

Interwar Democratisation and the Rise of Equality: The 'First Wave' of Greek Feminism

3.1 Introduction

After Parren's pioneering efforts in the late nineteenth century, a new feminism emerged in Greece during the interwar years, which was greater in scale and whose primary focus was the extension of suffrage to women. As such it is often referred to as the 'first wave' of Greek feminism, in line with Anglo-American conceptions of feminist history.¹ Interwar feminism emerged in the context of the 'Bourgeois Revolution' of Prime Minister Eleftherios Venizelos—the period of great socio-political and economic transformation between 1909 and 1935,² during which the territorial gains of the Balkan Wars (1912–13), participation in the Great War, and the massive demographic changes following the catastrophic Asia Minor campaign of 1921–22³ were amongst the events of greatest consequence. The ascendancy of liberal politician Eleftherios Venizelos reflected largely a subterranean transformation of the Greek social economy. The struggle for dominance between the increasingly powerful merchant classes or bourgeoisie and the traditional (mainly rural) social classes—represented by the aristocracy, landowners, the peasantry, and the clergy—intensified and culminated in the Revolution of 1909,⁴ which brought Venizelos to power. As the bourgeoisie's most significant advocate, Venizelos ushered in a new political paradigm in his efforts to create the institutions indispensable to a modern republic, in the place of the traditional system of absolute clientelism that had prevailed since Independence. Amongst his important contributions were legislative reforms and the establishment of institutions that supported the growth of the fledgling industrial economy. Though conservative in his approach and his beliefs, Venizelos's ascendancy on the platform of liberal constitutional reforms raised hopes in centrist and left-leaning circles in Greek society about the possibility of building a liberal democracy as part of a general political Greek renaissance.

1

The liberal ethos of Venizelism, enshrined in the new constitution drafted under his administration, provided a favourable environment for the emergence of new political and cultural currents. Amongst the most significant of these developments were the consolidation of working class-consciousness and politics⁵ (especially following the success of the Russian Revolution in 1917), the expansion and radicalisation of political parties, the reinvigoration of the demotic movement, and the beginning of a new era of feminist activism. This chapter attempts (a) to provide a brief sketch of this vibrant and complex context and (b) to examine the ways in which Greek feminism negotiated the multiple and often conflicting political currents, both indigenous and international, which shaped the interwar environment. Between the ethos of liberal Venizelism, international pacifism, the strengthening labour movement, economic depression, and the march of fascism, as well as the growing dominance of a

2

conservative strain of Greek nationalism as an outcome of Greek irredentism, the context was simultaneously ripe for the emergence of feminism but volatile and ultimately resistant to the changes feminists proposed to the social contract.

3.2 The League for the Rights of Women

By 1920, a new generation of self-identified feminists, primarily from the petit bourgeoisie and professional middle classes, focused their attention on the female franchise as the key to the solution of Greek women's predicament, both within the private and the public spheres. Interwar feminism was located within the liberal Venizelist tradition, which focused on legal reforms but was also influenced by the substantive formulations of liberty and democracy promoted by the increasingly powerful socialist and communist movements. After all, the interwar workplace was characterised by a rapidly growing labour force with thousands of women concentrated in its lower ranks, who had no effective political representation. The gender antagonism and androcentrism of the trade union movement continued unabated, even after the historic strike waged by women factory workers in response to proposed wage reductions many years earlier.⁶ 3

The League for the Rights of Women represented the vanguard of interwar feminism in Greece. It was founded in 1920 by music teacher and critic Avra Theodoropoulou and enjoyed strong support from prominent liberal educationalists such as Dimitris Glinos, Alexandros Svolos, M. Triantafilidis, and others. The League's brand of feminism was described as 'spiritual emancipation' by Avra Theodoropoulou (1926); as a 'reclassification of human entities' according to colleague Maria Svolou; as the 'the patriotism of our gender', according to Rosa Imvrioti (1926); and as 'the liberation of women's power' according to Alkis Thrilos (1923), all of whom were prominent members. The new feminism, they argued, embodied a 'lifestyle' and *diekthikisi*, or radical bargaining;⁷ or, as expressed by feminist historians Angelika Psarra and Efi Avdela (1985: 38), 'a stance simultaneously ineluctable and inevitable'. 4

In an article titled 'Feminism in Greece', Theodoropoulou (1927) introduced the League to the world of Greek politics as an organisation that recognised women as social, economic, and political entities.⁸ It embraced women of 'all political persuasions' and was 'committed to the rights and needs of women and children, and the pursuit of political, civil and economic equality between men and women'. Theodoropoulou also emphasised the organisation's allegiance to the international feminist movement. 5

Other important organisations of the interwar movement included the conservative Ethniko Symvoulío (National Council) established in 1908, which also constituted the Greek branch of the International Council of Women; the Sosialistikos Omilos Gynaikon (Socialist Women's 6

Society) founded in 1919; and the women's branch of the Greek Communist Party (Kommounistiko Komma Elladas/KKE).⁹ The most significant challenge to the interwar status quo in Greece, however, was posed by the League for the Rights of Women.¹⁰

The League was influenced significantly by a synthesis of the radical humanist critiques of the Anglo-Saxon and French Enlightenment, and also by Greek modernism. The speeches and writings of the president, Avra Theodoropoulou, echoed the theory of history and society of her close colleague and prominent demoticist, Dimitris Glinos. Glinos's 'Humanity of Women' lecture (1921) reviewed the '... historical contingencies that fostered the growth of mass education, citing economic and political shifts engendered by capitalist development, greater attention to moral, intellectual, and social progress, and revolutionary demands for the amplification of popular voices, changes from which the main beneficiaries were men' (Hart, 1996: 111).¹¹ Similarly, Theodoropoulou (1922) argued that the mass entry of women into the labour market (the outcome of capitalist industrialisation and urban migration) afforded women a measure of financial autonomy for the first time, and, in turn, the circumstances were created for raising women's consciousness of their secondary social status—a necessary prerequisite for change. The idea was that women, regardless of their social location, would become incensed and revolted by their gender status and join the great international union of women fighting for their rights (Psarra & Avdela, 1985: 100–27). 7

The League regarded legal and constitutional reforms as vital conditions for the facilitation of women's economic independence. The franchise remained the primary objective for the League feminists throughout the interwar period, and they argued that society could only impose obligations on women if they were granted basic rights. In addition, they campaigned for workplace and family law reforms, as well as for changes in education and for the legal protection of prostitutes, all of which combined to expand women's choices and shift their subordinate status in society. Furthermore, the League fought against the double standards of the Greek state which, on the one hand, treated women as the legal equivalents of children and the insane, while on the other, it demanded that women pay their taxes, preserve the home, and nurture the nation's children. In a speech delivered at the Greek Odeon (19 April 1922), Theodoropoulou argued, in the spirit of Glinos, that women's advancement was a historic inevitability based on economic progress, a perspective which enabled her to defend the feminist project, albeit unsuccessfully, against charges of *xenomania* and subservience to foreign values, hurled at feminists by at best antagonistic and sometimes outraged conservative nationalists. 8

Greek interwar feminism had a broader appeal than Parren's feminism in the nineteenth century, but still remained remote from the peasant majority. Nevertheless, it represented a step away from the elitism of nineteenth-century feminist politics, shifting its focus from women of privilege to the predicament of working women of all classes in the rapidly industrialising cities. The shift is evident in the titles of their respective publications—Parren's aristocratic 9

Efimeris ton Kyrion (The Ladies' Newspaper) as opposed to the League's *O Agonas ton Ginekon (The Struggle of Women, hereafter The Struggle)*, with its distinctly populist resonance.

