Istituto Nazionale Ferrucio Parri. I have extensively consulted and used clandestine press from all three countries. Unlike post-war testimonies and personal memoirs, the clandestine press has the great advantage of being close to the time of the narrated events, while at the same time, they were published by people who were either directly involved or by witnesses who were at the spot.[116] For the biographies of most women in France and Italy, I have consulted the online platform *Le Maitron*, the name for a collection of biographical dictionaries on the labour movement in France and the site of ANPI for the case of Italy.

Moreover, I have used various post-war personal memoirs for each country. Personal testimonies, including personal memoirs, offer a window into everyday experiences and emotions, and they are used to reconstruct the subjective experience of the resisters to the extent that this is possible. As Penny Summerfield argued regarding oral testimonies by women who participated in the British war effort during the Second World War, such sources can shed light on the effects of wartime experience and their subjective sense of themselves as women, and hence, gendered subjects.[1] Given my double reading of personal memoirs and autobiographies as sites of memory, for clarity reasons, I have provided in a footnote *when* the first editions of these personal memoirs appeared in the cases I used a later version. I particularly examined the following memoirs for France's case: Charlotte Delbo, *Auschwitz et après I : Aucun de nous ne reviendra* (Minuit Double, 1970), Marie-José Chombart de Lauwe, *Toute une vie de résistance* (POP'COM , 2002),[117] Marie-José Combart de Lauwe, *Resister Toujours* (Flammarion, 2015), Élisabeth Rioux Quintenelle, [Marianne], *La guerre sans arme* (Editions de Belledonne, 1996), Madeleine Riffaud, *On l'appelait Rainer* (Paris: Editions Julliard, 1994), Giséle Guillemot & Samuel Humez, *Résistante : Mémoires d'une Femme de la Résistance à la Deportation* (Editions Michel Lafon, 2009), Cécile Ouzoulias Romagon, *J'étais agent de liaison FTPF*, ouvrage réalisé avec la collaboration de Raymond Lavigne (Paris : Editions Messidor, 1988), Rosemonde Pujol, *Nom de guerre Colinette 1941-1944* (De l'Armançon, 2003), Agnès Humbert, *Resistance: Memoirs of Occupied France*, trans. Barbara Melhor, afterward by Julien Blanc (Bloomsbury: London, 2008),[118] Marie-Madeleine Fourcade, *Noah's Arch*, trans. Kenneth Morgan (New York : E.P. Dutton &

[116] Joseph Baumgartner, "Newspapers as Historical Sources," *Philippine Quarterly of Culture and Society* 9, no. 3 (1981): 256, http://www.jstor.org/stable/29791732.
[117] First edition in 1998.
[118] Her diary was first published in French in 1946.

Company, Inc, 1974),[119] Lucie Aubrac, *Ils partiront dans l'ivresse : : Lyon, mai 43, Londres, février 44* (Paris : Seuil, 1984) , Jeanne Bohec, *La plastiqueuse à bicyclette* (Éditions du Félin : Paris, 2022),[120] Geneviève de Gaulle, *La traversée dans la nuit* (Seuil, 1998), Lise London, *La Mégère de la rue Daguerre. Souvenirs de résistance* (Paris : Éditions du Seuil, 1995), Raymonde Tillon, *J'écris ton nom, Liberté* (éditions du félin, 2002). For Greece, I read the following memoirs : Μαρία Καρρά, Επονίτισσα *: στους δρόμους και στις γειτονιές της Αθήνας* (Αθήνα: Δωρικός, 1982), Μαργαρίτα Κωστάκη, *Μια ζωή γεμάτη αγώνες* (Αθήνα: Σύγχρονη Εποχη, 1987), Σούλα Καρανίκα, *Για Μία Νέα Ζωή* (Αθήνα: Σύγχρονη Εποχή, 1984), Φανή-Μανωλκίδου Βέττα, *Θα σε λέμε Ισμήνη* (Φιλίστωρ, 1997), Τιτίκα Παναγιωτίδου-Γκλέντη, *Γνωριμία με τις Αντάρτισσες* (Κατερίνη: Εκδόσεις D.E.A Κατερίνη, 1981), Δέσποινα Φούκα-Ρέζε*, Οργισμένα Χρόνια: Αφήγημα* (Λαμία, 1994), Πηνελόπη Ρίγγα, *Η Αντιστασιακή μου Ιστορία* (Αθήνα: Έκδοση της Κίνησης « Η Γυναίκα στην Αντίσταση», 1984), Πετρούλα Νικολοπούλου, *Μία Επονίτισσα Θυμάται* (Χρονικό της Αντίστασης) (Αθήνα, 1984), Μαρία Μπέικου, *Αφού με Ρωτάτε, Να Θυμηθώ* (Αθήνα: Καστανιώτης, 2010). Last, for Italy I examined the following memoirs: Iste Cagossi, *da piccola italiana a partigiana combattente* (S.T.E.M., 1976), Marisa Ombra, *La bella politica: La Resistenza, "Noi donne", il femminismo* (Torino: SEB 27, 2009), Vera Sacchi, *Io non sto a guardare: Memorie di una partigiana femminista,* a cura di Rosangela Pesenti (Manni editore, 2015), Ada Gobetti, *Partisan Diary: A Woman's Life in the Italian Resistance,* trans. Jomarie Alano (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014),[121] Giovanna Zangrandi, *I Giorni Veri, 1943-1945* (Editore Mondadori,1963), Lidia Menapace, *Io, Partigiana: La Mia Resistenza*(Manni Editore, 2014?2015?),[122] Cesarina Bracco, *la staffetta garibaldina*, presentazione di Luigi Longo (Istituto per la Storia della Resistenza in provincia di Vercelli Borgosesia, 1976), Ida d'Este, *Croce Sulla Schiena* ((Verona: Cierre Edizioni, 2018),[123] Elsa Oliva, *Ragazza Partigiana* (Firenze: La Nuova Italia, 1974), Joyce Lussu, *Portrait* (Roma: L'Asino d'oro, 2012), Mimma Rolla, *La Mia Resistenza: Memorie e riflesioni di una partigiana, a cura di Bianca LENA* (Edizioni Giacch'e, 2018), [124] Onorina Brambilla Pesce, *Il pane bianco* (Varese:

[119] First published in French in 1968.
[120] First published in 1975.
[121] I used the translated edition of Ada Gobetti's diary. The first Italian version appeared in 1956.

[122] Lidia Menapace's case is interesting since she has written various memoirs on her resistance experience apart from the one examined in this thesis. For more: Lidia Menapace Brisca Bolzano, *Memorie clandestine (*Centro di cultura dell'Alto Adige,1964); *Resisté: racconti e riflessioni di una donna che ancora resiste* (Milano: Il dito e la luna, 2001). I was unfortunately unable to consult them due to the restricted time for archival fieldwork.
[123] First published in 1953.
[124] First published in 1988.

Edizione Arterigere, 2010), and Rina Chiarini and Remo Scappini, *Ricordi della Resistenza* (Cooperativa editografica Toscana, 1974).

Meanwhile, while I was able to listen to some archived oral testimonies by former resisters in both France and Italy, I ended up not using any of the information collected. This is related to various logistical problems, i.e., my absence from the UK.[125] Besides, to properly engage with oral history interviews, I would have had to listen and re-listen to the interviews to remember, correct any factual inaccuracies or to just properly situate my source while writing my thesis. Due to the aforementioned reasons, however, this was deemed impossible. This was not applicable to Greece, which I was able to visit multiple times throughout my research, as I was born and raised in Athens. For that reason, in the case of Greece, I listened to Maria Beikou's interview various times and, as a result, I was able to incorporate interesting material from her interview.

While oral testimonies and post-war written testimonies uniquely offer a window into everyday experiences and emotions and how women engage with their past selves, they are essentially a subjective retelling of lived experience, and these narrations will be further contextualised by using newspapers and organisational archives. Taking into account the space limits of this thesis, it goes beyond the scope of this section to thoroughly examine the benefits and limitations of each source. Therefore, acknowledging that all of them present us with both opportunities and limitations and that each of these source types can be interpreted in different ways, depth will be achieved by properly situating and integrating them.

Overview of Chapters

This thesis has followed both a thematic analysis, examining the different themes that emerged throughout this study, and a case-by-case approach where this was more suitable. The first chapter introduces the frameworks which underlie the conceptual underpinnings that have informed my research. My research draws on a growing body of literature on women and war, gender history and theory, the Second World War, anticolonial wars and antiimperialist struggles, and more recent social movements, particularly in the Middle East.[126] The literature on the Egyptian Revolution of January 25 and more broadly the so-

[125] Due to my immigration status in the UK, I was able to stay outside the UK for only six months within a twelve-month period, which, given the comparative nature of my fieldwork, was anything but enough. This did not allow me enough time to properly engage with oral archived interviews.

[126] Patterns of participation of women in the European anti-fascist movements during the Second World War can be identified in insurgencies and liberation movements in the Global South upon which this thesis has built upon. For instance, several publications discuss the history of the South Vietnamese women who, together with their northern sisters, fought for the National Liberation Front against the Saigon regime and the American imperialist administration. Even though males made up the great majority of soldiers in the country's various conflicts, there were women warriors in Vietnam during almost a half-century of conflict,

called Arab Uprisings has examined various important links between protest, public space, and gendered politics and has been crucial in shaping my argument and approach. Chapter 1 provides the conceptual framework upon which I build my approach in analysing the resistance, its legacy, and its memorialisation as influenced by gender, documenting systems of gender and gender relations in the specific historical moment of the Second World War resistance.

Chapter 2 provides the historical and political background of 1920s/1930s France, Greece, and Italy. It is important to establish a historical and political framework that informed women's participation in the resistance movements, even if it is brief. For better clarity, the chapter follows a case-by-case analysis, recognising the different positioning of women within the three respective countries. The chapter also examines the traditions of gendered molisation within the left in the 1920s/1930s before the war. One limitation of this chapter, due to the time and space limits of this thesis, is the absence of a more nuanced intersectional analysis and the close attention to local particularities. Unfortunately, also due to the comparative nature of this thesis, it was impossible to have an exhaustive analysis of women's lives and how other social categorisations, such as race, ethnicity, refugee status among others, informed their participation in the resistance. Some useful insights for further research are provided nonetheless regarding those issues that could further provide more nuance in the literature surrounding women's participation in the resistance, and in the resistance more broadly.

Chapter 3 focuses on the different narratives that facilitated women's involvement in the resistance struggle in each country; the resistance was a patriotic war, which, in turn, influenced the narratives and discourses behind women's call-to-arms.[127] To highlight the national specificity, I follow a case-by-case analysis in this chapter as well. However, I also highlight the similarities observed during my research. In all three countries, the invocation of collective national memories became a frame where women based their involvement in the resistance. Especially in France and Greece, narratives on previous female engagement in national struggles became a point of reference for the resistance movements, and the French and Greek revolutions respectively, were discursively used to mobilise more women

and the tradition dates back to the country's founding. See more: Sandra C. Taylor, *Vietnamese Women at War: Fighting for Ho Chi Minh and the Revolution* (Kansas: University Press of Kansas, 1999), 2.

[127] Based on Cockburn's argumentation. See more: Cynthia Cockburn, *The Space Between Us*: *Negotiating Gender and National Identities in Conflict* (London: Zed Books, 1998), 15.

to join the resistance struggle. These gendered mobilisational frames were drawn upon a history of previous national female heroisation.[128]

Chapter 4, 5 and 6 follow a thematic analysis. Through an integrated and thematic approach, these chapters that build on gender theory highlight the junctures and disjunctions between the three different cases. This integrated thematic approach provides important insights in order to examine the resistance as a gendering activity. My primary research, including mostly clandestine press, archival reports, and personal memoirs, is analysed based on literature on various themes, from gender and war to body, space, and politics. Chapter 4 specifically examines roles that aligned, more or less, with the established notions of femininity. I argue that, in their majority, women were mobilised by following a gendered trajectory, undertaking activities that extended their traditional roles as mothers and housewives. Yet the context of war and occupation sourced these 'traditional' roles and activities with a political meaning. These previously nonpolitical activities acquired political significance. This was confirmed by the risk that accompanied these roles and activities, which, in turn, manifested women's creative agency in making a political choice to join the struggle – even if they were "caught up" in it.

Chapter 5 analyses how women were also able to appropriate their gender and the internalised ideas about women and womanhood to their advantage, drawing information from a variety of sources such as the clandestine press and personal memoirs. The first section has also built upon various secondary literature that focuses on links between protest, public space, and gendered politics, especially the protests that took place during the so-called Arab Spring. In all three cases, women participated in activities in the public space, protesting the war and occupation, the harsh conditions that came along with it, and the prosecution that followed the participation in the resistance. Women experienced the resistance as an embodied activity. Yet these experiences of embodiment in the resistance were gendered. Many of the demands of the protests were closely related to women's traditional responsibilities as housewives and mothers. Due to my personal interest in the Arab world and anticolonial and liberation struggles in the Middle East including Turkey and Kurdistan, my research has been greatly influenced by literature examining these regions. Gülsüm Baydar's work "Embodied spaces of resistance" about women's resistance in Turkey during the Gezi movement in 2013, Nisa Göksel's work "Gendering Resistance: Multiple Faces of the Kurdish Women's Struggle" on Kurdish women and the different modes of engagement in the resistance along with Maha El Said, Lena Meari and Nicola Pratt's

[128] Based largely on Poulos, *Arms and the Woman*, 177.

book *Rethinking Gender in Revolutions and Resistance: Lessons from the Arab World* in reconceptualising the revolutions and social movements in the Arab world through gendered lenses were all crucial in shaping my overall approach and narrative. Without their valuable contributions examining women's resistance and role in the social movements in various parts of the world, this thesis would have lacked on an analytical level. The second section of chapter 5 examines how women used their gender to 'pass' between the lines, by taking advantage of the ideas and stereotypes that largely saw women as non-dangerous and non-political. I largely built upon Juliette Pattinson's phenomenal work, where she examined how the female members of the Special Operations Executive (SOE) used their gender to pass.

Chapter 6 focuses on the figure of female partisan. Through a close reading of post-war personal testimonies, I examine the narratives surrounding the female partisan figure, paying closer attention to this small minority of women who participated in combat operations alongside men. I examine the use of female partisan figure as a source of propaganda rather than an actual representation of the multiple experiences of female resistance. I also build upon Judith Butler's work, where she introduces how new gendered lives are formed, to examine how the female partisan represents a new gendered life. To examine the female partisan figure as a replica of a new gendered life, I have drawn upon a variety of sources, from clandestine newspapers and post-war testimonies and pieces to a limited number of photos. I used the photos to highlight my argument, but I have not delved into a close reading of the three photos provided in the chapter. Further research could analyse the various photos of female partisans existing in all three countries and the construction of narratives around them.

Chapter 7 and 8 examine the resistance as a site of memory rather than a national war of liberation. This double reading of the resistance both as a national liberation war where women's participation was informed by their gender and as a site of memory, where the politics of memory and location influenced the resistance's gendered legacy, provides important insights into women's gendered memories. Given that most sources on women's participation in the resistance emerged since the 1970s and onwards, the sources used in this thesis, to their majority, excluding clandestine press and a few archival documents, are informed by memory. Chapter 7 provides a brief examination of the politics of memory in each country with some insights regarding gender-specific legacies, following a country-by-country chronological analysis. Providing this context is crucial before looking into women's resistance memories through their writing. To provide this necessary framework

upon which my double reading of memoirs will take place, I draw on a body of research already conducted in each country in the topic of resistance memory.

Chapter 8 focuses on personal memoirs, exploring how women's recollections have been shaped after the war, impacted by counternarratives, public and collective memory, and discursive changes based on their different positionalities and trajectories post-war. This chapter, as an idea, was conceived towards the end of this thesis as a result of the extensive use of personal memoirs and I consider much of the contribution innovative regarding how personal memoirs by women resisters can be read as sites of memory. I follow a thematic approach, hoping to provide some insights regarding the different strategies employed by former female resisters to write about their resistance experience in the first person. Two works were crucial in the approach followed in this chapter. Both Mildred Mortimer's work on personal memoirs of women fighters in the Algerian anticolonial struggle and liberation war and Fatma Kassem's work on Palestinian women's memory prompted me to see women's personal testimonies of the resistance as a form of political intervention, where women become a historical subject.[129] Building on their work, I also follow the same approach to understanding the writing of personal memoirs by former female resisters as an intervention against women's erasure or/and marginalisation from history and memory of the Second World War resistance.

In the conclusion, I provide some remarks on my positionality as a subject and how this thesis was shaped and altered in three and a half years of its writing. I consider this important as both the topic of this research and its content were greatly influenced by my politics and involvement and broader interest in the radical struggles. In that sense, focusing on communist/socialist/left wing resistances was a political choice, seeing the resistance not solely as a defence against illegal occupation, but also as a revolutionary struggle to alter society. Further, the resistance is understood as a symbol for revolutionary action that shaped the resistance's memory and legacy, which also influenced my construction of political subjectivity through my involvement in the left-wing radical movement in Greece. Along with the Italian students involved in the radical movement in the 1970s that understood the resistance as fundamentally "red" (communist), I also wish to highlight EAM's resistance as a revolutionary force that became a revolutionary symbol of struggle for future generations, including mine. Last, I also provide certain directions for further research that could further examine the resistance, its legacies, and memories as gendering activities.

[129] Mildred Mortimer, *Women Fight, Women Write: Texts on the Algerian War* (London; Charlottesville; University of Virginia Press, 2018); Fatma Kassem, *Palestinian Women: Narrative Histories and Gendered Memory* (Bloomsbury Academic & Professional, 1993.

Conclusion

Three key points have emerged from this review of the literature on the participation of women in left-wing resistance movements in Greece, Italy, and France. First, traditionally, women have not received the same attention in the historiography as men, given that the majority participated in the resistance by assuming combat support roles. This lack of attention began to change in the 1970s within the context of the Second Wave of Feminism which favoured an overall reevaluation of women's place in history and in the resistance. Second, their gender was central in the modes of operations, discourses and narratives, experiences, and post-war legacies and memories of resistance.[130] Women participated in the resistance in various ways through their gender, while their memories were equally informed by their gender. Arguing that gender was essential in anti-Fascist resistance, the study will explore how women's activities and the symbolics of feminine played critical roles in both the development and patterns of mobilisation of resistance movements on several levels. They did so to carry a tactical surprise and demand concessions from the occupiers and their local collaborators by instrumentalising their feminine symbolics. A small minority of women participated in combat, and in some instances, were 'deprived' of accounts of their femininity. Third, women remembered and narrated their resistance experiences in different times and locations under different historical circumstances. The different legacies surrounding the resistance in each country had an impact on women's memories and their narrations.

It becomes apparent that the literature lacks a comparative historical study regarding the participation of women in left-wing resistance movements and post-war gendered memories to systematically establish these three points and identify alternative patterns. To fill this gap in the literature, this research will focus on the role of women in left-wing resistance movements in France, Greece, and Italy, examining the resistance both as a war of liberation and a *lieu de memoire*. The comparison will reveal patterns and national specificities in the relationship between gender and resistance, and gender and memory.

By understanding and comparing representations and the actual roles female resisters played across three different societies during the Second World War, this research will contribute to the history of resistance(s) in a transnational manner. This will be achieved by an extensive study of primary sources (archives, diaries, newspapers, archived recordings, personal memoirs). This variety of sources is interpreted in different ways depending on the context of their examination, and depth will be attained by integrating them. Moreover, the

[130] Built upon Douzou and Mercedes, "Introduction" in *La Résistance à l'épreuve du genre,* 9.

post-war production of the variety and dissemination of sources (personal memoirs, oral archived testimonies) and the impact on the gendered representations of the resistance will be examined. The findings will inform contemporary debates about the role of women in revolutionary movements and the formation of political subjectivity. Specifically, the study will improve academic understanding of women in social movements, insurgencies, and politically violent or/and revolutionary organisations since most of this literature on the topic focuses on the period from the 1960s and 1970s to today. The findings will also contribute to the field of memory and gender by focusing on post-war works of cultural production by former female resisters. The multiple discourses surrounding these gendered resistance(s), from unified, polarised and contested legacies of resistance, will be examined by placing them within the specific historical circumstances in each country. It will also examine the different ways in which these former resisters' memories of the resistance exist alongside or contradict the state-sponsored narratives of the war constructed after the liberation in each country, and the existence of counternarratives in the case of contradiction.[131]

[131] An extremely helpful study that helped me articulate my thoughts on the resistance as *lieu de memoire* and upon which I built my argument here is Natalya Vince's study on women combatants in the Algerian War of Independence: Natalya Vince, *Our Fighting Sisters: Nation, Memory and Gender in Algeria, 1954-2012* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2016), doi:10.7228/manchester/9780719091070.001.0001. See more: Ibid, 8.

Introduction

A variety of covert and clandestine organisations sprouted up across several countries in German-occupied Europe to resist Nazi power. Millions of people, including women, were motivated to oppose or combat Nazi occupation.[132] With the exclusion of the partisan movement in the Soviet Union, the various resistance movements that emerged in Europe were not a product of a state decision and their organisational form was looser than the centralisation and hierarchy of formal military institutions.[133] This thesis will focus specifically on left-wing resistance movements and the participation of women in them in France, Greece, and Italy.[134] Resistance activities depended on volunteers, an element that further facilitated the participation of women. Indeed, women's participation in all aspects of resistance activities during the Second World War became possible due to the nature of the war they became involved in. The essence of the resistance concerned the absence of boundaries vis-à-vis its battlefront. The resistance could not be located in a defined battlefront; 'the resistance front' was nowhere and everywhere at the same time. In this type of warfare, where the line between civilians and resisters/partisans/fighters was blurred, women's participation became easier.[135]

Irregular wars consist of mismatched forces, with one side pursuing this type of war out of weakness due to the numerical or technological superiority of the opponent.[136] This mismatch between the guerrillas and the authorities is related to the enemies' capabilities, modes of operation, and the organisational structure of the adversary.[137] 'The inferior side

[132] How many resisters existed remains a matter of debate, depending on how the resistance is defined. Moreover, the resistance can be seen as something more than solely a struggle against illegal occupation, and act as a revolutionary symbol to change society. In that context, the notion of 'real' resister is altered based on ideological cleavages.

[133] White, *Resistance in Europe, 1939-1945,* 15-16. See also: Jørgen Hæstrup, *Europe Ablaze: An Analysis of the History of the European Resistance Movements, 1939-45*, Vol. 55 (Odense: Odense University Press, 1975), 19-21.

[134] The identification of women in the respected case studies with left-wing ideas varies from country to country while differences also concern the class, ethnicity, and pre-war politicisation of women.

[135] Part of the difficulties in analysing women's contribution in in irregular conflict in general and in the resistance arises from the greater challenge of distinguishing civilians from fighters in this type of war. For more concerning the difficulties in distinguishing between fighters and civilians and their interconnected roles: Jessica Trisko Darden, "Assessing the Significance of Women in Combat Roles," *International Journal (Toronto)* 70, no. 3 (2015): 454.

[136] David Betz, *Carnage and Connectivity: Landmarks in the Decline of Conventional Military Power* (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2016), 13-17.

[137] Beckett, *Modern Insurgencies and Counter-Insurgencies,* 9.

has to focus on surprise, mobility, and constant harassment, while avoiding direct confrontations with the superior opponent.[138] This asymmetry also necessitates a camouflage that allows the resisters/guerrillas to survive the militarily superior opponent. In that sense, Mao's maxim written in *On Guerrilla Warfare* about the relationship between the population and the guerrillas becomes extremely relevant in the resistance, with the latter noting that "the former may be likened to water, the latter to the fish who inhabit it."[139] These under-cover resisters mixed up with the local population and passed between these invisible lines that characterised the resistance, which was vital to their survival.[140] At the same time, the support of the population was crucial for the successful outcome of the activities of the resistance fighters, which was facilitated by the national character of the war.[141] Being militarily weaker than their Nazi occupiers, resistance fighters *had to* engage in irregular warfare. To compensate for their military weakness, resistance fighters fought in the mountains and the cities, benefiting from both active and passive support of the population.

During the Second World War, both resisters and partisans engaged in a variety of activities, including 'narrow' military activities typical of any insurgency, through acts of sabotage and subversion.[142] Resistance activities also included protests and strikes, destroying occupier communications and supplies, exacting reprisals against the local collaborators with the occupiers, and launching varying-scale assaults against Axis occupation soldiers.[143] Even though the notion of guerrilla warfare is not identical to that of the 'resistance', which comprised a larger range of activities,[144] the most militarised form of resistance was that of guerrilla warfare by partisans. For the purposes of this thesis, a distinction must be made between the terms' 'resister' (antistasiakos, résistant, resistante) and partisan (antartis, partigiano, partisan*)*. The notion of 'partisan' is largely associated with guerrillas in Greece, France, and Italy fighting in the mountains, where a small minority of women also fought. As such and for the purposes of this thesis, the word 'partisan' will be

[138]Gérard Chaliand, "Guérillas et Terrorismes," *Politique Étrangère* 76, no. 2 (2011): 281, http://www.jstor.org/stable/42715902.
[139] Mao Tse-Tung, *On guerrilla Warfare*, trans. Samuel B. Griffith (Virginia: Martino Fine Books, 2017), 93.
[140] White, *Resistance in Europe 1939-1945*, 9-10.
[141] Despite the different approaches to the issue of guerrilla warfare in terms of the most appropriate venue for its conduct, theorists agree on the importance of the support of the population for the success of guerrilla warfare. Even though their observations on irregular warfare are *posterior* to the topic of this research, all theorists of irregular warfare consider the support of the population crucial to the success of the insurgency. See more: Tse-Tung, *On guerrilla Warfare*, 17, 20; Ernesto Guevara, *Guerrilla Warfare*, trans. J.P. Morray (United States: BN Publishing, 2012), 9.
[142] Ben H. Shepherd, and Juliette Pattinson, "Partisan and Anti-Partisan Warfare in German-Occupied Europe, 1939-1945: Views from Above and Lessons for the Present," *Journal of Strategic Studies* 31, no. 5 (2008): 677.
[143] Ben H. Shepherd, "Guerrillas and Counterinsurgency" in *The Cambridge History of the Second World War*, eds. John Ferris and Evan Mawdsley (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015), 690, doi:10.1017/CHO9781139855969.029.
[144]Beckett, *Modern Insurgencies and Counterinsurgencies*, 55.

used for the resisters who conducted a guerrilla war and participated in combat operations against the occupiers, while the word 'resister'/resistance fighter will be used to describe the other forms that resistance took, including protests, providing food and shelter to resisters and partisans, gathering information, and transferring guns and many more activities. It should be noted that a strict distinction between the terms and roles is not always possible, as these 'volunteers' moved between different resistance roles and activities based on operational needs, which applies to women too; yet it remains helpful in order to better examine women's resistance activities in this thesis.

Indeed, the resistance activities took many forms and were altered based on space-specific needs. The first tepid reaction that overtook European societies was replaced with the first 'small' acts of resistance. These first passive manifestations of resistance gave way to more active ones.[145] Resisters flew forbidden flags, organised demonstrations, and wrote slogans on the walls against the occupation. While the Axis powers started losing momentum in the conventional war that was taking place simultaneously, the acts of resistance became even more offensive from 1943 as a result of the optimism generated by the victory in the Battle of Stalingrad in February of the same year and onwards for the cases of Greece and France. Following Italy's capitulation in September 1943 and the consequent German occupation of central and northern Italy, also signalled the beginning of the resistance for Italy. Clandestine press increased its outputs, acts of sabotage against the occupiers, and isolated attacks on enemy soldiers and officials were among the few examples. Resistance also became better organised, encompassing a wide range of activities from the supply of intelligence to the Allies, the setting up of escape lines, along with more direct acts of assassinations, and guerrilla warfare.[146] Both crucial and necessary to this transformation of the resistance from a passive to an active and organised stance was the emergence of resistance organisations that coordinated resistance activity. Those movements were able to convert the self-sustaining gestures of an 'active' minority into a campaign based on the active or/and passive support of important sections of the population.[147]

---

[145] Prior to 1943, active resistance was undertaken by a small minority rather than the whole 'nation'. The collective myth of a universal resistance to the occupiers dominated the post-war historiographies, where Germans became the sole responsible for this war and its consequences, along with the downgrading of the extent of collaboration (i.e., for France, the collabo had represented solely *une poignée de misérables* as de Gaulle had pronounced in a radio address on October 14, 1944, following the liberation). For the French case, this exaggeration of participation in the resistance, suited both the communists and the Gaullists, while such a myth was necessary to heal the wounds left by the war. In the same pattern, in Italy, the capitulation of Italy in September 1943 became the beginning of the myth of self-liberation from the fascist rule, forgetting about the 21-year fascist period that preceded it. For more about these (necessary) myths: Χάγκεν Φλάϊσερ, *Οι Πόλεμοι της Μνήμης: Ο Β' Παγκόσμιος Πόλεμος στη Δημόσια Ιστορία* (Αθήνα: Εκδόσεις Νεφέλη, 2012), 61, 234-235, 246.

[146] White, *Resistance in Europe 1939-1945*, 9-10.

[147] Ibid.

In France, the largest left-wing resistance movements that emerged were the *Francs-Tireurs et Partisans* (Communist), the Libération-Nord, and the Libération-Sud. The selection of those three organisations is based on the political orientation, largely communist and socialist, respectively, of their political leaders and the majority of their base. The FTP was created by the *Parti Communiste Française* (PCF- French Communist Party) at the end of 1941; it brought together the previously communist and autonomous organisations of the *Organisation spéciale* (Special Organisation), les Bataillons de la jeunesse (Youth Battalions) and the 'groupes spéciaux' of Main-d'œuvre immigrée (MOI). Among the examined groups, the communist-dominated FTP was the strongest and most effective resistance group, and in February 1943, the FTP furnished nearly one-third of the maquis, the guerrilla forces operating in rural France. The Libération-Sud was formed by socialists, and it had a strong worker's presence, while supported by the *Section française de l'Internationale ouvrière* (SFIO - French Section of the Workers' International). Equally, the Libération-Nord, even though not entirely socialist at its base, had a socialist leadership. In Greece, the biggest left-wing movement was the *Ethniko Apeleutherotiko Metopo* (EAM-National Liberation Front), with various organisations under this umbrella-movement, including Ethniki Allilegguh (EA – National Solidarity) and *Eniea Panelladiki Organosi* Neon (EPON - United Panhellenic Organisation of Youth). In Italy, the CLN formations included three left-wing groups:[148] the communist *Brigate Garibaldi* (Garibaldi Brigades), the *Giustizia e Libert*à (Justice and Freedom) Brigades related to the *Partito d'Azione* (founded in 1942 by former militants of *Giustizia e Libert*à), and the socialist *Brigate Matteotti* (Matteotti Brigades). On October 1943, under the General Command of the Garibaldi Brigades, the *Gruppi di Azione Patriottica* (Patriotic Action Groups -GAP) were also formed to operate mainly in occupied cities.

This chapter will provide the theoretical background that informs this thesis. First, I will examine what constituted resistance and how its meaning was altered throughout the years to become more inclusive to encompass more activities apart from guerrilla warfare. Second, I will examine the idea of war as a gendering activity, engaging critically with the scholarship on the topic, since women largely participated in the resistance by following a gendered trajectory. Third, I will look into the incorporation of women in nationalistic projects, particularly in times of conflict, since the resistance was such a project. Indeed, women participated in the resistance not solely as gendered subjects but largely as national ones. Fourth, I will link the theory of war as a gendering activity to the notion of

[148] The CLN also included the Democrazia Cristiana (DC), the Partito Liberale Italiano (PLI), and the Partito Democratico del Lavoro (DL).

performativity. The irregular type of war, with the resistance front being everywhere and nowhere, meant that, in practice, women were transformed into potential invisible agents, able to weaponise their gender and the internalised stereotypes linked to them to their advantage in order to 'pass' and move more freely. The last part will examine in more detail the resistance movements that emerged in France, Greece, and Italy and women's participation in them.

1.1. What constituted Resistance?

A problem that emerges regarding the research on women and their participation in the resistance activities concerns the absence of a precise definition of what constitutes resistance in the scholarship. Multiple studies in all three countries have explored the notion of resistance and the activities this notion embodied. For instance, writing in 2019, Douzou notes that in France, over the years, more than 4,500 publications on the resistance have been published,[149] with the numbers continuing to increase year after year. There have been numerous comprehensive and outstanding overviews of the resistance phenomenon since the 1950s, from Henri Michel's book to the prominent resister's Lucie Aubrac summary of events.[150] These also include Olivier Wieviorka's *Histoire de la Résistance*, *1940–1945* and Robert Gildea's *Fighters in the Shadows*.[151]

However, in order to understand women's roles and contribution to the resistance movements, the term and its resignifications over the years must be explored. The historiography of the resistance until the 1970s focused on the military aspect, and, as a consequence, it included mostly men and did not facilitate the inclusion of women in the historiography.[152] Margaret Weitz explained that this invisibility of women was closely related to the definition of resistance until the 1970s, alongside the very nature of women's contribution as compared to the militarised definition of the resistance.[153] Douzou also recalled this oblivion of women's participation; this "oblivion" engulfed a wide range of groups, including women and Jews, whose actions could not be properly comprehended under the framework that perceived the resistance strictly in military terms. More specifically, before the 1970s, women's initiatives were seen as a support to the main, military, resistance that was largely reserved for men, with the few exceptions of women who assumed the role of female partisan by participating in combat operations. Giorgio

[149] Douzou, "A Perilous History," 96.
[150] Lucie Aubrac, *La Résistance (naissance et organisation*) (Paris: Robert Lang, 1945).
[151] Robert Gildea, *Fighters in the Shadows: A New History of the French Resistance* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2015); Wieviorka, *Histoire De La Résistance.*
[152] Thibault, *Les femmes et la Résistance*, 13.
[153] Weitz, *Sisters in the Resistance*, 7.

Vecchio also highlights this in relation to Italy. When referring to women's involvement in the r*esistenza*, Vecchio argues that women's role was seen as a simple contribution, inferior to that of men's military resistance and it did not receive the same attention following the war.[154] The overemphasis on military resistance excluded women from the resistance narrative since most women participated in non-combat roles.

At the same time, following the war, this perception of 'inferior' resistance led to a biased accumulation of data since non-participation in military activities denied most of these women resisters from being recognised as such. Olivier Wieviorka contends that in the aftermath of the war in France, the underrepresentation of women in portrayals of the French resistance was the result of a biased accumulation of the statistical sample. This is due to how the recognition process worked in the aftermath of the war, when the partisans were numbered by their volunteer servicemen card (*carte de combattant volontaire de la Resistance*). Following the end of the war, the majority of women were not handed these cards since they were not considered *combattants*.[155] The glaring absence of official recognition becomes evident in de Gaulle's post-war France, as for more than a thousand *Compagnons de la Libération*,[156] only six were women; the percentage of women among the medalists was ten percent, despite the thousands that became involved, reflecting this militarised definition of resistance in the early post-war years. The dividing line was drawn between a few heroines and 'exceptional' women[157] such as Danielle Casanova and Lucie Aubrac in the case of France, Irma Bandiera and Carla Capponi in Italy, Ilektra Apostolou and Sotiria Mpelou for Greece,[158]among others, and the vast majority of anonymous or less known women who participated in the resistance by assuming a variety of tasks and roles and had not already established themselves as important figures of the left prior to the war. In that respect, Maria de Blasio Wilhelm is right in arguing that such statistics are useless

[154] Giorgio Vecchio, *La Resistenza delle donne, 1943-1945* (In Dialogo, 2010), 16.
[155] Wieviorka, *Histoire De La Résistance*, 564.
[156] The Companions of Liberation were members of the Order of the Liberation. The latter was created by General Charles de Gaulle in 1940 to honour the people who had distinguished themselves in the fight for liberation. The percentage of the women awarded is disproportionally lower when compared to the thousands who participated in the resistance.
[157] Bruno Leroux, résume of conférence "Les femmes dans la Résistance en France," *Fondation de la Resistance*, https://www.fondationresistance.org/pages/rech_doc/les-femmes-dans-resistance-france_cr_lecture33.htm.
[158] I have referred to one woman who martyred during the resistance in each case (Casanova, Bandiera, Apostolou) and to one that survived the war in each country (Aubrac, Capponi, Lazarou). Certainly, martyrdom was valuable way to be recognised as a resister worth commemorating which further reinforces the idea of a mascunalised version of the resistance. These 'exceptional' women are recognised more easily as heroines and resistance fighters because of their martyrdom, which is conceived as the greatest sacrifice in the name of the nation.

when it comes to measuring women's participation in the resistance, as women participated in every aspect of it.[159]

To better understand the devaluation of role of women in the war, the notion of 'double helix' developed by Margaret and Patrice Higonnet is helpful to explain this classification of superior and inferior roles within the resistance movements. Particularly, this image permits us to understand women's position not in isolation but within a system of gender relations: "The female strand on the helix is opposed to the male strand, and position on the strand is subordinate to the position of the male strand." Hence, the activity *per se* is not what makes it inferior but rather the cultural perception of its relative value as opposed to men's roles and activities.[160] This becomes evident in the sources following the war and the narratives surrounding the female resistance. The writer Marie Paule Salonne mirrors this gendered division between heroic/non heroic acts of resistance in her book *Fends la bise: scènes du maquis breton,* where she evokes the Resistance in her region. Salonne mentions Mlle Le Calvez, who was responsible for taking care of Americans that arrived at the French shores, in Plouha, in 1944: "She had risked her life a thousand times over for them. In *a less heroic* but no less difficult domain, she had had a hard time providing them with good meals in those days of restrictions."[161] Mlle Le Calvez's act, despite risking deportation or death, was not seen as equally heroic. Yet women's activities in the resistance were, in many instances, as dangerous as 'holding a gun inflicting death' even if their contribution was classified as inferior after the war.

During the 1970s, women's position in the resistance became a valid topic for research.[162] Douzou nicely illustrates this evolution: "New approaches are linked, as we all know, to the interrogations that occupy our minds in the present time. We always interrogate the past from our position in the present, which in turn raises important questions." [163] Indeed, women's participation in the resistance was raised because of the feminist movement's theoretical preoccupations regarding the nature of gender and oppression. The perception of the resistance solely in military terms began to change, which facilitated

[159] Maria de Blasio Wilhelm*, The Other Italy: Italian Resistance in World War II* (New York: London: W.W. Norton & Company, 1988), 119.
[160] Higonnet, "Introduction" in *Behind the Lines*, 34.
[161] Marie Paule Salonne, *Fends la Bise: Scenes du Maquis Breton* (France: Editions Bloud & Gay, 1945), 29.
[162] The use of post-Second World War literature on women's participation in political violence and specifically anticolonial wars' literature has been crucial to the formation of my argument due to both my broader research interests and political engagement beyond academia. Besides, women's roles and representations in history were re-examined under the influence of May 68' during the 1960s-1970s, when women's participation and visibility in anticolonial wars in Algeria, Mozambique, Vietnam, Guinea-Bissau inevitably influenced the scholarship, with often parallelisations between the two struggles (antifascist and anticolonial), particularly in France due to the Algerian War of Independence.
[163] Douzou, "A Perilous History," 102.

women's inclusion in the resistance historiography. Along with the revaluation of what constituted resistance, women's contribution and its importance were also revaluated. The concept of resistance civile (resistenza civile in Italian historiography) emerged, which evolved to encompass the contributions of so-called "ordinary women",[164] which better illustrated the resistance of the many as opposed to the military resistance of a small minority of women. Claudio Pavone also distinguished between civil resistance and passive resistance and what he calls the grey zone in concentration camps. He describes civil resistance as "acts of support for those in need and the persecuted (soldiers, escaped allied prisoners, wounded partisans, Jews), refusal of obedience, small acts of sabotage within factories and public administration, refusal to surrender agricultural produce to official collection depots, and finally the provision of burial rites for the dead, withheld or forbidden by the German and Fascist authorities."[165] Such acts took place in all three countries. In the French case, the notion of civil resistance has been extensively used in the scholarship, which also facilitated the inclusion of women in the historiography of the resistance from the 1970s and onwards.[166] In Greece, the term 'civilian resistance' has not been widely used by historians focusing on women's participation in the Greek resistance, such as Vervenioti, Hart, and Poulos. Only Jean Loulis, in his article about the Greek resistance, used the term "civil conflicts" to highlight the variations of the resistance activities.[167]

A certain issue associated mostly with the historiography of the French resistance concerns the universalism that characterised the phenomenon of the resistance. Until the 1970s in France, the resistance is characterised as a 'whole' without paying enough attention to particularities of gender, race, and/or class. The universalism that distinguished the French resistance posed many problems in understanding the particularities that existed within it, such as the role of women.[168] Since the 1970s, research has evolved to reflect the diverse interests of the people who participated in the resistance and the different positionality from which they participated. The singularity of the resistance was replaced by the specificity and the different identities of the resisters, by referring to their class or/and gender and ethnicity in times. For instance, in a collection of essays in the edited book by Jean-Marie Guillon and

[164] Schwartz, "Partisanes and Gender Politics in Vichy France," 127, https://doi.org/10.2307/286436.
[165] Claudio Pavone, "*Les objectifs de la Résistance* : *le cas d'Italie*" dans *La Résistance et Us Français : villes, centres et logiques de décision* (Actes du Colloque international, Cachan, IHTP, 1995), 456-457.
[166] Luc Capdevila, "Résistance civile et jeux de genre : France-Allemagne-Bolivie-Argentine, Deuxième Guerre mondiale – années 1970-1980," *Annales de Bretagne et des pays de l'Ouest* 108 no. 2 (2001-2002) :109-119, DOI : 10.4000/abpo.1737, https://www.cairn.info/revue-annales-de-bretagne-et-des-pays-de-l-ouest-2001-2-page-16.htm
[167] Jean Loulis, "LA RÉSISTANCE EN GRÈCE," *Revue d'histoire de La Deuxième Guerre Mondiale et Des Conflits Contemporains* 34, no. 136 (1984): 91, http://www.jstor.org/stable/25729218.
[168] Andrieu, "Women in the French Resistance," 13.

Pierre Laborie, this 'specificity' takes different forms, from the Jewish resistance to the participation of Spaniards in the French resistance, despite not particularly focusing on the involvement of women, either in the civil resistance or its more militarised version.[169] On the matter, Andrieu argued that the absence of women in French historiography until the 1970s was not only a result of the universalism that surrounds the history of resistance in France.[170] Women's own "conservative" views regarding their contribution to the resistance further complicated the situation and affected the representation of women in the historiography. In the resistance generation, most women did not consider themselves heroines as demonstrated earlier through Marie Paule Salonne's words. Moreover, when asked by interviewers, women responded that they simply did their duty to their country. Instead of highlighting the political nature of such acts, women emphasised the morality behind them.[171]

In the immediate aftermath of the Second World War, the imposed forgetting or/and downplaying of the wartime mobilisation of women affected their self-perceptions.[172] However, what Andrieu rightfully recalled as a 'conservative view of their own contribution' emerged within a specific historical context that prioritised a militarised version of the resistance, framing women's contribution as inferior in the aftermath of the war, affecting, in turn, women's narrative and memory. Along with reevaluating what constituted resistance, women themselves were able to reevaluate their roles and contributions to the struggle, which further manifests the need to examine the resistance as a *lieu de memoire*. As Penny Summerfield explains, the social recognition offered by an audience is a necessary part of the production of memory, and the degree of continuity between the cultural values of the narrator and the audience affects the narrative produced.[173] The interpretation of women's contributions was subjected to resignifications. In Italy and France, the 1970s feminism provoked extensive discussions about women's oppression and the nature of gender, and consequently women's position in history, and in the resistance in particular.

---

[169] Jean-Marie Guillon and Pierre Laborie, *Mémoire et Histoire : Résistance* (Toulouse, Éditions Privat : 1995).

[170] Following the war, the historiography of the resistance does not only exclude women. As Thalmann argues, this tradition also helps to explain the overshadowing of the role of minorities (i.e., resistance from Jewish French women) and it is rooted in a very old tradition of nationalisation of foreign culture by assimilation to the dominant culture. See more: Thalmann, "L'oubli Des Femmes Dans l'historiographie de La Résistance," 6. This becomes evident in the Greek case study too vis-à-vis the resistance fighters of Slav Macedonian reference whose role in the resistance has been largely absent from historiography, with a few exceptions.

[171] Andrieu, "Women in the French Resistance," 16-17.

[172] Amrita Pritam Gogoi, "Nepal's posing women guerrillas: memory, subjectivity and war-time photographs," *European Bulletin of Himalayan Research* 61 (2023): 1.

[173] Penny Summerfield, *Reconstructing Women's Wartime Lives* (Manchester: New York: Manchester University Press, 1998), 23.

Women began to reevaluate their contribution when ideas of what constituted resistance had become broader to include non-military actions, and by extension, the historiography of the resistance became more inclusive for its female participants. This social recognition of their contributions led to various studies that examined the different aspects of the resistance, while reevaluating women's creative agency and choice to accept the risks associated with their actions.

This revaluation of the resistance meant that many of the roles previously seen as auxiliary/secondary/inferior/less heroic or described as passive resistance were open to resignification of their value. Women's roles in the resistance included many of their traditional roles. Many of these actions initially were spontaneous and within the domestic space and responsibilities traditionally associated with women (providing shelter to a wanted partisan, cooking for partisans and resisters, providing clothing for partisans in the mountains, collecting medical supplies for the partisans), and hence, these acts had not been considered resistance or equally heroic immediately after the war. Their contribution was usually framed under the idea of a 'sacrificial motherhood' and aligned with what was conceived as women's natural inclinations and responsibilities. In that sense, many of their acts were framed under a narrative of compassion (i.e., protesting for better treatment of prisoners or helping a partisan because they also "had a son"), because they were associated with family members or family responsibilities (a sacrificial motherhood), or a woman's 'nature' (asking for an increase in food rations for children), which was largely anticipated by women. However, these deemed as "compassionate" acts led to reprisals from the occupiers and their collaborators and were sourced with political significance due to the context of war and occupation.

Therefore, to understand what constituted resistance and who was a resistance fighter, the notion of 'resistance fighter' should be examined in view of what constituted resistance in the eyes of the occupiers and their collaborators. Indeed, as Kristal Alfonso writes, women who provided shelter to someone wanted by the Gestapo or more broadly the occupying authorities and their local collaborators, such as a political refugee, a Jew, an Allied pilot, or a resistance fighter/partisan, risked death or deportation if detected, with several of them actually being killed or sent to camps.[174] For instance, in 1941, Otto von Stulpnagel, the commander of the German armed forces in occupied France, declared that anyone who helped allied airmen would be shot and that women guilty of similar acts would

[174] Kristal L. M. Alfonso, *The Female Fighters of World War II in Femme Fatale: An Examination of the Role of Women in Combat and the Policy Implications for Future American Military Operations* (Air University Press, 2009), 16.

be deported to concentration camps in Germany.[175] In all three case studies, women were tortured, sometimes to death, in an attempt to extract crucial information about the resistance networks or specific individuals from women who worked for the movement – with the prominent example of Irma Bandiera. A woman who helped her children in resistance activities may not carry a gun but she still 'resists'- which becomes evident from the fury and rage that provoked to the occupiers. This rage was manifested in various ways during the war: in December 1943, when the collaborative authorities in Greece arrested a partisan, his wife ran behind him to help him. The collaborators started kicking her in her belly, which made her lose her child.[176]

As such, the term resistance fighter was reevaluated and resignified to include not only those who carried guns with the aim of inflicting death but also those who risked their own arrest, deportation, or even death despite not trying to kill the enemy: "It's not the noise that makes war, it's death."[177] Hence, such acts constituted resistance even though these women did not carry guns. These women largely participated in the war by following a gendered trajectory, with the resistance being a gendering activity. The next part will examine the notion of war as a gendering activity, with a particular focus on the resistance as an irregular war.

1.2. Gendering War, Gendering Resistance, Gendering Memory

During the Second World War, the average percentage of female combatants in partisan formations fighting against Nazi occupation in Wehrmacht-occupied European territories—France, Italy, Greece, Yugoslavia, and the Soviet Union, among others—was estimated at ten to fifteen percent. According to Hagemann, most women in combat positions served in the communist-led People's Liberation Force of Yugoslavia, which was by far Europe's biggest army of its sort during the Second World War. By the conclusion of the war, approximately 100,000 women had joined its ranks.[178] In Italy, 55,000 women were recognised as resistance members after the war, accounting for around twenty-eight percent of all partisans, with 35,000 of them serving in combat groups.[179] In all three cases examined in this thesis, women performed intelligence duties working as 'staffette' and liaison officers, organised protests, hid and supplied partisans, among other activities, and in rare

[175] Rossiter, "Le Role des femmes dans la Résistance en France," 54.
[176] Κίνηση «Η Γυναίκα της Αντίστασης», *Γυναίκες στην Αντίσταση: Μαρτυρίες* (Αθήνα: Κίνηση η Γυναίκα στην Αντίσταση, 1982), 218.
[177] Quoted in Laurent Douzou, 'La construction de la catégorie de genre dans les Résistances antifascistes sur le pourtour méditerranéen' in *La Resistance à l'épreuve du genre*, 26. Originally : André Malraux, Œuvres complètes, vol. 3, Paris, Gallimard, coll. « Bibliothèque de la Pléiade", 1996), 965.
[178] Hagemann, "History and Memory of Female Military Service in the Age of World Wars" in *The Oxford Handbook of Gender, War, and the Western World since 1600*, 480-483.
[179] Ibid, 484.

cases, participated directly in combat operations. Despite the variety of roles that women assumed in partisan movements and their wide participation, the exclusion of women from combat roles remained largely unchallenged, with most women assuming combat support roles. Indeed, within the resistance context, women were able to assume previously unimaginable roles but the exclusion from combat remained largely the norm. This was the case for the partisan formations operating in the mountains/rural areas that were also characterised by a gendered division of labour, with a "gear" and a "front". The figure of female partisan despite its post-war popularity which will further be examined in Chapter 9 of this thesis, was seen as an exception to the rule.

This tendency to exclude women from combat roles was not unique to the partisan movements of the Second World War. The 'combat taboo' is based on the idea that no matter how much social change the war brings, the exclusion of women from direct combat operations remains a barrier between genders.[180] The resistance, while it provided a window of opportunity for more women to become involved in previously unimaginable actions, also revealed what constructions of gender can be flexible and negotiable based on current needs, also set the limit of what was not currently negotiable.[181] Exclusion from direct combat operations has been a widespread pattern throughout centuries and civilisations, and it can only be understood by first comprehending why warfare, and particularly combat, have traditionally been a male-dominated activity.[182]

As Hagemann explains, in the 1980s, Cynthia Enloe's *Does Khaki Become You: The Militarization of Women's Lives* and Jean Bethke Elshtain's *Women and War* became immediate feminist theory classics, basically criticising the gender hierarchy that existed in war.[183] Enloe explored the growth of military institutions in the Western world, demonstrating that the military has created an 'archetypical gender-construct' where the male combatants exist as the opposite of female civilians. Elshtain investigated how the twin myth of males as "just warriors" and women as "beautiful souls" has worked to build and protect men's identity as "warriors" and women's identity as "peaceful non-combatants" from antiquity up until the present day.[184] Even if women fighters appear, which was the

[180] Corina Peniston-Bird, and Emma Vickers, "Introduction" in *Gender and the Second World War*: *Lessons of War*, ed. Corinna Peniston-Bird and Emma Vickers (Basingstoke, Hampshire: Palgrave Macmillan), 6.
[181] Ibid*,* 1.
[182] Joshua S. Goldstein, *War and Gender*: *How Gender Shapes the War System and Vice Versa* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001).
[183] Cynthia H. Enloe, *Does Khaki Become You: The Militarisation of Women's Lives,* 1st ed. (Boston, MA; London: South End Press, 1983); Jean Bethke Elshtain, *Women and War* (New York, N.Y: Basic Books, 1987).
[184] Hagemann, "Introduction: Gender and the History of War—The Development of the Research," in *The Oxford Handbook of Gender, War, and the Western World since 1600,* 5-6. For more on war and gender:

case in the resistance movements and, more broadly, other national liberation wars, Elshtain argues that contrary to the majority of women who are seen as 'beautiful souls', a great minority concerns the Ferocious Few -as she calls them. These images of the 'Ferocious Few' have rather enhanced the unnaturalness of the woman fighter, or they have presented them in such a way as to coincide with socially accepted notions of femininity and masculinity, subject to changes in each society and historical era.[185] The woman fighter is "an identity in extremis," not an *expectation.*[186] In the resistance, the few female partisans participating in combat operations were seen as an exception and always in comparison with the great majority of women who assumed gender-specific roles. Women participated in the war by assuming combat support roles, which further emphasised combat as a man's domain. With women assuming combat support roles, men were free to participate in combat operations.[187]

The tendency to exclude women from combat roles has been related to the importance of cultural values in society. This further explains women's exclusion from combat in the resistance movements that spread in occupied countries throughout Europe. An important reason for such hostility was that women in combat roles represented the breakdown of the gender hierarchy and hence the social order.[188] Even in irregular warfare, a group's desire to avoid losing faithful members in traditional societies can discourage the leaders from making more space for women. Miranda Alison also explains how, in very traditional societies, women may be used mainly in support roles to avoid contradicting cultural norms and beliefs.[189] Gendered resistance was also the norm in communist and more broadly left-wing movements during the Second World War, despite their progressive ideology. The resistance was shaped by the existing pre-war norms in each country; these clandestine societies were a product of the society of their times, '*la societe des annees 1930*

Goldstein, *War and Gender*; Andrea Pető, and Gale (Firm), *Gender: War* (Farmington Hills, Mich: Macmillan Reference USA, a part of Gale, Cengage Learning, 2017); Laura Sjoberg, *Gender, War, and Conflict* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2014); Laura Sjoberg, *Gendering Global Conflict: Toward a Feminist Theory of War* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2013); Laura Sjoberg and Sandra Via, eds., *Gender, War and Militarism: Feminist Perspectives* (Westport, CT: Praeger Security, 2010); Ana Carden-Coyne (ed), *Gender and Conflict since 1914: Historical and Interdisciplinary Perspectives* (New York: Palgrave, 2012).

[185] Miranda Alison, *Women and Political Violence: Female Combatants in Ethno-National Conflict* (New York: Routledge, 2009), 91. For instance, by portraying them with their babies, along with the rifle. In Angola, a woman fighter of the *Movimento Popular de Libertàcao de Angola* is portrayed with a baby and a gun. Same in a poster produced by Frente de Libertàção de Moçambique, transl. Mozambique Liberation Front. See more: Hoover Institution Libraries & Archives, "Angolan Liberation Fighter," Poster Collection, 1970/1975, https://digitalcollections.hoover.org/objects/9637/angolan-liberation-fighter?ctx=8fc07abdca1e24fe452e7499e0cb5f2b742400bb&idx=4.

[186] Elshtain, *Women and War*, 173.

[187] Kaptan, "Women in the Military" in *Gender*, 39.

[188] Hagemann, "History and Memory of Female Military Service in the Age of World Wars," in *The Oxford Handbook of Gender, War, and the Western World since 1600,* 484.

[189] Alison, *Women and Political Violence,* Chapter 3.

et 1940' as Douzou puts it.[190] In this context, these women participated in the resistance movements not solely as gendered subjects but as gendered citizens of their respective societies.

At the same time, if the resistance was a gendered experience, memory too was inevitably shaped by gender. Following Luisa Passerini's argument, memory is always gendered and women's memories, and their selective silences, recur through their experiences in different times and spaces.[191] In that sense, the notion of gendered memory is also central to my discussion of personal memoirs of female resisters, both in terms of the way in which the memoirs studied here focus on particular experiences of women during the resistance, and with regard to how the remembrance and representation of the resistance as a past event might be informed by gender in women's writing.[192] There is a gendered articulation of the resistance experience by the former women authors. In that sense, looking at the memoir both as a source that reconstructs (pieces) of the wartime experience and as a *lieu de mémoire*, the resistance's gender-specific memorial afterlives will be examined.

Women's memories, whether individual or collective, are not static in time but are alive, active and open to resignification, anchored in the present as much as in the past.[193] When it comes to post-war accounts, from personal memoirs to oral history, "narrative involves not only telling the story but also retelling the story."[194] As mentioned, during the era broadly known as second-wave feminism, characterised by a revival and radicalisation of feminist activism in the wake of 1968, women re-evaluated and re-interpreted their resistance experience and their historical agency more broadly, which affected the memorialisation of resistance. In that sense, the focus on the multiple afterlives of women's resistance concerns the emphasis on memory as a process to understand the meaning behind the event of the resistance, rather than a guarantee of truthfulness. The idea of 'contesting a past' reveals a struggle not solely on the terrain of truth but rather in the realm of meaning-

[190] Douzou, 'La Construction de la Catégorie de gendre dans la Résistances antifascistes sur le pourtour méditerranéen' in *La Résistance à l'épreuve du genre,* 22.

[191] Cited in Hillary Hiner, "Memory Speaks from Today': analyzing oral histories of female members of the MIR in Chile through the work of Luisa Passerini," *Women's History Review* 25, no. 3 (2016): 395, DOI: 10.1080/09612025.2015.1071566.

[192] Largely influenced and based on Leggott' study on Spanish fiction by women focusing on the Civil War memory. For more: Sarah Leggott, *Memory, War, and Dictatorship in Recent Spanish Fiction by Women* (Bucknell University Press, 2015), 26.

[193] Nadje Al-Ali, "Memory, history and contestations in present-day Iraq," in *Beyond Women's Words: Feminisms and the Practices of Oral History in the Twenty-First Century*, ed. Katrina Srigley, Stacey Zembrzycki, Franca Iacovetta (Routledge, 2018), 138, https://doi.org/10.4324/9781351123822

[194] Nefissa Naguib, *Women, Water and Memory: Recasting Lives in Palestine* (BRILL, 2008), 2**3.**

particularly for groups whose knowledge was discounted in the aftermath of the war, including women, minorities, and so on.[195] The next part will particularly examine this women's role in conflicts associated with nationalism; the resistance was a war of national liberation against the Axis occupiers.

1.3. Women, War & Nationalism: Mobilisation Frames and their Bargains

Particularly for conflicts associated with nationalism,[196] women's biological ability to bear children tends to be seen as crucial to the survival of the nation, and this contribution is also considered an obligation to their national collectivity.[197] In such projects, from nation-building ones to national liberation wars, women have certain roles to assume. Yuval-Davis and Anthias Floya have articulated women's roles in imagined ethnic/national processes. Women have participated in these processes as:[198]

a. biological reproducers of members of ethnic collectivities;
b. as reproducers of the boundaries of ethnic/national groups;
c. as participating centrally in the ideological reproduction of the collectivity and as transmitters of its culture;
d. as signifiers of ethnic/national differences: as a focus and a symbol in ideological discourses used in the construction, reproduction and transformation of ethnic/national categories
e. as participants in national, economic, political and military struggles.

These factors form the basis of the cultural construction of gender roles and identities. These may alter depending on the setting, as is the case in an irregular war but they are founded on sanctioned institutionalisation of gender difference and distinct understandings of men's and women's responsibilities.[199] Since women have the ability to 'reproduce the nation' and, in consequence, are the signifier of (ethnic) difference, their ability influences any policies related to women's participation in the public sphere and national affairs, including their participation in conflict. Women are absorbed metaphorically into the national body politic

---

[195] Katherine Hodgkin, and Susannah Radstone, *Memory, History, Nation: Contested Pasts* (London; New Brunswick, N.J; Transaction Publishers, 2006), 1.

[196] According to Suruchi Thapar-Björket, discussions about nationalism have mostly been by men about men. Consequently, they have found no difference between men and women in their understanding of nationalism or the unique position of women as nationalist subjects. Suruchi Thapar-Björket, 'Gender, Nations and Nationalism,' in the *Oxford Handbook of Gender and Politics*, ed. Georgina Waylen, Karen Celis, Johanna Kantola, and S. Laurel Weldon, 803–833 (New York: Oxford University Press, 2013), 806.

[197] Nira Yuval-Davis, *Gender & Nation* (London ; Thousand Oaks; New Delhi: Sage Publications, 1997), 38-39.

[198] Floya Anthias, and Yuval-Davis, *Woman, Nation, State* (London: The Macmillan Press, 1989), 7.

[199] Ann McClintock, "Family Feuds: Gender, Nationalism and the Family," *Feminist Review* 44, no. 1 (1993): 61.

as its border and metaphoric limit. Hence, women's 'integration' in national projects follows a different trajectory from that of men.[200]

As a result, many of the discussions regarding women's reproductive rights and the pressure to have children have been traditionally associated with women's ability to ensure the survival of the 'nation'. As a result of the connection between their biological ability and the idea of the survival of the nation, women's desire for participation in combat has traditionally been seen as a danger to their biological "destiny" as the (nation)-state's future generations breeders. Women's exclusion from combat is justified based on the need to sustain the imagined collectivity.[201] As members of an imagined national collectivity and producers of its members, women are also perceived as "bearers of the collective".[202]

Deniz Kandiyoti further argues that in modern nationalist projects that emerged at the end of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, women entered the 'universal realm' of citizenship, and women could participate actively and simultaneously be hostages in such nationalist projects. When it comes to examining twentieth-century left-wing nationalism and national liberation projects, which is the main focus of this project, the move towards secularism, social reform, and an extension of citizenship rights seems to favour a more egalitarian society.[203] In the course of the twentieth century, in various secular national projects, women were invited to participate in more aspects of the public sphere by recognising them as national actors. Yet, this recognition was gendered and based on difference. In times of relative peace, women, as gendered citizens, were invited to participate as mothers, educators, carers, and more broadly assume supportive roles. In turn, this re-affirmation of boundaries of acceptable feminine behaviour forced women themselves throughout the course of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries to mobilise based on a gendered idea of citizenship, sourced by political maternalism, making social and political rights claims on the basis of women's roles as mothers.[204]

Building on the above, women's engagement in national conflicts has been the subject of study with scholars' examining's gendered mobilisation through different frameworks. The maternalist framework frames women's engagement in the struggle as a motherly obligation and duty to the nation. That is to say, women's participation is a response to the danger imposed by the regime/occupying/colonial authorities on their

[200] Deniz Kandiyoti, "Identity and Its Discontents: Women and the Nation," *Millennium* 20, no. 3 (March 1991): 429-430, https://doi.org/10.1177/03058298910200031501.
[201] Siniša Malešević, *The Sociology of War and Violence* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 295-296.
[202] Yuval-Davis, *Gender & Nation*, 33, 38.
[203] Kandiyoti, "Identity and Its Discontents," 429.
[204] Ibid, 433.

children and, more broadly, to the nation's children.[205] The maternalist framework focuses on women's feminine roles in political struggles. In times of rupture, these roles can expand to include non-traditional roles that bend gender expectations. Yet women's activism is situated within the context of the nationalist struggle and does not ascribe feminist meanings to them.[206] Within the resistance, many women were mobilised based on this maternalist framework and narratives. For instance, women protested to the occupying authorities and their local collaborators, asking for concessions related to their children's needs, acting not solely as mothers of their own children but as mothers of the nation's children.

The second framework is that of the female warrior. This frame concerns the minority of women who participate in the struggle as fighters, side by side with men at the forefront.[207] While most women assumed gender-specific roles in the resistance by following their traditional roles or expanding on them, a minority of women assumed the role of female partisan and participated directly in combat operations. Combat, perceived as the manliest role, was reserved for men. Women who transgressed this 'barrier', breaking with the combat taboo, had to navigate it carefully. This unexpected behaviour and *hors-de-norme* role came with a bargain, namely 'a patriarchal bargain' to use Deniz Kandiyoti's term. In Deniz Kandiyoti's words, "women strategize within a set of concrete constraints that reveal and define the blueprint of what I will term the patriarchal bargain' of any given society."[208] These bargains may also vary by class, caste, and ethnicity within societies. These 'patriarchal bargains' have a significant impact on the formation of women's gendered subjectivity and the nature of gender ideology.[209] While most authors have applied this concept by looking how women navigate these patriarchal bargains by establishing their power through a creative agency navigating these gendered norms, I use the notion of patriarchal bargain in line with Isabel Käser's line of argument, where the latter uses the term 'party bargain' to demonstrate how Kurdish women in PKK "break out of certain societal constellations by entering the party and subject themselves to new bar- gains, this time with the party."[210] Indeed, the cultural and gender norms of the time identified the role of 'female partisan' as an exception allowed due to the emergency circumstances and due to the small number of women who transgressed the combat taboo. This transgression of

[205] Nermin Allam, *Women and the Egyptian Revolution: Engagement and Activism during the 2011 Arab Uprisings* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2017), 28.
[206] Ibid.
[207] Ibid.
[208] Deniz Kandiyoti, "Bargaining with Patriarchy," *Gender and Society* 2, no. 3 (1988): 275. http://www.jstor.org/stable/190357
[209] Ibid.
[210] Isabel Käser, *The Kurdish Women's Freedom Movement: Gender, Body Politics and Militant Femininities* (Cambridge University Press, 2021), 163.

women who participated in violence was both contained and regulated through the prohibition of romantic relationships between the partisans and an exemplary behaviour from women themselves to avoid being deemed immoral. These highly gendered narratives regarding women's direct participation in combat both create the space for women to participate in transgressive acts of politics and, at the same time, regulate their transgression. In the sources examined in Chapter 7, the 'policing' of the female partisans' behaviour becomes apparent in all three countries, but particularly in Greece due to the powerful social contract of honour (timi).

In the case of Greece,[211] the policing did not solely concern the female partisans but all the young women who participated in the struggle outside the domestic milieu. Especially in the provincial areas, the notion of honour (*timi)* was a powerful social contract that determined women's overall behaviour and participation in the public milieu, and it was an important factor that made a lot of families hesitant about the participation of their daughters in outdoor resistance activities. As Hart explains, the notion of honour for 1930s/1940s Greece was strongly linked to their allotted responsibilities as mothers and s. A woman's behaviour was dictated by a set of moral principles, and any behaviour that violated these codes of conduct, such as a marriageable-age women who circulated outside the house without a male chaperone or women who lost their virginity before marriage, brought shame not only to themselves but also to their male family members, who were held responsible for protecting the honour of their female relatives.[212] The policing of women's bodies at a societal level can be summarised by the phrase *Ti tha pei o kosmos* (what will the people say?). Male members of a household knew that it was their responsibility to protect the honour of their female members, especially those of marriageable age, otherwise the society will judge them negatively. For instance, regarding the importance of the paternal figure as the guardian of the woman's honour, Marion Sarafis, an archeologist and the wife of ELAS general Stefanos Sarafis,[213] mentions that "[Stefanos] Sarafis told me that in his youth in

[211] The focus on largely on Greece regarding this part is mostly due to first the sources I came across throughout my fieldwork in the three countries, and second, due to my deeper knowledge regarding the cultural values in my home country as compared to Italy and France, despite my language fluency in both cases.

[212] Hart, *New Voices in the Nation*, 153-155.

[213] Marion Sarafis met Stefanos Sarafis in 1938 while he was in internal exile in Milos. In her book, she recalls about their encounter: "At the end of the three days, I left Milos in a state of considerable emotional turmoil. For the first time, at the age of twenty-four, I had met someone I could love, someone with whom I felt an affinity like that of the 'other half' described in Plato's Symposium. the three elements that have always seemed to me essential to love; ethical respect, stimulating companionship and physical attraction were all present." See more: Marion Sarafis, "Introduction" in Stefanos Sarafis, *ELAS: Greek Resistance Army*, trans. Sylvia Moody (London: Merlin Press, 1980), xiii.

Trikala, a man was acquitted of raping a girl *(therefore dishonouring her)*[214] because she was illegitimate, in other words, no man's property."[215]

Therefore, Greek women who wanted to participate in resistance activities, particularly the younger non-married ones, first had to overcome this powerful social contract that considered women's involvement in activities outside the domestic milieu as something shameful, fearing how the society would react.[216] Diamanto Gkritzona, a former resister and member of EPON, narrates how women who were active in resistance activities outside the domestic milieu were seen by society with suspicion in the beginning, particularly in the countryside (*eparhia)*. Gritzona recalls the disapproval of the mother of a young woman who wanted to work for EPON during the resistance. Her narration demonstrates how powerful the social contract of honour was. According to Gritzona's narration, she was young and beautiful, and her mother said: "Who will take her [as a wife]? Nobody will want to marry her!"[217]

Hence, EAM, as a movement emerging in 1940s Greece and influenced by these gendered and social norms, put a lot of importance on the 'honour' of the organisation, which was associated with the behaviour of its women participants. One of the reasons cited behind EAM's success was the movement's emphasis on parental consent regarding women's membership in the organisation. Riki Van Boeschoten, in her analysis based on oral testimonies from the village of Ziaka, north-westen Greece, where EAM was the dominant guerrilla organisation, notes in one testimony that Ioulia Paparosiou's dad reacted when EAM came to ask for her services in knitting for the organisation outside of the house, "The girls are young, what are they going to do there?" The *antartes* answered back that girls too (had to fight) and we *will beg you* a lot (to let them work for EAM)."[218]

However, these 'patriarchal bargains' are not eternal or unchangeable entities; rather, they are susceptible to historical upheavals that provide new battlegrounds for the renegotiation of gender relations.[219] The patriarchal bargain is always susceptible to change, based on the historical transformations and exigencies of each historical moment.[220] This is crucial in understanding how mobilisation in the resistance was influenced by the historically

---

[214] Explanation and emphasis my own.
[215] Cited in Hart, *New Voices of the Nation,* 153.
[216] It is no coincidence that all Greek resisters mentioned in their personal memoirs that the first and far most difficult barrier that they had to overcome was their parents' disapproval or hesitance to participate in the struggle outside of the house due to the powerful social contract of honour in 1930s/1940s Greek society (i.e., Φουκά Ρέζε, *Οργισμένα Χρόνια*; Νικολοπούλου, *Μία Επονίτισσα Θυμάται*).
[217] «Κίνηση Η Γυναίκα της Αντίστασης», *Γυναίκες στην Αντίσταση*, 14.
[218] Ρίκη Βαν Μπουσχότεν, *Περάσαμε πολλές μπόρες κορίτσι μου…* (Αθήνα: Πλέθρον, 1998), 92.
[219] Kandiyoti, "Bargaining with Patriarchy," 275.
[220] Ibid, 275.

specific patriarchal bargains in each society but also how the mobilisation in the resistance altered the patriarchal bargain. In Greece's case, the powerful social contract of honour that influenced women's behaviour in 1930s/1940s Greece was altered through their participation in the resistance, a result of EAM's radical vision for post-war society. This 'bargain' was subject to change even though it continued to assert its influence on women's lives post-war. In a newspaper, this change of attitude towards women's position outside the home during the resistance is highlighted:[221]

> The girls of the village, the girls of EPON (*Eponitisses*), barefoot and with their sleeves rolled up, thrown firmly into work, poured water, and mopped up the school while the others, with their pitchers, carried water from the tap. The floor of one classroom with all the windows wide open was even drying. It was a Saturday and according to the standard EPON schedule, all the offices had to be cleaned…. They do this work willingly and they are satisfied because they are at least contributing in this way. The men, some sitting out on the terraces of the small square, others standing in small groups, chatting, continue their work, without paying any attention, just like when the women clean their houses. In the early days, of course, when the girls first cleaned the school, they were all staring. And at night in the houses, by the fireplaces, it was the general topic of conversation and gossip. But now, after a year and a half, this amazing event that shook the whole village is commonplace.

