Homeland Activism, Public Performance, and the Construction of Identity: An Examination of Greek Canadian Transnationalism, 1900s-1990s

By

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Abstract

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This thesis examines cases of Greek Canadian transnationalism throughout the twentieth century. It utilizes a large database of oral interviews, newspaper records, both Greek and English language publications, and a variety of archival documents, including government correspondence, community records, and Royal Canadian Mounted Police files, to investigate the ways that Greek immigrants, and to a lesser extent their Canadian-born children, responded to political and humanitarian crises in Greece and engaged in homeland practices. Focusing on Greek Canadians’ use of public performances, namely cultural presentations, humanitarian relief campaigns, commemorative celebrations, and public protests, in mobilizing broader support for their cause, I argue that such transnational acts nurtured a diasporic space that drew Greek Canadians into a public dialogue on the meaning of Greek immigrant identity.

Mediated by immigrant elites and shaped by particular conditions in both Greece and Canada, Greek Canadians’ transnationalism contributed significant material and symbolic aid to Greece, but also served as a vehicle for them to privilege and project their ethnic and national identities on a public stage. Though, to be clear, no single narrative emerged, as multiple authors professed to represent the majority of Greeks even while women and working-class men were relegated to less public roles and, often, engagement
in homeland affairs engendered political and ideological strife among Greeks. While chapter one addresses various forms of public and private transnationalism among early twentieth century Greek immigrants, each of the remaining chapters provide a detailed case study of homeland activism. Chapter two examines Greek Canadians’ humanitarian aid work in the Greek War Relief Fund during the Second World War, and chapters three and four focus on Greeks’ political engagement in response to the right-wing military dictatorship and competing claims over Macedonia. In exploring how homeland practices and politics became localized in the diaspora, this thesis demonstrates the significance of transnationalism in the construction of Greek immigrant identity.
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Introduction

In the wake of the April 1967 coup d’état in Athens, in which a group of right-wing military colonels overthrew the government and established dictatorial rule, a Greek immigrant in Toronto penned an open letter to King Constantine of Greece. Claiming to represent “Canadians of Greek descent” who “feel deep concern and even shame for the degeneration of the political situation in Greece,” the letter-writer blamed the king for his complicity in the coup and admonished him to return parliamentary democracy to Greece.\(^1\) Published in a Greek-language Toronto newspaper, this letter, and the political demonstrations that followed, reflected important themes in Greek Canadians’ transnational activism throughout the twentieth century. The Greeks who took to the streets in protest believed, as the letter-writer put it, that they had a right to intervene in homeland affairs – a right derived “from the deep love and affection we have for Greece which has not weakened by our emigration,” to say nothing of the vast sums of remittances supplied annually to Greece.\(^2\) Yet in condemning the dictatorship, Greek immigrants and their Canadian-born children expressed more than simply their enduring love for Greece; indeed, in their protests on city streets and in the pages of the press, they sought to provide meaningful moral and practical aid to Greece and, in so doing, forged a diasporic public sphere – a material and discursive space not bound or limited by national borders.\(^3\)

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\(^1\) Nick Skoulas, “Advice to a King, an open letter to King Constantine,” *New Times (Neoi Karoi)*, April 27, 1967, 1.
\(^2\) Ibid.
Throughout the twentieth century, sizeable numbers of Greeks in Canada transcended vast distances to engage in homeland practices and politics. Privately, they nurtured kinship ties and resourcefully adapted cultural and religious rituals to the Canadian landscape. Publicly, they rallied in response to various territorial, political, and humanitarian crises in Greece and, through their words and actions, endeavoured to mobilize other Greek immigrants to the cause and urge the Canadian government and broader public to intervene on behalf of Greece’s interests. Public performances, notably protests and cultural and commemorative celebrations, were commonly appropriated in service of the homeland, as were newspapers, both English and Greek-language.

Significantly, the communal experience of such performances and the circulatory nature of newspapers served as a public stage for Greeks in Canada to negotiate the meanings of a Greek ethnic and national identity. Mediated by immigrant elites who sought to script positive narratives of the homeland and of their immigrant community, and shaped by particular conditions in Canada, this transnational activism facilitated the creation of an alternative space for Greek Canadians to forge collective identities.