The women of the National Council were more sympathetic to conservative nationalist sensitivities, which the title of their publication aptly conveyed: *Hellinis (Hellenic Woman)*. Despite their differences, both the League and the National Council worked vigorously to popularise feminist values and principles, to mobilise as broad a spectrum of women into political life as possible, and to cultivate the notion of a collective political identity as women. Completing the set of women's political publications was *Sosialistiki Zoe (Socialist Life)*, published by the Socialist Women's Society.¹² 10

3.3 Kallirhoe Parren and the Women's Lyceum

In 1921, Kallirhoe Parren returned from her political exile in Hydra to find that the terms of women's emancipation had shifted significantly. In spite of her pioneering contributions to Greek feminism in the heyday of *The Ladies' Newspaper*, her central role in the 1897 war effort, and her contributions to women's education,¹³ by the time interwar feminism was in full flight Parren's political stature had been diminished. Her elitist predisposition and the continued use of *katharevousa* rather than the demotic idiom, in conjunction with her outspoken commitment to an antiquated, rigid strain of Hellenism, had fallen well out of feminist favour. Upon returning from exile, she retreated almost exclusively into her work for the Lykeio ton Ellinidon (Greek Women's Lyceum), which she had founded in 1911 and which thrived for subsequent decades. 11

The Lyceum's main aim, according to its statute, was the '... the gathering of women of Letters, Science and the Arts in the service of the advancement of their gender' and, also in keeping with nationalist concerns, 'the education of mothers, the rekindling and preservation of indigenous Greek morals and customs' (Xiradaki, 1988: 60). In contrast to the limited reach of the League amongst women of the 'popular classes', the Lyceum established strong connections with rural Greece where its emphasis on tradition had great appeal: 12

The Lyceum embraces all realms of female development, female activism, female achievement... 'Although [the Lycea] extend beyond philanthropic activities'... 'they are centres of solidarity, which is the ultimate expression of philanthropy, extending into the intellectual, spiritual and artistic cultivation of societies... Our Lyceum, faithful to this program, laid the foundations for this course in its first year, for the rebirth, first and foremost, of a genuine Greek soul with all its morals and customs, and the development of the social classes in the service of hygiene in all its forms'. (Extract of the Lyceum Oath of 1912, in Psarra & Avdela, 1985: 45)

The Lyceum's focus on custom and tradition, as well as Parren's aristocratic milieu, sat very awkwardly in the new era of class-consciousness, the recognition of working-class dignity, and demotic cultural politics, which shaped Greece during the interwar period. Parren's celebration 13

of women's national role as traditional guardians of morality and reservoirs of national culture was directly at odds with the contemporary feminist model for emancipation. While factions of the demotic movement forged alliances with the left, Parren's emphasis on women as bearers of indigenous traditions was predicated on their exclusion from the fast-changing environment of the public space, that is, from what demoticists, liberal, and socialist alike, termed progress. Her devotion to the monarchy and her religious convictions were also at odds with the new feminism. While the new crop of interwar feminists did not seriously challenge or retheorise the maternalism of the liberal state, they had nevertheless departed from a view of women's national purpose as agents of national continuity, while men were endowed as progressive agents of national modernity. Interwar feminism rejected the philanthropic 'tea-drinking' culture represented by Parren and the women of the Lyceum, their idealisation of folk arts and crafts for their perceived ethnic authenticity and supposed embodiment of true Greek femininity. Her past achievements notwithstanding, Parren's image as the chief representative of 'well-meaning or polite feminism' (Psarra & Avdela, 1985: 46) was 'tarnished' by an unwavering commitment to a thoroughly discredited conservative agenda.¹⁴

Parren's intellectual and political marginalisation between the wars invites closer inspection. Her astute positioning of the feminist project in relation to the progressive discourses inspired by the drive for Greek 'spiritual rebirth', which marked the last quarter of the nineteenth century, shielded Parren and Greek feminism from accusations of 'radicalism' and xenophobia; instead, the modernising nationalism of the time enabled her to argue legitimately for the necessity of advancing women's education, if not for their voting rights. 14

By the 1920s Greek feminism had become more confident and ambitious, and Parren remained on the margins, abstaining from any collaboration with other organizations, focusing almost exclusively on preparations for the Lyceum's annual 'Great Stadium Festival'. Her era had come to a close in a society which had clashed fiercely with the monarchy, with which she was still closely affiliated and which was very firmly situated within emerging democratic, populist currents. The interwar period in Greece was one in which feminist identity and conceptions of liberty and democracy were influenced less by political and cultural nationalism, religion and tradition, than by pacifism and secular humanism. 15

3.4 Feminism and the Demotic Movement

All the interwar organisations collaborated on the campaign for women's suffrage, which culminated in a small victory when literate women of at least 30 years of age were granted the right to vote (but not to run as candidates) in local elections.¹⁵ The prevailing climate of solidarity in the early phase of interwar feminism was evident in the political trajectory of prominent interwar feminist and socialist Athina Yianniou. Trained as a teacher, Yianniou arrived in Athens from Constantinople in 1911. Following an initial alliance with feminist Sotiria Aliberti and with Parren's colleague, Kalliope Kehagia, she became a member of both the National Council and the League simultaneously. Indeed, she retained her dual membership 16

long after establishing the Socialist Women's Society in 1919. Yianniou continued her active participation in both organisations until at least 1929, concentrating primarily on the right to suffrage (Xiradaki, 1988: 124). Furthermore, the National Council offered to provide the League with a permanent column in its own journal *Hellinis*, which the League kindly accepted until its own journal, *The Struggle*, was established in the autumn of 1923. Indeed, the prevailing goodwill was enshrined in the Council's mission statement at the time, which emphasised '... the creation of relationships of solidarity and unity between women's organisations and the facilitation of a more practical and effective network of communication' (*Hellinis*, 25 March 1921).

The shift away from the elitism of the nineteenth century was also in evidence with interwar feminists' solidarity with the demotic movement. The latter emerged in the last quarter of the previous century but began to gel as a modernising force under Venizelos. The demoticists were an important force in refashioning Greek national identity in more inclusive terms. The purpose was to advance the cause of the *mitriki lalia* (mother tongue) over the purists' preference for *katharevousa*, an artefact of Greek Enlightenment scholars (often referred to as *logii*, the etymology of which comes from *logos*, the multifarious Greek word for reason, speech, language, and so on), whose aim was to 'cleanse' the Greek language from the Turkish and Slavic 'impurities' infused into it during the Ottoman centuries. The result was a language characterized by a stilted style, which adopted ancient and Byzantine ecclesiastical linguistic forms. Charles Stewart (1991: 27) suggests that the '... competition among local discourses to control the definition and hence the perception and experience of "Greekness"' was located firmly within the ongoing struggle to construct a homogeneous Greek national identity, a project which in fact preceded the Greek Revolution by several decades.