In sum, gendered resistance reflected the society upon which it emerged, but also altered it, by providing women with new forms of political mobilisation. The war constituted both a continuation but also a break with tradition, when the gender and social norms were to be reinforced. Indeed, the forms and narratives of resistance were influenced by the existing societal norms. Yet the resistance provided women with new frames of collective action, redefining the *status quo*, and thus mobilised them to join in repertoires of contention of the patriarchal bargain in each society. Women's participation in the resistance, through various roles and capacities, transgressed gender boundaries. By doing so, it broadened women's political horizons and imagination in constructing new gendered identities and gender norms.[222]

1.4. Performing Genders, Transgressed Genders

Yuval Davis has shown how nationalist projects are indeed constructed around different notions of manhood and womanhood. Gender is differentiated and essentialised as a part of the nationalist project, which influenced the division of roles in all aspects of life, including

[221] 'Επονίτισσες', Ελεύθερη Ελλάδα: Όργανο της Κ.Ε. του Εθνικού Απελευθερωτικού Μετώπου, αρ. φύλλου 34, Γενάρης 1944, σ. 2, Βιβλιοθήκη – Αρχείο Χαρίλαος Φλωράκης, Επιμορφωτικό Κέντρο ΚΚΕ ,Αθήνα.
[222] This becomes evident in personal memoirs and personal accounts by former resisters, partisans, and female fighters: From reading women's resistance memoirs and analysing their life trajectory, it becomes evident that their participation in the struggle affected their subjectivity in more complex ways than dichotomous binary conceptions of progression and regression that feminist approaches to war have argued about.

war. Men are seen as warriors and women as nurturers, which impacts their roles in conflict.[223] Therefore, the gendering of war cannot be adequately understood without a discourse that provides meaning to different roles based on this binary structure.[224] The term gender should be seen as the social interaction between the two sexes. Women and men were and are defined by their interactions with one another, and no comprehension of either could ever be obtained by looking at one in isolation from the other.[225]In this understanding, the gender order becomes a site of conflict that exists between women and femininity and men and masculinity. Hegemonic masculinity is understood as the masculine characteristics that are most broadly shared in a particular social formation - the common sense of gender shared by all males, except those males whose masculinity is perceived as aberrant. Both physical strength and practical competence are seen as required characteristics but the ability to assist and defend women.[226] These essentialised stereotypes and social roles aim to fix identity in eternal dualisms (woman-noncombatant and male-combatant, woman-victim of violence and male-perpetrator of violence).[227]

As Judith Butler argues, specific sorts of activities and roles are commonly perceived as reflective of a gender core or identity, and these roles and their related acts either adhere to an anticipated gender identity or seek to challenge that expectation.[228] Butler goes on to define gender as a "series of demands, taboos, sanctions, injunctions, prohibitions, impossible idealizations, and threads imposed on the basis of perceived membership in biological sex."[229] Butler argues that gender is a performative act. It is generated by the "stylization of body" through repetitive acts that construct a gender identity, creating the impression of an enduring gendered self.[230] These acts are not natural but as they have become well-established and unexceptional through repetition, they are taken for granted.[231] Gender, unlike biological sex, is not factual. It is produced via various performative acts. Butler discusses how gender must be demonstrated on a regular basis via "performative

[223] Yuval-Davis, *Gender & Nation*, 42.
[224] Higonnet, "Introduction" in *Behind the Lines*, 4.
[225] Joan Wallace Scott, *Feminism and History* (Oxford: New York: Oxford University Press, 1996), 155.
[226] John Tosh, "Hegemonic Masculinity and the history of gender" in *Masculinities in Politics and War: Gendering Modern History,* ed. Stefan Dudink, Karen Hagemann, and John Tosh (Manchester; New York;: Manchester University Press, 2004), 47.
[227] Cockburn, *The Space Between Us*, 13.
[228] Judith Butler, "Performative Acts and Gender Constitution: An Essay in Phenomenology and Feminist Theory," *Theatre Journal 40,* no. 4. (Dec. 1988): 27-528.

[229] Judith Butler, *Bodies That Matter: On the Discursive Limits of "Sex"* (London: Routledge, 1993), 70-84. See also Judith Butler, *Gender Trouble* (London: Routledge, 1999), 43-44.
[230] Butler, *Gender Trouble*, 179, 187.
[231] Pattinson, *Behind Enemy Lines*, 16.

activities" to "show" one's gender.[232] Gender, rather than being an intrinsic characteristic of individuals, is a psychologically embedded social construct that actively appears in daily human contact.[233]

The notion of gender as a 'doing' helps us understand this type of engagement reserved for women in the resistance.[234] The gender reality that characterised the resistance was something performative; women had to perform, both metaphorically and literally, certain roles abiding to an 'essential' masculinity or femininity. Women engaging in resistance activities used the taboos, injunctions, and idealisations of women as pure, innocent and non-political with the aim of deceiving the enemy to gather information and transfer guns and food to the partisans.[235] Their gender and the interrelated stereotypes that came along with that had to be further emphasised, to be performed in front of the occupiers. Performativity as an idea signifies an act or a process through which something becomes different. Certain practices can be silenced, while others can be further emphasised, and hence, gender continues to be reshaped in response to current needs.

This adaptation to current needs and the instrumentalisation of feminine symbolic becomes evident in the resistance in a variety of roles and settings. Indeed, women were pushed outside of the domestic milieu due to the increasing needs and harsh material conditions and 'performed' in the public space by abiding by traditional ideas about gender roles with the aim of gaining concessions for a variety of demands towards the occupiers and their local collaborators. However, abiding to the established gender norms vis-à-vis women's roles does not reduce the political significance of these acts. According to Butler, the public nature of these actions does not only concern the public in sight gathering of these women. Rather, the given space acquires a political significance, something more than just an assembly of women's bodies. Butler argues that at that moment when a certain crowd manifests in the given public space, politics does not happen only in the realm of the public space, but it crosses these lines, affecting what is also conceived as private.[236] Women, by moving to the public sphere, contested this established norm, breaking with tradition despite the gendered trajectory of the acts.[237] Following Judith Butler's notion and argumentation,

---

[232] Cited in Brett Schmoll, "Solidarity and Silence: Motherhood in the Spanish Civil War," *Journal of Spanish Cultural Studies* 15, no. 1-2 (2014): 477.
[233] Candace West, and Don H. Zimmerman, "Doing Gender," *Gender & Society* 1, no. 2 (1987): 126-130, 137.
[234] 'Gender doing' refers to a combination of socially driven perceptual, interactional, and micropolitical behaviours that frame certain interests as representations of male and feminine 'natures'. West, and Zimmerman, "Doing Gender," 125–51. https://doi.org/10.1177/0891243287001002002.
[235] Butler, *Bodies That Matter*, 70, 84.
[236] Butler, *Notes Toward a Performative Theory of Assembly* (London: Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2015), 71.
[237] Building on Ibid, 29.

these ‘public assemblies’ of women during the resistance could be called performative, “a bodily demand for a more livable set of lives.”[238] The persistence of women’s bodies in the public milieu in order to demand called the legitimacy of the occupation into question through a gendered performativity of their bodies. In that sense, women’s intstrumentalisation of their gender should demonstrate women’s “*embodied* agency, of *being* in the public sphere,”[239] disrupting in practice hegemonic norms that placed women solely in the domestic milieu or/and portrayed them as naïve, sentimental, and unable to be political.

Moreover, this idea of ‘performance’ based on the appropriation of different characteristics and identities can be further explained using the notion of ‘passing’, which penetrated various roles assumed by women during the resistance. The concept refers to the process by which persons who are thought to have a fixed, monolithic identity strive to take the qualities of the 'Other' in order to avoid being identified as different. [240] In the case of the resistance and national liberation movements, resistance fighters aim to ‘pass’ without being identified as politicised subjects, and hence, a threat to the authorities. This idea of ‘passing’ as a performative act based on the appropriation of different characteristics and sourced with a female agency becomes evident in the movie *Battle of Algiers* (1966), which enacts the struggle over Algiers during Algeria’s war of independence (1954-62). In the film, Algerian women are portrayed as active participants rather than passive subjects. They deliver weapons, help fighters escape, and even plant a bomb in a cafeteria.[241] Women in the film, either veiled and ‘hidden’, carrying a gun in a basket, or unveiled and adopting a more ‘French’ outlook, instrumentalised the European gaze upon them to conform to the internalised Orientalist stereotypes that saw Algerian/Muslim women as non-political subjects. The veiled women, who see without being seen, to slightly paraphrase Franz Fanon,[242] were able to *pass* and act as ‘invisible’ political agents. Equally, by taking advantage of the gaze and racialised forms of femininity that favour a normalised white femininity, Algerian women used the Orientalist projection on them to their advantage. By adopting what was conceived as a ‘European appearance’, they were perceived as non-threatening and were free to pass. What is notable about the film is how it presents iconic versions of femininity in an ironic way: women in the film and the resistance played upon

[238] Ibid, 25.
[239] El Said, Meari and Pratt, “Introduction,” in *Rethinking Gender in Revolutions and Resistance,* 12.
[240] Juliette Pattinson, “'Passing Unnoticed in a French Crowd': The Passing Performances of British SOE Agents in Occupied France,” *National Identities* 12, no. 3 (2010): 292.
[241] Catherine Sawers, “The Women of *Bataille d’Alger*: Hearts and Minds and Bombs.” *Journal of Middle East Women’s Studies* 10, no. 2 (2014): 93, https://doi.org/10.2979/jmiddeastwomstud.10.2.80.
[242] Frantz Fanon, *A dying colonialism* (New York: Grove Press, 1965), 48.

gender stereotypes, making us aware of the gap between the ideal feminine and the much more complex reality of multiple femininities. Indeed, useful for the analysis of the sources used in this thesis, the film's irony vis-à-vis essentialised ideas of femininity demonstrates the interconnection between intersectionality and gender performativity. Indeed, as Aitemad Muhanna-Matar explains vis-à-vis intersectional performativity, the performance does not solely play on the gender stereotype, but (each) performance culminates in the interplay between multiple identities based on gender, class, nationality, ethnicity, religion, and sexuality,[243] based on the specific exigencies. The intersectional approach to gender performance provides insights into different forms of gender performativity within the context of Second World War resistance. Understanding gendered performativity as 'intersectional plays of identities' is extremely relevant regarding gender performativity in the context of Second World War resistance, as some insights into the matter allow us to better understand women's embodied agency in the different resistance roles. The next part will examine the different resistance organisations and women's participation in them in France, Greece, and Italy.

1.5. Women and the Resistance Movements in Greece, France, and Italy

Despite their common gendered division of labour, the resistance organisations differed in many aspects, including their membership composition, tasks assumed, and their radicality and revolutionary aims. In France, women who became involved in clandestine organisations, were largely organised in gender-mixed groups. Many women became involved in the three communist and socialist groups: the *Franc-Tireurs et Partisans* (FTP), created by leaders of the French Communist Party, the Libération-Sud, and the Libération-Nord. Yet this integration did not imply integration of roles or an absence of a division of labour. As we shall see, women became involved in the resistance organisations of FTP, Libération-Sud, and the Libération-Nord by following a gender-specific trajectory, largely assuming roles different than men. A notable exception of women's only organising concerns the *comités féminins de la Résistance* (Women's Committees of the Resistance), which was all-female in its composition, established in October 1940 by Danielle Casanova. Gradually, these women's committees were formed at local, then regional, and inter-regional levels. In the north, they adhered to the *Union des femmes françaises* (UFF - Union of French Women), and to the *Union des femmes de France* in the southern zone. The women in charge were Josette Cothias, a union activist who had joined the Communist Party during the

[243] I have largely built upon the work of Aitemad Muhanna-Matar, "The emerging intersectional performative gender of displaced Syrian women in southeast Turkey," *Gender, Place & Culture* 29, no. 6 (2022): 774, DOI: 10.1080/0966369X.2021.1887091.

Popular Front and Maria Rabaté, a primary school teacher involved in Indre education union and a member of the Communist Party since 1921 in the northern zone after Danielle Casanova was arrested in February 1942; and Marcelle Barjonet, who joined the PCF in the summer of 1939, and Simone Bertrand, who joined the Communist Party in 1929 in Isère and became involved in *comités féminins clandestins* up until 1942, in the southern zone.

In Greece, the largest resistance organisation, the *Ethniko Apeleutherotiko Metwpo (*EAM-National Liberation Front) was formed in 1941 following the German invasion, an initiative undertaken by the *Kommounistiko Komma Ellados* (KKE- Communist Party of Greece) and spearheaded a cross-class, populist, patriotic mass movement. Its military wing, known as ELAS, was founded later, in 1942. KKE's strategy was a popular-front approach based on patriotic and national rather than a strict class-based discourse.[244] In that way, it was able to gather wide public support from a broader spectrum of Greek society that did not particularly identify with communist ideas, from progressive and bourgeois-liberals to even nationalists who saw the occupation as the pinnacle of evil. As Hart argues, the movement served two functions. First, it attempted to rally the country's defence against the Axis troops, which was a common characteristic of the Second World War resistance's groups in all three countries. However, in addition to its military goals, EAM was a national social movement that resulted in a fundamental rupture with the past. What characterised the movement apart from its military aims concerned the granting of citizenship rights to historically marginalised people within the Greek state, with women and ethnic/linguistic minorities being among those.[245] Therefore, it was open to almost everyone regardless of their political beliefs. Under EAM's affiliation, two mass organisations emerged that largely included women in their ranks. The first one was the *Ethniki Allhlegguh* (EA- National Solidarity), also metaphorically called "The Mother of the Struggle" (I mana to Agona).[246] The organisation was founded on May 28, 1941, even before the defeat of the Greek Army in the Battle of Crete (*Maxi tis Kritis*) on June 1. All its founding members were prominent communists, members of KKE, in exile in Folegandros island in Cyclades since Ioannis Metaxas 4th of August Regime, including a woman, Dionusia Papadomixelaki.[247] However, the organisation downplayed its communist ideals, while its mission statement highlighted its humanitarian mission. According to Vervenioti, when a man/woman did not want to get directly involved with EAM/ELLAS, they were encouraged to join the National Solidarity

[244] Poulos, *Arms and the Woman*, 163.
[245] Hart, "Women in the Greek Resistance," 47.
[246] See more: Κίνηση «Η Γυναίκα της Αντίστασης», *Γυναίκες στην Αντίσταση*, 96. See more: Χάγκεν Φλάϊσερ, *Στέμμα και Σβάστικα: Η Ελλάδα της Κατοχής και της Αντίστασης 1941-194*4, 1ος τόμος (Αθήνα: Εκδόσεις Παπαζήση, 1989), 145; Poulos, *Arms and the Woman*, 163.
[247] Ναταλία Αποστολοπούλου, *Περήφανες και Αδούλωτες* (Αθήνα: Εκδόσεις Εντός, 1997), 18.

organisation, as it was not considered political. And in that sense, as Vervenioti explains, since it was not political, it was considered the ideal place for women to get involved.[248] As a newspaper mentions regarding women's contribution to the struggle through the National Solidarity, "the woman *whose nature* brought her closer to the aims of National Solidarity, excelled in this field as in the entire four-year liberation struggle."[249] Therefore, EA was dependent mostly upon women. From its 3.000.000 members nationally, 1.740.000 were women.[250] The organisation had several duties that followed a gendered trajectory, including taking care of injured *antartes*, providing moral support to them, organised food handouts for the poor and founding nurseries for children.[251] In the newspaper *Gynaikeia Drasi* (Women's Action), women are encouraged to join EA and assume their gender-specific roles:

> Specifically, we, women, have a duty to ourselves, to our children and to Greece to fight without rest: 1) for daily rations to be given to all members of the family and particularly to children. 2) for an increase in the bread ration 3) for the creation of purchasing cooperatives to replace the black market. 4) for free medical care for their welfare…[252]

In her book, Natalia Apostolopoulou, a former female member of EAM, mentions that in occupied Greece, women got involved in the resistance as "*allhlegguhtises*" (by participating in *Ethniki Allhelegguh*). To illustrate the tremendous work of EA, Apostolopoulou mentions that EA organised approximately 1258 pharmacies, 673 medical clinics, 73 public hospitals, 90 public convalescent homes and 1080 soup kitchens.[253] Ares Velouchiotis, the prominent leader and chief instigator of ELAS, in an article, praises the important contribution of EA in the struggle:

> only the one who ate bread, kneaded and baked by the hands of a woman or girl in [National] Solidarity *(allhlegguhtissas*), [only] the one who was treated from psoriasis and was deloused by the *allhlegguhtissa*, the one who bathed and found warm shelter, the one who saw the solidarity women and solidarity men alongside them opening roads from the snow in the Mount Tzoumerka, carrying

[248] Βερβενιώτη, *Η γυναίκα της Αντίστασης*, 231.
[249] 'Η Δασκάλα στην Αλληλεγγύη,' Αλληλεγγύη: Όργανο Κεντρικής Επιτροπής της Εθνικής Αλληλεγγύης, Νοέμβριος 7, 1944, σ. 2, Αρχείο Σύγχρονης Κοινωνικής Ιστορίας, Αθήνα.
[250] Ζώγια Χρονάκη, "Οι Ελληνίδες στην Αντίσταση 1941-1944" in *Μην Απαλείφεις ποτέ τα Ίχνη: Ο ρόλος των γυναικών στη γερμανική και ελληνική αντίσταση ενάντια στον εθνικοσοσιαλισμό και την γερμανική κατοχή*, επιμ. Θεοδοσία-Σούλα Παυλίδου και Ρουντίγκερ Μπολτς (Παρατηρητής: 1999), 30.
[251] Despoina Fouka Reze mentions in her memoirs that based on the Statute of EPON, women under 23 would be involved in EPON, while the gilrs over 23 will be involved in EA. See more: Φουκα-Ρέζε, *Οργισμένα Χρόνια*, 171. As early as October 29, 1940, the most important groups of Communist prisoners, including women, appealed to the Dictator Ioannis Metaxas asking to be released to send them in the front and the women as nurses. See more Φλάισερ, *Στέμμα και Σβάστικα,* 131.
[252] 'Χρειάζεται Αγώνας για να Κερδίσουμε την Ζωή', Γυναικεία Δράση, αρ. φύλλου 3, Απρίλιος 15, 1942, Εφημερίδες Γυναικών, σ. 4, Βιβλιοθήκη – Αρχείο Χαρίλαος Φλωράκης, Επιμορφωτικό Κέντρο ΚΚΕ.
[253] Αποστολοπούλου, *Περήφανες και Αδούλωτες* , 21.

> food and ammunition, barefoot in the snow, only he can know the great role that the EA played and continues to play.[254]

The second organisation that involved Greek women in mass was the *Eniea Panelladiki Organosi Neon* (EPON- United Panhellenic Organisation of Youth), founded in 1943, which represented the biggest youth resistance organisation against the German occupation not solely in Greece but in Europe. The main difference with EA concerned the age composition of this organisation since it was addressed to young people. In this mixed organisation for young people, women participated in various roles, but their roles were still gender-specific. For instance, Sophia Vlachou, a member of EPON, took over and supervised food handouts in seventeen villages of Fthiotida, while she also organised a clinic for injured *antartes* in the village of Perivlepto.[255] The diverse yet gender-specific roles are also articulated in the memoirs of the former resister Karra, a member of EPON:

> The tasks we had each time were many and varied. Apart from participating in events and demonstrations, it was the hiding of the outlaws, finding *giafkes* (safe house), i.e., places to hide materials or meeting people or weapons, etc. Then there was the organization of maintenance, the survival of the outlaws, the organization of crews for writing on the walls, telethons, handing out flyers, the organization of fund-raisers, the organization of the finances, financial boosters, the lottery parties. Among our serious tasks of political, enlightening and organisational importance was the reception and distribution of the illegal press, which was the animator of the broad masses, editing, giving slogans of the moment.[256]

From Karras' memoirs, it becomes evident that women in EPON were also involved in the organisation of artistic events for the local population, while they also talked with the local population about EAM's ideals and post-war vision. This was called *diafotisi* (enlightenment). The youth was seen as an important target group by EAM; EPON's major mission was to organise culture in every town and therefore train the next generation to be 'builders of the new Greece'.[257] EPON's primary mission concerned the curation of cultural events, the majority of which took place at its locus, in the local EPON club, which was often situated near or in the local school. Moreover, EPON had created a number of social initiatives, including the reconstruction of destroyed houses and the repair of roads, farmed the fields of guerrilla families, volunteered as nurses and teachers, and cleaned public spaces.[258] These roles assumed by young women broke with the patriarchal Greek tradition. This break with tradition was most seen through women's involved in EPON, since young

[254] Άρης Βελουχιώτης, 'ΕΑ, η στοργική μάνα του ΕΛΑΣ,' *Αλληλεγγύη Όργανο Κεντρικής Επιτροπής της Εθνικής Αλληλεγγύης*, Τρίκαλα, Φεβρουάριος 3, 1945, σ. 1, Αρχείο Σύγχρονης Κοινωνικής Ιστορίας.
[255] Βερβενιώτη, *Η γυναίκα της Αντίστασης*, 235.
[256] Μαρία Καρρά, *Επονίτισσα : στους δρόμους και στις γειτονιές της Αθήνας* (Αθήνα: Δωρικός, 1982), 68.
[257] Cited in Tsoutsoumpis, *A History of the Greek Resistance in the Second World War,* 237.
[258] Ibid, 237.

and unmarried women's ability to go out and hang out with men or women of their age unrelated to them, without "compromising their honour (timi)" would have been unimaginable prior to the war.[259]

In Italy, following the establishment of the CLN in September 1943, two months later, in November 1943, on the initiative of the Communist Party, a women's only organisation with important representation in north Italy was established with the aim of coordinating previously spontaneous actions to "assist" the partisan struggle: "It was in November 1943, in a room of a modest flat in Milan, where there was a large red stove (which remained an unforgettable memory),[260] that some women belonging to the various parties of the CLN met to lay the foundations of a unitary and mass organisation."[261] Most women in Italy participated in the resistance through the *Gruppi di Difesa della Donna*. The ANPI national figures show that there were at least 70,000 Italian women organised in the GDD, numbers that led Anna Bravo to claim that the organisation represented "the sites where female mediation between politics and society was exercised and non-elitist acculturation promoted."[262] While at first glance the Women's Committees in France might resemble the organisational structure of the GDD, the latter was much more formalised, with clear hierarchical structures, and women's mobilisation became well-organised through the GDD in comparison to France. This becomes evident in the published guidelines and directions sent to the existing GDD groups in each province, city, and town, communicated through a top-down approach:

> To all G.D.D. women, and in particular to those who work in care work:
>
> Let us make a few more practical suggestions, which each woman will then complete with her own initiative and heart:
>
> -to avoid hurting the feelings of people in misery and pain by presenting oneself in an unflattering appearance and manner, in an overly restless and professional manner, in an unfriendly manner.
>
> -Do not take on the task of too many visits, in order to be able to follow up personally and attentively each family, even visiting them more than once a month.

[259] Even though there were women teachers before the war, this profession did not guarantee an immediate acceptance of women's entrance in the public realm. For more: Hart, *New Voices in the Nation*, 152.
[260] The room with the red stove is surely what Teresa Noce would define in 1946 as her small office. Mentioned in Giovanni Rinaldi, *I treni della felicità (*Ediesse: Rome, 2009), 21.
[261] Nadia Spano & Fiamma Camarlinghi, *La questione femminile nella politica del P.C.I*, Prefazione di Camilla Ravera (Donne e Politica, Roma, 1973), 86.
[262] Cited in Caterina Liotti e Natascia Corsini, *Pane, Pace, Libertà: I Gruppi di Difesa della Donna per l'Assistenza ai combattenti della Libertà a Modena (1943-1945)* (Modena: Centro documentazione donna, 2018): 52.

> -Do not make more than one or two visits a day, in order to be able to remember the data collected, to cash the report but for obvious conspiratorial reasons, do not enter and leave the house with surprise notes, with lists of no more than a few names, with too large sums...
>
> - Never leave your own names and contact details of other guests....[263]

As it becomes evident from the directives, and in line with Laura Orlandini's argument, the desire to form a mass women's organisation met several purposes: to promote assistance to families during the hardest phases of the war and to coordinate the antifascist women's initiatives that had emerged spontaneously in parts of occupied Italy.[264] In another document, women's participation in various activities through the GDD is illustrated:

> A group of Giovanni was established in this municipality with the aim of financing partisan activities... This group has, since the beginning of 1945, collaborated closely with the G.L. "Val Germanasca" Brigade, working in particular on the uninterrupted development of the following activities:
>
> I) Assistance to Freedom Fighters
>
> II) Aid to the families of those who fell for freedom and to those left behind after enemy raids
>
> III) Relief to freedom fighters captured by the enemy
>
> IV) Flowers to the graves of the fallen
>
> V) Distribution and dissemination of the underground press.[265]

These activities largely align with established gendered divisions of labour. Behind the creation of the GDD, there were the gender norms and ideas of the 1930s and 1940s Italy that recognised women primarily as mothers and wives.[266]

Arguably, the GDD was also much more well-organised and played a crucial role in mobilising women and coordinating their actions during the resistance than any other organisation in France. Moreover, the organisation was not solely concerned with the pressing needs of the war but was preoccupied with offering women opportunities for

---

[263] 'A tutte le donne dei G.D.D e in particolare a quante prestano la loro opera nel lavoro assistenziale', Gruppi di Difesa della Donna e per l'Aiuto ai Combattenti della Libertà : comitato centrale di Assistenza per Milano e Provincia , Fondo : CLN ALTA ITALIA (CLNAI) Serie: Periodo Clandestino, sottoserie : Carteggio con partiti politici, organizzazioni di massa e CLN di base, Fascicolo : ''Carteggio del Clnai con i gruppi di difesa della donna' , Gruppi Difesa Donna: Busta 14 Fasc. 37, Istituto Nazionale Ferruccio Parri, Milan.

[264] Laura Orlandini, *La democrazia delle donne. I Gruppi di Difesa della Donna nella costruzione della Repubblica (1943-1945)* (Roma: BraDypUS, 2018), 17.

[265] 'Relazione', Busta 1, Fasc. 5, Fondo Anna Barullo, Istituto Piemontese Per La Storia Della Resistenza E Della Società contemporanea 'Giorgio Agosti', Turin.

[266] This internalised idea of women's primary roles as mothers and wives appears in Teresa Noce's letter to her unborn son from prison, where Noce mentions in regards to the inability of the other inmates to understand her involvement in politics "and those women, who also could not understand why I, 'in that situation', i.e. a girl and a mother, had to be put in prison 'for politics' (i.e. for something that only concerned men!)..." Cited in: Anna Tonelli, *Nome di battaglia Estella: Teresa Noce, una donna comunista del Novecento* (Firenze: Le Monnier, 2020), 79.

political involvement in view of the resumption of democratic life post-war.[267] The GDD's importance also lies in its contribution to laying the foundations for women's post-war mobilisation through the UDI, providing women with new forms of political mobilisation in post-war Italy, having provided women with organisational capabilities and network to keep a post-war mobilisation of women in the public space and political life of post-war Italy. UDI's role in mobilising women post-war cannot be comparable to the UFF in France vis-à-vis the impact on women's post-war mobilisation and political subjectivity. For Greece, providing such a comparison with EAM's post-war contribution vis-à-vis women, is rather difficult to assess to the same extent as for the GDD. Due to the outcome of the Civil War (1946-1949) and post-war right-wing state, women's gains and new forms of political mobilisation developed through EAM's revolutionary struggle were largely postponed until the 1970s/1980s.

It is important to note that women in the resistance did not experience the war and occupation solely through their gender; instead, other categories, such as class, ethnicity and race, influenced their participation in the resistance. For instance, as Franca Bortolloti rightly notes regarding Italian working-class women, the women working in the factories for forced labour in Germany were in a worse situation compared to men. Often, these workers were wives of soldiers at the front, and deportation for them meant leaving children at home without parents.[268] The overall GDD guidelines demonstrate that the class element was downplayed to highlight working women's current situation by attributing it to the war and occupation, rather than providing a more thorough class-based analysis.

Both the GDD and EAM had to downplay their communist and socialist ideals and adopt a less political language to attract women from the broader political spectrum and population to their ranks. However, EAM, aside from its defensive nationalism that aimed to resist the triple occupation through a variety of actions, was a national, patriotic, social movement that aimed to modernise Greek politics, and in that sense, it differed from other resistance movements in France and Italy vis-à-vis its radicality and its emancipatory politics vis-à-vis women. As Hart writes, between 1941 and 1944, EAM worked to change the pre-war participatory structures and redefine Greek nationhood in the context of wartime mobilisation. One of EAM's goals was to push for gender equality, as part of the process to redefine the meaning of the nation and citizenship.[269] This was indeed reflected in EPON, EAM's youth organisation, which created new patterns of political mobilisation, based on

[267] Orlandini, *La democrazia delle donne,* 17.
[268] Bortolotti, *Le donne della Resistenza antifascista e la questione femminile in Emilia-Romagna*, 47.
[269] Hart, *New Voices in the Nation*, 103.

collective action and active participation in politics. Moreover, EAM's most important document in relation to women's position in the movement, published in February 1943, was much more ideologically coloured and imagined a more radical break with the past: "What forms does this struggle take today and what should be the contribution of women? This is what we will try to see today with the various categories of village and city women, giving first place to the female worker who represents the most pioneering, most militant section of the women of Greece."[270] The document continues by citing different categories of women and how they can be involved in the revolutionary struggle, as female workers, female farmers, teachers, students, and so on.[271] The overall approach of EAM in Greece regarding women's position in the movement and women's condition in society envisioned a more radical break with the past than was the case for the GDD. EAM provided a transformative radical political project, aiming at assembling and channelling collective capacity to act to produce political effects vis-à-vis its women's members, while its emancipatory politics regarding young (unmarried) women were much more radical also due to the stronger patriarchal nature of Greek society at the time.

Conclusion

In sum, women participated in mass in the resistance movements that emerged in all three countries, through different and sometimes multiple frames, assuming various roles in the struggle. Gendered perception continued to exist, which, in turn, created a division of labour between men and women. Yet militarised gendered performances in the context of the resistance and more broadly in national liberation wars and irregular conflicts are more complex than any gender binary would suggest. Women participation in the resistance encompassed a diversity of roles and a flexibility based also on specific organisational needs. Women were able to transgress their 'motherly' role and become 'female fighters' in instances but female partisans also assumed 'motherly roles', acting as nurses or taking care of the partisans with maybe a gun in their hand. Female resisters blended 'feminine' and masculine practices or moved from one to another based on the time/space specific needs.[272]

---

[270] Κεντρική Επιτροπή του Εθνικού Απελευθερωτικού Μετώπου, *Πώς Πρέπει να Δουλεύη η Γυναικά στο Εθνικό Απελευθερωτικό Μέτωπο*, 5.

[271] Similar documents, books and articles elaborating on women's involvement in liberation struggles appeared during the 1950s-1980s in the context of anticolonial wars. See more: Thomas Sankara, "Women's role in the democratic and popular revolution" in *Women's liberation and the African freedom struggle* (New York, London, Montreal, Sydney: Pathfinder, 1990), 12th edition 2021, 67-70; Adele Balasingham, Women and Revolution: The Role of Women in Tamil Eelam National Liberation Struggle (1983); Gulf Committee and Oman Solidarity Campaign.

[272] Orna Sasson-Levy, "Women's Memories of Soldiering: An Intersectionality Perspective in Gendered Wars," in *Gendered Memories: Feminist Conversations on War, Genocide and Political Violence*, ed. Ayse Gul Altinay, and Andrea Pető (London; New York: Routledge, 2016), 116.

These alternative gender acts, such as protesting in the public sphere, acting as couriers or/and even 'acting' as housewives for the partisans, involved "both *subversion* of and *compliance* with hegemonic gender-ed and sex-ed norms, thereby dismantling the subordination/resistance binary common to feminist scholarship."[273] Despite following a gendered trajectory in their participation in the resistance, women manifested their agency to become involved in dangerous political acts. The resistance experience, beyond ahistorical binaries of oppression/emancipation, provided them with the necessary skills and awareness to question their position in society. This break with the past was possible due to both the irregular nature of war, that allowed a broader participation of women, and the patriotic nature of the struggle, that incorporated women in the struggle through a gendered perception of citizenship. Therefore, to understand women's gendered mobilisation in the resistance, we first need to provide the context upon it emerged, examining the traditions of gendered citizenship in 1930s/1940s Greece, Italy, and France.

[273] Much of my conceptualisation here is influenced and built upon: El Said, Meari and Pratt, 'Introduction' in *Rethinking Gender in Revolutions and Resistance*, 11-15.

Chapter 2: Traditions of Gendered Citizenship in 1930s/1940s Greece, Italy, and France

Introduction

To write the history of women in the resistance in three different countries necessitates first placing women in their historically specific context from which they emerged**.** The social conditions and changes in each country played a vital role in the production of gendered political mobilisation in the interwar period, and, by extension, influenced women's entrance and overall participation in the resistance during the war. While recognising the different positioning of women within France, Italy and Greece, and the need for a nuanced intersectional analysis, along with paying attention to local particularities, it remains impossible to provide an encompassing framework and exhaustive analysis of women's lives, in their diversity, in the interwar period in all three countries. Instead, I will briefly examine the traditions of gendered mobilisation in the 1930s/1940s societies that influenced women's entry and experience in the resistance, particularly within the left. This chapter, therefore, will focus on the different social underpinnings of gender upon which the resistance emerged and took place in the three cases, providing certain details on the national specificity and national context. While recognising the importance of other social categories and factors, such as class/ethnicity/race among others, the national context and gendered citizenship of the 1930s/1940s is crucial to understanding women's participation in the resistance. For clarity reasons, I will follow a country-by-country approach in this chapter to better situate these left-wing women in the national context.

2.1. Women's Role in Interwar France: femme, mère et marraine

In France, following the First World War, a broad spectrum of women, both communist and catholic, became involved in political affairs. Because of the Great War, women took on social and professional roles previously inaccessible to them. Yet in the years following the war, this trend was reversed, with women's suffrage being rejected by the French senate in 1922.[274] This hostility was closely associated with the concerns vis-à-vis France's failing birth rate, which became prominent in the French political discourse throughout the 1920s

[274] Sian Reynolds, "Introduction" in *France Between the Wars: Gender and Politics* (London; New York: Routledge, 1996), 37.

and 1930s.[275] The period was characterised by a natalist push in support of women's return to the home and to family duties. The French Parliament repeatedly discussed how to deal with the country's falling birth rate. As a result, the 1920 law criminalised abortion, the selling of contraception, and 'anti-conception propaganda', and promoted support measures to increase the number of births.[276] Pro-natalist sentiment was strong not just among Catholics but also among many other parts of French society concerned about the demographic disaster caused by the war, including within the Left. Thus, in inter-war France, the legislation of 'the private familial world' and women's bodies stood at the forefront of public debate and their reproductive ability was a matter of public debate and concern. This pronatalist turn, following the war, became evident even in the newly founded communist party too. *LOuvriére,* the journal of female workers published by the French Communist Party, wrote on April 10, 1924:

> the state does not have the right to refuse women, who do not have the means to raise a child, access to an abortion under the best conditions, which means practiced in hospitals using the most modern methods of science so long as it does not assure the mother, by means of a basic allowance, the economic independence which would permit her to dedicate herself to her maternal task.[277]

As Susan R. Grayzel demonstrates, fears regarding the low birthrate in France, in comparison with the German birthrate, led protonatalists to emphasise women's fundamental role in producing potential future soldiers. In response to this, women activists and politicians throughout the political spectrum deployed political maternalism, using this narrative of their roles as mothers of the nation to justify the need for political rights.[278] The demographic question remained central to the Republican consensus and to the mobilisation of patriotism in the face of a potential national threat throughout the 1930s.[279]

Within this context, in social and family welfare, women played an important role in shaping French politics in novel ways.[280] Wartime experiences increased women leaders,

---

[275] Reynolds, *France Between the Wars*, 18-20. See also: Susan R. Grayzel, *Women's Identities at War: Gender, Motherhood, and Politics in Britain and France during the First World War* (London; Chapel Hill, N.C: University of North Carolina Press, 1999), 86-87.
[276] Reynolds, *France Between the Wars*, 18-20.
[277] Cited in Christine Bard, Jean-Louis Robert, "The French Communist Party and Women 1920-1939: From "Feminism" to Familialism"" in *Women and Socialism - Socialism and Women: Europe Between the World Wars,* ed. Helmut Gruber and Pamela Graves (New York, Oxford: Berghahn Books, 1998), 340, pp. 321-347, https://doi.org/10.1515/9781785330063-016,
[278] Grayzel, *Women's Identities at War,* 86, 223.
[279] Bard and Robert, "The French Communist Party and Women 1920-1939," in *Women and Socialism - Socialism and Women*, 341.
[280]Caroline Campbell, "Gender and Politics in Interwar and Vichy France," *Contemporary European History* 27, no. 3 (2018): 483, doi:10.1017/S0960777317000108.

both within the left and Catholic,[281] and their commitment to urge women to pursue higher education, participate in politics, and oppose Napoleonic Code-era family regulations, which deprived women of individual rights and subordinated women to their husbands' and fathers' authority. Despite the overall mobilisation, the legal situation of Frenchwomen during the Third Republic, entrenched in the Napoleonic Code, did not recognise them as equal citizens. Women had no legal status and were denied citizenship under the republic. Any progress was associated with their rights as mothers and wives, rather than as political subjects of the republic. Up until the end of the Second World War, women not only remained non-citizens of the Republic, but they were also non-persons before the law.[282] French women were "barred from any formal share in parliamentary or even local politics" since they were not allowed to vote or stand for election prior to 1944.[283]

At the same time, French feminism was rather conservative regarding women's suffrage. For fear that women's suffrage would overturn the Republic if all women voted, most feminists, even within the left, preferred to avoid such an outcome until the conditions were perceived as ripe. As Christina Bard and Jean Luis Robert argue, in the 1920s and early 1930s, prior to the emergence of the popular front, "the political culture of France favoured the "enlightened minorities," and for men as well as women, political engagement was exceptional."[284] Leon Richer, a co-founder of the *Ligue française pour le droit des femmes* (LFDF- French League for Women's Rights), argued that women's minds were not educated in republican principles yet and "the feminine mind was still too crushed by the yoke of the Church." Based on that, he feared that giving women's suffrage could end up voting against the republic or for conservative parties.[285] In the same pattern, Leon Blum was on record as stating that women should enter politics "from the top" rather than "from the bottom," and he was well aware of the opposition of most members of the Radical Party, his key parliamentary partners during the Popular Front governance (1936-1937), as well as many

[281] For more on the mobilisation of Catholic, conservative and right-wing women in the Interwar France: Cheryl Koos, and Daniella Sarnoff, "France" in Women, Gender and Fascism in Europe 1919-1945, ed. Kevin Passmore (New Brunswick, New Jersey: Rutgers University Press, 2003), 168-188; Magali Della Sudda, "Socio-histoire des formes de politisation des femmes conservatrices avant le droit de suffrage en France et en Italie. La Ligue patriotique des Françaises (1902–1933) et l'Unione fra le donne cattoliche d'Italia (1909–1919)," (PhD diss., École des Hautes Études en Sciences Sociales, Paris, 2007).
[282] Charles Sowerwine, "Introduction" in *Sisters or Citizens? Women and Socialism in France since 1876* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982), 6.
[283] Reynolds, "Introduction" in *France Between the Wars* 2.
[284] Bard and Robert, "The French Communist Party and Women 1920-1939," in *Women and Socialism - Socialism and Women*, 324.
[285] Sowerwine, "Introduction," in *Sisters or Citizens?* 7.

Socialists, to female suffrage.[286] The continuation of the republican regime was perceived as more important than equal rights.[287]

This role of 'enlightened minorities' was also reflected in the engagement of a few exceptional women within the communist movement in the 1920s and 1930s, as one of the prominent examples of Martha Desrumeaux (1897–1982) manifests. The latter started working at a young age and rose to prominence in the Textile Federation of the North, serving on the Central Committee. She stood out during strikes for her physical bravery, aggressive speech, and ability to take charge during the strikes.[288] Another example is that of Maria Rabaté, who headed the women's committees in the northern zone with Claudine Chomat during the resistance. Having joined the communists in 1921 and worked as a contributor to *L'Ouvrière*, she continued to work throughout the 1920s/1930s as an organiser, and recruiter amongst local women for the Communist Party. In March 1935, Jacques Duclos appointed Maria Rabaté as secretary of the National Committee of the World Committee of Women Against War and Fascism (with Bernadette Cattanéo).[289] Moreover, the overall gendered division of labour favoured the recruitment of those who had a communist family political socialisation, or who were linked to party cadres through marriage; Pennetier and Pudal mention that fifty two percent of the female cadres involved with the communist party in the 1930s were married to a militant.[290] Yet this does not mean that their involvement was always accepted even if they were married with a 'comrade'. Yvonne Laurent, a communist militant involved with *Comité Mondial des Femmes de Vichy* and later a resistance member, is indicative of this. Yvonne had wanted to join the Communist Party since 1934 but as she would later explain, she had to fight against the ideas of her husband, a member of the *L'Association républicaine des anciens combattants* (ARAC - Veterans' Republican Association) who never joined the communist party formally, and who "found it difficult to accept that a woman could be a militant without her husband."[291] She eventually joined in 1936.[292]

Moreover, the government of the Popular Front (1936-1938), which saw the inauguration of the first three women ministers, along with the Spanish Civil War (1936-

[286] Reynolds, "Women and the Popular Front in France: The Case of the Three Women Ministers," *French History* 8, no. 2 (1994): 197.
[287] Sowerwine, "Introduction," in *Sisters or Citizens?* 8.
[288] Bard and Robert, "The French Communist Party and Women 1920-1939," in *Women and Socialism - Socialism and Women,* 324-325
[289] Le Maitron, RABATÉ Maria [née BERNUCHON Maria, Anne], https://maitron.fr/spip.php?article75179.
[290] Claude Pennetier and Bernard Pudal, "La Part des femmes, des femmes a part," in *Le sujet communiste: identites militantes et laboratoires du «moi»* Claude Pennetier and Bernand Pudal (Presses Universitaires de Rennes, 2014), 176.
[291] Ibid, 179.
[292] Le Maitron, LAURENT Yvonne, https://maitron.fr/spip.php?article116408.

1939), provided women with opportunities to engage in various political activities. In 1936, the PCF abandoned its prior attempts to organise young women inside the mixed Communist youth organisation, the *Jeunesse Communiste*, as part of its Popular Front policy and established a distinct organisation for young women. Softening its prior revolutionary rhetoric, the PCF now focused more on adjusting its discourse on women to meet its new agenda.[293] The Young Communist veterans in charge of the newly formed *Union des Jeunes Filles de France* (UJFF - Union of Young French Women) worked hard to build an organisation whose activities and publications would appeal to the masses of young working women to attract more people in their ranks. To that purpose, they planned events for young women, such as fashion exhibitions and cooking and sewing workshops, and produced a newspaper under the name *Jeunes filles de France*, modelled after the commercial women's press. Encouraged by party authorities, the organisation and its press focused heavily on love, fashion, and movies.[294]

The UJFF's head, Danielle Casanova, who had been involved to the Young Communist League of France previously, established the tone for the new organisation when she said that it would relate its activities to "the lives and even the hopes of the young woman."[295] As Susan Whitney explains, this was an attempt to develop new models of communist femininity and female political involvement to attract more women to the ranks of the party. Within the UJFF, the ideal profile of the Young Communist woman as a comrade in the working-class struggle that had prevailed in the 1920s and early 1930s was replaced. The 'new woman' was portrayed as an attractive, sophisticated young woman as well as a potential wife and mother. Rather than being committed to gender-neutral revolutionary activity, young Communist women were characterised by their moral rectitude, commitment to marriage and motherhood, and gender-specific public engagement.[296] Writing in 1936, Cilly Vassard, a prominent communist in 1930s France, demonstrates this mentality of gender-specific mobilisation based on difference: "our party, without any reservation or restraint, is in favour of absolute equality for women in all spheres… But the feminists, women who are often well educated and have a level of education that would enable them to occupy all positions, find themselves blocked in their careers by a barrier that has only their gender as its cause."[297] This is not to say that the UJFF excluded young women from

[293] Bard and Robert, "The French Communist Party and Women 1920-1939," in *Women and Socialism - Socialism and Women,* 322.
[294] Susan B. Whitney, "Embracing the Status Quo: French Communists, Young Women and the Popular Front," *Journal of Social History* 30, no. 1 (1996): 29.
[295] Cited in Ibid, 29.
[296] Ibid, 29.
[297] Cited in Pennetier and Pudal, "La Part des femmes, des femmes a part," in *Le sujet communiste,* 166. (pp. 165-189).

politics. Rather, it attempted to involve them in ways that were perceived as more compatible with accepted ideals of femininity in the 1930s.[298] According to Marie-Claude Vaillant-Couturier, who participated in the establishment of UJFF, this female-only organisation wished to tackle the mistrust around the mixed membership of the communist youth. Indeed, in 1938, it claimed 19,000 members, including young girls from a variety of political backgrounds.[299] If compared to the numbers of female adherents in the 1920s, there was a clear benefit of this gender-specific mobilisation. According to Brigitte Studer, prior to the popular front strategy, the French Communist Party had 2,600 female members in 1924, 3 to 4 per cent, while this figure fell to 200 in 1929, a representation of 0.6 per cent within the party.[300] Moreover, the Central Committee declined from 15 percent women in 1920 to only six per cent in 1922, with a total absence in the 1930s.[301] Non-mixing was a strategy adopted to help remove the obstacles to women's involvement. From the perspective of the PCF, this change in approaching increasing its membership numbers was successful, presumably because it fitted with the organisation's new goals and its newly recruited membership, male and female, which was composed of working-class people who were devoted to conventional gender norms and family values.[302]

Further, for women who became politicised prior to the war and the resistance, the role of the UJFF is often signalled out as the key point in their politicisation.[303] For instance, Francine Fromond joined the UJFF in 1933, and quickly took a leading role. She was later involved in the resistance, parachuted into France in 1942, where she set up a radio station. Fromond headed the underground communist organisation in the southern zone, where she was responsible for liaising with the Communist International through her radio station.[304] The antifascism of the 1930s was gendered in nature, and it was conceptualized as such by both feminist communist activists and their male comrades. Hence, a gender-specific

[298] Whitney, "Embracing the Status Quo," 29-30.
[299] Catherine Vandel, "Mémoires de "jeunes filles" pas forcément "bien rangées"," *Humanite.fr,* Mars 8, 2013, https://www.humanite.fr/-/danielle-casanova/memoires-de-jeunes-filles-pas-forcement-bien-rangees.
[300] Brigitte Studer, "Communisme et féminisme," *Clio*: *Femmes Gender Histoire* 41 (2015): 141, DOI : https://doi.org/10.4000/clio.12393.
[301] Bard and Robert, "The French Communist Party and Women 1920-1939," in in *Women and Socialism - Socialism and Women*, 323.
[302] Ibid, 343.
[303] Reynolds, "The lost generation of french feminists? anti-fascist women in the 1930S," *Women's Studies International Forum* (November–December 2000): 683.
[304] Le Maitron, "FROMOND Francine, Albertine [Pseudonyme à Moscou : Madeleine DUPUY]," Dictionnaire biographique du mouvement ouvrier français, https://maitron.fr/spip.php?article24419.

antifascism, based on women's maternal qualities and the ideas about their position in society, was constructed throughout the 1930s.[305]

This gendered antifascism was manifested in the division of labour during the French (and international) solidarity towards Republican Spain. The Spanish Civil War provided opportunities for communist women in France to mobilise politically. As General Francisco Franco's rebel army invaded northern Spain and tightened its siege of Madrid in March 1937, working-class women in Paris' banlieues expanded their humanitarian assistance efforts in support of the Spanish Republic. Francine Escande, born in 1918 and a former resister on the side of her husband Paul Escande, for example, mentions that she was antifascist prior to the war due to the education she received at home and "because it could hardly be otherwise *at that time*," referring to the Spanish Civil War and the republican war refugees that arrived in French soil through the Pyrenees.[306] Yet this political mobilisation was also gendered in nature. Images of Spanish women threatened by or fighting in the conflict were prominent throughout the war, with posters that directly appealed to French women for help. This help included relief programmes, which appealed to gender distinctions, and mobilised French communist women to the forefront of the antifascist fight in gendered ways.[307] The Brigades relied heavily on women's participation, albeit this was obviously contingent on the conventional division of labour among genders in activist labour. If JC leaders and volunteers joined the International Brigades, UJFF leaders and members travelled to Spain to transport supplies of milk to the Spanish people. Madeleine Braun (1907–1980), a party sympathiser, served as general secretary of the International Committee for the Coordination of Information for the Republic of Spain's assistance from 1936 to 1937. Marguerite de Saint-Prix, who was a pacifist during the Great War, led the French Section of the Spanish Republic's Committee of International Aide to Women and Children.[308] While the UJFF condemned the government's non-intervention stance, UJFF militants were discouraged from joining directly in the International Brigades. In most cases, women travelled to Spain with their partner, husband, or brother.[309] Instead, young Communist women were urged to

[305] Astrid Swenson, "Memory, Gender, and Antifascism in France and Britain in the 1930s," in *The Gender of Memory: Cultures of Remembrance in Nineteenth and Twentieth-Century Europe*, ed. Sylvia Paletschek and Sylvia Schraut (Frankfurt a. M.; New York, 2008), 125, 127.
[306] Francine Escande, "Préface," in *Les Femmes dans la Résistance, Actes du Colloque* (Paris : Éditions du Rocher, 1975), 23.
[307] Laurence Brown, ""POUR AIDER NOS FRERES D'ESPAGNE", Humanitarian Aid, French Women, and Popular Mobilization during the Front Populaire," *French Politics, Culture & Society* 25, no. 1 (Spring 2007): 30.
[308] Both examples cited in Bard and Robert, "The French Communist Party and Women 1920-1939," in *Women and Socialism - Socialism and Women,* 330.
[309] Édouard Sill, « "Nos camarades femmes" » In *¡Solidarias! Les volontaires étrangères et la solidarité internationale féminine durant la guerre d'Espagne (1936-1939),* éd. Édouard Sill (Rennes: Presses universitaires de Rennes, 2022), 66, https://doi.org/10.4000/books.pur.162740.

concentrate their efforts on offering monetary and emotional support to French young men at the front, as well as the Spanish people. As a result, members of the UJFF knitted and stitched for French volunteers and, beginning in 1937, they became *marraines de guerre* to French soldiers at the front. The following remark in the newspaper *Jeunes filles de France* demonstrates the gender-specific form of UJFF involvement: "The young women of France, who are so sensitive and attuned to human suffering, will knit for the brave militiamen who suffer from cold on the front lines in the battle for freedom. *Marraines attentives*, they will provide the moral support and material aid needed by their brave brothers in the International Brigades."[310] Josette Cothias, who during the resistance was in charge of organising the Women's Resistance Committees in the Nord, Pas-de-Calais, Somme and Aisne, had gone with Jeannette Veermersch, a *Confédération générale du travail unitaire* (CGTU- United General Confederation of Labor) activist,[311] leader of the *Jeunesses Communistes* (JC – Young Communists)and later of the UJFF, to escort a caravan of milk lorries to Spain in support of the Republicans.[312] Even if they managed to join the 'front', there was a gendered division of labour there too. Juliette Ténine, who managed to join the International Brigades in 1937, was involved in the health service of the XIV Brigade and, during the resistance, she acted as a liaison for the FTP and engaged in intelligence activities.[313]

In sum, in interwar France, women within the left were mobilised in the public realm by following a gendered trajectory, largely abiding by traditional constructions of gender that perceived women primarily as mothers and wives. The declaration of war in France on September 3, 1939, in response to Germany's invasion and occupation of Poland and the following defeat during the Battle of France (1940), along with humiliation that came with it, created a rupture with the past; this rupture, in turn, became a window of opportunity for women to mobilise in the resistance in unprecedented numbers and ways and defy any stereotypes that portrayed them as incapable and politically immature to become citizens before the law. Following the defeat and the beginning of the resistance, women in great numbers worked alongside men and fought in the Resistance, and hence, any argument that diminished their capabilities due women's political immaturity would no longer be tenable.

2.2. Women in Interwar Greece: Between Tradition and Modernity

In Greece, the interwar period saw the emergence of a new phase of feminist politics, largely represented by the *Sindesmos gia ta Dikeomata tis Ginaikas* (League for Women's Rights),

[310] Cited in Whitney, "Embracing the Status Quo," 42.
[311] It merged back into the CGT in 1936.
[312] Le Maitron, COTHIAS Josette [COTHIAS Josette, Andrée, Juliette] épouse DUMEIX, Le Dictionnaire biographique du mouvement ouvrier franç, https://maitron.fr/spip.php?article20760.
[313] Le Maitron, TÉNINE Juliette, épouse ALBERT Juliette, https://maitron.fr/spip.php?article132156.

which was founded in 1920 by the music teacher and critic Avra Theodoropoulou. As Margarite Poulos argues, the spread of women's suffrage was the main goal of this new feminism, which had a greater scope than nineteenth century women's movements in Greece. This interwar liberal feminism emerged against the backdrop of the massive demographic shifts that followed the disastrous Asia Minor campaign of 1921–1922, as well as the Bourgeois Revolution led by Prime Minister Eleftherios Venizelos from 1909 and onwards.[314] This political period, until his death in 1936, was marked by a socio-political and economic transformation, with the adoption of a new Constitution, along with the making of primary education compulsory for everyone, which played an important role in reducing women's illiteracy throughout the 1930s.[315]

On the eve of the Asia Minor Catastrophe, as the 1922 defeat in the Greco-Turkish War is referred to in Greece, feminism was largely located within the liberal Venizelist tradition, which primarily focused its efforts primarily on legal reforms.[316] In that period, as Eleni Stamiris explains, middle-class women mobilised for certain women's rights, such as better education, better working conditions, certain social benefits for working women, and a range of other social changes mostly connected to their responsibilities as mothers.[317] This shift to appeal to a broader spectrum of women, across social classes, became inevitable following 1922. The Catastrophe led to massive demographic changes in Greece; indeed, because of the final defeat, more than one million refugees arrived in Greece from 1922 to 1924, which influenced the feminist movement, pushing it towards the needs of working-class women. The dire economic conditions under which many refugees lived resulted in an impressive increase in the number of women employed in various sectors of paid work.[318] For many refugee women, wage labour was a condition of survival to support the family income. In an article at *Rizospastis,* the newspaper affiliated with the Communist Party, the increasing number of women workers becomes apparent: "According to statistics (G. Haritakis et al.) more than 60 thousand women workers are employed in Greek industry, out of a total of 285 thousand workers. The spinning and textile industry employs 20,000 women

[314] While widespread in the Greek historiography, the term Bourgeois Revolution does not imply here that a Greek bourgeoisie only came into existence after 1909. Instead, I follow George Mavrogordatos more nuanced interpretation that the 1909 was a culmination of antagonism between two on the one hand the 'traditional military- bureaucratic' bourgeois, and a 'new entrepreneurial diaspora bourgeoisie' that wished to participate more in Greek politics and welcomed Venizelos entrance into politics. See more: Georgios Mavrogordatos, *Stillborn republic: social coalitions and party strategies in Greece* (Berkeley, I983), I2I-127.
[315] Poulos, *Arms and the Woman*, 117.
[316] Ibid, 119.
[317] Eleni Stamiris, "The Women's Movement in Greece," *New Left Review* 1/158, July/August 1986. https://newleftreview.org/issues/i158/articles/eleni-stamiris-the-women-s-movement-in-greece.pdf
[318] For more: Τμήματος της ΚΕ του ΚΚΕ για την Ισοτιμία και Χειραφέτηση της Γυναίκας, "Οι Γυναίκες Εργάτριες της Προσφυγιάς," σε *1922, Ιμπεριαλιστική Εκστρατεία και Μικρασιατική Καταστροφή,* επιμ. Τμήμα Ιστορίας του ΚΚΕ (Σύγχρονη Εποχή, 2022). See also: Chatzitheodorou, "Ilektra Apostolou,"29.

and the clothing industry employs 14-15 thousand women workers. These figures are inferior to the actual present figures because they were compiled three years ago but even with them alone it is clear that women in Greece have now well and truly entered into production and form a large part of the working class of Greece."[319] As a result of this unprecedented entrance of women into labour market, women first came into contact with organised women's unions, trade unions and politically defined associations. Hence, due to this demographic and socio-economic change, women's paid labour became unsurprisingly a key concern for both women in the feminist movement and, more broadly, the left. Yet as Poulos argues, while this Interwar feminism had indeed a broader appeal to women than in the nineteenth century, it remained remote from the peasant majority or other marginalised groups within the Greek context, which would later be addressed by EAM for the first time during the resistance.[320]

Moreover, as Poulos explains, interwar feminism in Greece was also impacted by the notions of democracy and liberty advanced by the increasingly influential socialist and communist groups. [321] This resulted in contextualising women's suffering within a broader narrative of social struggle and revolution. Similarly to other European communist parties at the time, the KKE's perspective on the advancement of women was directly tied to a wider social change, highlighting that the working class was an ally of women while also rejecting feminism for its reliance on what it saw as a bourgeois view of women's struggle. The party, through its press and publications, emphasised both the necessity to organise working women in unions and the demand for special protection for working women, rejecting the idea that obtaining the right to vote would be a panacea for women's equality.[322] In 1925, when the question of voting was revived, the party publications examined various women's issues, including their stance regarding women's suffrage. Irini Koumioti-Kountouri, (pseudonym Raika, 1901-1936) was the head of the Women's Bureau of the KKE. From the columns of Rizospastis she systematically elaborated the positions of the KKE on the women's issue and the relations between communism and feminism.[323] Raika sets the framework for the communists vis-à-vis women's suffrage: every woman's claim must start

[319] Cited in Ριζοσπάστης (Online version), "Οι Αγώνες των εργαζόμενων γυναικών μέσα από τις σελίδες του," Μάρτιος 25-26, 2017, https://www.rizospastis.gr/story.do?id=9289874.
[320] Poulos, *Arms and the Woman*, 121.
[321] Ibid, 118.
[322] Τόνια Καφετζάκη, Γυναικεία Αμφισβήτηση και Κομμουνιστική Στράτευση: Εργαζόμενες Γυναίκες σε Μεσοπολεμικά Πεζογραφήματα και Άρθρα της Γαλάτειας Καζαντζάκη, *Μνημών* 25 (2003): 55, https://doi.org/10.12681/mnimon.768.
[323] Αγγέλικα Ψαρρά, «Τα "πρώτα κορίτσια" του ΚΚΕ και οι τύχες τους: Έμφυλες πρακτικές μιας βολικής αποσιώπησης» στο Βαγγέλης Καραμανωλάκης – Εύη Ολυμπίτου – Ιωάννα Παπαθανασίου (επιμ.), *Η ελληνική νεολαία στον 20ό αιώνα. Πολιτικές διαδρομές, κοινωνικές πρακτικές και πολιτιστικές εκφράσεις*, Αθήνα, Θεμέλιο, 2010, 433-445. See also Chatzitheodorou, "Ilektra Apostolou," 29.

"from the principle that in today's society it is not possible to liberate women from oppression and that in the struggle for the liberation of women the only natural ally is the working class, the only healthy and positive element on which we can rely."[324]

During the 1920s, KKE's mobilisation strategy did not facilitate the involvement of women in mass in the party. Most well-known women who participated in the communist movement in the 1920s/1930s, Greece were relatives of male cadres. The most prominent example is the communist and later female resister Ilektra Apostolou, a member of KKE with pre-war anti-fascist action and a member of EPON during the resistance, who was also executed by the collaborationist security forces for her involvement in the resistance struggle in 1944. Apostolou was the sister of Lefteris Apostolou, who became the General Secretary of *Omospondia Kommounistikon Neolaion Ellados* (Young Communist League of Greece-OKNE) in 1924. In the same pattern, many women within the Party were married or later on married male cadres and were involved in the movement "at their husband's side", such as Kaiti Zevgou, whose memoir examines her involvement in the communist movement between 1925-1947 on the side of her husband Giannis Zevgos,[325] among others. On that matter, Vervenioti explains that marriage with a comrade was one of the few options available for women working for the party to continue organising in the struggle freely due to the powerful social contract of 'honour' that penetrated every aspect of women's lives.

As it happened in France, within the broader context of the Popular Front policy by Comintern (1934-1939), the KKE's approach started to change in 1934, when Ilektra Apostolou represented Greece in the International Antifascist Conference taking place in Paris the same year. Yet this change did not manage to materialise into something more concrete prior to the war due to the overall political instability of the 1930s, particularly the period between 1932-1936, which saw the restoration of the Monarchy following an illegitimate referendum and the establishment of Ioannis Metaxas' dictatorship on August 4, 1936.[326] During Metaxas' dictatorship, from 1936 to 1941, at least 1,000 to 5,000 people

[324] Γιάννας Κατσιαμπούρα, "Πρώιμος σοσιαλιστικός φεμινισμός: κομμουνίστριες και σοσιαλίστριες στον Μεσοπόλεμο," *Το Μωβ*, Οκτώβριος 31, 2015, https://tomov.gr/2015/10/31/proimos-sosialistikos-feminismos-kommoynistries-sosialistries-ston-mesopolemo/.

[325] Καίτη Ζεύγου, *Με τον Γιάννη Ζέβγο στο επαναστατικό κίνημα* (1980).

[326] Metaxas' brief dictatorial regime in Greece did not have a crystalised position vis-à-vis women. The Metaxas regime, similarly, to an extent, to Benito Mussolini's regime in Italy, had to navigate the demands of social change despite its conservative discourse on women's natural place in the domestic milieu. Therefore, in practice, in line with Poulos and Christos Konstantopoulos' argument, the regime promoted maternalism, which offered women new possibilities to mobilise politically. See more: Poulos, *Arms and the Woman*, 67; see also Christos Konstantopoulos, "Women and the National Youth Organisation of the Greek 4th of August Regime (1936-1941)," (Undergraduate dissertation, Cambridge University, 2019), 31-32. This paradox was also apparent in the establishment of fascist youth organisation, the EON. EON, as was the case for other

were deported to Akronafplia, Agios Efstratios, Folegandros, Anafi, Gavdos, Kimolos, Sifnos, Sikinos, and elsewhere. Among them, many women were also sent to internal exile, either alone or with their children. Prominent women communists were also exiled, such as Ilektra Apostolou, who was sent to exile with her newborn, and Marika Mpartziota, also imprisioned with her 18-month year old, Kaiti Zevgou, Maria Karayiorgi (Agrigiannaki prior to marriage), Margarita Kostaki, and Dionusia Papadomixelaki, among others.[327]

After Greece's success in the Greco-Italian war (1940-1941), the German invasion to rescue its ally and the defeat that followed the Battle of Crete on June 1, 1941, resulted in the Triple Occupation of Greece.[328] As a result of the overall collapse, towards the end of 1941, a New Central Committee was formed by exiled members of the KKE who had escaped from their places of detention and would form the first resistance organisations to fight against the occupier. In that context, founded on September 27, 1941, EAM worked to change the pre-war participatory structures and redefine Greek nationhood in the context of wartime mobilisation.[329] Along with the patriotic nature of the war, the dire economic situation as a result of the Triple Occupation affected women's lives and their household responsibilities and prompted large parts of the female population to join the resistance. In the words of the anthem of *Leuteri Nea* (LN- Free Young Woman), women in the national liberation war "fight to get rid of the threefold slavery, the conqueror, the boss and the man."[330]

2.3. The Italian Fascist Regime, its Gender Politics and the Prosecution of Communists

As far as Italy is concerned, before examining women's gendered mobilisation in the left, it is important to briefly examine the gender politics of the fascist regime and how this evolved during the *ventennio* (1922-1943) due to its long stay in power, as compared also with Metaxas' brief stay in power. Women who would later become involved in the resistance in mass were 'born and raised' under the fascist regime. Studies by Victoria De Grazia, Perry Wilson, Roberta Sassano, Isabella Gianelloni, Ernesto Zucconi, Angelo Piero Cappello, Valentino Rubetti, Mirella Serri, Marco Innocenti and Alessandra Pescarolo are amongst the

youth organisations at the time, both fascist and communist, followed a gendered trajectory with gender-specific roles for its members without challenging the gender binary. However, reaching significantly more girls than previous youth movements, many of its female members participated in a youth organisation and youth extracurricular activities not chosen by their parents and outside the domestic milieu for the very first time. Konstantopoulos, op.cit., 42.

[327] Ευτυχία Τσέα, "Η είσοδος των Ελληνίδων στην πολιτική και το δημόσιο βίο μέσα από το δρόμο της εξορίας. Γυναίκες και εξορία κατά τη διάρκεια του Μεσοπολέμου," (Μεταπτυχιακή εργασία: Εθνικό και Καποδιστριακό Πανεπιστήμιο Αθηνών, 2017), 55-62.

[328] Greece was divided between Germany, Bulgaria and Italy.

[329] Hart, *New Voices in the Nation,* 79.

[330] Cited in Δρόμος της Αριστεράς, "Λεύτερη Νέα," Φεβρουάριος 28, 2019, https://edromos.gr/lefteri-nea/.

many works that examine women's interaction with various aspects of the fascist regime during the v*entennio*.[331] At its establishment in 1921, the gender ideology of the *Partito Nazionale Fascista* (PNF- National Fascist Party) was ambiguous, including on women's suffrage. According to De Grazia, Mussolini promised the vote to women, yet narrowed it down to specific categories of women, such as widows.[332] Indeed, once the Fascist Party came to power in 1922, it introduced a bill to give women the right to vote in local administrative elections, with the law passing in 1925. Nevertheless, most of its members initially were men, and only a few women were involved in *squadristi* activities, such as strikebreaking.[333]

Pronatalism was central to fascism and how it framed its policies vis-à-vis women. Women's distancing from their traditional roles as mothers, wives and housewives in the domestic milieu was seen as something dangerous for the survival of the nation. Motherhood was seen as indispensable for Italy's national strength, and consequently, good Fascist women were expected to have many sons, who would then participate in war and imperial conquest for the honour of Italy.[334] In a cartoon created by Ugo de Vargas, and published in 1933 in the satirical newspaper Marc'Aurelia, a maid is portrayed bringing the phone to her boss. The conversation goes as follows, with the boss asking the maid: Who wants me? A man? – No – A lady? -No -Well, then, who is it? – *A donna-crisi*. [335] The *donna-crisi* in the fascist imagination was a woman dangerous to the national interests: this modern type of woman is pictured as thin, with a sterile body, which implies that she will not be able to bear children and hence fulfill her 'true' role in the society by becoming the prolific *donna-madre*. This thin without curves, portrayed as a masculinised body, contrasts with the feminine curvaceous body, able to bear children.[336] Mussolini had indeed declared in his ascension speech in 1927: "That the most fundamental, essential element in the political, and therefore economic, and moral, influence of a nation lies in its demographic strength...Italy, if she is

[331] Victoria De Grazia, *Le donne nel regime fascista* (Marsilio, Venezia, 1993); Roberta Sassano, *Camicette Nere: le donne nel Ventennio fascista*, in El Futuro del Pasado, n. 6 (2015): 253-280; Isabella Gianelloni, *Cara Contessa: Le donne e il Fascismo* (Rubbettino, 2014); Valentino Rubetti, *Fascismo al Femminile: La donna fra focolare e mobilizzazione* (Roma: Armando Editore, 2019); Ernesto Zucconi*, Fascismo al femminile: Le donne nel Ventennio* (Pinerolo: Novantico Editrice, 2019); Angelo Piero Cappello, *Fasciste: Donne in marcia verso Roma, 1919-1922* (Ianieri Edizioni, 2022); Marco Innocenti, *Le Signore del Fascismo: Donne in un Mondo di Uomini* (Milano: Bur Rizzoli, 2021); Mirella Serri, *Mussolini ha fatto tanto per le donne! Le radici fasciste del maschilismo italiano* (Milano: Longanesi, 2022).; Alessandra Pescarolo, *Il lavoro delle donne nell'Italia contemporanea* (Viella, 2019).
[332] Victoria De Grazia, *How Fascism Ruled Women: Italy, 1922-1945* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1992), 37.
[333] Wilson, "Italy," in *Women, Gender and Fascism in Europe,* 12.
[334] Penelope Morris and Perry Willson, "La Mamma: Italian Mothers Past and Present," in *La Mamma. Interrogating a national stereotype* (Palgrave, 2018), 9.
[335] Cited in Natasha V. Chang, *The Crisis-Woman: Body Politics and the Modern Woman in Fascist Italy* (University of Toronto Press, 2015), 4-5.
[336] Ibid, 3.

to count for anything in the world, must have a population of not less than 60 million inhabitants by the middle of this century up from approximately 40 million."[337] To support this population campaign, the regime introduced measures with the aim of encouraging Italian women and families to procreate. These efforts ranged from expanding welfare payments and tax breaks to providing better health care for women, and even compensating women who produced more than the state's aim of five children per household.[338]

In the beginning, some women wished to claim a broader place in the fascist movement beyond their roles as wives and mothers of male members. The *Fasci Femminili* (FF- Women's Clubs) were first founded in 1920 in Monza, Milan and they were soon established in other urban centres in the North. Membership varied from women who were disillusioned with the ability of liberal democracy to transform Italy closer to their needs and saw the movement as a formidable force to more conservative lower middle-class women, who saw the movement as a means to defeat the communist threat to the regime, as represented by the glorious October Revolution (1917) in Russia.[339] However, upon the establishment of Mussolini's dictatorship in 1925, the party's gender ideology started to crystallise more clearly. Despite the initial ambivalence of the party regarding women's position within the party and the fascist movement and its support for women's suffrage, after banning all opposition and with the establishment of the dictatorship, the suffrage bill passed in 1925 was, in practice, meaningless. [340] In 1930, the full subordination of women's section to the male hierarchy became official when the establishment of the dictatorship restricted the previous autonomy of the Women's Groups. Elisa Majer Rizzioli, previously appointed as the Inspectress of the Women's Groups in the party, also holding a post in the Party Directorate, was forced to resign and the Inspectorate was abolished.[341] Once the last piece of autonomy was abolished, a centrally driven push for women's membership took place. Each party branch was obliged to have a *Fascio Femminile*, run by a secretary. Superficially, what seemed like a push for women's participation in the party was always subordinated to the male hierarchy.[342]

In practice, in the long run, the Party had to adapt to the demands of social change and provide women with opportunities to transgress their motherly role and become involved

[337] Cited in Lauren E. Forcucci, "Battle for Births: The Fascist Pronatalist Campaign in Italy 1925 to 1938," *Journal of the Society for the Anthropology of Europe* 10 (2010): 4, https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1556-5823.2010.00002.x.
[338] Ibid, 5.
[339] Wilson, "Italy," in *Women, Gender and Fascism in Europe,* 12.
[340] Slaughter, *Women and the Italian Resistance,* 15.
[341] Wilson, "Italy," in *Women, Gender and Fascism in Europe,* 16.
[342] Ibid, 18.

in the public space leading to an uneasy balance between discourse and praxis. Despite the party's propaganda, women's position in Fascist Italy was much more complex, with contradictions between the wish of the Fascist regime to restrict women to their clearly defined gender roles of mother and housewife and the actual situation regarding women's position. Staying in power for twenty years, the fascist regime both influenced its female subjects and was also influenced by the specific needs and changing nature of the society it governed.[343]

For the left, the consolidation of the fascist regime and its repression of any democratic opposition led to the prosecution of antifascists, while many had to flee to other countries to avoid being prosecuted. Between 1926 and 1943, 15806 antifascists were referred to the Special Court for the Defence of the State, including 748 women.[344] Prior to 1922, women's involvement in the newly founded communist party was small; PCI female members were solely 400.[345] By 1926, with the transition to clandestinity, the possibility of engaging with the communist movement became even more restricted. Nevertheless, in the twenty years of fascism experience, a minority of predominantly left-wing women discussed below decided to resist the fascist dictatorship, which forced them into operating in a clandestine way. The prosecution of communists, leftists and antifascists more broadly during the twenty-year period of fascism gave them both a political experience that proved important when the resistance was transformed into a mass movement in 1943, and a more crystallised, antifascist, identity. As Olga Prati points out specifically about the communists that represented the biggest threat to the regime which would later become involved in the resistance, "The communists kept alive a clandestine organisation with a party character, linked to the headquarters, with a work programme and propaganda capacity: circulation of the 'Unita', writing on walls, red flags on 1 May. The old comrades remember an exceptional commitment to the celebration in 1930 of the anniversaries of the Soviet Revolution."[346]

The women who actively opposed fascism during the ventennio did not solely take a political stance. They also had to work clandestinely for the communist movement. For instance, Rina Chiarini, an antifascist from Empoli, became a member of the Communist

[343] Paul Corner, "Women in Fascist Italy. Changing Family Roles in the Transition from an Agricultural to an Industrial Society," *European History Quarterly* 23, no. 1 (1993): 64

[344] Giovanni de Luna, *Donne in oggetto, L'antifascismo nella società italiana, 1922-1939* (Bollati Boringhieri, 1995), 17.
[345] Ibid, 96.
[346] Olga Prati, "Le Donne Ravennati Nell'Antifascismo e nella resistenza," in *Le donne ravennati nell'antifascismo e nella Resistenza: dalle prime lotte sociali alla Costituzione della Repubblica*: [atti del Convegno tenuto a Conselice, 1976], ed. G. Franco Casadio, and Jone Fenati (Ravenna: Edizioni del girasole, 1978), 57.