This thesis addresses several key themes. Certainly, some attention is paid to the private or familial forms of transnationalism, particularly in chapter one, which discusses the role of kin networks in facilitating chain migration and long-distance match-making, assisting migrants in locating jobs, and nurturing cultural and religious practices. But the main focus of this study is the public expression of transnationalism through the forums


of cultural performances, humanitarian relief campaigns, commemorative celebrations, and political protests. Throughout the twentieth century, Greek migrants in Canada participated in numerous public performances intended for both Greek and non-Greek audiences. Some of these displays were carefully orchestrated by immigrant elites, while others were spontaneous acts of ethnic nationalism. Ostensibly, they shared in common an underlying goal of providing aid to Greece during times of crisis or conflict, as was the case during the Balkan Wars of 1912-1913, the Axis occupation of Greece during the Second World War, the seven-year reign of the right-wing military regime beginning in 1967, and the Macedonia issue throughout the second-half of the twentieth century. As residents or citizens of Canada, Greek migrants viewed themselves as uniquely positioned to assist their homeland, and they readily utilized public performance in their efforts to mobilize other Greeks or to persuade the Canadian public or government to intervene on behalf of Greece’s interests. As historians such as Robert Cupido, Stuart Henderson, Franca Iacovetta, and April Schultz have shown, such performances also served as vehicles for migrants to stake their ownership over particular symbols and historical narratives and contest assumptions about the inevitability of immigrant assimilation by refashioning and projecting their ethnic identities to a broader audience.5

Drawing upon an extensive body of literature on commemoration, parades, and spectacles, I demonstrate the role of public performance in the construction of a Greek ethnic and national identity for immigrants and their children in Canada.\(^6\) Such performances offered Greeks an audience and a platform from which to contest prevailing discourses on Greek immigrants while also expressing a collective vision of a national homeland. Significantly, such performances were also “sites of contestation” – complicated by the multiple authors who challenged or subverted the official messages.\(^7\) National commemorative festivals offer the most striking example of this. Celebrations such as Greek Independence Day on March 25 and Ohi (No) Day on October 28 (commemorating Greece’s resistance against Mussolini during the Second World War) were intended to project a unified, singular, and celebratory vision of the homeland, but they were commonly appropriated for political purposes by individuals who offered alternative interpretations. In this thesis I explore the use of churches, community halls, city streets, and public squares as sites of performance by transnational Greeks grappling with questions of representation, cultural ownership, and authenticity.


Competing narratives were reflected in other, less obvious, ways as well. Much like migration itself, gender and class hierarchies shaped migrants’ engagement in transnationalism. As “ethnic elites” or “brokers” between immigrant communities and the host society, upwardly mobile or middle-class men dominated leadership roles within various organizations and often asserted themselves as spokesmen for all Greeks. Eager to demonstrate their respectability, Greek business owners in the first half of the twentieth century appropriated this role, while in later decades it was well-educated, professional men, motivated by ideological or political goals, who gravitated towards such positions of power and self-appointed authority. As a highly educated and fluent English speaker, the letter-writer introduced at the beginning of this chapter was not representative of the post-1945 Greek migrants to Canada, the majority of whom emigrated from rural areas and with relatively little education, though he had no qualms speaking on behalf of the broader community of immigrants. Working-class women and men also participated in transnational networks and homeland political struggles, though they often did so from the periphery, as they were rarely offered opportunities to shape the official narratives and, on occasion, performed as props in the various spectacles organized by male community leaders. Drawing upon Catherine Squires’ discussion of multiple public spheres, this study recognizes the diverse and uneven access to the diasporic public sphere but shows that even in these limited spaces, working-class Greeks attributed meaning to their performances, viewing their participation as educating the

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broader public on Greek culture and history, as in the case of the Greek War Relief Fund, or as furthering the cause of democracy in Greece, as was the case during the military junta.

In locating and analyzing the various forms of transnationalism exhibited by Greek migrants in Canada, this thesis highlights their political engagement in homeland issues. Concerns about the political instability in Athens, as well as the territorial and cultural sovereignty of Greece, prompted sizeable numbers of Greek immigrants to voice their grievances and demand change through public protests and newspapers, asserting that as Greeks they had both a duty and right to intercede on behalf of Greece’s best interests. Their political activism was not simply the result of transplanted ideologies. While some individuals arrived in North America with deep political convictions and first-hand experience in resistance movements, many others were politicized in Canada. Their ethnic nationalism, which Matthew Frye Jacobson identifies in his study of Irish, Polish, and Jewish immigrants to the United States in the second half of the nineteenth century, as “neither fixed nor constant” but rather “situational – a fluid cultural construction which shifts over time in response to new social, economic and political circumstances” and defined “against another (or others),” was forged in their experiences as immigrants in Canada.\(^{10}\) Drawing insight from the extensive literature on immigrant activism and radicalism, much of it produced by labour historians investigating the interplay of class exploitation and gender and ethnic hierarchies in politicizing

immigrants, this thesis explores the processes through which Greek immigrants, in forging transnational linkages, developed and expressed their political and ethnic identities. While protests were an obvious form of political activity, Carmela Patrias, Jacobson and others have demonstrated the value in broadening our definition of politics since, as Jacobson explains, “politics is not limited to the straight-forward mechanics of government” and “[c]ulture itself may be the site of domination and resistance.” Using a wide lens, this thesis explores how parades, festivals, commemorative celebrations and other performances were infused with political messages and meanings.