The political and cultural significance of the demotic movement cannot be overstated. A plethora of organisations that were inspired by it, sprouted all over Greece.¹⁶ Of those, the most significant was the Ekpaideftiki Etairia (the Educational Society or the Society for Education) established in 1910, which was run by a large number of prominent intellectuals of diverse political persuasions, including the well-known patrician educationalist Penelope Delta and Theodoropoulou's colleague and mentor, Dimitris Glinos, both of whom became leading figures in the demotic movement. Their common goal was to institute an educational system in Greece functional to the requirements of a liberal-bourgeois state, one that sought to be more simultaneously inclusive and modern, but which remained loyal to the nation's irredentist aspirations. According to the society's charter, the collective aims were to create:

Genuine modern Greek reality and ideals [which are] manifested in the neo-Hellenic tradition, folk songs, folk tales, legends, proverbs, customs and the varied ways of life ... and above all in the living language and creative literature. This unadulterated modern Greek world must become the basis of our education. (Augustinos in Hart, 1996: 108)

Interwar feminism's alignment with the demotic movement is simple enough to comprehend, given the latter's democratic purpose; the adoption of the demotic immediately opened the public space, and the rights and resources of the nation-state, to groups traditionally excluded from it, including women. Whereas *katharevousa* represented a tool of exclusion from the polity of all but an educated elite, the perpetuation of which some demoticists considered inappropriate for a society which was reinventing itself according to Enlightenment values. The political and philosophical overlap between the demotic movement and the labour movement, created

a sizeable leftist contingent within the demotic movement, which appealed to many interwar feminists. But this melting pot of multiple allegiances which the demotic movement accommodated—socialist, demoticist, and feminist—was short lived. The unity of the movement became compromised as anxieties grew amongst liberal and nationalist demoticists about the growing influence of socialism and communism within its ranks.

Indeed Glinos's open embrace of communism led to the collapse of the Educational Society in 1927, the first significant event to threaten the coherence of the demoticist movement. The accommodation of socialists and communists, who saw *katharevousa* as a key instrument of exclusion of 'workers and peasants from the state apparatus by a greedy ruling class', became increasingly awkward. It undermined previous alliances between left-leaning demoticists and nationalist conservatives who had associated *demotiki* with the irredentist project.¹⁷ More moderate demoticists, such as Alexandros Delmouzos, believed that the goals of demoticism should be kept separate from political struggle, which should aim to transform the class organisation of society directly. For this group, communist demoticists such as Glinos were seen as loose canons on the decks of liberal intellectual life (C. Stewart, 1991: 31).¹⁸

Liberal demoticists' cosmopolitan admiration of European literary models and intellectual currents, on the one hand, distinguished them from right-wing nationalists who abhorred Western models; but on the other hand, they dabbled in their own brand of nationalism in sympathy with the right and to counter communist internationalism, which both groups regarded as a threat to the distinctiveness of Greek culture.

But left-wing conceptions of democracy had a growing appeal amongst some feminists who measured its merits against the relatively thin model of liberty offered up by formal equality politics. Indeed, by the 1930s, key figures of the feminist movement were absorbed into the socialist left and began to make public declarations that, without the stalwarts of mass politics, any attempt to effect real change to women's marginal status in political life was futile.

Interwar feminists aggravated other national sensitivities. Before 1922, a large proportion of Greeks lived outside national borders (e.g., Constantinople, Thrace, Smyrna, and so on), and cosmopolitanism was a way of life among educated Greeks, many of whom lived in Hellenic centres outside Greek national territory. As a result, Greek nationalism held distinct internationalist resonances. After 1922 and the expulsion of millions of ethnic Greeks from

Turkey, internationalism and cosmopolitanism receded; indeed, both became regarded as an unpopular strain of Hellenism and were abandoned in favour of a strictly nationalist emphasis on territory and environment. As such, feminism's outward orientation, and its international collaborations especially with the pacifist movement, was at odds with the insularity and revanchism that marked Greek nationalism after 1922.

3.5 Feminist Internationalism and Greek Nationalism

The symbolic universe of interwar feminism was far removed from Parren's, which comprised a large catalogue of historic female warriors deployed to legitimate the feminist campaigns of the nineteenth century. With the trauma of the Great War on the one hand, and looming fascism on the other, interwar feminists entered international pacifist politics vigorously and emphasised women's natural role as campaigners against violence and war. In fact, the warrior imagery so heavily utilised by nineteenth-century feminists became part of the symbolic arsenal of the Metaxas dictatorship in the 1930s, to furnish an ultra conservative brand of nationalism inspired by the fascist regimes which had risen to dominance in Europe. 25

Greek feminist involvement in the pacifist movement fulfilled various objectives. First, it was a means of forging strong alliances with other feminist organisations of Europe and North America, which were enmeshed in the pacifist movement. This international network included the International Women's League for Peace and Freedom (for which Parren was the Greek representative), the International Women's Suffrage Alliance (for which the League was the Greek satellite), the International Council (to which the Greek National Council was allied), and the International Women's Organisation for Peace and Disarmament. These organisations acted as role models and kindle for the fledgling Greek organisations. As national representatives, Greek feminists participated in international conferences and helped fashion the aims and objectives of their affiliated organisations. International collaboration gave Greek feminist activism an international character, as well as offering Greek women a forum for political expression and formal recognition and respect, in lieu of acknowledgement at home. 26

In the nineteenth century, Kallirhoe Parren had marked the history of women's wartime participation as proof of women's capacity for full citizenship, invoking vivid images of their wartime heroism to legitimise the feminist campaigns of the era. During the interwar years, the legacy of long and successive wars, persecution by the state and its male dominated military apparatus, as well as the north European reaction to trench warfare, combined to all but erase such warrior imagery from feminist narratives. Indeed, the images of women fighters did not resurface to serve political ends until the period of popular resistance to the Axis occupation of Greece in the 1940s. Theodoropoulou described the mood of Greek feminists in her first public address at the Greek Odeon on 19 April 1922: 27

And now we come to another dimension of women's activism, in the struggle for the end of all wars, and global peace. All the women who lead feminist movements everywhere, champion the gospel of fraternity amongst peoples,

whenever such an opportunity arises. The international women's organisation for 'Peace and Freedom' [translator's note: *Pax et Libertas* in the original] is the embodiment of the feminist commitment to peace. This organisation attempts to recruit a mass cross-party women's army. Not an army for the purposes of war but in the service of peace. An army, which would secure life, not spread death and catastrophe. This is the *leit-motif* of all its conferences and probably its most sincere objective, and the one most compatible with its nature. The League of Nations which still finds itself in a vague, nebulous situation, lives so deeply in the female soul that it won't take too long before it develops flesh and bone, to become a living reality. Perhaps these pacifist tendencies of women are considered by many to be dangerous given that war may be the only way for a nation in crisis, where war signifies the liberation of oppressed peoples. But pay heed. Pax et Libertas. Peace and Freedom. The woman who struggles for her political emancipation will be willing to share in every sacrifice including the harshest to secure free political life for all the people, men and women. (in Psarra & Avdela, 1985: 126)

National Council member Eleni Sifnaiou (*Hellinis*, 1934) also issued a call to all women and mothers to cultivate the pacifist idea and to resist falling into the trap set by '... those who want to portray the League of Nations as a big lie, as bankrupt, and as incompatible with human nature'. In a similar spirit, Athina Yianniou's April 1923 speech, entitled 'Women and Politics' and given at the Greek Odeon, contained the statement that '... the cause for peace was one of three defining values encapsulated in the triptych of the Socialist Women's Society, alongside justice and love'.¹⁹ 28

And yet, while the exchange of ideas and knowledge across national boundaries enriched Greek feminism and endowed it with a measure of prestige, it did not yield outcomes for women within Greece. Women's inferior political and social status persevered despite changes granting women the right of conditional participation in the local government elections of 1929. 29