Party in 1926. During that period, she had to work in clandestinity, with her roles being articulated in her 1974 personal memoir; varying from distribution of clandestine press (L'Unita), to attending party appointments and making other necessary connections.[347] Those who had to flee to France also formed the antifascist opposition from abroad. This small group of exiled communists organised strikes, and demonstrations while in exile in France in the 1930s, kept the flame of antifascism alive and some were later involved in the French resistance. After the capitulation in 1943, some of these communists, and more broadly antifascists, even crossed the borders and went back to join the Italian resistance.

There was a small number of prominent women among these left-wing exiles. The most prominent example is the communist Teresa Noce, one of the founding members of the Italian Communist Party in 1921.[348] Noce, who was editor of *La voce della gioventù* at the time, had already suffered an arrest in Milan in 1923. In 1926, she was forced into exile with her husband, Luigi Longo, first in Moscow and then in France. Noce then participated in the Resistance in France by being among the first organising the *Francs-Tireurs-et-Partisans- MOI* (main-d'œuvre immigrée).[349] Camilla Ravera was the secretary of the underground PCI from 1927 until 1930, following Antonio Gramsci's arrest, until her arrest in 1930. Having returned clandestinely to Italy from France, she was sentenced to fifteen and a half years, spent in prison and exile until the fall of Fascism in 1943.[350] Several other less well-known women became involved in the clandestine movement during the *ventennio*, and later became involved in the resistance; Maria Pippan Nicoletto, who later became involved in the resistance in Brescia, had emigrated to France with her family, where she joined the Communist Party. In 1931, the Party sent her to Italy to clandestinely carry out anti-fascist activities there.[351]

Further, many Italian antifascists, approximately five thousand, including around one hundred women, volunteered in the International Brigades during the Spanish Civil War, which further provided them with prior organisational experience. Giovanni Pesce, an Italian antifascist who fought in the International Brigades during the Spanish Civil War and later in 1943 joined the GAP- Patriotic Action Groups[352] first in Turin and then in Milan, mentions how his experience in Spain shaped him politically: "Spain was a huge moral, political, and

[347] Rina Chiarini and Remo Scappini, *Ricordi della Resistenza* (Cooperativa editografica Toscana, 1974), 17.
[348] Behan, *The Italian Resistance*, 12.
[349] Associazione Nazionale Partigiani d'Italia, 'Teresa Noce', https://www.anpi.it/biografia/teresa-noce.
[350] Associazione Nazionale Partigiani d'Italia, 'Camilla Ravera', https://www.anpi.it/biografia/camilla-ravera.
[351] Associazione Nazionale Partigiani d'Italia, 'Maria Pippan Nicoletto', https://www.anpi.it/biografia/maria-pippan-nicoletto.
[352] The Italian Communist Party took the initiative to create the small partisan groups known as the Patriotic Action Groups, which were primarily focused on operating in the city. These groups were created at the end of October 1943 by the general command of the Garibaldi Brigades.

military training ground. It gave experience to hundreds and thousands of people who then led the European Resistance."[353] Andrea Torre, the archivist at the Istituto Nazionale Ferruccio Parri, has curated a platform about the Italian antifascists who volunteered in the Spanish Civil War, amongst them sixty-eight women. From the listed biographies, the gendered mobilisation of Italian women in the war becomes apparent, along with the political experience it provided for them. For instance, Giuseppina Rossetti's family home became the meeting point for the FTP in Montreuil. Her daughter, Liliana, became a *staffetta* in the Italian resistance, which also exemplifies the importance of intergenerational influence in the construction of political identities, along with the participation in the struggle through family networks in this type of warfare. Maria Zazzi, who had followed her husband Armando Zazzi to Spain and provided service there, later became involved in resistance activities in Bologna. In 1943, Marcella Paparozzi, who had also volunteered in the Spanish Civil War as a nurse in Barcelona, later became involved in the resistance.[354]

In sum, this pre-war clandestine and political experience would prove crucial in the establishment of the first resistance networks and in its impact on the gendered mobilisation in the resistance, both for exiled Italian leftists and the ones that remained or returned to Italy following the capitulation on September 8, 1943. Many of the communist and antifascist women had already "learned" how to use their gender to pass, having operated clandestinely during the *ventennio*, and used this know-how to build an underground, gender-specific, movement following the fall of the Fascist regime. It was the start of the Nazi occupation of North Italy in 1943 that led to a broadening of the antifascist movement and pushed a younger generation of women who grew up under the fascist rule in joining the resistance.

Conclusion

In sum, women in the Second World War were caught up in coercive identity processes; they came to the resistance movements strongly influenced by the gender norms of the 1930s/1940s, knowing each other as members of the same imagined community, as French, Greek, and Italian women.[355] Women's mobilisation in the public realm was inevitably gendered, characterised by a mentality that abided by the traditional constructions of gender roles. Building on Brigitte Studer, for a generation of communist and socialist women who mobilised in the 1930s asserting their "autonomy meant walking a narrow path" to avoid being suspected of betraying the 'spirit of the Party' that prioritise the defeat of fascism over

[353] Behan, *The Italian Resistance*, 17.
[354] Biographies of Italian volunteer antifascists in Spain, *Oggi in Spagna, Domani in Italia*, Istituto Nazionale Ferruccio Parri, http://www.antifascistispagna.it/?page_id=763.
[355] Based on Cockburn's argumentation. See more: Cockburn, *The Space Between Us*, 15.

the defeat of male domination and patriarchy.[356] This gender-specific pre-war moblisation and the ideas of citizenship based on difference influenced the perception of women's entrance and role in the resistance activities during the war. This perception of difference between the 'male' and the 'female', 'masculinity' and femininity', and men's roles and women's roles ultimately had an impact on the roles women assumed in the resistance movements.

A product of the societies it emerged from, the resistance and the division of roles were influenced by these pre-war societal and gender norms. Following the war and occupation, these newly formed resistance movements represented both a continuation and a rupture of their respective societies. Indeed, the resistance produced a new kind of mass societal movement, facilitated by its higher ideals of patriotism. The novelty of resistance due to its patriotic nature lies also in the encounter between two categories of women, largely coming from two different generations. A generation of women who had previous political experience during the Interwar period, particularly communists and socialists, were from the first to mobilise, and more importantly, organise the first resistance movements that would later be joined by greater numbers of women, including a younger generation. However, many of the women who were mobilised in the resistance movements had no previous political experience and were born during the Interwar period. The ruptures wrought by the occupation on the social fabric of the three examined societies made for unprecedented developments that pushed and pulled unprecedented numbers of previously unpoliticised women in the resistance.

In both cases, women were mobilised in the resistance as nationalised subjects fighting to liberate their countries that had little to do with increasing gender equality or feminist ideas. However, in all three societies, the resistance was not solely an irregular war against the occupier and their collaborators, but it constituted a rupture with the past and the pre-war institutions. During the resistance, the construction of new conceptions of the nation, citizenship, and political mobilisation emerged, which reflected on the redefinition of the role of women in the post-war societies. The next chapter will better introduce this two-sided entrance of women in the resistance, examining those who entered the war as already 'politicised' subjects and those who did not enter the war with a revolutionary subjectivity or/and a self-identification with communist and socialist ideals but largely as national subjects.

[356] Studer, "Communisme et féminisme,"150.

Chapter 3: Gendered Discourses of Mobilisation; Entering the Resistance as Nationalised Subjects

Introduction

Renowned communist Rossana Rossanda noted regarding women's involvement in the antifascist struggle in Italy, "women arrived in the Resistance from two paths. They were those who were already politicised and politically active and those who had no experience whatsoever with doing politics, which constituted the grand majority."[357] This can also apply to France and Greece. The national character of the war, framed in all three countries as a war of national liberation, facilitated the incorporation of a broader spectrum of women who had no prior experience with political organising. On the one hand, as a war of national liberation against a foreign occupier, women in mass were called to join the struggle as gendered and national subjects, as French, Greek, and Italian women, rather than fighting for communist/socialist ideals. On the other hand, women with prior political experience, largely involved in communist and socialist politics prior to the war, then played a crucial role in shaping the mobilisation, and by extension, the politicisation of a younger generation of politically inexperienced women. While they also joined the resistance struggle as national citizens, their communists' and socialists' beliefs and prior political involvement were crucial aspects of their identity and informed their war mobilisation in the resistance. This chapter will particularly examine women's two-sided entrance in the resistance, building on Rossanda's argument, examining how these two paths met in practice and how this interaction materliased in each country.

I will particularly examine the narratives that facilitated women's involvement in the resistance struggle; The patriotic nature of war influenced the narratives and discourses behind women's call-to-arms.[358] Female engagement in previous revolutionary movements in each country became a point of reference for the resistance movements that emerged in the three occupied countries, and they were discursively used to mobilise more women to join the resistance. As Poulos explains vis-à-vis Greece, but the argument can be applied to France and Italy: these earlier models of female activism provided role models for women participating in the resistance. The invocation of collective national memories further facilitated the entrance of previously non-political women in the resistance, and at the same

[357] Rossana Rossanda, *Le altre: conversazioni a Radiotre sui rapporti tra donne e politica libertá, fraternità, uguaglianza, democrazia, fascismo, resistenza, stato, partito, rivoluzione, femminismo* (Milano: Bompiani, 1980), 145.
[358] See more: Cockburn, *The Space Between Us*, 15.

time, was used as a justifying frame for women's involvement. This gendered mobilisational frame, according to which girls and women were able to find in them the necessary role models within their national histories, was crafted against a reservoir of national female heroisation, through a shared national sentiment, rather than drawing on traditional socialist or feminist politics more closely associated with the interwar era.[359]

3.1. Entering the Resistance as a French Woman

Building on Rossanda's argument, for an older generation of already politicised women, participation in resistance movements was the logical evolution of their activities prior to the 1940s. As briefly examined in the previous chapter, certain women had already acquired political experience through their participation in left political parties and movements. These women entered the resistance movements by already identifying with socialist and communist ideas, with the prominent examples of Daniella Casanova, Agnes Humbert, and Lucie Aubrac.[360] As mentioned earlier, Casanova was a member of the Young Communist League of France from 1928 and was tasked with creating the UJFF in 1936. In 1940, she founded the *comités populaires* to mobilise women in mass in the resistance. Humbert, a curator at the *Musée des Arts et Traditions populaires*, who helped to establish one of the first resistance cells as early as 1940 through the *Groupe du musée de l'Homme* involving members of the Museum, had also identified with socialist ideals prior to the war.[361] Having joined the JC in 1932, Humbert was also involved with the *Union Fédérale des Étudiants* while studying at Sorbonne before the war. She contributed to the publication *La Vie Ouvrière*, where she signed her writings as 'Delphine Girard'. In the summer of 1939, she had travelled to the Soviet Union to examine museums and culture, which solidified her commitment to the communist cause. At the conclusion of July 1940, she returned to Paris and, refusing to accept defeat and eager to act, she came in contact with her friend Jean Cassou, the temporary director of the Museum of Modern Art, who was also keen to act. [362] Marie-Claude Vaillant-Couturier (1912-1996), who was a photojournalist for communist ephemera and a leading figure in the UJFF during the interwar period, joined the underground PCF during the resistance, helping produce clandestine publications.[363] Even a few younger women who had taken their first steps in the struggle during the late 1930s were eager to mobilise following the defeat. For instance, writing in 2009, Gisèle Guillemot, a

[359] Poulos, *Arms and the Woman*, 177.
[360] A founding member of the Libération-Sud.
[361] Gildea, *Fighters in the Shadows*, 68.
[362] For more about her life : Julien Blanc, "Agnes Humbert," *Musée de la Resistance en ligne*, n.d., accessed September 20, 2022, http://museedelaresistanceenligne.org/media10455-Agns-Humbert.
[363] Amy Victoria Morrison, "Communist Women's Resistance in Occupied Paris: Engagement, Activism and Continuities from the 1930s to 1945," (University of Adelaide, Unpublished PhD thesis, 2018), 44.

member of the *Franc-Tireurs et Partisans*, talked about her pre-war politicisation where she was growing up in Calvados. In her 2009 memoir, Gisèle places her first encounter with communist ideas prior to the war, at the age of fourteen:

> To ease the boredom, I search through the shelves of the office. Until I came across a voluminous book: Capital, by Karl Marx. Excited by my discovery, I read a few pages of it.... I end up talking about it to my employer who confesses his passion for Marxism. He is amused by my naive questions. Week after week, he likes to explain to me the subtleties of the division of labour and the exploitation of man by man.[364]

This first introduction to Marxism, along with her friends who were involved in the JC, had led her to become a communist sympathiser prior to the war. This later influenced her choice to become involved in the communist-led FTP:

> Following the appeal of the Communist Party, we are demonstrating against this non-intervention *(referring to the Spanish Civil War to help the Republicans),* which we interpret as a cowardly abandonment. We are deeply concerned. The shadow of Adolf Hitler is becoming more and more threatening over Europe.[365]

However, for a great number of women, entrance into the resistance was not characterised by previous identification with left-wing political ideals and such activism would have been unthinkable to many of them prior to the war.[366] In that sense, most women did not engage in left-wing movements due to their strict political affiliation and identification with communist and socialist ideals. Rather, they engaged by foregrounding their patriotic identity, as French women. Yet due to the rupture that occurred because of the war and occupation, women with no prior 'political' experience became involved in clandestine resistance organisations, some of which were largely dominated by communists and socialists, especially in the upper levels.[367] Those women who had acquired political experience prewar were in a better position to mobilise in the initial stages of the war and, as a result, played an important role in mobilising a younger generation of women or/and politically inexperienced ones.

While politicised women previously involved in the socialist and communist movement proved important in establishing the first cells of the resistance, communist and socialist ideas were not overemphasised and did not overshadow the patriotic discourse of the struggle. Patriotism remained an important component of the overall discourse, including

---

[364] Giséle Guillemot, and Samuel Humez, *Résistante : Mémoires d'une Femme de la Resistance à la Déportation* (Éditions Michel Lafon, 2009), 18.
[365] Ibid, 25.
[366] Lucie Aubrac, "Présence des femmes dans toutes les activités de la Resistance," in *Les Femmes dans la Resistance*, 20.
[367] Ibid*,* 21.

the one coming from communist/socialist movements. As Gaston Plissonier highlights regarding the patriotism that characterised these already politicised communist and socialist women: "The sense of national and patriotic duty was strengthened in them by the struggle of their party against the policy of capitulation against the rise of Hitlerism, which had led to the total failure (deroute) and the misfortunes of the country (patrie)."[368]

The importance of patriotic discourse becomes evident in the appropriation of previous moments of national glory, used as a mobilisational narrative to push the broader population to join the resistance movements. In this context, the French clandestine press regularly appealed to women's love for France by invoking Jeanne d'Arc and Jeanne Hachette.[369] Both women represented female symbols related to the national history of France: Jeanne d' Arc was honoured as a defender of the French nation for her role in the siege of Orléans during the Hundred Years' War (1337–1453), while Jeanne Hachette was also an emblematic figure in French history due to her participation in the resistance to the siege laid by Charles the Bold, Duke of Burgundy. Women were called to participate in the resistance by following the heroic traditions of their female ancestors that had "fallen" before them, in the steps of Joan of Arc, the steps of the women of the French Revolution. In the newspaper *Femmes Patriotes* published in February 1944, these national heroines are invoked, and contemporary women are called to follow their steps:

> The history of France is rich with examples of events where the women of our country have participated. In each era, when our *Patrie* was in danger, women were the first ones in the battle. From Saint Geneviève to Jeanne d'Arc and Jeanne Hachette, who led the men to the ramparts through the Great French Revolution, to these courageous women, pioneers of the resistance, who have been honoured by General de Gaulle. We are their descendants, and we have to show it today.[370]

The call to participate in the struggle did not differ radically based on the ideological orientation of the group and its affiliated publications. Compared to the use of Jeanne d' Arc and Jeanne Hachette as national symbols, I only came across one newspaper throughout my fieldwork that mentioned Louise Michel. In the newspaper *Femmes de France*, edited by the communist-led *l'Union des comités des femmes de France,* published in August 1944 prior

---

[368] Gaston Plissonnier, "Portee et caractéristiques de la participation des femmes communistes à la Résistance en zone sud," in *Femmes dans la Résistance*, 47.

[369] See for instance: La Voix des femmes, Union des femmes de France, 01 novembre 1942, Musée de la Résistance nationale / Champigny-sur-Marne, p. 1, http://catalogue.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/cb328911890; L'Appel des femmes : pour la défense de la famille et la libération de la France : organe du comité féminin de Toulouse, Union des femmes de France. Comité (Haute-Garonne), 01 septembre 1943, p. 1, http://catalogue.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/cb32700407c.

[370] 'Femmes de France,' Femmes Patriotes : Organe *des Comités féminins de la résistance (M.U.R.)*, no. 1, Février 1944, p.1, Bibliothèque nationale de France, accessed August 23, 2022, http://catalogue.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/cb32774124.

to liberation, Louise Michel and Dannielle Casanova, who had meanwhile become a martyr in 1942, are placed next to Jeanne Hachette and Jeanne d' Arc: "Sisters of the brave mothers of '92, women of a *peuple* of heroic traditions from which Jeanne Hachette, Jeanne d' Arc, Louise Michel, Dannielle Casanova emerged, pure daughters of our country, we will [also] be present in the fight of France for France."[371] Indeed, left-wing political activism in France had taken many forms prior to the resistance, from working-class women's engagement in the Paris Commune to the political violence that emerged in the 1930s in France between right-wing and left-wing groups, and these past traditions also provided gender-specific points of reference.[372] Yet even in the case of communist- affiliated newspapers, patriotism and love for the country remained more prominent components of the resistance discourse: "c'était [pour] la nation, c'était [pour] la France."[373]

Indeed, communist, and socialist women themselves, in personal wartime testimonies, foregrounded their patriotic sentiment. Their love for the nation was central to their personal discourse. Casanova, the pre-war engaged communist, in her last letter before her departure for Auschwitz in 1943, is cited saying: "Our beautiful France will be liberated, and our ideal will triumph."[374] Her last words were : "Je suis morte pour la France. (I died for France)."[375] Lise London, a French communist who had participated in the International Brigades in Spain and in the French Resistance later, explains for instance in her memoir how she came in terms with her arrest: "In 1942 we found ourselves prisoners of our enemies. As "soldiers" of the Resistance, we had accepted in advance this eventuality as a part of our struggle; likewise, if necessary, to give our lives so that France might live."[376] Patriotism also remained central in post-war female testimonies, directly addressing their participation in the struggle. As Genevieve de Gaulle mentions in her 1990 interview with Pierre Durand as a preface to his book on Danielle Casanova: "The Resistance, precisely, was pluralistic. There was the undeniable role of the communists, for sure but I knew men

---

[371] 'Aux Femmes, Mères, Jeunes Filles françaises', *Femmes de France : journal de l'Union des comités des femmes de France*, Aout 1944, p. 1, Musée de la Résistance nationale / Champigny-sur-Marne, accessed September 3, 2022, http://catalogue.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/cb437808824.

[372] Indeed, in France, already from the French revolution, and during the Paris Commune of 1871, women mobilised in the Parisian barricades and even challenged dominant gender ideologies of the time, with working-class women seized the revolutionary moment and establishing political clubs, defying gender, and class barriers. Carolyn Jeanne Eichner, *Surmounting the Barricades: Women in the Paris Commune* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2004), 16.

[373] Paraphrasing Pierre Durand's and Geneviève de Gaulle's responses on why getting involved in the resistance. In Pierre Durand, *Danielle Casanova : l'indomptable*, précédé d'un entretien avec Geneviève de Gaulle (Paris, Messidor, 1990), 9.

[374] 'Danielle Casanova', *La Patriote parisienne : journal édité par l'Union des femmes pour la défense de la famille et la libération de la France*, Septembre 1943, no.2, p.1, Bibliothèque nationale de France, département Réserve des livres rares, RES-G-1470 (289), accessed September 19, 2022, http://catalogue.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/cb328341497.

[375] Cited in Lefebvre-Filleau, *Femmes de la Résistance 1940-1945*, 250.

[376] London, *La Mégère de la rue Daguerre. Souvenirs de Résistance*, 168.

and women from the *Action Française*. The resisters belonged to the most diverse horizons of politics. They were believers or they were not. They came from all regions of France. They were men and women, young and old…*C'etait la France*."[377] In the same pattern, Claire Girard, an FFI resistance member, arrested in Oise after the Liberation of Paris, and shot at Courdimanche, is quoted in a 1957 article regarding her involvement in the resistance "All the values are one by one fallen so that only one remains, France."[378]

Within this discourse of patriotism, the call to serve France did not literally mean that women should take up arms. The clandestine press produced during the resistance, which included leaflets, newspapers, and several other publications produced illegally, referred to militant national heroines to discursively create the desire to participate in the resistance but this call-to-arms was rather gendered. Women had to serve by following a gendered trajectory, assuming a variety of roles short of taking up arms, by being accomplices to their husbands involved in resistance activities, becoming involved in protests related to household problems, providing both material and non-material assistance to partisans, acting as couriers, nurses attached in partisans' brigades, with only a small minority of women participating in combat alongside men.

3.2. Entering the Resistance as a Greek Woman

In Greece, most women who participated in the resistance between 1941 and 1944 did not have any previous experience participating in politics and most of them did not arrive in the resistance identifying with communist and socialist ideals. Prior to the resistance, politics was considered men's domain, with women being largely marginalised and in no position to demand substantial political changes.[379] Nevertheless, as in France, the most influential women in the resistance in the early years were those with prior political experience, particularly the ones who had engaged previously in the ranks of the Communist Party, with the prominent examples of Ilektra Apostolou, Chrysa Chatzivasiliou, Dionusia Papadomixelaki, among others. It was they who mobilised and influenced other women, including a younger generation of women, to join the resistance. This interaction becomes evident in the female-only clandestine organisation that emerged in Occupied Greece. Much smaller in both geographical representation and organisational capability compared to the autonomous GDD in Italy, the Greek all-female organisation LN was founded in 1942, co-

[377] Durand, "Préface," in *Danielle Casanova,* 9.
[378] The article was written in the occasion of inauguration of a commemorative plaque in Courdimanche in tribute to Claire Girard and Raymond Berrivin. For more : 'Une Lettre de Claire Rigard', *Bulletin des Anciennes deportees et Internees de la Résistance, Voix et Visage*, mai-juin 1957, ARCH/ 0157/3, La Contemporaine, Paris.
[379] Hart, *New Voices of the Nation*, 103.

funded by the communists Maria Karagiorgi and Kaiti Zevgou. The organisation was later replaced by the mixed youth organisation of EPON in 1943 but serves as a perfect example to highlight the interaction between the already politically engaged women and the ones that took their first steps outside the domestic milieu through the resistance. Apostolou politicised this younger generation of LN women after taking over as the organisation's leader.[380] Apostolou made an effort to communicate the idea that women could only truly be free and equal if they actively participated in the social movement. In his book *Ilektra*, Vasilis Mpartziotas, nickname Fanis, contends that Panagiota Stathopoulou and Koula Lili, the first Greek heroines of the resistance,[381] were "Ilektra's girls." [382]As he goes on to clarify:

> Stathopoulou, Lili… Those young heroines of the Movement of National Liberation in Athens were *Ilektra's girls*. They were educated in *Leuteri Nea* and the *EPON*. They learned what patriotism is and how men and women sacrifice themselves for freedom from Ilektra. Ilektra and the *EPON* gave them this courage to fight against tanks and slap Germans in the face on their tanks.[383]

In the same vein, Fofi Lazarou, an EPON member who subsequently became an active leftist for the remainder of her life, recalls Apostolou in a 1966 commemorative speech:

> Ilektra tried in every way to cultivate in young girls' minds self-confidence and faith in themselves. She insisted that they take part in the discussions and speak their minds, no matter how insignificant they thought their opinion was. She insisted that the participation of girls in the night crews for distributing leaflets and in demonstrations and rallies, (and) in other militant events, should be as numerous and militant as that of boys. "It is in the social struggles that we will win equality for women," she used to say.[384]

The war and the immediate consequences created the necessary "political space" that allowed women's involvement in previously unimaginable roles in the realm of politics. A 1943 article in the newspaper *Gynaikeia Drasi* on women's mobilisation in EAM demonstrates how [Greek] women took their first steps into politics through the resistance:

> [EAM] took in protests groups of people that up until yesterday were hesitant about their personal matters. Along with them, EAM was able to organise the

---

[380] The next two paragraphs are partly based on a previous article I had written on Ilektra Apostolou: Chatzitheodorou, "Ilektra," 22-51.

[381] In the biggest protest in Athens on July 22, 1943, two girls stood up against the German tanks. Panagiota shouted slogans against conscription in front of the tank when the tank passed over her. When Koula Lili saw Panagiota's dead body, she climbed on the tank and slapped the German for killing her friend. She fell dead immediately after.

[382] Βασίλης Γ. Μπαρτζιώτας, *Ηλέκτρα: Αδελφή του Κόμματός Μας* (*Μια Ηρωική Επαναστατική Ζωή)* (Αθήνα, 1984), 160.

[383] Ibid, 160.

[384] The speech of Fofi Lazarou took place in a commemoration event for Ilektra Apostolou in the women's prison Averof in 1966, where Lazarou was imprisoned. Even though the event was not allowed, several other women that participated in the resistance spoke, including Roza Imvrioti, Dido Swtiriou & Avra Partsalidou. See more: 'Ηλέκτρα,' Ομιλία της Φώφη Λαζαρου Στην Κρυφή Εκδήλωση που Πραγματοποιήθηκε για την Ηλέκτρα Αποστόλου, Αρχείο Φώφη Λαζάρου, Φάκελος 5, Υποφάκελος 3, Αρχείο Σύγχρονης Κοινωνικής Ιστορίας, Αθήνα.

> woman. The enslaved woman, the woman left in obscurity *(unseen),* the underestimated Greek woman; it took her away from the half-branch she was lying at and lifted her to the struggle alongside the man. The streets of Athens echoed her famous achievements…[385]

This mobilisation in turn, led to the politicisation of women, who formed a new political consciousness. Maria Desipris-Svolou, who had served as the General Secretary of the League for Women's Rights (1920-1932) and during the resistance joined EAM-ELAS and served as one of the five women ministers on the *Ethniko Simvoulio* (National Council),[386] writes in a 1943 article about women's changing condition in the resistance "At the same time, the Greek woman in the struggle formed a political consciousness. She entered political organisations, parties; the working women matured in the acute economic struggles that they also included political content."[387] Lefteris Apostolou, brother of Apostolou, a founding member of EAM and member of KKE, mentions in his 1945 book that "hundreds of thousands of women, hundreds of thousands of young people thus become, for the first time in the history of the [Greek] nation, from slaves and fatalists, *humans* in the true sense of the word, fully conscious of their social destiny."[388] Chatzivasiliou, another prominent member of the Communist Party and later President of the *Panelladiki Dimokratiki Enosi Ginaikon* (PDEG -Women's Panhellenic Democratic Union), recalled that EAM, from the beginning of the resistance, called women upon the struggle and organised women as equals. This allowed women to participate in all aspects of the resistance, from the "simple child welfare and child support roles, to more dangerous missions."[389] Pinelopi Rigga, in her 1984 memoir, also writes that, despite her illiteracy, she became aware of oppression as a result of her participation in the resistance activities:

> I am illiterate because, in those days, girls were not sent to school…. From my son-in-law I had heard before the war about the abolition of exploitation and [about] equality. I remember after all these years his words, which I did not understand back then. But amid the struggle and the fire of the Resistance, I understood very well that along with freedom we must have justice to stop the exploitation of workers and peasants, to build hospitals for the sick and

[385] 'Η Γυναίκα στον Αγώνα,' Γυναικεία Δράση: Όργανο του Εθνικού Απελευθερωτικού Αγώνα, Φύλλο 16, Αθήνα, Μάρτιος 25, 1943, σ. 1, Γενικά Αρχεία του Κράτους, Αθήνα.
[386] It served as a kind of parliament of representatives. The Government of the Mountain of the Political Committee for National Liberation held election on April 23 and 30, 1944, where women voted for the first time in Greece's history. Five female national councillors were elected - Maria Svolou and Kaiti Nisyriou-Zevgou from Athens, Chrysa Chatzivasiliou, Fotini Filippidou and Mahi Mavroidis - Chiourea.
[387] Μαρία Σβώλου, "Τα Πολιτικά Δικαιώματα της Ελληνίδας," *Νέα Ελλάδα: Δεκαπενθήμερη Πολιτική Επιθεώρηση της Κεντρικής Επιτροπής ΕΑΜ*, Αύγουστος 20, 1943, σ.6, Αρχείο Σύγχρονης Κοινωνικής Ιστορίας, Αθήνα.
[388] Λευτέρης Αποστόλου, *Τι έκαμε το ΕΑΜ για την Ελλάδα* (Αθήναι, Εκδόσεις Γκοβοστή, 1945), 24.
[389] Χρύσα Χατζηβασιλείου, *Το Κομμουνιστικό Κόμμα Ελλάδας και το Γυναικείο Ζήτημα* (Αθήνα: Εκδόσεις της Κεντρικής Επιτροπής του ΚΚΕ, 1946), 27.

> schools for the children, to teach girls how to read and write in schools and to protect the elderly.[390]

Even though it is undeniable that communists dominated EAM/ELAS, particularly in the upper ranks, the rank and file did not necessarily self-identify as communists, particularly amongst women.[391] As was the case in France, communist ideology was downplayed by EAM and its communist leadership to attract the broader spectrum of the Greek population. The broader political strategy adopted by the Communist Party in the early days of the war in 1941 reflected this focus on a patriotic discourse that downplayed communist ideas. During EAM's inauguration in 1941, its prominent Communist leader, George Siantos, decided that a Popular Front approach was the most effective means of legitimising the movement. As a result, members from every liberal and progressive political party were included. The KKE leadership anticipated that by using this popular front tactic, they would gain more credibility and assist the party in winning parliamentary elections and gaining the power; in order to appeal to a broader spectrum of the population, they had to appeal to the national sentiment and downplay the communist ideals to an extent.[392] As Marion Sarafis has noted, "EAM practice was to promote unity in the liberation struggle by not overstressing party political identities."[393] Through an unprecedented outreach, EAM provided a way for individuals to engage in politics that was not accessible to the masses in Greece before the war. [394] This popular movement strategy that appealed to patriotic sentiments facilitated the incorporation of women in the resistance activities, as women were able to identify with the national memories invoked and their mobilisation was based on a rich reservoir of national female heroization.[395]

This narrative of patriotism and love for the country becomes evident in the popularised dialogue between one of the most prominent female communists, Apostolou, and the collaborationist security forces (Eidiki Asfalia - Special Security Directorate) during her arrest and torture in July 1944, reproduced in various sources throughout the years, including one of Yiannis Ritsos' poems. When the security forces asked her name during her detention, she responded, "Greek [woman]" (*Ellhnida*). When they asked her what her last wish was, she responded, "Death to Fascism, Freedom to Greece."[396] In the same pattern,

---

[390] Πηνελόπη Ρίγγα, *Η Αντιστασιακή μου Ιστορία* (Αθήνα: Έκδοση της Κίνησης « Η Γυναίκα στην Αντίσταση», 1984), 14.
[391] John Louis Hondros, *Occupation and Resistance: The Greek Agony, 1941-44* (New York, Pella, 1983), 119.
[392] Hart, *New Voices of the Nation*, 121.
[393] Μάριον Σαράφη, *Ο Στρατηγός Σαράφης όπως τον Γνώρισα* (Αθήνα, Εκδόσεις Καστανιώτη, 1990), lvi.
[394] Hart, *New Voices of the Nation*, 97.
[395] Poulos, *Arms and the Woman*, 177.
[396] Γιάννης Ρίτσος, *Συντροφικά Τραγούδια* (Αθήνα: Σύγχρονη Εποχή, 2009), 41-42.

the 17-year-old Iro Konstantopoulou, a member of EPON who, despite her young age, engaged intensively in resistance activities in Athens, in her poem before her execution in Kaisariani's Shooting Range on September 5, 1944**,** writes:

> With respect to the Unknown *(meaning the tomb of Unknown Soldier in Syntagma Square in Athens)*
>
> The Chaidariotes will go
>
> To lay a wreath
>
> Like proper *patriots*.[397]

Konstantopoulou, being solely seventeen years old during her execution in 1944, does not foreground the communist identity of those who were to be executed in Kaisariani. Instead, in her poem, she cites them simply as patriots who [will] fall fighting for Greece. The patriotic appeal of EAM to attract the population also becomes evident in the clandestine press of the time. In *Eleutheri Ellada* (Free Greece), a newspaper affiliated with EAM, during the commemoration of the Greek War of Independence on March 25, 1943, it mentioned, "Long live EAM that leads us to the new national struggle!" In the same, "1821: *Armatoloi* and *Kleftes*. 1943: *Antartes* in ELAS."[398] This shows that EAM appealed to the patriotic sentiment of the Greek people through an invocation of the Greek Revolution of 1821 to mobilise the broader spectrum of the population in its ranks. This is also confirmed by the British reports that tried to understand the political goals of EAM/ELAS in 1943, being afraid by the popularity of the communist-led EAM. In a report on the resistance groups operating in Greece, British intelligence mentioned that EAM could not adequately be characterised as communist. Rather, it appealed to the patriotic sentiment of the Greek people and in the tradition of the Greek revolt against the Turks (1821).[399] Another manifestation of this becomes evident in the use of Greek folk songs, whose focus was

[397] Χρήστος Σαμουηλίδης, *Ανθολογία Ποιημάτων για την Εθνική Αντίσταση κατά τη Φασιστική Κατοχή (1941-1944)* (Αθήνα: Εκδόσεις Γκοβοστή, 2017), 69. Explanation and emphasis my own.
[398] '25η Μαρτίου', *Ημέρα της Εθνικής Ελευθερίας*, Ελεύθερη Ελλάδα, αρ. φύλλου 15, Αθήνα, Μάρτιος 25, 1943, σ. 2, Π1087 Μ, Εθνική Βιβλιοθήκη Ελλάδος.
[399] Report on Resistance Organisations in Greece, WO 202/1016, General Headquarters-Middle East Command, October 17, 1943, National Archives, London. According to another British report, one of the groups that consisted of "ardent communists" was the *Organosi Perifrourisis Laikou Agona* (OPLA - Organization for the Protection of the People's Struggle). See more: EAM/ELAS Aims, Organisation and Activities, FCO 162/278, General Headquarters, Middle East Command, 1944, National Archives, London.

centred on the Greek homeland (*patrida*).[400] In comparison to references in the 1821 Revolution, references to communism are rare. For example:[401]

> Our Greece, Our Greece,
> How much longer will you be a slave? *[parallelisationwith the Ottoman rule (tourkiki sklavia) in Greece until the Greek War of Independence (1821-1829)]*
>
> The black sleep of slavery- Our Greece-
>
> How long will you be asleep? *[also, an indirect reference to the re-birth of the Greek nation (ethniki palinigesia) associated with the Greek War of Independence against the Ottomans]*

Indeed, similarly to the French revolution, the 1821 Revolution was characterised by the significant involvement of women, including, in rare cases, combat activity,[402] which, in turn, was used as a gendered mobilisational narrative to call women into arms to engage in the resistance. Women were called to follow the steps of Laskarina Pinotsi, largely known as Bouboulina, a Greek naval commander during the Greek Revolution, the most well-known heroine of the Greek War of Independence in 1821. Similarly to the discursive use of the French female heroines, female engagement in the Greek Revolution functioned more as a call to arms through a gender-specific trajectory and less as a literal template of combative action for women called to participate in the resistance.

3.3. Entering the Resistance as an Italian Woman

As discussed, in Italy, a minority of women had significant prior experience in operating in clandestine ways to avoid being prosecuted by the Fascist regime during the *ventennio*. While many Italian women remained in exile during the resistance and engaged in the resistance outside of Italy and particularly in France, such as Noce, a few others managed to return to Italy following the capitulation of Italy in 1943. In 1943, Marcella Paparozzi managed to return, arriving in Florence, where she was active in the *Comitato di Resistenza* (Resistance Committee) from September 8, 1943, to August 15, when she moved to Emilia.

---

[400] Right wing and left-wing resistance organisations in Greece shared common topics in their proclamations and clandestine press to appeal to the population. For instance, in a proclamation from EAM, it starts with "Workers, [female] workers, employees! Greeks who love the nation and their homeland, whatever class you belong to!" See Προκηρύξεις ΕΑΜ/ΕΛΑΣ/ΕΠΟΝ, *Αρχείο Ηρακλής Πετιμεζάς*, 1-20, Γενικά Αρχεία του Κράτους. Equally, the all-female right-wing organisation Spitha mentions in an article in her newspaper *Eleutheri Elliniki Psyche* (Free Greek Psyche): "How much strength we must have to be able to stand as protectors for our family, so that men can be liberated and be given to the struggle that calls them! Will we find that strength? "Yes!" they answer instead of us, the Spartan women, the Greek women of the (1821) Revolution, the women of the Albanian six month [war] (referring to the Greek-Italian War in the Albanian front)." Η στήλη της Ελληνίδας: Κοντά στον άντρα για τον αγώνα', Ελεύθερη Ελληνική ψυχή, Έτος β, αρ. φύλλου 25, Φεβρουάριος 1943, σ. 3, Αρχείο αντιστασιακών οργανώσεων Επαναστατική Πανελλαδική Οργάνωση, ΣΠΙΘΑ και Εθνικό Κομιτάτο (Κ61β), Γενικά Αρχεία του Κράτους, Αθήνα.
[401] Τάκης Άδαμος, *Το Λαϊκό Τραγούδι της Αντίστασης* (Αθήνα: Καστανιώτης, 1977), 98.
[402] Poulos, *Arms and the Woman,* 186.

There, she took part in partisan activity in Maranello, in the Modena area under the Scarabelli Brigade - 2nd Modena Mountain Division, as a *staffetta*, until April 30, 1945.[403] Similarly, in 1941, Lina Fibbi, following the decisions of the PCI, she returned to Italy to carry out clandestine activities but was arrested as soon as she crossed the border at Ventimiglia and taken to the prison in Florence. In the absence of evidence against her, she was released. In 1943, she was called to work with the PCI.[404] The interaction between politically active women and non-politicised ones was crucial in building the first cells of resistance in Italy as well. As Natascia Corsini writes about women's mobilisation in Modena during the resistance, which can be applied more broadly:

> Among the women active during the Liberation struggle, some put into practice a previously acquired political education, which may derive from an intellectual or ideological position or be rooted in a class consciousness, matured in the preceding decades in the sphere of work and syndicalist struggles; while many others have a less "reasoned" position…[405]

This interaction between already engaged women and a largely younger generation of politically inexperienced ones further becomes evident in the very formation of the GDD. Indeed, even though most of its members were not affiliated with any party, the creation of the GDD was a result of the decision and mobilisation of left-wing women who had previous political experience in organising.[406] Slaughter argues that those left-wing women who took the initiative to form the GDD were firm believers that women should act in the public space and mobilised to make this happen. The initiative of an all-female organisation was taken by women who had already formed a sort of political consciousness during the twenty years of fascism, and who also largely identified with communist/socialist ideals. The initial group in Milan in 1943 was formed after the initiative by already politicised antifascist women; Lina Fibbi, who was a communist and was only 15 years old when she decided to join the French Communist Youth Federation, and who by the age of 17, became leader of the *Union des femmes frannçaises* of the Rhone Region; and Gina Bianchi, who joined the antifascist movement at the age of 16 and later became involved in the *scioperi del Marzo* 1943. Moreover, it included Pina Palumbo from the Socialists (*Partito Socialista Italiano di Unità Proletaria* – PSIUP, Italian Socialist Party of Proletarian Unity), two women from the Pd'

---

[403] Biografies of Italian volunteer antifascists in Spain, Oggi in Spagna, Domani in Italia, Istituto Nazionale Ferruccio Parri, http://www.antifascistispagna.it/?page_id=763.
[404] Associazione Nazionale Partigiani d' Italia, Giulietta Lina Fibbi, https://www.anpi.it/biografia/giulietta-lina-fibbi.
[405] Natascia Corsini, "La mobilitazione organizzata delle donne. Propaganda e attività dei Gruppi di difesa della donna nella provincia di Modena," in *Pane, Pace, Libertà*, 69.
[406] Bianca Guidetti Serra in her book *Compagne: Testimonianze di partecipazione politica femminile* (Torino: Einaudi, 1977) demonstrates this through women's narrations of their lifetime stories around their political mobilisation. These compagne had already experience in political organising (i.e., many recall the occupazione delle fabbriche in 1920) and identified with communist and socialist ideals.

A, Elena Dreher, who had refused to join the fascist youth and was fired by her job due to her political beliefs, and Ada Gobetti, whose house became at the centre of a clandestine network of intellectuals, including Carlo Rosselli, which would lead to the establishment of the *Giustizia e Libertà* movement in 1941, and Lucia Corti for the Catholic Left.[407] Equally, on a more regional level, usually a politically active woman who had already experience and connections with the national resistance movement would identify local women who had spontaneously engaged in some sort of resistance and recruit them in the local branch of the organisation.[408] The creation of an all-female organisation was seen as necessary to attract a broader female population and coordinate women's activities more effectively. The pressing need to alleviate the suffering brought by the war and occupation required an effective network of contact and protection with an organisational structure to make the best use of its potential.[409] This materialised into Gruppi di Difesa della Donna, established in November 1943. Indeed, as Mirella Alloisio, and Giuliana Beltrami explain:

> Women, therefore, did not join the resistance *en masse* because the PCI created the Gdd but rather, the PCI, or some women in the left-wing parties, created the Gdd because they felt the need, because it was necessary to give an organised structure to the women who had already taken part in the struggle or who were only asking to do so.[410]

However, as it happened in Greece and France, many Italian women did not become involved in the resistance out of their communist and socialist beliefs. At the same time, many young women in Italy who took part in the resistance were also born and educated in the fascist regime and its propaganda during the *ventennio*. Yet the latter were able to detach from the fascist propaganda following September 8. My analysis of testimonies regarding women's decision to become involved in the resistance demonstrates how this change of events that transformed Italy from an occupier to an occupied nation influenced women's decision to become involved in the resistance. The collaboration of the fascist regime with the Nazi occupiers pushed more women to defy the fascist omnipotence, questioning the regime's patriotism that went unchallenged by a considerable number of Italians. Antonietta Romano, who became involved in the resistance, demonstrates this change of mentality in her diary, which she kept during the war. Prior to joining the resistance in the ranks of *Partito della Sinistra Cristiana*, she declares in regard to the Allied enemies "But Anglo-Saxon life is not limited to vandalism by day, they return (to accentuate the work of destruction) at

[407] Slaughter, *Women and the Italian Resistance,* 66. See also: Gruppi di difesa della donna, Associazione Nazionale Partigiani d' Italia, https://www.anpi.it.
[408] Ibid, 67.
[409] Orlandini, *La democrazia delle donne*, 11.
[410] Mirella Alloisio, and Giuliana Beltrami, *Volontarie della Libertà 8 settembre 1943 -25 Aprile 1945* (Mazzotta. Milano, 1981), 32.

night knowing full well that the full moon and vast fires would illuminate the city giving them greater orientation."[411] From accusing the Allied enemies and admiring her brother in his military uniform that gave him a "un aspetto piu virile",[412] largely identifying with the Fascist regime's patriotism until 1943, she moves to the opposite direction by joining the resistance following the 1943 surrender and the consequent German occupation. When a woman in her workplace, already in the resistance, "opened her eyes" vis-à-vis the regime, Antonietta becomes Fiamma and enters a resistance *cellula* -with the changing of her name signalling her conversion.[413]

Following the capitulation in 1943 and the subsequent Nazi occupation of north Italy, opposing the foreign Nazi occupation and their fascist collaborators became synonymous, which also demonstrates the importance of patriotism for the Italian resistance. Grazia Labate, in a testimony about Alice Noli, narrates how the latter, a resister from Campomorone, became first involved in an act of resistance. In 1943, some Italian soldiers had been imprisoned by the Germans. Alice, standing in the middle of the road, forced the Germans' truck to stop and, despite the machine guns pointed at her, turned to the captain, exclaiming: 'Promise me that you will not harm *our* soldiers'. The 'our' in the narration of events signifies the importance of patriotism as a mobilisation basis for involvement in the resistance.[414] The nephew of Noli also mentioned the love for Italy in regard to his aunt's motivation for getting involved in the resistance: "But most of all she loved Italy: and in this love was the generous, spontaneous, total dedication of the heroine."[415] Maria Teresa Regard, a partisan member of the GAP in Rome, mentions in a 1998 interview with Allessandro Portelli:[416] "I, personally, did it first and foremost for my country, not so much for the Communist Party."[417] For the GDD and its founding members, the patriotic nature of the struggle resulted in downplaying the communists and socialist ideals that had earlier led to their political prosecution or/and exile with the aim of attracting a broader spectrum of women in its ranks, adopting a similar popular front strategy as EAM did in Greece. In 1944,

[411] Tatiana Bertolini, and Valter Molinaro, *Fiamma Partigiana all' Alfa Romeo: Il diario di Antonietta Romano e la Resistenza al Portello* (Gligoassociati editore, 2020), 55.
[412] Ibid, 61.
[413] Originally cited in Genitori della Scuola, n.22, Rirordi di Fiamma, pp. 6-7. Mentioned in her biography: Bertolini, and Molinaro, *Fiamma Partigiana all' Alfa Romeo*, 33.
[414] Grazia Labate, "25 aprile. La storia di Alice Noli," Aprile 19, 2020, *Fondazione Nilde Lotti*, https://www.fondazionenildeiotti.it/pagina.php?id=819.
[415] 'Alice Noli, Biografia scritta dal nipote Giuseppe Maria Rebera', Busta 3, Fasc. 3, Unione Donne Italiane, Rome.
[416] The interview is part of the Fondo Fosse Ardeatine, Resistenza, occuppazione tedesca, memoria, which was established for the interviews included in the book Alessandro Portelli, *L' ordine è già stato eseguito. Roma, le Fosse Ardeatine, la memoria* (Donzelli, 1999). Available at the Archivio Circolo Gianni Bosio.
[417] Cited in Tobagi, *La Resistenza delle Donne*, 47.

the GDD affirmed being open to all women, regardless of their social class or political ideas, with most of its membership not belonging to a political party:

> The number of women members of parties is very small compared to the number of women members of the DD Groups; the majority of them are non-party members and (they are) religiously practicing. This is what led Italian women to participate in the struggle for the liberation of our country; [the need] to hasten the expulsion of the Nazi-fascists, to get out of the state of subjugation in which they have been kept until now.[418]

The historian Franca Pieroni Bortolotti cites a PCI document from the war (n.d) in her book about the various 'tendencies' represented in the organisation:

> Included in this figure are the Party comrades who promoted the formation of the 'Groups' and who, in part, directed them. It should be noted, however, that most of the 'Groups' are led by non-PCI elements who, however, act in close collaboration with our comrades. Regarding the political tendencies represented in the various groups, it should be noted that the majority of members are anti-fascist, without belonging to any political party. There are, however, especially among the intellectuals, several republican Mazzinian women and some members of the Partito d'Azione, especially among office workers and housewives. Christian party and partly militant in Catholic Action. A considerable number of the women who belong to the GDD are practising Catholics.[419]

In a document introducing the GDD, its roles and main participants, the openness of the organisation to all women is emphasised, demonstrating a popular front strategy adopted by the upper levels:

> Women (are) from all social classes: housewives, factory workers, office workers, intellectuals, and peasants gather united by the need to fight and (united by) the love for the country. Women of every religious faith, of every political tendency, women without party unite for the common need that there may be bread, peace, and freedom, that the best sons of Italy who wielded arms against the enemy may be encouraged and assisted. In every block or neighbourhood, in every factory, office, school, village, they form the groups (di difesa della donna) and actively operate…[420]

This downplaying of communist ideals was complemented with a national discourse based on national memories and legacies. Although less invoked compared to the French and Greek revolutions, the Risorgimento (Unification) was also used as a mobilisational

---

[418] 'Indirizzo Politico', Il comitato provicionale dei gruppi di difesa della donna e per l'assistenza ai combattanti della libertà Novembre 5, 1944, Milano, Fondo; CLN Regionale Lombardia, Serie: Delegazioni Dei Partiti e Delle Organizzazioni di Massa, Busta 1. Fac.10, Istituto Nazionale Feruccio Parri, Milano.
[419] Cited in Bortolotti, *Le donne della Resistenza antifascista e la questione femminile in Emilia-Romagna*, 88. Initially from the document: PCI, 'Relazione parziale sulla attività delle compagne svolta per la costituzione dei GDD, nella città di Ravenna e dintorni, s.d.
[420] 'Dei «Gruppi di Difesa Della Donna e per L'Assistenza ai Combattenti della Libertà»', November 25, 1943, Fondo: CLN ALTA ITALIA (CLNAI) Serie: Periodo Clandestino, sottoserie : Carteggio con partiti politici, organizzazioni di massa e CLN di base, Fascicolo : ''Carteggio del Clnai con i gruppi di difesa della donna' , Gruppi Difesa Donna: B.14 Fasc. 37, Istituto Nazionale Ferruccio Parri, Milan.

narrative to attract the broader population in the resistance, which also reserved a gender-specific trajectory for women: "So, then, should we, the Italian women, help to throw into the mud our homeland, our ideals, our most cherished sentiments? Will the martyrs of *our Risorgimento against the Germans* oppressing our soil have been to no purpose…?"[421] In the newspaper *La Voce delle Donne* (Women's Voice), there is an abstract mention of the women who risked their lives during the Risorgimento, without naming any of these women: "Women, in the history of the Risorgimento and in the 'current struggle of national liberation, countless are the deeds of our heroines who regardless of any danger risked their young lives."[422] Sega writes that "If Joan of Arc is the model of a strong woman held up to Catholic girls, for the Garibaldians, Anita [Garibaldi] is the example to imitate." Sega goes on to narrate the story of Wilma De Paris from Belluno, who feels guilty for doing nothing while others risk their lives, so she makes the decision to go to the mountains and join the partisans:[423]

> She confides her secret to her friend Tina, telling her that women can do their part just like men; she is a *staffetta*: "You know, we're not the first and we're not crazy. Have you ever heard of Anita Garibaldi?" Tina is dubious: "Why are you doing this?" "If we participate too, tomorrow we'll have greater rights, don't you think?" The possibility of breaking free from subordination convinces her, and she becomes a courier in her brother's battalion under the name of Joe.[424]

Yet given that Sega provides only one example of citing Anita Garibaldi, the invocation of the latter is not as prominent as women revolutionaries in the case of Greece and France, where various sources cite Joan d'Arc or/and Mpoumpoulina respectively. Compared to the Greek and French invocation of past female heroines, part of their national histories, in Italy, there was a more abstract mobilisational narrative without invoking specific female heroines to act as female role models.

Nevertheless, in the case of Italy, women's earlier long engagement with antifascist politics and the profound experiences of imprisonment, clandestinity and exile during the *ventennio* that profoundly shaped their political identity meant a clearer adherence to socialist/communist/antifascist ideals, which was reflected in the discourse and narratives surrounding the resistance. The resistance mobilising discourse did not solely invoke the

---

[421] 'Donne Italiane', Donne in Lotta: Organo dei Gruppi di Difesa della Donna e per l'assistenza ai combattenti della libertà, Aprile 19, 1945, p. 4., Istituto Nazionale Ferruccio Parri, https://www.stampaclandestina.it/?page_id=116&ricerca=24.
[422] 'Affretiamo l' ora della nostra vittoria', La Voce delle Donne: Organo del Comitato centrale bolognese dei Gruppi di difesa delle donne, no. 1, Dicembre 20, 1044, p. 2, https://www.stampaclandestina.it/?page_id=704&ilnumero=1664.
[423] Sega, "Essere donna nell' esercito di Liberazione," in *Resistenza*, 117.
[424] Cited in Ibid, 117.

national sentiment of Italians against the now external enemy and occupier but a broader defence of freedom and democracy against Mussolini's internal dictatorship. Often, the women writing behind *la stampa clandestina* had either formed a communist/socialist political consciousness during the antifascist struggle in the *ventennio* or,[425] for younger ones, they were born and raised in antifascist families and had experienced political prosecution from the fascist regime first hand. For instance, in Turin, the newspaper *La Voce della Lavoratrice* was published by Women's Defence Groups by a group of women, including Bianca Guidetti Serra, who had already developed an antifascist awareness in 1938 during the anti-racial laws in Italy that affected the Italian Jewish community. In charge of *La Compagna,* the journal published by socialist women, in Piedmont, were Giuseppina Valsasna Scotti, who joined the Socialist Party in 1926, and during the *ventennio* her house became a meeting point for political dissidents;[426] along with Medea Molinari and her father Alberico Molinari, a long-time socialist militant.[427] These women saw the fall of fascism, liberation, and the return of democratic politics as components of one struggle. In the clandestine press, the occupation is characterised as *nazi-fascista* and the oppressors as *nazi-fascisti* to signal how the Fascist regime does not represent the Italian people but is allied with the oppressors. Fascism is portrayed as an enemy that needs to be defeated for the country to be liberated, where women also have a specific role to play. In *La Compagna*, women's role in the war against the internal enemy of fascism is articulated:[428] "But what do we Italian women do to end this war sooner that must liberate Italy not only from the Germans but also from fascism? Recriminations and tears are not enough. Instead, we encourage our men who work in the war industry for the Germans to sabotage machines and production. If they are in danger of being deported to Germany let us induce them to join the partisans."[429] This need for post-war rebirth is accompanied by a discourse that deprives the fascist regime by any patriotism while highlighting the need for a new, democratic, Italy. The clandestine press of the time regularly accused the small minority of the fascist 'responsables' for the war, the alliance with Nazi Germany, and the occupation by the Nazis.

[425] This was largely the case for women in Greece and Italy given the importance of knowing the know-how to navigate the movement in the early stages. Nonetheless, the experiences of imprisonment, exile and prosecution were longer and more profound than was the case in Greece with Metaxas' regime.
[426] Scotti Valsasna, Giuseppina, Polo del 900, https://archivi.polodel900.it/scheda/oai:polo900.it:56054_giuseppina-pinuccia-scotti-valsasna.
[427] La Compagna, Stampa Clandestina, 1943-1945, Istituto Nazionale Feruccio Parri, https://www.stampaclandestina.it/?page_id=116&ricerca=379.
[428] There is a similar discourse in EAM in Greece regarding the need for a new democratic society post war, although the 'J' accuse...!' tone towards Metaxas' short lived dictatorial regime is less pronounced compared to Italy's longer fascist regime.
[429] 'Donne Italiane', *La Compagna: giornale delle donne socialiste italiane; Edizione piemontese Edizione piemontese,* Agosto 1, 1944, no. 1, p. 1, https://www.stampaclandestina.it/wp-content/uploads/numeri/LaCompagna_piemonte_A01-N01.pdf.

In the newspaper *La Compagna*, the fascists are implied as the ones responsible for Italy's fate, while the proletariat will come to the rescue: "Italy was destroyed by the irresponsible few, but it will be remade by the work of the proletariat."[430]

Conclusion

In sum, in all three countries, women arrived at the resistance through different socio-political trajectories. Their involvement in the resistance struggle was more often crafted against a reservoir of narratives of national struggle and heroism, rather than drawing on communist/ socialist or feminist ideas. This invocation of collective national memories and national pride differed in each country based on the distinct national histories, myths, and traditions, along with the different conditions of war and occupation that characterised each country. Yet in all three cases, within this broader mobilisational narrative that tended to downplay communist ideals, a gender-specific component became apparent, calling women to participate in the resistance and defend their country by following the steps of their women ancestors who had defended their respective countries before. While these narratives differed slightly based on the ideological orientation of the source, even in the case of left-wing clandestine press, the national/patriotic nature of the struggle was crucial for the resistance discourse; women were called into arms as *donne italiane, Ellinides* or *Femmes françaises*,[431] rather than as 'Women Communists', which was rarer. This gendered narrative, in turn, reserved a gender-specific mobilisation for the majority of women, politicising their traditional roles as mothers and housewives in the context of emergency created by the war and occupation.

[430] 'Nevicata', *Compagna: Giornale dei gruppi femminili aderenti al Partito socialista di unità proletaria,* Emilia-Romagna, gennaio 15, 1945, Istituto Nazionale Ferruccio Parri, p. 2, https://www.stampaclandestina.it/?page_id=116&ricerca=202.

[431] These 'salutations' were the most common ones in the clandestine tracts that circulated in the occupied countries.

Chapter 4: The Domestic Milieu as a Political Milieu in the Context of War and Occupation

Introduction

The resistance was not located in a defined battlefront; it was nowhere and everywhere at the same time. In that sense, resistance activities took many forms based on local and space-specific needs. In this type of war, women's help was necessary for the survival of the movement. The absence of clear boundaries between the civilian and military war effort on the so-called home and fighting front facilitated the involvement of women in the conflict, through the extension and subversion of their traditional roles as mothers and housewives. Despite the broad participation of women in the left-wing resistance movements in all three countries, there was a mostly clear distinction between the roles women and men assumed. Most women who became involved in resistance activities did so through 'gender-specific' activities. This gender-specific trajectory applied both to the ones that supported the *antartes, maquis and partigiani* in the countryside and the *antistasiakoi, résistants, resistenti* in the cities and more urbanised environments. The liberation movements required women in the cities and in the mountains to cook for them, clean and wash their clothes, while they also needed women's 'household' to hide and be taken care of. As Leo Benvenuti mentioned in the introduction of the series 'La Mia Guerra' (1990), a TV documentary series of seven episodes narrating everyday life in Second World War Italy: "We would talk about the other war, the small war, terrible war, which we suffered in the villages, in the city, in the streets, in the shops, in the flats, in the offices, in the air-raid shelters, in the kitchens. On this front, the woman immediately became the protagonist and sometimes the heroine."[432]

In this type of warfare, clandestine in nature, trust between the actors involved was crucial to the survival of the movement. In that sense, family ties and close relationships provided a trustful environment in which clandestine operations could flourish. Indeed, the formation of resistance groups within very small spheres required family, friendship, and professional networks of mixed composition, which facilitated the involvement of women as mothers, wives, and so on in the struggle. Equally, the connection - an engaged family member, such as a husband, or a partner- was an important factor that facilitated women's participation in these clandestine activities. In that sense, Italo Calvino's term used in the

[432] 'Quando c'era la fame,' *La Mia Guerra*, RAI, https://www.raiplay.it/video/2019/01/La-mia-guerra---Puntata-1-7597bf41-f01d-4408-9d0a-2cf5a624b83d.html.

title of his book, 'spider nest', fits perfectly to explain how women were "caught up" in the resistance through family/neighborhood/work networks, or even by chance.[433] Yet, family-networks alone were not able to solve the various problems that emerged due to the war and occupation. Clandestine networks involving previously political individuals, especially those involved in left-wing and antifascist parties, were crucial to further pull and push women in the resistance.

At the same time, the hunger during the years of occupation, the lack of water and the inflation in essential products were problems that foremost concerned mothers and housewives. Due to the hardships caused by the war and occupation, women's first mobilisations were a response to these practical problems that emerged. Collective action was crucial to finding solutions to these problems. Since individual actions could not solve issues such as malnutrition and poverty. The 'Civil Resistance'[434] that took place in the cities through demonstrations and strikes among other actions further favoured significant female participation in these actions. This involvement reinforced women's traditional roles into an everyday activism, since many of the day-to-day problems related to the Occupation fell under women's domain, such as food scarcity, which affected their ability to provide food for their children. This chapter will first provide a brief context of how the harsh material conditions reframed women's roles as mothers and housewives and led them to act collectively and engage in resistance activity. Then it will examine the different configurations of these feminine roles in the resistance and their political meaning within the context of war and occupation.

4.1. Hunger and Harsh Material Conditions under the Occupation

In France, on June 17, 1940, Marshal Phillipe Pétain, known as the First World War hero of Verdun, and the French government sued for an armistice. When on June 22 the armistice was concluded, Alsace and Lorraine were seized by the Third Reich, northern France came under German occupation, and south France became the newly founded the rump state known as *État français* under the General Petain.[435] Marc Bloch, an Alsatian Jewish historian and member of the resistance, illustrates the general sentiment of the French the day after the defeat of France: "We find ourselves today in this dreadful situation that the fate of France has ceased to depend on the French, who are now only "somewhat humiliated

[433] Mairi Leontiadou, a laundress from Piraeus, was arrested and later executed during the Greek Civil War because she refused to turn in her neighbour who had given her a parcel to guard.
[434] Definition of the Civil Resistance provided by Claudio Pavone above: p. 54 of this thesis.
[435] Gildea, *Fighters in the Shadows*, 22.

spectators."[436] The defeat nevertheless is not what humiliated the French the most; it is rather the collapse (l' effondrement) that followed.[437] The subsequent collapse of the French army led to thousands of civilians fleeing.[438] This humiliation, due to the total collapse of the Republic and the occupation that followed, are cited to have prompted many women to join the resistance in post-war narrations. For instance, Marie-José Chombart de Lauwe entered the resistance at the age of 17 in the summer of 1940 at Brehat. Later, in 1941, as a resistance member of '*La Bande à Sidonie'*,[439] she mentions in her memoir: "The occupiers used to hassle us on many occasions. That is why in the Cotes-du-Nord, an occupied and forbidden zone on the coast, I started by raising my head with small gestures such as drawing Lorraine crosses on the walls."[440] Élisabeth Rioux Quintenelle, originally from Grenoble, was a nurse in the maquis of Oisans. She also writes in her memoirs how and why she became involved in the resistance in the first place. Her first act of resistance was spontaneous when she helped a prisoner destined for the Gestapo evade while working in the hospital: "Oh, I knew the reason I had done what I had done. I didn't want to see my country suffering, defiled by brutes, no longer hearing those guttural voices and shouted orders."[441] Robert Gildea writes that Madeleine Riffaud, a member of the Front National of medical students and later of the FTP, decided to 'find the resistance' after being molested by a group of German officers during the first days of the occupation. Even when a superior officer called the young soldiers in order, she still felt frustrated and humiliated at the same time. As cited in her 1994 personal memoir, at that time, she thought: "I am going to find them, those who did not accept the occupation, the humiliation... I don't know who they are, but I will find them."[442]

Simultaneously, this "exodus" that followed the defeat in 1940, the German occupation in the north, and the establishment of the Vichy regime all placed women in front of a series of everyday life problems related to their traditional responsibilities as housewives and mothers. The situation under occupation became unbearable for many families. As the historian Henri Amouroux wrote in 1962:

> The black market is the consequence of all times of scarcity. It causes a vertiginous rise in prices. In Nice, where the food situation is catastrophic, oil

[436] Sebastien Albertelli, Julien Balance and Laurent Douzou, *La lutte clandestine en France : Une histoire de la Resistance 1940-1944* (Éditions du Seuil, 2019), 16-17.
[437] Ibid, 16-17.
[438] Gildea, *Fighters in the Shadows,* 20-21.
[439] An escape network to England. Her mother, Suzanne, created the group whose main purpose is to help Breton people who want to escape to England. See more: Breizh Femmes, Histoire(s) - Marie-José Chombard de Lauwe, November 16, 2015, accessed February 12, 2023, https://www.breizhfemmes.fr/histoire-s-marie-jose-chombard-de-lauwe.
[440] Marie-José Chombart de Lauwe, *Toute une vie de résistance* (POP'COM, 2002), 9.
[441] Élisabeth Rioux Quintenelle, [Marianne], *La guerre sans arme* (Éditions de Belledonne, 1996), 56.
[442] Madeleine Riffaud, *On l'appelait Rainer* (Paris : Éditions Julliard, 1994), 24. A similar version is shared in Gildea, *Fighters in the Shadows,* 20.

> sells for 1200 F a litre butter for 450 F a kilo, an egg for 40 F, when the average salary varies between 1800 F and 2500 F a month, women's salaries being 15 to 20% lower than men's ... and a prisoner's wife, mother of two children, receiving 27 F of allowance a day. How can we be surprised when food dependencies represent more than 70% of the family budget?[443]

In Greece, hunger, and poverty, particularly in the rural areas where the more militarised version of the resistance emerged, were central to both the evolution and enlargement of the resistance and women's participation. Many women became involved in the resistance in order to solve the problems caused by the dire economic situation as a result of the Triple Occupation. The overexploitation of the country's food supplies, natural resources and industry by the occupiers led the Greek state into collapse and the Greek population to starvation. The plunder to cover their needs, the total destruction of the country's transportation system, along with the naval blockade imposed by the Allies, resulted in a famine that took the lives of 100.000 people.[444] Violetta Hionidou estimates the famine-related deaths from 100,000 to 450,000.[445] In a report by *Ethnikos Organismos Xristianikis Allelegguhs* (EOXA- National Organisation of Christian Solidarity), the dire situation is illustrated: "Anyone who lived through the winter of 1941-1942 knows what misery is. It was not ordinary poverty that made it difficult for a man to meet his living needs. It was absolute poverty, the lack of basic necessities for one's survival."[446]

Following the famine of 1941-1942, foreign aid was sent to Greece after an agreement between the Axis and the Allies. However, the control and distribution of aid became a weapon in the hands of the occupying authorities and their collaborators.[447] In the regions where the resistance was active, the Italians (until the capitulation of Italy in 1943) and the

---

[443] Henri Amouroux, 'La vie quotidienne sous l'occupation', l'institut, reçu 4, juin 1994, Bibliothèque Margarite Durand, 40.45. 940.4.GOE, Paris.

[444] Yannis Skalidakis, "From Resistance to Counterstate: The Making of Revolutionary Power in the Liberated Zones of Occupied Greece, 1943–1944," *Journal of Modern Greek Studies* 33, no. 1 (May 2015): 158.

[445] Violetta Hionidou, "Famine in Occupied Greece: Causes and Consequences." In *Bearing Gifts to Greeks: Humanitarian Aid to Greece in the 1940s*, ed. Richard Clogg (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007) 26.

[446] 'Συμβολή Γυναικών', Κεντρική Υπηρεσία, αρ. φακέλου 92, υποφάκελος 10, 1945, Διπλωματικό και Ιστορικό Αρχείο Υπουργείο Εξωτερικών, Αθήνα.

[447] In 1944, what to became known as the Battle of the Harvest (Η Μάχη της Σοδειάς) was a conflict between the occupiers and their collaborators against the resistance movements, particularly EAM/ELLAS. In June, when the harvest period begins, the Germans along with the help from collaborationists, wanted to take the harvest for themselves and deprive the guerrillas of their means for survival. The collaborationist government decision to deploy army personnel in the rural areas to register the agricultural production and purchase its output in controlled prices was seen as a *casus belli* from the population. ELAS GHQ had to ensure that the goods will be disposed according to need. When the guerrillas were sure that the Germans were not operating in the area, they helped the villagers in the reaping and threshing. Stefanos Sarafis argues that this collaboration between the guerrillas and the population created solidarity between them. As a result, the surplus was given to *Epimelitia tou Antarti* (ETA – Support for the Partisan) so it could be transported in the mountains and feed the guerrillas. See more: Skalidakis, "From Resistance to Counterstate," 160-163. This is evident from EAM/ELLAS anthem mention that "EAM/ELLAS saved us from the hunger." See also Sarafis, *ELAS: Greek Resistance Army*, 337-339.

Germans obstructed the transfer of aid to villages as part of their counterinsurgency strategy. This strategy had destructive effects on the rural population in Greece, where only half of the population in need received aid (one out of two million precisely).[448] It was within this background of social collapse as a result of the political and administrative vacuum that resistance emerged. As the results of four Greek psychiatrists demonstrate, "the psychological tyranny of anxiety and the shocking regression of the personality from the relentless action of terrorism and hunger was overcome by the psychology of resistance."[449] Initially, the resistance organisation filled this gap and functioned as an agent of social reconstruction.[450]

Therefore, many women in Greece became involved in EAM/ELAS due to the dire situation they had fallen into due to the occupation. As a direct consequence of women's traditional roles as housewives, the actions of EAM in addressing the problem of hunger attracted and mobilised a considerable number of women in its ranks from its early days in 1941-1942. As Vervenioti argues in her lecture on the participation of women in the resistance, it is the practical problems that mobilised women to participate in EAM.[451] Prior to the elections in *Politiki Epitropi Ethnikis Apeleftherosis (*PEEA- Political Committee of National Liberation) in 1944, a story published in a newspaper, regardless of its truthfulness, is indicative of EAM's focus on practical problems that affected the population, which facilitated women's mobilisation in its ranks. According to the story, a kid asks his mother:

> -Where are you going, Mom?
>
> -I'm going to vote. Didn't I tell you before that our *antartes* and EAM are giving us freedom...? We didn't vote before.
>
> -What are you going to vote for, Mum?
>
> Mum thought about it for a while. What's she going to tell her kid? He looked her in the eye with curiosity.
>
> -What am I going to vote for...? My little boy. What else? *I'll vote for the good guys to bring us bread.*[452]

In that context of harsh conditions, charity handouts also started "spontaneously" in Mikro Chorio in Eurytania, central Greece, under the initiative of Nafsika Flegga, a resister from there. The latter narrates that hunger was the ever-present element during the years of

---

[448]Skalidakis, "From Resistance to Counterstate," 159.
[449] Cited in Μενέλαος Χαραλαμπίδης, "Η Αντιστασιακή δράση σε αστικό περιβάλλον: Πολιτική διαμαρτυρία και ένοπλη δράση στην κατοχική Αθήνα," in *Τετράδια Πολιτικού Διαλόγου, Ερευνάς και Κριτικής*, αρ. 64, Χειμώνας-Άνοιξη 2014, 48.
[450] Ibid, 49.
[451] Τασούλα Βερβενιώτη, "Οι Γυναίκες στην εμπόλεμη Ελλάδα (1940 – 1950)," Μάϊος 20, 2016, Διάλεξη, https://www.blod.gr/lectures/oi-gynaikes-stin-empolemi-ellada-1940-1950/.
[452] 'Οι Γυναίκες στις Κάλπες', Ρούμελη: Όργανο της Επιτροπής του ΕΑΜ της Στερεάς Ελλάδας, Μάιος 1, 1944, σ.1, Αρχείο Κοινωνικής Ιστορίας, Αθήνα. Emphasis my own.

occupation, which affected most of all the children. According to her narration, this led her to start providing food from her own table to some neighbouring families out of compassion.[453] An act of solidarity or even an act of "collective motherhood," rather than a choice with political motives of participating in the resistance: Her compassionate act was later spotted by a communist member who was involved in the resistance. His incitement "pulled" Nafsika to organise more charity handouts outside of the village of Mikro Chorio, leading to a more organised and collective action through the ranks of EAM which mobilized women from the whole area of Eurytania.[454]

As previously mentioned, in pre-war Greece, women were almost entirely excluded from any political activity. As Hart argues, girls were not allowed into public spaces where politics were conducted (the *kafeneion* -traditional cafeteria- or the political party headquarters). Their participation was restricted in the domestic milieu.[455] Hart further identifies three interrelated situations where women had the ability to circulate in the village (chorio) or in the city. Women who had to help their family by working in the family business; women who were chaperoned by a male member of their household, particularly when women were of marriageable age; and women who engaged in duties related to the household (i.e., by baking the food in the public oven in the *chorio,* or going to the market).[456] Nevertheless, as we shall see in this chapter, during the war, these women, who represented the stability of the gendered order, came under pressure to re-negotiate their pre-war exhortations by engaging more in the public sphere.[457]

In Italy too, hunger was signalled by female narrators as an important wartime issue that affected women's lives and their children and mobilised them to act. A woman in the RAI series 'La mia guerra', recalls how hunger was prevalent during the war: "These days we really suffered from hunger... We walked around holding our stomachs so as not to feel cramps, we stopped our friends instead of saying good morning, we asked what did you eat today? We were so hungry!"[458] While 'hunger' here is not signalled as a mobilisation reason, it demonstrates how these issues affected women and their 'traditional' roles. Yet in Italy, the different political context of initially being an ally of Nazi Germany and an occupier determined women's first steps towards the resistance in different ways. Following the capitulation on September 8, Italian soldiers escaping from prisons, or those who did not

[453] Κίνηση «Η Γυναίκα της Αντίστασης», *Γυναίκες στην Αντίσταση,* 100-102.
[454] Ibid, 100-102; See also: Βερβενιώτη, *Η γυναίκα της Αντίστασης*, 214.
[455] Hart, *New Voices in the Nation*, 136.
[456] Ibid, 152.
[457] Jennifer Purcell, "The Domestic Soldier: British Housewives and the Nation in the Second World War: British Housewives and the Nation in the WWII," *History Compass* 4, no. 1 (2006): 153.
[458] 'Quando c'era la fame,' *La Mia Guerra*, RAI.

wish to adhere to the Repubblica di Salò needed civilian clothing, with women spontaneously offering their help. In one account, in Turin, Chiara Serdi's mother, *la signora Pachner*, on her own initiative, asked her family to donate any old clothes and she gave them to former soldiers so they could move more freely in civilian clothes: "Therefore my mother had asked everyone in the house who had old clothes, then she had asked the nuns... who always collected clothes to give to the poor and so on, and she had stocked up on clothes in the cellar and so she took them [the soldiers who came asking for civilian clothing] down to the cellar, dressed them and then accompanied them to the station, kissed them, hugged them, like this, *mio parente*, and put them on cattle wagons because at that time there was nothing else."[459]

4.2. Connections and Relations: Personal Entanglements

The irregular nature of war that necessitated clandestine modes of operations further facilitated women's involvement in the struggle through close networks of family and friends based on trust, while their roles as mothers and wives were reinforced to serve the movement. The element of causality through personal entanglements becomes apparent in various sources. Wives assisted their husbands in their clandestine work, such as Lucie Aubrac with Raymond Aubrac and Cécile Le Bihay with her husband Henri Tanguy in France. Equally, Madeleine Riffaud made her first steps in the resistance through her encounter and romantic involvement with Marcel Gagliardi, a doctor and a member of the *Jeuneusse Communiste*.[460] In Italy, Joyce Lussu's involvement in the resistance became intertwined with her love and involvement with Emilio Lussu, an antifascist leader who became involved both in the Spanish Civil War and the Italian resistance. Although having already connected with the antifascist movement due to her family's antifascist background, in her personal memoir she demonstrates how her 'love interest' towards Emilio pushed her to mobilise – in order to prove to him she was an adequate companion to him despite his militant life: "Emilio Lussu had no intention of forming a family, incompatible in his opinion, with the life he led as a militant revolutionary. But I was convinced that I was the right companion for a militant revolutionary… and I did not neglect to look for every opportunity to repeat and prove it to him."[461] Loukia Pistikidou, member of the Women's Committee in Macedonia's EAM in Greece and the editor-in-chief of *Synagonistria* (Female Comrade) illuminates this:

> The women alone took over the task of helping the partisans by providing them shelter, someone to dress, to remove from them the lice, to help them.