Transnationalism could serve as a unifying force for immigrant communities but also as a source of conflict. My analysis of transnational political activity demonstrates how homeland activism served, at times, to polarize immigrant groups. The Macedonia issue provides the most obvious example of the animosities that developed between ethnic groups in Canada, but other examples, notably the Venizelos-Royalist schism in the early twentieth century, and the hostility between supporters and opponents of the 1967 military coup, illustrate, too, how engagement in homeland politics engendered


divisions along ideological or political lines among immigrants. Probing cases of rupture or conflict provides for fuller understandings of community dynamics, complicating earlier celebratory portraits of immigrants as belonging to “cohesive communities.”

The Greeks who transcended geographical distances to inhabit a transnational community were not, however, deterritorialized. Contrary to theorist Arjun Appadurai’s contention about the diminishing relevance and power of nation-states in the context of globalization, this study supports the view that nation-states still matter in shaping migration since they, as Donna Gabaccia puts it, “continue to be important constituent elements and explanatory forces.” Though this study pays less attention to the role of homelands in mobilizing members of the diaspora, it does point to the ways that conditions in Canada shaped the contours of Greek immigrants’ transnationalism. Indeed, it was their ambiguous racial status as white ethnics in a predominately Anglo state that compelled Greeks in the 1940s to send humanitarian aid to Greece and refashion public perceptions of Greeks and Greece. And it was as citizens or residents of a democratic country that compelled anti-junta Greeks beginning in 1967 to appeal to the Canadian government to end diplomatic relations with the regime, and to protest the efforts by Greek consular officials, and other agents of the state, who attempted to thwart their resistance efforts.

In examining Greek immigrants’ transnationalism, this thesis sheds light on the activities and experiences of Greek immigrants in Canada. Greek migration to Canada

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dates back to the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries when small numbers of mostly male migrants, the majority of them emigrants from rural villages, arrived as labourers and gravitated to urban centers, particularly Toronto and Montreal. The 1901 Canadian census recorded a total of 291 individuals of Greek origin, but because this number included only those arriving from the Kingdom of Greece (and excluded, for example, Greek speaking Orthodox Christians from Asia Minor and other ‘unredeemed areas’) the actual number was likely higher. In 1911, there were just 3,614 recorded Greeks in Canada, but over the next two decades this number tripled to 9,444.  

By the 1910s and 1920s, small numbers of Greek women began entering Canada, mostly as the wives and fiancées of male migrants, and increasingly Greek communities developed institutionally with the establishment of Greek Orthodox churches, village and ethnic clubs, as well as language schools and various businesses. Significantly larger influxes of Greek migrants arrived in the decades following the Second World War. As in the early twentieth century, economic motivations were a main factor in encouraging emigration from Greece in the post-1945 period, but political instability, particularly following the brutal Civil War, also played a role. From 1945 to 1971, a recorded 107,780 Greeks arrived in Canada.  

Sizeable numbers of them entered through government labour schemes, including more than 10,000 women recruited as domestic workers, but the vast majority of Greeks arrived through the sponsorship program.  

A significant portion of these individuals emigrated from rural areas and arrived with little

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16 Statistics Canada. Table 075-0015 – Historical statistics, origins of the population, every 10 years (persons), CANSIM (database), Greek.  
17 Ibid., 29  
formal education and technical skills and, at least initially, labored in various low-pay, low-status jobs mostly in service industries and factories.

Though Greeks have lived in Canada for well over a century, there are relatively few historical studies of this immigrant group. Writing in the 1970s and 1980s, anthropologists and sociologists interested in issues of social integration, labour, and familial and intergenerational relations, produced the bulk of the literature on Greek migrants in Canada, frequently citing American sources to describe the experiences of the earliest Greek arrivals.  

