



TELOS

The Memory of the Dissident/Divergent Left: The Memoirs of A. Stinas

Panayiota Nazou
University of Sydney

1. Introduction

Our principal purpose with this paper is to analyse the discourse of a socio-political group's persecuted memory, in our case that belonging to a group within the Left Opposition to the Communist Party of Greece (CPG).¹ Through the "writings" of A. Stinas,² it is our aim to highlight the processes of reconstructing the past as well as its effectiveness, and also to determine the particular characteristics which distinguish it from the discourse of "official historiography" as a scientific field of study. From this perspective, our attempt should be seen as a "subordinate" process, one which belongs to the rather "newborn" field of enquiry that deals with "Subaltern or Dissident Studies".³ Of prime significance in this line of

¹ For an overall picture of the different Leftist oppositional organisations in Greece, their break-ups and re-formations, see diagram in K. Paloukis, "He aristere antipolitese sto KKE: Archeiomarxistes kai spartakistes", in C. Chatzeiosef (ed.), *Historia tes Elladas tou 20ou Aiona*, Vol. B2 (Athena: Vivliorama, 2003).

² This is the pseudonym by which he, his works and political activism are best known. As he himself states, "up until 1926 I signed with my real surname: Spyros Priftis. From 1926 onwards I signed as A. Stinas. Other pseudonyms were: Agis, Korfiatis, Filippou", *Anamnesis. hevdomenta chronia kato ap'te semaia tes sosialistikes epanastases* (Athena: Ypsilon/Vivlia, 1985) – henceforth referred to as *Memoirs* – p. 6.

³ In the Prologue of the anthology *Selected Subaltern Studies* (R. Guba, and G. C. Spivak (eds), *Selected Subaltern Studies* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1988)), Edward W. Said, in his attempt to define this new field of enquiry's identity (which bears the title *Subaltern Studies*), resorts to its semantic and historic significations as well as to its extensions, saying "The word *subaltern*, first of all, has both political and intellectual connotations. Its implied opposite is of course *dominant* or *elite*, that is, groups in power.... The resonances of the word *subaltern* derive from Gramsci's usage in the *Prison Notebooks* in which, ever the astute political analyst and theoretical genius, he shows how wherever there is history, there is class, and that the essence of the historical is the long and extraordinarily varied socio-cultural interplay between ruler and ruled, between the elite, dominant, or hegemonic class and the subaltern and as Gramsci calls it, the emergent class of the much greater mass of people ruled by coercive or sometimes mainly ideological domination from above" Prologue, pp. v-vi.

enquiry is the important testimony of A. Stinas himself, especially since with his *Memoirs* he strives to provide an “alternative history” to those offered by the more well-known members of the Left Opposition (e.g. the Spartacists/Trotskyists and especially that of Pantelis Pouliopoulos),⁴ to those of the official left in Greece, and much more so in comparison to those engendered in the “History of the Greek Nation”, which are by and large disseminated through the educational system.

Our analysis follows the structural articulation offered by A. Stinas’ text. It begins with a brief biography, proceeds to a genre classification of the *Memoirs* and the reasons for its composition, expands into a discussion of the ideas encapsulated within the main body of the text, so as to finally draw certain conclusions relating to the discourse employed by the “persecuted subject”, and to our own answer of that essential question raised by Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, in her important work: “Can the Subaltern Speak?”⁵ This is to say, to what extent the “subaltern subject” can actually have “speech”, firstly in the literal sense – that is, the subject is free to express its views, to disagree, to reject, to suggest – and secondly in a metaphoric sense – that is to say, that the subject’s opinions can contribute to the development of the discussion on the position and nature of the socio-political subject.

2. A. Stinas: “the ideological subject”

From information contained in A. Stinas’ “Brief Autobiographical Note”,⁶ the reader quickly discovers that his portrayed identity is single-faceted – namely, that of the ideological subject. A. Stinas as a human being, with needs, desires, weaknesses, emotional ties, and psychological and spiritual concerns of a different essence, is totally absent from the *Memoirs*. In fact, Michael Raptis, an ideological comrade of Stinas’ for a short period of time (1931-1932) and afterwards an internationally renowned leader of the Fourth International (under the name of Michel Pablo), in his introductory note in the French version of Stinas’ *Memoirs*, characterises him as the “red monk”, adding: “This frail man, feeding himself on coffee and biscuits, who had reduced his needs to a bare minimum, not only due to necessity but also to temperament, had a rare degree of revolutionary faith and

⁴ Stinas covers in about 100 pages of his *Memoirs* (pp. 278-361, that is, about 1/5 of the total) his rebuttal of the published views of Pouliopoulos regarding the International Communist Union of Greece (ICUG or “Stinas Group”). For a bibliography on the topic of the oppositional left in Greece, and especially on those by Pouliopoulos and on his person, see Paloukis, “He aristere antipolitefse sto KKE”, p. 243 and E. Asteriou and G. Lambatos, *He Aristeri antipolitefsi sten Ellada* (Athens, Filistor, 1995).

⁵ Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, “Can the Subaltern Speak?”, in P. Williams and L. Chrisman (eds), *Colonial Discourse and Post-Colonial Theory: A Reader* (Hemel Hempstead, England: Harvester Wheatsheaf, 1993)

⁶ *Memoirs*, pp. 5-6. References henceforth given in the text between parentheses.

courage when faced with the ‘class enemy’”.⁷ About half way into the *Memoirs*, and again only through his ideological activity, we are informed that he was from a village in Corfu (Spartilla), while from deductive calculations we can infer that he was born in the year 1900 and died in 1987 in Athens.⁸ The “Brief Autobiographical Note” is distinguished for its sparse and direct style and directness that indicate to the reader that the author felt uneasy having to reveal personal details – even though the totality of the information contained deals exclusively with his ideological “I”.

If the reader of A. Stinas’ *Memoirs* sought to “review” his lifespan of 87 years, the reader would soon conclude that almost his entire life was dedicated towards the realisation of the socialist revolution, while a greater part of his life was spent engaged in illegal activities, imprisonment, military concentration camps, or exile. Significantly, it is characteristic that all the information we have concerning the horrible tortures he was subjected to while imprisoned, and his courageous and impressive defence of his ideological positions before the court, come to us via second-hand sources.⁹ We are informed that he was only 14 when he first encountered socialist ideas, while at 20 he becomes a regular member of the Communist Party of Greece (CPG), despite the fact that he took active part a lot earlier in “the dissemination and defence of the principle of the October revolution...” He fought in the front lines of the CPG’s campaign and in some very senior positions (for example, between 1927-28 we encounter him serving as Secretary in Regional Piraeus, while between 1928-1931 he is in charge of the Party Organisation in Central and Western Macedonia). At the end of 1931, after his open rift with the party and his expulsion from their ranks (February 1932), he passes into his Trotskyist phase. Yet again however, he goes on to state that “I had, like many others, the delusion that he [Trotsky] represented the revolutionary wing of the movement.