[459] Tobagi, *La Resistenza delle Donne*, 14.
[460] Isabelle Mons, *Madeleine Riffaud : L'Esprit de Résistance (*Paris : Payot, 2019), 46, 53.
[461] Joyce Lussu, *Portrait* (Roma: L'Asino d'oro, 2012), 65.

> Because they were their own people, they were their brothers and sisters, their children, their men, and it was like giving a helping hand to your family. This is how they saw it… And this is where we gave a lot of weight, in participating (in the struggle), in helping in the struggle for liberation. And close to that, let's say as a second (priority), not as a first (priority) for example, as a feminist movement but as a second, we came to realise that we can, and we have brains, and we can think, and we are capable of doing something else, that up until now men have been doing, and now that the men are gone, we are doing it. So, we have the capability.[462]

Hence, women in both their wartime and retrospective personal testimonies highlight how they often got involved in the resistance activities as a result of their personal or familial contacts, for varying reasons. This is particularly true for the Greek case study since women's participation in the public sphere was non-existent for the majority of women due to the patriarchal nature of the Greek family, especially for rural women. According to Vervenioti, these women participated in the resistance activities after having spoken to a friend, a fellow villager, or a member of their family already involved in the resistance.[463] This private interaction in almost 'conspiratory' terms due to the clandestine nature of the struggle becomes evident in *Gynaikeia Drasi*, a women's newspaper affiliated with EAM. In the article, young women are prompted to participate in the struggle against the occupiers and their local collaborators:

> Many girls ask us what they must do to become useful in our liberation struggle. We answer.
>
> First of all, you need to organise yourselves. *Some trusted acquaintance* will certainly be able to connect you with EAM. There you will find your way and your destination.[464]

In Italy too, Marisa Ombra, a resister from Asti from an antifascist family, mentions that her first involvement in the resistance was through her father's involvement: "One evening in the winter of 1942-1943, my father arrived home with an old Remington and told us there was a job to be done..."[465] She later affirms that she began to understand more about the regime and the war that night when politics entered her life.[466] Idealle Cannella, a resister who joined the partisan formations in Val Grosina as a nurse, for instance, mentions the names of the *staffette* in Grosio, where it becomes evident that [all the mentioned ones] had a family member involved in the resistance activities which further manifests the importance

[462] Cited in Μπουσχότεν, *Περάσαμε πολλές μπόρες κορίτσι μου*, 93.
[463] Ibid*,* 113.
[464] 'Καθήκοντα για τις νέες', *Γυναικεία Δράση*, αρ. φύλλου 6, Ιούνιος 10, 1942, Εφημερίδες Γυναικών, σ. 2, Βιβλιοθήκη – Αρχείο Χαρίλαος Φλωράκης, Επιμορφωτικό Κέντρο ΚΚΕ, Αθήνα.
[465] Marisa Ombra, *La bella politica: La Resistenza, "Noi donne", il femminismo,* prefazione di Anna Bravo, (Edizioni Seb 27, 2009), 21.
[466] Ibid, 23.

of family ties and connection to get involved in the struggle given the clandestine nature of war:

> We look around for our *staffette:* there is Apollonia, the mother of Guglielmo Pini, the heroic commander who gave his life to save Grosio and the hydroelectric power stations of the Milan municipal company from destruction; Maria Maffi, the mother of Emilio Valmadre, who, very valiant, had the sad fate of falling into an ambush. We see Maddalena Rinaldi the postwoman from Grosio, our precious informer.... Anna Caspani Sala, sister of Commandants Protasio, Luigi and Franco Caspani…[467]

The personal connection was indeed an important route through which women 'found' the resistance, but it was not the only one. Due to the extended needs of the movement, as Janet Hart explains for Greece, some women were recruited by these organisations directly.[468] Moreover, by emphasising the family connection, I do not intend to reduce women's agency in participating in the resistance struggle. Women became involved in the resistance for a variety of reasons that also intertwined with each other, from an initial spontaneity, out of vengeance against Nazis and local collaborators who killed and tortured the men of their families, political motives, or/and purely out of needs for survival, such as hunger- related problems, the pressing need to provide for their children and themselves. For instance, in another example, Vervenioti mentions Kostoula, a former young female partisan, who decides to write a letter to her classmates explaining her decision to join the resistance: "What else is left for me to do? My father is in jail, my brother is in the mountain, my uncles are hostages in Italy and my village is completely unrooted by the occupiers. I have thought about it thoroughly. Who would avenge the calamities inflicted upon my family?"[469] Moreover, younger women even highlighted the feeling of adventure that participation in the resistance entailed. Cristina Casana, a liberal catholic resister from north Italy who provided shelter to resisters and partisans, recalls: "For me, it was a liberation. It meant the first independence from the family, discovering a 'non-worldly' relationship with people, getting out of a routine in solidarity with others, fighting for an idea even if it was very vague because I knew nothing about politics."[470] For younger people, participation in the struggle created new 'standards' of life through acts through an active participation in politics.

4.3. Framing the Female Resistance as Assistance

In all three cases, in various sources consulted, from clandestine press to archival documents, women's roles were described as assistance to the main struggle assumed by men, who

[467] Ideale Cannella, *Donne di Grosio; partigiane senza brevetto* (Roma: Patria Indipendente, 1963), 6.
[468] Hart, *New Voices in the Nation,* 163.
[469] Cited in Poulos, "Arms and the Woman," 172. Originally from and for more details: Βερβενιώτη, *Η γυναίκα της Αντίστασης*, 328.
[470] Alloisio, and Beltrami, *Volontarie della libertà, 8 settembre 1943 -25 Aprile 1945*, 39-40.

fought in the partisan formations: "It is up to us, women, young women (*jeunes filles),* to encourage, to support and help. Each one [should help] a husband, a son or a good friend to strengthen the resistance for the liberation of France."[471] In Greece, Despoina Fouka Reze, a member of EPON, mentions in her memoir that she wondered why men in the initial phase of the resistance in 1941 did not ask women for their *help* in doing the "less heavy" tasks:

> I sat down on a stool and under the dull light of the lamp hanging in the middle of the fireplace, to let the smoke escape, I began to write on a paper, on my knees, the names of the girls, who I thought would accept to work in an organised way. I divided them into four groups with a leader (epikefalis), dividing, basically, the work. e.g., washing group, cooking group and other [similar] needs, thus *relieving the men to do the heavier work.*[472]

Their roles were seen as vital, yet as a vital help to the partisans, who would be the ones liberating France in the end:

> It is up to us women, young girls, to encourage, support, and help. Each one has a husband, a brother, or a good comrade to strengthen in the struggle for the liberation of France. Let us be proud to think that our husbands, our brothers are fighting on the front line for the Liberation of our Fatherland, which we will rebuild bigger and stronger. How can we let the sacrifices of all our soldiers killed by the *Boches* during the wars of 1914-1918 and 1939-1940, of all those shot by the Gestapo and traitors to the Fatherland, go unnoticed?... Organise ourselves, team up together, form small committees of housewives in the neighbourhoods, committees of help and assistance to the families of prisoners for their patriotic actions, committees of support of G.F. and F.T.P., in order to make our voice heard.[473]

This support took various forms, from material to emotional: "Collect food, clothes, money. Hand them over to the resistance groups that will forward them to them."[474] Equally, in a Greek newspaper of Epirus in North Greece, the gender-specific role of women and its articulation as assistance to the main struggle, presumed by men, becomes evident:

> The women of Epirus, worthy of their heroic traditions, from the very first moment of the struggle, entered the battlefield and, relying on their own strength, wrote new pages and glories and heroism in this period of cruel violence. Their *accompaniment and assistance* to ELAS and the struggle in general were and continue to be important and diverse. They *stood alongside the fighting children of Epirus,* and they acted as their right hand. From

---

[471] 'Femmes de France', *Femmes Patriotes*, no. 1, p.1.
[472] Δέσποινα Φούκα-Ρέζε, *Οργισμένα Χρόνια: Αφήγημα* (Λαμία, 1994), 170. Emphasis my own.
[473] 'Femmes de France', *Femmes Patriotes : Organe Des Comites Féminins de la Résistance*, M.U.R, no. 1, Février 1944, Gayman Helene Rachel et le mouvement de résistance, F Δ res 745/04, La Contemporaine, Paris.
[474] 'Parisiennes', *La Patriote parisienne : journal édité par l'Union des femmes pour la défense de la famille et la libération de la France,* Septembre 1943, p. 2, Bibliothèque nationale de France, département Réserve des livres rares, RES-G-1470 (289), accessed September 8, 2022, http://catalogue.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/cb328341497.

> knitting socks, washing clothes, carrying ammunition and, with a rifle on their shoulders, the women of Epirus gave their all to the giant call of the nation.[475]

Knitting was also one of the activities assumed by women to 'support' the *antartes* materially, and many of the appeals to Greek women through clandestine press concerned the need for woollen clothing for the *antartes* that fought in the mountains *(mallino tou antarti)*. In the Greek newspaper "Foni tis EPON" (Voice of EPON), women's role of knitting for the partisans is seen as the women's contribution to resistance struggle: "We are awaiting, girl, for your knitted sweater."[476] In ELAS, by 1944, such activities had become much more organised and each military unit had its own service composed of women for knitting and washing.[477] In Greece, in another small leaflet (trikaki), women are encouraged by EAM to knit for them: "Knit (plekste malli) for our *antartes*. The fundraising for the partisan (*antarti)* is a national *duty*."[478] A similar leaflet circulated in France: "Prepare yourselves from now on to help by all means the Resistance, it is your *duty* as a Frenchwoman, as a wife, as a mother, and that so that France may live."[479] As it becomes evident from the above segments, despite its perception as assistance to the main struggle assumed by men, women's roles in supporting the partisan struggle were articulated as a duty: women have a duty to serve the nation and its/their men.

Moreover, in rural Greece, especially in the mountainous terrain of Evritania, due to the lack of transport means available, women were the ones to *assist* by carrying food, munition supplies and anything else partisans needed in the formations. This activity, which seems to fit better men's tasks due to the inferior muscle strength of women on average, was assumed by women already from the Greco-Italian War in 1940. Women are the ones carrying *zaligka.*[480] Melpo Axioti, a well-known left-wing resister and writer, mentions, "[we see her].. carrying *zaligka* the munition supplies to the guerrillas through impassable forests where not even a flying bird could approach."[481] Another role consistent with women's roles was that of the teacher. Yet in Free Greece, [482] within the overall radical

---

[475] Italics my own. 'Όλα για τον Λυτρωτή μας ΕΛΑΣ', Ηπειρώτισσα: Όργανο του Απελευθερωτικού Αγώνα Γυναικών Ηπείρου αρ. φύλλου 2, Οκτώβριος 13, 1944, σ.1, Αρχείο Σύγχρονης Κοινωνικής Ιστορίας, Αθήνα.
[476] 'Μάλλινα για τους Αντάρτες μας', Η Φωνή της ΕΠΟΝ: Όργανο της ΕΠΟΝ των νέων Φυματικών της Αθήνας, Χρόνος Α, αρ. φύλλου 1, Οκτώβριος 28, 1943, Αρχείο Ηρακλής Πετιμεζάς, Εθνικά Αρχεία του Κράτους, Αθήνα.
[477] Βερβενιώτη, *Η γυναίκα της Αντίστασης*, 242.
[478] 'Πλέξε Μαλλί', 37/38, Αρχείο Ηρακλής Πετιμεζάς, Εθνικά Αρχεία του Κράτους, Αθήνα.
[479] 'Appel aux femmes de France', Mouvement de Libération Nationale, Comite Regional, ARC 074-71/B, Campus Condorcet, Paris.
[480] *Zaligka* means carrying something on the shoulders. In rural areas of Greece, this was an activity predominantly done by women. Many elderly women also did the *zaligka.* In the Greek-Albanian war, women provided the munition supplies to the soldiers fighting on the frontline, not only because men were absent but because it was considered a degrading activity for men.
[481] Μέλπω Αξιώτη, *Απαντα*, Γ' τόμος, Χρονικά (Αθήνα, Κέδρος, 1980), 195-198.
[482] Free Greece is a term used during the Occupation to describe mountainous and semi-mountainous areas of Greece that were under full guerrilla control, without the presence of the occupation authorities.

program of EAM in transforming Greece, this role acquired an important political significance of rebuilding 'New Greece' by educating the new generation. In that context, women's involvement with educational activities increased dramatically in Free Greece, as many young women who had finished junior high school (*gymnasio)* staffed the newly founded *frontistiria* (tutoring) in Free Greece, with these women assuming the role of educating the new generation. Charis Sakellariou, a former member of EPON, in his book about the education by EAM/ELAS during the resistance, mentions that one of the most important aspects of the resistance was the establishment of nurseries for the kids in Free Greece. These nurseries were staffed largely by women from EPON:

> And one can only admire the self-sacrifice of these young *Eponitisses* (young women of EPON) who staffed these nurseries. Without any material help, they divided their day with genuine self-denial between the chores of their homes and their fields and willingly went there to cook, distribute the rations, supervise the children in eating and playing, wash them, bathe them, sew their little dresses or patch them up, and [to] learn songs and skits to entertain them and raise them culturally.[483]

This gender-specific mobilisation and discourse that saw women's resistance activities as assistance to the main struggle becomes evident from the variety of activities organised by the GDD in Italy from 1943 and onwards. For example, several initiatives, such as 'La Settimana del Partigiano' or the 'Corrispondenza ai Partigiani per il Natale', were organised in order to collect material for the partisans fighting. In a tract called 'La Settimana del Partigiano' issued by GDD in Genoa, similar to the initiative *mallino tou antarti* (trans. wool of the partisan) in Greece, the GDD appeals to the Genoese women: "Genoese women! Let us show the heroic freedom fighters our solidarity, our admiration..."[484]

This gendered support did not only manifest in material ways, but it took the form of emotional support to the partisans; a type of emotional labour, which further reinforced gender stereotypes of women as more emotional and compassionate than men. In Italy, for instance, women in the GDD were invited to send letters to partisans to boost their confidence in those difficult times. In 1944, for example, Sonia (no further information is given) writes to a partisan:

> Dear, dear Partisan, we, two, don't know each other but it's as if we've known each other for a long time, as if we were two old friends. And friends we are, and more than friends- brothers. We have the same ideals and the same

[483] Χάρης Σακέλλαρίου, *Η Παιδεία στην Αντίσταση* (Αθήνα: Σύγχρονη Εποχή, 2003), 59.
[484] 'La settimana del Partigiano', Il comitato nazionale dei ''Grupppi di Difesa della Donna e per l'Assistenza ai Combattenti della Libertà, Fondo : CLN ALTA ITALIA (CLNAI) Serie: Periodo Clandestino, sottoserie : Carteggio con partiti politici, organizzazioni di massa e CLN di base, Fascicolo : ''Carteggio del Clnai con i gruppi di difesa della donna' , Gruppi Difesa Donna: B.14 FASC. 37, Istituto Nazionale Ferruccio Parri, Milan.

> programme, you and I, even if our ideologies differ. I would like, dear Partisan, to be able to express to you on this piece of paper all that I sincerely feel for you and thus express what all Italian women (and I mean *the sane* ones) feel for you. Believe me, I do not intend here to engage in insincere rhetoric, let alone write big words that impress, no.[485]

In France, women were asked to act as 'marraines' of the Francs-Tireurs et Partisans:

> The proof of the prestige the F.T.P enjoys in France is given by the ever-increasing assistance they receive from the population, particularly through the intermediary of 'marraines'. At the beginning, they timidly collected some funds for the rebels they knew but the «marraines» have become emboldened and (they) now collect *for the rebels* and the F.T.P.[486]

In the poem 'An unknown godmother [marraine]' by Paul Piat, the emotional labour provided by French women who act as *marraine*s is further articulated, demonstrating how the 'marraines' in France provided (emotional) support:

> …
>
> Is it true that you say things
>
> So sweet that those who hear them dare
>
> To think of tomorrow with less terror?
>
> You don't answer anything but I know, in any case
>
> That you give out a few pieces of soul,
>
> A few fragments of heart, and for that, Madame
>
> I break my hands and bow low.[487]

This gendered division of labour based on the compassion of women to help and save the ones who fight for them was evident in the anthem of EA:

> Forward to Ethniki Allilegguh
>
> Thicken its ranks, brothers and sisters
>
> Spread your hands affectionately
>
> Save our chosen fighters.

The expectation on women to assume supportive and assistive roles becomes even more evident when addressing women who had previous antifascist and political experience. The instance of the French writer Edith Thomas is illustrative. When she was younger, Thomas

---

[485] 'Invio di Corrispondenza ai Partigiani per il Natale', VI Settore, natale 1944 [Sonia], Fondo: CLN ALTA ITALIA (CLNAI) Serie: Periodo Clandestino, sottoserie: Carteggio con partiti politici, organizzazioni di massa e CLN di base, Fascicolo : ''Carteggio del Clnai con i gruppi di difesa della donna' , Gruppi Difesa Donna: B.14 FASC. 37, Istituto Nazionale Ferruccio Parri, Milan.

[486] 'Les F.T.P. et leurs « Marraines »', *L'Humanité*, Numéro Spécial, Janvier 1944, p.1.

[487] Paul Piat, 'Une marraine inconnue', Gayman Helene Rachel et le mouvement de résistance, F Δ res 745/4, La Contemporaine, Paris.

worked as an archivist at the National Archives. She was a founding member of the Communists' National Committee of Writers (CNE), which was established in 1942, and she took the responsibility, despite the danger, of having committee meetings at her apartment. The group was responsible for writing the paper 'Les Lettres françaises', one of the most influential papers on 'intellectual' resistance during the occupation.[488] "When I had managed to locate enough seats (which often gave me a lot of trouble; the youngest sat on the floor), I sat and stayed quiet in my corner," she writes in her memoirs, published in 1952. Thus, in a male circle, even a communist woman with a significant pre-war political experience assumed a more supportive role, acting like a chair attendant.[489]

Therefore, even women with antifascist experience prior to the war did not always challenge this gendered internalised contract and division of labour. This narrative of the resistance as a gendered space and activity that reinforces the gender hierarchy by perceiving women's activities as 'assistance' to the main struggle becomes evident in Ada Gobetti's understanding of the need for a specific organisation for women, articulated in her war diary, first published in 1956: "It is a question of speaking a language that would best appeal to women's qualities because, while affirming a theoretical equality, it was necessary to recognize the existence of profound differences that create diverse sensitivities, interests, and impulses."[490] Later on, in 1964, Ada Gobetti re-underlines this gendered mentality behind the creation of GDD: "Why 'defence'? Precisely because she is the direct creator of life, the woman is more inclined than the man to defend it. Why "assistance"? Because, precisely because of that, she is "available", because she is comprehensively maternal, a woman sees in the task of assistance one of her main expressions..."[491] In her 2015 memoir, Vera Sacchi also recalls her first impression of the formation of the GDD:

> I confess that when I saw the name 'Women's Defence Groups and Aid to Freedom Fighters', I had the idea that we were auxiliaries, the pendants of the army, we were supposed to help and not as protagonists as we thought. We were sceptical but there were practical advantages (and besides), then they told us that we would be represented in the CLN.[492]

Thus, this gendered division of labour was complemented by an ideology, internalised by several women themselves, that their work was not only different but less

[488] Dorothy Kaufmann, "Uncovering a Woman's Life: Edith Thomas (Novelist, Historian, Résistante)," *The French Review* 67, no. 1 (1993): 69, http://www.jstor.org/stable/397784.
[489] Cited in Andrieu, "Women in the French Resistance," 16.
[490] Ada Gobetti, and Jomarie Alano*, Partisan Diary: A Woman's Life in the Italian Resistance* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014), 60.
[491] Ada Gobetti, intervento al VII congresso dell'Udi, giugno 1964. Cited in Alloisio, and Beltrami, *Volontarie della Libertà*, *8 settembre 1943 -25 Aprile 1945,* 30.
[492] Vera Sacchi, *Io non sto a guardare: Memorie di una partigiana femminista* (a cura di Rosangela Pesenti) (San Cesario di Lecce, Pietro Manni, 2015), 45

important/secondary than that done by men. Even if they recognised the importance of their actions and the risks associated with them, their activities and impulse to support their husbands' during the war was based on the cultural perceptions of a relative value in a gender-linked structure of subordination.[493] Agnes Humbert was a member of the left-wing *Union des Intellectuels Francais* prior to the war and had a pivotal role in the formation of the *Musée de l'Homme* Resistance network, one of the first resistance networks founded in France in 1940. Humbert recalls her involvement in the formation of the network in her personal memoir, first published in 1946. Recalling her activities in the network *Musee de l'homme,* a gendered division of labour becomes apparent: "The men wrote and talked, while I typed up their articles."[494] A bit further, she also mentions: "I am a typist, *naturally*."[495] Later, she reflects on her wartime self: "Besides, why would anyone be interested in me? I've done so little and been so careful. Why on earth would they arrest me?"[496] The fact that Humbert wrote this during the war and publishes it as early as 1946, only a year after the war, is indicative of the attitude, including her own, regarding women's contribution to resistance as inferior to men's.

However, the hierarchical conceptualization of the resistance roles does not mean that women considered their work unimportant. Many women valorised their own feminine roles: Élisabeth Terrenoire, an important figure of the resistance in Lyon, also wrote in 1946 regarding the support of the armed struggle and the activities presumed by women: "They ended up saying yes anyway [to helping their husbands]." While she also articulates women's involvement as 'help' to the men's struggle, she also exemplifies women's resistance as equally dangerous: "And this consent is indeed an act of resistance and not the easiest one. Because many people forget the danger when they are in a delicate situation… But the woman often shared more than the risks, she became a partner."[497] In the same pattern, Carlotta Buganza, a *staffetta* engaged in resistance activities in Modena along with her partisan brother Cesare, demonstrates the need for women's participation in the struggle by telling her brother: "You are the commander, and you can reprimand me (tell me off). But remember, I came here because *they sent (emphasis my own)* me. Therefore, [you should] know that you need me, just as you need the entire women's movement. This should

[493] For more: Margaret R. Higonnet, and Patrice R. Higonnet, 'The Double Helix' in *Behind the Lines*, 34.
[494] Agnes Humbert, *Resistance: Memoirs of Occupied France*, trans. Barbara Melhor, afterward by Julien Blanc (Bloomsbury: London, 2008), 24.
[495] Ibid, 25.
[496] Ibid, 41.
[497] Cited in Thibault, *Les femmes et la Résistance*, 18-19. Originally : Élisabeth Terrenoire, *Combattantes sans uniforme : les femmes dans la résistance,* préface par Geneviève de Gaulle (Paris] : Bloud et Gay, 1946).

be clear, because without us, you do nothing."[498] These testimonies demonstrate the hierarchical classification of roles within the resistance through the notion 'double helix' developed by Margaret and Patrice Higonnet. The activity *per se* can be both crucial and dangerous but this importance is diminished in relation to men's roles. It is rather the cultural perception of its relative value as opposed to men's roles and activities.[499] This becomes further evident when compared to the value attached to the role of partisan, regardless of gender. Being a partisan by participating in combat was seen as the most honourable, manly role, as it became closely associated with the idea of martyrdom – dying for one's cause is perceived as the biggest sacrifice, usually associated with men. Titika Panagiotidou-Gkledi in her memoir writes, for instance, how women trained in Rentina could not wait to participate in combat - despite having participated in various resistance activities prior. As she mentions in her memoirs, after their military training was over in 1944, the women of the squads were ready to participate in the battle and fight: "*Finally*, each one thought, the time has come to fight, to get the baptism of fire, and each one of us could feel the pride in her becoming alive."[500]

4.4. Resistance in the House and in the Kitchen

The politicization of domestic roles becomes evident when women opened their houses, providing a safe place to partisans and resisters, hiding them, and taking care of the resisters' needs. For instance, a former male partisan named Matteo recalls the house of Ada Gobetti, which became a safe house for partisans in Turin. Gobetti indeed provided her house and took the responsibility of hosting the partisans' meetings, but her role also included her housewife responsibilities:

> One would go to the kitchen (to get in, one had to squeeze through a narrow passageway): the radio was open, one would try to understand the bulletins in English, one would drink tea.... But the extraordinary thing was that no matter how much you looked around, nothing, absolutely no trace, appeared on the surface. Every scrap of paper you could find was of the strictest legality: mission bulletins, book catalogues. Everything was camouflaged to perfection.[501]

London also recalls Georgette Cortial, a midwife in Vitry who, along with London and Odette Dugué, headed women's committees in the southern suburbs of Paris set up by the Communist Party, whose house became a point of reference for secret meetings.[502] The

[498] Cited in Tobagi, *La Resistenza delle Donne*, 84.
[499] Higonnet, "Introduction," in *Behind the Lines*, 34.
[500] Τιτίκα Παναγιωτίδου-Γκλέντη, *Γνωριμία με τις Αντάρτισσες* (Κατερίνη: Εκδόσεις D.E.A Κατερίνη, 1981), 38.
[501] "La casa del miracolo," in Luisa Sturani, *Antologia Della Resistenza* (Centro del Libro Popolare -Torino, 1951), 347.
[502] London, *La Mégère de la rue Daguerre. Souvenirs de résistance,* 101.

memoirs of Christian Pineau, a leader of the Resistance and the creator of the organisation *Libération-nord*, are a superb example of this 'resistance at home' or, more broadly, 'housewife resistance'. When he was a fugitive in 1943, he used to stay with a family in Lyon:

> [A]t my friends', the Goyets' home, the atmosphere is gentle and calming. After a trip, once again in their little kitchen with the radio set near Thérèse who's sewing, I feel all danger has been removed, that nothing outside can trouble the tranquillity of this family life. On the second floor, in the room next to mine, Claudette, the Goyet's daughter, sleeps. She is the age of my fourth son but her child's face is graver. She participates in the war, which she has trouble grasping, and in the Resistance, which she hardly even imagines. When her resolutely optimistic mother, announces to her, once a week, in the spirit of wishful thinking, the taking of Smolensk by the Russians, she claps her hands. Smolensk must be quite near, since her parents are so glad. Thérèse takes charge of my food, my clothes, my laundry, with touching care. One night, going downstairs into the kitchen for a glass of water, I find her ironing my boxershorts.
>
> I gently scold her:
>
> —Thérèse, you'll get tired, you should not still be working after two a.m.
>
> She answers simply:
>
> —It's for France.[503]

In Greece, women also provided their houses to partisans and resisters; their houses were transformed into *giafkes* (safe houses) for the resisters. These 'type' of houses existed in all cities and villages throughout Greece and women were the ones hiding and taking care of the *antartes*. Vervenioti refers to them as "passages".[504] In Greece, women also hid British soldiers after the defeat in the Battle of Crete in 1941. For instance, women in Pilio took care and hid British soldiers in their homes while they also helped them escape to Turkey.[505] Hiding/hosting allied soldiers, or a partisan immediately transformed their homes from an apolitical space into a political one.

Women also extended their housewives' responsibilities to the movement: In a similar vein as Ada Gobetti in Italy, Kaiti Zeugou, a member of the *Kommounistiki Epitropi Athinas* (KOA- Communist Organisation of Athens) during the resistance recalled that she was the one who had to go shop for the *antartes* in their temporary shelter.[506] Equally, in her

---

[503] Cited in Andrieu, "Women in the French Resistance," 23
[504] Βερβενιώτη, *Η γυναίκα της Αντίστασης*, 218.
[505] Ibid, 213. In Italy too, following the armistice and German occupation, thousands of prisoners of war tried to escape and were hidden by the Italian population. Roger Absalom explores this 'unexpected alliance' -as he calls it- between the Allied prisoners who escaped the camps taken by Germans and the peasant population that helped and hidden these previous enemies. See more: Roger Absalom, *Strange Alliance: Aspects of Escape and Survival in Italy, 1945-45* (OLSCHKI: Firenze, 1991).
[506] Cited in Βερβενιώτη, *Η γυναίκα της Αντίστασης*, 116.

narration of events to Antoni Sanoudaki, Charikleia, whose husband was the Kapetanios (Captain) of ELAS in Anogeia, Crete, had to feed the *antartes* that came to her house with her husband, "and he was sitting there in an afternoon *(with the other antartes),* and I brought them raki[507] and raisins."[508] Moreover, in her 1984 memoir, Petroula Nikolopoulou, for instance, mentions that women were the ones who cooked for the *antistasiakous (*resisters*)* and the *antartes* (partisans) in their houses. As she mentions, women had to cook in turn in order not to raise suspicion, and once the food was cooked, the girls and boys of EPON had to distribute the food to the safe houses around the area.[509] This necessary provision to avoid raising suspension demonstrates both the political nature of women's roles and their creative agency.

As Andrieu argues, this 'domestic resistance' may be seen as an encroachment of the public sphere into the private one. Andrieu argues that regardless of how powerful the patriotic impulses were, it remained a private matter.[510] Yet women's traditional space was politicised due to the war; the kitchen, a previously apolitical space where women took care of their domestic responsibilities, was transformed into a political one, where partisans met, with women being, in some cases, the protagonists: "In kitchens like Angela's, Saturnia Tellus, Marta's, or this one at the Righess farm I feel in Italy, Italian. Kitchens all different from each other…different faces, something similar in this war nestling in the kitchens."[511] Giovanna Zangrandi, a *staffetta* in the 'Pietro Fortunato Calvi' brigade, in the 'Nannetti' division,[512] also mentioned the kitchens: "These women stayed here in the kitchens, which are now no longer sealed off from the alley, the war has swept away barriers and curtains…"[513] In the case of irregular war, the boundaries between both the public and private spaces and the roles of fighters and civilians are blurred. The private/domestic space also acquires political significance and those perceived as non-political individuals engage in a political act even though their responsibilities might resemble those taking place during peace. Taking care of a partisan and providing shelter in that context was equally dangerous and contained several risks apart from death and deportation. Cécile Romagon Ouzolias

[507] Greek traditional strong alcoholic drink. In Crete, they drink it all day and it is considered impolite not to drink it if offered. In the book, on several occasions, Charikleia mentions that along with the small portions of food that she offered to the antartes, she also brought raki, sometimes a whole bottle of it. Σανουδάκης, *Χαρίκλειας Δραμουντάμη- Στεφανόγιαννη*, 38-39.
[508] Σανουδάκης, *Χαρίκλειας Δραμουντάμη- Στεφανόγιαννη*, 39.
[509] Πετρούλα Νικολοπούλου, *Μία Επονίτισσα Θυμάται* (Χρονικό της Αντίστασης) (Αθήνα, 1984), 23-24.
[510] Andrieu, "Women in the French Resistance," 22-23.
[511] Giovanna Zangrandi, *I Giorni Veri*, *1943-1945* (Arnoldo Mondadori Editore, 1963), 213.
[512] The Venetian Alessandro Gallo 'Garbin' organised the first group of partisans in Cadore, which took the name 'Calvi' Brigade in memory of Pier Fortunato Calvi and the Risorgimento struggles: they were young men of different political ideologies but mainly belonging to the Communist Party and the Action Party. For more: ANPI Venezia, Sandro Gallo "Garbin", https://www.anpive.org/wordpress/2011/03/27/garbin/.
[513] Zangrandi, *I Giorni Veri*, 229.

recalls the danger this 'resistance at home' entailed for women: "We, Albert (my husband) and I, have recently moved in with Henriane Witbrott, a schoolteacher who was not afraid to take us despite being clandestine (les clandestins que nous sommes) … She risks as much as we did. She lived with her two children, with her parents in the city Jardins."[514]

4.5. Acting as the mother of the struggle

In all three countries, women were called to assume their roles as symbolic mothers of the resistance. Within the context of war and occupation, the realities along with the cultural constructions of women's roles as mothers were altered:[515] Mothers were not only seen as mothers of their own children, but they had a responsibility towards the whole nation, all the "children" that were fighting for the liberation of the country. The various sources that prompt women to assume their gender-specific role in the struggle highlight their ongoing role as caregivers, where they exist as living martyrs, a sacrificial motherhood. Taking care of the children was considered a woman's responsibility; this notion of collective motherhood mobilised more and more women who were eager to help and save the nation's children, both their biological ones and metaphorical ones (those of the nation), from hunger. In wartime clandestine press and documents, they are seen as the "mother of the struggle", the "mother of the struggling nation."[516] Vervenioti has used the notion of 'collective motherhood' to describe this sense of collective duty towards the nation, without, however, elaborating further on the narratives embracing this notion. In practice, this idea of collective motherhood that emerged during the war denotes a form of a maternal patriotism,[517] according to which women are expected to take care of the (nation's) children apart from their own. Maria Svolou, a socialist leader member of EAM, in her article about women in the National Resistance (*Ethniki Antistasi*) nicely illustrates what this maternal patriotism through a collective notion of motherhood entails:

> Every child that dies is a victory for the enemy. *Organise the defence against death (tin amyna kata tou thanatou)* and the fight begins. It's 1941-1942. The first mobilisations, the first strikes, the first outings. For the bread, for the oil,

[514] Cécile Ouzoulias Romagon, *J'étais agent de liaison FTPF*, ouvrage réalisé avec la collaboration de Raymond Lavigne (Paris : Éditions Messidor, 1998), 9.
[515] As Penelope Morris and Perry Willson have argued vis-à-vis Italian mothers, both the material reality of Italian mothers and the cultural constructs of their roles have changed dramatically throughout time and context, in different geographical areas of Italy and across socioeconomic strata. Equally, different political movements, including left-wing and revolutionary, have varying arguments and opinions about women's roles and motherhood in practice. For more: Morris and Willson, "La Mamma," in *La Mamma,* 1-2. See also: Anna Bravo, "Simboli del materno," in *Donne e uomini nelle guerre mondiali*, 3rd ed, a.c.d Anna Bravo (Editori Laterza, 2008), 96-134.
[516] Βερβενιώτη, *Η γυναίκα της Αντίστασης,* 121-122.
[517] In Ada Gobetti's diary, this collective motherhood also takes a more universal form when she wonders what difference a German boy has with her son Paolo. For more: Gobetti, and Alano, *A Partisan's Diary*, 100.

> for the porridge taken by the conqueror and his collaborators but always with the same purpose: to resist the enemy.[518]

Women's duty to provide for partisans other than their own sons, husbands and relatives is highlighted in the various clandestine publications of the time:

> And you, woman, who hold tight at your breast your children, who 'thank God' are too young to go to war...*what have you done to help our soldiers?*[emphasis not my own] Have you seen them ragged, dirty, and with worn-out shoes, and are you only able to hold tight to your breast your creatures who have a home, a warm bed and clothes and food to eat? You are not asked to take up the rifle and abandon your children, but you are asked, yes, *you are asked,* and your conscience tells you so, to have motherly instincts even for these children who are risking their lives to end the war for you too, because peace and serenity will soon be there for you too.[519]

In the same pattern, an Italian newspaper addressed to Italian mothers mentions:

> In a plains camp of the eight partisans who make up the squad, five are not Piedmontese, and therefore are in no condition to be rescued by relatives. Some are sick with scabies. To prevent the spread of this disease, these boys need spare clothes….. Think that the relief you brought to one of these boys may be matched to yours by other compassionate mothers.[520]

In the *L'Humanité*, the newspaper affiliated with the Communist Party, an appeal to women's 'mother instinct' is implied: "Women! Your role in this last fight is immense! It is for the daily bread of your children, it is them you are fighting for."[521] In another newspaper, women's actions are closely related to the wellbeing of their children: "Following the wonderful examples of women in Valence, the women of Toulouse, in their turn, fight for their children's bread, protesting in the markets, beating the cops of Petain who came to dispense them."[522]

L'Humanité mentions that women can do a lot in this decisive battle for France. But their number one 'devoir' (trans. duty) is 'to defend the right to life of our children', and hence do whatever possible to get food concessions and ease the hunger, while their second duty is 'help in any way possible those who fight against the invader' and their third duty is

---

[518] Μαρία Σβώλου, "Εθνική Αλληλεγγύη," Δακτυλογραφημένο Κείμενο για τις Αγωνίστριες της Εθνικής Αντίστασης, Αρχείο Μαρία Σβώλου, Κουτί 1, Φάκελος 6, n.d., Αρχείο Σύγχρονης Κοινωνικής Ιστορίας, Αθήνα.
[519] 'A te che accusi', Busta 1, Fasc. 3, Fondo Anna Marullo, Istituto Piemontese Per La Storia Della Resistenza E Della Societa' contemporanea 'Giorgio Agosti', Turin.
[520] 'Alle Madri Italiane', Busta 1, Fasc. 5, Fondo Anna Marullo, Istituto Piemontese Per La Storia Della Resistenza E Della società contemporanea 'Giorgio Agosti', Turin.

[521] 'Vivent les Francs-Tireurs de 1942', *L'Humanité : organe central du Parti communiste français*, Janvier 1, 1942, Bibliothèque nationale de France, accessed August 14, 2022, http://catalogue.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/cb42456522m.
[522] 'Hardi les Ménagères,' *La Voix des femmes, Union des comités des femmes de France*, Octobre-Novembre 1942, no. n.d., p.2, Bibliothèque nationale de France, accessed September 2, 2022, http://catalogue.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/cb328911890.

'to defend the valiant fighters that the Vichy police imprisoned and handed over to the Gestapo to be shot and deported.'[523] *La Femme Comtoise*, for example, also appeals to the 'mamans':

> We know that the most affected by this shortage of fat are our children: our babies who reach out to us with their little hands and whom we cannot satisfy, our boys and girls who do not have adequate nutrition for their normal growth and who become weak.[524]

The notion of collective motherhood, which identifies women as the responsible for the survival of the nation, penetrates almost every publication of the clandestine press of the time, regardless of the ideological affiliation of the newspaper. In *La Voix des Femmes*, the next generation's happiness is trusted upon women: "The happiness of the next generation: women's life goals."[525] In the same pattern, in Italy, Ines and Maria Cervi mention their mother Genoveffa Cervi, who provided shelter to partisans, treating them like sons, which was justified as the fulfilment of their maternal roles, and therefore more easily acceptable and not threatening to the social fabric:

> When foreign prisoners and Italian deserters came to our house seeking refuge and protection, she always welcomed them as her children and went out of her way to care for them when they were sick, to provide them with clothes and beds, [to] prepare meals for them. And if any of them tried to apologise for the trouble they were causing, she would reply: "If any of my children were in your condition, I would be grateful to that mother for taking them in and feeding them; I think your mothers would do the same."[526]

From the majority of publications circulated during the war in the three countries, it becomes apparent that motherhood and tasks closely associated with that role were considered women's first priority in the struggle. Yet it is in these apparently 'traditional' and 'expected' roles that women's agency and conscious choice of taking certain risks manifest themselves.

Conclusion

In sum, in their majority, women were mobilised by following a gendered trajectory, assuming roles that seemed to embody women's 'essence', with women's activities being

---

[523] 'L'Insurrection Nationale et les Femmes Françaises', *L'Humanité : Organe central du Parti communiste S.F.I.C.*, Ed. spéciale féminine, Janvier 1944, Numero Special, p.1, Bibliothèque nationale de France, accessed September 2, 2022, http://catalogue.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/cb327877364.

[524] 'Mamans', *La Femme comtoise. Organe de l'Union des femmes pour la défense de la famille et la libération de la patrie*, Aout 1945, no.2, p.1, ibliothèque nationale de France, département Réserve des livres rares, RES-G-1470 (127), accessed September 5, 2022, http://catalogue.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/cb32774000.

[525] 'Le bonheur de la génération future', *Le Voix des Femmes : Edité par l'Union des Comités des femmes de France de la région lyonnaise [*"puis" par l'Union des femmes françaises. Région lyonnaise !, no. 8, Décembre 3, 1944, p. 1, Bibliothèque nationale de France, accessed August 21, 2022, http://catalogue.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/cb328911817.

[526] 'Testimonanza di Ines e Maria Cervi', La donna reggiana nella Resistenza, Celebrazione del ventennale della morte di Genoveffa Cervi, Cmpegine-reggio emilia, 7 Febraio 1965, comitato per le celebrazioni del ventenale della Resistenza, Reggio Emilia, Busta 3, Fasc. 3, Unione Donne Italiane, Rome.

an extension of their traditional responsibilities as mothers and housewives. They acted not only as housewives of their own households and mothers of their own children but in a more collective way, acting as housewives of the movement and mothers of partisans and resisters outside of their family core. In the context of war and occupation, these previously unpoliticised activities were imbued with political significance; the risk that accompanied these roles manifested women's agency in making a political decision to participate in the struggle. Their households become part of the battlefront and their traditional responsibilities contain the risk of arrest and reprisals.

Simultaneously, these distinctions between different types of resistance may serve as explanatory models to examine the variety of women's experience, but in many instances these categories overlapped with others and women transgressed between different roles, adapting to the needs and circumstances. Resistance as housewives was not restricted to the domestic milieu. The problems that emerged due to the occupation and war necessitated a mass mobilisation of women from the private to the public space. Women had to use their bodies to demand various concessions by protesting in public spaces. At the same time, the role of the housewife also acted as a camouflage to cover other activities. Women weaponised the expectations associated with their gender to deceive the occupiers and their collaborators and act as couriers for the partisans. Such forms of political activism and mobilisation, while not entirely new, were previously unthinkable to a great number of women with no prior political experience. The context of war and foreign occupation transformed these forms of struggle into a liberatory one, attaching a more radical element to their mobilisation compared to past mobilisations.

Chapter 5: Playing on the Gender Stereotype: Passing Between the Lines

Introduction

In clandestine warfare, women were able to appropriate their gender and internalised ideas about women and womanhood to their advantage. Certain types of engagement allowed women to exploit established notions of femininity.[527] These engagements took two interdependent forms. While these two forms of resistance examined here, public protest and engagement and becoming a *staffetta*, differ in many aspects, they both used established notions of femininity to be carried out successfully. First, women used their bodies, seen as less dangerous than men, to participate in activities in the public space to protest. Seen as peaceful and caring human beings, women were able to use to their advantage the stereotypes associated with them to demand concessions. Such protests had various demands related to food shortages, better treatment or/and liberation of prisoners. Women were at the forefront of such protests and the street became their domain of action, both as an extension of their domestic responsibilities and as a milieu for collective actions of resistance. The precariousness of life and the material conditions pushed them outside of what was conceived as their rightful place (domestic milieu or a specific public space reserved for women). Wives and mothers of prisoners, and the mothers of large families who had to feed and keep their children warm, were among the women who started protesting the dire situation their households had fallen into due to the occupation.[528]

Women's mobilisation in the public space remained gendered, tapping into women's "traditional roles" as housewives and mothers.[529] As it became evident in the previous chapter as well, as mothers and wives, women *must* mobilise in order to save their husbands and sons. Yet this mobilisation was radical in nature, including both compliance and subversion of hegemonic gender roles;[530] indeed, the gender norms of time placed women largely in the private sphere, as it was the case for pre-war Greece, or within a restricted public space reserved for women, underpinning the patriarchal ideas behind women's place in society, largely seen as different from men's. I build here on Baydar's argument about embodied resistance in Turkey during the Gezi movement in 2013, where the latter uses Gilles Deleuze and Feliz Guattari's territorialization concept to demonstrate how protesting

[527] Children were also able to instrumentalise their young age to pass.
[528] Gildea, *Fighters in the Shadows*, 64.
[529] Schwartz, "Partisanes and Gender Politics in Vichy France," 128.
[530] El Said, Meari and Pratt, "Rethinking Gender in Revolutions and Resistance in the Arab World," in El Said, Meari, and Pratt, *Rethinking Gender in Revolutions and Resistance*, 14.

in the public space subverts ideas about women's place in the private sphere. Deleuze and Guttari define teritorrialization as dismantling existing structures and deciphering systems that organise our bodies, identities, and words, women, by appearing in the public sphere to demand concessions from the occupying authorities, challenged the dominant ideas about women's place solely in the domestic space. [531] For women in the resistance too, protesting in the public sphere involved "both *subversion* of and *compliance* with hegemonic gendered and sexed norms of the time, thereby dismantling the subordination/resistance binary."[532] The resister woman who protested in the public space was embedded in everyday life, playing a pivotal role in transforming the realm of the "private" and "ordinary" through what is conceived as a non-heroic, every day, struggle.[533]

Second, women also exploited established ideas about femininity to deceive the occupiers and their collaborators. They used their gender to 'pass'; by taking advantage of the ideas and stereotypes that largely saw women as non-dangerous and non-political, women were able to move and assume certain roles that needed this type of camouflage. Therefore, when women assumed more active, *hors-de-norme* roles, in the underground resistance by acting as *staffette*,[534] these roles were tied to their gender and ideas about femininity. In Italy, in many occurrences, this act was entrusted upon what was called a *staffetta*. The notion reflected multiple forms of engagement, given that the *staffette* participated in various activities. At times, the word courier is used as a translation of the *staffetta.* Nonetheless, as Wilhelm argues, the word courier cannot fully describe the various roles of the *staffette*. Many authors agree that even though it is difficult to define the parameters of *straffetta's* work, their role(s) were indispensable to defeat the enemy. The *staffetta* was seen as an indispensable link in the chain of command. Women became "courriers" and transferred all kinds of material, from printing press to ammunition and guns. In clandestine warfare, carrying out information was a vital task for the survival of the movement. The 'stafetta' assumed a variety of roles, which can apply to both France and Greece:

---

[531] Gülsüm Baydar, "Embodied spaces of resistance," *Women Studies International Forum* 50 (2015): 13-14, http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.wsif.2015.02.008. For more on territorialization/deterritorialization concepts: Gille Deleuze, and Felix Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus*, trans., B. Massumi (Minneapolis: Univ. of Minnesota Press, 1987).

[532] El Said, Meari and Pratt, "Rethinking Gender in Revolutions and Resistance in the Arab World," in El Said, Meari, and Pratt, *Rethinking Gender in Revolutions and Resistance*, 14.

[533] I have followed Göksel's approach as introduced earlier. For more: Göksel, "Gendering Resistance," 1112–1115, https://www.jstor.org/stable/48558594.

[534] Wilhelm, *The Other Italy*, 131. For instance, the operation known as Radio Co.ra, a covert radio operation that provided the Allies with crucial intelligence as they advanced north from Rome, would have been impossible without the assistance provided by Gilda Larocca. It was one of Gilda's responsibilities to find adequate places for the equipment as the radio had to be moved frequently for the German not tracing the signal. See more: Ibid.

> When we speak of a 'staffetta', we mean a woman who manages even in areas that are too dangerous for men, who connects armed groups with each other and with their management centres, who brings news to the men, orders, clandestine press, (false) identity documents, the mail to their home but also food, weapons, ammunition and money; [a woman] who had to move around carrying bulky and dangerous material, in many ways, by bicycle or on foot in bad weather, or on Nazi-Fascist trucks, or in crowded trains, controlled by the Germans and exposed to the danger of allied aerial bombardment; [a woman] who helped to shelter the wounded in safe places, who acted as courier service [between the partisans in the mountains] and the city, who listened to messages passed on to partisan commands. In the city, the women added to all this the work of organising resistance groups in factories, schools and offices, setting up and running food, weapons, clothing and provisions depots for the partisans, preparing and distributing the anti-fascist press, as well as assisting the prisoners of war, those persecuted by the Nazi-fascists and their families, and for some, clandestine political activity within various parties and groups.[535]

Women could be asked to attract German soldiers with their "charm" or transfer information/material due to their invisibility as political subjects.[536] For example, in the Italian newspaper *Partigiano*, it is mentioned, "It is more intelligent to recognise between the two sexes a certain division of labour that does not exclude but tends to a mutual integration. Each sex, in any case, and in its specific field, is more suitable than the other but this observation cannot exclude mutual interference. especially in cases of necessity--as in wars or devious partisan struggles in which female guile proved most useful…"[537] The irregular nature of war provided women with the opportunity to use their bodies and the internalised ideas associated with the 'female' to their advantage to transfer guns, ammunition, medical supplies, food, and letters. Providing information to partisan cells was not only an important aspect of the Resistance but an indispensable task for the survival of the partisans. When seen in retrospect, these activities, and their significance on the survival of the resistance can be better evaluated and appreciated than at the time they took place.[538]

5.1 Gendering Protests and Gender-Specific Demands

In Vichy France, these protests, which initially erupted in the southern zone's big cities, such as Montpellier, and smaller towns, such as Frontignan and Bedarieux, in the early months of 1942, took the shape of collective protests by enraged women.[539] In Greece, the lack of food

[535] Cited in "Le donne nella Resistenza," in *La resistenza bresciana. Rassegna di studi e documenti* (Brescia: Istituto storico della Resistenza bresciana, 1988), 83-84.
[536] Wieviorka, *Histoire de la résistance*, 570.
[537] Valentino Marafini, "Donne Partigiane," Il Partigiano: Settimanale Politico dei Partigiani della Libertà, Roma, Febbraio 9, 1944, no. 1, p. 4., Unione Femminile Nazionale, Milano.
[538] Bellina, and Sega, *Tra la città di Dio e la città dell'uomo,* 7.
[539]Laurent Douzou, "Résistance, une affaire d'hommes ?"16. See also : Harry Roderick Kedward, *Resistance in Vichy France : a study of ideas and motivation in the Southern Zone, 1940-1942* (Oxford : Oxford University Press, 1978), 221.

due to the harsh winter of 1941 led to the first manifestations in the summer of 1942, when women asked for more food rations.[540] These initially spontaneous protests were later transformed into a collective act of resistance and became more organised as the resistance movement grew. Equally, in Greece, women participated in mass manifestations, especially in the capital, Athens, in 1943. The largest protests in Greece took place on February 24, March 5, March 25 (Greece's national day for the celebration of the Greek Revolution),[541] June 25 and July 22 in 1943. The protests in February and March concerned the draft of Greek men to work in factories in Germany, while the ones during the summer were against the expansion of the Bulgarian zone of occupation and the atrocities of the Bulgarian occupying authorities.[542] In July 1944, the newspaper *Eleutheri Messinia* (Free Messinia) mentions, "the women of Kalamata are the ones who twice faced the bullets of the conqueror with their manifestations. Rural women often take a pioneering role in rallies and other mobilisations."[543] In the other areas of Greece, particularly after the capitulation of Italy in 1943, the "mopping up" operations that took place in rural Greece led to protests against unlawful killings, imprisonments and torture:

> The Greek women are taking an active part in the struggle alongside the men. In Kalamata, women rallied (*katevikan*) with black flags against the terror unleashed by the occupiers and the scumbags (*katharmata*) of Rallis. The fascists shot and killed 15 women. The participation of Greek women in the struggle seals the victory of the fighting people *(maxomenou laou).* A nation with such a heroism, can only win with [the participation of] women.[544]

Equally, the French Communists mobilised women by appealing to their needs as housewives and mothers; the *comités populaires feminins* introduced briefly earlier were neighbourhood-based groups in Paris and other urban centres, such as Lyon, that aimed to

[540] Βερβενιώτη, *Η γυναίκα της Αντίστασης*, 273.
[541] In all cases (less in Italy), such protests were called on during historical anniversaries and significant dates for each country. In France, November 11 was such a date as it coincided with the Armistice of 1918 that finally brought the fighting of the First World War (1914-1918) to an end, and July 14, which was the anniversary of the Storming of the Bastille on 14 July 1789. In Italy September 8, 1943, was such a date, which further manifests the need of Italy to re-invent herself based on new myths. May 1 was an important date for clandestine socialist and communist publications in all three countries, where the International Worker's Day was celebrated as a day against oppression and resistance. During my fieldwork, this was particularly the case for Italian publications, which, in my opinion, demonstrates both the powerful left discourse with the resistance and the need for renewal that characterised Italy more that was the case for Greece and France.
[542] Ibid, 276. During my fieldwork, I came across reports from the war of rapes and sexual violence taking place in the Bulgarian zone of occupation. Incidents of sexual violence are also mentioned in post-war sources during the 'clearing' operations in 1944 during the exodus of German occupiers from Greece.
[543] 'Η Γυναίκα της Μεσσηνίας στον Απελευθερωτικό μας Αγώνα', Ελεύθερη Μεσσηνία: Έκδοση των Οργανώσεων ΕΑΜ Μεσσηνίας, Ιούλιος 21, 1944, αρ. φύλλου 2, σ. 2, Γενικά Αρχεία του Κράτους, Παράρτημα Μεσσηνίας, Καλαμάτα.
[544] 'Οι Ελληνίδες στον Αγώνα', Μακεδονική Αλληλεγγύη: Όργανο της Επιτροπής Αλληλεγγύης Δυτ. Μακεδονίας, αρ. φύλλου 2, Φεβρουάριος 13, 1944, σ. 2, Αρχείο Σύγχρονης Κοινωνικής Ιστορίας, Αθήνα.

both inform and mobilise women to ask for concessions related to household needs.[545] In *L'Humanité (zone Nord)* urged the 'femmes communistes' to react by 'serving themselves' in the bakeries: "Ménagères, mères de famille! Go en masse to the depots and department stores that supply the *boches*, and help yourselves, preparing to retaliate against any enemy that prevents you from taking back what the *boches* steal from us..."[546] In a similar pattern of militancy, in Italy too, women 'attack' the food depots and bakeries. As Sega cites, in Turin, Nelia Benissone led women in the assault on food warehouses. In Rome, Adele Bei also led an assault on bakeries.[547] Similarly, as noted by Alano, women participated in and led such protests, organized by GDD. The GDD aimed at militarising as many women as possible by trying to incite protests for sugar, salt, milk, and petrol' and 'locating food and fuel stocks in order to seize them'.[548] For example, in 1944, women in Cologno, Italy, managed to get more meat through their collective action:

> The women of Cologno held a demonstration in the town hall offices protesting against the town secretary and the Podesta (there must have been about 200 of them) at about 3 p.m. on Saturday 29th, because they had not been given meat for a long time and were given sausages instead. In the face of the mass protest - it seems that one woman threw the sausages in the Secretary's face - and that another, while he was making a phone call, knocked out the phone with a stick (legnata). However, later on, three Republicans arrived, took the two butchers from the village and gave each of them an animal but these were not enough for everyone, so it was provided for, and on Tuesday morning, 1 August, the whole population got their due.[549]

In Italy, following September 1943, women also organised in order to prevent food and other products from being given to Germans and their fascist collaborators by protesting: "Fighting against the Germans and fascists does not only mean fighting with weapons in hand, it means fighting against hunger and cold, it means preventing the plundering of our products and procuring our own foodstuffs by fetching them from the warehouses destined for the Germans and fascists, it means opposing deportations and the death of our children."[550]

---

[545] Through these committees, women also took care of injured soldiers and resisters: "Everyone knows how active our *Comités des femmes de France* are in relieving our wounded and helping our soldiers." See more : 'Un scandale', Le Voix des Femmes, no. 8, p. 3. These semi-spontaneous acts, staffed both by politicised and non-politicised women, paved the way for the foundation of *Union des Femmes Françaises* and the broader politicisation of French women, since it appealed and recruited women from a broader political spectrum.
[546] 'Comment agir', *L'Humanité : organe central du Parti communiste français*, Juin 19, 1942, p.1, Bibliothèque nationale de France, RES-G-1470 (175), accessed September 3, 2022, http://catalogue.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/cb42456522m.
[547] Sega, "Essere donna nell' esercito di Liberazione," in *Resistenza,* 119.
[548] Alano, "Armed with a Yellow Mimosa," 621.
[549] 'A Cologne le donne ottengono la distribuzione della carne', *La fabbrica: organo della federazione Milanese del Partito Comunista Italiano,* Settembre 15, 1944, Anoo II, No. 9, p. 4, Istituto Nazionale Ferruccio Parri, Milan.
[550] 'Donne Italiane', I comitati di difessa della donna e per l'assistenza ai combattenti della Libertà, Fondo Maria Gross, Istituto Nazionale Ferruccio Parri, Milan.

This extension of women's domestic responsibilities in public was regularly propagandised in the clandestine press of the time, where women were encouraged to participate in protests and other collective actions with the aim of securing various concessions related to food and medical care. Newspapers such as *La Voix des Femmes*, a clandestine newspaper published by the *Union des femmes de France* in France, mentioned housewife-related problems, the difficulties of providing proper nutrition for children and the living conditions and torture of husbands and sons.[551] Following Göksel's argument,[552] the distribution of clandestine press and publication of women's accomplishments were acts of resistance in and of themselves. Apart from the danger the act of distributing clandestine press required, the publishers sought to mobilise the women through the press. The editors frequently called on women to engage in resistance, by highlighting the gains made by women's collective acts. For instance, in the Greek magazine *Gynaikeia Drasi*, several editions include a column "Woman of the Neighborhood in the Struggle of Life" (H Gynaika tis Sunoikias stin Pali gia tin Zoi) that mentions women's gains through their participation in such protests and collective acts: "The cesspools have been poured out and filth is running in front of the houses. The women with numerous committeemen went down to the mayor demanding that this intolerable situation be remedied."[553] In another Greek newspaper, *I Foni tis Ginaikas* (The Voice of the Woman), women's mobilisation taps into what was conceived as women's responsibilities as housewives and mothers: "A committee of *mothers* from Kastella presented a memorandum to the director of the EOXA and asked for a double ration for the children who will not go to the children's summer camps."[554] In a French newspaper, women are praised for their acts of courage in preventing the distribution of food to the German occupying forces (aux Boches):[555]

> It is thanks to the brave and unceasing action of the French women, preparing for their march on Vichy that the dreaded public authorities frightened by the extent that the demonstrations could take, had to distribute to the French what they intended for the *Boches*.[556]

In the Italian newspaper *Noi Donne* (We Women), several columns under the name *Donne in Lotta* (Women in Struggle), *Notiziario* (News), mention women's accomplishments

[551] Schwartz, "Redefining Resistance," in *Behind Enemy Lines,* 149.
[552] Göksel, "Gendering Resistance," 1123.
[553] Γυναικεία Δράση, "Η Γυναίκα της Συνοικίας στην Πάλη για την Ζωή," αρ. φύλλου 16, Μάρτιος 25, 1943, Εφημερίδες Γυναικών, σ. 2, Βιβλιοθήκη – Αρχείο Χαρίλαος Φλωράκης, Επιμορφωτικό Κέντρο ΚΚΕ.
[554] 'Δρόμος της Πάλης', Φωνή της Γυναίκας, αρ. φύλλου 3, Αύγουστος 8, 1943, Εφημερίδες Γυναικών, Βιβλιοθήκη – Αρχείο Χαρίλαος Φλωράκης, Επιμορφωτικό Κέντρο ΚΚΕ.
[555] The term 'boche' is a pejorative term for German forces and it derives from the word 'caboche' (trans. cabbage).
[556] 'Le 12 Novembre les Femmes ont marché sur Vichy', *La Voix des Femmes : Organe des Comités Populaires Féminins,* Décembre 1942, no. De Noel, p.2, musée de la Résistance nationale / Champigny-sur-Marne, accessed September 18, 2022, http://catalogue.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/cb32891189.

through their collective actions: "Manifestations and protests of women saved 35 patriots from death."[557] These concessions are seen as necessary to save their children from famine and the means of their actions to succeed is through a protest or a manifestation, where their collectivity becomes their weapon. In a column dedicated to women's successful actions, 'Les Femmes Agissent' (The Women Act), this 'tactic' and its success can be further illustrated:

> In Lyon, at the gas company, the management dismissed a woman who was absent to see her sick child. Eight of her colleagues went to the delegation to prevent this dismissal. They were told that it was none of their business. But in front of their insistence, the management is obliged to say that the employee will not be fired and that it was only to frighten her that they threatened her. This is a good example of what can be achieved when we are in solidarity with each other.[558]

In another issue of the communist newspaper *L'Humanité*:

> In Valence (Drôme), 3000 women manifested in front of the mayor on July 21 and the next day another manifestation took place that obliged the mayor to distribute pasta and vegetables… In Amiens, the women, by demonstrating, forced the sale of products intended for the Germans…[559]

In a tract by the 'France Combattante'[560] appealing to French women, the 'ménagères' are called to play their role in the struggle:

> You have a large place in the struggle which must lead us to the end of your sufferings. Do not allow your families to starve, form your committees of housewives, protest against the inadequacy of supplies, demonstrate at the Marries and the Prefecture, demand the return of the deportees of 11 November, organise solidarity in their favour with their families.[561]

Furthermore, women prisoners protested with the aim of improving imprisonment conditions in Châlons sur Marne (now Châlons-en-Champagne), in northeastern France, occupied by Germans from 1940 until August 1944. A report mentions the events taking

---

[557] 'Notiziario', *Noi Donne: Organo dei Gruppi di Difesa della Donna e per l'assistenza ai combattenti della libertà,* Edizione per la Lombardia, giugno, no. 1, anno 1, p. 7, https://www.stampaclandestina.it/?page_id=116&ricerca=71.

[558] 'Les Femmes Agissent', *Femmes : organe du Comité des femmes dans la lutte pour la libération de la France,* Mai 1, 1943, no.1, p.2, Musée de la Résistance nationale / Champigny-sur-Marne, accessed October 1, 2022, http://catalogue.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/cb437808108.

[559] 'Manifestations de Femmes'*, L'Humanité : organe central du Parti communiste français*, no. 175, Aout 14, 1942, Bibliothèque nationale de France, accessed August 30, 2022, http://catalogue.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/cb42456522.

[560] France Libre was renamed France Combattante in July 1942. According to the circular of July 29, 1942, from General de Gaulle's staff, this change reflected the alliance between the Free French Forces fighting abroad, and the internal resistance. See more: Fondation de la France Libre, De la France Libre à la France Combattante, https://www.france-libre.net/france-libre-combattante/.

[561] 'Femmes, ménagères', *La comite de l'isere et des Alpes Dauphinoises de la France Combattante*, n.d., ARCH0098/01/18, France Combattante, Contemporaine, Paris.

place in the prison of Châlons sur Marne, where 450 *patriotes* were imprisioned including forty women:

> But from the evening of the 16th to midday of the 18th, the meals were even more meagre than usual. Mr. Granet had given the order to reduce the rations still further. The patriotic women therefore wrote to the regional director and the prefecture. Then, on the 18th, at noon, all the patriotic women prisoners in the prison, standing at the windows, began to shout. We are hungry, let's eat![562]

In a similar vein, through their collective action, women in Italy were able to ask for better treatment of prisoners and liberate others:

> In Alfonsine on 27 September, the GDD snatched a young man from the Nazi-Fascists... The women surrounded the car, taking the captured young man to Ravenna, threatening and shouting for the young man to be freed but the Nazi-Fascist thugs managed to break through the crowd using weapons. Undeterred by their violence, the women, who were joined by new groups from the countryside, continued their demonstration, threatening to storm the fascists' barracks. Impressed by the vehemence of the popular demonstration that threatened to become general, the German command ordered two militia officers to go immediately to Ravenna to free the arrested man and take him back to his country. Despite the assurance they had received, the women continued in their determined attitude until the arrival of the car that brought the young man.[563]

Women in France and Greece also mobilised to prevent the draft of young men to support the Reich's economy by being sent to factories in Germany. As Celia Bertin, the former resistance member and writer, notes for France, women "reacted with great hostility to the draft of the classes mobilised for the *Service du travail obligatoire* (STO- Compulsory Work Service). Often, they were the ones who encouraged young men to hide or to go underground."[564] Such protests were organised in Greece too, both in Athens and smaller towns, to prevent the occupiers from sending Greek men to work in factories in Germany:

> The women of the Komninos district, lower in Patision, Metaxourgiou, Sfageion, thirty-fifty of them, go down together to the Metropolitan, Logothetopoulos *(head of the collaborationist government),* the Rector, the Italians, in order to thwart the political draft [*for forced labour*].[565]

---

[562] 'Les évènements de mars, à la prison de Chalons sur Marne', *Bulletin d'information*, Comité national de défense des prisonniers politique et la solidarité de la résistance groupant, no.2. Mai 30, 1944, 940.4, GUE, Bibliothèque Margarite Durand, Paris.

[563] Cited in Olga Prati, *Le Donne Ravennati Nell'Antifascismo e nella resistenza*, 106. Originally published in L'Unita, Edizione Straordinaria, Ottobre 5, 1944, ISRRA, B. I, no. 6.

[564] Celia Bertin, '50 Ans Après : Histoires et témoignages : Le récit de la vie quotidienne des femmes dans la France occupée, reçu, Avril 1, 1994, 940.4. GOE – Femmes de la Guerre, Bibliothèque Margarite Durand, Paris.

[565] 'Οι γυναίκες της Συνοικίας Παλεύουν', *Γυναικεία Δράση,* αρ. φύλλου 14, Φεβρουάριος 9, 1943, Εφημερίδες Γυναικών, Βιβλιοθήκη – Αρχείο Χαρίλαος Φλωράκης, Επιμορφωτικό Κέντρο ΚΚΕ.

In France, Plissonnier mentions the protest at Montluçon on January 6, 1943, when women prevented the departure of a train full of deportees.[566] The example was followed from other French cities and the clandestine press was also mobilised for this purpose:

> Women must protest in railway stations, lie down on the tracks to prevent the departure of deportation trains, take the lead in the fight against police searches, attack police stations and the locations where the deportees are gathered, do everything possible to prevent their husbands, sons, brothers and wives from leaving for Germany.[567]

Women's mobilisation in such acts was underpinned by a gender-specific ethics, which became the very source of their power in demanding concessions. In an Italian newspaper, the editors appeal to the emotion to mobilise women to act:

> In these days that are the last of the enemy occupation of your province, you dreamily witness the repetition and multiplication of the deportations of your sons, husbands, fathers and brothers.... Tears flow from your eyes; your hearts burn with hatred against the cold executors of an inhuman order but you have not yet hurled yourselves against the executioners who are tearing away your affections and the flesh of your flesh.[568]

In front of women, even the corrupted collaborators would give in:

> It is time for you to speak up. You must know your power; you can be ignored, forgotten but you cannot be openly denied a legitimate request…If you know how to speak up, "they" ("ils")*(the quotation marks here indicate that the collaborators are not men, depriving them of their masculinity due to their collaboration with the Nazis)* will give in before you, the profiteers with a worried conscience, the schemers, the corrupted...[569]

In a newspaper for housewives (ménagères), this gender-specific ethics reflects the idea of collective motherhood examined in the previous chapter, where women are called to save their children and the nation's children from famine through their collective organising:

> Women are in charge of all the movements. Very combative, they fight for the bread of their children (petits). In the cities and in the villages, women go in mass to submit their demands…With their unity and combativeness, French women saved their children from famine, and they served the cause of the great French Revolution 1790-1791-1792. [570]

The call for mothers to organise becomes evident in the Italian clandestine press as well. In the Italian newspaper *Donna Friuliana*, the lack of milk, which is necessary for babies, is

---

[566] Plissonnier, «Portee et caractéristiques de la participation des femmes communistes a la Résistance en zone sud » in *Femmes dans la Résistance,* 49.
[567] 'Pour Préparer l'Insurrection Nationale', *L'Humanité : organe central du Parti communiste français*, no. 214, Avril 15, 1943, p.2, Bibliothèque nationale de France, http://catalogue.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/cb42456522m.
[568] 'Donne di Bologna e Provincia!', Busta 4, Fasc. 11, Unione Donne Italiane, Rome.
[569] 'Femmes de Prisonniers,' Tract, ARC 074-71/C/D/E, Campus Condorcet, Paris.
[570] 'La Latte des Femmes pour le Pain à Travers la Histoire', *La Ménagère du Nord*, Juliet 14, 1941, no. 28, p.1, musée de la Résistance nationale / Champigny-sur-Marne, accessed August 12, 2022, http://catalogue.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/cb437852235.

mentioned: “if we love our children and our people, we cannot, no, [we cannot] give up. We must instead protest…”[571] A newspaper in Piedmont was called *Le Madre del Partigiano* (The Mother of the Partisan), which further underpinned this notion of collective motherhood.[572] Indeed, the form of this activism played upon the idea of maternal thinking seen as closely associated with an ‘ethics of care’; women were depicted as ethical human beings *due to their gender*, allowing them to demand several concessions from the occupiers and their collaborators.