Employing sociological methods, Efrosini Gavaki, Peter Chimbos, Judith Nagata and others have examined the processes through which Greek newcomers adapted to Canadian society while preserving aspects of their culture and traditions. Researchers have also explored the impact of migration on Greek families, and documented the institutional growth of Greek communities in Canada, particularly the development of Greek Orthodox churches, language schools, and the plethora of regional clubs and ethnic organizations. A number of studies have focused on Greeks

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in specific locales, notably Toronto and Montreal, discussing their settlement experiences, occupational profiles, and the ‘push-pull’ factors that facilitated Greek migration to Canada. The earliest publications viewed the Greek migrant as male and ignored how gender shaped migration and settlement experiences, but more recent studies have explored Greek immigrant women’s particular experiences, though much of this work focuses on traditional female roles as mothers, volunteers, domestic workers, and (heritage) language teachers. In addition to historicizing the experiences of Greek immigrants, this thesis contributes a transnational framework to the existing literature, shedding light on the important role of transnationalism in the construction of identity and community dynamics among Greek Canadians throughout the twentieth century.

This thesis also builds on and contributes to the voluminous and multidisciplinary literature on transnationalism. Writing in the early 1990s, anthropologists Nina Glick Schiller, Linda Basch, and Cristina Blanc-Szanton defined transnationalism as

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“the processes by which immigrants forge and sustain multi-stranded social relations that link together their societies of origin and settlement”\textsuperscript{25} and, moreover, identified it as a relatively new phenomenon, a product of the increasingly global flow of capital and improved communication technologies in the post-1945 period. However, migration historians, attentive to the reciprocal relations that individuals developed and retained as they migrated, have demonstrated that transnationalism predates recent technological advancements and economic changes.\textsuperscript{26} Without using the term transnationalism, historians have documented the significance of kin networks in facilitating migration, the development of village or regional associations dedicated to providing material aid to the hometown, and the importance of remittances to the sending countries.\textsuperscript{27} This literature also offered an important corrective to earlier analyses that presented immigrants as alienated and uprooted.\textsuperscript{28}


\textsuperscript{28} Oscar Handlin, \textit{The Uprooted: The Epic Story of the great Migration that Made the American People} (Boston: Little, Brown, and Company, 1951).
Immigrants’ political activism in homeland affairs has also attracted considerable attention by researchers across disciplines.\(^{29}\) Regarding the relationship between assimilation and transnationalism, anthropologist James Clifford has noted that the former is not possible when immigrants “maintain important allegiances and practical connections to a homeland.”\(^{30}\) Yet recent studies have problematized this relation, arguing that mobilization over homeland political affairs actually serves to engender immigrants’ incorporation into the host society.\(^{31}\) Much of this literature has also complicated previous assumptions about the deterritorialized nature of transnationalism by exploring the lobbying efforts by immigrant communities, particularly in the U.S., as well as the influence of sending-states in mobilizing members of its diaspora.\(^{32}\)

Migration and labour historians have provided valuable insights into the cross-border “movement and evolution of ideas – in the form of strategies, institutions, and


ideologies” in shaping the class-consciousness and daily experiences of migrants.33

Arguing that Italian-American syndicalists constituted a “transnational community,”
Michael Miller Topp has shown how opposition to Italy’s war in Tripoli informed the
labour activism of syndicalists in America.34 Studies of immigrant radicalism, notably
works by Ardis Cameron and Jennifer Guglielmo, demonstrate how immigrants,
including women, made use of homeland strategies and practices in their critiques of
American industrial capitalism and demands for improved working conditions.35

Building on Benedict Anderson’s insight into the role of print media in the development
of imagined communities, historians have analyzed the role of the immigrant press –
particularly its “didactic, propagandistic, and tactical functions” – in forging transnational
linkages and shaping what Matthew Frye Jacobson has termed a “diasporic
imagination.”36 Together this literature demonstrates how homeland practices and
political conditions shaped the contours of immigrant activism in the host country. Yet,
as Hartmut Keil explains in an essay on the linkages between socialists in Germany and
the United States, homeland ideologies and practices were “not transplanted into a
vacuum, but continued to be nourished by the demographic, technological, and social
upheaval engendered by American industrialization.”37