⁷ Cited in Alison Peat’s review of the French translation of the *Memoirs*, *Revolutionary History*, Vol 3, No. 1 (Summer 1990) [URL: <http://www.revolutionary-history.co.uk/>]. The reader of A. Stinas’ *Memoirs* and M. Raptis’s (Pablo’s) *He politike mou autoviographia (Political Autobiography)* (3rd edition, Athens: Ikaros, 2005) quickly discerns that there must have been a special and fine rapport between the two men. Neither man refers much to the other, while we learn from R. Faligot, R. and R. Kauffer in “Pablo: O teleftaios ton Moikanon” (“Pablo: The last of the Mohicans”) that Raptis introduced Stinas to Trotskyism, while Stinas never forgave Raptis for his flight overseas and that he openly accused him of opportunism, (Raptis, *He politike mou autoviographia*, pp. 299-304. See also Paloukis, “He aristere antipolitefse sto KKE”, pp. 223-224).

⁸ See A. Angelakopoulos, *To Epanastatiko Kenema tis Ergatikis Taxis (The Revolutionary Movement of the Workers’ Class)*; online directory: <http://www.politikokafeneio.com/istoria/>; files: epanastatiko130505.htm – epanastatiko270505.htm) and P. Noutsos, *He Sosialistike Skepse Sten Ellada Apo sto 1875 Os to 1974*; Vol 3 (Athens: Gnose, 1993), p. 521.

⁹ E.g. Angelakopoulos, *To Epanastatiko...* Angelakopoulos, a member himself of the “Stinas Group”, dedicates half of his study (i.e. about 50 pages) to Stinas and his group’s contribution to “the struggle for a free and autonomous socialist society”.

Officially [he adds], I was a member of the 4th International up until mid 1947. In essence however, I was never a part of it" (*Memoirs*, p.5).

To the reader of the *Memoirs*, it becomes apparent that Stinas first gains an awareness of this – something which he expresses with a degree of subtle irony in his text – during the period of rupture with the party, and that only after does he analyse and turn it into practice. He soon affiliates himself with the self-proclaimed “Left Opposition” and thus, in the period between 1931-1935, he participates in the organisations LOCPG (Leninist Opposition to the CPG) and BOLSHEVIST. In March of 1935, “after severe ideological struggles”, as he himself claims, and within the context of these groups, the Internationalist Communist Union of Greece (ICUG) is formed, of which he is a principal leadership figure. He will continue his political activism through this organisation up until the end of his life, whereas in terms of an active leadership role in the Group he will resign only in 1977.¹⁰ Stinas personally believes that this group/organisation is the only one that stands out from all the rest because of its policy principles, its means and forms of struggle, its fighting spirit, its dedication and the rectitude of its members. What’s more, Stinas, for the entire duration of its existence, personally takes on all the responsibility for the group’s positions and operations. At the end of his autobiographical note, he will clarify his views on this group by stating that,

it is one of the few revolutionary groups which stood worthy (with the help of Castoriadis)¹¹ of expelling all the old theoretical baggage which hindered in distinguishing between the Revolution and the Stalinist Counter-Revolution, and without any internal conflict and schisms to adjust itself with that which we generally refer to as “the spirit of the French May of ’68 (*Memoirs*, p. 6)¹²

¹⁰ See, Angelakopoulos, *To Epanastatiko*, 24 May 2005.

¹¹ Castoriadis himself speaks often, in his work, of his debt to Stinas. For example, see the interview he gave in 1975 in *To epanastatiko provlema semera* (Athena: Ypsilon/Vivlia, 1984), pp. 7-52, especially p. 9. See also the speech by Castoriadis, read out in March 1989 at the political memorial to A. Stinas held at the Law School of Athens, included in *O thrymmatismenos kosmos* (Athena: Ypsilon/Vivlia, 1992), pp. 143-150. See also Noutsos, *He Sosialistike Skepse*, pp. 499-500. Moreover, Stinas himself translated into Greek and prologued Castoriadis’ volume *The Revolutionary Movement in the Age of Modern Capitalism*. Today it is included in Castoriadis’ revised edition of that volume, *Synchronos kapitalismos kai epanastastase (Modern Capitalism and Revolution)*, trans. K. Kouremenos and A. Stinas (Athena: Ypsilon/Vivlia, 1987).

¹² At the end of this “Brief Autobiographical Note”, the author gives general information for his remaining works, numerous in number, which have been published from time to time. Of course, we also find circulating in book form *EAM-ELAS-OPLA: he "eidike apostole" tes ethnikes antistases sto deuterio pankosmio imperialistiko polemo kai he symvole tes ste vivlike katastrophe pou hen psychro proetomazoun hoi demioi pou kyvernoun tous laous* (Athena. Diethnes Vivliotheke, 1984).

As becomes apparent from the above summary of Stinas’ autobiographical note (as well as the remaining five-hundred pages of his *Memoirs* and all other sources), the sole focus is on Stinas’ ideological struggles, to the detriment of every other aspect of his being. He himself does not strive to appropriate the “successes” of the movement which resulted from his actions, nor to laud himself and take the credit for all its accomplishments. When he refers to the Internationalist Communist Union of Greece (ICUG), he defines it by using the possessive “us”, and never the alternative “my”, while similarly, scholars, and more importantly, other members of the Group refer to themselves as members *belonging* to the “Stinas Group”, and express without reservations their debt and respect towards “their teacher”. By way of examples we offer the “appraisals” by Angelakopoulos and Castoriadis. Beginning with the latter, he notes that:

... Spyros Stinas, a heroic fighter and revolutionary, with clear, uncompromising and bold political thoughts, who taught me much, to whom I owe a lot and with whom our friendship and political agreement and solidarity continued ceaselessly till the present day¹³

while the former has this to say:

... Stinas was a unique personality: By nature polite and dignified, intelligent, quick-witted and speedy, with an impulsive and hearty sense of humour, totally likeable as a human being and a comfortable talker, sharp-minded and visionary, with clear and bold thoughts, with capable learning, particularly concerning Marxism and the worker’s movement despite being mostly self-educated, a fervent linguist with huge humanist and revolutionary experience, he had the ability to develop and teach far from any dogmatism, opinionated views or prejudices the tactics, history and ambitions of the revolutionary worker’s movement. He was a born leader, “School” founder and dedicated to his mission.¹⁴

3. The *Memoirs* of A. Stinas: A Counter-History of the Greek Revolutionary Movement

To begin with, the title of the text itself, *Memoirs*, immediately indicates that we are dealing with a personal testimony – a characteristic element which secures its subjective “authenticity”, while it simultaneously

¹³ Castoriadis, *To epanastatiko*, p. 9.

¹⁴ Angelakopoulos, *To Epanastatiko*, 27 May 2005 (epanastatiko270505 htm)

indicates (since it relates to memory recall, re-presentations of the past events, positions, ideo-political arguments and counter-arguments) a plethora of other factors which act restrainedly, selectively or even refractively on his memory. All this cannot but have influenced the level of “authenticity” or even “precision” of his recollections.¹⁵ Therefore, the title in this case functions as a kind of protective shield for the author himself, despite the fact that in the text itself there is no indication that Stinas was preoccupied with these sorts of “abstractions”, much less with utilitarian matters of this kind. On the other hand, the reader discovers that while Stinas is not a theorist in the art of discourse, his text shows signs of an organising and “practical” (in the best sense of the word) mind, as far as the composition and analysis of his ideas goes. In his introductory note titled “Anti-Prologue” (that is, instead of a prologue), he takes care to classify his text in terms of genre and differentiate it from similar ones so as to apply his own criticism towards such texts. What’s more, he aims to reveal his aims and aspirations and to state the parameters of his own reasoning.