On the contrary, the League's establishment of a Balkan alliance with other feminist organisations of the region, attracted negative attention from the Greek political arena.²⁰ The 'Little Entente' was established in 1923, a parody of the alliances of the Great War, and inspired by, according to Theodoropoulou, eighteenth-century intellectual Rigas Velesinlis's vision of a Balkan Confederation of States. Other members of the Little Entente comprised the League's sister organisations in Romania, Serbia, Bulgaria, Czechoslovakia, and Poland, that is, the Balkan national branches of the International Women's Council. Theodoropoulou deemed that a Balkan alliance, which campaigned for women's right to vote, workplace and family law reforms, mother/child welfare, and inter-Balkan peace, was a 'natural progression because, unlike their American, English and Australian counterparts, Balkan feminists shared similar religious beliefs and family traditions, had similar educational experiences and social superstitions /conventions'. In the inauguration speech, Theodoropoulou (*The Struggle*, 1990: 29) anticipated the end of the isolation of the feminist struggle '... because many sleepless eyes kept watch close by'. Theodoropoulou cautioned governments to recognise that national 30

borders no longer enabled people to shield themselves from international developments because '... the doors are wide open, our countries and homes are made of glass, people can see right through them'.²¹

Such alliances enabled interwar feminists, and the League in particular, to make some advances in educational and political opportunities for women, but these modernist sensibilities were thwarted by the nationalist ferment of a country nursing its wounds after the events of 1922 and by the ensuing and rapid influx of many refugees which destabilised the social order. There was a significant increase in the proportion of both non-Greek minorities brought into Greece by the expansion of Greek territory and by the influx of Turkish- and Bulgarian-speaking ethnic Greek refugees. The new populations were often treated as foreigners rather than as fellow Greeks who had been violently uprooted from their homes. A palpable xenophobia emerged as many Greeks found themselves abruptly surrounded by a multitude of 'others', and in this context the League's ideal to transcend national borders and to fashion a united Balkan identity was untimely at best. Unlike *The Ladies' Newspaper* in the last quarter of the nineteenth century, the prevailing formulation of Greek nationalism after 1922 provided an unfavourable habitat for the integration of feminist objectives into the political mainstream. In the 20 May 1922 edition, the daily newspaper *To Ethnos* (*The Nation*) requested that the prime minister, Dimitrios Gounaris (who was referred to as 'the Patron Mr Pankhurst'), ask himself: 'What right did he have to allow the issue of the women's vote to turn the National Assembly into a feminist conference; at a time when the Greek nation has to solve very serious problems linked to the Asia Minor campaign'?

This view was echoed across the Greek press and even united the mutually hostile Venizelist and royalist press. In response to a parliamentary majority which voted against the women's vote in 1922, newspapers normally at odds with each other, shared similar headlines: 'The Defeat of the Philogynists', proclaimed *Embros* (*Forward*, 28 May 1922); 'Back to your homes', instructed *Esperini* (*Evening News*), on the same day:

The National Assembly rejected women's right to vote. The decision relieved the agony of all manner of right-thinking, rational people, as well as the ranks of the *Laiko Komma* [note: the rightist People's Party] whom have been truly and justifiably exasperated. We praise the Almighty and congratulate the members of Parliament who are responsible. As for the women we offer the advice that God bless them above all else with brains so that they can become good housekeepers, wives, and mothers. For this, and only this is her true destiny. To your homes, therefore, ladies. That's where your place is, not in politics.

The next day, the liberal newspaper *Eleftheron Vima* (*Free Tribune*) proclaimed (21 May 1922):

First of all, we are not against the granting of suffrage to women ... Anti-Venizelist Greece,²² however, after succeeding in ostracising Greek reality and replacing it with delusions, is already struggling to import prematurely, before its time, a foreign reality just to show that it's getting on with something. Imagine the readers of Athenian newspapers in Smyrna and Thrace ... yearning to be

informed of Athenian developments regarding Hellenism and the national question; imagine the reader in Thessalia turning the pages seeking news about the agricultural question, only to stumble across the minutes kept in the National Assembly on the discussion of the women's vote! What would *he* think? (Emphasis my own.)

In a parliamentary session of April 1929, one year before the right to participate in local elections was granted by the Venizelist government, Minister Floros asserted that the right to vote was directly linked to military service and was thus the exclusive privilege of men. The debate provided further opportunity for Floros to express the contempt of the traditional classes for the flamboyance of the bourgeoisie, especially its women, who spent endless hours on their makeup and manicures and who had the audacity to demand the vote, thereby humiliating the male sex. Ironically, he declared, 'If the women of Souli stood up and demanded the vote, I would be the first to sign, as I would argue that they undertook male duties when they fought (the Turks) with stones and rifles' (*Women's Struggle*, 1990: 34). He went on to say:

It seems to me that up there by the Sagarios river, some young people who write with the bayonet . . . the most beautiful moments of Greek poetry . . . they are children of the most unforgettable women . . . who did not hold conferences and did not ever open legal departments for women . . . who have not asked for the vote . . . and whose breasts are not used as shields against the bloody wars opposed by feminists, but are white and drip with holy maternal milk. (in Samiou, 1989: 17)

But Greek feminists entered into a dialogue with their nationalist opponents by appealing to a metaphor of the nation as a family, in which, by extension, women had a central role to play. In other words, if suffrage was due to women for their 'innate' talent for housekeeping, this could be easily extended to 'nation-keeping'.

In 1922, in response to feminist claims that women could contribute to the running of municipalities as they resembled large houses, the royalist, anti-feminist newspaper, *To Stemma* (*The Crown*) replied in its 18 April 1922 issue:

Women think that municipal affairs are highly compatible with the housekeeping spirit of women. They portray the Town Hall as 'the home of the city'. . . . However if the Town Hall is the home of the city, what becomes of the homes, which are not Town Halls, but which are still homes? Every rational man is a feminist, but to a certain point.

The metaphor failed to convince its readers, although Greek feminists located in a staunchly patriarchal context were acutely aware of the heuristic value of the family/nation metaphor, in which the nation is likened to a large family in urgent need of maternal nurturing and leadership. Feminists have often pointed out the precarious foundations of essentialist feminisms as they draw on a logic which justifies women's exclusion and prejudice throughout history in the first place. But as Karen Offen (1988) notes, most European feminisms of the interwar period (French, German, Italian, Swedish, and Greek) had a 'relationalist' view of the

sexes, that is, that sexes were distinguished by both biological and cultural traits, that there existed an essential difference between the natures of women and men. Interwar feminists accepted the sexual division of labour in private and public life also, and the argument for equality in this formulation was conceptualised as allowing for the *complementarity* of men and women to thrive. It was precisely in this context that Greek feminist discourse equated feminism with pacifism (and internationalism), elaborating incessantly on the intrinsic pacifism of women as a function of their reproductive role. Their task was complicated however by the need to blend this narrative with the imperatives of an industrial society and the concomitant modernity. How to make an essentialist view of the sexes coherent with demands for women's right to work *outside* the home (under protected conditions), to participate in all the professions, and to vote? Greek relational feminism, in the spirit of its European counterparts, combined a case for moral equality of women and men with an explicit acknowledgement of differences in their sexual functions in society.