33 Michael Miller Topp, Those without a Country: the Political Culture of Italian American Syndicalists
(Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2001), 5.
34 Ibid.
35 Ardis Cameron, Radicals of the Worst Sort: Labouring Women in Lawrence, Massachusetts, 1860-1912
(Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1993); Jennifer Guglielmo, Living the Revolution: Italian Women’s
Resistance and Radicalism in New York City, 1880-1945 (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina
Press, 2010).
36 Jacobson, Special Sorrows 10, 62; Christiane Harzig and Dirk Hoerder, eds. The Press of Labor
Migrants in Europe and North America, 1880s to 1930s (Bremen: Labor Migration Project, Labor
Newspaper Preservation Project, Universität Bremen, 1985).
37 Hartmut Keil, “Socialist Immigrants from Germany and the Transfer of Socialist Ideology and Workers’
Culture,” in A Century of European Migrations, 1830-1930, eds. Rudolph G. Vecoli and Suzanne M. Sinke
(Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1991), 331; see also, Donna Gabaccia, Militants and Migrants: Rural
Immigrants’ varied reactions to homeland affairs demonstrate that their political identities and diasporic attachments were far from homogenous. With respect to Italian immigrants, historians have explored the rise of pro- and anti-fascist movements in response to Mussolini, showing that ideological divisions generally fell along class lines: middle-class and upwardly mobile individuals were active in pro-fascist groups while working-class Italians dominated the anti-fascist resistance efforts. As for the politically polarized Hungarian immigrants in interwar Canada, Carmela Patrias has carefully documented the division of Hungarians into two opposing ideological camps. While recognizing the agency of the rank and file, her study pays close attention to the role of immigrant elites, church leaders, communist organizers, and the Budapest government in politicizing Hungarian immigrants. In considering the mediating role of outside forces, historians have also examined the lives of mobile political exiles, as Franca Iacovetta and Robert Ventresca do in their biographical study of the peripatetic Italian anarchist antifascist Virgilia D’Andrea, to shed light on how the transnational movement of radicals helped to revitalize and sustain political organizing in immigrant communities.

Building on this literature, this thesis explores the transnationalism of twentieth-century Greek migrants and, to a lesser extent, their Canadian-born children. It examines the processes by which Greeks created and nurtured a diasporic space through their

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38 Fraser M. Ottanelli, “‘If Fascism Comes to America We Will Push It Back into the Ocean’: Italian American Antifascism in the 1920s and 1930s,” and Nadia Venturini, “‘Over the Years People Don’t Know’: Italian Americans and African Americans in Harlem in the 1930s,” both in Italian Workers of the World: Labor Migration and the Formation of Multiethnic States, eds. Donna R. Gabaccia and Fraser M. Ottanelli (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2001): 178-195; Guglielmo, Living the Revolution, chapter 7.

39 Carmela Patrias, Patriots and Proletarians.

engagement in modified religious and cultural practices and their mobilization over homeland political issues and humanitarian crises. In doing so, the thesis draws on examples from different cities and towns in Canada, but focuses mostly on Ontario, particularly Toronto, in large part because this city was a main destination for significant numbers of Canada’s Greek immigrants, but also because of the rich primary sources on Toronto I was able to locate. Practically speaking, my proximity to Toronto made the process of locating potential interviewees and conducting oral interviews much more feasible than traveling across the country. This thesis utilizes newspaper records, both Greek-language and English-language publications, archival documents including government correspondence, Royal Canadian Mounted Police files, community records, and a large database of oral interviews. This database consists of seventy-eight interviews I conducted with Greek immigrants and Canadian-born Greeks. I also draw upon a slightly larger collection of interviews with pre- and post-1945 Greek immigrants and their adult Canadian-born children conducted in the 1970s and early 1980s by researchers with the Multicultural History Society of Ontario. All of these sources, and particularly the oral interviews, are not only mediated through processes of remembering and telling, but also tend to celebrate Greeks’ continued attachments to the homeland while concealing cases of disinterest or absence. Therefore, while focused mainly on documenting cases of transnationalism, this thesis is also attuned to cases of rupture.

41 Initially, I relied on family and friends to introduce me to potential interviewees. I also visited several Greek Orthodox churches in Toronto and surrounding cities and introduced my project to parishioners over coffee after the service. For chapters three and four, I cold called or emailed individuals whose names I had found through online telephone directories, Facebook, and Linkedin, and later asked them to connect me with their friends and former colleagues. Although not all of the interviewees are quoted directly in the thesis, the database as a whole has informed my understanding of Greek immigration and transnationalism.

Still, even those who did not formally participate in protests or performances over homeland affairs were nonetheless spectators and readers of newspapers that, as members of a diasporic public sphere, contributed to a larger dialogue on the meaning of Greekness and immigrants’ relation to the homeland.