Thus, from the outset, the author states that his *Memoirs* are not History, much less a History of the struggles of the working class. For Stinas, the only History of the worker’s movement is that of Kordatos, which ends however in the year 1918, while the various others produced by the official Left “complain, fabricate, mythologise and mudsling” (*Memoirs*, p. 7). Stinas goes on to state that the historians of the Communist Party of Greece (CPG) make out as if there never was a worker’s movement in Greece. Stinas’ intention with his *Memoirs*, therefore, is to simultaneously provoke and invite the current workers and younger generations of students to become more aware of facts, happenings and people which up till now were unfamiliar to them. He also wishes to encourage them to make comparisons between the forms of socialism for

¹⁵ Regarding the complex function of memory, its processes of recall and record-keeping of moments in the past and especially its relationship with language, thought and specifically with writing types (genre discourses) such as memoirs, autobiography and history, see John R. Anderson, *Language, Memory, and Thought* (Hillsdale, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum, 1976) and John F. Kihlstrom, “Memory, Autobiography, History”, online article based on piece appearing in a special issue of *Proteus: A Journal of Ideas* on the subject of Memory (Vol. 19, No. 2, Fall 2002) [URL: <http://ist-socrates.berkeley.edu/~kihilstm/rmpa00.htm>]. In particular, Kihlstrom holds that “remembering is more like making up a story than it is reading one printed in a book”, going on to state, by referring to the comment made by the critic James Atlas, that “the triumph of memoir is now an established fact”, and that “the memoir has displaced the novel as the literary genre of our age. We’ve returned to a first-person narrative of ordinary people in everyday life, but also with a kind of omniscience in which authors view earlier experiences in the light of later ones” (pp. 4 & 8) (much later comes the theory of the unreliable narrator). On the other hand, F. C. Bartlett, in the first decades of the 20th century (1932) made important contributions to the basic principles of mnemonic recall by stating that: “One’s memory of an event reflects a blend of information contained in specific traces encoded at the time it occurred, plus inferences based on knowledge, expectations, beliefs and attitudes derived from other sources” (cited in Kihlstrom, p. 4).

which the working masses of the past fought for and those promised by the various political parties of today (CP, PASOK), so that they may be led towards their own thoughts and choices (*Memoirs*, pp. 7-8).

Indeed, Stinas’ *Memoirs* are far from constituting a History (in the conventional sense of the word “history”) of the Left or Workers’ Movement. It is more a kind of counter-history, as recorded within its pages are aspects of the revolutionary movement in Greece which the “authoritative” Histories insist, at the best of times, on ignoring, due to their “insignificance”.¹⁶ What’s more, the *Memoirs* constitute a counter-history on the basis of how they are structured, as well as such things as what narration techniques are employed, what topics the writer selects to comment further upon and what to ignore or totally reject. For example, Stinas is not interested in giving us a macro-history which imposes itself on the reader with its coherence and “pseudo-scientific objectivity” – from the beginning, as we have noted, he informs the reader the purpose in writing his *Memoirs*; he forewarns about his ideological intentions, while the text itself reveals his ideological didacticism. On the contrary, he takes care to project the micro-history, the minutiae, and the gaps in his memory so far as they concern such things as, for example, a particular name, or the need for digressions or flashbacks, all so as to strengthen the argumentation behind his own ideological positions as well as those of his group. He does not hesitate to inveigh against the errors, the sins, and more importantly, the crimes of the Communist Party of Greece, nor against the weaknesses and mistakes of the various Left Oppositional groups, including his own, nor against these groups’ inability to clearly see and evaluate the moments and events of the revolutionary movement on both a national, and more importantly, an international level. This is why Stinas will deductively surmise in his introductory note that the present book is nothing more than “memories from a brief period in time when everything in the movement was pure, true, lucent, bright, and crystalline and memories from an entire historical epoch where every hour and every minute dripped blood, tears, mud and poison” (*Memoirs*, p.8). Of course, almost immediately there arises in the reader’s mind the question “how true” and, more importantly, how “transparent” and “clear”, could matters be within any movement, when it does but last a very short time.

¹⁶ The only exception to this is the very recent collective *History of Greece in the 20th Century*, edited by Christos Hatziosif, vol. B2 (Athens: Bibliorama, 2003), to which we have already referred.

4. A. Stinas – Pure Visionary or Incurable Utopist?

Alison Peat, in over-condescending criticism of the French edition of A. Stinas' *Memoirs*, notes, amongst her many other observations, the following:

However, despite his youthful appetite for somewhat difficult texts, there is little sign from this autobiography, or from the archival material which is cited or printed in appendix form, that he ever dealt with the key questions of Marxist theory, or really understood the nature of Trotsky's politics.¹⁷

On the other hand, Stinas himself, with a degree of foresight, gives an indirect response regarding the relationship between Marxist theory and its practical application, based on his own evaluative criticism of one of the Left Opposition's most important figures – namely, Pantelis Pouliopoulos.¹⁸

As far as Stinas was concerned, Pouliopoulos was one of the chief Marxist theoreticians, “in the most complete, strict and consistent definition of the term”. Despite this, however, he was, like many other Marxist theoreticians, deeply absorbed “in the study of History and its laws, as a result, forgetting both the movement and socialism. As far as the regular and rudimentary affairs were concerned he was literally in the dark” (*Memoirs*, pp. 356-357). After Stinas has listed numerous examples proving the veracity of his claims, he will conclude with the following inferential phrases:

... knowledge of Marxism is not sufficient to make a fighter capable of assisting the masses, in a positive manner, in the struggle for their emancipation. Marx's economic theories and the materialistic perception of history do not bother the capitalists in the slightest. How many people regard themselves as Marxists today? Even the bloodthirsty hangmen of Ethiopia. Only the movement itself teaches and edifies both the fighters and the masses. That which the movement itself offers not as fact but as a creative force, you will not find in either “Capital” or “philosophy” (*Memoirs*, p. 360).

¹⁷ Alison Peat, review of the French translation of the *Memoirs*.

¹⁸ For more on Pantelis Pouliopoulos see: Paloukis, “He aristere antipolitefse sto KKE”, pp. 224-237, Angelakopoulos, *To Epanastatiko*, 17 May 2005 and 27 May 2005 (epanastatiko170505.htm and epanastatiko270505.htm) and Michael Raptis (Pablo), *He politike mou autoviographia*, pp. 21-49, p. 59.