As Louise Tilly (1981: 218) has argued in the case of French social and political thought, Greek feminism also put at the centre of its discourse not the individual woman but her family. This was not merely an ideological choice but also reflected, importantly, the function of the Greek family as the predominant unit of economic production, at least among the peasant and artisan classes. Even among the propertied and wage-earning strata, the family never lost its importance as an economic unit.²³ Not surprisingly, therefore, organisations like the League felt the need to repeatedly re-assure their audience that feminism did not intend to threaten the institution of marriage and the family, but rather to strengthen it by contributing to the ideal of marriage as a union between two dignified, cooperative, and equal individuals:

36

We do not intend to dismantle the Greek home, the Greek family; we simply want to open the windows of that home toward the sun and the wind . . . to let in the oxygen this home needs when it is built upon the sturdy foundations of equality and justice. We can never found it upon an unbridled individualism, contempt and guardianship of one over the other, but on the basis of respect towards every human value, of men, women and children and every individual who comprises the social nucleus, the family. Upon this model will be built the new polity where men and women can live freely, liberated from exploitation of the strongest, holding their fate in their own hands with human dignity. (Theodoropoulou, in the first edition of *The Struggle*, Autumn 1923)

With the adoption of traditional constructions of gender complementarity, interwar feminists unwittingly reinforced the Byzantine social contract that justified their exclusion from political life, where women featured as dependents of men but were burdened with the full catalogue of obligations normally attributed to full citizens. The implicit feminist acceptance of politics as a masculine domain, which women merely requested the right to share with men, was incoherent with the campaign for women's suffrage no matter how astute and legitimate the nation/family metaphor may have been.²⁴

37

As the fascist clouds assembled over Europe in the 1930s, social and political movements began to collapse under the pressure of growing political polarisation both within and beyond Greek borders. The cross-organisational collaboration and solidarity which had been a feature of Greek interwar feminism began to implode in the face of soaring unemployment and the intensification of working-class militancy, which compelled the National Council in 1934 to distance itself from the campaign for suffrage and workplace rights. Its platform eventually became indistinguishable from that of the conservative party, and this shift eventually ended the Council's alliance with the League. By 1935 political polarisation had taken proper hold of the women's movement, as each organisation and individual veered either towards the right or left, until the women's movement became totally subsumed by anti-fascist momentum and the concern for the 'greater good'. In 1936, the Metaxas dictatorship assumed power and all social movements were officially disbanded and made illegal.

38

3.6 Metaxas, Women, and the Nation

Until we secure mothers of conscience for Greece, we must emphasise the family order As the family is the basic cell of every society, mothers also constitute the primary foundation of society. (*Neolaia*, July 1937)²⁵

The compounded impact of the economic²⁶ and political²⁷ crises of the interwar period undermined in a fundamental way the legitimacy of the liberal bourgeois order that was epitomised by Venizelos. The protracted and bitter Venizelist-Royalist conflict made the 1930s, especially the period between 1932 and 1936, one of extreme political instability marked by several regime shifts, unsuccessful broad coalition governments, and three different coups, each one launched from a different point on the political spectrum. The restoration of the monarchy in 1935, and the serious political vacuum which followed, left the door ajar for the imposition of more authoritative solutions. The dictatorship of General Ioannis Metaxas came to power on 4 August 1936, and lasted until his death in 1941, shortly before the invasion of the German army. The fascist credentials of the Metaxas regime have been the subject of significant debate amongst historians of the period, many of whom strongly contend that the Metaxas state was not fascist but authoritarian with fascist leanings, more comparable to Spain's Franco than the fascist regimes of Germany and Italy.²⁸ The most notable differences between them were the Metaxas state's relative non-violence; it did not pursue an expansionist agenda or institute anti-Semitic programs, and it lacked a mass political movement. But like Mussolini and Hitler, Metaxas rose to power on the wave of political and social instability of the 1920s and early 1930s, and his regime was characterised by two negative attributes: anti-communism and anti-parliamentarism, 'evils' which he regarded as being perilous to the integrity of the Greek nation. The regime had two positive objectives that were linked with its extreme nationalism: the much touted Regeneration and National Unity, which in conjunction would bring into being the 'Third Civilisation'. This new civilisation combined the finest elements of the ancient classical (Spartan) and Byzantine traditions, although the content of the Third Civilisation was never sufficiently developed—a vague dream comprised of generalities.

39

Metaxas's regeneration promoted an inward-looking celebration of 'Greekness', with explicit references to the 'Greek race', whose destiny was to civilise the world that was characteristic of the populist, anti-Venizelist right. Sarandis (1993) has argued that the combined qualities of the Metaxas state point far less to fascism than to 'paternalistic' benevolent dictatorship of the New Right.

The intensification of labour unrest engendered by the Depression had reached a climax after the passing of legislation that enforced Compulsory Arbitration and Social Security Payments. This culminated in the trade-union decision to wage a 24-hour general strike. On 4 August 1936, the threat of the somewhat mythical 'communist' strike legitimised Metaxas's move to suspend the constitution, with the full support of the monarchy, and declare his absolute rule over the land.²⁹ The following day, Metaxas's address to the nation declared (a) the 'restoration' of order across the country; (b) the 'relief' of the Greek people who had been awaiting such a political shift; and (c) new government policies directed at the moral and material support of the working class and of the disenfranchised, generally. Metaxas was simultaneously reviled for his dictatorial state and admired for the policies he introduced to socialise the Greek economy: the introduction of a minimum wage; unemployment insurance; a five-day, forty-hour working week; a guaranteed two-week vacation; stricter occupational safety; and maternity leave. At the same time there were extensive arrests of trades unionists and communists, the establishment of concentration camps on remote islands, the creation of a secret police force, and the institutionalised use of torture, although the regime did not commit political murders or instate the death penalty. 40

Metaxas's repugnance for parliamentary government—and his contempt for the misguided, alien, and utopian ideologies of individualism, liberalism, and historical materialism which had conflict between state and society at their core—would be replaced by a militant commitment to order, discipline, and work. His motto of a disciplined freedom, in combination with a collectivistic nationalism, would merge the individual with the whole and forge a sense of national unity, pride, and glory which Greece had lacked for so long. 41

Individualism was viewed as fundamentally incompatible with the social nature of humankind; liberalism as a misguided and utopian understanding of freedom; historical materialism as equally incompatible with human nature, for its theory of value ignored the spiritual and focused exclusively on the material dimensions of human existence. Giorgios A. Madzoufas, an official of the regime, argued that the combined influence of these two philosophical schools of thought ultimately endangered the existence of the Greek nation, because '... each individual had become incapable of seeing beyond his own narrow egocentric concerns; he considered himself free to do as he pleased, a condition which can only lead to anarchy; and he suffered a regression in each and every attempt at spiritual progress' (*Neolaia*, September 1937). 42

While Metaxas abolished the civil rights of men and women, as in German National Socialism and Italian fascism, Metaxas's rhetoric bestowed upon the nation's subjects—the working masses and women in particular—an unprecedented level of political and national significance. 43

This was rather striking for Greek women, who unlike men had never enjoyed full citizenship status, but had been excluded from the public domain. Metaxas brought women into the centre-stage of political life and national discourse by creating a cult of Mother Worship, in which the nation's mothers and all women, as potential mothers, were not just valued members of the national family but were also integral to the national destiny. It parallels both Koonz's (1987) and De Grazia's (1992) observations of the extreme maternalism of German and Italian fascism respectively, as a means of co-opting women, who were unlikely supporters, into the regime. Moreover, Metaxas's 'Mother Worship', like the German and Italian manifestations, had unforeseen consequences for the history and development of the Greek welfare state, especially regarding mothers and children.