5.2 Playing on the Gender Stereotype to Pass

The second form of gendered mobilisation also played on gender stereotypes and internalised ideas about women’s nature, but here it depicted women as non-political, naïve, and even dumb, incapable of participating in political acts. In this type of gendered mobilisation, the ‘female’ became a symbol that represents the unpolitical, naïve nature of women. These internalised ideas and stereotypes were used to their advantage to deceive the occupiers and their collaborators rather than demand concessions. In practice, women were used with the aim of achieving tactical surprise over a militarily superior enemy. Women in the resistance were able to “play on the gender stereotypes” to pass in order to transfer material, spy, or even assassinate. From an operational point of view, the fact that women could trade on gender stereotypes (i.e., women are seen as less dangerous than men, peaceful and caring beings) converted them into an important type of specialised labour. This appropriation can be particularly useful in an irregular war where the boundaries between civilians and guerrillas are not easily identifiable. This “concealment” proved beneficial to the movements; as invisible political agents, women were able to carry guns and other material, act as liaison officers between locals and partisans, and distract the opponent.[573]

To camouflage themselves and cover their clandestine activities, women disguised themselves, performing their traditional roles, only to camouflage their political actions. A housewife who hides letters, guns, and ammunition in her basket; a pregnant woman hiding equipment under her clothes; a woman even pretending to be pregnant; all these women performed their expected roles as a means to camouflage their involvement in the struggle. Onorina Pesce reflects on that in her memoir: “Women especially had this liaison role, not

[571] ‘Donne del Friuli lottano per la Esistenza’, La Donna Friuliana: organo dei Gruppi di difesa della donna e per l'assistenza ai combattenti della libertà , sezione di Udine, aderente al CdLN, marzo , Numero 3, anno 2, 1945, p. 4-5, https://www.stampaclandestina.it/?page_id=116&ricerca=231.
[572] La Madre del Partigiano, giornale dei Gruppi di difesa della donna, febbraio 1945, https://www.stampaclandestina.it/?page_id=116&ricerca=597.
[573] Thomas L. Jakana, and Kanisha D. Bond, “Women’s Participation in Violent Political Organizations,” *The American Political Science Review* 109, no. 3 (2015): 491, http://www.jstor.org/stable/43654428.

because of a position of subordination to their comrades, but because of their greater ease of movement. I myself went through the roundups more than once without being searched."[574] In an interview with Monica Saigal, Lucie Aubrac affirms this weaponization of 'femininity' to their advantage: "It annoys me when people say that women did not fight. They fought with their feminine weapons, seduction."[575] Aubrac, in an interview from 1994, also recalls her involvement in evasion activities: "In escapes [meaning freeing someone from prison or elsewhere] the first pleasure was obviously to free people. And then also the pleasure of *fooling the opponent*, that's important.", indicating that she gave a performance to fool the opponent, performing a role based on the exigencies. [576] Writing in 1953, Ida d'Este provided a verse-type description of the work, responsibilities, and the actual nature of the staffetta's duties, which shared similarities with a 'performance' in a theatrical play to be successful (bold my own):

1. riding a bicycle.
2. assaulting trucks at roadblocks.
3. remembering.
4. **staying silent.**
5. **inventing.**
6. not wanting to know more than what needs to be reported.
7. **make a dumb face.**
8. defend yourself from the importunate.
9. laugh at ice, snow, rain, darkness, curfew.
10. **inspire confidence even without a safe word**.[577]

Dan A. Amelio mentions that in Italy, women even carried guns in baby carriers or in pregnant pouches on their persons.[578] Certain resistance activities were therefore "performed" by women because, as women, they were invisible political subjects. For instance, in her memoirs, Aubrac mentions the camouflage the mother role provided:

> I catch up with my little man, who trots ahead of us, and leave them to their conversation. A mother and her child, what could be more transparent in a share, on a Sunday afternoon? I am delighted to be the mini cover of this encounter between two engaged men.[579]

[574] Onorina Brambilla Pesce, *Il pane bianco* (Varese: Edizione Arterigere, 2010), 33.
[575] Saigal, "entretien avec Lucie Aubrac," in *Héroïnes françaises, 1940-1945*, 167.
[576] 'Lucie Aubrac' in 'Les héroïnes ne sont pas des héros ni des héroïnes' 13 histoires d'elle, ' janvier 1979, 940.4. GOE, Bibliothèque Margarite Durand, Paris.
[577] Bold my own. Ida d'Este, *Croce Sulla Schiena* (Verona: Cierre Edizioni, 2018), prima edizione 1953), 39.
[578] Dan A. D' Amelio, "Italian Women in the Resistance, World War II," *Italian Americana* 19, no. 2 (2001): 132, http://www.jstor.org/stable/29776690.
[579] Lucie Aubrac, *Ils partiront dans l'ivresse : Lyon, mai 43, Londres, février 44* (Paris : Seuil, 1984), 69.

Serge Lecul, a member of FFTP, also mentions in his memoirs:

> The liaison is ensured by women or young girls whose families are housing FTPs. Here we find Françoise Gaillard, alias "Irma", and her 14-year-old daughter Lucienne. She was often used for dangerous missions: carrying messages or weapons, convoying a downed airman nearby so that he could be directed to an evacuation network. *Her young age allows her to move around without attracting too much attention from the French and German police.* We can also count on Fernande Caudron, Simone Petiot, Geneviève Gabard, Jeanne Holleville alias "Jeannette", Renée and Germaine Mansion…Their help for the resistance is immense, it is a great help for us. They risk their lives on every expedition.[580]

Women were able to act above suspicion due to their gender. Gisele Guillemot recalls in her memoir her involvement in resistance activities in Calvados after one of her male friends was arrested by the Wehrmacht that she did not have to leave her permanent residence, unlike the men of her group. As she mentions: "The senior leaders certainly consider it safe to do so [remain in her usual residence]. After all, I'm just a girl."[581] Marie-Madeleine Fourcade, the leader of the French resistance network known as Alliance (or as Noah's arch),[582] mentions in her memoirs:

> Navarre: "I am going to pick out the best elements, the ones who want to put up a fight. This legion will make it possible to set up patrols throughout France. In the meantime, *you,* he said, pointing his cigarette at me, '*you* will organise the underground side.'
>
> 'But Navarre I am only a woman!' I exclaimed, taken completely aback.
>
> 'That's another good reason! *Who will ever suspect a woman...*'[583]

One of the agents working for and with her, Jeannie Rousseau, also benefited from her gender in espionage operations while working for the Wehrmacht. In her book memoirs, Jeannie is mentioned by her 'nom du guerre' Amniarix:[584]

> A 20-year-old recent graduate of the prestigious École Libre des Sciences Politiques, Rousseau, like her boss, benefited from men underestimating her. When the Germans set up their Brittany headquarters, Rousseau, who spoke fluent German, applied for a job as a translator. *Remarkably careless around this pretty young woman,* the Wehrmacht officers peppered their conversations with two strange words: "Peenemünde" and "raketten." In answer to Jeannie's *seemingly innocent* query, an officer showed her a drawing of a rocket and a testing station, on an island off the Baltic coast, Peenemünde. Rousseau's report on this exchange was an astonishing piece of

[580] Serge Lecul, *Résistance Vimeu 1942-1944*, Souvenirs recueillis par Hubert Quilliot (Fressenneville, Imp. Carré, 1994), 14-15.
[581] Guillemot, and Humez, *Résistante,* 34.
[582] Kati Marton, "Remembering a Woman Who Was a Leader of the French Resistance," *The New York Times,* March 12, 2019, accessed December 15, 2022.
[583] Marie-Madeleine Fourcade, *Noah's Arch*, trans. Kenneth Morgan (New York: E.P. Dutton & Company, Inc, 1974), 26.
[584] Ibid, 259.

> intelligence. It revealed to the Allies the existence of a new superweapon, the V2 rocket.

In a Greek newspaper, it becomes evident why a woman is chosen to work as a liaison because she would be able to move above suspicion: "When 3000 Germans were blocked in Tyrnava, the Colonel of Eph. ELAS, who was outside, had to contact some of the fighters inside Tyrnava. He asked a woman who happened to be there at the time if she wanted to go to the city as a liaison."[585] In Italy, Cesarina Bracco, a s*taffetta* of the 'Bandiera' detachment, then a member of the 2nd 'Biella' Brigade of the 75th 'Giuseppe Boggiani Alpino' Brigade, and later framed in the 5th 'Maffei' Division where she remained until the Liberation, mentions, "First, Giovanna and I have to go and get our weapons back. For the boys, it would be too dangerous to go, and hence, this task was assigned to us."[586] Ada Gobetti was able to pass easily from the German authorities, who had no idea who she was: "Thanking my innate qualities as a woman, as I had many other times, I passed easily amidst the Germans…"[587] Marie Jose Chombart de Lauwe equally recalls how frustrated she was when the Germans complimented her beautiful legs, "but in the end, so be it. Let them worry about my legs and let me do what I have to do."[588] Similarly, Zangrandi mentions in her memoirs while walking through a checkpoint: "Valley Pusteria, checkpoints, with my smiling model (moidele) face, they let you through with a bow."[589] Joyce Lussu, in her memoir, recalls when Emilio Lussu told her there was a problem establishing a liaison with the government established in the south after liberation from the Germans because the men who had tried to cross the borders were unsuccessful, she responded: "I could give it a try." … "Maybe it's easier for a woman."[590] Pesce wanted to become a partisan in the mountains instead of staying in the city. Giovani Pesce, however, told her about women's important role in operating in the cities: "It takes unsuspected women like her to carry out attacks in style."[591] In a Greek newspaper, women's liaison role is highlighted: "Women were *syndesmoi* (liaisons) between our sections and often, defying danger, transferred valuable information to ELAS."[592]

Another task relatively unmentioned facilitated through this gender passing is the attendance of funerals; Maria Karra in her memoir recalls the funeral of Charis (Tavridis

---

[585] 'Τα ενθυμα και τα ωραία του αγώνα', Θύελλα: Γυναικείο Όργανο του Απελευθερωτικού Αγώνα Θεσσαλίας αρ. φύλλου 2, Αύγουστος 31, 1944, σ. 1, Αρχείο Σύγχρονης Κοινωνικής Θεωρίας, Αθήνα.
[586] Cesarina Bracco, *la staffetta garibaldina*, presentazione di Luigi Longo (Istituto per la Storia della Resistenza in provincia di Vercelli Borgosesia, 1976), 5.
[587] Gobetti, and Alano, *A Partisan's Diary*, 124.
[588] Combart de Lauwe, *Resister Toujours* (Flammarion, 2015), 67.
[589] Zangrandi, *I Giorni Veri*, 122.
[590] Lussu, *Portrait,* 88.
[591] Cited in Tobagi, *La Resistenza delle Donne*, 89.
[592] 'Εφεδροελασίτισσες,' Λαοκρατία: Όργανο της Πανηπειρωτικής Επιτροπής του ΕΑΜ, αρ. φύλλου 20, Νοέμβριος 11, 1944, σ. 3, Αρχείο Σύγχρονης Κοινωνικής Ιστορίας, Αθήνα.

or/and Tavropoulos his surname), a resister from Kallithea, who was killed during the Battle of Kallithea on July 24, 1944: "In the end, it was decided that all men should leave, and only women (should) stay."[593] This becomes even more evident in the Italian resistance in activities concerned with the memorialisation of martyrs (the fallen- caduti) by decorating their tombs. As in other tasks, this assumed unpolitical nature of women provided them the ability to stay in public and move more freely in comparison to men: "... Before leaving the cemetery, we went back to the graves of those shot at Piazzale Loreto and there, after a minute's silence, a comrade read a commemorative poem, another read the list of names of women (the specific names are not mentioned in the document) who had died in the struggle for liberation, and at the end, the members shouted as loudly as they could all together: "Death to the fascists, death to the Germans, Comrades you shall be avenged!..."[594] On Women's Day, women martyrs were also memorialised in events organised by the GDD: "At 11 a.m. we displayed a photograph of a heroic young girl shot with a tricolour ribbon around her, and with a dedication that read: Glory and Honour to the Fallen Heroine and underneath "shot by the Nazi-fascists."[595] These superficially simple roles of funeral attending and commemoration of the fallen assumed by women acquired a political significance within the context of war and occupation. The funeral became a potential space to express dissatisfaction with the occupation, with commemoration of fallen martyrs being an act of resistance in itself. As Yunus Abakay demonstrates regarding funerals of female Kurdish fighters, which could also apply to the Second World War resistance, funerals for women martyrs are not just about the martyrs who have died; they also have an intersectional nature that creates conditions of agency for women in public, especially in traditional societies. Concurrently, women's role in the national struggle is acknowledged by the public, especially via the commemoration of (and female) martyrs, establishing female identities as heroes and martyrs in the national discourse. [596]

The most adequate camouflage for women who wished to pass varied depended on the situation and its success relied on an intersection of characteristics rather than solely on

[593] Καρρά, *Επονίτισσα,* 96.
[594] 'Celebrare la giornata della donna', Comitato Liberazione Nazionale Regionale Lombardia, Marzo 8, 1945, Fondo; CLN Regionale Lombardia, Serie: Delegazioni Dei Partiti e Delle Organizzazioni di Massa, Busta 1. Fac.10, Istituto Nazionale Feruccio Parri, Milano.
[595] Gruppo Oreste Chirotti, Ai comitato del 3o Settore, Marzo 8, 1943, Attivita del Gruppo in occassione dell' 8 Marzo anniversario che I gruppi di Difesa della Donna e Assistenza ai Combattenti della Libertà' vollero festeggiare, FONDO : CLN ALTA ITALIA (CLNAI) SERIE : Periodo Clandestino, sottoserie : Carteggio con partiti politici, organizzazioni di massa e cln di base. Fasciciolo : ''Carteggio del Clnai con i gruppi di difesa della donna', GRUPPI DIFESA DONNA : B.14 FASC. 37, Istituto Nazionale Ferruccio Parri, Milano.

[596] Yunus Abakay, "Kurdish gender politics: Funeral ceremonies of female fighters," *Digest of Middle East Studies* 33, no.11 (Jan 2024): 8.

gender. In a document, Matteuci Aurora, a *staffetta* who operated in Arcevia along with her sister Alba, narrates how she managed to pass by pretending to go ask for an assistant for the birth of a child:

> The mission was to investigate the whereabouts of a partisan's home and family behind the arrival of the Nazi-Fascists. -I set off along a lonely little road and when I had gone along it, I came across a German soldier who stopped me and asked me where I was going and through which region; I absolutely had to get through…I tricked him by telling him that I was going to Piticchio to call an assistant for the birth of a child, [and] with this excuse, I obtained permission to go on.[597]

In instances, in order to pass, women appropriated their gender by assuming their roles as mothers and wives for various tasks, therefore, foregrounding being a mother and married facilitated the passing in certain cases. Madeleine Braun recalled in her intervention in a conference in Sorbonne that a young communist woman who corresponded with her husband *(her name or her husband's name are not mentioned)* by sewing little letters into the collars of the shirts she brought to the prison, and she found her husband's mail in the dirty laundry in the same place.[598] Being young and female also provided camouflage to pass: Gisele Guillemot mentions in her personal memoirs how her 'gender' indeed helped her accomplish her missions as a liaison. Her youthful appearance also contributed to the successful camouflage:

> With my youthful appearance and my school uniform, I am the ideal recruit for this kind of mission: an ordinary girl at first sight, who rides a bicycle like so many other teenagers: no one can suspect that I am in reality a liaison agent capable of transporting explosives from one point of Calvados to another with impunity![599]

Zangrandi also describes two *staffette* in her memoir, demonstrating how their youthful, innocent look helped them pass checkpoints and act as s*taffette*: "Irina, calm and discreet, very self-contained, while Lydia has two spirited eyes and always looks like a frightened fawn: three times she escaped from the Germans…"[600] Older women also appropriated their gender, along with their age, to pass. Pineoloppi Rigga, forty-five years old at the time, as mentioned in her memoir, recalls how she worked as a liaison for ELAS in North Greece:

> When they had secret documents, they would notify me and give them to me, and I would go wherever they told me to. These documents were small pieces of paper with orders, information and instructions written on them. I supplied

[597] Testimony by Matteucci Aurora, in Giuseppina Re detta Pina, Serie 1, Sottoserie 4, Donne e resistenza (1945 - 2000), Busta 253, Fondazione Gramsci, Rome.
[598]Madeleine Braun, "les femmes dans la Front National en zone sud," in *Les Femmes dans la Résistance*, 33.
[599] Guillemot, and Humez, R*ésistante*, 40.
[600] Zangrandi, *I Giorni Veri*, 211.

> this regiment with guns, bullets, radios, telephones, telephones, clothing, medicines, shoes and more, so they called me by the name of 'Captain'.[601]

In another passage: "In the spring of '43, the Organisation of the EAM of Arta gave me a document to take it to Giannena, a city in North Greece, to Christos Soulis who was a relative of mine…I took the document I put it in my genitals and got into a truck and went to Giannena."[602] Fani's Theodorou house, the beloved of Apostolis Tsiaras, secretary of the Communist party in Magnesia, had become a save heaven for the *antartes* in the area. However, their involvement in the resistance activities did not stop there: Fani's mother, an old lady, transferred notes between fighters[603] as she was able to move more freely and above suspicion. Both in the cases of Fani's mother and Rigga, their age, along with their gender, became the most adequate camouflage for such activities. The 'passing' was facilitated due to the intersection of gender and age that made Fani's mother and Rigga invisible on the radar of occupiers for potential threats. Rigga demonstrates how this intersection of gender and age facilitated the passing:

> When the Italians Armando Bliorini and Lando,[604] who were in Karabiniaria, warned me that they were hunting to arrest patriots and the patriots had to leave Arta immediately, we used three methods. One method was that many girls were dressed in women's robes like old women and with robes for knitting in the armpit, they passed the Italian blockade near the cemetery with the justification that they were going to Peta to get wool to knit and make clothes for their children.[605]

Similarly, an old peasant Italian woman in the Langhe during a roundup had let the partisans hide their weapons under the straw in her barn. When she saw the Germans coming, she crouched down to urinate on that very spot and drove them away, protesting angrily for their indiscretion.[606] Appropriating the stereotypes that came along with her gender and old age, she managed to deceive the Germans and save the partisans. In the same vein, Cécile Ouzoulias Romagon, in her memoir, demonstrates how gender and class combined were instrumental in the act of passing. Ouzoulias mentions how the police treated a 'dame' differently in comparison to a poor girl. The successful instrumentalisation of femininity was not only related to the biological sex *per se* but it needs to share certain characteristics: "It is true, as experience has shown, that the police are always more courteous to a "lady"

[601] Ριγγα, *Η Αντιστασιακή μου Ιστορία*, 18.
[602] Ibid, 33.
[603] Βερβενιώτη, *Η γυναίκα της Αντίστασης*, 216.
[604] Two leftist Italians working with the Greek resistance movements based on Pinelopi Rigga's memoirs. They provided both information and material to EAM along with other leftist/democratic Italians.
[605] Ριγγα, *Η Αντιστασιακή μου Ιστορία* , 42.
[606] Cited in Tobagi, *La Resistenza delle Donne*, 107. Originally Anna Bravo, *A colpi di cuore. Storie del sessantotto* (Laterza: Roma-Bari, 2008), 135-136.

than to a poor woman."[607] This underpins the idea of a hegemonic femininity to pass as invisible. Bacco writes in regard to and her friends' and her reaction when they came across a battle: "Clumsy and frightened, we do not throw ourselves to the ground when the bombs come but with care we bend on our knees trying not to soil our clothes and socks."[608] What seems like naivety at first is justified immediately after; they should not spoil their dresses and look suspicious going back. This feminine camouflage is a successful instrument of deception when it fulfils the expectations of a hegemonic femininity, conforming to the ideas of an hegemonic femininity that associates women with domesticity. This also resonates with Gobetti's reasoning about being dirty "I gave the impression of someone filthy, but I would not have wanted these revealing signs to make anyone suspicious."[609] In the same pattern, Romagnon recalls the importance of appearance when acting as a liaison: "I recall that we were recommended to be well dressed, during our liaisons, in order to pass more easily during a search or a blockade."[610] An idea of hegemonic femininity is underpinned in these excerpts, where women are supposed to be clean, given that they remain in the domestic milieu, taking care of the household, not wandering in the mountains. A distancing from this hegemonic idea of what constitutes the feminine could potentially compromise the feminine camouflage.

On the contrary, a woman who did not conform to the stereotypes of being non-political, hence a politicised woman, was considered dangerous and it became more difficult to assume such roles and carry through with them. Karra demonstrates that when she refers to Maria Svolou, who, due to her pre-war political actions, was easier to be identified: "At that time the protection of such militants like Svolou was a serious matter and for this the organisation took many measures."[611] London too, in her memoir, recalls how she did not recognise Casanova due to her more 'elegant' appearance: "I have an appointment with Danielle in a salon... I could hardly recognise her because she'd changed so much physically. Her eternal *beret* had been replaced by a tasteful cape. Observing my astonishment, Danielle laughed at seeing herself so beautiful in the mirror of my eyes. -The cops will have a hard time spotting me!", demonstrating how they cover their communist identity to pass more easily during the occupation.[612] Ada Gobetti, who had previous political experience in Turin and her house was a point of reference for antifascist resistance prior to September 8, mentions in her biography: "I went to look for a certain woman, one

[607] Romagon, *J'étais agent de liaison FTPF*, 122.
[608] Bracco, *la staffetta garibaldina*, 30-31.
[609] Gobetti, and Alano, *A Partisan's Diary*, 142.
[610] Romagon, *J'étais agent de liaison FTPF*, 139.
[611] Νικολακοπούλου, *Μία Επονίτισσα Θυμάται*, 24.
[612] London, *La Mégère de la rue Daguerre. Souvenirs de résistance,* 140-141.

of Trinch's clients, who lives near the station. In a manner that was a bit vague, I convinced her to keep a package of documents for me that I was afraid to keep at home, and even more afraid to keep in Turin, and that, on the other hand, would be completely safe at her house."[613] Gobetti, in comparison with this anonymous, unknown woman, is seen as more inadequate in hiding resistance material, as her involvement with political activities has compromised her feminine (unpolitical) camouflage.

In practice, this benefit of moving more freely meant that many liaison agents travelled continuously from place to place; Pujol, in her memoirs, mentions that 'Vincent' (his real name was Francis-Louis Closon, a *Forces françaises libres* member) told her about her new role as 'estafette': "From now on, Colinette, you will have to do a lot of travelling. Try to get a card from a newspaper that will put you in charge of the reportage so that you can travel without any trouble from the police controls."[614] According to a commemorative article for Gisele Joannes, an activist in the *Confédération Générale du Travail* (CGT - General Confederation of Labour) clothing union and communist, the latter is cited mentioning: "I became a liaison officer for the clandestine trade union leadership, I was particularly in charge of the publication of clandestine material and its transport." Gisele changed residence 23 times: "I lived in Paris, Lyon, Toulouse, in burgages of the Massif Central...my son always followed me, even if he did not live with me."[615] Another article commemorating 'Odette' or 'Dominique' (her *nom de guerre,* her real name was Andrée de David-Beauregard) recalls her duties:

> Finally, by the strength of her determination and daring, she was released and joined the maquis of Saint-Afrique as a liaison officer, and in spite of the danger, the exhausting fatigue, the heat and the thirst, she made long bicycle trips, often 100 kilometres a day, to carry orders and messages and thus contribute to our liberation. And it is while carrying out this task that she died a glorious death on August 21, 1944.[616]

Gisele Guillemot also refers to travelling around with her bicycle: "I cycle for miles in all weathers, in the pouring rain, in the wind or in the blazing sun."[617] Equally, Marie Henriette Dion, another liaison agent, is cited, recalling her role:

> I used to ride my bicycle a lot, I used to go and inspect places. Girls that I saw gave me information, we had a hiding place in the cathedral, in a small chapel under a *prie-dieu*, the cleaning was never done. They would bring the

[613] Gobetti, Alano*, Partisan Diary,* 37.
[614] Rosemonde Pujol, *Nom de guerre Colinette 1941-1944* (De l'Armançon, 2003), 76.
[615] Dominique Lacan, 'Syndicalistes, résistantes, Des femmes contre le Nazisme,' *Antoinette,* no.216, 1983, p.28, 940.4. POS, Bibliothèque Margarite Durand, Paris.
[616] 'Andrée de David Beauregard : Martyre de la Résistance', La Languedoc féminin, no. 1955-56 & 58, Septembre et octobre 1944, p.3, 940.4. POS, Bibliothèque Margarite Durand, Paris.
[617] Guillemot, and Humez, *Résistante*, 40.

> information to the letters; I would transcribe it into the code that I had been given and take it to a person in charge. "Obviously, this intensified at the time of the liberation. As a liaison officer, I crossed the German lines to find the Americans in Château-Thierry while the Germans were still in Soissons.[618]

This ability to pass above suspicion was particularly useful in spying operations. Wilhelm argues that *staffette* in Italy were preferred for certain spying operations. When a rebel leader was organising an assault, he often depended on female couriers to gather information. Typically, the *staffette* kept a casual though vigilant eye on a German position. Then one or two of them would ride their bikes around the area, recording details like the placement of machine guns and sentries. They then reported back to the commander on what they had discovered.[619] Claudia Catelli, a *staffetta* from Piacentino, in her interview with Iara Meloni, mentions:

> As a *staffetta*, l I had heard that a German marshal had a 'friend', and so I told these partisans, I told them that there was this marshal who was with her every night. and so, they went to pick him up, one evening, and took him to the command and there they swapped him with ten partisans who were in prison in Fiorenzuola. The *staffetta* also did espionage.[620]

Similarly, Greek women also engaged in spying operations. As Chris Jecchinis mentions, some women were actively and successfully engaged in espionage activities for British Intelligence and Greek resistance groups. This deception can be further illustrated through the organisation formed by Lela Karayiannis.[621] The organisation of Karayiannis, called Bouboulina- inspired by the heroine of the Greek Revolution, hid, and took care of British soldiers left in Greece after the defeat in the Battle of Crete. Apart from hiding British men, Mrs. Karayannis' Athens-based organisation, gave the Allies crucial information about Axis shipping, resulting in the annihilation of many German and Italian ships and submarines.[622] In his book, W. Byford-Jones mentions Karayianni:[623]

> Lela Karayianni's agents had penetrated almost every German service. From the German Admiralty, they obtained the names of sailors and dates of each sea mission, as well as submarine plans and minefield plans. From the Luftwaffe

---

[618]Cited in Catherine Gonnard, 'En résistance, elle s'appelait Quartier, *Lesbia Magazine*, Mars 1997, p.31, 940.4. POS, Bibliothèque Margarite Durand, Paris.
[619] Wilhelm, *The Other Italy*, 131.
[620] Iara Meloni, *Memorie Resistenti*, 104.
[621] Cited in Chimbos, "Women of the 1941-44 Greek Resistance against the Axis," 32.
[622] Despite all the dangerous work that Lela Karayiannis undertook, in several memoirs is framed mostly as a mother figure. In the memoirs of Flossie Lewis Ferentinou, a former British soldier who found refuge in one of Karayiannis' safe houses, he mentions "she took care not only to find proper shelter and food for the British but to give them as much as possible, surroundings reminding them of their home as to lessen their bitterness of their loneliness." 'Απόσπασμα από το Βιβλίο του Flossie Lewis Ferentinou', Οργανώσεις Πληροφορίων και Δολιοφθορών, 912/Α/11 [Οργάνωση Λέλας Καραγιάννη], Ιστορία Διεύθυνσης του Στρατού, Αθήνα.
[623] Απόσπασμα από το βιβλίο του Άγγλου Ανώτερου Αξιωματικού και Συγγραφέως W. Byford-Jones Greek Trilogy, Οργανώσεις Πληροφορίων και Δολιοφθορών, Φ912/4/3 [Οργάνωση Λέλας Καραγιάννη], Ιστορία Διεύθυνσης του Στρατού, Αθήνα.

> she secured the plans of underground gasoline depots and aircraft hiding places in the forest of that area, she carefully monitored the construction of the Araxos airfield in the Peloponnese, which was bombed and destroyed by the RAF just after it was put to use because of the information she was transmitting by radio to Cairo from the mountains. *The Germans could not believe that everything that came to light from investigations and evidence was the work of a woman and tortured her to reveal the complicity of another person*. (Italics my own)

Further, several accounts demonstrate how women instrumentalised their gender by flirting and using their charm as a means to pass, deceive and spy. Pesce, in her memoir, recalls how the antifascists in Milan managed to capture and kill the fascist spy Domenico di Martino, who had provided his service to the *Opera Vigilanza Repressione Antifascismo* (OVRA - Organization for Vigilance and Repression of Anti-Fascism), the secret police of the fascist state, up until 1943. As auxiliary commissary attached to the Political office of the Questura di Milano, he was responsible for the arrest, interrogation, and torture of partisans and patriots. Onorina, having come up with a story in consultation with Visone (Giovanni Pesce), went to his office with the pretext of wanting de Martino to intervene so her sister's child to an officer that was killed in Greece is recognised. Having identified de Martino, knowing how he looks, Onorina Pesce recalls how "A few days later I pointed him out to a detachment of three Gappistas," although this first ambush attempt had to be called off. A few days later, however, a second ambush attempt took place, this time successful: "Visone and I, hand in hand like two sweethearts, were walking near the corner dual which we knew De Martino and his escort would pass. The Gappisti had moved to the 'beginning and end of the street....I saw him…Pesce nodded and the Gappisti began to walk toward the villa. When the car stopped in front of the gate, they fired…"[624] The commander of the German base in North Aegean, Josef Adler, was captured after he was seduced by a woman. Her family regularly travelled between Skiathos (an island in the North Aegean Sea) and Volos (continental Greece) and, during a paper check, what is described as a beautiful woman pretended to have forgotten her papers and invited him to the house to show him her identity. In the house, the *antartes* were waiting in an ambush to capture him.[625] The Greek newspaper *Eponitis* mentions that some women were 'used' to liberate some imprisoned partisans. The Nazis had put prisoners in a carriage of a train and left a mine connected to a cable as a deterrent to prevent the train from being blown up by the partisans: "As soon as the train stopped, the girls offered wine to the Germans and asked to give it to the prisoners. When the door opened, the girl who entered the death carriage cut the cable with a pair of scissors and told

[624] Pesce, *Il pane bianco*, 50-53.
[625] Βερβενιώτη, *Η γυναίκα της Αντίστασης*, 224.

the prisoners to leave."[626] Lucie Aubrac extracted her husband Raymond from the hospital after she flirted with a guard in the prison.[627] Equally, as Simone Leeville mentions in her 2003 memoirs written by Jacqueline Débordes:

> "As Simone's role became more and more important, more precautions had to be taken. It was the lieutenant's job to warn her sufficiently. I forbid you to pass the famous TCOs." he told her. I will come to Moulins myself to fetch them.
>
> -"Why is that?" she questioned him. I am not in danger. Every time I cross the line, I have a word, a smile for them. They hardly look at my pass."[628]

Later in the book, she recalls:

> A *milicien* approached her. With a smile, she handed him her identity card.
>
> -"What do you have in that suitcase?" he asked her.
>
> -A bit of laundry, you want to see?
>
> This smile, which had done her many favours, dissuaded the militiaman. The danger had passed, this time again.[629]

Post-war, a woman resister (mentioned as M.M without her full name given) narrates how women were able to pass more easily by joking around with officers:

> Once, some S.S. on duty at a checkpoint on a country road a few kilometres from Rome, stopped a girl carrying a large, bulging bag on the handlebars of her bicycle. Obviously believing it to be food smuggling, they brusquely and sternly besieged the girl, "No, bombs," the girl replied with comic gravity, and the Germans must have found the reply very witty because they renounced further investigation and with a warm and satisfied "Gut" they let her through. The girl reached Rome without further incident and the bombs arrived safely at their destination.[630]

In some instances, women were also asked to even go as far as sleeping with men in order to get information. Ida D' Este mentions: "One day, Dr X was giving me some orders... at a certain moment he almost muttered to himself... "and then another thing... but not this... she can't do that." I'm a proud woman and I get angry. "I can't do it? Is there anything I need that I can't do?" I insist. It was a question of going to St. Vitus to make love (perhaps pretend) [631]to the Germans in order to get information."[632]

---

[626] 'Επονίτισσες Ηρωίδες', Επονίτης Πελοποννήσου: Όργανο του Συμβουλίου Περιοχής Πελοποννήσου της Ενιαίας Πανελλαδικής Οργάνωσης Νέων, αρ. φύλλου 9, Αύγουστος 11, 1944, σ. 1, Βιβλιοθήκη – Αρχείο Χαρίλαος Φλωράκης, Επιμορφωτικό Κέντρο ΚΚΕ.
[627] Gildea, *Fighters in the Shadows*, 49.
[628] Jacqueline Débordes, *La Guerre Secrète à bicyclette*, *Tome 3 : Simone Léveillé* (Broché, 2003), 101.
[629] Ibid, 186.
[630] 'La lotta partigiana (Testimony by M.M),' p. 1-2, in Giuseppina Re detta Pina, Serie 1, Sottoserie 4, Donne e resistenza (1945 - 2000), Busta 253, Fondazione Gramsci, Rome.
[631] Parenthesis and comment not mine.
[632] Cited in Tobagi, *La Resistenza delle Donne*, 98.

Yet their feminine camouflage did not always work. In times when the occupiers and their collaborators had incontrovertible evidence, they did not fall into the trap of a naïve and innocent woman. Petroula Nikolopoulou was arrested in 1943 in Athens while distributing clandestine proclamations of EPON and EAM. When the security forces collaborating with the occupiers saw her, they took her to the local police station and interrogated her about her involvement in resistance activities. She told them that she found the proclamations down on the street and "out of curiosity, I took them to read them."[633] The collaborators did not bite the 'naivety card' and after beating her, they held her in custody for several days. Even when an arrest took place, as showed in Nikolopoulou's case, women continued to their performance and played dumb in order to re-camouflage themselves. Cécile Ouzoulias Romagon, a liaison agent for her husband in the FTPF in France, when arrested, played dumb to reconceal herself and escape being imprisoned. While having a conversation with another woman arrested for providing shelter to FTPF, she tried to re-establish herself as a non-political subject that does not represent a real threat:

> -I am a concierge," she said. What will happen to me? I made the mistake of housing an FTP in a maid's room...
>
> I interrupted her. I act dumb:
>
> -What's an FTP? I've never seen one...[634]

The fact that their femininity was helpful in such activities does not mean that they were not conceived as 'hors de norme' roles. Women's entrance into such roles provoked surprise and even mistrust vis-à-vis their morality, despite the much-needed camouflage of the 'feminine' to carry out certain tasks. This was particularly the case for liaison/staffette/courriers operating in the mountains since it was not considered a woman's rightful place. Jeanne Bohec mentions that when she was parachuted from Britain to France, her arrival surprised the *maquis,* who did not expect a woman:

> The BCRA had announced my arrival, neglecting to say that Rateau was a woman. And I was one of the first, if not the first, to be parachuted into France...When the first moment of surprise had passed, he welcomed me. From that moment, I was accepted by everyone and never afterwards did any member of the Resistance have any difficulty in accepting me in my role, which *was not considered especially feminine*.[635]

She mentions that even women themselves did not expect a woman for this role:

[633] Νικολόπουλου, *Μία Επονίτισσα Θυμάται*, 35.
[634] Romigon, *J'étais agent de liaison FTPF*, 65.
[635] Jeanne Bohec, *La plastiqueuse à bicyclette* (Éditions du Félin : Paris, 2022), 102.

> Brigette and Pat were also expecting a boy but they showed less surprise than the reception committee. Being women, they understood very well that for the special work that awaited me, a woman was worth [as] a man.[636]

In her memoir, first published in 1968, Marie-Madeleine Fourcade, who oversaw recruiting and assigning agents in sections, asks Gavarni in a conversation between the two of them:

> 'They think it is ridiculous to take orders from a woman?'
>
> 'You must admit… You' re very young, they don't feel sure.'[637]

Therefore, as it becomes evident from the various sources used, even in intelligence and spying operations, where their gender became beneficial to the success of such actions, women were not easily accepted.

Conclusion

In sum, both types of mobilisations appropriated established ideas about women and femininity. These activities, despite not involving direct combat, were considered dangerous and crucial for the survival of the struggle and women encountered similar risks as men. Marisa Ombra demonstrates how the job of being a *staffetta* was equally important and dangerous as participating in battle: "The *staffette* did not have the relative protection of the detachment, the brigade, the commander assuming responsibility. Everything depended on the readiness to understand situations and decide what was best to do."[638] Elsa Oliva also re-affirms the peculiar nature of the duties of the *staffette*: "I had a rifle to defend myself but the *staffetta* had to go through all the ranks, go into the middle of the enemy unarmed, and do what she did."[639] In another article about Francine Fromond, introduced earlier, the importance of these 'staffette' and liaison officers is highlighted:

> And when our country was invaded, she suddenly revealed leadership qualities in the important liaison services of the F.T.P., which were at the origin of the French resistance… This young girl was frightfully tortured. The Germans knew that a word from her would have uncovered the whole organisation and arrested some of the fighters.[640]

A letter related to Bianca Ceva, who entered the resistance in the ranks of the Partito d'Azione and later in 1944 joined the partisans in Oltrepo Pavese after she managed to escape from prison, sent by the *Comitato di Liberazione Nazionale Alta Italia* in 1946 affirms the importance of women's contribution: "On this occasion, I am pleased to recall the superb

---

[636] Ibid, 106.
[637] Fourcade, *Noah's Arch,* 67.
[638] Ombra, *La bella politica*, 34.
[639] Tobagi, *La Resistenza delle Donne*, 154.
[640] 'Les obsèques de Francine Fromont : Héroïne Française,' *L'Humanité : journal socialiste quotidien*, Aout 5, 1945, p.2, Bibliothèque nationale de France, accessed through Gallica, http://catalogue.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/cb32787730.

contribution made to the struggle for National Liberation by our women: in multiple fields of our activity they discharged tasks that it *would not have been possible to entrust to young men* (emphasis my own), and these tasks were fulfilled with enthusiasm, with strong spirits and amidst very grave risks..."[641] Pujol also comments on that in her personal memoirs:

> I would like to make a parenthesis on this function of "secretary" at a time when this title continues to mark the inferiority of the second sex over the first. A sexist basis for discrimination that I found particularly glaring and frustrating in my resistance movement, where, *despite the equality of risks (emphasis my own),* the hierarchy remained macho.[642]

Yet even women themselves, as social subjects whose ideas were influenced by the historical setting, diminished the importance of these actions, and saw their resistance as supportive to the liberation struggle fulfilled by men. Women had internalised this division between the important military resistance vs their less important gender-specific tasks even if they ran similar or the same risks as men. Cesarina Bracco, mentions, in 1976, for instance, "Our comrades fought a hard fight, poorly equipped, amidst many dangers and difficulties. The thought that we could alleviate some of their worries gave us new courage."[643] In the same pattern, Giovanna Zangrandi states in her memoir: "At Claudio's house, he [Sandro Garbin] did the most rigorous organisational work, directions (direttive) I logically do not know, as a s*taffetta* and pawn (pedina)."[644]

While these affirmations by women themselves might seem to feed into and strengthen existing gender stereotypes about women and their roles, they also undermined these by mocking and eroding beliefs that women were by nature more obedient, respectable, and unpolitical, essentially making us suspicious of the familiar gendered binary divisions of "strength/weakness, toughness/tenderness, protector/ protected, action/passivity, independence/dependence, and masculinity/ femininity."[645] This mocking and sarcasm towards these stereotypes is exemplified in Mimma Rolla's (coming from a communist family, she joined the Fronte della Gioventù and participated in the GDD) theatrical 'performance', while distributing leaflets urging students in her school not to enrol in the armed forces of the Salò Republic. As she recalls, after having secretly left these leaflets in the class, she approached a group of male students who were discussing the object of the

[641] 'Croce al merito di Guerra in seguito ad attivita partigiana', Fondo Bianca Ceva, Busta 1, Fasc. 7, Unione Femminile Nazionale, Milan. See also 'Alla partigiana Bella Bianca…', Comitato di Liberazione Nazionale Alta Italia, Corpo Volontari della Libertà, Commando Regionale Nord-Emilia, No. 5069, Parma, il 25.7.1946, Fondo Bianca Ceva, Busta 1, Fasc. 7, Unione Femminile Nazionale, Milan.
[642] Pujol, *Nom du Guerre*, 34.
[643] Bracco, *la staffetta garibaldina*, 6.
[644] Zangrandi, *I Giorni Veri*, 79.
[645] Lorraine Bayard de Volo, "A Revolution in the Binary? Gender and the Oxymoron of Revolutionary War in Cuba and Nicaragua," *Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society* 37, no. 2 (2012): 415.

leaflet: “But I was good-heartedly pushed away, as is customary with a curious bumblebee (bimbetta) about things that do not concern her. In fact, I remember almost precisely the words with which I was politely ousted: ‘these are not things for a little girl.’ intimately I smiled inwardly, somewhat smitten.”[646] The irony and Rolla’s sarcasm revolve around the fact that she is the one having distributed clandestinely these leaflets and yet her male classmate ousted her off suspicion because she is a girl. Hence, these performances that played upon established stereotypes force us to reimagine the conceptual boundaries of gendered resistance, while also disrupting the largely gendered and hierarchical binary between violent/nonviolent modes of mobilisation in the resistance movements.[647]

[646] Mimma Rolla, *La Mia Resistenza: Memorie e riflesioni di una partigiana, a cura di Bianca LENA* (Edizioni Giacch’e, 2018), 59.
[647] Göksel, “Gendering Resistance,” 1113.

Chapter 6: Female Partisans, or Where 'Something queer happens'[648]

Introduction

"The moment the Germans left Vaphe with our operator, Elpida quickly took the wireless and the other incriminating things a little way off, and hid them; conducting herself, *although a woman,* with all the sense and coolness of a brave *man*."[649]

Psychoundakis, 1955, 91. Cited in Hart, *New Voices of the Nation*, 151.

This chapter will examine the small minority of women who were able, or in some cases had to, pass the binary between 'female' and 'male' forms of resistance, and participated in combat operations alongside men. Despite their small numbers, their transgression across traditional roles through participation in violence led to an increased fascination with women combatants in all three societies during and after the war. This popularity becomes evident in the post-war circulation of photographs taken of these women (while performing) in these roles in all three cases; in the French resistance, there is the 1944 image of 'Nicole', aka Simone Segouin- a member of an FTP partisan unit. Her photograph became one of the images associated with the 'femme partisane' fighting Nazis with a gun in her hand. Indeed, the image of 'Nicole' rose in prominence when photographs of her by Hungarian- American photographer Robert Capa were published in *Life*. Nicole previously had participated in the capture of 25 German soldiers in an operation in the village of Thivars, towards the end of the war in 1944.[650] Jack Belden in his 1944 article for Life Magazine writes: "Nothing pleased Nicole so much as the killing of the Germans," although, in her 2014 obituary, Nicole is cited as being unsure if she had killed any.[651] Following the images of her with a gun in her hand, several other articles about Nicole and her participation in the resistance

[648] Butler, *Notes Toward a Performative Theory of Assembly*, 64.
[649] Emphasis my own.
[650] Jack Belden wrote an article about her in September 1944. In the narration of Belden, the representation of the 'feminine' comes in contrast with the partisan role of 'Nicole.' As he mentions: "Her blonde hair fell over a sun-browned face in careless disarray and this, with her full lips and a rather sultry expression, gave to her obviously young face the appearance hoyden. She was clad in a light-brown jacket and a cheap flower skirt of many hues which ended just above her knees." In the next paragraph her feminine appearance comes in contrast with her role as a partisan: "I was walking toward the cathedral when around the corner swung a column of 25 Germans prisoners. As the column drew abreast of a group of U.S. soldiers, the G.I.'s let out a series of whistles. At the end of the column walked the Partisan girl, nonchalantly holding a German Schmeisser pistol." See more: Jack Belden, "The Girl Partisan of Chartres," *Life*, September 4, 1944, p. 20, https://books.google.co.uk/books?id=Vk8EAAAAMBAJ&dq=%22The+Girl+Partisan+of+Chartres%22&pg=PA20&redir_esc=y#v=onepage&q=%22The%20Girl%20Partisan%20of%20Chartres%22&f=false.
[651] Richard Sandomir, "Simone Segouin, Teenage Fighter in French Resistance, Dies at 97," *The New York Times*, March 17, 2023, https://www.nytimes.com/2023/03/17/world/europe/simone-segouin-dead.html.

were published: in an article about Nicole-Simone, Frantz Malassis provides a portrait of her in an article in the newspaper *Eure-et-Loir Independent* of August 26, 1944: "one of the purest types of this legion of heroic Frenchwomen who prepared the way for liberation," and who "inspired by the most ardent patriotism, (...) took part in all the perilous operations among her comrades in the Franc group, whose risks she shared and whose admiration she won through her extraordinary drive and total disregard for danger."[652] This extract demonstrates both the separation of women between heroic and non-heroic, with most women positioned in the latter category, and the (re)use of a reservoir of women heroines from the 'glorious' past to balance the uncommon image of female partisan. Nicole is placed among the heroic ones, echoing the previous French women who paved the way for liberation through their participation in armed struggle.

Figure 1 Simon Segouin as captured by the Hungarian-American war photographer Robert Capa in Paris, 1944.

[652] Frantz Malassis, "Photographie de la jeune résistante armée de Chartres," *Fondation de la Résistance*, n.d., accessed January 18, 2023, https://www.fondationresistance.org/pages/rech_doc/jeune-resistante-armee-chartres_photo1.htm.

In Greece, it is the image of another female partisan, Titika Panayiotidou-Geldi, who later became known as the 'Woman of the Resistance' after Spyros Meletzis photographed her in August 1944.[653] Titika, like Nicole, became known through the lens of a photographer, Meletzis, who captured several partisans in the mountains towards the end of the war in 1944.[654] However, as Poulos explains, despite the popularity of Titika's image of brandishing her gun, according to her own subsequent testimony, she had never really used it and her promotion to deputy lieutenant of her platoon occurred despite her very minor battlefield experience.[655] Following the recognition of EAM's resistance in 1982, her photograph reached a broader audience, when it was published on a stamp, while it was also published on the cover of her 1982 memoir.

Figure 2 Titika Panayiotidou captured Spyros Meletzis in August 1944 at the "Sarafis Officers' School" in Rentina.

[653] Given the post-Civil War right-wing state, it seems fair that Titika Panayiotidou-Geldi's photo became popular after the fall of the Regime of the Colonels in 1974, which further manifests the 'resistance' not solely as a war of liberation but as lieu *de memoire*. While Apostolou and other fallen heroines of the resistance and the Civil War are memorialised in refugees' publications up until 1982, the renewed interest in the resistance following the fall of the dictatorship and the reconciliation favoured a rediscovery of these women who had participated in the resistance and had experienced the consequences of the communist defeat first hand. In a 1975 poster, several photos of women are included, among them Titika's too: Commemoration of the Greek Military Coup, Kommounistikē Neolaia Elladas, 1975, International Institute of Social History, Amsterdam, https://search.iisg.amsterdam/Record/968716

[654] Σπύρος Μελέτζης, *Με τους Αντάρτες στα Βουνά* (Αθήνα, 1982).

[655] Poulos, *Arms and the Woman*, 180.

In Italy, the most popular image of women's armed resistance was the image of the *Partigiane a Brera, which* gained in popularity in Italy in the 1970s, during the era broadly known as the Second Wave of Feminism, when there was an increased interest in women's participation in the resistance. The photograph was taken by the photographer Tino Petrelli in Italy's Via Brera in Milan on April 27, 1945, portraying some female partisans who went to hand over (their?) weapons to the Allies. Andrea Torre, the Chief of Archives in the Istituto Nazionale Ferruccio Parri told me that the photo was indeed staged (he mentioned it as 'la fotografia posata'), [656] which demonstrates the use of the female fighter image as a tool of propaganda, demonstrating the lasting impact of the image of female fighters as a symbol of revolution, rather than an actual representation of the Second World War female resistance in its entirety.

Figure 3 The Brera Partisans as captured by Tino Petrelli on April 26, 1945

These images of the small minority of women who acted as partisans received increased popularity following the war despite representing only a small part of women's resistance.

[656] Private conversation during my archival work in Milan in March 2023 with Andrea Torre.

The role of female partisans was perceived as a break with established gender norms.[657] As Juliette Pattinson has argued regarding female agents in SOE, this *hors-de-norme* (out of the ordinary and hence, exceptional) feature has led to an excessive fascination with women combatants due to the transgression of conventional codes of behaviour that saw women as non-violent and peaceful human beings.[658] The image of the female partisan with a gun in her hand within the masculinist–nationalist setting of the resistance was viewed as a "transgressive and challenging act depicted in gendered terms."[659]

However, these images are also closely associated with wartime and post-war communist and socialist propaganda, where the female fighter represents a new society. While it goes beyond the scope of this thesis to examine the lasting effect of the female partisan image, these images of a tiny group of women have *subsequently* become symbolic of women's participation in the struggle more broadly. This chapter will provide a nuanced analysis of the actual roles of women partisans, along with the wartime narratives surrounding the image of female fighter. It will also focus on the image of female fighter as a source of wartime propaganda rather than an actual representation of the female resistance. I will argue that women who assumed the role of female partisan represented 'the ferocious few', existing in an in-between space, where something "queer happened", a new gender self, to use Butler's words. This queerness was both imposed on these women but also internalised by women themselves as a means to navigate the uncomfortable image of 'female warrior'. To examine these narratives surrounding female partisans, I have focused on a variety of sources, from clandestine newspapers to post-war testimonies and pieces, including personal memoirs, one archived oral testimony and post-war articles commemorating these women.

6.1. The Ferocious Few: Between Necessity and Choice

Despite the popularisation of the image of the female partisan with a rifle on her shoulder, their participation in actual combat remained largely an exception to the rule, with only a small minority of women fighting alongside men.[660] In many cases, the term partisan was used more broadly to describe women who stayed amongst men in the mountains, entering what was perceived as a male space. This 'entrance' happened, at times, out of necessity, primarily to avoid reprisals by the occupying authorities and their collaborators if their

[657] Capdevila, "La mobilisation des femmes dans la France combattante (1940-1945)," 4.
[658] Pattinson, *Behind Enemy Lines*, *9.*
[659] Berberian, "Gendered Narratives of Transgressive Politics," in *Age of Rogues*, 55.
[660] Luc Capdevila, ''La mobilisation des femmes dans la France combattante (1940-1945),'' *Clio. Histoire, femmes et sociétés* 12, 2000, mis en ligne le 24 mai 2006, consulté le 22 avril 2022, p. 1, URL : http://journals.openedition.org/clio/187 ; DOI : https://doi.org/10.4000/clio.187.

political engagement was exposed or out of the need to follow their husbands.[661] As Bénédicte Santoire has argued vis-à-vis Kurdish women fighters, this necessity complicates the notion of agency when it comes to choosing between different modes of resistance because the contextual border becomes increasingly blurred between a clear political motivation to join the partisan formations and the difficult material conditions that women faced at the time.[662] In Greek sources, there is a clear reference to women following their husbands into the mountains; certain women were forced to follow the *antartes* in the mountains, particularly wives of Captains of ELAS for their own personal safety to avoid reprisals rather than to take arms. According to narrative accounts, when the first resistance cells were founded in the mountains of Roumeli in 1942-1943, the partisans' heartland in Northern Greece, wives of partisans had to accompany the men to the mountains, in times during military operations. For instance, Captain Theoharis, later leader of the first ELAS unit in the Attika area, was also accompanied by his fiancée even on the battlefield. During military operations against Nazi soldiers, General Emmanuel Mantakas, the commander of the Greek resistance fighters in Crete, was escorted by his two daughters.[663] In a 2023 article commemorating the women who participated in the Operation Harling, also known as the Battle of Gorgopotamos on November 25, 1942, it is cited: "One of the main characteristics of the Karalibanaion was the fact that in all the battles they took part in they had their female companions (sintrofises) by their side, armed with their rifles. Demos Karalivanos (Pterodimos) always had Panagiou by his side, his nephew Theocharis Polychronos (earlier mentioned as Captain Theocharis) had his fiancée Asimo and Polykarpos Kapouros (Karpis) had Vasilo by his side."[664] This 'accompanying' during military operations, which undermines the whole narrative of protection, might also suggest protecting the honour of women. For Greece, given the powerful social contract of honour at the time, leaving them alone while fighting in the mountains could have provoked reactions and rumours from

[661] In all three countries, the topography (urban vs mountainous) of the region was also an important differentiating factor that impacted the roles and activities assumed by women. In cities, women had to focus more on demonstrations and protests, claiming a position in the previously male-dominated public sphere, breaking with established ideas on women's rightful place in the domestic milieu, while in mountainous areas, women would regularly serve as a link between the resistance in the mountains and the local population, working as couriers for the partisans. Although there is no specific study (to my knowledge) that focuses on the comparison of (gender-specific) activities in rural and urban environments, these differences do not solely manifest themselves through the narration of events by former resisters; they also demonstrate how the roles assumed by women were bounded to an extent by the exigencies of location.

[662] Based on Bénédicte Santoire, "Beyond feminist heroines: framing the discourses on Kurdish women fighters in three types of Western media," *Feminist Media Studies* 23, no. 4 (2023): 1617, DOI: 10.1080/14680777.2022.2041690.

[663] Cited in Chimbos, "Women of the 1941-44 Greek Resistance Against the Axis," 31. For more examples : Βερβενιώτη, *Η γυναίκα της Αντίστασης*, 305-306.

[664] Ανδρέας Δενεζάκης, "Οι ΕΛΑΣίτισσες αντάρτισσες που συμμετείχαν στην επιχείρηση του Γοργοπόταμου," *Ημεροδρόμος,* Νοέμβριος 25, 2023, https://www.imerodromos.gr/oi-elasitisses-antartisses-pou-summeteichan-sthn-epicheirhsh-tou-gorgopotamou/.

society. The 'accompanying' even during military operations where women could come under fire further enhances this argument. The mountains, perceived as an unnatural space for women where men operate is not suitable for 'leaving women alone'. In Italian sources, women are also portrayed fighting side by side with their husbands. In the newspaper *Italia Combatte*, a 1945 image of an Italian female partisan in Val d'Aosta is accompanied by the caption "Valle d'Aosta (female) patriot fighting *with her husband*[665] against fascists and Nazis."[666] In a document analysing women's contribution to the resistance, women's escape in the mountains for "fear of reprisals" is also mentioned, along with the gender-specific space reserved for them in the front:

> They went up there, perhaps because their house had been burnt down, their country devastated by the enemy; perhaps because they could not but also because they did not want to stay down there when it was possible to follow their men up into the mountains, when it was possible to fight and fight with them. This is how these detachments of (Women) Volunteers for Liberation fought: working to prepare uniforms, washing, ironing, repairing (mend-aggiustare) for the partisans; perhaps they (the partisans) will feel that they have a little bit of home in the mountains in this affectionate female assistance, a little bit of home that they will sometimes miss.[667]

In Greece, the female partisans who operated in the mountains in majority held gender-specific roles, such as knitting for the partisans and cooking, acting as military nurses, or they could hold a double role of both participating in battle as fighters, but they were also expected to take care of the partisans. According to the recollections of the guerrilla Georgia Paliou who participated in the 1942 Battle of Gorgopotamos, as told to her daughter, Zana Beboni, the women followed ELAS' mission with the main task of intervening and providing, if necessary, first aid to possible injuries of the front line guerrillas.[668] Indeed, even the mountains where guerrillas operated, which were conceived as a predominantly male space were gendered.The first space was male, and it involved combat operations, while the second space was female, including combat support roles. Their participation in actual combat operations was little altered during the transition to the armed struggle.[669]

The necessity of preserving the female partisan as an *identity in extremis* in order to uphold the gender hierarchical order further becomes evident in the reluctance to establish female platoons or/and female-only maquis groups in France. In France, in a bulletin of the FTPF published in 1944, the formation of '*groupes de partisanes*' is announced. Women are

---

[665] Italics my own.
[666] Italia Combatte: trasportato all'aviazione alleata, April 9, 1945, Unione Femminile Nazionale, Milano.
[667] 'Il contributo femminile alla guerra di liberazione', Busta 1, Fasc. 5, Fondo Anna Marullo, Istituto Piemontese Per La Storia Della Resistenza E Della Societa' contemporanea 'Giorgio Agosti', Turin.

[668] Δενεζάκης, "Οι ΕΛΑΣίτισσες αντάρτισσες που συμμετείχαν στην επιχείρηση του Γοργοπόταμου."
[669] Capdevila, "La mobilisation des femmes dans la France combattante (1940-1945),'' 3.

praised for their contribution to the resistance and "The C.M.Z.[670] has received many requests from patriotic women to take a more active part in the guerrilla."[671] However, in the same bulletin, "*Les Groupes de partisanes* should be composed of women who are able to take time off from major family obligations… No women's only maquis formations will be tolerated at this time." First, according to the bulletin, women are allowed to participate in the struggle if they do not have caring responsibilities towards their families, re-affirming the idea that women's primary duties were as mothers/wives. Second, while a group of female partisans will be established, no women only maquis formation will be tolerated.[672] This further demonstrates how the term 'partisane' in this case implies combat support roles rather than participation in actual combat. The use of 'tolerate' vis-à-vis the formation of women's only maquis formation re-affirms the gender binary between male and female, of what is negotiable and what is not.

Unlike the situation in France, in Roumeli, Northern Greece, women's squads were created in 1944. Women had to go through military training for four months at the ELAS Officer Academy, located in Rentina in North Greece. Maria Beikou, a former Greek *antartissa (*female partisan), for instance, mentions that the women-only squad (*dimoiria*) contained thirty women. As Poulos writes, women's platoons operated in the Ninth Division (western Macedonia), Tenth Division (central Macedonia), Thirteenth Division (Roumeli), Second Division (Atticoboetia), First Division (Thessaly), and the Eighth Division (Ipiros).[673] Despite the designated training programmes the new female recruits had undergone from 1944, according to several primary and secondary sources, including Beikou's interview to Vervenioti, Flegga's 1982 testimony, and based on Poulos observations, women were discouraged from participating in battle directly.[674]The formation of women's platoons was effectively hindered by the leadership's efforts to forbid any real female participation in battle.[675]

---

[670] Comité militaire de la zone sud (Military Committee for the Southern Zone).
[671] 'Formation de Groupes de Partisanes', Bulletin intérieur réservé aux officiers et sous-officiers FTPF : (France d'abord, Forces françaises intérieures, CMZ des FTPF), Mars 25, 1944, p. 11, Musée de la Résistance nationale / Champigny-sur-Marne, accessed August 24, 2022, http://catalogue.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/cb437767912.
[672] Ibid, 12.
[673] Poulos, *Arms and the Woman*, 179.
[674] Ibid, 179. For instance, Poulos writes how second-lieutenant Liza Kallinou stated that when her platoon desired to take part in the Athens/Piraeus operations in December Events, they were not allowed to do so. Based on Flegga's testimony, Thyella was the only woman allowed in *actual* combat in the Battle of Athens during the December Events (Κίνηση «Η Γυναίκα της Αντίστασης», *Γυναίκες στην Αντίσταση*, 131). Beikou too in her interview to Vervenioti examined earlier recalls that while everyone in the unit wished to go to Athens, they were not allowed (it does not exactly specify it to women) and later mentions that solely Thyella got permission to go to Athens (Interview of Maria Beikou to Tasoula Vervenioti).
[675] Poulos, *Arms and the Woman*, 179.

Nonetheless, a small minority of women broke this 'combat taboo' and transgressed the division between male/female resistance and participated in combat. Combat roles were opened to women due to their proven military aptitude, a characteristic usually attributed to men. Maria Beikou explains in her interview with the historian Vervenioti that while in the beginning, as a member of EPON around 1943, her duties involved assisting the armed units operating in Evoia, she later received a gun in ELAS in the women's platoons. She recalls women's performance during the training period in Rentina in 1944 when she joined ELAS:

> [T.V.] -Did the girls make it?
>
> [M.B.] -Better than the men.
>
> [T.V.] -They were more methodical...
>
> [M.B] Much more methodical. Better than the men.[676]

In Italy, one prominent example of this break with the combat taboo is that of Irma Marchiani, a former housewife. She was among the partisans who battled at Montefiorino and was eventually arrested in August 1944. She was then sent to jail in Bologna and sentenced to death, but she managed to escape. Afterwards, she was promoted to vice commander in the Matteotti' Battalion of the Garibaldi "Modena" Division and experienced more combat after rejoining her unit.[677] In the same pattern, Laura Polizzi, known as Mirka, first got involved in the GDD but after her family was deported, she decided to join the partisan formations and work as a *staffetta*. In the summer of 1944, due to her military aptitude, she was awarded the rank of vice-commissioner of the Garibaldians in the Reggiano region.[678] Another prominent example for France is Madeleine Riffaud; her military aptitude earned her the command of a group of male partisans during the insurrection in Paris.[679] Earlier, in July 1944, she had become well known by shooting a German officer in plain daylight, which resulted in her arrest. As she writes in her 1994 memoir about the shooting: "A German soldier. A sub-officer, alone, stops to look at the Seine. So, everything goes very quickly. Foot on the ground. The gun quickly out of the bag. Two bullets in the head. It is the first time I shot someone."[680] This act of killing separated her from the majority and allowed her to 'pass' the barrier of combat taboo. After an exchange of prisoners, she was released, and she immediately decided to join the insurrection

---

[676] Interview of Maria Beikou to Tasoula Vervenioti, Oral Testimonies File, Hellenic Literary and Historical Archive, Thessaloniki, Greece.
[677] D' Amelio, "Italian Women in the Resistance," 128. See also 'Irma Marchiani', Associazione Nazionale Partigiani d' Italia, https://www.anpi.it/biografia/irma-marchiani.
[678] Tobagi, *La Resistenza delle Donne*, 146.
[679]Schwartz, "Redefining Resistance," in *Behind Enemy Lines*, 151.
[680] Riffaud, *On l'appelait Rainer*, 96.

of Paris. At the age of twenty, on her birthday, she participated in an attack on a German supply train with three other men, which resulted in taking eighty prisoners.[681] These achievements, however, were not enough to curb any hesitation in accepting a 20-year-old girl as a 'capitaine' as she writes in her memoir in third person: "In the company's (the military unit) headquarters she was called 'captain'... This did not please some of the boys, who thought it was a great honour for a little girl and felt offended."[682] Writing post-war, Riffaud recognises how her role as captain was perceived as an anomaly due to her gender, and provokes the negative reaction of her male peers, even to the extent of feeling offended by being replaced by a girl.

Flegga-Papadaki, a former Greek resister, in an edited volume of women's recollections of the resistance published in 1982, mentions Thyella[683] (her real name was Meni Papahliou), one of the first *antartisses* in Roumeli, North Greece. According to Fleggas's testimony, Thyella was the only woman allowed in *actual* combat later on in the Battle of Athens in December 1944, known as *Dekemvriana* (December Events) against the Greek governmental forces, collaborationist groups and the British army. All the other women were asked to assume equally important combat support roles.[684] Thyella had previously distinguished herself in military operations, which paved the way for her participation in battle. As Giorgos Kotzioulas recalls, "Thyella helped them [the partisans] a lot, she was exceptionally smart, she was discovering hidden guns, anything."[685]

As it is evident, this transgression into combat roles was largely an exception to the rule, following Elshtain's argument. Female partisans were distinct from the great majority that followed a gendered trajectory. These images of the 'Ferocious Few', as Elshtain calls them, enhanced the unnaturalness of the female partisan. Their social acceptance became possible through association with a canon of national heroines and through narratives of tales of women's military heroism invoked by national histories,[686] and as long as they represented an exception to the rule. This exceptionalism of female partisans and women staying in the mountains, entering what was perceived as a men's domain, involved for these women specific forms of patriarchal bargain in these male-dominated spaces.

[681] Mons, *Madeleine Riffaud*, 101-102.
[682] Riffaud, *On l'appelait Rainer,* 135.
[683] Nickname. In the parentheses it is her real name. Thyella in Greek means storm.
[684] Κίνηση «Η Γυναίκα της Αντίστασης», *Γυναίκες στην Αντίσταση*, 131.
[685] Κοτζιουλάς, *Όταν Ήμουν με τον Άρη,* 120.
[686] Based largely on Poulos, *Arms and the Woman*, 177.

6.2. Entering a New Bargain: The Female Partisan

The female partisan was "an identity in extremis," not an *expectation* for most women.[687] Women partisans became 'accepted' only because their numbers were small, as their exceptional status was consistently highlighted. Based on various sources, this beyond the ordinary behaviour and role was accompanied by a questioning of their moral principles and suggestions on sexual transgression, with a moral judgment passed onto them. In line with the prevailing patriarchal notions of sexuality and honour, what did these women do in the mountains, along with male partisans? What purpose can a woman serve in the mountains among the partisans, conceived as a combat zone, besides sexually satisfying the partisans operating there? Alba Dell'Acqua worked as a doctor's assistant and spent some time in the woods. They managed to reach a resistance command unit. When she entered the command's shed, she presented herself to the chief in the mountains, the chief asked her: "But are you here to be a partisan or *a whore*?"[688] Interestingly, in Greek narrations and stories, Thyella was rumoured to be a whore, which further manifests the prevailing perception of women in the mountains as 'immoral'. For instance, Vervenioti recalls hearing that rumour in her interview with Beikou, with the latter denying it, although confirming that she was an 'ambiguous' personality without providing more detail on what was so ambiguous about her.[689]

This sexualisation pattern was evident in the final parades marking the partisan victory in Italy. In Milan, one woman remembers that people insisted that women should wear armbands to signify their role as nurses and not as partisans. In Turin, women who had participated in the Garibaldi brigades were not allowed to march in these parades out of fear that people would think of them as 'prostitutes'.[690] In the same pattern, in France, in the maquis, even women who assumed the acceptable role of nurse were considered outside of their "rightful" place and a moral judgment was passed upon them. As Élisabeth Rioux Quintenelle mentions in her memoirs about her joining the maquis as a nurse: "I was there, I was a nurse, so I might as well show what I could do. The locals looked at me with bewildered eyes at first: "What is this girl doing, is she a soldier's wife?"[691] This also enhances the points made earlier about women's 'entrance' into the mountains/where partisans operated by following husbands. In Greece, Leventoaikaterini, from Crete, was a widow with four children. When she expressed her desire to carry a gun along with her duties

[687] Elshtain, *Women and War*, 173. See also Yuval-Davis, *Gender & Nation*, 94.
[688] Cited Tobagi, *La Resistenza delle Donne*, 126. Originally: Mirella Alloisio, and Giuliana Beltrami Gadola, *Volontarie della libertà* (Bertoni, 2022), 141.
[689] Interview of Maria Beikou to Tasoula Vervenioti.
[690] Behan, *The Italian Resistance*, 174.
[691] Quintenelle, *La guerre sans arme*, 63.

of feeding the *antartes* (by playing a dual role, both of an armed partisan and the person who takes care of them), an elderly man from the village told her to stay with her children, hinting that this is her job and not carrying a gun.[692] The questioning of a woman's morality penetrated various activities outside her traditional roles, especially in Greece's case. Reze also recalls in her 1994 memoirs the reaction of her mother when she told her about her wish to get involved in the youth organisation of EAM, EPON: "She understood as much as possible, thought for a moment, shook her head and said: "That's all really good and sacred (kala kai agia), my child but this is a men's business, inside your house do whatever you can, outside the door don't and *get a name* (sou vgaloun kana onoma)[693], my child."[694] Equally, in her interview with Vervenioti, the female partisan Maria Beikou from Evvoia, Greece, who was a member of EPON and later fought in ELAS recalls about women joining EPON:

> [T.V]-You said it was a mixed team. What was the ratio? Did the girls come easily?
>
> [M.B]- No
>
> [T.V]- What made it difficult for them?
>
> [M.B]-It was difficult in a provincial town, especially in the countryside, it was very difficult to get out. Because if you got a name.., you had to break *that thing*..[695]

Rosemonde Pujol also recalls how she was refused embarkation in a boat when she tried to reach Britain to join the Free France forces in the early days of the occupation: "We don't want to put you at risk. Risks are good for men!"[696] The army was considered a man's domain.

Therefore, especially when women transgressed the gender order by becoming a partisan, they did so by entering a new bargain, this time within the resistance organisations. For the female partisan to become accepted, strict rules were imposed on her behaviour. Here, I follow Käser's line of argument regarding Kurdish female fighters.[697] This acceptance of the transgression was both contained and regulated through the prohibition of romantic relationships between the partisans and exemplary behaviour from

---

[692] Κίνηση «Η Γυναίκα της Αντίστασης», *Γυναίκες στην Αντίσταση,* 26.
[693]In Greek, to sum up the notion of honour and how important is what the people say, there is a saying: Better your eye goes out than your name (Καλύτερα να σου βγει το όνομα, παρά το μάτι). Get a name (mou vgainei to onoma) can be explained with the English proverb "Give a dog a bad name and hang him."
[694] Φούκα-Ρέζε*, Οργισμένα Χρόνια,* 172.
[695] That 'thing' refers to the social control system of 'honour' that governed inter-sex relationships in 1940s Greece. Italics my own. Source: Interview of Maria Beikou to Tasoula Vervenioti.
[696] Pujol, *Nom de guerre Colinette 1941-1944*, 13.

[697] Käser, *The Kurdish Women's Freedom Movement*, 24-25.

these women was expected. Indeed, this was particularly the case for Greece, where the social contract of honour remained powerful. Indeed, prior to the 1920s, women were generally restricted to the home milieu without the right to work, with little access to education, political engagement, or economic freedom, which influenced also their perceptions about their position in society.[698] Vervenioti argues that ELAS had undertaken the obligation of guarding or restoring national honour. [699] In practice, this was translated into the 'policing' of female partisans and their sexuality. For instance, as Poulos writes, romantic sentiments between recruits were forbidden, and even a misplaced word was punished austerely.[700] Either as an object of regulation and close control or as a space of violation, women's sexuality was key to the negotiations regarding women's participation in the partisan struggle.[701] Giorgos Kotzioulas, a member of ELAS responsible, recalls that the *antartes* had to give the best impression possible and it was something that the movement paid special attention to that: "Special attention was paid to this [good behaviour] because the reactionaries were always presenting the revolutionaries as flouters of the family, polemic of ethics. We have to show the people of the countryside that all this was slander and the *antartes* rise to the occasion (stekontai sto upsos tous). They had come to strengthen these institutions, not to abolish them."[702] In the same pattern, in Italy, the women's presence in the male-dominated partisan formations is addressed in a circular issued by the Belluno Pisacane Brigade Group: "Attention should be drawn to the morality and seriousness of these women, and, on the other hand, we must also monitor the behavior of the Garibaldini towards our female comrades."[703]

In the context of the partisan struggle, any heterosexual love arising from the interaction between the partisans had to be repudiated to focus on the resistance. In Italy, for instance, Sega cites the love affair between Gianna and Mario Lizzero, who fell in love during the resistance: "We had these relationships, this deep love, but in such a conspiratorial way that few people knew."[704] Therefore, this prior sexualisation of women who cross the boundaries of what is perceived as man's domain was settled by imposing on the women

[698] Vervenioti in the first chapter of her book about women in the resistance explores the situation of women (various aspects of it) in the Interwar period, exploring also the changes taking place vis-à-vis their condition at the time: Βερβενιώτη, *Η γυναίκα της Αντίστασης*, 19-66.
[699] Cited in Poulos, *Arms and the Woman*, 187.
[700] Ibid.
[701] Hilal Alkan, "The Sexual Politics of War: Reading the Kurdish Conflict Through Images of Women," *Les cahiers du CEDREF* 22 (2018): 73.
[702] Γιώργος Κοτζιουλάς, *Όταν Ήμουν με τον Άρη: Αναμνήσεις και Μαρτυρίες* (Αθήνα: Εκδόσεις Δρόμων, 2015), 122.
[703] Cited in Sega, "Essere donna nell' esercito di Liberazione," in *Resistenza,* 123.
[704] Cited in Ibid, 129.

clear boundaries of modesty and morality.[705] In ELAS, the exemplary conduct of women partisans, who were mostly young women of a marriageable age, is regularly highlighted in wartime Greek publications to appease any concerns regarding their behaviour:

> The *exemplary* squad of women partisans (antartisson) of Roumeli was formed. The willingness of the women of our region to join ELAS exceeded all our predictions. From all over, we have partisans coming to us, from Mesologgi, Xeromero, Agrinio, Domoko, Euboea, Lamia, etc. All of them, disciplined, are performing their duties (guarding the post in an exemplary manner) and diligently attending classes.[706]

Nevertheless, this figure of female partisan does not solely exist as an identity in extremis; its very existence serves other non-military purposes. In the context of the resistance and war, their *hors-de-norme* figure became a source of propaganda and, in the case of communist/socialist movements, a symbol of renewal and revolution.