An indirect reply, on behalf of A. Stinas, towards the charge contained in Peat's critique (and to any other advocate or haughty admirer of such theories that rile against such failed attempts) may be found in Rosa Luxemburg's letter addressed to Lenin, where she observes: “Let us speak plainly. Historically, the errors committed by a truly revolutionary movement are infinitely more fruitful than the infallibility of the cleverest Central Committee”.¹⁹

Which were, though, the basic principles of the revolution that the “empirical Marxist” A. Stinas envisioned? Which were the specific differences in matters of theory and practical strategising that determined his relationship with the other revolutionary groups, and to what extent did these differences contribute constructively or divisively within the wider framework of the revolutionary movement? Because, as Angelakopoulos correctly observes, in the history of the theoretical battle that raged within the revolutionary movement, it was not only the self-deceit, doubts and hesitations of the oppressed classes in their struggle for emancipation that were reflected, but also, belying these, were the deeper differences, of prime importance no less, relative to the various tendencies regarding issues of practical tactics. It was these exact differences which followed the revolutionary movement from its inception that ultimately, “contributed, not only to its fragmentation and transformation, but also to its final dissolution” (*Memoirs*, pp. 70-71).

Without doubt, what impresses the reader of the *Memoirs* is not only the selflessness of A. Stinas own contribution to the revolutionary struggle, but also his steadfastness and intransigence regarding the fundamental principles of the movement which he regards as non-negotiable under any circumstances. For the entire duration of his revolutionary activity, he will remain an ardent supporter of two fundamental “theories”, and their subsidiary postulations: the Trotskyist theory of the Permanent Revolution²⁰ and the “Leninist formula” of Revolutionary Defeatism, adapted to suit the socio-political conditions of the Greek reality, a reality which was not, of course, impervious to the influences of its international counterpart.

¹⁹ Rosa Luxemburg, *The Russian Revolution and Leninism or Marxism*, with new introduction by Bertram D. Wolfe (Ann Arbor, Michigan: The University of Michigan Press, 1961), p. 108.

²⁰ The treatise, which is known to us today as a theory, *The Permanent Revolution* (first Russian edition published in Berlin in 1929), constitutes Trotsky's response to the war Lenin's successors unleashed upon him (Zinovieff, Stalin, Buharin etc), since, as Trotsky himself tells us, the Theory of the Permanent Revolution represents for them “the original sin of ‘Trotskyism’”. For the editor of the Greek translation, this treatise is considered “a crowning example of the Marxist perception of revolutionary change in society”, of equal value to Marx and Engel's *Communist Manifesto* and Lenin's *State and Revolution* by Lenin. See Trotsky, “Introduction to the First Russian Edition”, and K. Pittas, “Prologue”, *He darkes epanastase*, trans. K. Pittas (Athens: Ekd Ergatike Demokratia, 1998), pp. 7-30.

As we now know, both the theory of Permanent Revolution (developed in 1905 by Trotsky) as well as the formula of Revolutionary Defeatism (developed in 1904 by Lenin) were based on the specific ideas first postulated by Marx and other like-minded thinkers in the mid-19th century (or possibly even a little earlier). Even then, when still “ideas” (which would later develop into full-fledged theories or even formulas), they were associated with the burning questions regarding the form the revolution should take and the procedures necessary for the realisation of its ultimate purpose. In both cases, it was the disputes which resulted, as much on a theoretical as a practical level, that determined the fortunes of the proletariat’s revolution in Russia and the entire world in the mid-20th century.²¹

In the case of Stinas, we could argue that the manner in which he perceived the theory of Permanent Revolution and subsequently promoted it through his personal, as well as his Group’s, political activism reveals that he remained utterly faithful to the fundamental principles that Marx had first postulated, albeit in seminal form, and which were subsequently further developed by Trotsky. For Stinas, the continuous revolution (in Trotsky’s words) “does not compromise with any type of class dominance”, “does not stop at the democratic stage, but continues towards the attainment of socialism and the war against foreign reaction” and, above all, “can only end with the abolishing of social classes”.²²

On the contrary, as far as the formula for Revolutionary Defeatism is concerned, A. Stinas and his Group’s position appears to have been rather more simplified, certainly more clear, than that of its founder Lenin (in the period when he was in dispute with Trotsky), but also more stable than those of Trotsky himself, the “father” of international revolutionary defeatism. More stable, because whenever the formula impinged on Trotsky’s own personal patriotism, his contradictory positions – on social-patriotism, on the degenerated workers’ revolution within the Stalinist regime, and most importantly, on the issue of International Revolutionary

²¹ For the three main perspectives regarding the Permanent Revolution, (the how and by whom this revolution will take place, the stages of transforming social relations, its permanent form and its international character as well as its fundamental principles) see Trotsky, *He diarkes epanastase*, pp. 19-20, pp. 147-152. For the formula of Revolutionary Defeatism, as it was revived (in 1904) by Lenin, as a former Marxist idea, its evolution into a specific political position during the Second World War, and the subsequent questioning by Trotsky of Lenin’s (not so clear) positions, relative to the form Revolutionary Defeatism would have taken in the event of Russia’s embroilment in the imperialist war, see “The Defeat of One’s Own Government in the Imperialist War”, *Lenin Collected Works*, (Moscow: Progress Publishers, 1974), Vol. 21, pages 275-280 and Jean-Paul Joubert’s “Revolutionary Defeatism”, *Revolutionary History*, Vol. 1 No. 3 (Autumn 1988) (War and Revolution in Europe: 1939-1945) [available online at <http://www.revolutionary-history.co.uk/>].

²² Trotsky, *He diarkes epanastase*, p. 18 and Pittas, “Prologue”, *He diarkes epanastase*, p. 8.

Defeatism as it was expressed in his works from the last three years before his murder (August 1937-April 1940) – would reveal themselves.²³

If we wanted to succinctly present a few examples of Stinas’ initial positions and activities, as well as that of his Group, in relation to what we have stated above, we would mention his significant participation in the struggles of the Workers’ Movement in Greece, directly after the First World War and the first half of the 1920s, up until his rift with the Communist Party of Greece (CPG) and his subsequent expulsion from their ranks (1930-1932). It was at this point that Stinas accepted the fact that the CPG had completely lost its autonomy, that its Stalinisation had gone too far, and that its policies “increasingly came into opposition with the interests of the workers’ class and the proletariat’s revolution” (*Memoirs*, pp. 146-157). We would also offer as an example his sharp dispute with the fickle theory of the 3rd International, that relating to the “third and final period of capitalism”, which he considered not only incorrect but also deliberately deceitful, necessary only so as to further the aims and objectives of Soviet bureaucracy²⁴ (*Memoirs*, pp. 158-159). We would also make mention of the outright rejection, by the Stinas Group (as opposed to the other oppositional groups of the time), of the theories of the Popular Front, and the slogans relating to social-patriotism and social-fascism.²⁵

As far as Stinas was concerned, the Popular Front Theory was one of the main contributing factors in the deterioration from within of the Workers’ Revolution – at a time in its history when it was going strong no less, as Stinas himself, contrary to his detractors, believed. This is because Stinas supported the viewpoint that,

if a situation is not revolutionary when the workers take over the streets, when the state machinery is paralysed, when the army enters into a spirit of camaraderie with the aroused masses, when the police, terrorised, lay under siege in their police stations, then what is? (*Memoirs*, p. 200)

²³ See the “Preface” by Daniel Guerin to the French translation of the collected (last) articles and interviews of Trotsky’s (1937-1940), Leon Trotsky, *Sur la deuxième guerre mondiale* (Brussels: Editions La Taupé, 1970), pp. 19-20. See also, Angelakopoulos, *To Epanastatiko*

²⁴ The publication of his own ideas, as well as his proposal to create a new International, resulted in the breakup of LOCPG (Leninist Opposition to the Communist Party of Greece), which was led by Raptis and Erginos. At that point in time, both Raptis and Poulitopoulos supported the positions of the 3rd International.