The regime's obsession with the 'demographic problem' inspired novel strategies designed to boost the birth rate and to reinforce traditional family values, which combined to bring ironic outcomes. The drive to bring the so-called Third Civilisation into being, guided by the Spartan style values of country, religion, and family, led to a heavy investment in the welfare infrastructure. The 'battle for births' in Metaxas's Greece, as De Grazia (1992) argues in the case of Italian fascism, established the new rather than restored the old. It established unprecedented levels of pre-natal and infant care for children up to three years of age, provided by 'Consultation Centres for Expectant Mothers' (established in Athens and across rural Greece). Kindergartens for 3-to-6-year-old children were set up and catered to the needs of the poor and of 'working mothers . . . who can hand over their children to the protective care of Society . . . rather than abandon them to the squalor of the street' (*Neolaia*, August 1939). The National Child Care Centres were expanded for the aid of children of working mothers and of *widows in particular*. These centres, operated by professional teachers, were open throughout the working week, and accepted children in the early morning until the early evening when they returned the children to their mothers. In addition, Children's Seaside and Mountain Recreational Resorts were established, which aimed to take in 'approximately 5,000 children each summer with special health needs, preferably from poor homes, and typically from urban industrial centres'. They were designed to boost national health and thus assist 'in the production of healthy future citizens and a reduction in the number of patients in the nation's hospitals' (*Neolaia*, August 1939).

44

As in Italy, the Greek fascist regime's treatment of women demonstrated the incoherence of its vision, or what De Grazia (1992: 2) refers to, in the Italian case, as the 'deep conflict within the [fascist] state between the demands of modernity and the desire to reimpose traditional authority'. In Greece, feminist organisations such as the League for Women's Rights were amongst the first casualties of the Metaxas state, not just because the regime condemned the goals of feminism (the vote, workforce participation, for example) but also because feminism was a product of liberalism and, as such, the cult of the individual lay at its centre. For Metaxas, women intellectuals were 'natural enemies of the New State',³⁰ they were social outcasts, products of 'boulevard feminism', despised for their perceived hostility to women's natural and national destiny—motherhood—and, by extension, the sabotage of the 'national family'. For

45

instance, Sitsa Karaiskakis, a prominent propagandist for women of the Metaxas regime, preached relentlessly from the pages of the youth journal, *Neolaia*, about the importance of awakening in women '... the desire for family, as this is the holy source of the National Renaissance The pseudo-philanthropy of liberals in their disdain for traditional values which they believe reduce women to child-bearing machines, is nothing less than a criminal act. Woman's so-called liberal and communist protectors fed her soul poison and allowed her to forget her great vocation. A nation without youth is a nation condemned to death' (*Neolaia*, August 1937).

The National Council, by virtue of its links with conservative political elites, continued to operate until the outbreak of the Second World War, but its scope was dramatically reduced in line with the demands of the regime. When Metaxas banned all left or liberal-leaning political activity in 1936, the National Council, unlike the League, was permitted to continue operating, as was Parren's Lyceum.³¹ By 1940 the National Council had effectively become a philanthropic organisation, and one-third of its executive council was to be appointed by the Ministry of National Welfare (*Hellinis*, 1940, vol. 11). 46

Metaxas's references to a glorious past lost in the mire of the liberal experiment resuscitated images of Spartan and Byzantine glories as well as images of the more recent glory of the Revolution, incorporating into inspirational narratives the heroic women warriors who had been recast as feminist icons by Parren some decades earlier. Metaxas drew on these images, not to promote the advancement of women in education and the workplace but as symbols of their tradition, sacrifice, and commitment to the nation. 47

Matawan's youth organization, EON, was central to the Third Civilisation he envisaged. Its journal, *Neolaia*, used many of these images alongside others of uniformed child-soldiers of different ranks (scouts to phalangists) lined up in military fashion at the numerous events staged across the country by the organization. The emphasis was on 'physical and spiritual training' as a means of reinforcing loyalty to the regime and to embed within the young the 'ideals of the nation', for they were its ultimate inheritors and guardians. EON was conceived as the 'spinal cord' of the national project, for '... if the individual does not subordinate himself to the interests of the whole, and does not consider his individual interests as inferior to those, then the State cannot exist and nor can its institutions' (*Neolaia*, September 1937). 48

EON established sex-segregated schooling and activities which aimed to create '... men out of boys, with a keen sense of their responsibility to the nation's whole and to themselves, either as leaders of Society, or as humble workers . . . and mothers of the young girls, guardians of tradition, transmitters of national ideals to subsequent generations' (*Neolaia*, September 1938). As discussed earlier, Metaxas's hyper-maternalist conceptions of women's citizenship role, while narrowly inscribed, elevated motherhood to a national priority and, by extension, boosted their cultural status and the standards of health care. In a sense, this overblown maternalism 49

offered more to women than its understated liberal counterpart, whereby men inhabited and defined public life and women were the unsung heroes of a feminised private sphere, conceived of as apolitical.³²

The Metaxas state trained girls in 'Home Economics, which comprised three main areas of learning modelled vaguely on the education systems of Spartan military society. The curriculum concentrated on Nourishment, Attire and Spiritual Housekeeping, with a strong physical education component to nurture strong women who would, in turn, produce citizen-soldiers with healthy bodies and minds' (*Neolaia*, September 1938). The induction of girls into EON would '... put an end to red nails and perfume brands as the central concern of young girls, and instead inspire them as true Mothers of the Race'. In the special pages for girls in *Neolaia*, Sitsa Karaiskakis transmitted the feminine ideal promoted by the Metaxas state: 'The girl who previously called for rights and emancipation, will realise that deep inside her lies the truth of her existence as the biological foundation of the Greek social whole' (in Mahaira, 1987: 78). The specific educational program for girls in EON would facilitate this 'awakening'.

The 'Fourth of August' regime collapsed after Metaxas's death in January 1941. Soon after, the large-scale German invasion of Greece followed by the Axis occupation made way for the installation of a fascist puppet government under Giorgos Tsolakoglou.

3.7 The Pursuit of the 'Greater Good'

While Venizelism widened the field of political possibility in Greece, nationalist politics and the ongoing struggle to define national identity had acquired new and more complex dimensions during the interwar years. Competing nationalist visions that were represented by the liberal forces of modernisation on the one hand, and by traditional Greece on the other, co-existed with (a) the increasing influence of both socialism and fascism within Greece and internationally, and (b) the tensions generated by the introduction of ethnic minorities into the Greek nation-state following the territorial gains of both wars, all of which further complicated the matrix of Greek nationalist politics. According to veteran Greek historian Svoronos (1976: 135), the turbulence and volatility of the post-war period in Greece was due to the absence of a stable ideological convention, compounded by the political and social effects of constant war for two consecutive decades. He argues that the republican/democratic forces which sprouted under Venizelos, both at the level of party politics and civil society, were ultimately too 'weak and cowardly' to bring reform initiatives to fruition, or even to extend or escape the narrow liberalism of Venizelos himself, whose powerful personality alone stemmed the tide of political polarisation (*ibid.*, 129).