This dissertation is composed of four chapters. Chapter one charts the material, social, religious, and political linkages that Greek immigrants in the early decades of the twentieth century forged with the homeland and other Greek diasporic communities. It explores public forms of transnationalism, including military enlistment in the Balkan wars, politicization in response to the Venizelos-Royalist debates, and humanitarian responses to the Asia Minor refugees. Because public displays of ethnic pride by Greeks were rare during this period, the chapter also investigates examples of familial, cultural, and religious transnational linkages. Chapter two provides a detailed case study of Greek Canadians’ efforts to send humanitarian relief to Axis-occupied Greece during the Second World War. Focusing on the Greek War Relief Fund (GWRF), it documents the collaborative efforts made by Greeks to raise financial contributions and public awareness about Greek conditions and the people’s heroism that, in the process, also refashioned public perceptions of Greek immigrants in Canada. Investigating Greeks’ transnational political activism in the second half of the twentieth century, the next two chapters document the role of performance and newspapers in the construction of a diasporic public sphere. Chapter three focuses on the resistance movement that formed in response to the April 1967 military coup in Athens. It examines the use of anti-junta newspapers and political protests by a small group of activists to denounce the dictatorship and demand the Canadian government’s severing of diplomatic relations.
with the regime, and discusses the tensions that developed between opponents and
supporters of the military government. Chapter four probes the responses of Greek
Canadians to the Macedonia issue before and after the Republic of Macedonia’s 1991
declaration of independence from Yugoslavia. It also discusses the politicization of
Greeks as immigrants in Canada, as well as the role of cultural symbols and competing
historical narratives in polarizing Greek and Macedonian groups.

In exploring transnationalism throughout the twentieth century, this thesis
highlights not only the many similarities in the methods and messages Greek Canadians
appropriated in service of their homeland, but also how immigrant activism was shaped
by particular contexts. In their public performances and in the pages of the ethnic and
English-language press, Greeks endeavoured to provide Greece with material and moral
aid and, in the process, nurtured an alternative space within which Greeks could negotiate
the meaning of Greek identity in Canada. Immigrant elites tended to take a leading role
in this activity, but they were never the sole authors. How Greeks responded to
homeland issues, however, was shaped as well by conditions in Canada at particular
times. The Greeks who rallied around the GWRF, for example, were at least partly
responding to nativist sentiments, while those in the second half of the twentieth century
staged their transnationalism in the context of emerging narratives of multiculturalism.
Enthusiasm over homeland issues also varied. In the case of the GWRF, the majority of
Greeks supported the cause and contributed to the relief efforts, while in other cases, as
with the military junta, homeland politics largely divided Greeks and only a small
minority formally participated in the resistance movement. The processes of
politicization also differed, with some Greeks developing their political identities as
immigrants in Canada, and others arriving in Canada with deeply engrained political convictions. Together these chapters demonstrate how homeland attachments and engagement in transnational struggles contributed to the remaking of Greek identity in Canada.
Chapter 1

Early Twentieth Century Greek Migrants in Ontario and the Development of Transnational Networks

Theodoros (Ted) Paraskevopoulos, a 1908 arrival to Toronto, spent much of his spare time in the reading room of the John Ross Robertson library, learning about the “Greek masters” – Socrates, Plato, and Aristotle – while keeping up with events in both Greece and Canada by reading the New York conservative Greek newspaper, the Atlantis, and the Toronto Evening Telegram. Paraskevopoulos was just fourteen years of age when he first arrived at Ellis Island in the 1890s, and lived and laboured in Boston for several years before migrating north to Canada. As with many Greeks of his generation, he viewed migration as a familiar economic strategy. As a youth, his shoemaker father uprooted the family from Tripoli to a town north of Kalamata in search of more lucrative markets to peddle his goods. With no land and as the eldest son of the family, Paraskevopoulos recognized the value of migration and, later when he managed to find steady work, regularly sent money home to his father and eventually arranged to bring his family to Canada. Yet even as he built a life for himself in Toronto, working first as a busboy and waiter, and by 1912 opening his own restaurant, he retained a deep commitment to his homeland, declaring himself a “staunch royalist” in support of King Constantine during the turbulent political disputes of the 1910s and 1920s. He also cherished the cultural and religious traditions of his homeland and, having learned to play the violin from a German musician in Toronto before the start of the First World War,
frequently took his instrument to baptisms, weddings, and name-day celebrations to play the remembered songs of the old country (Figure 1.1).43

Like many of the Greek immigrant men and women who migrated to Canada in the early decades of the twentieth century, Paraskevopoulos lived in a transnational world – a material and imaginative community that was not bound or limited by national borders. Even as Paraskevopoulos established his business, home, and family in Toronto, he maintained a keen interest in homeland political affairs and a desire to retain the familial ties and the cultural, social, and religious practices that affirmed his identity. Long before technological advancements made transatlantic communication and travel easily accessible and affordable, Greeks in Canada developed meaningful ways to forge material, emotional, political, and social linkages with their homeland.