²⁵ The theory of the Popular Front was promoted by the bureaucracy in Moscow and was soon adopted in France and England, as well as in Greece, where we have the cooperation between the Communist Party and the civil libertarian and democratic parties, under the pretext of the rise of Nazism in Germany in 1933. See also, Trotsky, *He prodome epanastase (Betrayed Revolution)*, where he characterises the tactics of the Popular Front supporters as “obscene politics” and predicts the miserable outcome it will have for the U.S.S.R. in the event that it dominates Europe. See also Stinas, *Memoirs*, pp. 308-309.

Of course, the later infamous Soviet-German Pact of Non-Aggression (Ribbentrop-Molotov Pact, 23rd August 1939) vindicated Stinas Group's position and not the other "non-Oppositional" Groups, in this instance. Finally, we would refer to the clear stance the Stinas Group took with regards to the War, Revolutionary Defeatism and the theories of the united front and two-front struggle.²⁶ The positions of the Stinas Group regarding the War were similar to those of Rosa Luxembourg and Karl Liebknecht, who held that, just as with the First World War, so too did the Second exclusively serve imperialist interests. This meant that the only justifiable reason to participate in it would have to have been so as to bring about a civil war (that is, a social revolution), whose ultimate purpose would be the seizure of power by the working class and its transformation into a proletarian dictatorship.

As for the theory of the two-front struggle, Stinas believed that it was "as old as opportunism itself" (*Memoirs*, pp. 303-320). These positions determined the stance the Stinas Group took throughout the duration of the German Occupation of Greece, and led to a rift with the remaining Trotskyist groups, especially the Uniting Organisation of Internationalist Communists of Greece (UOICG), all of which supported participation in the national war of liberation – a line which even the CPG toed. It was at this point that Stinas, and the members of his group (most of whom were in prison anyway), cut off as they were from the developments on the international stage, naively believed that they comprised the only authentic Trotskyist Oppositional Group in Greece, one which followed the fundamental principles of Revolutionary Defeatism as advocated by the 4th International. They only learned the bitter truth at the end of 1944, when the fortunes of the Second World War had already been decided. This, it should be stated, served as the principal cause behind the Group's later estrangement from the 4th International and Trotskyism. During the German Occupation, and especially after Stinas' escape (in October 1942) and his Group's reorganisation, the Internationalist Communist Union of Greece (ICUG) constituted (perhaps) one of the few revolutionary groups

²⁶ The theory of the two-front struggle states that, in the event of war between two of our enemies, we ally ourselves with our "lesser enemy" and simultaneously fight against him. For Stinas, this theory did not differ from that which the Russian Mensheviks propounded against the theory of the Permanent Revolution, when they said that the duty of the Russian proletariat, in common with the liberal bourgeoisie, was to overthrow Tsarism and feudalism, while simultaneously fighting for its own particular interests (*Memoirs*, p. 313). The theory of the united front, with its slogan "we strike together, we advance separately", had been proposed by UOICG, in its attempt to oppose the dictatorship of Metaxas in 1936 through a common struggle. For Stinas, this theory was totally off the mark, seeing as it was put forward by Pouliopoulos at a time when there were no class fronts (*Memoirs*, pp. 295-298). The question which we pose here, to begin with, is whether it differs at all to the theory of the two-front struggle. If yes, then why couldn't it be applied in times when there were class fronts, at least within the framework of the Left Opposition Groups themselves?

in the world. Faithful as it was to the fundamental principles of revolutionary defeatism, it struggled to transform the imperialistic war then raging into an international struggle of the proletariat, attempting, as it did, to convince not only the Greek but also the German and Italian soldiers that the war they were fighting was fratricidal in nature, and that it was in their best interests to turn against their common exploiter, namely their own governments.²⁷

All of the above examples succinctly help to confirm our observation regarding Stinas' steadfastness and intransigence as far as the fundamental principles of the revolutionary movement were concerned – principles which he believed to be inviolable and non-negotiable under any circumstances. But despite the fact that every honest and unselfish ideologue recognises that for a revolutionary movement to be successful such cooperation is a necessary and vital ingredient, Stinas and his group, through their intransigence and steadfast adherence to their ideological principles, rendered any cooperation with the other Left groups of the Greek Opposition impossible – thus nullifying any possibility of success for the Movement. It seems, however, that Stinas failed to accept this very fact.

"It is not possible for one to fight if he does not believe in the conquest of the goal for which he is fighting" Lenin once said,²⁸ while a common dictum, based on common sense says, "One does not fight for an ideal but for a humanly attainable outcome". It seems as though Stinas and his group realised that they were fighting for an ideal situation, but they simultaneously believed that the limits of what is humanly attainable can be subject to change if they are constantly tried and tested. "A series of consecutive defeats are followed by the final victory," stated Rosa Luxemburg, and Stinas and his group firmly believed in this, at least until the end of the 1940s, if not until the end of their lives. Unfortunately, in this case everything worked to narrow the limits of human attainability and not to the broadening of those limits. This made the realisation of their ideological vision seem all the more distant. Despite this, the revolution for the Stinas group, whatever form it may have taken, was considered a constant process, and therefore the struggle should continue. Here lies the remarkable, but also the tragic, side of this group.

One must seek to understand where this intransigent stance of Stinas came from, both in his devotion to the fundamental principles of the

²⁷ *Memoirs*, pp. 317-320 and pp. 379-383; Castoriades, *O thrymmatismenos kosmos*, p. 146.