If this is correct, the potential of the feminist project to take root in Greek society was also constrained by the weakness if not absence of a democratic tradition in Greek political life. Svoronos argues that the myriad democratising forces at work during this historical juncture ultimately failed to lay solid foundations in Greek political life, even though it appeared, for the first time, to be possible. 53

The increasing insularity of Greek nationalism after the Asia Minor debacle and the ensuing exchange of populations complicated the task of social movements which emerged during the interwar period. The political legitimacy of feminism in the nineteenth century was largely a result of overlapping nationalist and feminist objectives at that time. During the interwar years, feminists around the world became identified with the international pacifist movement, which gained rapid momentum after the horrors of the Great War. The involvement of Greek feminists in international pacifism located them favourably within the international feminist community, but placed them at odds with inward-looking conservative nationalists whose concerns gained political ground in interwar Greece. This broader political dynamic underpinned interwar feminism's peripheral status throughout the period until the ascendancy of the Metaxas dictatorship on the coattails of European fascism brought the vibrant reform culture of the interwar to a close. 54

In sum, the instability of the interwar made the process of feminist negotiation with the state more difficult as the state changed hands so frequently. The strengthening of bourgeois ideology and liberal reforms under Venizelos provided a favourable habitat for the emergence and diffusion of feminist ideology, although Venizelos's Komma Fileleftheron (Liberal Party) was never amongst its most avid supporters.³³ Elefandis (1979: 52), too, lays responsibility for the political instability of the interwar period on the fundamental weakness of its democratic forces: '... none of its pioneering representatives had emerged from the masses, none represented the people's interests, and all displayed an unrestrainable propensity towards foreign protection and involvement in Greek national life'. If this was true of 'high politics', it applied equally well to interwar feminism. 55

Some of the League's key figures had yielded to the pressures of increasing political polarisation as early as 1932. The general secretary, Maria Svolou, resigned from the League in 1932 to join the Greek Communist Party (KKE) after declaring '... that feminist demands are not realistic or viable outside the context of a more radical and general social upheaval'. As the Second World War unfolded in Greece with the Axis occupation, both the League's president, Avra Theodoropoulou, and her colleague, Rosa Imvrioti, joined the communist-led Resistance movement, a choice for which Imvrioti, like Svolou, would later be persecuted. Indeed, Imvrioti had become involved with communism as early as the mid-1920s through her involvement with the demotic movement. Alongside colleague Dimitris Glinos, she had declared '... that language... and the entire education system can only change in the context of a social transformation, in a socialist society' (excerpt of the 'progressive' demoticist pledge of 1927, in Kalantzis, 1985: 109). 56

Indeed, the experience of the Metaxas dictatorship was of great significance to the political fate of the Greek left, as popular discontent sowed by the regime, in conjunction with the harsh effects of the subsequent Axis occupation, helped to transform the Greek left and the KKE, in particular, from a political failure (in the 1920s) to a dominant force in the 1940s. As Alexander Kitroeff (1993: 63) has argued, the political developments from the mid-1930s in particular were central to significant changes in the political views of the Greek peasantry. Traditionally regarded as apathetic and increasingly conservative in this period, the Greek peasantry lost faith in the Venizelist liberals, in the royalist conservatives, and in Metaxas. This general discontent fed into the massive support mobilised by the Greek Resistance movement (1941–44) known as the EAM/Ethniko Apelefterotiko Metopo (National Liberation Front), a communist-led coalition of peasants, socialists, bourgeois liberals, demoticists, and nationalists from across the spectrum.³⁴ The extensive experience of Greek communists in underground organizations was crucial to the Resistance's organization and was recognised as such by the coalition, which at this point supported the strategic and organisational dominance of the KKE within the movement. 57

As the war unfolded, and as EAM established its hold in Greece, the 'woman question' far from disappeared from public discourse as one might expect in wartime; instead, it became a defining feature of EAM's platform.³⁵ It was from within EAM that a new era of progressive gender politics dawned and which captured the attention not only of a narrow circle of educated women but also a vast number of women and girls across urban and rural Greece. These women and girls were mobilised into political life for the first time, a phenomenon which transformed the social and political landscape in Greece irreversibly, and which provided the primary historical basis for the long-standing identification in Greek society of women's liberation with the left. In a sense, the anti-fascist Resistance movement was the culmination of three decades of Greek modernist thought and activism, which blended liberal and indigenous Greek feminism, Marxism, and demoticism. 58

As we shall see in the next chapter, a discourse of gender equality, set within a framework of cultural nationalism, would utilise anew the symbolism of women in arms, the implicit emancipated subjectivity of whom symbolised the modernity of the Resistance. Bouboulina and Mado reappeared during this important nation-building episode alongside the gun-toting partisan woman as Enlightenment figures, which underscored the Resistance movement's overarching ambition to restructure national political culture according to modern European standards of political participation. It was a dramatic counternarrative to the insular and conservative nationalism of the Metaxas state, which had used similar images for its embodiment of tradition, sacrifice, and commitment to the fatherland. In the next chapters I shall ask, How did the Resistance reconstitute Greek women's national citizenship? How did the experience of Greek women themselves shed light on the relationship between nationalism and emancipatory/feminist politics? What role did the specific imagery of women-in-arms play in the Resistance discourse of the new society? 59

Notes

Note 1: The 'first wave' refers to a period of feminist activity during the nineteenth century and early twentieth century in the United Kingdom and the United States. It focused on de jure (officially mandated) inequalities, primarily on gaining the right of women's suffrage. This was a defining feature of interwar feminism in Greece, in contrast to Parren's formulations in the late nineteenth century which purposely overlooked political rights.

Note 2: Eleftherios Venizelos was a Cretan politician who is largely credited for the transformation of Greece into a modern nation-state. For a discussion of the early impact of Venizelism, see Mazower (1992).

Note 3: Excellent studies of the Asia Minor disaster include Jensen (1979); M. Stewart (2004); Llewellyn-Smith (1998); and Kasaba (2002).

Note 4: The 'Goudi insurgency' of 1909, modelled on the Young Turk Rebellion of 1908, involved a military league which demanded reorganisation of the army and the navy, the banning of royal intervention from the procedures of military administration, and the reform of political life. Considering the reaction of political opponents, the league resorted to staging a coup, obliging the government of K. Mavromichalis and the king to consent to most of their claims. Simultaneously, Eleftherios Venizelos was invited to power. His appointment marked the dawn of a new era in Greek history. Excellent studies of Venizelist Greece include Mavrogordatos (1983); Andreopoulos (1989); Leondaritis (1990); and Dimitrakopoulos & Veremis (Eds.) (1980).

Note 5: The capture of Thessaloniki by the Greek Army was of tremendous consequence to the Greek state. Thessaloniki was multi-ethnic region with a large Jewish community, a sophisticated economy, and well-established trade unions and socialist organisations. Once Thessaloniki and other northern regions were integrated into the Greek nation, the new social movements of the interwar period and the labour movement, in particular, gained momentum, culminating in the establishment of the Greek Communist Party in 1920, during the Second Panhellenic Socialist Conference (5–12 April).

Note 6: In April 1892, at a Piraeus Retsina factory, sixty textile women labourers waged the first-ever strike by women, against a proposed 20 percent reduction of an already meagre wage. See Kalkani (1985).

Note 7: The term, more specifically, pertains to the new militant forms of public protest in support of women's claims and rights, which qualified Greek interwar feminism as a social movement.

Note 8: In the Athenian literary journal *Nea Estia* (*New Hearth*), A/16–17, 867–69, from the Theodoropoulou archives.

Note 9: Communist women's subservience to the party and its attendant prejudice against feminism limited their contribution to the interwar movement. Their focus was almost exclusively on decrying the 'double burden' of working women whilst simultaneously attempting to discredit the 'deception of autonomous bourgeois feminism'. The party, however, adopted the discourse around women's enfranchisement in the 1920 elections and pursued it vigorously and decisively after the Sixth Plenum in 1934.

Note 10: Other smaller interwar women's organizations produced journals such as *Eva Nikitria* (1921–23), a satellite of Parren's Lyceum, based on the island of Zakynthos; *The Women's Newspaper* (1929), a conservative weekly; and *The Feminist* (1930), a fortnightly sociological review organised by the Feminist Union of Macedonia/Thrace.

Note 11: Hart (1996) argues that Glinos's view on the capacity of war and economic crisis to liberate women from the private sphere inspired the theoretical and philosophical foundations of the gender equality politics promoted by the communist-led Resistance movement (1941–44).