6.3. The Image of Female Partisan as Propaganda

The various images of female partisans that emerged during the war were also used as a propaganda tool. In patriarchal societies where the social and cultural contract of honour regulated relationships between women and men, the image of female partisans was indeed used as a propaganda tool to mobilise men by "shaming" them for leaving it to women to do their duty. Mary Nash's analysis of the 'miliciana' image and its symbolism during the Spanish Civil War (1936-1939) also provides a complex reasoning behind this popular image, which can apply to the figure of the female partisan in the resistance:

> In the initial stages of the Civil War, the innovative imagery of the *miliciana* appears as a break with former models of norms and social roles for women. Nonetheless, a further analysis which takes both imagery and social reality into account, points to the non-representativity of this new model of woman soldier common in the early weeks of the war. She does not appear to represent a genuine new female prototype but is rather a symbol of war and revolution not necessarily destined to be a real model for other women. The model projected is not that of a 'new woman' who arises from the socio-political context but rather one designed to fill the needs of the war. Neither can it be considered a mirror of reality or a sign of female incorporation into military resistance at the fronts.[707]

Nash continues by explaining how the image of *miliciana* was not directed towards a female audience but rather tended to be directed to men: "She represented a woman who had an impact, who provoked because she took on what was considered to be a male role and thus

[705] Alkan, "The Sexual Politics of War," 74.
[706] 'Οι Αντάρτισσές μας', Ρουμελιώτισσα: Όργανο της Επιτροπής ΕΑΜ της Περιοχής Στερεάς, Ιούλιος 30, 1944, φύλλο 2, σ.2, Αρχείο Σύγχρονης Κοινωνικής Ιστορίας, Αθήνα.
[707] Mary Nash, "'Milicianas' and Homefront Heroines: Images of Women in Revolutionary Spain (1936–1939)," *History of European Ideas* 11, no. 1–6 (1989): 238, doi:10.1016/0191-6599(89)90212-X.

obliged men to fulfil what was at times described as their 'virile' role as soldiers."[708] Vervenioti notes that the participation of women in ELAS in Greece served internal propaganda needs by provoking understandings of masculine honour in order to mobilise more men to join. A detailed examination of the female fighter in ELAS reveals that this new replica of a woman fighter was far from typical and was not intended for a feminine audience but rather served as a vehicle for a message intended for males, inspiring them to fulfil their responsibilities in the anti-fascist battle.[709]

Based on the above, these images of female partisans with guns over their shoulders were used to mobilise in the resistance as a struggle more broadly by following their duties through a gendered trajectory. Within the context of communist and socialist resistance movements whose aim did not concern solely liberation from the occupier but also to change their respective post-war societies, the potent images of female partisans, including the ones mentioned earlier, represented the very notion of a new society, a break with the past and the pre-war defeatist societies. It was produced as an instrumentalisation of the notion of 'new woman' already invoked in the 1930s, this time breaking even more with the past, altered for the purposes of war and resistance. Indeed, as Polymeris Voglis argues, the resistance was also a form of revolt against the past, a catharsis to the defeat and humiliation, signifying the rebirth of the 'nation' following the war.[710] Representing the utopias promised by the revolution, the image of revolutionary woman became prevalent as an imagined *topos*. These female symbols possessed characteristics highly desirable or near perfect, but these images acted as symbols used to invoke the imaginary. Its materialisation concerned the building of a better society rather than a total break from her. This symbolic purpose of women as *par excellence* the personification of revolution for the purposes of war, and particularly in revolutionary wars, was not restricted in the context of the resistance and has become evident in other revolutionary struggles and the popular images associated with them; the prominent Palestinian revolutionary Leila Khaled was seen as a "pin-up of Palestinian armed struggle in the 1960s/1970s", the "icon of the Palestinian revolution";[711] the potent images of women of the Algerian *Front de libération nationale (*FLN – National Liberation Front), Zohra Drif, Djamila Bouhired; Major Ana Maria of the *Ejercito Zapatista de Liberacion Nacional (*EZLN - Zapatista Army of National Liberation); the various images

[708] Nash, "Milicianas' and Homefront Heroines," 238.
[709] Βερβενιώτη, *Η γυναίκα της Αντίστασης,* 316, 330.
[710] Πολυμέρης Βόγλης, *Δυναμική Αντίσταση: Υποκειμενικότητα, Πολιτική Βία και αντιδικτατορικός Αγώνας 1967- 1974* (Αθήνα: Εκδόσεις Αλεξάνδρεια, 2022), 26.
[711] This is how she is referred to in some outlets; Katharine Viner, "I made the ring from a bullet and the pin of a hand grenade," *The Guardian*, January 26, 2001, https://www.theguardian.com/world/2001/jan/26/israel; Sarah Irving, Leila Khaled: The Icon of the Palestinian Revolution (Pluto Press, 2012).

of Kurdish female fighters, and many more who became symbols of revolution and change. These female-centred images continue to invoke the spirit of the revolution beyond national borders. Hence, in line with Agata Lisiak, who has argued that "revolutionary images centred on women, both real-life and fictional, belong to what Ariella Azoulay calls the "language of revolution","[712] I too understand the imaginary of female partisans as a source of revolutionary aspiration within the resistance context.

In the context of the 1940s, this further becomes evident with the very instrumentalisation of the image of Yugoslavian and Soviet female partisans for propaganda purposes. In all three countries, Soviet and Yugoslavian female partisans are praised in the clandestine press and women in Greece, Italy, and France are called upon to mimic their Soviet and Yugoslavian sisters who fight the enemy with a gun in their hand. In a 1944 edition of the *Ecole Laique*, a newspaper affiliated with the Front National, it is mentioned that "in the USSR, women are covered in glory fighting alongside the partisans. *The French women can also be as courageous as the Soviet women*. Many (of them) have already proved that, and the teachers too have already proved that dying heroically under the Nazi bullets."[713] In the same pattern, in Greece, tales of female military heroism in Yugoslavia and the Soviet Union fuelled the discussion about women's participation in the resistance. *Women's Action* wrote a piece in February 1943 honouring the "legendary heroines of Belgrade, Varia Dravas and Vera, a military commander, who, at twenty, had fallen heroically during a defence operation."[714] The report also underlined that women made up about forty percent of Montenegro's guerrilla forces. A young Yugoslavian fighter earned a warm reception and extensive attention in the clandestine press for her speech at the Pan-Thessalian Conference of EPON in July 1943. Following her speech, all the women in the Karditsa region were urged to take inspiration from and heed the example, as exemplified in the newspapers *Floga tis Neolaias* (Flame of Youth) on August 31, 1943 and *Foni tou EAM* (Voice of EAM) on July 21, 1943.[715] In the Italian newspaper P*artigiano*, a clandestine newspaper established in the summer of 1944 under the initiative of Anton Ukmar 'Miro', a member of the Ligurian Unified Military Command and commander of the VI Operational Zone, an article was published in 1944 dedicated to women. In the article, a photograph of Soviet female partisans is published, along with the following caption: "Russian women

[712] Agata Lisiak, "Women in Recent Revolutionary Iconography**,"** *IWM Junior Visiting Fellows' Conference Proceedings*, Vol. XXXIII (2014): 1, https://files.iwm.at/jvfc/33_2_Lisiak.pdf.
[713] 'L'Heure de la Décision', *L'École laïque : Organe du Front National de l'enseignement Primaire*, Mai-Juin 1944, no. 27, p.1, Bibliothèque nationale de France, département Réserve des livres rares, RES-G-1470 (101), accessed September 29, 2022, http://catalogue.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/cb32764425h.
[714] Cited in Poulos, *Arms and the Woman*, 176-177.
[715] Cited in Ibid, 176-177.

partisans with weapons often taken from the Germans themselves, fought behind the White Russian front, a true guerrilla warfare in defence of their collective farms."[716] Yet this call-to-action by following the example of Soviet and Yugoslavian women in clandestine publications served more as propaganda to motivate women to join the struggle through a mirroring effect, as an inspiration to join the struggle, rather than actually urging them to participate in combat. The use of Yugoslavian and Soviet partisans in the context of communist/socialist resistance movements equally acts as a symbol of inspiration reimagining a new society, where the liberated woman prefigures a new world. Particularly for the Soviet Union, where the revolution materialised, the figure of the Soviet female partisan acts as a symbol of revolution, reflecting on women's changing roles in society as liberated woman.

At the same time, these female partisans were presented in such way to coincide with socially accepted notions of femininity and masculinity. Indeed, the female partisans who seem to participate in actual combat are disguised with male or even in military clothing. A Titika Panayiotidou photo taken in August 1944 in the mountains shows a girl holding a gun in a military uniform that has little or no difference from a men's one. Similarly, looking at Polizzi's photo, one distinguishes a woman in man's clothing posing for her portrait to be taken, camouflaging this identity in extremis through a manly disguise. As shown above, French partisan Nicole also appears in more unisex clothing, wearing a button-up shirt and what seems like a Bermuda shorts. As the next part will demonstrate, the female partisan figure represents a new gendered life.[717]

[716] Valentino Marafini, 'Donne Partigiane', Il Partigiano: Settimanale Politico dei Partigiani della Libertà, Roma, Febbraio 9, 1944, no. 1, p. 4., Unione Femminile Nazionale, Milano.
[717] Butler, *Notes Toward a Performative Theory of Assembly*, 64.

Figure 4 Laura Polizzi on July 13, 1944. Source: Il Centro Studi Movimenti

Figure 5 Titika Geldi Panayiotidou photographed in August 1944 by Spyros Meletzis

6.3. Queering the Partisans: New Gendered Selves

These *femmes* that broke the combat taboo were seen as an exception to the rule, and from the expected feminine behaviour and roles.[718] Regarding the labour division in the resistance, Andrieu has argued that the gender division of roles was not drawn between men and women but between males and male women on the one side and "pure women" on the other.[719] Enloe points out how women are sidelined in such contests of power unless they can sufficiently wrap themselves in a certain masculinised style of speech and conduct, despite being mocked as "unfeminine".[720] This demonstrates how 'the female partisan' existed within a space between, deconstructing the gender binary while also existing within its limitations.

Judith Butler argues that sex is a regulatory ideal and its materialisation happens through highly regulated practices. This process of materialisation is what produces the boundary.[721] This materialisation, according to Butler, is never complete, and therefore, it further needs a reiteration of those norms. Indeed, this demonstrates that bodies never

[718] Schwartz, "Résistance et Différence Des Sexes," 74.
[719] Andrieu, "Women in the French Resistance," 24.
[720] Enloe, *Bananas, Beaches and Bases*, 52.
[721] Butler, *Bodies that Matter,* 1-2, 9.

comply with the norms "by which their materialisation is impelled."[722] In the case of instabilities, where there is a possibility of rematerialisation, the regulatory law can be turned against itself and re-articulate, calling into question the hegemonic context in which it operates.[723]Building on that, those women who, in wartime, moved away from the internalised, dominant ideas of what it meant to be a woman called into question the hegemonic context they operated within. Hence, to come to terms with the rare image of the woman fighter, the small minority of women assumed that role were seen as acquiring masculine qualities, from physical courage to verbal violence, characteristics *par excellence* attributed to men.[724] As Butler argues in regard to how gender can be 'affected', and therefore change/adapt: "…this condition of being affected is also where something queer can happen, where the norm is refused or revised, or a new formulation of gender begin."[725] Women partisans refused or temporarily revised the gender norms and the gender 'ideals' of their time, entering what seemed like a queer in-between, or as Butler calls it "a new form(s) of gendered life."[726]In her essay about the Lesbian Phallus, Butler argues that "a desire that is produced historically at the crossroads" of the prohibitions produced by the feminine/masculine binarism, secured through heterosexual presumption, and hence, "it is never fully free of the normative demands that condition its possibility."[727] This can be useful in understanding the transgression of female partisans. The latter, even though they tried to move away from the strict gender binary, were never free of the binary that allowed their transgression. Their existence represented a new form of gendered life. These women combatants existed at a crossroads, in an in-between space, bound by the hegemonic context characterised by this binarism.[728]

This queerness, where the female partisan as an identity does not fit the established ideas about gender, is evident from various sources. In the battle of Makrakomi on October 6, 1943, according to Flegga's testimony, Thyella is cited as transferring twenty-four injured men while heading back to the base of operations.[729] Thyella was perceived by Nafsika as equal and even braver than the other male fighters. In a firefight between ELAS and the Germans, Nafsika recalls searching for Thyella to feel safe instead of a male

[722] Ibid, 2.
[723] Ibid.
[724] Lacour-Astol, *Le genre de la Résistance,* 160.
[725] Butler, *Notes Toward a Performative Theory of Assembly*, 64.
[726] Ibid, 64.
[727] Butler, *Bodies that Matter*, 86.
[728] It is worth mentioning that this binarism did not affect only the women who assumed *hors de norme* roles but also the women who demonstrated characteristics usually attributed to men. Bravery was seen as a characteristic of a hegemonic masculinity rather than something a woman can have, and courageous women were portrayed as men or stripped by accounts of their feminine self.
[729] *Κίνηση «*Η Γυναίκα της Αντίστασης», *Γυναίκες στην Αντίσταση*, 130.

fighter.[730] Flegga's choice further manifests Andrieu's argument that the divisive line was drawn between men and male women on one side, and pure women on the other. Flegga represents the feminine, the pure woman, while Thyella acquires qualities attributed to men, such as courage in battle. Entering what is conceived as a male's domain happened simultaneously with the erasure of accounts of her feminine self, disassociating herself with women's expected place and behaviour. This queerness comes in certain cases with a sort of sexlessness, with women being deprived of their biological (female) sex. In Italy, Anna Cinanni was admonished by her brother to keep in mind that while fighting, she was *not a woman* but a communist (*neutral*) fighting for the *Resistenza*.[731] Anita Malavasi, while a *staffetta* for the Garibaldi brigades, was told: "You are not a man, nor a woman, *you are a partisan*."[732] The partisan Modesta Rossi, known as Tuska, when she demonstrated "the courage" to follow the male partisans in a brothel, the latter reiterated this mantra: "She is not a woman, she is a partisan."[733] The deprivation of a female partisan's femininity takes place by the enemy's side as well: On September 17, 1944, Rita Rosani participates in an attack and her partisan group is surrounded and attacked by Black Brigade members. When her companions decide to retreat, Rita stays there and continues to shoot. When she ends up being caught by a Black Brigade soldier, she kills her with a shot in the head. When they ask her killer why he killed a wounded woman, he replies: "It wasn't a woman, it was a bandit."[734] This deprivation of their femininity, either in terms of an imposed queerness or sexlessness, was seen as necessary by both men and women in order to make acceptable the uncomfortable image of a woman-fighter who did not conform to the dominant gender norms of the time.

Indeed, women even 'masculinised' themselves to fit in by adopting masculine attitudes.[735] The "unwomanly" comportment of the female partisans who got involved in shootings and killings is highlighted in several sources. In a 1989 interview with Paula Schwartz, "Claude",[736] a female liaison officer in an underground group she had participated in attacks, remembers: "I am a man ... if I smoke and drink today, it's because I picked up these habits in the Resistance. By working with men, I became like them."[737] In the same

[730] Ibid, 128.
[731] Slaughter, *Women and the Italian Resistance*, 2.
[732] Tobagi, *La Resistenza delle Donne*, 129.
[733] Ibid, 186.
[734] Cited in Sega, "Essere donna nell' esercito di Liberazione," in *Resistenza,* 130.
[735]Tsjeard Bouta, and Georg Frerks, *Gender, Conflict, and Development* (Washington, DC: World Bank, 2005), 16.
[736] Paula Schwartz uses a code name here to ensure the anonymity of her interviewee. For more: Paula Schwartz: "Partisanes and Gender Politics in Vichy France," 131, footnote 11.
[737] Cited in Capdevila, "La mobilisation des femmes dans la France combattante (1940-1945)," 9. Originally : Schwartz, "Partisanes and Gender Politics in Vichy France," 138.

pattern, Rosemonde Pujol provides in her resistance memoir a conversation with Andrée Dournee, where the latter affirms:[738] "André means man.[739] I was born a man. I'm finally going to be able to *really* fight a war."[740] In the same pattern, in her memoir, Lucie Aubrac looking back to the rescue of her husband Raymond Aubrac describes the need to disassociate herself from the wife and mother labels to avoid being perceived as weak: "They must not get into the habit of thinking of you as a wife who is overwhelmed by what happened (meaning Raymond's arrest by the Gestapo), a mother expecting a second child, a weak woman who has to be protected, who has to be spared."[741] In Italy, Elsa Oliva mentions in her 1974 memoir that she had to gain the respect of the partisans of the 2ª Brigata della Divisione Beltrami. She, therefore, decided to gather them all together in order "to explain that I must not be considered a woman by anyone but one of them (uno di loro)."[742] To be accepted, Oliva herself temporarily denies her feminine self.

In the same vein, Thyella did not perceive herself as a 'woman' when she was in battle, identifying more with men. During a military clash with the Germans, Flegga came across the firefight by chance while moving between nurseries established in North Greece. Thyella, seeing Nafsika in the battlefront, asked her what she was doing there: "What are *you* (*a woman*) doing here? You cannot see that there is a war going on?[743] Thyella separates herself from the majority of women whose place is not in war and battle, exceptionalising herself by denying her feminine self temporarily during her partisan activities. Indeed, in many cases, to highlight the exceptionalism of the woman fighter, when women partisans in combat roles are mentioned, this is done within a comparative framework with the great majority that follows a gendered trajectory.

This queerness of female partisan, "queer as being about the self that is at odds with everything around it and that has to invent and create and find a place to speak and to thrive

[738] Pujol in Annex 5 of her book cites Andrée Dourne's work, where she used only her former pseudonym Jean-Marie, entitled *Croquis aux trois couleurs* published in 1959. There, Dourne recalls these role-playing games in the different situations where Pujol and Dourne could have been arrested by the Gestapo. As she mentions, 'Monsieur Georges' was one of the imaginary figures that they had an appointment with. This further manifests the performative in the roles of resistance. For more, Pujol, *Nom du Guerre,* 176.
[739] The name 'Andre/André' means man, warrior and derives from the Greek male name Andreas (Ανδρέας). The noun 'andreia' (ανδρεία) means bravery.
[740] Italics my own. Pujol, *Nom du Guerre*, 27.
[741] Lucie Aubrac, *Outwitting the Gestapo*, trans. Konrad Bieber (University of Nebraska, 1993), 91.
[742] Elsa Oliva, *Ragazza Partigiana* (Firenze: La Nuova Italia, 1974), 24-25. It must be noted that despite her speech to the men of her brigade and her determination to deny her gendered self to be accepted and respected as one of them (men), she later mentions (p. 25): "I notice that many of the comrades suffer from the scabies, and I start treating them with great results." Therefore, she still holds a role conceived as destined for women.
[743] Translation: «Τι γυρεύεις εσύ εδώ; Δεν βλέπεις πως γίνεται πόλεμος; » Κίνηση «Η Γυναίκα της Αντίστασης», *Γυναίκες στην Αντίσταση*, 128.

and to live",[744] was manifested in the attribution of characteristics largely associated with men at the time. To fit the female into the 'male combatant' paradigm, this erasure of the feminine self took place simultaneously with the establishment of a new gendered self, which manifests itself also in women's clothing and overall appearance. For instance, one of the classes of the *Corps féminin de transmission* (CFT) had written a small text providing some rules for women, one of which "commands" women soldiers to keep their femininity: "All your life, woman soldier, *you will keep your femininity*."[745] This extract highlights the difficulty of accepting the female soldier due to the transgression of conventional codes of feminine appearance and behaviour. In a newspaper from *Ipeiros*, North Greece, a woman member of *Ethniki Allhlegguh* who transfers food to the partisans demonstrates how women and men partisans dress alike, a sort of female manpower: "I'd been assigned to bring food, medicine, woolly clothing. Five hours passed after we started (*our journey to the mountains)*. And what am I looking at? Three girls are with them (*the antartes*). Heroic girls who refused the silence of home, *dressed in military uniforms,* are also fighting for freedom."[746]

The uncomfortable image of the woman partisan was balanced by covering the female body through military clothing. Army clothing militarises the female body: the military uniform that is associated with discipline, with women expected to act accordingly while wearing it: "We had a feast when we wore the guerrilla uniform and the honourable colour of khaki. We were born partisans."[747] In another Greek newspaper: "Somewhere in Free Greece - proud and arched. Dressed in khaki *like a man*. With a bandolier double-breasted on her and the automatic assault rifle in hand. With a *leventiki* poise and an eagle eye. The type of the modern Greek female partisan."[748] As Louise Francezon argues vis-à-vis women's military uniforms of women recruits in Special Operations Executive (SOE), women's partisan clothing goes beyond the simple status of an object and can be understood as a creative practice that aims to create a new gendered identity. These military uniforms, largely made for men, betray the exclusion of the female from the military and show how women's bodies within it are still understood as an exception.[749] This exclusion is also articulated through a transfusion of male characterisations as articulated in the sources, since

[744] Cited in Louise Francezon, *L'espionne de la Seconde Guerre Mondiale : pratiques et représentations d'une "masculinisation" de la femme* (Presses universitaires de Rennes, 2024), 15.
[745] Capdevila, ''La mobilisation des femmes dans la France combattante (1940-1945),'' 9.
[746] "Ηρωϊδες Αντάρτισσες του 1943," Η Φωνή της Νέας, Φεβρουάριος 10, 1943, σ. 3, Εφημερίδες Οργανώσεων ΕΑΜ Νέων, Βιβλιοθήκη – Αρχείο Χαρίλαος Φλωράκης, Επιμορφωτικό Κέντρο ΚΚΕ.
[747] 'Μιλούν οι Αντάρτισσές μας για την Καινούρια Τιμημένη τους Ζωή', Συναγωνίστρια, αρ. φύλλου 3, Απρίλιος 12, 1944, Εφημερίδες Γυναικών, Βιβλιοθήκη – Αρχείο Χαρίλαος Φλωράκης, Επιμορφωτικό Κέντρο ΚΚΕ.
[748] 'Η Ελληνίδα στον Αγώνα', Ελεύθερη Ελλάδα, αρ. φύλλου 34, Γενάρης 1944. Αθήνα, Αρχείο Νέα Ελλάδα: Όργανο της Κ.Ε. του Ε.Α.Μ., Π1078, Εθνική Βιβλιοθήκη Ελλάδος.
[749] Francezon, *L'espionne de la Seconde Guerre Mondiale*, 98, 101.

language itself operates within this gendered binarism. The descriptions accompanying the female partisans highlight their manly appearance: "We pride ourselves on our uniform, our tunic, our *golf trousers*, our bicorne with the flag of our legendary ELAS, *our thick socks and boots that forced us to walk proudly* and let's just say it - *so manly* (*antrikia*)."[750] The exceptionalism and disguise of female partisans by placing them within an in-between queer space protected the femininity of the majority who assumed gender-specific roles, perceived as more "adequate" to the prevailed notion of femininity.

Conclusion

In sum, breaking the gender barrier by participating in combat operations was not the norm in the resistance and was not easily acceptable. Men did not want to see a woman assuming what was perceived as a man's job in a man's place, and women entering such spaces and socialising among men could be seen as a threat. Even within the front where partisan groups operated, two spaces existed. The first space was perceived as male, reserved for those who participated in combat, occupied by male combatants and very few female combatants. The second space was perceived as female, occupied by those who were responsible for the non-combat roles, including military logistics, nursing wounded combatants, and other roles close to the front, equally dangerous.[751] Due to the war and rupture it caused, a small minority was able to assume these perceived as male combat roles within the gendered space of the resistance, but their small number reinforced rather than dissolved the gendered binary of male combatants and female non-combatants. The idolisation of the small minority of women who participated in combat operations and the popularity they received due to their 'exceptionalism' further reinforced the idea that combat was exclusively for men.

The return of 'combat' as an exclusive male activity, when the war was almost decided, further emphasised the gendered contract of male-combatant/ female-non-combatant. The window of opportunity that opened for certain women due to the irregular nature of war closed. This need for returning to a sort of (gendered) normality becomes apparent in the sources. Both in Italy and France, women were to return to a sort of normalcy. This return to 'normality' was not the case for Greece, where the beginning of the Civil War saw many more women assuming the role of female soldier through the ranks of *Dimokratikos Stratos Ellados* (DSE - Democratic Army of Greece). For instance, in 1944, the increasing number of *antartisses* became evident in Crete, apart from North Greece,

[750] 'Μιλούν οι Αντάρτισσές μας για την Καινούρια Τιμημένη τους Ζωή', Συναγωνίστρια, αρ. φύλλου 3, Απρίλιος 12, 1944, Εφημερίδες Γυναικών, Βιβλιοθήκη – Αρχείο Χαρίλαος Φλωράκης, Επιμορφωτικό Κέντρο ΚΚΕ.
[751] Based on Ly, *Women of the Portuguese Guinea Liberation War,* 83.

which became the main battlefront during the Civil War. [752] Antonis Samoudakis mentions that ELAS sent nine *antartisses* in the mountains, including the popular *antartissa* Maria Spanogiannaki- Lagouvardou.[753] Samoudakis recalls that women in Crete started fighting side by side with men in the mountains during the Civil War and not earlier than that. Indeed, during the Civil War (1946-1949), the number of women partisans increased even more and especially in the last years of the Civil War in 1948 and 1949 before the defeat of the DSE. The requirement of fighters enabled women to become involved in combat operations, with many of them breaking even more with tradition and, from EAM liaison agents and couriers, they assumed the role of female fighter within the ranks of the communist-led DSE. While it goes beyond the scope of this thesis to examine the increase in numbers of female partisans in the ranks of DSE, this increase was also out of necessity as the communists needed as many fighters as possible.

[752]Αντώνης Κ. Σανουδάκης, *Χαρίκλειας Δραμουντάνη- Στεφανόγιαννη: Η Ανωγιανή Γυναίκα στην Αντίσταση* (Αθήνα: Ηράκλειο: Εκδόσεις Κνωσός, 2012), 5.
[753] Σανουδάκης, *Χαρίκλειας Δραμουντάνη- Στεφανόγιαννη*, 5.

Introduction

The discourse on memory is central to understanding these resignifications and contestations of the resistance as a past. There is a dialectic relationship between the present (that of the narration) and the past (that of the resistance), between what is conceived as a personal and as a public memory, and consequently, what is perceived publicly as relevant and important.[754] Memory is always located in a specific historical context, with political decisions made about what story is promoted, reformulated, or even silenced.[755] This is the case especially when it comes to women's role in the resistance, whose experience was downplayed in the aftermath of the war. Building on Mortimer, the gender division permeating the post-war story of resistance initially led to the assumption that only those who had experienced 'combat' had the authority to speak and write about the resistance.[756] Since most women did not engage in combat on the battlefield, this deprived them of legitimacy in the role of "the great war-story tellers" in the early years following the war.[757] Earlier in this thesis, I have also demonstrated how the notions of resistance and resisters shifted and became more inclusive to encompass the various activities that constituted 'resistance acts' after the end of the war during the 1970s, which facilitated the inclusion of women's resistance stories. At the time, the development of feminist movements challenged both political and academic spheres vis-à-vis its gendered subjects. This re-focus forced scholars to start applying gender concepts while also revisiting former analyses of the past.[758] The contestation of the 1970s revolved around who was entitled to talk about the resistance in the aftermath of the war and how these ideas of male-exclusive entitlement were contested in the 1970s to include women in the discourse. Narratives of events and the meanings attached to them always become subject to transformations.[759] As Norman Saadi Nikro argues, the past is "rather a restless series of experimentations with alternative forms

[754] Summerfield, *Reconstructing Women's Wartime Lives*, 2.
[755] Laleh Khalili, *Heroes and Martyrs of Palestine: The Politics of National Commemoration* (Cambridge University Press, 2007), 5.

[756] Mortimer, *Women Fight, Women Write,* 5.
[757] Ibid*,* 5.
[758] Aliou Ly, *Women of the Portuguese Guinea Liberation War: De-gendering the History of Anticolonial Struggle* (Zed Books, 2024), 13.

[759]Hodgkin, and Radstone, *Memory, History, Nation: Contested Pasts*, 23.

of structures of narrative, of remembering, of temporality, and of subjectivity and identity."[760]

This chapter will first examine the politics of memory briefly in each country, following a country-by-country chronological analysis, providing brief insights vis-à-vis gender and memory for each case. This context is necessary before examining the emergence of women's memories post-war through their writing. The different memories of the resistance in each country reflect debates about who had led the resistance, and who was recognised as a resister and worth memorialising after the war, and these debates influenced women's writing. These questions were closely connected, influenced and altered by contemporary politics and socio-cultural changes.[761] Jay Winter has understood this resignification of memories as a constant re-interpretation in the context of social debates that take place in the present, where this dynamic process leads to the co-existence of many hegemonic and marginal cultures of memory.[762] As Laleh Khalili has argued, stories transform a couple of experiences into meaningful narrative sequences, collate events, and place them in accordance not only based on the actuality of the events that have passed but also by taking into account the exigencies of the present, socio-political context in which the narrative has emerged.[763] Hence, any post-war research reflecting on the post-Second World War period should also consider the lasting aftereffects of the war on the three societies, directing the focus on "…the rubble -psychological, emotional, literal- from which they emerged."[764]

With the exception of a few wartime archival records and clandestine press, it is important to note that the variety of sources associated with women's resistance was also produced after the war, with an increasing number of sources appearing during and after the 1970s; personal memoirs, oral and written testimonies, and documentaries. This further manifests the centrality of memory discourse when examining women's resistance due to the nature of sources involved and their post-war production. Most women cited in the previous chapters narrated their resistance activities years later after the events, especially from the 1970s and onwards. These women recovered their resistance recollections,

[760] Norman Saadi Nikro, *The Fragmenting Force of Memory: Self, Literary Style and Civil War in Lebanon* (Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2012), 6.
[761] John Foot, *Italy's Divided Memory* (Basingstoke, Hampshire: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009), 148.
[762] Cited in Sylvia Paletschek and Sylvia Schraut, "Introduction: Gender and Memory Culture in Europe – Female Representations in Historical Perspective," in *The gender of memory,* 9.
[763] Khalili, *Heroes and Martyrs of Palestine,* 5.

[764] Frank Biess, "Introduction: Histories of the Aftermath," in *Histories of the Aftermath: The Legacies of the Second World War in Europe,* ed. Frank Biess, and Robert G. Moeller (New York: Oxford: Berghahn Books, 2010), 1.

becoming "conscious of an act sui generis by which we detach ourselves from the present in order to replace ourselves, first in the past in general, then in a certain region of the past – a work of adjustment, something like the focusing of a camera."[765]

So far, this thesis has examined the resistance *au féminin* in the context of an irregular war of liberation. However, to fully grasp the female resistance experience, we also need to examine the emergence of their memories, including their gender-specific aspects, within the broader context of post-war legacies and memories of resistance. This double reading will help examine how women's memories have been constructed post war, influenced by public and collective memory, counternarratives, and discursive shifts depending on their positionality as subjects who remember. How the politics of location influenced the politics of memory in each country given the different post-war politics in each country, and how this, in turn, influenced women's memories? Focusing specifically on women's post-war memoirs, before examining those post-war female personal accounts requires first an inquiry into the national memory context, which will illustrate how these ideological and cultural processes participate in the construction of (inter)personal, always gendered, selfhood.[766]

While the previous part of this thesis largely followed an integrated thematic approach, the different post-war context in each country favours a case-by-case approach for this chapter to better situate women's memories as well. The chronological approach structures the politics of memory into a series of periods that follow the main articulations of the resistance in each country.[767] While recognising that a strict distinction between different periods also poses several problems and oversimplifies a much more complex reality, it is the most adequate given the comparative nature of this study with three different case studies. For a wider analysis of the shifting memory politics after the war, I rely on existing scholarship in the field of memory in each country, providing the context upon which my double reading of memoirs will take place in the next chapter.

7.1. Cold War & Anticommunism

Prior to focusing on the different post-war paths, the broader Cold War context and its influence on the post-war legacy of communist resistance must be briefly examined. Despite

[765] Christine Quinan, "Postcolonial Memory and Masculinity in Algeria," *Interventions* 19, no. 1 (2017): 18, DOI: 10.1080/1369801X.2016.1142881.

[766] Valerie Anishchenkova, "Autobiography and Nation-Building: Constructing Personal Identity in the Postcolonial World," in *Autobiographical Identities in Contemporary Arab Culture* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2014), 38-39.

[767] The chronological approach was followed by Phillip Cooke in his book on the legacy of the Italian resistance, where he demonstrated that a genre-by-genre approach was less adequate. Cooke, *The Legacy of the Italian Resistance,* 4.

their differences, all three societies were caught up in the broader political constraints and incentives imposed by the Cold War, which influenced, in turn, the memory of the resistance. Within the Cold War context, as Maud Bracke argues, West European governments, including the victorious post-war right-wing Greek government, aligned themselves with 'Atlanticism' in its political, military, economic and cultural aspects and official discourses of the Second World War and the post-war resistance myths and narratives were influenced by this ideologically driven cleavage. This ideological cleavage and the positioning of Western countries led to a denial (in the case of Greece) or at least downplaying of the role in the resistance played by the radical left and the Soviet-aligned communist parties, given that in all three countries they represented the biggest resistance movements and could claim the post-war resistance legacies.[768] From their side, in France and Italy, the communists themselves downplayed the more radical aspects of their policies vis-à-vis the use of violent means to change the political system and promoted a view of the resistance as a movement that embodied the ideals of democratic renewal that had been proclaimed during the partisan war.[769] In Greece, this ideologically driven cleavage turned into a full-scale autonomous Civil War between 1946-1949, where the first 'battle' of the Cold War took place. As it will become evident throughout the next two chapters, this also resulted in more polarised memories than was the case in France or even Italy.

Within the Cold War context, the downplaying of communist resistance also affected women's memorialisation in all three countries. In Greece, the women resisters who participated in the communist-led EAM and later fought in the ranks of DSE were seen as traitors of the nation and their memories were excluded from the memory of the resistance. In Italy, the portrayal of the resistance through a broader antifascist lens that downplayed the communist/red resistance also affected how women were depicted in the post-war legacy of the resistance. Indeed, as Alano has argued, this viewpoint that women's activities of assistance to male partisans as relatively inferior was appropriate for Italy's right-wing parties, which built a collective memory of the *resistenza* that reinforced a paternalistic image of Italian society.[770] In the same pattern, in France, the downplaying of the communist/socialist/left-wing resistances through the construction of a Gaullist myth sidelined the participation of women in these left-wing movements in the internal resistance. These women who had mobilised in metropolitan France, assuming the risks that came along

[768] Maud Anne Bracke, "From Politics to Nostalgia: The Transformation of War Memories in France during the 1960s–1970s," *European History Quarterly* 41, no. 1 (2011): 8, DOI: 10.1177/0265691410386423
[769] Based upon Filippo Focardi, *La guerra della memoria: La Resistenza nel dibattito politico italiano dal 1945 a oggi* (Roma; Bari; Editori Laterza, 2005), 24.
[770] Alano, "Armed with a Yellow Mimosa," 616.

with their participation in various resistance activities, were sidelined in favour of a narrative that prioritised a more militatised version of the resistance, including de Gaulle's external resistance.

In practice, the post-war societies in Europe invented 'stories of resistance' based on their differing interests, ideologies, and exigencies of the present. As Henri Rousso argued in the 1990s, in France, as elsewhere in Europe, the history of the Second World War was conceived and written within *ad hoc* institutions under 'ambivalent' circumstances with the aim of creating a unifying myth of the resistance.[771] The three societies created multiple and changeable discourses within the historically specific constraints of "time and place and in mutual interaction with existing institutions and extant histories."[772] Memory shaped power constellations that differed in each society post-war.[773] In all three countries, after the war, both the post-war governments and people had to figure out how to move on from these conflicts and memory creation became an important instrument in achieving this goal.[774]

7.2. France and the Politics of Memory: From Universalism to Vichy Syndrome

In France, during and after the war, a myth was promoted that 'France had liberated itself.' This was the essence of the message by Charles de Gaulle following the liberation of Paris when he spoke in the Hotel de Ville on August 25, 1944.[775] De Gaulle and his *France libre* government-in-exile, while being geographically far from France, stated that the outcome was the product of a collective national effort.[776] According to this narrative, the events of August 1944 in Paris demonstrated that only a small number of collaborators had accepted the German occupation of France. Whereas Petain and the Vichy government had deceived many French citizens into believing they were acting in good faith, Paris, during the insurrection, demonstrated that the French were fervently committed to France, and they

[771] Henry Rousso, "De la résistance, du résistancialisme et des historiens," in L'engagement et l'émancipation : Ouvrage offert à Jacqueline Sainclivier (Rennes : Presses universitaires de Rennes, 2015), 311-315, DOI: https://doi.org/10.4000/books.pur.90663.
[772] Khalili, *Heroes and Martyrs of Palestine*, 39.

[773] Jan-Werner Müller, "Introduction: the power of memory, the memory of power and the power over memory," in *Memory and Power in Post-War Europe: Studies in the Presence of the Past*, ed. Jan-Werner Müller (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 2.

[774] Richard Ned Lebow, "The Memory of Politics in Postwar Europe," *in The Politics of Memory in Postwar Europe* (Duke University Press, 2006), 23.
[775] Rod Kedward, *The French Resistance and Its Legacy* (London: Bloomsbury Publishing Plc., 2022), 2.
[776] Avril Tynan, "Demythologizing de Gaulle: History as Myth and Myth as Hermeneutic in France after Vichy and Algerian Independence," *Nottingham French Studies* 61, no. 1 (2022): 4, Edinburgh University Press.

were ready to retake the battlefield to free her from the German invaders.[777] This post-war myth took the form of what Henri Rousso later termed *resistancialisme*, a process that sought, firstly, the marginalisation of what the Vichy regime was and the systematic undermining of its influence on French society, including its most negative aspects; and secondly, the construction of an object of memory, the 'Resistance', which went far beyond the algebraic sum of minorities that the Resistance fighters were. Third, the extension of this "Resistance" to the nation as a whole,[778] where the legacy of the resistance belonged superficially to the whole French nation. This meant that within that universalism, women's role in the resistance was acknowledged, even if their contribution was downplayed. Memorial acknowledgment was reserved for a few "exceptional" women, while most women who participated in the resistance, largely by following a gendered trajectory, assuming their traditional roles, were not seen as 'resisters' in the aftermath of the war. Even if certain women worked to uncover women's resistance, such as Elisabeth Terrenoire's work *Combattantes sans uniformes* (1946) or/and *Les Femmes héroïques de la Résistance, Bertie Albrecht et Danielle Casanova* by Louis Saurel (1945), historians did not pay much attention prior to the 1970s.[779] Indeed, the 'erasure' of women's resistance in the aftermath of the war became evident in the *Compagnons de la Libération*: women made up less than ten per cent of the *Médaillés de la Résistance*, and only 6 of the 1,038 *Compagnons de la Libération* were women.

Even in the first post-war years, the two primary myth makers and guardians of memory narratives of the resistance myth, the Gaullists, and the communists, began to have diverse memories regarding the resistance. While downplaying the errors of the Party in 1939-1940, the communists aimed to portray themselves as "the first Resistance fighters", with many accounts from its ranks rightly tracing this commitment back to the Spanish Civil War.[780] As Patricia Dogliani argues, the communists began to construct their own memory of the resistance distinct from that of the Gaullists; that of the 75.000 martyrs, of the "parti des fusillés", promoting the sacrifices of the communists' as compared to any other resistance movement: "It can be said that without the Communist

[777] Margaret Atack, "A nation united? The impossible memory of war and occupation in France," in *Remembering the Second World War*, ed. Patrick Finney (Routledge, London, 2017), 13.

[778] Rousso, "De la résistance, du résistancialisme et des historiens," 314-315.

[779] María Björg Kristjánsdóttir, "Les femmes et la Résistance: une histoire oubliée," Háskóli Íslands (University of Iceland), September 2010, 7, https://www.fondationresistance.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/05/Doc00143-1.pdf.

[780] Jean-Marie Guillon, "Le Peuple héros de la Résistance »? La représentation communiste des comportements collectifs," in *Images des comportements sous l'Occupation*, édité par Jacqueline Sainclivier et al. (Presses universitaires de Rennes, 2016) https://doi.org/10.4000/books.pur.46582.

Party, the Party of the Martyrs, there would have been no real French Resistance."[781] The Gaullists could not assume the same number of communist martyrs and their narratives focused on the external military resistance and the liberation of Paris.[782] The Gaullist myth of resistance promoted an impersonal rebellion, representing the whole French nation against the Nazi invader. This portrayal of the resistance as impersonal and universal diminished the contribution of the communist and left-wing resistance – including women participants, and simultaneously uplifted de Gaulle and the Free French forces, who had remained in exile for the longest time.

Nevertheless, De Gaulle had to include left-wing resisters and promote a generous and collective vision of the French resistance, given that the Free Forces, made up of colonists and exiles, could not equate the internal resistance and its martyrs, especially the martyrs of the communist resistance. As Richard Golsan explains, the need to balance this became evident from those elected to the Order of the Companions of the Liberation. Of the 1,036 new members, more than three-fourths were from the Free French Forces, and among those left out were Communist and leftist resistance *heroes* such as Raymond Aubrac, Pierre Villon, and Maurice Kriegel[783] – left-wing resisters who had already built their legacies and were more difficult to be side-lined in the impersonal and unified post-war resistance legacy. This was equally true for the few exceptional women whose stories of resistance were included in this unified myth of resistance, while the female red resistance was side-lined. Few women heroines were recognised for their contribution, such as Berty Albrecht, the co-founder of the Combat resistance group, and Laure Diebold, who had acted as a secretary for Jean Moulin. Both women were also among the *Compagnons de la Libération,* along with Marie Hackin, who participated in the organisation of the French Volunteer Corps (Free France), Marcelle Henry, who became involved in the *Forces Françaises Combattantes*, joining the *Bureau Central de Renseignements et d'Action* (B.C.R.A), Simone Michel-Lévy, from the PTT resistance, and Emilienne Moreau-Evrard, agent of the Brutus network.[784] On the contrary, left-wing resisters were side-lined compared to the women who became involved with the Free France and the Free French Forces. Lucie Aubrac was also one of the few "exceptional"

[781] Cited in Olivier Wieviorka, *Divided Memory: French Recollections of World War II from the Liberation to the Present,* trans. George Holoch (Standford University Press, 2012), 57.
[782] Patricia Dogliani, *Rappresentazione e memoria della Guerra in Italia e in Francia, in Storia e Memoria: la Seconda guerra mondiale nella costruzione della memoria europea* (Museo Storico in Trento, 2007), 200.
[783] Richard J. Golsan, "The Legacy of World War II in France: Mapping the Discourses of Memory," in *The Politics of Memory in Postwar Europe*, edited by Richard Ned Lebow, Wulf Kansteiner, and Claudio Fogu (Duke University Press, 2006), 78.

[784] "Six femmes sont Compagnon de Libération," *Ordre de la Libération*, n.d., https://www.ordredelaliberation.fr/fr/les-femmes-et-les-hommes-compagnon-de-la-liberation.

women whose resistance activity was recognised in the aftermath due to the popularity her story had attracted.

During Algeria's National War of Independence (1954-1962), referred to in France as the Algerian crisis,[785] the memory of resistance was reshaped to fit the contemporaneity of the war. Former resisters in favour of a colonial Algérie *française* laid claim in their new "struggle" to the legacy of wartime resistance against the Nazis, justifying the parallelization between the two struggles based on their suspicion towards the Algerian nationalists of having sought the support of the Third Reich during the Second World War.[786] On the opposite side, former left-wing resisters started to frame the decolonisation wars as a continuation of the struggle against the Nazis. Despite the distortion of the memory of the Dark Years from both sides to fit their differing narratives during decolonisation in Algeria, the validity and legitimacy of the resistance myth were confirmed by the fact that both sides laid claims on it.[787] While aware of the specific historical particularities, the supporters of Algerian independence situated their support for the Algerian cause as a continuation of their anti-fascist struggle, arguing that the war was undermining democratic structures and the 'phantom of fascism' was imminent. By making extensive use of torture towards the Algerian freedom fighters, the French army and the *Organisation armée secrète* (OAS - Secret Army Organisation) only strengthened the parallelism between the two 'wars of liberation'.[788] Those opposed to the French war in Algeria managed to convince the French public of the similarities between the Nazi occupation methods and the French vis-à-vis the FLN and their treatment of its fighters, invoking the memories of occupation to mobilise against the war.

As Martin Evants explains, clandestine work for the Algerian cause was also sourced from the memory of war, occupation, and resistance, with the latter being a formative experience and a moral example to follow to structure their motivations while working for the Algerian cause. [789] Therefore, the Second World War resistance acquired an afterlife that acted as a moral compass, providing the moral values through which the Algerian cause was understood and action was justified, further strengthening it, especially vis-à-vis its more radical spectrums. The resistance inspired not only those previously directly involved in the anti-Nazi activities -with the prominent example of Madeleine Riffaud who would go to

[785] The naming of events is also closely related to memory and claims surrounding the nature of conflicts. For imperial powers, national wars of independence or uprisings against colonialism are often framed as 'crises' or/and terrorism.
[786] Golsan, "The Legacy of World War II in France," in *The Politics of Memory in Postwar Europe,* 79-80.
[787] Ibid, 79-80.
[788] Wieviorka, *Divided Memory*, 84.
[789] Martin Evans, *Memory of Resistance: French Opposition to the Algerian War* (Bloomsbury, 1997), 32. See also, Wieviorka, *Divided Memory*, 39-40.

cover the anticolonial wars in Algeria at the time and, later on, Vietnam- but also a younger generation of activists who framed their political conscience as being influenced by a family member or someone they knew who had resisted the Nazi occupation. Even those who had no connection whatsoever with the resistance or a former resister, saw the resistance as an example, an inspiration, and they framed their involvement as an identification with the resistance tradition.[790]

The narrative of France as a nation of resisters was largely unchallenged until the late 1960s, as it served the interests of both the communists and the Gaullists. However, the May '68 revolts also impacted the resistance myth.[791] The post-war myth that portrayed the whole French nation as resisting against Nazism was challenged by young people who denounced this fabrication. The student movement had started in the first place to question the outdated education system and curriculum, but the demonstrations were directed at Gaullist power and all it symbolised, denouncing the fabricated narratives of the Second World War, and the silencing of uncomfortable memories in the public discourse, such as collaboration and the deportation of the Jews by the Vichy regime. The selective oblivion and silence concerning collaboration by their war-time generational parents came under fire.[792] However, while Henry Rousso argued that the May '68 strikes and protests challenged the resistance myth, Pierre Nora counterargued that May '68 did not constitute a deathblow to the resistance myth.[793] Instead, this younger generation denounced the elements that were not seen as radical enough and were portrayed as a treason of the 'true' resistance, while they revived its most radical, red, parts to frame and source their contemporary political actions. Indeed, as Bracke argues, the young protesters used the resistance as a revolutionary symbol rather than as solely a historical event. The protesters invested the resistance myth with a new, different and more radical interpretation, and this re-interpretation of the resistance was used against the generation who had created it, including former communist resisters whom the students did not consider radical enough.[794] At the same time, beginning from the late 1960s, in the midst of May '68, and throughout the 1970s, several feminist attempts to address the under-representation of women in

[790]Evans, *Memory of Resistance*, 40-41.
[791] Robert J.C Young examines the May '68 as an anticolonial revolt, focusing on the international context that influenced the events of May '68 in France. As he argues, in May 1966, when Mao launched the Cultural Revolution, promoting assaults on all types of traditional authority with the slogans "rebellion is justified" and "destroy the four olds" (culture, customs, ideas, and institutions). While the Cultural Revolution had an impact to the students globally at the time, the protests of 1968 were also characterised by a proletarian internationalism, ignited by the outbreak of the Tet Offensive in Vietnam, which commenced on January 30, 1968. See more: Robert J.C. Young, "May 1968: Anticolonial Revolution for a Decolonial Future," *Interventions* 23, no. 3 (2020): 432- 447, doi:10.1080/1369801X.2020.1843517.
[792] Golsan, "The Legacy of World War II in France," in *The Politics of Memory in Postwar Europe*, 80-81
[793] Cited in Ibid, 80-81.
[794] Bracke, "From Politics to Nostalgia," 13.

resistance historiography took place. Along with oral history, women's history developed at the time challenging the dominant discourse of resistance as solely male and military. As it became evident in the introduction examining the resistance historiography vis-à-vis women, women themselves started narrating their stories by participating in academic conferences, writing their memoirs, and giving interviews.

Yet the legacy of the resistance further came under attack during the 1970s and 1980s: as compared to the myth of France as a nation of resisters, what predominated at the time was the portrayal of a collaborationist France. This was demonstrated by documentaries such as *Le Chagrin et la pitié* (The Sorrow and the Pity) and, more importantly, *Français, si vous saviez*.[795] Henry's Rousso's book *Le Syndrome de Vichy*, published in 1987, reflected this need for a more accurate representation of the collaboration, resistance, occupation, and the memory of the Vichy regime vis-à-vis repression, especially towards the French Jewish population.[796] During the presidency of Valery Giscard d'Estaing (1974–1981), a phenomenon Rousso has referred to as *Giscardo-vichyisme* came to replace the previous myth of *resistancialisme*. His coming to power demonstrated how the resistance as a form of political legitimacy was side-lined, and dubious pasts became forgivable, as was the case with Valery Giscard d'Estaing's family record.[797]

Vis-à-vis women, Lucie Aubrac's story came to the spotlight at that time. Lucie Aubrac's post-war legacy is further examined here due to the popularity of her resistance story and persona during and after the war. Reid argues that Lucie Aubrac did not become the porte-parole of the Resistance in the 1950s and 1960s, when the myth of France as a nation of resisters was strong. As Reid rightly explains, Aubrac assumed this role only when this particular aspect of the resistance was questioned, and France was portrayed as a nation of non-resisters.[798] Following her husband's arrest, Lucie went to meet Klaus Barbie, claiming to be Raymond Aubrac's fiancée, stating he was named "Ermelin" (one of Raymond's aliases) and he was captured in a raid while seeing a doctor. Then Klaus Barbie informed her that her so-called father of her child would be executed as a member of the Resistance. Invoking the argument of the child's recognition, Aubrac was able to obtain permission to marry him before his execution, ostensibly to save her honour by legitimising the child with whom she was pregnant. When Raymond returned to jail after his fake

[795] Denis Peschanski, "Remembrance of the Second World War in France," *Chemins de Mémoire,* n.d., https://www.cheminsdememoire.gouv.fr/en/remembrance-second-world-war-france.
[796] The societal engagement with these issues influences, in turn, women's writing. London (born Élizabeth Ricol) engaged with the topic of antisemitism of the Vichy regime in her memoir. See more: London, *La Mégère de la rue Daguerre. Souvenirs de résistance,* 100.
[797] Bracke, "From Politics to Nostalgia," 19.
[798] Reid, "French Singularity, the Resistance and the Vichy Syndrome," 201-202.

wedding, he and fifteen other prisoners were liberated in an ambush by a commando squad commanded by Lucie, which attacked the truck he was in, killing six guards.[799] Post-war, Lucie Aubrac and her husband Raymond Aubrac came to the spotlight when the work of a Lyon-based journalist, Gérard Chauvy, author of several highly regarded books on Lyon during the war, tried to highlight the contradictions in their successive accounts regarding the resistance by comparing them with various sources from the period. The author tried to demythicise the Aubracs by arguing that Klaus Barbie, the head of Gestapo in Lyon who became known as the 'Butcher of Lyon' due to his torture methods towards Jews and members of the resistance, through his lawyer's testament Jacques Vergès , accused the Aubrac couple of working for him and betraying their comrades, including Jean Moulin.[800] The so-called "Aubrac affair" occupied considerable attention in the French press for over six months in 1997.[801] The accusation towards the Aubracs was eventually ruled out by a Paris court as false and the court decided to condemn Gérard Chauvy for his publication on the basis that he did not respect the social responsibility of the historian and the rules of deontology.[802] Despite the accusation being ruled out, the Aubracs decided to appear in front of a roundtable of historians organised by the left-wing newspaper *Libération*. The historians in attendance pointed out that both Raymond's and Lucie's testimonies included contradictions, despite the fact that none of them accepted the claim that Raymond Aubrac was an informant. As Susan Suleiman argues, the attention that the Aubrac affair gathered demonstrated that the resistance as a historical event continued to be present in France. The attention around the 'affair' showed that the writing of history is not as straightforward as it may seem, as it is deeply implicated in shaping social memory, and vice versa.[803]

Nevertheless, these discussions,[804] along with the emergence in power of Valéry Giscard d'Estaing, reflected the fact that, in 1980s France, resistance and collaboration were no longer viewed exclusively as ideologically driven, but also more of a chance and external circumstances. Michel Foucault supported this in an interview published in the *Cahiers du cinéma* in 1974. According to Foucault, the demise of Gaullism and the election of Valéry

---

[799] Ibid.

[800] Jean-Marie Guillon, "L'Affaire Aubrac, ou la dérive d'une certaine façon de faire l'histoire," *Modern & Contemporary France* 7, no. 1 (1999) : 90, DOI: 10.1080/09639489908456472.

[801] Susan Rubin Suleiman, "History, Heroism, and Narrative Desire: The "Aubrac Affair" and National Memory of the French Resistance," *South Central Review* 21, no. 1, Politics and Aesthetics of Memory (Spring, 2004): 54, https://www.jstor.org/stable/40039826.

[802] Juan Ramón Goberna Falque, "Límites y limitaciones de la historia: El "affaire" Aubrac," *Hispania Revista española de historia* 59, Núm. 203 (1999): 1105.

[803] Suleiman, "History, Heroism, and Narrative Desire," 55.

[804] In Greece, such discussions only recently started taking place, particularly through a newly published book: Μενέλαος Χαραλαμπίδης*, Οι Δωσίλογοί: Ένοπλη, πολιτική και οικονομική συνεργασία στα χρόνια της Κατοχής* (Αθήνα: Αλεξάνδρεια, 2023).

Giscard D'Estaing marked the end of the grand, ideologically driven narratives of the occupation previously promoted by Gaullists, most notably the myth of universal resistance of the French against Fascism, and by consequence, the small minority of collaborators.[805] Francois Mitterrand's rise to power in 1981 further demonstrated that the resistance as a source of legitimacy was obsolete. While Mitterrand's past as a civil servant for the Vichy regime until 1943 was the subject of significant media controversy throughout the presidential election campaign, ultimately it was not a barrier to his election. Political cleavages in French society were no longer based on competing interpretations of the Second World War to the extent that it had been the case following the war and up until the 1960s.[806] The resistance and the war became more or less depoliticised topics, with the resistance losing much of its revolutionary fervour as a template for action. This less politicised environment as compared to Italy and Greece, in turn, led in a less politicised writing of the resistance experience. Women who wrote their memories did so in order to re-write themselves back into the (resistance) history from a female perspective, because their (her)stories had been relegated as marginal to the male, dominant story. Indeed, as I will demonstrate in the next chapter, this rather depoliticised memory becomes even more evident when compared to Greek women, who wrote their memoirs with more urgency than their French counterparts.

7.3. Italy and the Politics of Memory: Confronting Fascism and Civil Strife

In Italy, the anti-fascist front, following its establishment in 1943, declared that Mussolini was the one who had betrayed the Italians, having imposed an unnatural alliance with Hitler's Germany, while opposed by the whole Italian nation.[807] The declaration by the leader of the Italian Communist Party, Palmiro Togliatti, was indicative of this. Togliatti condemned the alliance made by the Fascist regime with the country's "age-old enemy", the much "hated German". According to him, it was an alliance signed "without any consultation and without the consent of the Italian people, against all traditions and interests of the Italian nation."[808] Between 1943 and 1945, the war waged alongside the Allies was described as a war of national liberation supported by all but a few Italians. The Italians were portrayed as united. *Un popolo alla macchia* was the expression used by the communist leader Luigi Longo, one of the most important military commanders of the Resistance and future leader of the PCI.[809]

[805] Golsan, "The Legacy of World War II in France," in *The Politics of Memory in Postwar Europe,* 83.
[806] Bracke, "From Politics to Nostalgia," 21.
[807] Focardi, *La guerra della memoria, 5.*
[808] Cited in Ibid, 6. Originally: P. Togliatti, *Opere*, vol. V, *1944-1955*, a cura di L. Gruppi, Editori Riuniti, Roma 1984, pp. 176-77.

[809] Ibid, 7.

In Italy, a persuasive narrative was needed to justify this change of mind towards alliances, which prompted the construction of an antifascist myth as early as September 8, 1943.[810] Filippo Focardi cites how Vittoria Foa understood September 8: the latter was not to be seen as "… [it should be seen] "a moment of choice and recovery of the national identity betrayed by fascism."[811] This need for 'rebirth' needed the distancing from the Fascist twenty-year past, and the 'rediscovery' of what it meant to be Italian. [812] The need to navigate this fascist legacy meant that the nation's identity and the myth around it had to be rehabilitated and re-established.[813]

In 1945, as Phillip Cooke writes, the military side of the resistance was officially over and the construction of an antifascist myth continued to be formed in the post-war years.[814] Following the war, the post war dominant memory narrative of the left, including, but not limited to the PCI, emphasised the 'national character' of the resistance, which was portrayed as the struggle of almost the entire Italian population to liberate the country from the German invader, while its local collaborators, Fascist allies were only few in number. The figure of the 'bad German', who was capable of any atrocity against the civilian population, was contrasted with that of the good Italian.[815] The prevalence of patriotism in the left-wing resistance, also among women themselves, facilitated this post-war memory, which linked the nation, antifascism, and participation in the resistance as one struggle.

Nevertheless, as Paolo Pezzino suggests, the portrayal of the Italian resistance in an such inclusive way left in the darkness the intricacies of behaviour and social interactions that marked the daily experience of Italians throughout those years, including the experience of twenty-year long Fascism, and collaboration with the occupier – including those women who developed intimate relations with the occupiers.[816] Further, Foot introduces the notion of divided memory, where he points out that in contemporary Italian history, events have been interpreted in contrasting ways, where the facts themselves are often contested. This results in an absence of consensus over what happened, and contradicting stories and memories.[817] Ex-combatants of the fascist wars, partisans of different political affiliations

[810] Focardi, *La guerra della memoria*, 5.
[811] Cited in Ibid*,* 81.
[812] Ibid*,* 81.
[813]Fiona M. Stewart, "*Guerra civile*: experience, memory and contrasting histories of the Resistance in Italy," *Journal of Modern Italian Studies* 23, no. 3 (2018): 297, DOI: 10.1080/1354571X.2018.1459410.

[814] Cooke, *The Legacy of the Italian Resistance*, 8.
[815] See more: Focardi, "La memoria della guerra e il mito del «bravo italiano». Origine e affermazione di un autoritratto collettivo," *Italia Contemporanea* 220-221 (settembre-dicembre 2000): 393-99.
[816] Paolo Pezzino, "The Italian Resistance between history and memory," *Journal of Modern Italian Studies* 10, no. 4 (2005): 397.

[817] Foot, *Divided Memory*.

and different post-war visions, civilians with different involvement in the struggle after September 8, Salò fascists and collaborators, including women collaborators, had all experienced war differently, and hence, held different and even competing memories of it. Yet due to the need for national rebuilding following the war, the previous social and political cleavages and the civil strife in the north were side-lined in favour of a resistance myth and disruptive historical events that may have split the country and threatened its democratic transition were side-lined.[818] Hence, an antifascist resistance memory was constructed, excluding those who fought with Mussolini's fascist army and, following the armistice, for the Republic of Salò or/and had collaborated with the occupiers, and their respective memories.

In post-war Italy, the communists were the main carriers of the resistance myth, with the Christian Democrat party (DC) being unable to counter this narrative effectively.[819] This was also reflected in women's post-war organisations which emerged following the resistance. UDI was founded in 1944-1945 in the midst of the war of liberation (and civil strife according to Pavone), which also worked to safeguard the memory of female resistance. UDI included communists, socialist and actionist women and later worked hard to preserve the memory of resistance by gathering personal testimonies. Yet Catholic women also founded their own organisation later on in March 1945, the *Centro italiano femminile* (CIF – Italian Women's Centre),[820] demonstrating also the different post-war visions vis-à-vis women. It goes beyond the scope of this thesis to examine how these two organisations promoted the memory of women's resistance differently and their points of contention based on their respective ideological cleavages, but the fixed identity markers vis-à-vis resistance affiliations (communist/catholic/socialist) were also promoted -consciously or even unconsciously- through these organisations post-war.

Following the fall of the governments of national unity in which it had participated in 1948, the PCI, forced by the new political cold-war climate, reaffirmed its close ties to the partisan movement and championed itself as a mass movement in which it took the lead during the resistance, in addition to viewing it as a unified experience.[821] Indeed, as Andrea Cossu writes, despite these efforts to establish its own memory culture, the party promoted the idea that the unity the anti-fascist forces discovered during the resistance had to be maintained at whatever cost, as it was the only option to prevent an authoritarian turn in

[818] Cooke, *The Legacy of the Italian Resistance*, 34.
[819] Focardi, *La guerra della memoria, 3.*
[820] Sega, "Essere donna nell' esercito di Liberazione," in *Resistenza,* 132-133.
[821] Andrea Cossu, "Commemoration and processes of appropriation: The Italian Communist Party and the Italian Resistance (1943–48)," *Memory Studies* 4, no. 4 (2011): 394.

Italian politics.[822] The re-appropriation of the unitary aspect of the resistance myth and its memorial afterlives became evident during the trial for defamation brought by the leader of the Italian resistance and member of the antifascist group *Giustizia e Libertà* and founder of the Action Party, Ferruccio Parri, in late 1953, against two neofascists journalists from the newspaper *'Meridiano d'Italia'*, Ugo Franzolin and Franco Maria Servello, who had accused him of betraying his comrades in the struggle. The trial demonstrated the broad anti-fascist solidarity around Parri, which ranged from Catholics to Communists, from socialists to liberal democrats. The broad antifascist solidarity shown towards Parri re-affirmed the antifascist liberation struggle as the basis for the legitimisation of the post-war democratic republic.[823]

Nevertheless, it was only in the 1960s that the resistance myth and its legitimacy as the foundation of post-war republican Italy were successfully established, which further accelerated with the coming to power of centre-left governments.[824] In 1962-1966, the year of the Fanfani government, important 'resistance' dates were celebrated, along with the twentieth anniversary. Contrary to the first decade when no official ceremony was celebrated, in 1963, the 'September 8' was saluted both as the end of a war waged against the will of the Italians, and as the birth of the resistance, and simultaneously, the re-birth of the Italian nation.[825] In 1966, social-democratic leader Giuseppe Saragat promoted this narrative of portraying Italians as victims of fascism that had started as early as 1943: "For the political leaders who pushed Italy and its heroic soldiers into a war from which the homeland could only come out the loser or lost."[826] Within the unifying myth of antifascist resistance, women were part of the resistance myth, but their role was perceived as inferior to that of men until the 1970s.

As an effect of May 68, the unifying idea of the resistance was attacked by a younger generation who felt that the real resistance was red, not tricolour, appropriating the more revolutionary elements of the resistance legacy.[827] For them, the resistance [was] "rossa, non è democristiana". As in France, students even attacked the former communist resisters for what they saw as 'treason' of the resistance (la resistenza taciuta) and its revolutionary spirit and for failing to transform the revolutionary fervour of the resistance into a communist revolution. In Italy, unlike France that experienced a relatively calm period following the

[822] Ibid, 393.
[823] Focardi, *La guerra della memoria*, 35-36.
[824] Ibid, 43.
[825] Ibid.
[826] Cited in Ibid, 45.
[827] Cooke, *The Legacy of the Italian Resistance*, 11.

May 68' protests, the resistance continued to be seen as a lost opportunity during the 1970s, and these young protesters saw a connection between the resistance fighters of 1943-1945 and their barricades against the police: "Ora e sempre resistenza," Stanno nascendo i nuovi partigiani," "Fascisti, padroni, per voi non c'è domani" were some among the slogans shouted in the protests.[828]

During the 1980s and 1990s, the notion of 'Civil War' appeared in Italian historiography with Claudio Pavone's book *A Civil War: A History of the Italian Resistance* (1991), where he highlighted the violence between Italians between 1943-1945.[829] Pavone's multi-layered approach vis-à-vis the resistance uncovered how the resistance within the broader context of the Second World War consisted of three separate, but interconnected wars: a civil war (Guerra civile), a class war (guerra di classe), and what he calls a patriotic war (Guerra patriottica).[830] The historian and former partisan Nuto Revelli rejected Pavone's classification of the resistance as a civil war, where Italians fought against Italians. As a counternarrative to the framing of the war as a civil strife, the Resistance was not, as Revelli counter-argued, "a civil war in the fullest sense of the term because the Fascists were foreigners to us, as much, if not more than the Germans."[831] Claudio Pavone responded that Revelli's framing of the war as a war against an external enemy in effect confirmed his claim of a civil war strife, since the latter wished to deprive Italian fascists of their national identity,[832] portraying them as 'traitors'/enemies of the nation.[833] Pavone also argued that

---

[828] Cited in Focardi, *La guerra della memoria*, 47, 49.
[829] Pavone, *A Civil War*.
[830] Claudio Pavone, "Premessa" in *Una Guerra Civile: Saggio storioco sula moralità nella Resistenza* (Torino: Bollati Boringhieri, 1991), xi. In an interview following the publication of his book, he explains his logic behind choosing the term 'guerra patriottica' instead of the term 'guerra di liberazione nazionale' – which resonates with his broader analysis. For more: Pavone, "Sulla moralità nella Resistenza: Conversazione con Claudio Pavone condotta da Daniele Borioli e Roberto Botta," *Quaderno di Storia Contemporanea numero*, n. 10 (1991):19-42.
[831] Cited in Stewart, "*Guerra civile*," 298.
[832] The logic behind Pavone's argument also resonates with the post-war portrayal of Greek communist resisters as 'Soviet spies' and 'traitors' by the right-wing government, a narrative used to downplay the notion of the civil war between 1946-1949, calling it instead S*ymmoritopolemos* (trans. Gang warfare).

[833] In the same pattern yet in the opposite direction, Stewart also argues that Revelli himself uses the formula 'partisans' positively as a synonym for Italian national identity, as a metonym for Italians, while equating the 'fascists' with the Germans/Nazis, which seems like depriving the *Italian* fascists of their national identity. Stewart does argue, however, that rather than concealing the identity of Italian fascists [and by extension Italians fighting Italians], Revelli focused on what he saw as his actual primary opponents, the Germans, while also this phrasing derived from his specific experience of not having encountered a single fascist in battle. See more: Stewart, *Guerra civile*, 300. This further demonstrates the importance of memory in shaping the narrative, including personal experience in shaping memory. In my opinion, the two functions are not necessarily exclusory; by focusing on the Germans as his primary opponents based on his experiential memory, Revelli downplays the civil war aspect by also denying the Italian fascists of their right to exist in the same memorial status as the antifascist partisans. For Ravelli, the resistance is not solely a war but a symbol of revolution, where his comrades die for the ideals of freedom. Indeed, as Stewart herself writes, Revelli himself has acknowledged that his reservations regarding Pavone's thesis concerns his rejection of equating the death of the partisans (a freedom fighter in his opinion) with the death of a fascist (a traitor).

"inherent in civil war itself is something that feeds the tendency to bury the memory of it."[834] This need to forget about civil strife violence or conceal the civil war aspects becomes evident in several other case studies, from the Greek Civil War 1946-1949 to the Lebanese Civil War 1975-1990, from the Angolan Civil War 1975-2002 to the Algerian Civil War 1991-2002 but also in the post-war memorialisation of civil war violence. While there are several monuments and museums memorialising wars of national liberation, national resistance movements and rebellions against foreign occupation, museums of modern civil wars are a rare occurrence.[835] This is closely associated with both the need to move forward as a society and to rebuild and, in the case of a decisive victor in the conflict, to deny any legitimacy to the defeated side -the case of Greece is an excellent example in this case. However, I argue that even if there is the tendency to bury the memory of civil strife in order to move forward as a society, individuals and groups continue to hold "their private memories from the war,"[836] even if polarisation is not comparable to the time of active fighting. In Italy, the memory of fascism is still political, with the memory of the resistance and antifascism existing as a political counter-memory to it.

The much more political nature of the resistance memory in Italy as compared to France becomes evident beyond the writing of memoirs. Post-war up until the present day, in Italy, contrary to France, the resistance myth continues to add value to the political mobilisation, especially of the left – as seen by the yearly demonstrations of thousands taking place each April 25. This becomes evident from the various projects and publications that emerge related to the resistance, from projects commemorating liberated cities to the hundreds of personal memoirs by former resisters that are published until today. When compared to Greece, where the resistance myth equally remains a crucial identity marker and heritage of the left, in Italy, the post-war state was formed based on the resistance as its foundational myth. In Greece, the communist defeat meant that the memory of the resistance

---

Cited in Stewart, "*Guerra civile*," 301, DOI: 10.1080/1354571X.2018.1459410. See also: Daniele Borioli, and Roberto Botta, "Sulla moralità nella Resistenza: Conversazione con Claudio Pavone," *Quaderno di Storia Contemporanea* 10 (1991): 19–42.

[834] Pavone, *A Civil War,* 272.

[835] Even if they exist, they primarily focus on memorialising the damage the violence inflicted in the nation, rather than on the conflicting and antagonistic memories of the different sides. An example is the Beit Beirut, formerly known as the Yellow House. Located on the former "green line" during the civil war, the Yellow House was a forward control post and sniper base during the civil war. In addition to its strategic location that separated East and West Beirut, the architecture of the Yellow House, with its transparency and varied shooting angles, was used for military purposes to control the surrounding area, known as the "Sodeco Crossroads" When you visit the museum, you can see the destruction of the building and the bullet marks while the exhibits are limited without any description provided. For more: Beit Beirut, https://www.beitbeirut.org/english/galleryen.html. At the same time, in both Greece and Italy there are museums of national resistance but no such thing as Civil War Museum(s).

[836] Sune Haugbolle, "Public and Private Memory of the Lebanese Civil War," *Comparative Studies of South Asia, Africa and the Middle East* 25, no. 1 (2005): 202.

of the communist-led National Liberation Front had to be erased from the post-Civil War state until the 1980s. However, in Italy as compared to Greece, **even if the left continues to be the main carrier of the resistance myth and legacy, there is also a broader antifascist dimension to the memory of resistance, which manifests itself in the production of memoirs by various actors. This collective antifascist resistance myth includes women from a broader political spectrum, from communist women to catholic ones**.[837]The former female resisters who write their memories did and do so in order to re-write themselves into the history of the resistance and provide their (her)stories, but for the case of Italy, they also demonstrate how this collective representation of the antifascist resistance exists as a counter memory to the memory of fascism, which is still very much present in Italian memory.[838]

7.4. Greece and the Politics of Memory: Memorial Absences and Returns

In Greece, the transition from the resistance to a full-scale civil war had long lasting implications for the resistance and its polarised memory, which Italy and France did not experience to the same extent. Unlike France, where a 'unifying myth' was constructed, only to be deconstructed later, and Italy, where such an attempt was made but it did not materialise to the same extent, especially following the fall of governments of National Unity, Greece was not in a position to produce such a myth post-war. It is interesting, however, to examine the inception of a unifying resistance myth in 1944. Following the liberation of Athens on October 18, 1944, the Prime Minister of the government of National Unity, Georgios Papandreou, gave a speech:

> The barbarians are now fleeing from the general allied victory and our national resistance... Our entire people have been a fighter for Freedom. There is certainly no other example of such universal resistance in occupied Europe... The entire Greek people have become worthy of the Patriot. With the passage of time, Peace the glorious saga of Albania, will be added to the myth of universal resistance.[839]

[837] For instance, I have examined the memoir of Ida D' Este (1953), who during her university studies was active in the *Federazione universitari cattolici* (FUCI- Federation of Catholic University Students) in Veneto, and after September 8, 1943, she became involved in *Azione cattolica* (Catholic Action), providing assistance to Italian soldiers held on ships in the port of Venice. Post war she organised the women's movement of Christian Democracy in the region. See more: Ida D' Este, Associazione Nazionale Partigiani d' Italia, https://www.anpi.it/biografia/ida-deste.

[838] The still politicised memory of Fascism and how it is intertwined with the memory of the resistance becomes evident from Guido Bartolini's article and the interventions by scholars on Italian memory: Guido Bartolini, "Past, present, and future of the Italian memory of Fascism. Interviews with Luisa Passerini, Filippo Focardi, John Foot, Robert Gordon, and Philip Cooke," *Modern Italy* 27 (2022): 303–325, doi:10.1017/mit.2022.30.

[839] Cited in Κουκή, "Από τον Πόλεμο στην Ειρήνη και από την Ειρήνη στον Πόλεμο (1944-1949)," σε Φυτίλη, Αυγερίδης, και Κουκή, *Η Δεύτερη Ζωή της Εθνικής Αντίστασης,* 43.