²⁸ With the basic difference, however, that the position for which Lenin and his supporters were fighting had no relevance to the real aims of the Russian Revolution, which was the "emancipation of the working class", Luxemburg, *The Russian Revolution and Leninism or Marxism*, pp. 68-72. See also Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 6, p. 180 and Trotsky, *He diarkes epanastase*, p. 81

proletarian revolution in the first half of his life, but also to other questions which he later persistently dwelled upon until the end of his life. Castoriadis informs us of Stinas' fixation on questions such as: why did the Russian Revolution degenerate? Why did Bolshevism and Lenin attain the trust of the masses despite the fact that they were originally not considered to have any relationship to the revolution? Why did Rosa Luxemburg remain a voice crying in the wilderness? Why did Marxist theory contain from the very beginning those elements that made the current developments possible, if not unavoidable, even enabling all the bureaucrats and executioners to quote them?²⁹

Castoriadis was an active member of the Stinas group from 1942 to 1945 (when he left for France). But despite the fact that he had broad theoretical knowledge and rare intellectual insight, he belonged, as he himself stated, to a different generation (being only 23 in 1945). He was thus able to interpret the developments of the proletarian revolution not only from different perspectives but also from some objective distance. Castoriadis therefore offered explanations of the issues troubling Stinas in his articles published in the journal *Socialisme ou barbarie* (from 1949 until 1966 when circulation ceased), but also in other later works of his. The explanations he gave were accepted by Stinas, however it seemed as though they just weren't enough for him. "Perhaps", Castoriadis would add, "because the real revolutionary tradition was for me embodied in books, whereas for Stinas it was an experience indelibly marked in his memory, it was his life itself... And this contains a certain tragic element from which we can never escape."³⁰

Indeed, Stinas was fortunate enough to feel – either from a distance or by participating in them – the tide of workers' revolutions which corresponded to the models of the revolution which he and his group envisaged: revolutions which were not ordered, instigated, preached and especially not directed by anyone, neither party nor individual. They were the doing of the masses themselves and the source of their inspiration was their class instinct. The specific model Stinas used was of course the Russian Revolution (which however proved to be not at all permanent, but a betrayed revolution),³¹ at least in the way that he believed it originally broke out. Stinas believed that the revolution was genuinely formed and implemented in its original phase – which, in the first part of his *Memoirs*

²⁹ Castoriadis, *O thrymmatismenos kosmos*, p. 149.

³⁰ Castoriadis, *ibid.*, p. 148.

³¹ "The revolution will either be permanent or betrayed". The Russian Revolution was sacrificed on the altar of the Stalinist construction of the socialist economy in the USSR, since as Stalin himself clearly stated, economic construction "is more important than the Permanent Revolution" (see S. Michael's "Prologue to the second edition" of the Greek translation of Leon Trotsky's *The Betrayed Revolution*.)

he will characterise as the Leninist/Trotskyist phase. In the second part of his *Memoirs*, Stinas considers only the first few months of the Russian Revolution genuine, up until July 1917. In this short-lived phase of the Russian Revolution, Stinas witnessed his own revolutionary vision of a democratic social organisation taking on flesh and bones. A vision which "subjugated its representatives to the continuous control of their constituents and realised for the first time in the modern age a true democracy on a universal scale" (*Memoirs*, pp. 23-24 and p. 33). For Stinas, the spirit of the May '68 French Revolution was an analogous case.

However, in the five hundred densely written pages of his *Memoirs*, few are "heroic" (as he characterises them) moments of the Workers' Revolution or the Greek Workers' Revolution, while there is an abundance of examples relating to its failures and darker side. Heroic is what Stinas calls the well-organised Workers' Movements in Europe, Russia and Latin America before, during and after the First World War, after which point he sees it as shifting from an imperialistic war to one aimed at their own governments (*Memoirs*, pp. 205-218); he also interprets the inability of the leaders of the Second International to prevent the War, and worse, the agreement of the socialist parties and syndicates to actively take part in it, as a sign of the collapse of the Workers' Revolution.³²

The heroic moments of the Workers' Revolution will include the strikes of Lavria and Serifos (when the strikers overthrew the authorities and took charge of the organisation of the island's economy in cooperation with the farmers) in 1896 and 1916 respectively, as well as all the strike mobilisations, the rowdy demonstrations and clashes, in Athens, Piraeus, Volos and Corfu, in the first months of 1921, when the people realised that the promises for peace and freedom were nothing more than a pre-election deception by the United Opposition, while conscription and shipments of troops to the front continued and privations increased. It was then that the anti-war rallies and strikes coincided with the demands of the workers and farmers for their own individual rights.

The point of reference for Stinas' constant retrospectives of heroic moments of the workers' revolution was the events in Thessalonike in 1920-23. "I remember", noted Castoriadis, "his admiration for the female tobacco workers of Thessalonike who descended onto the streets in their clogs and clashed with the police".³³ Stinas would fill many pages of his

³² *Memoirs*, pp. 12-17 and Paul Froelich, *Rosa Luxemburg*, pp. 252-269. Stinas provides an extensive excerpt (pp. 13-14) from Froelich's *The Life and Works of Rosa Luxemburg*, which he translated into Greek (A' edition, Neoi Stochoi, 1972, B' edition, titled *Rosa Luxemburg*, Hypsillon/Vivlia, Athens, 1981.) Also translated by Stinas into Greek are Luxemburg's *The Russian Revolution* and *Spartacus' Demands – Letters from Prison*, published by Hypsillon/Vivlia.

³³ Castoriades, *O thrymmatismenos kosmos*, p. 148.

memoirs describing the revolutionary role of the Thessalonike Federation when it was still the Turkish department of the 2nd International (before liberation in 1912). He would also describe the events following the liberation of Thessalonike, when the Federation took the initiative of unifying all the socialist groups of the country in order to create one socialist party (*Memoirs*, p. 42). At that time, the majority of its members were Jewish workers and intellectuals. It was only after 1919, when the Thessalonike Federation became a part of the socialist party, that many Greek workers started joining its ranks. For Stinas, Thessalonike was the heart of the workers' movement in Greece, especially in the early 1920s. He himself experienced and indeed contributed to the remarkable results of the harmonious cooperation among different groups: the Communist Party, the Workers' Centre of Thessalonike, the labor unions and the popular masses of the city in general. He was able to see the city transformed into a cooperative of the various social-democratic movements, producing a plethora of published material that testifies to the intellectual and ideological orgasm occurring in the city (*Memoirs*, pp. 42-52).

Unfortunately, it was also during his stay in this city that Stinas would be touched by the fundamental reformations being made to the governing policies of the Greek Communist Party and where he would experience the corrosive effects of these reformations, including the subsequent paralysis of what was a vibrant workers' movement.³⁴ Stinas described this period as "the Zachariades period" and he described it as being

... the period of the Stalinisation of the party. The critical spirit must be completely exiled from the party. The members of the party must be transformed into robots, into mindless instruments of decisions made by others without any ounce of their own participation. (*Memoirs*, p. 164)

Those who dare express doubts are marginalised, stigmatised and even murdered. Such moments, which occurred in the 1930s and during the German Occupation and the Civil War, constitute the dark events of the revolutionary movement in Greece. Stinas provides many examples in his *Memoirs* that deal with the murderous activities of the OPLA³⁵ and the

³⁴ For Stinas, the same role was played by the Communist Parties "in Spain in '36, in France and in Greece. They behaved similarly in France and Italy in the post-World War II period. They did the same in Greece in July of '65 and in France in May of '68" (*Memoirs*, p. 471).

³⁵ The group OPLA (Ομάδα Περιφρούρησης Λαϊκού Αγώνα = Squad for the Guarding of the Popular Struggle) was established in the period of the Dekembriana events (end of 1944) when the Germans left the country. According to Stinas, this group was like the GPU or the Ochrana, in the service of EAM. The group murdered hundreds if not thousands of mainly internationalist fighters who dared to disagree with the "Stalinist" leadership of the Greek Communist Party. It also murdered many innocent citizens (*Memoirs*, pp. 422-429).

inhuman stance adopted by the members of the Communist Party (and its leadership in particular) towards their fellow inmates and prisoners who happened to be Trotskyists. Stinas informs us how the Trotskyists would be left to starve (*Memoirs*, pp. 361-364) or how, after colluding with the German executioners, would ensure that the Trotskyists would be the first to face the firing squad (*Memoir*, pp. 269-273).