This chapter explores the transnational practices of Greek immigrants in Ontario in the first several decades of the twentieth century. Drawing from oral histories I conducted with Canadian-born adult children of Greek parents, as well as a collection of oral interviews with early twentieth century immigrants conducted in the 1970s and early 1980s by researchers with the Multicultural History Society of Ontario, newspaper records, and community archival documents, I examine how these immigrants nurtured connections with their homeland and, in the process, formed a diasporic public sphere. To some degree, their transnationalism was conventional for migrants of this period: they sent remittances home to their families and provided economic aid to their villages; some enlisted for military duty, while many more developed a keen interest in Greece’s political affairs. They retained religious and cultural practices as well, viewing these

rituals as authentic expressions of Greek ethnic and religious identity, even as they underwent significant modifications in Canada. To be clear, migrants did not simply continue long-standing traditions in a new locale and across vast geographical space. With migration their relationship with the homeland and their own identities underwent fundamental shifts. Notably, their politicization was not simply an extension of an established practice brought with them from Greece, but rather a product of their North American migration and shaped significantly by Greek-language American newspapers. That Greeks in Canada relied heavily on their American counterparts for information on Greek political affairs is not surprising. Given the small size of the Greek communities of Ontario (though larger than other provinces but significantly smaller than their counterparts in the United States), we can only understand the transnational ties between migrant and homeland by broadening our focus to consider the reciprocal relationships and cross-border networks that developed among immigrant communities. Lastly, as useful as it is to understand how early twentieth century migrants transcended geographical distances to engage in the collective identity of a community they did not physically inhabit, much could also be learned from moments when transnational links were complicated or disrupted.

In the early 1990s, sociologists and anthropologists had begun to define the social processes by which migrants “develop and maintain multiple relations – familial, economic, social, organizational, religious, and political that span borders” as transnationalism. Responding to earlier analyses that defined migration as a form of

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rupture and migrants as uprooted, these scholars shifted their centre of analysis away from the nation-state and focused instead on migrants as agents who actively shape their own environment by creating and sustaining “multi-stranded social relations that link together their societies of origin and settlement” and in so doing provided a useful framework and vocabulary to articulate the relationships between migrants and their homelands. Yet in defining transnationalism as a new phenomenon, as a product of late twentieth century globalization and technological advancement, these scholars have ignored important continuities with the past. Even if migration historians have not always employed the phrase “transnationalism” to describe the activities and multiple identities and allegiances of nineteenth and early twentieth century migrants, their investigation into the local, regional, and fluid identities of migrants as well as the economic remittances, chain migrations, de-territorialized cultural and religious practices, and homeland activism of migrants at the turn of the century demonstrates the multiple ways transnationalism predates the technological advances of the post-World War II

Admittedly, the term itself is somewhat problematic since the circular exchange of letters, money, goods, people, advice, and information across national borders, actually predates the emergence of nation states and national identities among immigrants. Nonetheless, transnationalism provides a useful framework for analyzing the activities and identity formation of twentieth century immigrants in Canada.

This is not to suggest, however, that all immigrants participated equally or with equal enthusiasm in transnational networks. Just as class and gender hierarchies mediated migration experiences, they also shaped the contours of engagement in transnational communities. While some immigrants nurtured a commitment to their homeland, others forged transnational ties only intermittently or not at all. Yet recovering migrants’ decision not to (or their inability to) participate in transnationalism has proven to be a complicated endeavour. Aside from overt expressions of transnationalism, such as political involvement or military enlistment in the homeland, most of the mundane or everyday acts of transnationalism were rarely recorded in written documents, and therefore while I have mined a number of newspaper and other archival documents, much of my evidence for this chapter relies on oral history. My oral histories bring to life what Robert A. Orsi has termed the “inner worlds” of early twentieth century


Greek migrants and their children.\textsuperscript{52} The benefits as well as the challenges of using oral history lie in the nature of the source itself, which is constructed through processes of remembering and telling and mediated by the interviewer.\textsuperscript{53} How people remember and choose to narrate their histories is shaped by past and present class, gender, racial, and ethnic identities as well as a myriad of other factors,\textsuperscript{54} as Alessandro Portelli explains, oral history “tells us not just what people did, but what they wanted to do, what they believed they were doing, what they now think they did.”\textsuperscript{55} It certainly may be the case that Greeks who spoke of their enduring commitment to their family and homeland might have done so because to admit otherwise would challenge their current perceptions of themselves; as Alistair Thomson explains, “[w]e compose our memories to make sense of our past and present lives.”\textsuperscript{56} This is not to suggest, however, that such memories ought to be dismissed as inaccurate or unreliable; rather, by contextualizing the narratives and interrogating the “silences and omissions,” historians can better grasp both the persistence and the limitations of transnationalism as well as how individuals remember and interpret their involvement in such de-territorialized communities.\textsuperscript{57}