This statement made following the liberation of Athens demonstrates, as Vasco Martins argues, "how political memories and narratives can be shaped, silenced or adapted to fit a particular occasion."[840] In 1944, the whole Greek nation was to claim the resistance legacy. Yet, due to the failure of reconciliation in Greece, the memory of unity as professed by Papandreou during that initial moment was side-lined. Instead, the passing to a full-scale civil war led to competing narratives that impacted the resistance and its post-war legacy. Greece experienced a battle of conflicting narratives within the context of the Civil War (1946-1949), which were later transformed into conflicting memories.[841]

Furthermore, unlike France and Italy, the end of the Civil War meant that the former resisters of EAM were subjected to prosecution, imprisonment, and exile, which created a profound cleavage within Greek society and further prevented the construction of a 'universal' myth. The right-wing regime was authoritarian in nature, trying to assert its legitimacy in post-conflict Greek state, which had a particular impact on how the memory of the resistance was invoked. Richard Ned Lebow asserts that in authoritarian regimes, the victorious side attempts to enforce its own self-serving interpretations of the past while excluding any conflicting narratives, a type of hegemony that Berthold Molden notes "is built by prioritising some memories over others according to the specific power constellations of a given society."[842] Therefore, in the context of the Cold War, the post-war state framed the resistance as a two-front struggle, both against the occupying forces (1941-1945) and against communism. The right-wing state was portrayed as continuation of the great national struggle against the communist threat of 1946-1949.[843] Hence, in post-Civil War Greece, the legacy of 'resistance' became closely associated with anticommunism rather than antifascism, prioritising the memory of 'the resistance' against those perceived as traitors of the nation due to their communist beliefs. As Manos Avgeridis argues, the communist defeat and the exclusion of the biggest resistance movement from the post-war resistance narratives left a gap that no other resistance movement was able to fill.[844]

Resistance myths were used in both France and Italy as the criterion for legitimation of the post-war state, which was not the case in Greece. A similar unifying myth was unable

[840] Martins, "Hegemony, Resistance and Gradations of Memory," 87.
[841] The next part is largely based on my article about the memorialisation of the communist resistance fighter Ilektra Apostolou, although altered to fit the need of the broader spectrum of this part. For more: Chatzitheodorou, "Ilektra Apostolou," 22-51.
[842] Cited in Vasco Martins, "Hegemony, Resistance and Gradations of Memory: The Politics of Remembering Angola's Liberation Struggle," *History & Memory* 33, no. 2 (Fall/Winter 2021): 81, DOI: 10.2979/histmemo.33.2.04.
[843] Αυγερίδης, "Η Οριοθέτηση της Εθνικής Αντίστασης από τους Νικήτες του Εμφυλίου Πολέμου (1949-1967)," σε *Η Δεύτερη Ζωή της Εθνικής Αντίστασης*, 96
[844] Ibid.

to be constructed with the exclusion of EAM. Up until 1974, 'the collective' memory of the left-wing resistance was absent from Greek history, which was dominated by the narrative of 'national mindness'(ethnikofrosyni). National mindness was a concept around which official public discourse in Greece was organised from the civil war to the military dictatorship vis-à-vis the leftists. In the discourse, leftists were presented as people outside the national core and were described, among other things, as EAMobulgarians to deny them their Greekness. The discourse of national mindness influenced the narratives and memories produced in the post-civil war period, reframing the events that took place during the war and occupation from the perspective of the victors of the civil war and within a broader Western Cold War discourse.[845] Within this polarised political climate of Civil War and Cold War, women resisters who had fought in the ranks of EAM/ELAS/DSE were portrayed as traitors of the nation-state, stripped of their Greekness in the narratives shaped by the right-wing state.

The polarisation between the left and the right and their competing memories was further hardened during the military dictatorship (1967-1974), known as *Diktatoria ton Syntagmatarchon* (Regime of the Colonels). The Greek Junta exiled several communists to islands such as Gyaros and Leros, including former resisters who had come back to Greece in the early 1960s, as well as other democratic elements, making the legacy of the resistance subject to resignifications based on the contemporary resistance against the dictatorship. Between 1967-1974, the anti-dictatorship struggle is interpreted as a continuation of the resistance, adding to the existing memory of the 1940s resistance. The anti-dictatorship struggle was framed as a continuation of the Second World War resistance against the local traitors. In the clandestine anti-dictatorship publications, there is an explicit connection between the National resistance of the 1940s and the anti-dictatorship struggle.[846]

The Regime of the Colonels also wished to appropriate the resistance legacy for its own purposes, obviously away from any red elements related to the resistance legacy.[847] As Eleni Kouki argues, the dictatorship pushed the anti-Communist narrative even further than the post-Civil War state. In the 1949 law regarding the recognition of resistance and resistance fighters, the main concern of the post-civil war right-wing state was to exclude the left-wing

[845]Αυγερίδης, "Οι δύο κόσμοι της Μετεμφυλιακής Ελλάδας και το Αίτημα της Αναγνώρισης," σε *Η Δεύτερη Ζωή της Εθνικής Αντίστασης,* 125, 144, 148.
[846] Δημήτρις Γαρρής, "Αντίσταση και πάλι; – Γέφυρες συμβολισμών και αγωνιστικές γενεαλογίες μεταξύ της Εθνικής Αντίστασης της δεκαετίας του 1940 και του Αντιδικτατορικού Αγώνα της περιόδου 1967-1974," *Αντιδικτατορικός Αγώνας (1967- 1974): Ιστορία και Μνήμη,* n.d., https://antidiktatorikos.uoa.gr/antistasi-kai-pali-gefyres-symvolismon-kai-agonistikes-genealogies-metaxy-tis-ethnikis-antistasis-tis-dekaetias-tou-1940-kai-tou-antidiktatorikou-agona-tis-periodou-1967-1974/.
[847] Κουκή, "Το ΝΔ 179/1969 και ο Δεύτερος Κύκλος της Αναγνώρισης (1967-1974)," σε *Η Δεύτερη Ζωή της Εθνικής Αντίστασης*, 156, 158.

resistance, labelling left-wing resisters as traitors to the nation and framing their actions as anti-national. The dictatorship, however, by its 1969 decree (ND 179/1969), equated communism and its followers with the forces of occupation.[848]

The fall of the dictatorship in 1974 paved the way for a less polarised memory of the resistance;[849] as Polymeris Voglis and Yiannis Nioutsikos argue, marked the beginning of a new historical epoch for the study of the resistance. The fall of the dictatorship, as well as institutional reform, the political and cultural liberalisation, and the legalisation of the Communist Party, which had been outlawed since 1947, set the circumstances for a reassessment of the 1940s and its cleavages. The actions of the resistance during the Triple Occupation began to be seen not as a division of Greek society but rather as an element of unity.[850] 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.[851] Even though a more collective myth started to be constructed, at the same time, the ones who fought and had become active subjects in the resistance, the Civil War, and having experienced continuous prosecution during the dictatorship, remained "convinced of the validity of their private memories from the war,"[852] and their ideologically polarised narratives that surrounded the war. From the perspective of the state, the recognition of the communist party did not necessarily mean that the resistance legacy of the Left was also accepted. As Magda Fytili argues, the 1974 reconciliation meant in practice that the communist parties could be legal, as long as they did not refer to what was still considered as an 'anti-national' past.[853]

In 1982, the rise to power of *Panelinio Sosialistiko Kinima* (PASOK- Panhellenic Socialist Movement) marked the attempt to change the institutional collective memory through the adoption of a different recognition of resistance. The N1285/1982 put an end to the 'memory battles' related to the resistance and put an end to the questioning of the patriotic and resistance role of left-wing guerrilla groups.[854] The unifying myth, similar to the ones that emerged to different extents in France, and Italy, seeks to recognise the whole Greek nation as a participant in the resistance, with only a small minority collaborating with the

[848] Ibid, 164.
[849] The next paragraph is largely based on my article Chatzitheodorou, "Ilektra Apostolou," 22-51.
[850] Voglis, and Nioutsikos, "The Greek Historiography of the 1940s," 321.
[851] Ibid, 333. See also: Chatzitheodorou, "Ilektra Apostolou," 22-51.
[852] Haugbolle, "Public and Private Memory of the Lebanese Civil War," 202.
[853] Magda Fytili, "Including the "Nation's Enemies": The Long Politics of Recognition and Restitution during the Third Greek Republic (1974–2006)," *Journal of Modern Greek Studies* 40, no. 1 (May 2022): 201.
[854] Φυτίλη, "Η Συμβολική Ενσωμάτωση των «Εχθρών του Έθνους» (1981-1989)," σε *Η Δεύτερη Ζωή της Εθνικής Αντίστασης*, 223, 229.

enemy *and* acting against the national interests.[855] This emergence of unity meant that certain left-wing resisters were also transformed from national traitors into national heroes-including women; the example of the communist Ilektra Apostolou demonstrates how the post-dictatorship state 'nationalised' former left-wing resisters, incorporating them into the national historiography of resistance.[856] With the recognition of EAM's role in the National Resistance and the incorporation of the left-wing resistance into the national myth, a more concrete reconciliation emerged. Yet due to their long absence from the 'official' national memory, these left-wing resisters wished to make their memories equally recognisable, to cover up the long memorial absence, while also narrating the political experiences that followed the resistance, such as exile and imprisonment for their participation in the struggle. Therefore, compared to women's writing in France and Italy, women's writing, and their interventions were also a form of political protest against this forty-year oblivion imposed by the state.

Conclusion

In sum, the memory and the notion of the resistance remained and continue to remain open to resignifications based on the exigencies of the present and could also be subject to resignifications in the future. In all three cases with clear 'resistance' scripts in place following the war, narratives shifted, and the passage of time produced more nuanced and divergent highlighting the variety of differing experiences among the populations. This demonstrates that memory politics are intimately linked to the oscillating political capital of their producers. It is within that context that women's memories and their post-war writings should be examined and understood, as they emerged within a specific context, more or less polarised depending on the politics of location and time and were influenced and shaped by exigencies of the present. The differing experiences of women resisters after the war were shaped both by their participation *in* the Resistance and their subsequent representation *of* the Resistance in their respective post-war societies, which helps us understand why they narrated their experiences so differently.[857]

---

[855] Ibid, 239. In the same pattern, the laws that permitted the return of political refugees excluded «μη Έλληνες το γένος» [trans. those who are not racially Greek]; in practise, this exclusion concerned the Greek Slav minorities who had fought in EAM and became political refugees, around 35 percent of the political refugees, following the communist defeat. Nationalising the resistance meant accepting those who had fought for EAM/ELLAS, as long as they were considered racially Greek. For more: Ibid, 249.

[856] For more about the different memory cultures related to the communist Ilektra Apostolou: Chatzitheodorou, "Ilektra Apostolou," 22-51. The same inclusion did not concern those perceived as non-Greeks, such as the Slavophone Macedonians, including the prominent female resistance fighter Mirka Ginova, whose memorialisation was never comparable to Apostolou and has only recently has been embraced from part of the radical left in Greece.

[857] Fiona M. Stewart's article on memory of the resistance in Italy and its contrasted histories was helpful in shaping my argument. For more: Stewart "*Guerra civile*," 293-312, DOI: 10.1080/1354571X.2018.1459410.

In France, the less polarised memory of the resistance as compared to Greece, which experienced a Civil War, led to the emergence of personal memoirs much earlier than was the case in Greece. Indeed, the personal memoirs by former female resisters in France span a period from the late 1940s in the aftermath of the war up until recently. As Olivier Wieviorka has argued, the resistance myth, cultivated both by the Gaullists and the communists, saw the liberation war as a collective and patriotic action by the 'peuple française', which was used to maintain social coherence and harmony in the post-war France.[858] In that context of societal consensus, participation in the resistance was a legitimate story to tell, even if these stories included only a few exceptional women at first. On the contrary, the same could not apply in Greece, since a Civil War broke out soon after the liberation.[859] The Civil War and the defeat of the communist side (1949) made the construction of a similar myth of a unified resistance impossible, while it also portrayed the communists, the main carriers of the resistance heritage, as traitors. This defeat of the communists meant, in turn, that their narratives were excluded until the 1980s. This also affected women's writing at the time, as they only started narrating their side of the story following the recognition of EAM's role in the resistance. In Italy, the emergence of a post-war antifascist paradigm, with the dominance of communist and more broadly left-wing discourse surrounding the resistance, also provided an enhanced legitimacy for women to write and narrate their memories. As was the case in France, Italian memoirs by former female resisters emerged as early as the 1950s, with a gradual increase in publications from the 1970s, with personal memoirs appearing up until today.

The next chapter of this thesis will examine how women reflected on and navigated the different discourses of war and resistance post-war and how this interfaced with their gender identity. I will particularly examine several personal memoirs by former resisters, exploring their gendered narratives of resistance, while situating them within the politics of memory in each case. Rosemary Sayigh has reflected on her aims and approach while writing her doctoral dissertation on the life stories of women in the Shatila camp in Lebanon: "I was particularly interested to see how they would relate themselves to the national movement, how they would reflect through their own lives the nationalist discourse, and how this would interface with their gender identity. At this point I began to read about empowering methods

[858] Olivier Wieviorka, "Structurations, Modes d'intervention et Prises de Décision," *Le Mouvement Social,* no. 180 (1997) :55, https://doi.org/10.2307/3779348. For more about the 'confusion memorielle' that surrounded the myth of resistance as a unified act by the whole 'peuple française': Olivier Wieviorka, *Histoire de la résistance*, 640-650.

[859] For more about the different perspectives regarding the starting point of the Civil War: Nikos Marantzidis and Giorgios Antoniou, "The Axis Occupation and Civil War Bibliography: Changing Trends in Greek Historiography: 1941-2002," *Journal of Peace Research* 41, no. 2 (2004): 224.

in oral history."[860] Building on that, I am also interested in exploring how former female resisters reflect on the resistance, their participation in the struggle and the national discourses surrounding it.

[860] Cited in Nur Masalha, *The Palestine Nakba: Decolonising History, Narrating the Subaltern, Reclaiming Memory* (Zed Books, 2012), 216. Originally: Rosemary Sayigh, interview by Toinevan Teeffelen, *Jerusalem Times*, October 10, 1997.

Chapter 8: Women Resisted, Remembered, Wrote

"We fought for national liberation and at the same time our imagination "galloped" in worlds of ideals where social justice, equality, brotherhood were the foundations of the new world we dreamed of…"[861]

Introduction

The extensive use of personal memoirs in this thesis necessitates a double reading of them as historical sources that depict both the experience of the antifascist resistance and their emergence within a historically specific moment, influenced by the politics of memory in each country, interfacing with gender identity. How do the authors of these memoirs remember these events within the historical context in which they wrote them and what can we learn by contextualising their narratives of resistance?[862] In the essay *The Perils of Writing as a Woman on Women in Algeria*, Marnia Lazreg wonders, "[How] can an Algerian woman write about women in Algeria when her space has already been defined, her history dissolved, her subjects objectified, her language chosen for her? How can she speak without saying the same things?"[863] These questions and reflections can equally apply to the women who participated in the resistance in the Second World War and whose stories have emerged since the 1970s when historiographic interpretations and public narratives of women's participation in the Resistance underwent major changes. As a result of the changing societal and political context in which the former resisters wrote, many women themselves articulated their thoughts on resistance for the first time and its gendered dimensions, while others re-evaluated their experience and contribution to the struggle.

The autobiographical self in the personal memoirs examined in this thesis is situated within a national context, with which the narrating subject navigates the politics of memory in different ways. Self-representations of their former resister-self function both "as a medium that communicated, and simultaneously, recorded cultural, social, and historical information."[864] As Phillip Dwyer writes regarding the genre of war memoir, "Historians have to take into account not only the social and political context in which the memoir was written but those cultural influences that may have sculpted and shaped the veteran's memory leading up to the point in time when pen is put to paper."[865] Indeed, the different

[861] Καρρά, *Επονίτισσα*, 9.
[862] Building upon the work of Hodgkin, and Radstone, *Memory, History, Nation*, 4-5.
[863] This is cited in Caroline E. Kelley, *Women Writing War: The Life-writing of the Algerian moudjahidate* (Peter Lang, 2020), 1.
[864] Ioanna Laliotou, "On Luisa Passerini: subjectivity, Europe, affective historiography," *Women's History Review* 25, no. 3 (2016): 414.

[865] Philip Dwyer, *War Stories: The War Memoir in History and Literature* (Berghahn Books, 2016), 14.

political futures deeply influenced the contexts of literary production, and have brought to the fore the relationship between memory, national history and autobiographical practices.

The former female resisters who wrote about their resistance experience demonstrate how public memories and legacies influence their writing and narratives. In France and Italy, the powerful public narrative and state discourses that promoted the idea of unity of the resistance struggle meant that women-authors tended not to challenge this discourse and myth *per se,* despite revisiting certain aspects of it related to women's experiences. Indeed, the relatively less polarised memorialisation of the resistance in Italy and France saw women as legitimate storytellers earlier than was the case for their Greek counterparts, who were perceived largely as 'traitors' by official state memory until the 1980s. In France and Italy, former female resisters' desire to record *their* resistance experience was driven by the need to determine *their* position in history and establish themselves *vis-à-vis* the dominant male-centered narratives that favoured militarised notions of the resistance. At the same time, to use the Deleuzian term again, deterritorializing from the male hegemonic narrative, they simultaneously reterritorialize the narrative, exploring and articulating a separate, gender-specific, identity of the resistance fighter and narrative of what antifascist resistance was.[866] On the contrary, in Greece, the forty years of silencing of EAM's contribution to the resistance struggle, which was the main carrier of the resistance myth, along with the transformative life experiences of exile and imprisonment that awaited many of the former female resisters and prevented them of narrating their resistance memories, meant that Greek women aimed at also challenging dominant and state discourses up until 1982.

In this chapter, I will analyse women's personal memoirs to identify the gendered specificities within these differing national memory cultures. The authors of these memoirs include what they perceive as worth remembering and worth communicating to their audience, enabling us to see both how an event is remembered, and the importance attached to different events. As memory cannot exist "without its emotional undertones and components"[867] related to past events, the women resisters in each case made choices over which events were worth narrating. Their stories follow their own internal logic, demonstrating their reflexive engagements with their own lives and experiences – their past selves.[868] As Frances Houghton has argued vis-à-vis Second World War memoirs, a valuable

[866] Later memoirs by women do not necessarily feel the edge [need] to position themselves against the male dominated narrative to the same extent as earlier ones, written in 1970s/1980s. For example, Marie Jose Chombart de Lauwe in her memoir first published in 1998 does not narrate her memories of resistance by highlighting its gender-specific aspects.
[867] Cited in Laliotou, *On Luisa Passerini*, 422. Originally: Luisa Passerini, "Connecting Emotions: Contributions from Cultural History," *Historein* 8, (2008): 121.
[868] Naguib, *Women, Water and Memory,* 22.

second reading of experience is made possible by the narrativization and employment of memory on paper,[869] providing, in this case, the former resisters with a space for introspection of their resistance experience.

This chapter aims to provide insights regarding the different strategies employed by former female resisters to write about their resistance experience in the first person through memory. In line with the work of Fatma Kassem on Palestinian women's memory, my main aim in focusing on women's narratives of resistance through personal memoirs is to document their experiences to acknowledge these women as a valuable source of historical knowledge.[870] I will focus on the production of personal memoirs as a form of political intervention aimed at becoming a historical subject and will argue that the personal memoirs by former female resisters functioned as their intervention against women's erasure or/and marginalisation from history and memory of the Second World War resistance. As Mortimer writes regarding Algerian women's writing on their participation in the war of liberation, "The "fight to write," the struggle to become the legitimate chronicler of one's own story, is being waged and won by women writers committed to replacing amnesia with anamnesis, forgetting with remembering, as they destroy the silence that had been imposed upon them."[871] In Greece, this intervention was not only aimed at correcting the amnesia regarding women's contribution, it also protested against the forty years of persecution after the war. It is by no means a coincidence that most of the Greek memoirs by women were produced during the early 1980s, when the former communist resisters were welcome to share their part of the story, becoming, more or less, accepted by the official and public memory, previously depicted as traitors or/and Soviet "puppets", residing most of the time outside the Greek borders or confined in prison cells.

The focus of this chapter is explicitly on women's memoirs, enabling these women to reclaim their subjectivity[872] and manifest their creative agency as historical agents who construct and interpret their own memories, having authority over the narrative.[873] In bell hooks' words, women have "the right to define their own reality, establish their own identities, and name their history."[874] Indeed, writing in 1975, Jacques Chaban-Delmas who introduces Jeanne Bohec's memoir as follows: "At a time when the equivalence between

[869] Frances Houghton, *The Veterans' Tale: British Military Memoirs of the Second World War* (Cambridge University Press, 2019), 10.
[870]Kassem, *Palestinian Women,* 41.

[871] Mortimer, *Women Fight, Women Write,* 19.
[872] Kassem, *Palestinian Women,* 10.
[873] Mortimer, *Women Fight, Women Write*, 2.
[874] Cited in Kassem, *Palestinian Women,* 10.

women and men serves as a topic for many speeches or is the subject of many measures, Jeanne Bohec provides striking proof that women are very capable of achieving a degree of courage, of determination and efficiency accessible to few men." [875] Moreover, women's memoirs also function as an ode to former female comrades who fought in the struggle alongside them, introducing a collective gender frame, where women do not write solely their personal story but engage with their writing in such ways to make evident women's collective contribution to the resistance.

Of interest in this chapter is not the factual recounting of the narrated events, but how these memoirs influence 'cultural memory' and vice-versa, and the impact they may have on the ways in which a society wants to remember and commemorate previous conflicts,[876] and in this case, the gender-specific 'will to memory' vis-à-vis the resistance.[877] Following Estelle Ceccarini's argument, these literary texts of former resisters that are situated at the intersection of history and memory (and gender) are also those that offer a chance to search for a previous image of themselves during a conflict while analysing a post-war reconfiguration of their wartime experience in a complex dialogue between their personal perception and the collective memorial framework of the society in which they develop.[878] The female resister who writes may recall certain experiences and events from the past and examine their gender-specific contribution to the struggle but that past event "is interpreted through the filter of time and shaped by larger social and political attitudes," [879] not only towards the resistance, but also towards gender norms and politics.

Personal memoirs as historical sources share some characteristics with oral history interviews and testimony, but unlike oral testimonies and interviews, the personal memoir wishes to present a more developed portrait of the examined individual. It allows for greater detail and personal reflection, including the expression of the narrator's emotions vis-à-vis the contemporary historical moment upon which the memoir appears.[880] Moreover, many of the personal memoirs were a result of both the increased interest among a new generation of women's historians and the wider public in women's participation in the resistance in the 1970s and 1980s and a follow up after oral testimonies were gathered by historians in all

[875] Bohec, *La Plastiquese à Bicyclette*, 5.
[876] Dwyer, *War Stories,* 5.
[877] Gil Eyal uses the term 'will to memory' in her article and could further apply here. For more: Gil Eyal, "Identity and Trauma: Two Forms of the Will to Memory," *History and Memory* 16, no. 1 (2004): 5-36.
[878] Estelle Ceccarini, "Les écrits des résistantes italiennes ou l'écriture comme lieu d'expression d'une symbolisation complexe de la Résistance au féminin," in *La Résistance à l'épreuve du genre*, 183.
[879] Cited in Dwyer, *War Stories*, 5.
[880] Mildred Mortimer, "Looking back on a nation's struggle: women's reflections on the Algerian War of liberation," *Modern & Contemporary France* 31, no. 1 (2022): 70, doi:10.1080/09639489.2022.2128316.

three countries. Marisa Ombra demonstrates how this interaction shaped her decision to write her autobiography in 2010. In the epilogue of her memoir, she mentions that her autobiography, which includes details about her resistance experience, is a product of the interaction between her and Ilaria Scalmani, who first interviewed her for the 2005 exhibition *Donne manifeste: l'UDI attraverso i suoi manifesti, 1944-2004*.[881]

Memories and their validity are influenced by several identity markers, [882] along with gender, and the different pre-war and post-war social positionalities of the women in focus. Their personal stage of life during which these women wrote their stories also affected how they told their resistance stories, shaped by historically specific social, cultural, and political contexts.[883] Differences on a more personal level, such as educational background, equally impact the production of personal memoirs. As Edna Lumsky-Feder explains, narrating one's life story is influenced by the narrator's capacity for articulation, openness, courage, reflection, and fitness of memory.[884] As we see, with a few exceptions,[885] the women who wrote their personal memoirs were literate and "privileged" to receive an education either before or after the war. This gave them the capacity to write and articulate their thoughts on paper post-war. In that sense, personal memoirs do not offer a full picture of the diversity of resisters and their experiences. For instance, older peasant women, who engaged in the resistance, were unable to write their stories. The importance of oral history lies indeed in allowing a broader spectrum of women to narrate their stories, providing a more accurate representation of women's experiences. However, due to the comparative and transnational nature of this thesis, it goes beyond its scope to fully address these topics. A study in the future could better explore and further elaborate on these differences in oral and written memory and narrative, and the impact on the narrative due to educational background and social positionality.

The personal memoirs analysed in this chapter cover a period from the 1940s until today. This broader cover of the historical period requires a more detailed explanation of why certain women wrote their personal memoirs in the late 1940s, while others waited until

[881] Ombra*, La Bella Politica*, 109.
[882] If we consider that post-1982 Greece has not allowed the return of those perceived non-racially Greeks, which applies to the Slav Macedonians who fought in the Resistance and the Civil War on the side of EAM/DSE, we can see how ethnicity in the case of Greece has played a role in the exclusion of the memories of former partisans and resisters of Slav Macedonian reference. Due to the language barrier of not speaking Macedonian, I have been unable to record any of these memoirs apart from this one: Евдокија Фотева – Вера (Evdokia Foteva-Vera), До Пеколот и Назад (Toronto: Risto Stefov Publications: 2012).
[883] Cited in Kassem, *Palestinian Women,* 52.
[884] Cited in Ibid*, 52.*
[885] Despoina Fouka-Reze, for instance, mentions in her prologue: "I venture, in advance, to ask readers to judge me leniently for any errors and prejudices that may exist, with the extenuating circumstance of low intellectual knowledge." In Φουκά-Ρέζε, *Οργισμένα Χρόνια*, 3

later to do so, even as late as the 2010s. The publication of personal memoirs even now results from other contributing factors as well: At the time of writing this thesis, the last few resisters state that they narrate their experiences due to the urgent threat of losing valuable testimonies.[886] If it is not made public now or in the immediate future, it will cease to exist as a first-hand memory, too. Maria Beikou, for instance, articulates this logic behind the writing of her 2010 memoir, more than sixty years after the end of the Greek Civil War, "the reason for writing this book was my archive and especially the diary from the Democratic Army that was found in the archive of my husband, Georgoulas Beikos, when I handed it over to the ASKI, in 1996, because I became ill with cancer and I didn't know how my illness would develop..."[887]

8.1. The Stories of The Ferocious Few 2.0

Margaret and Patrice L.-R. Higonnet's image of the 'double helix', examined in the introduction, was reflected in literary production as well. Texts on the resistance written by men are far more numerous, widely distributed and emerged earlier, as men were seen as more legitimate actors as narrators of war and resistance. The first women to write their memoirs were, more or less, recognised as important figures of the left prior to their participation in the resistance, such as Agnes Humbert in France and Ada Gobetti in the case of Italy, who both published their memories as early as 1946 and 1956, respectively. In Greece, due to the silences and memorial erasure surrounding EAM's resistance, this was not the case vis-à-vis already established female figures of the left, such as Kaiti Zevgou, who only published in 1980, as mentioned earlier.

In terms of the content, the very first memoirs that appear tend to provide an essentialising notion of femininity, reflecting the ideas surrounding women and the feminine self at the time. Humbert's narrative in her published war diary is a manifestation of that: "The men wrote and talked, while I typed up their articles… I am *naturally* (italics my own) a typist."[888] Giovanna Zangrandi's memoir, *I Giorni Veri, 1943-1945*, published in 1963, demonstrates how 'femininity' and the feminine essence are not considered qualities made for war. Zangrandi curses the inconvenience caused by female physiology: "This blood that stinks of human and flows slow and unpleasant [...] damned women, what god without pity or mercy made them like this, women?" [889] Although her affirmation seems much more

[886] Mortimer, *Women Fight, Women Write,* 171.
[887] Μαρία Μπέικου, *Αφού με Ρωτάτε, Να Θυμηθώ* (Αθήνα: Καστανιώτης, 2010), 29.
[888] Humbert, *Resistance,* 24-25.
[889] English translation my own. Cited in Ceccarini, "Les écrits des résistantes italiennes ou l'écriture comme lieu d'expression d'une symbolisation complexe de la Résistance au féminin," in *La Résistance à l'épreuve du genre*, 194. Originally in Zangrandi, *I giorni veri*, 160.

personal rather than reflecting her ideas about women in general and the female 'essence', Menapace too, writing her memoir much later in 2014, mentions that she is not *naturally* courageous, despite the risk she is involved in transferring clandestine press, plastique etc.[890]

Equally, women who assumed roles outside the norm found it easier to tell their stories earlier, particularly within the period from the 1950s up until the 1970s and 1980s, when the narrative continued to favour the military resistance over the less militarised forms of action. When public memory narrative began to include more women from the 1970s and onwards, they privileged the ones perceived as 'extraordinary', the ferocious few, who were closer to the battlefront, even if their roles were informed by their gender, acting, for example, as *staffette*. The most prominent example of an entirely *hors-de-norme* role is Elsa Oliva's memoir *Ragazza Partigiana*, published in 1974. As already shown in the previous chapter, Oliva's transgression as a partisan is perceived by herself as an exception to the rule. Her identity exists in contrast with many women who assumed gender-specific roles. As the only woman in the brigade, Oliva uses the pronoun 'we' to refer to her and her male comrades in the brigade. She is a partisan like them, and her identity in extremis manifests itself through the comparison of her role vs women's roles: "As we pass, the people shout, cheer enthusiastically, the women weep and embrace us."[891] Jeanne Bohec, writing in 1975, also adopts such a framing that separates her role as a woman parachuted in France and trained in sabotage techniques compared with most women who are mentioned as "Galilee's secretaries assistants." These Galilee's secretaries, Brigitte and Pat, in the memoir, also expected a 'garcon' instead of Bohec, according to her narration.[892] Bohec, who examines her role in comparison with the assistive work assumed by the secretaries, essentially reproduced the double helix image that places women's roles as subordinate compared to men's. Madeleine Riffaud, writing later than Oliva and Bohec, in 1994, also demonstrates how the female partisan was an identity in extremis, recalling how the work of women consisted mainly of making connections and carrying weapons. Yet regarding her 'mode' of resistance, she recalls by writing in the third person that Rainer (her *nom de resistance*) wanted to find her comrades, having understood later on that "she had chosen this life…ready to find life again, to take life again [meaning to kill], and most importantly to get back to the fighting."[893] However, Riffaud, writing later than Oliva and in collaboration with the writer Gilles Plazy, does not fall into the trap of denying her feminine self despite

[890] Menapace, *Io, partigiana*, 82.
[891] English translation my own. Cited in Ceccarini, "Les écrits des résistantes italiennes ou l'écriture comme lieu d'expression d'une symbolisation complexe de la Résistance au féminin," in *La Résistance à l'épreuve du genre*, 204. Originally in Oliva, *Ragazza partigiana*, 53.
[892] Bohec, *La plastiqueuse à bicyclette*, 106.
[893] Riffaud, *On l'appelait Rainer*, 56, 134.

her transgression, avoiding an essentialisation of femininity in her writing. In that sense, there is an evident change in the representation of femininity and female identity between the memoirs written in the 1950s/1970s and those produced from the 1990s; For instance, Riffaud's feminine self is not lost in an impersonal 'nous' that refers to an abstract notion and sexless of partisans as is the case in Oliva's – she identifies herself as a 'petite fille' compared to the 'garçons' who felt annoyed when she became captain. Instead, throughout her narration, she remains a woman, even if she declares her exceptionality compared to the roles assumed by most women in the resistance.[894]

Ouzoulias Romagnon, writing in 1988, provides a much more pluralistic portrayal of the feminine resistance. Narrating her story of militancy in the ranks of the Communist Party alongside her husband, she begins her narration about the 'safe house' where they stayed. There, the host-housewife Henriane Witbrott is mentioned, whose name would have stayed unknown probably if Ouzoulias-Romagnon had not mentioned it. Ouzoulias-Romagnon recalls how Witbrott risked more than herself who lived in total clandestinity, as she was living with her children and parents.[895] Ouzoulias-Romagnon gives Witbrott's *sans armes* resistance the recognition it deserves.

Moreover, memoirs by former *staffette* who worked close to the battlefront were being published in Italy in large numbers from the 1970s and onwards, with the prominent examples of Iste Cagossi and Cesarina Bracco, who both published their memoirs in 1976. Particularly for Italy, the *staffette* embodied the essence of female resistance, which, in turn, influenced the production of memoirs. Both Cagossi and Bracco narrate their 'staffette' experiences, but these memories still operate under the spectrum of the double helix. While they recognise their contribution to the resistance, the dangerous nature of the roles they assumed and the transgression of expected gender roles ("he stares at me as he did not expect a girl"),[896] they continue to frame it as subordinate to men's military roles. Bracco, for instance, looked for the valediction by the male partisans after she completed her mission successfully: "*avete visto, ce l'abbiamo fatta*"[897] she affirms, demonstrating both how such an act is perceived as something out of the ordinary vis-à-vis women's capabilities and at the same time how the search for men's valediction places it in a comparatively subordinate position.

[894] Ibid, 135.
[895] Ouzoulias-Romagnon, *J'étais agent de liaison FTPF*, 9.
[896] Bracco, *la staffetta garibaldina*, 13.
[897] Ibid, 7.

Nevertheless, simultaneously, these women reflect implicitly on their own essentialisations of the feminine; with their response of '*avete visto, ce l'abbiamo fatta'*, these women demonstrate how they are aware of the false stereotypical representation of women's "natural" position and "inadequate" capabilities. This becomes even more evident when women engage in an internal conversation on how their femininity was instrumentalised to pass, as discussed in Chapter 5, basically mocking any essentialisation of gender identity. Women who worked as *staffette* or moved around transferring all kinds of things narrate that they were aware of how their femininity was used as a camouflage to deceive the enemy. In their post-war narrations, they explain thoroughly how they used these established ideas about the feminine to their advantage to carry out their missions successfully. These women hereby manifest their agency by acting in such a way in order to 'pass' and carry out their duty with success. Guillemot recalls: "With my youthful looks and schoolgirl outfit, I'm the ideal recruit for this kind of mission: an *ordinary* (italics my own) girl at first glance..."[898] The use of ordinary as an adjective is an irony that demonstrates the critical look at the model and ideas vis-à-vis traditional femininity.

In sum, the broader inclusion of women's voices and the narrative representation of plural resistance(s) in the memoirs also involves an element of transgression of the male-dominated narrative, even if it is still influenced by the very binary it wishes to transgress. This, in turn, influenced whose resistance (her)story was perceived as worthy to write and tell. This earlier production of personal memoirs by a few 'extraordinary women' reinforced the gendered and hierarchical division of the resistance. Building on Elshtain's term of 'Ferocious Few', the production of personal memoirs by former resisters reflected this gendered and hierarchical representation of the resistance, even when women began to narrate their stories. As Faqir has argued regarding the genre of personal memoirs by women in the Arab world, women's need to narrate their stories resulted from their need to define their position in history when the conditions were mature enough to do so and locate themselves *vis-à-vis* the male master narrative.[899] The changes that came along in the 1970s and the emergence of oral history as a drive towards 'history from below' pushed and pulled[900] even more women to narrate their personal stories, without, however, completely eliminating the hierarchy between men's and women's stories. Over the years, this narrative

[898] Guillemot, and Humez, *Résistante*, 40.
[899] Originally Fadia Faqir, Introduction in *In the House of Silence: Autobiographical Essays by Arab Women Writers* (Reading: Garnet, 1999), 8-9. Cited in Hiyem Cheurfa, *Contemporary Arab Women's Life Writing and the Politics of Resistance* (Edinburgh University Press; 2023) 40-41.
[900] Women were also invited by historians to share their resistance experience.

opened up to become more and more inclusive of women's stories, while examining ideas surrounding femininity more and more critically.

8.2. Gendered Self and Collective Frames

As we have seen, after the war, women's roles were perceived as less important; this affected them not solely as individuals who participated in the resistance but rather as a collective subject, excluded due to its gender. When the public understanding of resistance became broader to include non-militarised forms in the 1970s, to counter this collective memorial marginalisation, women did not write solely as individuals wishing to narrate their personal story, but they wrote intersubjectively, as a social group whose stories had been marginalised. Therefore, to regain their agency, they highlight how their gendered self participated in the struggle. Yet marginalisation in post-war memory and narratives led women resisters to not solely refer to their acts of resistance as a personal story but to adopt a collective action frame, constructing a *collective, gendered,* narrative of their participation. Through these gendered collective lenses, other women, who otherwise would have remained lost in the margins of history, become historical subjects through the narration of these women resisters who write down their memories and include them in the story.[901] In the memoirs, this occurred both through simple naming of former resisters and a more detailed engagement with their stories. Women, by naming their former female comrades, demonstrate their desire to memorialise not solely their comrades' death but their resistance story as well. Indeed, the female resisters do not solely write the memoir for themselves, but they engage in multiple dialogues between different audiences of readers. Through intersubjective lenses, the author's and the reader's selves merge in a process of conversation about the resistance that does not solely focus on the resister's personal story but delves into the lives of others.

[901] This collective frame of memorialisation can focus on different social categorisations, although this part will specifically focus on gendered framing. For instance, Lise London (born Élizabeth Ricol) in her memoir pays a tribute to the young people that engaged in the resistance: "Before closing this part, I'd like to pay tribute to the team of teenage boys and girls who were my first comrades in arms in the aftermath of the German occupation..." London, *La Mégère de la rue Daguerre. Souvenirs de résistance,* 95. Indeed, Resisters memorialise those who fought along with them more broadly and participated in the struggle for liberation: Riffaud while not specifically memorialising female fallen resisters wonders how the memory of the resistance is still alive, including the memory of "…several people, whom we had already lost forever, who had not returned from the mission, whom we had waited in vain for at the weekly reunion, who had not only "died for France" but who had personally saved us by blocking the police search with their silence under torture. To the point of dying." (Riffaud, *on l' appelait Rainer*, 12) Ouzoulias Romagnon also dedicates her memoir to her former comrades, among others, who fought together in the battle for liberation: "Finally, I dedicate it to my comrades in the resistance, and in particular to all those modest people whose names are unknown to the general public and who gave their lives or their health so for France to live." (Ouzoulias Romagnon, *J'étais Agent de Liaison*, FTPF, 7). Ida d'Este in a note in the second edition of her book mentions "but with joy I accepted the reprint *as a tribute* to all the dear friends I met during that wonderful time."[901] (D'Este, Croce sulla Schiena, 25).

Margarita Kostaki mentions that "many women joined the EAM organisations and above all the EA; they became paramedics, nurses- several took up arms and fought the occupiers."[902] Riffaud also recalls women's contribution to the resistance, constructing a collective image of the female: "The work of women and young girls consisted mainly of building houses and transporting weapons... they were the little hands of the resistance, repairing broken nets and mending clandestine fabric."[903] Bohec too refers to women who worked as liaison officers in the maquis of Saint Michel and, as already mentioned, the so-called 'secretaries'. Those women, whose names and stories would have probably remained forgotten if not for her memoir, become subjects of history through Bohec's narration: "Several young girls acted as liaisons, most notably Annick Perrotin and the three Pondard sisters..."[904] Fouka- Reze dedicates a part of her memoir to the women's organisations during the Occupation and retrospectively narrates the tasks and behaviour of women in them.[905] Karra also provides the space to memorialise her female comrades whom she organised within EPON; some of her chapters are named after former female comrades; for instance, a chapter is named after four comrades of hers: 'Mirada, Eleni, Sonia, Maritsa', where she shares briefly their involvement in the struggle.[906] Panagiotidou Glenti also reveals various names and stories by former female resisters, and partisans that she met during her participation in EAM/ELAS.[907] Fouka- Reze even shares lists of names of women who became involved in EPON and EA.[908] Pinelopi Rigga, in the prologue of her memoir, mentions that the purpose behind the narration of the story is to memorialise many of her "patriot" female comrades who fought for freedom.[909]

A collective memorialisation of women, former comrades, is a result of their lives becoming intertwined during the resistance. They did not solely share the risks embodied in resistance actions, but they might have well experienced the consequences that emerged from this risk, such as prosecution, imprisonment, and death. Genevieve de Gaulle Anthonioz, in her book *La Traversée de la nuit*, narrates her time in the Ravensbrück concentration camp, but this time in jail, a profound political experience, is shared with other women prisoners. Therefore, she also narrates their collective story, devoting time and space to talk about the mutual help developed among the women prisoners.[910] Chombart de Lauwe,

[902] Κωστάκη, *Μια Ζωή Γεμάτη Αγώνες*, 40.
[903] Riffaud, *On l'appelait Rainer*, 56.
[904] Bohec, *La plastiqueuse à bicyclette*, 155.
[905] Φουκά-Ρέζε, *Οργισμένα Χρόνια*, 171-176.
[906] Καρρά, *Επονίτισσα,* 73-74.
[907] Παναγιωτίδου-Γκλέντη, *Γνωριμία με τις Αντάρτισσες,* 17, 90,
[908] Φουκα-Ρέζε, *Οργισμένα Χρόνια,* 180-181.
[909] Ρίγγα, *Η Αντιστασική μου Ιστορία*, 9.
[910] De Gaulle- Anthonioz, *La traversée de la nuit.*

in a footnote, shares the "luck" of another female resister: "She was deported in the same convoy as me. She survived Ravensbruck, Majdanek and Auschwitz, where she was liberated by the Red Army."[911] Chomart de Lauwe, therefore, does not narrate solely her personal involvement in the struggle but also informs the reader about the future of other women who became involved in the resistance and the consequences they faced as a result of their actions. Nikolakopoulou too pays an homage in her memoir to "our dead (oi nekroi mas)," citing first and foremost the female resister Panagiota Stathopoulou, who was shot by a German tank, which then passed over her body in July 1943 and they had attended the same protest. Stathopoulou is not alive to share her resistance story, so Nikolakopoulou does it for her.[912] Kostaki, too, in her memoir, dedicates a few pages memorialising female resistance fighters, her former comrades, who were executed between 1948-1949 by the right-wing state, specifically those women in Averoff Prison whom she met during her stay.[913] Soula Karanika also affirms her wish to write as a form of homage to her former comrades and female prisoners: "My decision to write was not dictated by a sense of self-pity nor by the need to write my story. It is simply an expression of my debt to the 4000 imprisoned women who lived with me and wrote with me in them and in the different prisons a second *leventiki* story."[914]

The gendered self as a collective further becomes apparent through the utilisation of 'we' instead of 'I'. Romagnon, in her memoir, regularly juxtaposed the roles of women versus those of men, portraying them as different due to their gender. Ouzoulias refers to these gender-specific mobilisations, "I say "one of us" because most of this liaison apparatus was made up of women, girls and young women..."[915] while also recalling the logic of the party behind the mobilisation of women: "it's up to *us,* women, less suspicious a priori in the eyes of the police and the Gestapo (in the name of the distrust they held… for this inferior female gender incapable, according to them, of taking part in an action!)..."[916] Therefore, to claim their place in history through writing is not a solely personal act but rather a collective one. The personal is political in their writing because their marginalisation concerns their gender collectively, rather than specifically their personal self. Thus, just as the resistance is a collective act of defiance, so is writing about it.

---

[911] Chombart de Lauwe, *Toute une vie de résistance*, 74.
[912] Νικολακοπούλου, *Μία Επονίτισσα Θυμάται*, 68-70.
[913] Κωστάκη, *Μια Ζωή Γεμάτη Αγώνες*, 65-69. Fouka Reze also provides the names of women who were executed in Averoff prison between 1948-1949 along with some memories related to them. Φουκά-Ρέζε, *Οργισμένα Χρόνια*, 273-277. She also provides a list of names of women who were executed during the Occupation and the Civil War, Ibid, 278-279.
[914] Σούλα Καρανίκα, *Για Μία Νέα Ζωή* (Αθήνα: Σύγχρονη Εποχή, 1984), 7.
[915] Ouzoulias Romagnon, *J'étais agent de liaison FTPF*, 122.
[916] Ibid, 124.

8.3 A Story of the Past and a Story for the Future: From the Comrades that Fell for the Nation, to the Next Generation

The women authors did not solely refer to their former comrades, paying tribute to the heroic past. They also articulate their thoughts vis-à-vis the moment in which they write, addressing the next generation that did not live through these events, whose importance continues to this day. Hereby, they demonstrate how writing is always intersubjective and does not solely recall past experiences but always exists in dialogue with contemporary readers, their experiences, and viewpoints. Iste Cagossi also writes: "Invited by the A.N.P.I. of Reggio Emilia to write a report on my activities during the struggle, I felt the desire to expand my writing with quick references to the period of the twenty years of Fascism, in order to let my son know, through my direct experience, the vicissitudes of those years."[917] Karra affirms "the years have passed, we are getting older, we are leaving. We owe the new generation a story...I want to narrate [these memories] to my daughter, my nephews, the young people, as a small tribute to the young children who fell in this difficult struggle fighting for bread, freedom and the honour of the people."[918] Several female authors see the resistance as a revolutionary symbol, a template for revolutionary action, rather than solely a historical event. Their narration in these cases also serves as a call-to-arms for the next generations. Petroula Nikolakopoulou recalls how freedom is won: "With sacrifices and blood we conquered our freedom. Because freedom cannot be won otherwise. Because the one who takes it away from you will not give it back unless you take it from him with a struggle that requires great sacrifices."[919] This affirmation does not solely concern the past struggle of the resistance. It is introduced as a template for revolutionary action that the resistance inspired, becoming a legacy that future generations must follow. Fouka-Reze, writing in 1994, prompts this new generation to continue to resist and to fight; "fight with all your strength for Peace...I wish you to be the generation of real change and lasting peace."[920] Menapace equally mentions, "This book aimed at girls and boys, a testimony to help them navigate their way through confused and lost modernity."[921] Manolikidou-Vetta too explains the reason behind her writing "I owe to future generations a personal testimony that can serve as an example of the *spirit of resistance* (italics my own) but also as an example of the mistakes that were made and I hope that they will not happen again."[922] In the same pattern, Raymonde Tillon in her autobiography reflects in a critical manner how the "hopes of the Resistance" did not

[917] Cagossi, *da piccola italiana a partigiana combattente*, 7.
[918] Καρρά, *Επονίτισσα,* 11-12.
[919] Νικολακοπούλου, *Μία Επονίτισσα Θυμάται*, 9.
[920] Φουκά – Ρέζε, *Οργισμένα Χρόνια*, 296-297.
[921] Menapace, *Io, partigiana*, 13.
[922] Μανωλικίδου-Βέττα, *Θα σε λέμε Ισμήνη*, 14.

materialise: " Despite the great sacrifices of so many of our comrades, the universal social justice that was our great hope has not yet been achieved..."[923] Guillemot, in her epilogue, criticising Jean-Marie Le Pen's statement that the gas rooms represented just a point of detail, affirms the 'devoir' of remembering the past to avoid repeating it. This prompts her to start narrating her resistance story to students in schools and universities, a future generation who should not forget the history and legacy of the resistance: "If I can interest the students and give them a spark... you never know."[924] She leaves it hanging without explaining what this might constitute for the future generation but it subtly demonstrates how the past can work as a symbol that inspires and informs contemporary struggles, selectively articulating what needs to be remembered from the past, where the resistance acts as a site of memory for society. Pesce, in her autobiography, recalls the terrorist attack carried out by the neo-fascist terrorist group Ordine Nuovo on December 12, 1969, and its social impact: "We were convinced that socialism would be the outcome which mankind would undoubtedly have to reach. We felt that the resistance did not end with the war, and that it went on. We were certain that the young people, making their own experiences, would find their own way to move the country forward."[925] Her narrative demonstrates how the resistance was not solely a historical event, but a revolutionary symbol, a template of action to be used against fascism and oppression by a younger generation of 'resisters' and anti-fascists. Chombart de Lauwe articulates in a similar manner the reasoning for writing her memories after all these years have passed: "So it is to keep the flame of memory alive that I speak today when I'm asked to do so... I do it because *I have to*. Because forgetting, ignoring, and eradicating the past acts as breeding ground for totalitarianism. So that we cannot say again without lying that *we didn't know* (italics not my own)... and to the young people whom I'm talking to, I always come to the same conclusion: life is beautiful..."[926] Indeed, in a similar vein as the clandestine press was used as a call-to-arms for people to become involved in the struggle during the war, the personal memoirs too function as call-to-arms for the younger generation to resist following the template that the resistance had settled. The former resisters prompt the new generation to continue to fight according to the ideals of the resistance but without repeating the mistakes that were made. Therefore, the Resistance becomes an archived memory, but it also exists as a model for action for the next generation of potential resisters.

---

[923] Raymonde Tillon, *J'écris ton nom, Liberté* (Éditions du félin, 2002), 148. This critical stance is also closely related to her personal story and trajectory. Tillon begins her memoir by denouncing French style Stalinism as she calls in. "On the threshold of this book, of revisiting seven decades of struggle and hope, i must begin by denouncing French-style stalinism, for it did exist." Op.cit. 11. Tillon was expelled by the Communist Party after the condemnation of the Soviet invasion of Czechoslovakia.
[924] Guillemot, and Humez, *Résistante*, 207-208.
[925] Pesce, *Il pane bianco*, 125.
[926] Chombart de Lauwe, *Résister toujours,* 15-16.

8.4. The Resistance as the Source of Revolutionary Subjectivity

While looking back at the resistance, some of the women authors place the origins of their political consciousness in that period. This is the case particularly for younger women who first became involved in politics through the resistance. Indeed, in accordance with Kampwirth, who understands revolutions as movements rather than points in time,[927] women in their personal memoirs demonstrate how the resistance should better be understood as a process that contained the seed that planted a political consciousness in those women and not as a single event responsible for their revolutionary subjectivity. Molly Tambol has also examined women's autobiographies in Italy, exploring how the resistance experience constituted the political awakening of its women participants.[928] Tambol demonstrates the much more complex construction of political identity through the example of Bianca Bianchi's autobiography *La storia è memoria: ti racconto la mia vita.* As she argues, Bianchi recalls her first political speech came after the liberation of Florence (her city), when she attended a DC election campaign rally. There, Bianchi became frustrated with the lack of young people and young women specifically. Spontaneously, she took the floor and spoke at a rally. Tambol goes on to challenge this deliberate periodisation of her 'political awakening': "She was clearly already familiar with speaking in public and even articulating her political ideas in public yet narrates her 'first' political speech as naïve and spontaneous."[929] Tambol's approach is important to have in mind when examining autobiographies and memoirs of women's resisters, engaging with their past selves.

Despite recognising a more complex construction of subjectivity without fixating on strict periodisations, the fact that women themselves choose to argue in favour of the resistance as a crucial point of their political awakening/ripening -even if reality is indeed more complex- is still important. For instance, Ombra too sees her participation in the resistance as an important step to her politicisation. Coming from an antifascist family, her upbringing had definitely influenced the construction of her political identity, as she has hinted in her memoir as well.[930] She recalls that in the summer of 1944 as a *staffetta* she passed the checkpoint on Corso Savona, at the entrance to the bridge over the Tanaro River to go to Monferratto where the partisans here operating: "The border we had crossed was not only material. For me it would be the first of many borders I would have to cross in the future,"[931]demonstrating how

[927] Kampwirth, *Feminism and the Legacy of Revolution*, 5.
[928] **Molly Tambor, "La revisione di sé: Women's Autobiographies of the Resistance," in The Concept of Resistance in Italy: Multidisciplinary Perspectives, ed. Maria Laura Mosco, and Pietro Pirani (Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Inc 2017), 65.**
[929] **Ibid, 71.**
[930] Ombra, *La bella politica,* 21.
[931] Ibid, 28.

the resistance was only an initial step, providing the very seed, in a longer process of politicization. Later on, Ombra also demonstrates how the GDD functioned as a rupture with tradition; the GDD was "a great school for political training. They paved the way for women to become aware of being persons."[932] She also points out how women during the resistance "for the first time were measuring and discovering our true possibilities and capabilities, and [we] were discovering that, in the competition with the boys, we were no less."[933] I argue that by reading Ombra's autobiography through a more holistic approach, we could uncover the reason behind the importance of the resistance in the construction of (female) political identity. Indeed, it becomes evident that even if any strict periodisation is both flawed and deliberate, the choice to highlight the importance of the resistance in the construction of political subjectivity lies in the rather unique experience of the resistance as a collective power of politics for women.

Most autobiographical works do not contain such a long *a posteriori* intervention as Ombra's does. This long intervention articulating the meaning of the resistance to the growing of their political awareness is closely related to the genre in which each woman chooses to write about her experience. The memoirs studied here are often hybrid creations, including characteristics from various genres such as autobiography, oral testimony, and literary text. A personal memoir usually covers memories from a specific time, in this case, the resistance, or reflects upon a string of themed occurrences throughout their life, such as political activism more broadly. An autobiography covers a larger period, usually providing a historical account of one's lifetime. Ombra's text resembles more of an autobiography, where she examines several past experiences related to wartime and post-war politics. Even if women do not provide such a lengthy explanation vis-à-vis the construction of their political/revolutionary subjectivity, they do so through a smaller a posteriori intervention. For instance, Maria Karra in her chapter about 'Women and the Resistance', written in 1982, critically recalls women's positionality in the 1930s/1940s Greece, touching upon women's ignorance at the time, the notion of honour that penetrated every aspect of the Greek society, and her 'embarrassment' (ntropi) being around boys her own age prior to her involvement in the resistance, along with the emancipatory politics that came along with the resistance. However, in her memoir she depicts the resistance as providing her with an emancipatory frame of action that acted as a source of critical awareness towards gender relations. She recalls that "then the parties started…", where resisters in the mixed youth organisation of EPON gathered together using the 'party' as camouflage for political actions and

[932] Ibid, 31.
[933] Ibid, 43.

discussions, and it is there she started interacting with boys her age for the first time.[934] Later, she also mentions that for her and the young women in EPON, another battle had begun simultaneously with the resistance against the occupier: [the one] with the home (spitiko)."[935] Manolkidou Vetta also recalls how the resistance "created a new type of man, a new way of life,"[936] demonstrating how it is conceived as a pivotal event for her political involvement later.

By contrast, women who had already formed a political consciousness prior to their entrance into the resistance do not necessarily begin with the resistance experience as the first step towards their politicalisation. Gisele Guillemot, in her 2009 memoir, recalls that it is at the age of fourteen that "I'm beginning to grasp the full deception of this paternalistic system…" Her first steps into political activism were a result of her school years' experience in the working-class town Le Plateau in Calvados: "I think that's how I got my start in activism. grumbling about a despotic siren and workers who went to work without asking questions."[937] Guillemot recalls that this form of political awareness was crystallised into a more concrete communist identity only in the summer of 1936 (when she was around fifteen) when she came across Karl Marx's *Capital*.[938] Guillemot too demonstrates the importance of collective power of politics in her narration; it is indeed the interaction with comrades and the participation in the struggle -fighting together and sharing the risks- that plays a pivotal role in the construction of identity, which also explains the importance of the resistance for women.

Equally, women whose parents held antifascist beliefs and were involved in the struggle tend to place the awakening of their political awareness earlier, demonstrating an intergenerational construction of identity through family memory. These women highlight how their familial background experiences influenced the construction of their political subjectivity. Menapace,[939] writing in 2014, states that her parents were antifascist during the *Ventenio fascista*, and mentions in her memoir that already in 1941, at the age of 17, she was "decidedly anti-fascist."[940] However, in both cases, the importance of their resistance experience for their political ripening is manifested in the writing of a memoir primarily

[934] Καρρά, *Επονίτισα*, 61-62.
[935] Ibid, 103.
[936] Μανωλκιδου-Βέττα, *Θα σε λέμε Ισμήνη*, 44.
[937] Guillemot, and Humez, *Résistante*, 17.
[938] Given that Guillemot was born in 1922, she was 14 in 1936. Ibid, 18.
[939] Lidia Menapace has written before about her resistance experience, with the first work appearing in 1964: Lidia Menapace, *Memorie clandestine* (Bolzano: Centro di cultura dell'Alto Adige, 1964).
[940] Menapace, *Io, partigiana*, 39.

focusing on the topic of resistance, which functions as proof of how women make an explicit linkage between their resistance self and their post-war political mobilisation.

Moreover, women provide information about their post-war political involvement, which can also function as proof of how their resistance experience was a source of political education, which introduced them to new forms of political mobilisation and where women became aware of their abilities. For instance, Joyce Lussu begins her story with the events in the resistance but in her epilogue refers to her post-war anticolonial activism and interest in anticolonial wars; Lussu translated into Italian various works from Albanian, Turkish, Kurdish, Vietnamese, from Angola, Mozambique, and African American dissident authors.[941] The linearity behind the narration of events with the resistance as the beginning point of the narration demonstrates how her political journey from the resistance to her anticolonial beliefs and activism is seen as a logical continuation of her struggle. This is particularly important for the communist resistance that promotes internationalism, seeing all proletarian revolutions as part of one struggle. Indeed, the connection between participation in the resistance as a crucial component for shaping internationalist identity is exemplified with Madeleine Riffaud, who became involved in anti-imperialist struggles; After the war, Riffaud became a war correspondent reporting from the Algerian War of Independence for the Communist French newspaper *L'Humanité,* while she also stayed with freedom guerrillas in Vietnam for seven years.[942] To my awareness, however, Riffaud does not make an explicit connection between the resistance experience and her post-war involvement as an internationalist in anti-imperialist struggles in her memoir.

8.5. A Political Protest Against Oblivion[943]

The Greek personal memoirs differ from both the Italian and French ones as Greek resisters also write to protest the forty years of prosecution that followed the resistance upon the communist defeat in 1949. In Greece, memorial justice in terms of recognising EAM's members as national resisters had not occurred prior to the 1980s, and hence, the emergence of personal memoirs by former resisters was also a counter-narrative that aimed to provide visibility for neglected and ignored voices of former resisters and highlight their prosecution

[941] Lussu, *Portrait,* 114-135. In her memoirs, Joyce centres Emilio as a figure that was extremely important in shaping her political consciousness. Yet this does not diminish the importance of the resistance as an experience that combined the acknowledgement of 'oppression' with a revolutionary practice. For more about Lussu's translation work: Annarita Taronna, "En-gendering Translation as a Political Project The Subversive Power of Joyce Lussu's Activist Translation(s)," in *Feminist Translation Studies: Local and Transnational Perspectives,* ed. Olga Castro, Emek Ergun (New York: Routledge, 2017).
[942] For more about Madeleine Riffaud's life and post-war political mobilisation in antiimperialist struggles: Isabelle Mons, *Madeleine Riffaud: L' esprit de Résistance* (Paris: Payot, 2019).
[943] I was greatly influenced by a work related to the Spanish Civil War women's memory: Shirley Mangini, *Memories of Resistance: Women's Voices from the Spanish Civil War* (New Haven: London: Yale University Press, 1995).

for their beliefs in the post-Civil War right-wing state.[944] Therefore, all Greek memoirs by female authors are written from the 1980s and onwards, when EAM's resistance was formally recognised. This paved the way for women resisters to share their stories and experiences of resistance. Former female resisters foreground their experiences during the war, and present their struggle through a gendered lens, but, in the case of Greece, they also confront an unresolved individual and collective past.[945] This long-awaited recognition of their contribution to the national liberation struggle leads them to protest the forty-year silencing before the recognition of EAM's resistance. In Greece, women write to remedy a double forgetting: the oblivion of the memory of communist resistance *and* of women's resistance. This protest writing becomes apparent in the rationale for writing as articulated by the former female resisters themselves. Nikolakopoulou mentions "But so many years have passed; some have denied the vindication of our struggle and the sacrifices of our martyrs...and here comes the vindication...now that most of the fighters are killed or dead from the hardships and sufferings inflicted on them by the state of the *apatridon* (those without a homeland, who do not love their homeland metaphorically here- my comment) and the right-wing grabbers."[946] Karra even goes beyond a simple accusation against the right-wing state that prosecuted thousands of former resisters. She does not separate the period of Occupation and the post-Civil War state, rather equating the post-Civil War right-wing state with an extension of the Occupation: "Action under occupation was enough to send you to the firing squad. It was a crime. Those who acted paid dearly. All their lives in prison, exile, unemployment, prosecution. Nobody talked about these things for dozens of years."[947] Kostaki also recalls the long-term prosecution and imprisonment due to her involvement in the Communist Party and struggle from Metaxas' regime up until the fall of the dictatorship in 1974; sixteen years in prison, eleven years in exile.[948] She also attributes EAM's female members' prosecution to their emancipatory politics vis-à-vis women: "After the occupation, the right [referring to post-civil war regime], terrified by the social emancipation of women, took harsh measures against pioneering women. [The regime] imprisoned them, court-martialled them. [It] executed others. Many hundreds were exiled to Trikeri, Makronissos..."[949] Panayiotidou-Glenti also looks back on the hardships she encountered post-war due to her involvement in the communist resistance. Having graduated

[944] Based upon Anna Lisa Tota, and Trever Hagen, "Introduction: Memory work: naming pasts, transforming futures," in 'Routledge International Handbook of Memory Studies' (1st ed.), Tota, A.L., & Hagen, T. (Eds.). (2015). Routledge. https://doi-org.ezproxy2.lib.gla.ac.uk/10.4324/9780203762844
[945] Sarah Leggott, *Memory, War, and Dictatorship in Recent Spanish Fiction by Women* (Bucknell University Press, 2015), 1.
[946] Νικολακοπούλου, *Μία Επονίτισσα Θυμάται*, 10.
[947] Καρρά, *Επονίτισσα*, 11.
[948] Κωστάκη, *Μια Ζωή Γεμάτη Αγώνες,* 7.
[949] Ibid, 41.

from junior high school to be admitted at the Law School of Thessaloniki, she was denied the necessary 'certificate of social convictions':[950] "and when I dared to ask, I was told that 'you are not Greek'," [951] hinting that due to her involvement in the communist-led National Liberation Front, she was not Greek but a traitor of the nation. The post-Civil War right wing state deprived the communist resisters of their Greekness with the aim of delegitimising them and portraying them as traitors of the homeland. Writing years later, these women articulate their narrative as opposed to the dominant 'national mildness' narrative.

On the contrary, the prefaces in memoirs published by Italian and French resisters do not include such political statements that aim to get the historical record right and protest the oblivion imposed by the state. The less polarised memorialisation of the resistance in both countries and the avoidance of a full-scale Civil War in Italy meant that the resisters who participated in the communist-led movements, including women, were legitimate actors for storytelling and memorialisation. This is why many personal memoirs by former resisters in Italy and France published in the 1970s do not include prefaces and prologues that act as an indication of protest writing.[952] Instead, their introductions provide special thanks towards former comrades, as is the case with D'Este's or, even expressing gratitude to historians who worked with them in the production of the memoir, as is the case with Ombra's memoir. Regarding the Italian case study, Bracco, Ravera and Zangrandi did not include prefaces justifying their involvement in the resistance or explaining the reasoning behind the writing. There is no provision or need for such political statements that seek to break the silence and undo the oblivion of the state vis-à-vis the resistance legacy. Cagossi was even invited by ANPI to write down her memories related to her participation in the resistance, further affirming the legitimacy of the resistance myth in post-war Italy, especially within the left, and including the legitimacy of women narrating it.[953]

In France, too, the depoliticisation of resistance memory from the 1980s, as discussed in the previous chapter, means that the subject narrates in a non-polarised memorial

[950] The certificate of social convictions was a state document issued by the Greek police or army authorities between 1938 and from time to time until 1981, certifying that a citizen was neither a communist nor a communist sympathizer. Among others measures, during the Civil War, the certificates were included in the "Extraordinary Measures". In 1948, the certificates were institutionalised to cover the entire public sector, including for enrolment in universities.

[951] Παναγιωτίδου- Γκλέντη, *Γνωριμία με τις Αντάρτισσες*, 197.

[952] I have previously used a similar term vis-à-vis the translation of Palestinian literature into Greek referring to it as 'resistance translation' building on the term 'resistance literature'. See more: Christina Chatzitheodorou, "From Palestine to Greece: A Translated Struggle," Asymptote, January 10, 2024, https://www.asymptotejournal.com/blog/2024/01/10/from-palestine-to-greece-a-translated-struggle/. In the same pattern, I use the term *protest writing* to capture the reasoning behind Greek women's writing, and former resisters more generally, following the return from exile, their release from prisons, and the 'acceptance' of their resistance story.

[953] Cagossi, *da piccola italiana a partigiana combattente*, 7.

environment. Their narrations and personal memoirs acted as forms of resistance and protest against the erasure and marginalisation of women and their gendered memories from the narrative, aiming to include their side of the story in male hegemonic narratives but their writing did not aim to completely challenge the state of memory vis-à-vis the resistance more broadly. Their participation in the resistance did not need post-war 'validation' as was the case for Greece, and writing their memories did not function as a form of political protest of the memorial oblivion imposed by the state.

Therefore, contrary to Italy and France, in Greece, writing was also a form of catharsis after forty years of exile, prosecution, and imprisonment for thousands of former resisters who fought in EAM and later in DSE. In Greece, the Left reclaimed its myth of resistance, telling its own side of the story after forty years of exclusion from the narrative, perpetrated by the very state itself. However, their stories do not solely concern the resistance. For many women resisters in Greece, the memory of resistance between 1941-1944 is followed by memories of imprisonment, exile, and prosecution during and after the Civil War, including their prosecution during the military dictatorship between 1967-1974. For the Greek women who wrote in the 1980s, the resistance struggle was the beginning point of years of prosecution by the post-Civil War state, which led to double oblivion for women of the left. Soula Karanika's prologue in her memoir manifests this hybrid function of memoir both as a form to narrate the past through a gender-specific lens, but also as a political protest against the forty years of silencing. Karanika does not focus on her resistance story but rather describes the struggle of these women following the resistance while in prison in Civil War Greece, who were prosecuted for their "faith in the ideals of the National Resistance."[954]

Nevertheless, an example of how memory is always situated in a dialectical relationship with the present becomes evident in the different narratives that appear from the 1990s, where EAM is perceived as the sole representative of the resistance myth following the 1980s within the Left. Published in 1997, fifteen years after the recognition of EAM's resistance, Fani Manolkdidou-Vetta adopts a more critical stance towards KKE, without necessarily equating KKE with EAM's resistance "But the leadership of the KKE also had an immense share and was to blame (*referring to the Civil War that followed the liberation)*; it was not worthy of the fighters of the National Resistance and their struggle."[955] The collapse of socialism in the 1990s, the end of the Cold War and its narratives, the distancing

[954] Καρανίκα, *Για Μία Νέα Ζωή*, 8.
[955] Μανωλκίδου-Βέττα, *Θα σε λέμε Ισμήνη*, 53.

from the events of the Civil War, and the personal political journey of the author are among the reasons for this critical stance towards KKE. [956]

Conclusion

The women resisters who narrate their memories do so with the aim of challenging the male-dominated narrative of the resistance that prioritised military resistance over other forms until the 1970s. This challenging of the narrative was achieved through various forms, from oral testimonies and interviews to more holistic representations of the past self, such as a personal memoir or an autobiography. This chapter particularly focused on various personal memoirs written from the early 1940s until the present day. Women wrote their memories of resistance for various reasons. Several themes were common in all three cases, such as the need to memorialise former comrades and to transmit messages to the next generation. Nonetheless, the different post-war political paths that awaited the three countries also influenced the collective memory of the resistance as an event. The personal memoirs remain important historical artefacts that depict both the female participation in the struggle of resistance and their emergence within a historically specific time and place, influenced by the politics of memory and location in each case. Former female resisters appropriated their respective resistance myths to challenge the male dominated narrative while also articulating their gender-specific one. Throughout the years, women's ideas about resistance, their participation in the struggle and femininity were altered, along with the changing of social and gendered norms. Throughout their personal memoirs, women used various methods to reappropriate the narrative and make their own voices and stories heard. For instance, by memorialising other women, former comrades of theirs, they displayed the importance that resisters themselves attached to gender as a frame for understanding their collective resistance experience, demonstrating that telling their story was not solely a personal endeavour.

While these insights apply to Greece and the experience of Greek female resisters, in the case of Greece, the forty years of silencing that followed the resistance due to the communist defeat in the Civil War means that women resisters do not solely wish to challenge the male dominated narrative. In the case of Greece, the state's institutional memory up until 1982 is challenged. The personal memoirs act as a form of protest to demand a retrospective form of memorial justice for the silencing of their resistance memories until the time of their writing in the 1980s. Having experienced imprisonment and exile, both transformative political experiences, they come from a different positionality

[956] Fani Manolkidou Vetta was involved in the Communist Party in the 1970s following its legalization after the fall of the dictatorship, while later she became involved in SYRIZA.

compared to their French and Italian counterparts, whose storytelling is considered legitimate in the post-war state. Therefore, in the French and Italian personal memoirs, the intersections between female resisters' lived experiences and national discourses about the resistance produced following the war were not challenged in their totality. On the contrary, the Greek resisters include a prologue that consciously aims to set the historical record straight, presenting a form of protest writing that aims at challenging and correcting their earlier depiction as 'traitors'. They do not solely wish to challenge the absence of a more inclusive gender-specific narrative but to reject the discourses surrounding their resistance experience, challenging the post-war narrative in its totality. Indeed, Greek women rather than appropriating the resistance narrative to form their own gender-specific one, reject the state institutional narrative that existed about the resistance.

General Conclusion

"If the people are to be fed with bread, let me die for it."

The last words of Mairi Leontiadou, a laundress from Piraeus, Greece. She was executed in Averoff prison for refusing to turn in her neighbour who had given her a parcel to guard- which contained a pistol.

Contemporary Social History Archives (ASKI), Athens, Greece

The aim of this thesis has been to examine women's involvement in left-wing resistance movements in France, Italy, and Greece. From the 1970s and onwards, there has been a shift in approaching the resistance in a less militarised way, which facilitated the inclusion of women in the previously male-dominated historiography. Since then, several historians in each country have examined women's resistance, whose work has both greatly facilitated and shaped mine. Therefore, while women's resistance cannot be described as an under-researched topic, this thesis contribution is based on four interacting axes that aim to uncover both similarities and differences in the three examined countries. First, the comparative nature underlying this thesis highlights similarities between the three countries in terms of women's participation in the resistance. Such a systematic comparative historical study has enabled the identification of broader historical patterns on the roles of women in past and contemporary conflicts, revolution, and social movements. Second, these similarities are largely a result of the gender of the participants, which informed the way women participated in these left-wing movements in all three countries. Their gender shaped the modes of operation in this clandestine war, the discourses surrounding it, the participants' experiences, and their post-war memories of resistance. Indeed, women participated in the resistance in various ways through their gender, instrumentalising their femininity, while their memories were equally informed by their gender. For that reason, this thesis examined the roles of women in resistance(s) through a gendered lens, drawing on theories of gender, patriarchy, memory, and war.

Third, the focus particularly on left-wing movements was not *solely* a personal choice. These left-wing movements represented the biggest resistance movements in all three countries. More importantly, to use Rossana Rossanda's words once again, women 'arrived' at the resistance from two paths; the first ones to mobilise were the already politicised communist and socialist women who had acquired political experience prior to the war. This gender-specific pre-war moblisation and overall gendered experience had an impact on women's entrance and role in the resistance activities *during* the war. The national character of the war also facilitated the participation of a broader spectrum of women, especially younger ones, previously not involved politically, who were pulled and pushed

into the resistance, who crossed paths with an older generation of politically active women. At the same time, the resistance provided these young women with new, gendered, forms of political mobilisation.

In the resistance, the majority of women assumed gender-specific roles that superficially seemed to "match" women's 'essence': Women became involved as housewives and mothers, for their own families and for their nation. Yet in this alternate context, of war, occupation and clandestinity, these activities entailed risks, which sourced them with political significance. In this context, women manifested their agency by making a political choice to become involved in the struggle. While the majority of women followed a gendered trajectory, a small minority of women assumed the role of partisan. Their exceptionality reinforced the gendered binary of male combatants and female non-combatants rather than eliminating it. This exceptionality, reserved for a small minority, however, came with a bargain – a policing of their bodies and their behaviour. Female partisans' behaviour was both contained and regulated through the prohibition of romantic relationships between the partisans and exemplary behaviour from women themselves to avoid being deemed immoral.

Fourth, the post-war inclusion of women in the resistance historiography, the nature of the primary sources examined, along with the comparative nature of this thesis, shaped both the content and the methodology followed in this thesis. Indeed, the re-examination of women's roles in the resistance in retrospect means that examining the resistance solely as a Second World War [gendered] event hides aspects of the resistance memory and its gendered aspects in each country. This post-war shift in the historiography demonstrates how women's resistance is largely informed by memory. Furthermore, this is closely related to the sources examining women's contribution to the resistance, and particularly the sources used in this thesis. In this way, for the purposes of this thesis, the resistance was not solely examined as a national liberation war but also as a site of memory, where the politics of memory and location influence the resistance's gendered memory. While there are various post-war sources on women's resistance informed by memory, this thesis extensively used personal memoirs to "find" women's resistance. The double reading of personal memoirs has allowed me to construct an image of these women's resistance experience both as a Second World War event and as a site of memory, exploring how those women engage with their past selves from their present (that of the writing) positionality. The different politics of memory in each case inform these post-war sources and influence, in turn, women's writing, influenced by the different collective memories and collective grievances surrounding the resistance.