Fortunately, a plethora of other micro-narratives in Stinas' *Memoirs* function somewhat as a counterweight to the above dark aspects of the revolutionary movement in Greece. One may find narrations of self-sarcasm, both comic and tragic, and stories of heroism, humaneness and selflessness which often overlooked distinctions along ideological lines. One such example comes from Stinas' personal experience when, in the early 1920s and during a demonstration of the farmers of Kerkyra, he attempted to address them, as a representative of the Communist Party. He received heckles and cat-calls from the protesters who counted him among the "suited-up" bureaucrats of the Communist Party who the farmers considered as untrustworthy as the "politikantides" ("tricky, double-dealing, baby-kissing") politicians of Greece.

Illustrative of the power that the labour unions could wield is the account by Stinas of the episode with Prime Minister Venizelos in 1915. The Prime Minister, clearly annoyed that the representatives of the Electrical Workers' Union of Athens had interrupted the night sitting of Parliament so as to present their demands to him, abruptly stated that their demands were rejected, even though he had not heard them, and he duly moved to exit the chambers. "But at his last word" narrates Stinas, "the lights of the Parliament were switched off and together with the lights of the Parliament went all the lights of Athens and Piraeus. Calmly and unruffled, the president of the Union, Papanikolaou, an ingenious character, pulls out a spermaceti candle from his pocket, lights it and in a formal voice says to Venizelos: "Be seated Mr President and let us continue the discussion". Of course, Venizelos stayed, accepted their demands and only then were the lights switched back on" (*Memoirs*, p. 40).

Human kindness and class solidarity also feature in the micro-narratives of Stinas. These values were often to be found in the person of those who were considered "enemies" of the Communists or of the nation. Stinas came across such a case in the person of the Bishop of Karystos, Panteleimon, who in 1942 conspired in the escape of Stinas from detainment, thus saving him from almost certain execution by the Germans. Likewise, certain Italian soldiers, foreign occupiers though they were, protected him from abuse by Greek guards, telling him in a friendly tone: "Signore, tutti gli uomini siamo fratelli" (*Memoirs*, p. 393).

One could select from a plethora of such micro-histories from within Stinas' *Memoirs*, which reveal many more such obscure or even completely unknown "heroic" or even "darker" sides of the Greek Revolutionary Movement, especially in the first half of the 20th century. The issue at hand in this case however is not the recording of the various aspects of the Greek Revolutionary Movement, which certainly as a whole comprise an important testimony in the overall history of revolutionary movements in Greece, but rather the quality of the "subject Stinas" which emerges directly or indirectly from these micro-histories, on the basis of their wider content, his personal revolutionary contribution and even the ideological positions which are projected through these. Can we claim that we are dealing with a revolutionary anarchist or a democratic socialist? A pure ideologue or an incorrigible dreamer, a utopist?

Certainly, based upon his life-long faith in the basic principles of the Revolutionary Movement and his personal contribution to the cause – in the role of both simple fighter and leader of the Left Opposition organisation ICUG – Stinas is presented as an intensely aware revolutionary, with a clear internal understanding of the revolutionary tenets. The struggle for him is mainly class-related, his ultimate goal being the emancipation of the masses, the means for the success of this goal being the dictatorship of the masses. Repeatedly Stinas discusses, albeit in very general terms, of the dissolution of governments and the seizure of power by the workers. He speaks about the type of revolution, the classless society he seeks to bring about, the leading – albeit unassertive and non-dominating – role of the "vanguard", but again in very general terms. Stinas himself, as we have seen, lived, felt and participated in "successful" revolutions, in the form he had envisioned for them. All of them, however, as he himself admits, were of "brief duration". The big question of "why?" must remain unanswered, for Stinas seeks neither to face or tackle it in his *Memoirs*.

The translator of the French edition of the *Memoirs*, according to Alison Peat, supported the notion that Stinas, in the final years of his life, leaned nearer to anarchism, without us being absolutely certain as to what the translator meant by this. From within the *Memoirs* themselves and Stinas' own proclamations, we can argue that this "anarchism" reveals itself in terms of the pursuit of a social system which is based upon the absence of a central concentrated power base, where the governing bodies are elected, controlled and are required to give continuous account to the people. It is only within these limits that we can frame Stinas' so-called "anarchism".

Conversely, from within the majority of the micro-histories, what is revealed to us is a Stinas who is a steadfast revolutionary but also a great

humanist, selfless fighter, pure ideologue and an incurable visionary – perhaps even to the point of being labelled a utopist – a man who continues to believe in the ability of mankind to create a society which is more just and humane. This is why, at the age of about eighty, and despite the despair engendered within him as a result of the disheartening global situation in which he lived during the final years of his life,³⁶ he chose to conclude his *Memoirs* with a renewal, one last time, of his declaration of faith in the views espoused by Rosa Luxemburg, that is to say that the "final victory" of the socialist revolution will occur, after a series of "defeats" – meaning, therefore, that "the struggle continues!"

5. In Lieu of an Epilogue: *The Memoirs of A. Stinas* as a Response to the Question "Can the Subaltern Speak?" (or "Does the Subaltern Have a Voice?")

We could argue that *The Memoirs of A. Stinas*, along with his life as it is presented to us through these memoirs, offer an indirect answer to the question we set above as whether or not a "subaltern" can have a voice – meaning by this, as we have already set forward in the initial parameters of this analysis, whether a subaltern is free to express their opinion, to disagree, to suggest, and even to actively participate in the formation of a socio-political system. Also, on another level, whether the subaltern's "voice" has the ability, and also the potential, to contribute to the development of the dialogue relating to the position and nature of the socio-political subject.

Certainly Stinas belongs to the category of the "subaltern", not because of his social origins but rather due to his ideological convictions that ran contrary to the socio-political system in which he lived. This system, with its "democratic", liberal, dictatorial or even communist countenance, attempted to bar him from the opportunity "to have a voice", initially by grouping him within the "subaltern" sub-group, and later by depriving him of the right to act and function as a free being.

We know from our sojourn through Stinas' *Memoirs*, of course, what his response to all this would have been. Throughout his entire life he remained an assiduous activist who sought and succeeded, up to a point, even when in prison,³⁷ to "retain a voice". From his position as leader of an opposition group, he rejected assuming the role of an "ideological father" who sees it as his duty to speak for the "powerless or subaltern totality". On

³⁶ Castoriadis, *O thrymmatismenos kosmos*, pp. 149-150.