Note 12: *Socialist Life* circulated between 1928 and 1935. The communist position on the 'Woman Question' would gain clarity and prominence with the onset of the Second World War and the rise of populist resistance.

Note 13: For a specific discussion of Parren's astute political exploitation of the 1897 Greco-Turkish war, see Avdela & Psarra (2005). For a discussion of her post-war trajectory, see Psarra (2006).

Note 14: Parren's enduring bond with the monarchy and the aristocracy, in general, played an important role in her diminishing importance and popularity amongst feminists. After all, bourgeois-liberals, socialists, and Venizelists shared the conviction that the 1922 National Catastrophe was caused by royalists and their willingness to stop at nothing to curb Venizelos's reforms.

Note 15: This piece of legislation was published in *Efimeris tis Kyverniseos (Government Bulletin)* 40, 5/2/30, vol. A.

Note 16: Ethniki Glossa (National Tongue), founded in 1905, and the Educational Society and the Students' Fraternity (Foititiki Sindrofia) founded in 1910 were three of many organisations inspired by the demotic movement. All had members who participated in Venizelos's education reforms of 1917 whose slogan was 'National education in the national language'. The result was the introduction of demotic Greek (*demotiki*) as the language of instruction in all elementary schools. However, with the defeat of Venizelos in 1922, *katharevousa* was reinstated and remained the language of instruction until 1976. After the collapse of the last military dictatorship, *demotiki* was replaced as the official language of Greece—in education, law, and government.

Note 17: The highest goal of Greek irredentism—the 'Grand Idea' (*Megale Idea*), entailed the recapture of Constantinople (Istanbul) from the Turks.

Note 18: The demotic movement became fragmented as tensions between communists and nationalists deepened. It underwent several stages leading up to and including the period of coalescent nativism during the Metaxas dictatorship (1936–41). Many of its champions, particularly those who eventually embraced communism such as Glinos, Alexandros Svolos, and feminist Rosa Imvrioti, became the intellectual architects of the Resistance coalition, which emerged against the German occupation some years later. The official language of the Resistance was the demotic idiom, in contrast to a countermovement comprised of Axis collaborators, military elites, the gendarmerie, and quisling governments who used *katharevousa*.

Note 19: Her speech was one in a series of lectures organised by the League. It was published in an Athenian daily entitled *Patris (Fatherland)* in May 1925.

Note 20: In *The Struggle*, April and May issues of 1924 and April to December issues of 1931.

Note 21: The 'Little Entente' had the support of the governing Demokratiki Enosis (Democratic Union), led by socialist A. Papanastasiou who congratulated the League for reinforcing the government's foreign policy. He referred to the 'Common destiny/luck, similar geographical and climactic boundaries, and blood relations, economic interests, which collectively create common sentiments and impose necessarily the collaboration of Balkan peoples' (*The Struggle*, 1990: 39).

Note 22: As mentioned earlier, feminism's supporters were not necessarily located within the republican, predominantly Venizelist, currents. One of feminism's few parliamentary successes occurred under the brief Prime Ministership of Gounaris in 1922, leader of the conservative and royalist *Laiko Komma* (People's Party).

Note 23: Even as late as the 1970s and 1980s, many of the workers in the industrial belt of Elefsis (south of Athens) would take leave with their families to return to the provinces in order to collect olives. Thus, the Greek working classes retained until recently some capacity to produce valuable commodities autonomously, a capacity which was, however, centred upon the familial economic unit.

Note 24: The Socialist Women's Society was the only interwar organisation in Greece to campaign for women's right to abortions and the right to retain their nationality upon marriage (see *Socialist Life*, vols. 1 and 3, 1928).

Note 25: *Neolaia* was the magazine produced by EON /Ethniki Organosis Neon (National Youth Organisation), a youth organisation founded by Metaxas along the lines of the fascist/Nazi youth organisations in Italy and Germany. It attracted a huge number of children and young people either by compulsory recruitment (at the local schools) or because the uniform, sporting facilities, and other

resources it provided appealed to a largely impoverished population. It is likely that most of its members were indifferent to EON's fascist ideology, when one observes the swiftness with which EON members joined EPON, the youth wing of the communist-led Resistance movement, which emerged after the Axis occupation.

Note 26: See Mazower (1991) for a historiographic account of the interwar economic crisis.

Note 27: Parallel to the mixed successes of the economic policies instituted by the liberal government was the political struggle between Venizelists and anti-Venizelists. This split the nation into two political worlds and led to the ultimate collapse of the Republic in 1935. Each side was identified with a particular constitutional regime, the Venizelists with the Republic, and the anti-Venizelists with the monarchy, even if this correspondence was imperfect and ambiguous (Mavrogordatos, 1983: 25). Venizelists supported their leader's bourgeois democratic goals, capitalist development, national integration, and moral, intellectual renewal (Kokkini, 1989:14). The anti-Venizelists headed by King Constantine, and in coalition with the old nineteenth-century establishment parties, represented a counteroffensive of 'the oligarchical interests hit by Venizelos' bourgeois revolution and the post-revolutionary life of Greece' (Mavrogordatos, 1983: 26). While the content of this conflict is far too complex to be explored here, the division crystallised into a 'National Schism' by 1916, over the issue of Greek participation in the Great War, which anti-Venizelists opposed. This schism was irreversibly compounded by the Venizelist government's execution of six anti-Venizelist leaders held responsible for the Asia Minor disaster of 1922.

Note 28: See Clogg (1992) and Hondros (1983). See also Sarandis (1993) and Kofos (1983).

Note 29: See Hondros in Close (1993) for an evaluation of the Metaxas ascendancy as a ploy by the king to sustain his anti-Venizelist support base.

Note 30: See speech by Archbishop Kabanis in *To Neo Kratos (The New State)*, vol. 8, 1938, in Mahaira (1987: 75).

Note 31: The Lyceum and the Metaxas regime shared a commitment to the preservation of Greek traditions and customs as part of a national rebirth.

Note 32: For a more comprehensive discussion of the patriarchal aspects of the Metaxas regime, see Mahaira (1987).

Note 33: Feminist lobbying for the vote enjoyed more parliamentary support from representatives of the conservative Populist Party under Gounaris, as well as the socialist-led Democratic Union Party under Papanastasiou, at different moments of the interwar period.

Note 34: Mazower's (1991) analysis of the interwar economic crisis adds another critical dimension in assessing the social basis of what was to become of the Greek Resistance movement. Mazower argues that Venizelos's response to the effects of the Depression in Greece after 1929 was resourceful but ultimately inadequate. The policies of linking the fortunes of the Greek drachma to the gold standard and import substitution industrialisation after 1932 minimised the effects of the international Depression and also created an economic upswing, which lasted till the end of the decade. However, this model of economic prosperity did not prove to be a formula for self-sustaining economic growth; nor did its benefits trickle down to the masses. In 1938, 80 percent of the population enjoyed less than 40 percent of national income (see Livieratos, 1985: 63). The cumulative effects of this also contribute to an understanding of the Resistance movement constituency. As expected, the increasingly confident trades unions took action, and working-class demonstrations gained momentum. According to Mazower (1991: 58), the economic crises of 1929–32 caused the Venizelos government to lose the support of two of its major constituencies: northern Greece (with its high percentage of 1922 refugees from Asia Minor) and the urban refugees who had arrived after the 1922 catastrophe.

Note 35: The Greek Communist Party's (KKE) traditional hostility towards feminism per se persisted throughout the war, but a renewed interest in gender equality was expressed as early as 1934 following the Sixth Plenum, when KKE was represented at the 1934 International Anti-Fascist Conference in Paris by a woman named Electra Apostolou.