It has been demonstrated in the second part of this thesis that writing these personal memoirs and autobiographies is a product of both authors' personal memories and a reflection of the collective and public memories surrounding the resistance in each case. As such, any attempt to read these memoirs as solely a reflection of their Second World War experience does not allow us to understand the memorial afterlives of the resistance. Through the personal memoirs, we can see how these women reflect on their own lives post-war and how their post-war self is informed by both their gender identity and the politics of memory in each case. Indeed, for the second part of this thesis, the notion of gendered memory was crucial to my discussion of personal memoirs, both in terms of understanding the memoir as a historical artefact shaped by collective memory, and regarding how the resistance as a past event might be informed by gender.

Women authors remember and write; in that way, they re-appropriate the narrative and bring themselves and their female comrades back into history by memorialising them. In that way, they showed how sharing their story was not only a personal activity, but rather a collective act of resistance to the male-dominated History. Indeed, in France and Italy, women authors through their writing protest the erasure and marginalisation of women from the narrative, aiming to un-do that, without however completely challenging the state of memory vis-à-vis the resistance and its legacy. On the contrary, in Greece, women authors write to protest the oblivion imposed by the state vis-à-vis their resistance story, and along with that, they include their gendered experience.

While this thesis has hopefully contributed to the study of gendered resistance(s) in various ways, there are still important topics and variables that this thesis did not cover extensively and could be further researched in the future. One issue concerns the 'blindness' surrounding the social category of race and ethnicity, penetrating this research. Indeed, an intersectional approach could demonstrate the multifaceted connection between ethnicity, gender, and other social categories that interact with each other, and equally shaped the participation of different groups in the resistance. I was only able to provide some minor but hopefully useful comments on the participation of Slavophone Macedonians/Slav Macedonians in the case of Greece, which could pave the way for a more critical examination of their participation in the Greek resistance, especially vis-à-vis the participation of Slav Macedonian women.

Following, I consider it important to reflect on my own positionality as a subject that shaped both the content and the approach of this research. The geographical scope of the topic of my research was chosen based on my language skills since I was able to read in all

three languages without any issues due to my fluency throughout my research. Yet it would be wrong to diminish the much richer knowledge regarding the Greek case study. Born and raised in Greece, it was much easier for me to navigate the archival chaos, while also incorporating insights due to my living experience there that were rather impossible for the cases of France and Italy – despite my best attempt.

Last, I consider myself also a political subject, whose research has been shaped by my political involvement in the radical movements in the various cities I lived in, especially due to my involvement in the Greek left-wing movement throughout the years. Engaged from a young age, it played an important role in choosing the topic of this research; like other leftists and revolutionaries before me, I understand the resistance not solely as a Second World War event but as a revolutionary symbol that inspires future revolutionary action – a template for a better world rather than an event of the past. Submitting this thesis after three and half years, a thesis that initially wished to examine women's involvement in the communist and socialist resistance movements in Greece, Italy, and France, I realised that for me (as the Italian comrades shouted in the protests in the 1970s: la resistenza è rossa non democristiana), the resistance was 'red' not solely because the left represented the biggest movement in the examined countries, but because it became a revolutionary symbol that inspired later revolutionary action and continues to do so up until now.[957]

[957] Reflecting on my positionality, the politics of location and memory have also shaped my idea about the resistance as 'red'. In Greece, the resistance is depicted largely as a heritage of the left, which is due to the different political situation before, during, but more importantly, after the war. It was the left-wing, largely communist, resisters who became subject to prosecution in the aftermath of the war, and whose identity was shaped profoundly by experiences of exile and imprisonment due to their political beliefs. This has influenced how I see the resistance, also given my active participation in left-wing politics, including participating in commemoration events of the resistance. Yet as my examiner, Professor Claudia Baldoli, pointed out, the resistance was not solely red. Indeed, depicting it as solely red is rather simplistic, even if I myself consider the communist resistance pioneering. In Italy specifically, there is a stronger identification with the broader term of antifascism vis-à-vis the resistance, while in France, the resistance itself was much less politically coloured despite the fact that the communists represented the biggest movement there too. The discussion with Professor Baldoli has further prompted me to think about the political nature of the resistance memory. The twenty years of fascism shaped a broader antifascist identity, which included various political tendencies, while the avoidance of a full-scale Civil War also helped to sustain a more inclusive antifascist identity. On the contrary, the much more profound polarisation and political cleavage that *followed* the resistance in Greece due to the Civil War and the communist defeat led the protagonists of these events to hold more polarised memories. Equally, the exile and imprisonment of these former resistance fighters influenced their political identity in profound ways.

Bibliography

Archival Institutions

Greece

Archia Sichronis Kinonikis Istorias (Social and Contemporary History Archives- ASKI)

Epimorfotiko Kentro Charilaos Florakis (Educational Centre of the KKE Charilaos Florakis)

Genika Archia tou Kratous (General Archives of the State - GAK)

Eliniko Logotexniko kai Istoriko Archio (Hellenic Historical and Literary Archive- ELIA)

Benaki Museum

Diplomatic and Historical Archives Service (Ministry of External Affairs)

France

Contemporaine

National Archives

Campus Condorcet

Bibliothèque Marguerite Durand

Bibliothèque Nationale de France,

Service Historique de la Defense

Italy

Istituto Nazionale Ferrucio Parri

Unione Femminile Nazionale

Istituto piemontese per la storia della Resistenza e della società contemporanea "Giorgio Agosti" (ISTORETO)

Unione Donne Italiane (Union of Italian Women - UDI)

English Secondary Sources

Abakay, Yunus. "Kurdish gender politics: Funeral ceremonies of female fighters," Digest of *Middle East Studies* 33, no.11 (Jan 2024): 6-25.

Absalom, Roger. *Strange Alliance: Aspects of Escape and Survival in Italy, 1945-45*. OLSCHKI: Firenze, 1991.

Al-Ali, Nadje. "Memory, history and contestations in present-day Iraq." In *Beyond Women's Words: Feminisms and the Practices of Oral History in the Twenty-First Century*. Edited by Katrina Srigley, Stacey Zembrzycki, Franca Iacovetta. Routledge, 2018.

Alano, Jomarie. "Armed with a Yellow Mimosa: Women's Defence and Assistance Groups in Italy, 1943-45." *Journal of Contemporary History* 38, no. 4 (2003): 615-631.

Alison, Miranda. *Women and Political Violence: Female Combatants in Ethno-National Conflict*. New York: Routledge, 2009.

Alfonso, Kristal L. M. *The Female Fighters of World War II in Femme Fatale: An Examination of the Role of Women in Combat and the Policy Implications for Future American Military Operations*. Air University Press, 2009.

Alkan, Hilal. "The Sexual Politics of War: Reading the Kurdish Conflict Through Images of Women." *Les cahiers du CEDREF* 22 (2018): 68-92.

Allam, Nermin. *Women and the Egyptian Revolution: Engagement and Activism during the 2011 Arab Uprisings.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2017.

Andrieu, Claire. "Women in the French Resistance: Revisiting the Historical Record." *French Politics, Culture & Society* 18, no. 1 (2000): 13–27, http://www.jstor.org/stable/42843092;

Anthias, Floya and Nira Yuval-Davis. *Woman, Nation, State*. London: The Macmillan Press, 1989).

Anishchenkova, Valerie. "Autobiography and Nation-Building: Constructing Personal Identity in the Postcolonial World." In Autobiographical Identities in Contemporary Arab Culture. Edinburgh : Edinburgh University Press, 2014

Asprey, Robert B. *War in the Shadows: The Guerrilla in History*. Volume 1. Lincoln: iUniverse, 2002.

Atack, Margaret. "A nation united? The impossible memory of war and occupation in France." In Remembering the Second World War. Edited by Patrick Finney. Routledge, London, 2017.

Aubrac, Lucie. *Outwitting the Gestapo*. Translated by Konrad Bieber. University of Nebraska, 1993.

Balasingham, Adele. W*omen and Revolution: The Role of Women in Tamil Eelam National Liberation Struggle.* Gulf Committee and Oman Solidarity Campaign, 1983.

Baldoli, Claudia. "'With Rome and with Moscow': Italian Catholic Communism and Anti-Fascist Exile." *Contemporary European History* 25, no. 4 (2016): 619–43.

Bard, Christine, and Jean-Louis Robert, “The French Communist Party and Women 1920-1939: From “Feminism” to Familialism".” In *Women and Socialism - Socialism and Women: Europe Between the World Wars.* Edited by Helmut Gruber and Pamela Graves. New York, Oxford: Berghahn Books, 1998.

Baumgartner, Joseph. “Newspapers as Historical Sources.” *Philippine Quarterly of Culture and Society* 9, no. 3 (1981): 256-258, http://www.jstor.org/stable/29791732.

Bayard de Volo, Lorraine. “A Revolution in the Binary? Gender and the Oxymoron of Revolutionary War in Cuba and Nicaragua.” *Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society* 37, no. 2 (2012): 413-439.

Baydar, Gülsüm. “Embodied spaces of resistance.” *Women Studies International Forum* 50 (2015): 11-19, http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.wsif.2015.02.008.

Beckett, Ian F.W. *Modern Insurgencies and Counter-Insurgencies: Guerrillas and their Opponents since 1750*. London: New York, Routledge, 2001.

Behan, Tom. *The Italian Resistance: Fascists, Guerrillas and the Allies*. London; New York;: Pluto Press, 2009.

Berberian, Houri. “Gendered Narratives of Transgressive Politics: Recovering Revolutionary Rubina.” in *Age of Rogues: Rebels, Revolutionaries and Racketeers at the Frontiers of Empires*. Edited by Ramazan Hakkı Öztan, and Alp Yenen. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2021.

Betz, David. *Carnage and Connectivity: Landmarks in the Decline of Conventional Military Power*. New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2016.

Biess, Frank. “Introduction: Histories of the Aftermath.” In *Histories of the Aftermath: The Legacies of the Second World War in Europe.* Edited by Frank Biess, and Robert G. Moeller. New York: Oxford: Berghahn Books, 2010.

Bartolini, Guido. “Past, present, and future of the Italian memory of Fascism. Interviews with Luisa Passerini, Filippo Focardi, John Foot, Robert Gordon, and Philip Cooke.” *Modern Italy* 27 (2022): 303–325, doi:10.1017/mit.2022.30.

Boris, Eileen, Sandra Trudgen Dawson, and Barbara Molony. “Introduction.” in *Engendering Transnational Transgressions: From the Intimate to the Global.* Edited by Eileen Boris, Sandra Trudgen Dawson, and Barbara Molony. London: Routledge, 2020, doi:10.4324/9781003050384.

Bouta, Tsjeard, and Georg Frerks. *Gender, Conflict, and Development*. Washington, DC: World Bank, 2005.

Bracke, Maud Anne. “From Politics to Nostalgia: The Transformation of War Memories in France during the 1960s–1970s.” *European History Quarterly* 41, no. 1 (2011): 5–24, DOI: 10.1177/0265691410386423

Brown, Laurence. “"POUR AIDER NOS FRERES D'ESPAGNE", Humanitarian Aid, French Women, and Popular Mobilization during the Front Populaire.” *French Politics, Culture & Society* 25, no. 1 (Spring 2007): 30-48.

Butler, Judith. *Performative Acts and Gender Constitution: An Essay in Phenomenology and Feminist Theory, Theatre Journal* 40, no. 4. (Dec., 1988): 519-531.

Butler, *Bodies That Matter: On the Discursive Limits of "Sex."* London: Routledge, 1993.

Butler, *Gender Trouble*. London: Routledge, 1999.

Butler, *Notes Toward a Performative Theory of Assembly*. London: Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2015.

Calvino, Italo. *The path to the nest of spiders*. Translated by Archibald Colquhoun. New York: Ecco Press, 1976.

Campbell, Caroline. “Gender and Politics in Interwar and Vichy France.” *Contemporary European History* 27, no. 3 (2018): 482-499, doi:10.1017/S0960777317000108.

Carden-Coyne, Ana (ed). *Gender and Conflict since 1914: Historical and Interdisciplinary Perspectives*. New York: Palgrave, 2012.

Chang, Natasha V. *The Crisis-Woman: Body Politics and the Modern Woman in Fascist Italy*. University of Toronto Press, 2015.

Chatzitheodorou, Christina. “Ilektra Apostolou: A Greek Female Resistance Fighter and a Heroine of the Left.” *Twentieth Century Communism* 25, no. 25 (2024): 22-51.

Chatzitheodorou, Christina. 2025. “La Résistance à l’épreuve Du Genre: Edited by Laurent Douzou and Mercedes Yusta. Rennes: Presses Universitaires de Rennes, 2018, 250 Pp, Paperback, 25.00 €, ISBN 978 2 7535 7568 4.” *National Identities*, June, 1–4. doi:10.1080/14608944.2025.2515759.

Cheurfa, Hiyem. *Contemporary Arab Women’s Life Writing and the Politics of Resistance*. Edinburgh University Press; 2023.

Chimbos, Peter D. “Women of the 1941-44 Greek Resistance against the Axis: An Historical and Sociological Perspective.” *Atlantis* 28, no. 1 (2003): 28-35.

Crenshaw, Kimberlé W. “Demarginalizing the Intersection of Race and Sex: A Black Feminist Critique of Antidiscrimination Doctrine, Feminist Theory and Antiracist Politics.” U. Chi. Legal F. (1989): 139–167, https://scholarship.law.columbia.edu/faculty_scholarship/3007/.

Cockburn, Cynthia. *The Space Between Us*: *Negotiating Gender and National Identities in Conflict*. London: Zed Books, 1998.

Cooke, Phillip. *The Legacy of the Italian Resistance*. Basingstoke : Palgrave Macmillan, 2011.

Corner, Paul. "Women in Fascist Italy. Changing Family Roles in the Transition from an Agricultural to an Industrial Society," *European History Quarterly* 23, no. 1 (1993): 51-68.

Cossu, Andrea. "Commemoration and processes of appropriation: The Italian Communist Party and the Italian Resistance (1943–48)." *Memory Studies* 4, no. 4 (2011): 386–400.

D' Amelio, Dan A. "Italian Women in the Resistance, World War II." *Italian Americana* 19, no. 2 (2001): 127-141, http://www.jstor.org/stable/29776690.

Darden, Jessica Trisko. "Assessing the Significance of Women in Combat Roles." *International Journal (Toronto)* 70, no. 3 (2015): 454-462.

Deleuze, Gille, and Felix Guattari. A Thousand Plateaus, trans., B. Massumi. Minneapolis: Univ. of Minnesota Press, 1987.

Diamond, Hanna. *Women and the Second World War in France, 1939-1948: Choices and Constraints*. New York; Essex; Pearson Education-Longman, 1999.

de Grazia, Victoria. *How Fascism Ruled Women: Italy, 1922-1945*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1992.

Douzou, Laurent. "A Perilous History: A Historiographical Essay on the French Resistance." *Contemporary European History* 28, no. 1 (2019): 96-106, https://doi.org/10.1017/S0960777318000619.

Dwyer, Philip. *War Stories: The War Memoir in History and Literature.* Berghahn Books, 2016.

Eichner, Carolyn Jeanne. *Surmounting the Barricades: Women in the Paris Commune*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2004.

El Said, Maha, Lena Meari and Nicola Pratt (eds), *Rethinking Gender in Revolutions and Resistance: Lessons from the Arab World*. London, England: Zed Books, 2015.

Elshtain, Jean Bethke. *Women and War*. New York, N.Y: Basic Books, 1987.

Enloe, Cynthia H. *Does Khaki Become You: The Militarisation of Women's Lives.* 1st edition. Boston, MA; London: South End Press, 1983.

Evans, Martin. *Memory of Resistance: French Opposition to the Algerian War*. Bloomsbury, 1997.

Eyal, Gil. "Identity and Trauma: Two Forms of the Will to Memory." *History and Memory* 16, no. 1 (2004): 5-36.

Fanon, Frantz. *A dying colonialism*. New York: Grove Press, 1965.

Foot, John. *Italy's Divided Memory*. Basingstoke, Hampshire: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009.

Forcucci, Lauren E. “Battle for Births: The Fascist Pronatalist Campaign in Italy 1925 to 1938.” *Journal of the Society for the Anthropology of Europe* 10 (2010): 4-13, https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1556-5823.2010.00002.x.

Fourcade, Marie-Madeleine. *Noah’s Arch*. Translated by Kenneth Morgan. New York: E.P. Dutton & Company, Inc, 1974.

Fytili, Magda. “Including the "Nation's Enemies": The Long Politics of Recognition and Restitution during the Third Greek Republic (1974–2006).” *Journal of Modern Greek Studies* 40, no. 1 (May 2022): 195-222.

Gildea, Robert. *Fighters in the Shadows: A New History of the French Resistance*. Cambridge, Massachusetts: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2015.

Gluckstein, Donny. *A People’s History of the Second World War: Resistance Versus Empire.* London: Pluto Press, 2012.

Gobetti, Ada. *Partisan Diary: A Woman's Life in the Italian Resistance*. Translated and edited by Jomarie Alano. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014.

Gogoi, Amrita Pritam. “Nepal’s posing women guerrillas: memory, subjectivity and war-time photographs.” *European Bulletin of Himalayan Research* 61 (2023).

Goldstein, Joshua S. *War and Gender*: *How Gender Shapes the War System and Vice Versa*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001.

Golsan, Richard J. “The Legacy of World War II in France: Mapping the Discourses of Memory.” In *The Politics of Memory in Postwar Europe*. Edited by Richard Ned Lebow, Wulf Kansteiner, and Claudio Fogu. Duke University Press, 2006.

Göksel, Nisa. “Gendering Resistance: Multiple Faces of the Kurdish Women’s Struggle.” *Sociological Forum (Randolph, N.J.)* 34, no. S1 (2019): 1112-1131, https://www.jstor.org/stable/48558594.

Grayzel, Susan R. *Women's Identities at War: Gender, Motherhood, and Politics in Britain and France during the First World War*. London; Chapel Hill, N.C: University of North Carolina Press, 1999.

Guevara, Ernesto. *Guerrilla Warfare*. Translated by J.P. Morray. United States: BN Publishing, 2012.

Haugbolle, Sune. “Public and Private Memory of the Lebanese Civil War.” *Comparative Studies of South Asia, Africa and the Middle East* 25, no. 1 (2005): 191-203.

Hæstrup, Jørgen. *Europe Ablaze: An Analysis of the History of the European Resistance Movements, 1939-45*, Vol. 55. Odense: Odense University Press, 1975.

Hagemann, Karen, Stefan Dudink, and Sonya O. Rose. *The Oxford Handbook of Gender, War and the Western World since 1600.* New York: Oxford University Press, 2020.

Hart, Janet. “Women in the Greek Resistance: National Crisis and Political Transformation.” *International Labor and Working-Class History*, no. 38 (1990): 46–62, doi:10.1017/S014754790001019X.

Hart, Janet. *New Voices in the Nation: Women and the Greek Resistance, 1941-1964*. Cornell University Press, 1996.

Hayes, Graeme. “Resistancialism revisited: masculinity and national identity in Claude Berri’s Lucie Aubrac (1997).” *Studies in French Cinema* 1, no. 2 (2001): 108-117.

Higonnet, Margaret R. *Behind the Lines: Gender and the Two World Wars*. London; New Haven, Conn; Yale University Press, 1987.

Hiner, Hillary. “Memory Speaks from Today’: analyzing oral histories of female members of the MIR in Chile through the work of Luisa Passerini.” *Women's History Review* 25, no. 3 (2016): 382-407, DOI: 10.1080/09612025.2015.1071566.

Hionidou, Violetta. “Famine in Occupied Greece: Causes and Consequences.” In *Bearing Gifts to Greeks: Humanitarian Aid to Greece in the 1940s*. Edited by Richard Clogg. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007.

Hodgkin, Katherine, and Susannah Radstone. *Memory, History, Nation: Contested Pasts*. London; New Brunswick, N.J; Transaction Publishers, 2006.

Hondros, John Louis. *Occupation and Resistance: The Greek Agony, 1941-44*. New York, Pella, 1983.

Houghton, Frances. *The Veterans' Tale: British Military Memoirs of the Second World War*. Cambridge University Press, 2019. doi:10.1017/9781108690164.

Humbert, Agnes. *Resistance: Memoirs of Occupied France*. Translated by Barbara Melhor. Afterward by Julien Blanc. Bloomsbury: London, 2008.

Irving, Sarah. Leila Khaled: The Icon of the Palestinian Revolution. Pluto Press, 2012.

Jakana, Thomas L., and Kanisha D. Bond. “Women’s Participation in Violent Political Organizations.” *The American Political Science Review* 109, no. 3 (2015): 488–506. http://www.jstor.org/stable/43654428.

Kampwirth, Karen. *Feminism and the Legacy of Revolution: Nicaragua, El Salvador, Chiapas*. Athens, OH: Ohio University Press, 2004.

Kandiyoti, Deniz. “Bargaining with Patriarchy.” *Gender and Society* 2, no. 3 (1988): 274-290, http://www.jstor.org/stable/190357

Kandiyoti, Deniz. “Identity and Its Discontents: Women and the Nation.” *Millennium* 20, no. 3 (March 1991): 429-443, https://doi.org/10.1177/03058298910200031501.

Kassem, Fatma. *Palestinian Women: Narrative Histories and Gendered Memory*. Bloomsbury Academic & Professional, 1993.

Käser, Isabel. *The Kurdish Women's Freedom Movement: Gender, Body Politics and Militant Feminities*. Cambridge University Press, 2021.

Kaufmann, Dorothy. "Uncovering a Woman's Life: Edith Thomas (Novelist, Historian, Résistante)." *The French Review* 67, no. 1 (1993): 61-72, http://www.jstor.org/stable/397784.

Kedward, Harry Roderick. *Resistance in Vichy France: a study of ideas and motivation in the Southern Zone, 1940-1942.* Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1978.

Kedward, Rod. *The French Resistance and Its Legacy*. London: Bloomsbury Publishing Plc., 2022.

Kelley, Caroline E. *Women Writing War: The Life-writing of the Algerian moudjahidate*. Peter Lang, 2020.

Khalili, Laleh. *Heroes and Martyrs of Palestine: The Politics of National Commemoration*. Cambridge University Press, 2007.

Konstantopoulos, Christos. "Women and the National Youth Organisation of the Greek 4th of August Regime (1936-1941)." Undergraduate dissertation. Cambridge University, 2019.

Koos, Cheryl, and Daniella Sarnoff. "France." In *Women, Gender and Fascism in Europe 1919-1945.* Edited by Kevin Passmore. New Brunswick, New Jersey: Rutgers University Press, 2003.

Laliotou, Ioanna. "On Luisa Passerini: subjectivity, Europe, affective historiography." *Women's History Review* 25, no. 3 (2016): 408-426.

Lebow, Richard Ned. "The Memory of Politics in Postwar Europe." In *The Politics of Memory in Postwar Europe*. Edited by Richard Ned Lebow, Wulf Kansteiner, and Claudio Fogu. Duke University Press, 2006

Leggott, Sarah. *Memory, War, and Dictatorship in Recent Spanish Fiction by Women*. Bucknell University Press, 2015.

Lisiak, Agata. "Women in Recent Revolutionary Iconography." *IWM Junior Visiting Fellows' Conference Proceedings*, Vol. XXXIII (2014): 1-17, https://files.iwm.at/jvfc/33_2_Lisiak.pdf.

Ly, Aliou. *Women of the Portuguese Guinea Liberation War: De-gendering the History of Anticolonial Struggle.* Zed Books, 2024.

Malešević, Siniša. *The Sociology of War and Violence*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010.

Mangini, Shirley. *Memories of Resistance: Women's Voices from the Spanish Civil War*. New Haven: London: Yale University Press, 1995.

Marantzidis, Nikos, and Giorgios Antoniou. “The Axis Occupation and Civil War Bibliography: Changing Trends in Greek Historiography: 1941-2002.” *Journal of Peace Research* 41, no. 2 (2004): 223-231.

Martins, Vasco. “Hegemony, Resistance and Gradations of Memory: The Politics of Remembering Angola’s Liberation Struggle.” *History & Memory* 33, no. 2 (Fall/Winter 2021): 80-106, DOI: 10.2979/histmemo.33.2.04.

Masalha, Nur. *The Palestine Nakba: Decolonising History, Narrating the Subaltern, Reclaiming Memory*. Zed Books, 2012.

Mavrogordatos, Georgios. *Stillborn republic: social coalitions and party strategies in Greece*. Berkeley, I983.

McClintock, Ann. “Family Feuds: Gender, Nationalism and the Family.” *Feminist Review* 44, no. 1 (1993): 61-80.

Moore, Bob. 2000. Resistance in Western Europe. Oxford: Berg.

Morris, Penelope, and Perry Willson. “La Mamma: Italian Mothers Past and Present.” in *La Mamma. Interrogating a national stereotype*. Palgrave, 2018.

Morrison, Amy Victoria. “Communist Women’s Resistance in Occupied Paris: Engagement, Activism and Continuities from the 1930s to 1945.” University of Adelaide, Unpublished PhD thesis, 2018.

Mortimer, Mildred. “Looking back on a nation’s struggle: women’s reflections on the Algerian War of liberation.” *Modern & Contemporary France* 31, no. 1 (2022): 59–74. doi:10.1080/09639489.2022.2128316.

Mortimer, Mildred. *Women Fight, Women Write: Texts on the Algerian War*. London; Charlottesville; University of Virginia Press, 2018.

Muhanna-Matar, Aitemad. “The emerging intersectional performative gender of displaced Syrian women in southeast Turkey.” *Gender, Place & Culture* 29, no. 6 (2022): 772-792, DOI: 10.1080/0966369X.2021.1887091.

Müller, Jan-Werner. “Introduction: the power of memory, the memory of power and the power over memory.” in *Memory and Power in Post-War Europe: Studies in the Presence of the Past*. Edited by Jan-Werner Müller Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002.

Naguib, Nefissa. *Women, Water and Memory: Recasting Lives in Palestine*. BRILL, 2008.

Nash, Mary. “‘Milicianas’ and Homefront Heroines: Images of Women in Revolutionary Spain (1936–1939).” *History of European Ideas* 11, no. 1–6 (1989): 235–44, doi:10.1016/0191-6599(89)90212-X.

Nikro, Norman Saadi. *The Fragmenting Force of Memory: Self, Literary Style and Civil War in Lebanon*. Cambdrige Scolars Publishing, 2012.

Nora, Pierre. "Between Memory and History: Les Lieux de Mémoire." *Representations*, no. 26 (1989) : 7–24, https://doi.org/10.2307/2928520.

Paletschek, Sylvia and Sylvia Schraut. "Introduction: Gender and Memory Culture in Europe – Female Representations in Historical Perspective." In *The Gender of Memory Cultures of Remembrance in Nineteenth- and Twentieth-Century Europe.* Edited by Sylvia Paletschek and Sylvia Schraut. Frankfurt a. M.; New York: Campus, 2008.

Passerini, Luisa. F*ascism in Popular Memory: The Cultural Experience of the Turin Working Class.* Cambridge University Press, 1987.

Pattinson, Juliette. *Behind Enemy Lines: Gender, Passing and the Special Operations Executive in the Second World War,* Cultural History of Modern War Series. Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2007.

Pattinson, Juliette. "'Passing Unnoticed in a French Crowd': The Passing Performances of British SOE Agents in Occupied France." *National Identities* 12, no. 3 (2010): 291-308.

Pavone, Claudio. *A Civil War: A History of the Italian Resistance*. London; New York;: Verso, 2013.

Peniston-Bird, Corina, and Emma Vickers. *Gender and the Second World War*: *Lessons of War*. Basingstoke, Hampshire: Palgrave Macmillan.

Perry, Alan R. "Literary and Cinematic Representations of Sacred Italian Resistance Memory: The Holy Partisan-Martyr as Hero." *Forum Italicum* 33, no. 2 (1999): 433-457.

Peschanski, Denis. "Remembrance of the Second World War in France." *Chemins de Mémoire*, n.d., https://www.cheminsdememoire.gouv.fr/en/remembrance-second-world-war-france.

Pető, Andrea, and Gale (Firm). *Gender: War*. Farmington Hills, Mich: Macmillan Reference USA, a part of Gale, Cengage Learning, 2017.

Pezzino, Paolo. "The Italian Resistance between history and memory." *Journal of Modern Italian Studies* 10, no. 4 (2005): 396 – 412.

Phoenix, Ann, and Pamela Pattynama. "Intersectionality." *European Journal of Women's Studies* 13, no. 3 (2006): 187-192.

Poulos, Margarite. *Arms and the Woman: Just Warriors and Greek Feminist Identity*. Columbia, 2010.

Poulos, Margarite. *Refugee to Revolutionary: A Transnational History of Greek Communist Women in Interwar Europe*. Vanderbilt University Press, 2024.

Purcell, Jennifer. “The Domestic Soldier: British Housewives and the Nation in the Second World War: British Housewives and the Nation in the WWII.” *History Compass* 4, no. 1 (2006): 153-160.

Quinan, Christine. “Postcolonial Memory and Masculinity in Algeria.” *Interventions* 19, no. 1 (2017): 17-35, DOI: 10.1080/1369801X.2016.1142881.

Reynolds, Siân. *France Between the Wars: Gender and Politics*. London; New York: Routledge, 1996.

Reynolds, Siân. “Women and the Popular Front in France: The Case of the Three Women Ministers.” *French History* 8, no. 2 (1994): 196-224.

Reynolds, Siân. “The lost generation of French feminists? anti-fascist women in the 1930S.” *Women's Studies International Forum* (November–December 2000): 679-688.

Santagata, Alessandro. “Italy’s Catholic Partisan: History and Narrative,” *Modern Italy* 30, no. 2 (2025): 161–76. https://doi.org/10.1017/mit.2024.74.

Santoire, Bénédicte. “Beyond feminist heroines: framing the discourses on Kurdish women fighters in three types of Western media,” *Feminist Media Studies* 23, no. 4 (2023): 1610-1626, DOI: 10.1080/14680777.2022.2041690.

Sasson-Levy, Orna. “Women’s Memories of Soldiering: An Intersectionality Perspective in Gendered Wars.” In *Gendered Memories: Feminist Conversations on War, Genocide and Political Violence*. Edited by Ayse Gul Altinay, and Andrea Pető. London; New York: Routledge, 2016.

Sawers, Catherine. “The Women of *Bataille d’Alger*: Hearts and Minds and Bombs.” *Journal of Middle East Women’s Studies* 10, no. 2 (2014): 80–106, https://doi.org/10.2979/jmiddeastwomstud.10.2.80.

Sankara, Thomas. *Women’s liberation and the African freedom struggle*. New York, London, Montreal, Sydney: Pathfinder, 1990. 12th edition.

Schmoll, Brett. “Solidarity and Silence: Motherhood in the Spanish Civil War.” *Journal of Spanish Cultural Studies* 15, no. 1-2 (2014): 475-489.

Schwartz, Paula. “Partisanes and Gender Politics in Vichy France.” *French Historical Studies* 16, no. 1 (Spring 1989): 126-151.

Shepherd, Ben H., and Juliette Pattinson. “Partisan and Anti-Partisan Warfare in German-Occupied Europe, 1939-1945: Views from Above and Lessons for the Present.” *Journal of Strategic Studies* 31, no. 5 (2008): 675-693.

Sowerwine, Charles. *Sisters or Citizens? Women and Socialism in France since 1876*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982.

Swenson, Astrid. “Memory, Gender, and Antifascism in France and Britain in the 1930s.” In *The Gender of Memory: Cultures of Remembrance in Nineteenth and Twentieth-Century Europe.* Edited by Sylvia Paletschek and Sylvia Schraut. Frankfurt a. M.; New York: Campus, 2008.

Suleiman, Susan Rubin. “History, Heroism, and Narrative Desire: The "Aubrac Affair" and National Memory of the French Resistance.” *South Central Review* 21, no. 1, Politics and Aesthetics of Memory (Spring, 2004): 54-81, https://www.jstor.org/stable/40039826.

Reid, Donald. “French Singularity, the Resistance and the Vichy Syndrome: Lucie Aubrac to the Rescue.” *European History Quarterly* 36, no. 2 (2006): 200-220.

Sarafis, Stefanos. *ELAS: Greek Resistance Army*. Translated by Sylvia Moody. London: Merlin Press, 1980.

Schwartz, Paula. “Partisanes and Gender Politics in Vichy France.” *French Historical Studies* 16, no. 1 (Spring 1989): 126-151.

Scott, Joan Wallace. *Feminism and History*. Oxford: New York: Oxford University Press, 1996.

Shepherd, Ben H. “Guerrillas and Counterinsurgency.” In *The Cambridge History of the Second World War*. Edited by John Ferris and Evan Mawdsley. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015.

Slaughter, Jane. *Women and the Italian Resistance, 1943-1945*. Denver: Colorado: Arden Press, 1997.

Sjoberg, Laura, and Sandra Via, eds., *Gender, War and Militarism: Feminist Perspectives*. Westport, CT: Praeger Security, 2010.

Sjoberg, Laura. *Gendering Global Conflict: Toward a Feminist Theory of War*. New York: Columbia University Press, 2013.

Sjoberg, Laura. *Gender, War, and Conflict*. Cambridge: Polity Press, 2014.

Skalidakis, Yannis. “From Resistance to Counterstate: The Making of Revolutionary Power in the Liberated Zones of Occupied Greece, 1943–1944.” *Journal of Modern Greek Studies* 33, no. 1 (May 2015): 155-184.

Stewart, Fiona M. *Guerra civile*: experience, memory and contrasting histories of the Resistance in Italy, *Journal of Modern Italian Studies* 23, no. 3 (2018): 293-312, DOI: 10.1080/1354571X.2018.1459410.

Summerfield, Penny. “Gender and War in the Twentieth Century.” *International History Review* 19, no. 1 (1997): 3-15.

Summerfield, Penny. *Reconstructing Women’s Wartime Lives*. Manchester: New York: Manchester University Press, 1998.

Tambor, Molly. “La revisione di sé: Women’s Autobiographies of the Resistance.” in *The Concept of Resistance in Italy: Multidisciplinary Perspectives*. Edited by Maria Laura Mosco, and Pietro Pirani. Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Inc 2017.

Taronna, Annarita. “En-gendering Translation as a Political Project
The Subversive Power of Joyce Lussu’s Activist Translation(s).” In *Feminist Translation Studies: Local and Transnational Perspectives*. Edited by Olga Castro, Emek Ergun. New York: Routledge, 2017.

Taylor, Sandra C. *Vietnamese Women at War: Fighting for Ho Chi Minh and the Revolution*. Kansas: University Press of Kansas, 1999.

Thapar-Björket, Suruchi. “Gender, Nations and Nationalism.” In the Oxford Handbook of Gender and Politics. Edited by Georgina Waylen, Karen Celis, Johanna Kantola, and S. Laurel Weldon. New York: Oxford University Press, 2013.

Tosh, John. “Hegemonic Masculinity and the history of gender.” In *Masculinities in Politics and War: Gendering Modern History*. Edited by Stefan Dudink, Karen Hagemann, and John Tosh. Manchester; New York;: Manchester University Press, 2004.

Tota, Anna Lisa and Trever Hagen. “Introduction: Memory work: naming pasts, transforming futures.” In *Routledge International Handbook of Memory Studies*. Edited by Anna Lisa Tota and Trever Hagen. Abingdon, Oxon: Routledge, 2016.

Tse-Tung, Mao. *On guerrilla Warfare*. Translated by Samuel B. Griffith. Virginia: Martino Fine Books, 2017.

Tsoutsoumpis, Spiros. *A History of the Greek Resistance in the Second World War: The People's Armies*. Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2017.

Tynan, Avril. “Demythologizing de Gaulle: History as Myth and Myth as Hermeneutic in France after Vichy and Algerian Independence.” *Nottingham French Studies* 61, no. 1 (2022): 1-16, Edinburgh University Press.

Vince, Natalya. *Our Fighting Sisters: Nation, Memory and Gender in Algeria, 1954-2012*. Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2016.

Voglis, Polymeris, and Ioannis Nioutsikos. “The Greek Historiography of the 1940s. A Reassessment.” *Südosteuropa* 65, no. 2 (2017): 316-333.

Voldman, Danièle. *Hommes et femmes dans la France en guerre (1914-1945).* Payot, 2003.

Weitz, Margaret Collins. *Sisters in the Resistance: How Women Fought to Free France, 1940-1945*. New York: J. Wiley, 1995.

West, Candace, and Don H. Zimmerman. “Doing Gender.” *Gender & Society* 1, no. 2 (1987): 125-151.

Wieviorka, Olivier. “Structurations, Modes d’intervention et Prises de Décision.” *Le Mouvement Social,* no. 180 (1997) :55-68, https://doi.org/10.2307/3779348.

Wilson, Perry R. "Women, War and the Vote: gender and politics in Italy, 1940–46." *Women's History Review* 7, no. 4 (1998): 617-623, https://doi.org/10.1080/09612029800200190.

White, Ralph. *The Unity and Diversity of the European Resistance in Resistance in Europe 1939-1945*. Edited by Stephen Hawes, and Ralph White. London: Allen Lane, 1975.

Whitney, Susan B. "Embracing the Status Quo: French Communists, Young Women and the Popular Front." *Journal of Social History* 30, no. 1 (1996): 29-53.

Wieviorka, Olivier. *Divided Memory: French Recollections of World War II from the Liberation to the Present.* Translated by George Holoch. Standford University Press, 2012.

Wilhelm, Maria de Blasio. *The Other Italy: Italian Resistance in World War II*. New York: London: W.W. Norton & Company, 1988.

Young, Robert J. C. "May 1968: Anticolonial Revolution for a Decolonial Future." *Interventions* 23, no. 3 (2020): 432–47. doi:10.1080/1369801X.2020.1843517.

Yuval-Davis, Nira. *Gender & Nation*. London; Thousand Oaks; New Delhi: Sage Publications, 1997.

French Secondary Sources

Albertelli, Sebastien, Julien Balance and Laurent Douzou, *La lutte clandestine en France : Une histoire de la Résistance 1940-1944*. Éditions du Seuil, 2019.

Albertelli, Sébastien. *Elles ont suivi de Gaulle - Histoire du Corps des Volontaires françaises*. Perrin, 2020.

Andrieu, Claire. "Les Résistantes, Perspectives de Recherche." *Le Mouvement Social*, no. 180 (1997): 69–96. https://doi.org/10.2307/3779349.

Astol-Lacour, Catherine. *Le genre de la Résistance. La Résistance féminine dans le Nord de la France*. Paris, Les Presses de Sciences Po, 2015.

Aubrac, Lucie. *La Résistance (naissance et organisation*). Paris: Robert Lang, 1945.

Aubrac, Lucie. *Ils partiront dans l'ivresse : : Lyon, mai 43, Londres, février 44*. Paris : Seuil, 1984.

Bohec, Jeanne. *La plastiqueuse à bicyclette*. Éditions du Félin : Paris, 2022.

Capdevila, Luc. ''La mobilisation des femmes dans la France combattante (1940-1945).'' *Clio. Histoire, femmes et sociétés* 12, 2000. Mis en ligne le 24 mai 2006. Consulté le 22 avril 2022, URL : http://journals.openedition.org/clio/187 ; DOI : https://doi.org/10.4000/clio.187.

Capdevila, Luc. "Résistance civile et jeux de genre : France-Allemagne-Bolivie-Argentine, Deuxième Guerre mondiale – années 1970-1980." *Annales de Bretagne et des pays de*

l'Ouest 108, no. 2 (2001-2002) :103-128, DOI : 10.4000/abpo.1737, https://www.cairn.info/revue-annales-de-bretagne-et-des-pays-de-l-ouest-2001-2-page-16.htm.

Carquain, Sophie. *Nous étions résistantes*. Alisio, 2020.

Chaliand, Gérard. "Guérillas et Terrorismes." *Politique Étrangère* 76, no. 2 (2011) : 281-291, http://www.jstor.org/stable/42715902.

Chaubin, Hélène. "Femmes dans la Résistance méditerranéenne." *Clio. Femmes, Genre, Histoire* 1. 1995, URL : http://journals.openedition.org/clio/514 ; DOI : https://doi.org/10.4000/clio.514.

Chombart de Lauwe, Marie-José. *Toute une vie de résistance*. POP'COM, 2002.

Débordes, Jacqueline. *La Guerre Secrète à bicyclette*. Tome 3 *: Simone Léveillé.* Broché, 2003.

Della Sudda, Magali. "Socio-histoire des formes de politisation des femmes conservatrices avant le droit de suffrage en France et en Italie. La Ligue patriotique des Françaises (1902–1933) et l'Unione fra le donne cattoliche d'Italia (1909–1919)." PhD diss., École des Hautes Études en Sciences Sociales, Paris, 2007.

Dreyfus, François-Georges*. Histoire De La Résistance: 1940-1945*. Paris: Fallois, 1996

Douzou, Laurent, and Mercedes Yusta (Dir.). *La Resistance à l'épreuve du genre : Hommes et femmes dans la Résistance antifasciste en Europe du Sud (1936-1949)*. Presses Universitaires de Rennes, 2018.

Douzou, Laurent. "Résistance, une affaire d'hommes ?" *Les Cahiers de l'Institut d'Histoire du Temps Présent*. Identités féminines et violences politiques (1936-1946). No. 31. (octobre 1995): 11-24, DOI : https://doi.org/10.3406/ihtp.1995.2311.

Durand, Pierre. *Danielle Casanova : l'indomptable*. Précédé d'un entretien avec Geneviève de Gaulle. Paris, Messidor, 1990.

Francezon, Louise. *L'espionne de la Seconde Guerre Mondiale : pratiques et représentations d'une "masculinisation" de la femme*. Presses universitaires de Rennes, 2024.

Guillon, Jean-Marie and Pierre Laborie. *Mémoire et Histoire : Résistance*. Toulouse, Éditions Privat : 1995.

Guillon, Jean-Marie. "L'Affaire Aubrac, ou la dérive d'une certaine façon de faire l'histoire." *Modern & Contemporary France* 7, no. 1 (1999) : 89-93, DOI: 10.1080/09639489908456472.

Guillemot, Giséle, and Samuel Humez, *Résistante : Mémoires d'une Femme de la Resistance à la Déportation*. Éditions Michel Lafon, 2009.

Kristjánsdóttir, María Björg. “Les femmes et la Résistance: une histoire oubliée,” Háskóli Íslands. University of Iceland. September 2010. https://www.fondationresistance.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/05/Doc00143-1.pdf.

Lacour-Astol, Catherine. *Le genre de la Résistance : la Résistance féminine dans le Nord de la France*. Paris : Sciences po, les presses, DL 2015.

Lecul, Serge. *Résistance Vimeu 1942-1944*. Souvenirs recueillis par Hubert Quilliot. Fressenneville, Imp. Carré, 1994.

Lefebvre-Filleau, Jean-Paul. *Femmes de la Résistance, 1940-1945*. Monaco : Éditions du Rocher, 2020.

Les Femmes dans la Résistance, *Actes du Colloque*. Paris : Éditions du Rocher, 1975.

Loulis, Jean. “LA RÉSISTANCE EN GRÈCE.” *Revue d’histoire de La Deuxième Guerre Mondiale et Des Conflits Contemporains* 34, no. 136 (1984): 91–110, http://www.jstor.org/stable/25729218.

Maerten, Fabrice. “La Résistance, une école d'émancipation pour les femmes ? La réalité nuancée du Hainaut belge.” In *Femmes et Résistance en Belgique et en zone interdite*. Lille : Publications de l’Institut de recherches historiques du Septentrion, 2007.

Martin, Jean Pierre. *Femmes dans la Résistance - Aux armes, citoyennes !*. Nouvelles Éditions Sutton, 2015.

Michel, Henri. *Histoire De La Résistance en France (1940-1944)*. 4th edition, Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1965.

Mons, Isabelle. *Madeleine Riffaud : L’Esprit de Resistance.* Paris : Payot, 2019.

Ouzoulias Romagon, Cécile. *J’étais agent de liaison FTPF*. Ouvrage réalisé avec la collaboration de Raymond Lavigne. Paris : Éditions Messidor, 1998.

Pavone, Claudio. “Les objectifs de la Résistance: le cas d'Italie.” in *La Résistance et les Français: villes, centres et logiques de decision.* Actes du Colloque international, Cachan, IHTP, 1995.

Pennetier, Claude, and Bernard Pudal. “La Part des femmes, des femmes a part.” In *Le sujet communiste.* Édité par Claude Pennetier and Bernand Pudal. Presses Universitaires de Rennes, 2014), https://doi.org/10.4000/books.pur.50557.

Pujol, Rosemonde. *Nom de guerre Colinette 1941-1944*. De l'Armançon, 2003.

Quintenelle, Élisabeth Rioux. [Marianne]. *La guerre sans arme*. Éditions de Belledonne, 1996.

Riffaud, Madeleine. *On l’appelait Rainer*. Paris : Éditions Julliard, 1994.

Rousso, Henry. “De la résistance, du résistancialisme et des historiens.” in L'engagement et l'émancipation : Ouvrage offert à Jacqueline Sainclivier. Rennes : Presses universitaires de Rennes, 2015. DOI: https://doi.org/10.4000/books.pur.90663.

Sill, Édouard. “Nos camarades femmes.” In *¡Solidarias! Les volontaires étrangères et la solidarité internationale féminine durant la guerre d’Espagne (1936-1939)*. Édité par Édouard Sill. Rennes: Presses universitaires de Rennes, 2022.

Terrenoire, Élisabeth. *Combattantes sans uniforme : les femmes dans la résistance*. Préface par Geneviève de Gaulle. Paris: Bloud et Gay, 1946.

Thalmann, Rita. “L’oubli Des Femmes Dans l’historiographie de La Résistance.” *Clio. Femmes, Genre, Histoire*, no. 1 (1995): 21-35, http://www.jstor.org/stable/44668330.

Thibault, Laurence. *Les femmes et la Résistance*. Préface par Jean-Louis Crémieux-Brilhac. Paris: Association pour des études sur la résistance intérieure : Documentation française, 2006.

Tillon, Raymonde. *J’écris ton nom, Liberté*. Éditions du félin, 2002.

Rossiter, Margarete L. “Le Role des femmes dans la Résistance en France.” *Guerres Mondiales et Conflits Contemporains,* no. 155 (1989) : 53-62, http://www.jstor.org/stable/25730596.

Rousso, Henry. *Le Syndrome De Vichy De 1944 à Nos Jours*. Éditions du Seuil, 1990.

Wieviorka, Olivier. *Histoire De La Résistance: 1940-1945*. Paris: Perrin, 2013.

Saigal, Monique. *Héroïnes françaises, 1940-1945 : courage, force et ingéniosité*. Monaco : Éditions du Rocher, 2008.

Salonne, Marie Paule. *Fends la Bise: Scenes du Maquis Breton*. France: Éditions Bloud & Gay, 1945.

Schwartz, Paula. “Résistance et Différence Des Sexes : Bilan et Perspectives.” *Clio. Femmes, Genre, Histoire*, no. 1 (1995):67-88, http://www.jstor.org/stable/44668333.

Studer, Brigitte. “Communisme et féminisme.” *Clio*: *Femmes Gender Histoire* 41 (2015): 139-152, DOI : https://doi.org/10.4000/clio.12393.

Italian Secondary Sources

Alloisio, Mirella, and Giuliana Beltrami. *Volontarie della Libertà 8 settembre 1943 -25 Aprile 1945*. Mazzotta. Milano, 1981.

Alloisio, Mirella, and Giuliana Beltrami Gadola, *Volontarie della libertà*. Bertoni, 2022.

Antonelli, Laura. *Voci dalla storia. Le donne della Resistenza in Toscana tra storie di vita e percorsi di emancipazione*. Pentalinea, 2006.

Battaglia, Roberto. *Storia Della Resistenza Italiana*. Vol. 129. Torino: Einaudi, 1970.

Bellina, Luisa, and Maria Teresa Sega. *Tra la città di Dio e la città dell'uomo. Donne cattoliche nella Resistenza Veneta*. Istituto Veneziano per la Storia della Resistenza e della Società Contemporanea & Istituto per la storia della resistenza e della società contemporanea della Marca trevigiana, 2005.

Benelli, Giuseppe. *La donna nella Resistenza in Liguria*. Firenze La nuova Italia, 1979.

Bertolini, Tatiana, and Valter Molinaro. *Fiamma Partigiana all' Alfa Romeo: Il diario di Antonietta Romano e la Resistenza al Portello.* Gligoassociati editore, 2020.

Bertolo, Bruna. *Donne nella Resistenza in Piemonte: infermiere, staffette partigiane, madri coraggio, deportate, combattenti, martiri*. Sant'Ambrogio di Torino: Susalibri, 2014.

Borioli, Daniele, and Roberto Botta. "Sulla moralità nella Resistenza: Conversazione con Claudio Pavone." *Quaderno di Storia Contemporanea* 10 (1991): 19–42.

Bortolotti, Bruna. *Le donne nella Resistenza antifascista e la questione femminile in Emilia-Romagna: 1943-1945*. Milano: Vangelista, 1978.

Bracco, Cesarina. *la staffetta garibaldina*. Presentazione di Luigi Longo. Istituto per la Storia della Resistenza in provincia di Vercelli Borgosesia, 1976.

Bravo, Anna. "Simboli del materno." In *Donne e uomini nelle guerre mondiali.* Terza Edizione. A cura di Anna Bravo. Editori Laterza, 2008.

Bresciani, Marco. *Quale antifascismo?: Storia di Giustizia e Libertà* (Carocci, 2017).

Bruzzone, Anna M., and Rachele Farina, *La Resistenza taciuta. Dodici vite di partigiane piemontesi*. Bollati Boringhieri, 2016.

Cannella, Ideale. *Donne di Grosio; partigiane senza brevetto*. Roma: Patria Indipendente, 1963.

Chiarini, Rina, and Remo Scappini. *Ricordi della Resistenza*. Cooperativa editografica Toscana, 1974.

d'Este, Ida. *Croce Sulla Schiena*. Verona: Cierre Edizioni, 2018.

de Luna, Giovanni. *Donne in oggetto, L'antifascismo nella societa italiana, 1922-1939*. Bollati Boringhieri, 1995.

Dogliani, Patricia. *Rappresentazione e memoria della Guerra in Italia e in Francia, in Storia e Memoria: la Seconda guerra mondiale nella costruzione della memoria europea*. Museo Storico in Trento, 2007.

Donne contro: protagonismo delle donne e soggettività femminile tra guerra, fascismo e resistenza: atti del convegno Bondeno, 10 marzo 1995.

Donne e resistenza: atti del convegno: Pisa, 19 giugno 1978.

Focardi, Filippo. *La guerra della memoria: La Resistenza nel dibattito politico italiano dal 1945 a oggi*. Roma; Bari; E*ditori Laterza, 2005.*

Focardi, “La memoria della guerra e il mito del «bravo italiano». Origine e affermazione di un autoritratto collettivo.” *Italia Contemporanea* 220-221 (settembre-dicembre 2000): 393-99.

Istituto varesino per la storia dell’Italia contemporanea e del movimento di liberazione, e Luigi Baggiani. *Mezzo secolo fa: guerra e resistenza in provincia di Varese*. Milano: Angeli, 1995.

Giacobbe, Iolanda Crimi. *Donne siciliane nella resistenza*. Catania: Circolo Anna Frank, 1962.

Guidetti Serra, Bianca. *Compagne: Testimonianze di partecipazione politica femminile*. Torino: Einaudi, 1977.

“Le donne nella Resistenza.” In *La resistenza bresciana*. *Rassegna di studi e documenti.* Brescia: Istituto storico della Resistenza bresciana, 1988.

Liotti, Caterina, and Natascia Corsini, *Pane, Pace, Libertà: I Gruppi di Difesa della Donna per l’Assistenza ai combattenti della Libertà a Modena (1943-1945)*. Modena: Centro documentazione donna, 2018.

Lussu, Joyce. *Portrait*. Roma: L’Asino d’oro, 2012.

Martocchia, Andrea. *I partigiani jugoslavi nella Resistenza italiana. Storie e memorie di una vicenda ignorata*. Odradek, 2011.

Meloni, Iara*. Memorie resistenti. Le donne raccontano la Resistenza nel Piacentino*. Le Piccole Pagine, 2015.

Minoranze linguistiche e resistenza: Friuli-Venezia Giulia, Italia, Europa: Atti del Convegno : Udine, 8 e 9 maggio 2008.

Movimento femminile della democrazia Cristiana. *Donne cristiane nella resistenza*. Condividi, 1956.

Oliva, Elsa. *Ragazza Partigiana.* Firenze: La Nuova Italia, 1974.

Ombra, Marisa. *La bella politica: La Resistenza, “Noi donne”, il femminismo.* Prefazione di Anna Bravo. Edizioni Seb 27, 2009.

Orlandini, Laura. *La democrazia delle donne. I Gruppi di Difesa della Donna nella costruzione della Repubblica (1943-1945)*. Roma: BraDypUS, 2018.

Pavone, Claudio. *Una Guerra Civile: Saggio storioco sula moralità nella Resistenza* . Torino: Bollati Boringhieri, 1991.

Pavone, Claudio. “Sulla moralità nella Resistenza: Conversazione con Claudio Pavone condotta da Daniele Borioli e Roberto Botta.” *Quaderno di Storia Contemporanea numero*, n. 10 (1991):19-42.

Peli, Santo. *La necessità, il caso, l'utopia. Saggi sulla guerra partigiana e dintorni* (BFS Edizioni, 2022).

Pesce, Onorina Brambilla. *Il pane bianco*. Varese: Edizione Arterigere, 2010.

Petracci, Matteo. *Partigiani d'oltremare. Dal Corno d'Africa alla Resistenza italiana*. Pacini Editore, 2020.

Prati, Olga. "Le Donne Ravennati Nell'Antifascismo e nella resistenza." In *Le donne ravennati nell'antifascismo e nella Resistenza: dalle prime lotte sociali alla Costituzione della Repubblica*: [atti del Convegno tenuto a Conselice, 1976]. A cura di G. Franco Casadio, and Jone Fenati. Ravenna: Edizioni del girasole, 1978.

Presa, Silvana. *Donne guerra e Resistenza in Valle d'Aosta*. Aosta: Le Chateau Edizioni, 2016.

Porciani, Elena. *Le donne nella narrativa della Resistenza. Rappresentazioni del femminile e stereotipi di genere*. Villaggio Maori, 2017.

Residori, Sonia. *Sovversive, ribelli e partigiane. Le donne vicentine tra fascismo e Resistenza (1922-1945)*. Cierre Edizioni, 2021.

Rinaldi, Giovanni. *I treni della felicità.* Ediesse: Rome, 2009.

Rolla, Mimma. *La Mia Resistenza: Memorie e riflesioni di una partigiana. A cura di Bianca LENA*. Edizioni Giacch'e, 2018.

Rossanda, Rossana. *Le altre: conversazioni a Radiotre sui rapporti tra donne e politica libertá, fraternità, uguaglianza, democrazia, fascismo, resistenza, stato, partito, rivoluzione, femminismo*. Milano: Bompiani, 1980.

Rossini, Ilenia. *Un fiore che non muore. La voce delle donne nella Resistenza italiana*. Red Star Press, 2022.

Sacchi, Vera. *Io non sto a guardare: Memorie di una partigiana femminista*. A cura di Rosangela Pesenti. San Cesario di Lecce, Pietro Manni, 2015.

Santagata, Alessandro. *Una Violenza Incolpevole: Retoriche e pratiche dei cattolici nella Resistenza veneta* (Viella, 2021).

Sarti, Maria Alberta. *La donna piemontese nella Resistenza*. Torino: Tip. Agat, 1986.

Sega, Maria Teresa. *Eravamo fatte di stoffa buona. Donne e Resistenza in Veneto*. Nuovadimensione, 2010.

Sega, Maria Teresa. "Essere donna nell' esercito di Liberazione." in *Resistenza: La guerra partigiana in Italia (1943-1945)*. A cura di Filippo Focardi e Santo Peli. Carocci, 2025.

Spano, Nadia, and Fiamma Camarlinghi. *La questione femminile nella politica del P.C.I*. Prefazione di Camilla Ravera. Donne e Politica, Roma, 1973.

Sturani, Luisa. *Antologia Della Resistenza*. Centro del Libro Popolare -Torino, 1951.

Tempesta, Lisa. *Storie di donne in guerra e nella Resistenza atti del Convegno Provincia di Treviso, sala Bruno Marton, 8 e 15 marzo 2005*. Treviso: ISTRESCO, 2006.

Tobagi, Benedetta. *La Resistenza delle donne*. Torino: Einaudi, 2023.

Tonelli, Anna. *Nome di battaglia Estella: Teresa Noce, una donna comunista del Novecento*. Firenze: Le Monnier, 2020.

Vecchio, Giorgio. *La Resistenza delle donne, 1943-1945*. In Dialogo, 2010.

Vecchio, Giorgio. Il soffio dello Spirito: Cattolici nelle Resistenze europee (Viella, 2022).

Verona B., Fiori. *La donna mantovana nella Resistenza*. Sometti, 2010.

Viganò, Renata. *L'Agnese va a Morire*. 4th Edition. Torino: Einaudi: 2014.

Zangrandi, Giovanna. *I Giorni Veri*, 1943-1945. Arnoldo Mondadori Editore, 1963.

Greek Secondary Sources

Άδαμος, Τάκης. *Το Λαϊκό Τραγούδι της Αντίστασης*. Αθήνα: Καστανιώτης, 1977.

Αξιώτη, Μέλπω. *Απαντα*, Γ' τόμος, Χρονικά. Αθήνα, Κέδρος, 1980.

Αποστολοπούλου, Ναταλία. *Περήφανες και Αδούλωτες*. Αθήνα: Εκδόσεις Εντός, 1997.

Αποστόλου, Λευτέρης. *Τι έκαμε το ΕΑΜ για την Ελλάδα*. Αθήναι, Εκδόσεις Γκοβοστή, 1945.

Βαν Μπουσχότεν, Ρίκη. *Περάσαμε πολλές μπόρες κορίτσι μου*….Αθήνα: Πλέθρον, 1998.

Βερβενιώτη, Τασούλα. "Γραφές γυναικών για τον ελληνικό Εμφύλιο: οι συλλογικές μνήμες και η αμνησία." Σε *Η Εποχή της Σύγχυσης: Η Δεκαετία του '40 και η Ιστοριογραφία*. Αθήνα: Εστία, 2008.

Βερβενιώτη, Τασούλα. Η γυναίκα της Αντίστασης: *Η Είσοδος των Γυναικών στην Πολιτική, Β' Έκδοση.* Αθήνα: Εκδόσεις Κουκίδα, 2013.

Βερβενιώτη, Τασούλα. *Διπλό Βιβλίο: Η Αφήγηση της Σταματίνας Μπαρμπάτση*. Αθήνα: Κουκίδα, 2017.

Βόγλης, Πολυμέρης. *Δυναμική Αντίσταση: Υποκειμενικότητα, Πολιτική Βία και αντιδικτατορικός Αγώνας 1967- 1974*. Αθήνα: Εκδόσεις Αλεξάνδρεια, 2022.

Γαρρής, Δημήτρις. "Αντίσταση και πάλι; – Γέφυρες συμβολισμών και αγωνιστικές γενεαλογίες μεταξύ της Εθνικής Αντίστασης της δεκαετίας του 1940 και του Αντιδικτατορικού Αγώνα της περιόδου 1967-1974." *Αντιδικτατορικός Αγώνας (1967-1974): Ιστορία και Μνήμη*, n.d., https://antidiktatorikos.uoa.gr/antistasi-kai-pali-gefyres-symvolismon-kai-agonistikes-genealogies-metaxy-tis-ethnikis-antistasis-tis-dekaetias-tou-1940-kai-tou-antidiktatorikou-agona-tis-periodou-1967-1974/.

Γρηγοριάδης, Σόλων. *Ιστορία της Σύγχρονης Ελλάδας, 1941-1974*, 1ος Τόμος: Κατοχή-Δεκεμβριανά 1941-1945 .Αθήνα. Polaris.

Ζεύγου, Καίτη. *Με τον Γιάννη Ζέβγο στο επαναστατικό κίνημα* (1980).

Καρανίκα, Σούλα. *Για Μία Νέα Ζωή*. Αθήνα: Σύγχρονη Εποχή, 1984.

Καρρά, Μαρία. *Επονίτισσα : στους δρόμους και στις γειτονιές της Αθήνας*. Αθήνα: Δωρικός, 1982.

Καφετζάκη, Τόνια. Γυναικεία Αμφισβήτηση και Κομμουνιστική Στράτευση: Εργαζόμενες Γυναίκες σε Μεσοπολεμικά Πεζογραφήματα και Άρθρα της Γαλάτειας Καζαντζάκη, *Μνημών* 25 (2003): 53-77, https://doi.org/10.12681/mnimon.768.

Κηπουροπούλου, Γεωργία. *Μαρτυρίες γυναικών της Φλώρινας στην εθνική αντίσταση (1941-1944) Η σημασία της συμμετοχής τους στη διαμόρφωση της εθνικής και της έμφυλης ταυτότητάς τους.* Ηρόδοτος, 2019.

Κίνηση «Η Γυναίκα της Αντίστασης». *Γυναίκες στην Αντίσταση: Μαρτυρίες*. Αθήνα: Κίνηση η Γυναίκα στην Αντίσταση, 1982.

Κομμουνιστικό Κόμμα Ελλάδος, *Επίσημα Κείμενα, Τόμος 5ος (1940-1945)* (Αθήνα 1973, ΕΚΔΟΣΗ ΚΚΕ ΕΣΩΤΕΡΙΚΟΥ).

Κοτζιουλάς, Γιώργος. *Όταν Ήμουν με τον Άρη: Αναμνήσεις και Μαρτυρίες*. Αθήνα: Εκδόσεις Δρόμων, 2015.

Μελέτζης, Σπύρος. *Με τους Αντάρτες στα Βουνά*. Αθήνα, 1982.

Μπαρτζιώτας, Βασίλης Φ. *Ηλέκτρα: Αδελφή του Κόμματός Μας* (*Μια Ηρωική Επαναστατική Ζωή).* Αθήνα, 1984.

Μπέικου, Μαρία. *Αφού με Ρωτάτε, Να Θυμηθώ*. Αθήνα: Καστανιώτης, 2010.

Νικολοπούλου, Πετρούλα. *Μία Επονίτισσα Θυμάται* (Χρονικό της Αντίστασης). Αθήνα, 1984.

Παυλίδου, Θεοδοσία-Σούλα, και Ρουντίγκερ Μπολτς. *Μην Απαλείφεις ποτέ τα Ίχνη: Ο ρόλος των γυναικών στη γερμανική και ελληνική αντίσταση ενάντια στον εθνικοσοσιαλισμό και την γερμανική κατοχή*. Παρατηρητής: 1999.

Ρίγγα, Πηνελόπη. *Η Αντιστασιακή μου Ιστορία*. Αθήνα: Έκδοση της Κίνησης « Η Γυναίκα στην Αντίσταση», 1984.

Ρίτσος, Γιάννης. *Συντροφικά Τραγούδια*. Αθήνα: Σύγχρονη Εποχή, 2009.

Σαμουηλίδης, Χρήστος. *Ανθολογία Ποιημάτων για την Εθνική Αντίσταση κατά τη Φασιστική Κατοχή (1941-1944)*. Αθήνα: Εκδόσεις Γκοβοστή, 2017.

Σανουδάκης, Αντώνης Κ. *Χαρίκλειας Δραμουντάνη- Στεφανόγιαννη: Η Ανωγιανή Γυναίκα στην Αντίσταση*. Αθήνα: Ηράκλειο: Εκδόσεις Κνωσός, 2012.

Σαράφη, Μάριον. *Ο Στρατηγός Σαράφης όπως τον Γνώρισα*. Αθήνα, Εκδόσεις Καστανιώτη, 1990.

Τμήμα Ιστορίας του ΚΚΕ, *1922, Ιμπεριαλιστική Εκστρατεία και Μικρασιατική Καταστροφή.* Σύγχρονη Εποχή, 2022.

Παναγιωτίδου-Γκλέντη, Τιτίκα. *Γνωριμία με τις Αντάρτισσες*. Κατερίνη: Εκδόσεις D.E.A Κατερίνη, 1981.

Σακέλλαρίου, Χάρης. *Η Παιδεία στην Αντίσταση*. Αθήνα: Σύγχρονη Εποχή, 2003.

Τσέα, Ευτυχία. "Η είσοδος των Ελληνίδων στην πολιτική και το δημόσιο βίο μέσα από το δρόμο της εξορίας. Γυναίκες και εξορία κατά τη διάρκεια του Μεσοπολέμου." Μεταπτυχιακή εργασία: Εθνικό και Καποδιστριακό Πανεπιστήμιο Αθηνών, 2017.

Φλάϊσερ, Χάγκεν. *Στέμμα και Σβάστικα: Η Ελλάδα της Κατοχής και της Αντίστασης 1941-1944*. 1ος τόμος. Αθήνα: Εκδόσεις Παπαζήση, 1989.

Φλάϊσερ, Χάγκεν. *Οι Πόλεμοι της Μνήμης: Ο Β' Παγκόσμιος Πόλεμος στη Δημόσια Ιστορία*. Αθήνα: Εκδόσεις Νεφέλη, 2012.

Φούκα-Ρέζε, Δέσποινα. *Οργισμένα Χρόνια: Αφήγημα.* Λαμία, 1994.

Φυτίλη, Μάγδα, Μάνος Αυγερίδης, και Ελένη Κουκή. *Η δεύτερη ζωή της Εθνικής Αντίστασης: Πρακτικές αναγνώρισης και αποκλεισμού 1944-2006*. Αθήνα: Θεμέλιο, 2022.

Χαραλαμπίδης, Μενέλαος. "Η Αντιστασιακή δράση σε αστικό περιβάλλον: Πολιτική διαμαρτυρία και ένοπλη δράση στην κατοχική Αθήνα." In *Τετράδια Πολιτικού Διαλόγου, Ερευνάς και Κριτικής*, αρ. 64, Χειμώνας-Άνοιξη 2014.

Χατζηβασιλείου, Χρύσα. *Το Κομμουνιστικό Κόμμα Ελλάδας και το Γυναικείο Ζήτημα*. Αθήνα: Εκδόσεις της Κεντρικής Επιτροπής του ΚΚΕ, 1946.

Ψαρρά, Αγγέλικα. «Τα "πρώτα κορίτσια" του ΚΚΕ και οι τύχες τους: Έμφυλες πρακτικές μιας βολικής αποσιώπησης» στο Βαγγέλης Καραμανωλάκης – Εύη Ολυμπίτου – Ιωάννα Παπαθανασίου (επιμ.), *Η ελληνική νεολαία στον 20ό αιώνα. Πολιτικές διαδρομές, κοινωνικές πρακτικές και πολιτιστικές εκφράσεις*, Αθήνα, Θεμέλιο, 2010, σ. 433-445.

Spanish Secondary Sources

Goberna Falque, Juan Ramón. "Límites y limitaciones de la historia: El "affaire" Aubrac." *Hispania Revista española de historia* 59, Núm. 203 (1999): 1105-1127

Media Articles

English

Belden, Jack. "The Girl Partisan of Chartres." *Life*. September 4, 1944. Accessed June 19, 2023, https://books.google.co.uk/books?id=Vk8EAAAAMBAJ&dq=%22The+Girl+Partisan+of+Chartres%22&pg=PA20&redir_esc=y#v=onepage&q=%22The%20Girl%20Partisan%20of%20Chartres%22&f=false.

Chatzitheodorou, Christina. “From Palestine to Greece: A Translated Struggle,” *Asymptote*, January 10, 2024. Accessed August 23, 2024, https://www.asymptotejournal.com/blog/2024/01/10/from-palestine-to-greece-a-translated-struggle/.

Marton, Kati. “Remembering a Woman Who Was a Leader of the French Resistance.” *The New York Times,* March 12, 2019. Accessed August 21, 2024, https://www.nytimes.com/2019/03/12/books/review/lynne-olson-madame-fourcades-secret-war.html.

Sandomir, Richard. “Simone Segouin, Teenage Fighter in French Resistance, Dies at 97.” *The New York Times*, March 17, 2023. Accessed August 13, 2024, https://www.nytimes.com/2023/03/17/world/europe/simone-segouin-dead.html.

Stamiris, Eleni. “The Women’s Movement in Greece.” *New Left Review* 1/158, July/August 1986. Accessed September 12, 2023, https://newleftreview.org/issues/i158/articles/eleni-stamiris-the-women-s-movement-in-greece.pdf.

Viner, Katharine. “I made the ring from a bullet and the pin of a hand grenade.” *The Guardian*, January 26, 2001. Accessed September 1, 2024, https://www.theguardian.com/world/2001/jan/26/israel;

French

Breizh Femmes. Histoire(s) - Marie-José Chombard de Lauwe. November 16, 2015. Accessed December 17, 2023, https://www.breizhfemmes.fr/histoire-s-marie-jose-chombard-de-lauwe.

Blanc, Julien. “Agnes Humbert.” *Musée de la Résistance en ligne*, n.d. Accessed September 20, 2022, http://museedelaresistanceenligne.org/media10455-Agns-Humbert.

Leroux, Bruno. Résume of conférence “Les femmes dans la Résistance en France.” *Fondation de la Résistance*. Accessed September 22, 2023. https://www.fondationresistance.org/pages/rech_doc/les-femmes-dans-resistance-france_cr_lecture33.htm.

Malassis, Frantz. “Photographie de la jeune résistante armée de Chartres.” *Fondation de la Résistance*, n.d. Accessed January 18, 2023, https://www.fondationresistance.org/pages/rech_doc/jeune-resistante-armee-chartres_photo1.htm.

Vandel, Catherine. “Mémoires de "jeunes filles" pas forcément "bien rangées".” *Humanite.fr,* Mars 8, 2013. Accessed January 13, 2024, https://www.humanite.fr/-/danielle-casanova/memoires-de-jeunes-filles-pas-forcement-bien-rangees.

Italian

Labate, Grazia. "25 aprile. La storia di Alice Noli." Aprile 19, 2020, *Fondazione Nilde Lotti*, n.d. Accessed January 23, 2024, https://www.fondazionenildeiotti.it/pagina.php?id=819.

Greek

Δενεζάκης, Ανδρέας. "Οι ΕΛΑΣίτισσες αντάρτισσες που συμμετείχαν στην επιχείρηση του Γοργοπόταμου." *Ημεροδρόμος,* Νοέμβριος 25, 2023. Accessed November 7, 2023, https://www.imerodromos.gr/oi-elasitisses-antartisses-pou-summeteichan-sthn-epicheirhsh-tou-gorgopotamou/.

Δρόμος της Αριστεράς. "Λεύτερη Νέα." Φεβρουάριος 28, 2019. Accessed November 10, 2023, https://edromos.gr/lefteri-nea/.

Κατσιαμπούρα, Γιάννας. "Πρώιμος σοσιαλιστικός φεμινισμός: κομμουνίστριες και σοσιαλίστριες στον Μεσοπόλεμο." *Το Μωβ*, Οκτώβριος 31, 2015. Accessed May 17, 2023, https://tomov.gr/2015/10/31/proimos-sosialistikos-feminismos-kommoynistries-sosialistries-ston-mesopolemo/.

Ριζοσπάστης (Online version), "Οι Αγώνες των εργαζόμενων γυναικών μέσα από τις σελίδες του." Μάρτιος 25-26, 2017. Accessed May 21, 2023, https://www.rizospastis.gr/story.do?id=9289874.

Πετρόπουλος, Γιώργος. "Η ίδρυση του Εθνικού Απελευθερωτικού Μετώπου," *Ριζοσπάστης,* Σεπτέμβριος 27, 2001, https://www.rizospastis.gr/story.do?id=960864.

Oral Archived Interviews

Greek

Interview of Maria Beikou to Tasoula Vervenioti, Oral Testimonies File, Hellenic Literary and Historical Archive, Thessaloniki, Greece.

Documentaries

Italian

La Mia Guerra. RAI, https://www.raiplay.it/video/2019/01/La-mia-guerra---Puntata-1-7597bf41-f01d-4408-9d0a-2cf5a624b83d.html.

Greek

Βερβενιώτη, Τασούλα. "Οι Γυναίκες στην εμπόλεμη Ελλάδα (1940 – 1950)." Μάϊος 20, 2016, Διάλεξη, https://www.blod.gr/lectures/oi-gynaikes-stin-empolemi-ellada-1940-1950/.