³⁷ Stinas manages, with his zeal and talent, to use his time in prison as an opportunity for ideological enlightenment, thus converting many of his guards into fellow ideologues. Moreover, Alison Peat observes that the manner in which Stinas describes the conditions in prison makes "Strangeways look like the Hilton".

the contrary, he did not believe in such classifications, and this is why he fought to have them abolished. Thus by word and by deed, he indicated that his role, as leader of the ICUG, but also of those who he classified as the “vanguard” of the Revolutionary Movement, was to contribute primarily in restoring the loss of trust the “subaltern” masses felt towards themselves, to make them believe that they had the ability and the right to “speak”, and secondly to become aware that they must, of themselves, take on the responsibility to lay claim to this right of “speech”, which belongs to them, and also to safeguard it, identifying the role of the leader with that of the collective “I” of the “subaltern” mass.³⁸

Despite this, the subaltern “having a voice” does not only mean, as has already been noted, that it has the potential or ability to “articulate” speech, but rather that it be possible to be “heard” and “read”, in the sense of being comprehended, interpreted, and heeded (that is, accepted). More specifically, for Spivak, “The subaltern as female cannot be heard or read”, and in more general terms, “the subaltern cannot speak”.³⁹ From this perspective, we can argue that neither Stinas and his Group, nor even any other group of the Left Opposition in Greece and abroad managed to “have a voice”. They remained a “non-read and non-recognised” margin in comparison to the major political parties and wider society. It proved impossible to “be heard” even by the working class mass that comprises the main “subaltern” part of every society. This, however, does not appear to be irrelevant, given that these same groups failed to “hear” and identify with the collective “I” of the subaltern mass.⁴⁰ What’s more, this basic “defect” is not only restricted to the Left Opposition groups, but rather to the whole of the Workers’ Movement, the Russian Revolution and Marxism in general. The fact that all these are nowadays firmly in the past proves that they failed to “read” the then socio-historic “reality” and, more

³⁸ Rosa Luxemburg, coming from a different viewpoint, claimed something similar when she said that, “the only ‘subject’ upon which the role of the leader falls is the collective ‘I’ of the revolutionary class which decisively demands the right to err and learn itself the dialectic of History” (cited in? *Memoirs*, p. 472)

³⁹ Spivak, “Can the Subaltern Speak?”, p. 104. For Spivak, the subaltern as female or non-Western civilisation, does not have a voice, in the sense that it cannot be heard nor read since even the most liberal critique which is offered by the West today stems from a desire to maintain the Western subject or better yet, the West as subject. The theory of the “multi-faceted subject” creates an illusory undermining of the superiority of the subject, while quite often it encompasses the very subject of knowledge. The great debate surrounding the critique of the superiority of the subject results in nothing other than in the proclamation of a Subject.

⁴⁰ As we are informed by Michael Raptis, even the 4th International had confirmed the status of these groups as being outside of the mass movement and had foreseen the danger of their transformation into propaganda groups “which had the added tendency of theorizing their isolation and gaining self-satisfaction in the idea that they comprised the “core”, the “centre” of tomorrow’s coalescence of the masses” (*He politike mou autoviographia*, p. 139). Even the 4th International’s studied tactic of “idiomorphic ingression” managed to achieve very little.

importantly, to plan for the unforeseen elements intrinsic to human nature. The absolute belief in the creation of one unique and true theory for society, history and the economy, gives birth to – as Castoriadis correctly observes – “the politically monstrous idea of orthodoxy”. Even the more contemporary socio-political thinkers who transpose their faith from the Workers’ Movement to the various peripheral movements (e.g. youth, students, women, environmentalist groups, or even ethnic minorities), tend to repeat the same mistakes and thus remain trapped within a “class mentality” which sets as its main tenet the pursuit of a “voice” for only one group or portion of society.

We shall conclude our own discussion here by declaring our faith in the ideas of three political thinkers and fighters for the rights of all human beings to have a voice.

Freedom, claimed Rosa Luxemburg, when it isn’t for everyone isn’t freedom:

Freedom for only the supporters of the government, only for the members of one party – however numerous they may be – is no freedom at all. Freedom is always and exclusively freedom for the one who thinks differently; because all that is instructive, wholesome and purifying in political freedom depends on this essential characteristic, and its effectiveness vanishes when “freedom” becomes a special privilege.⁴¹

This type of freedom is directly related to tenets of autonomy and political emancipation, which, as Castoriadis correctly stated, concern all of society. Political emancipation presupposes autonomous activity on the part of society as a whole, but also for each person on an individual basis. Unfortunately, and this is obvious to all of us, “exactly this sort of activity is largely absent nowadays”. It is precisely here that the value of such books as *The Memoirs of A. Stinas*, even from their didacticism, (all those “musts” for the “vanguard” and for every ideologue fighter) as well as every other weakness and mistake of the author,⁴² come to remind us that the right of and opportunity for “speech” are not given for free nor are they inherited, but rather they are won through our conscious participation in the ongoing struggle for it. Only thus, as a continuous, and even antagonistic process, can we interpret “real socialism” – the “socialist” or even “participatory” democracy, with the characteristics of an autonomous, self-governing and self-enacting society. The final realisation of this “real socialism” is

⁴¹ Luxemburg, *The Russian Revolution*, p. 69).

⁴² Luxemburg, *The Russian Revolution*, p. 108.

the great wager, the constant struggle for its attainment is the great reality.

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Byzantine Influence on Russia Through the Ages

Nonna Ryan
Macquarie University

Introduction

The spread of Byzantine culture and its influence on regions beyond its immediate control was considerable and long lasting. From a Russian perspective, the most important legacy of the Byzantine Empire was its impact on the development of Russian society and culture, which followed the acceptance in the 10th century of the Orthodox religion by the ancestors of modern-day Russians. Through this impact Byzantine Christianity has had a profound and permanent effect on Russian civilisation.

This work will discuss the influence of Byzantine culture on the development of Russian architecture, music, language, literature, painting and sculpture from the 10th century to the present day. It is interesting to ask why one culture had such profound influence on so many aspects of another. Central to any answer is an appreciation of the interaction and changing relationships that have occurred between the Orthodox Church and the developing Russian State over the past one thousand years. We begin with a brief discussion of the history of pre-Christian Russia, describe the interaction of the Eastern Slavs with Byzantium and then trace some aspects of the development of the present-day Russian society.

Emerging Christianity in Pre-Christian Rus through contacts with Byzantium

The region that encompasses present-day Byelorussia, Russia, and Ukraine has been subjected to numerous invasions and turbulent clashes of disparate cultures throughout all of recorded history. Archaeological evidence indicates that the south-west (present-day Ukraine) was the cradle of what came to be known as Russian culture. Around 1000 BCE, the Cimmerians, a proto-Iranian people from the Black Sea Region, settled in the south, (present-day Ukraine). Around 700 BCE the Cimmerians were expelled by the Scythians who were in turn defeated by the Sarmatians in the 3rd century BCE. The Scythians and Sarmatians were closely related, both tracing their origins to Iran. The Sarmatians controlled much of what is now southern Ukraine and south-western Russia until they were overpowered around 200 by the Ostrogoths, who were a Germanic people from the north-west. Around 370 the Ostrogoths were driven west by the arrival from Central Asia of the savage Huns.

The Huns were followed by the Avars, who were a Central Asian people probably related to the Huns. Around 570 they moved on from Russia to occupy the Danubian provinces and the heartland of what had been Attila's empire. Although finally crushed