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\textsuperscript{52} Orsi, Madonna of 115\textsuperscript{th} Street, xiv.
\textsuperscript{56} Alistair Thomson, “Anzac Memories: Putting Popular Memory Theory into Practice in Australia,” in The Oral History Reader, 245.
\end{flushleft}
Greek Migration to Canada

Small numbers of Greek migrants began to make their way to Canada beginning the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. The majority of these mostly male migrants had originally come from rural villages in the regions of Arcadia, Laconia, Macedonia, and some of the large-sized islands such as Crete, though smaller numbers of Greek-speaking Orthodox Christians emigrated from areas outside the Kingdom of Greece, such as Asia Minor. For peasants engaged in subsistence farming, burdened by high taxation, and limited by inheritance practices that subdivided available arable land into smaller and smaller plots, migration offered an opportunity to build capital and improve economic circumstances. Having emigrated from a farming village at sixteen years of age, arriving first in the United States before moving north to Toronto in 1912, Nikolas Diakopoulos understood well the economic motives that compelled men of his generation to migrate, explaining, “no transportation to sell their own products...farming boys and shepherds used to immigrate because they were poor.” Certain that he would eventually return home, Diakopoulos saw himself and others as sojourners: “everybody was going; in those days you went to make something and go back, make a little money and come back, get married, build up your home and everything else.” His comments were typical of the Southern European male migrants of this period who viewed their


60 Interview with Nikolas Diakopoulos. MHSO, Greek Collection, summer 1977.

migration as a temporary stage, as another 1914 arrival to Toronto put it, “when I came…I thought I would make money and go home…buy a whole bunch of sheep and goats.” As an economic strategy, migration would benefit the migrant and the extended family, as Gus Lagges, a 1924 arrival, put it simply, “I came to Canada to work and help my family.”

Notwithstanding their rural origins, a significant portion of these Greek migrants arrived in Ontario with some experience of urban living, having entered North America through Ellis Island. Before migrating north to Canada, Greeks lived in various American cities such as New York, Chicago, Philadelphia, and Lowell initially working in factories and textile mills. Out west Greeks worked in mines and railway construction. Later they gravitated to various service industries, notably as shoe-shiners, fruit and vegetable pushcart peddlers, as well as in confectionary shops and restaurants. Passing over the porous US-Canada border, Greeks moved north in search of jobs and to reunite with family and friends. After settling in Canada, many Greek migrants continued to work in similar service industries, especially as shoe-shiners, street peddlers, and in confectionary shops, small stores, and restaurants, while others found work in local factories.

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63 Interview with Gus Lagges. MHSO Greek Collection, June 14, 1982.
At the turn of the twentieth century, Canada’s immigration policy focused on the recruitment of agriculturalists, particularly for settlement in western Canada. Though some restrictions were imposed on select groups – notably on Asian migrants as well as, by 1906, “undesirable immigrants,” including those considered feeble-minded, insane, epileptic, deaf and dumb, diseased, and destitute – no racial or ethnic restrictions were placed on Europeans. Therefore, even as southern Europeans whose cultural stock was considered unsuitable for Canada by immigration officials and social commentators, including James S. Woodsworth who defined Greeks in his 1909 book, *Strangers within Our Gates*, as “a most undesirable class,” Greeks were not prohibited from migrating to Canada. Yet no efforts were made to recruit Greek migrants either. Promotional material was not distributed in Greece, incentives were not offered to Greeks to settle in Canada, nor were steamship and railway companies offered bonuses for the recruitment of Greek migrants. That the majority of Greek migrants to Canada in the early twentieth century arrived through Ellis Island, rather than directly to Canada, may have had more to do with available steamship routes than with restrictions in immigration policy. The lack of promotional material to Greece meant that most information about conditions in North America was made available through letters sent by migrants and by returned

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67 A Chinese head tax of $50 was introduced in 1885, which later rose to $100 in 1900 and $500 in 1903, significantly reducing the number of Chinese migrants, especially women. Canada’s Gentlemen’s Agreement with Japan reduced the number of Japanese migrants to less than 400 annually, and the Continuous Journey provision restricted migration from India, see, Patricia Roy, *A White Man’s Province: British Columbia Politicians and Chinese and Japanese Immigrants, 1885-1914* (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 1989); Hugh Johnston, *The Voyage of the Komagata Maru: The Sikh Challenge to Canada’s Colour Bar* (Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1979).


sojourners. Of course, very small numbers of Greeks did come directly to Canada as agriculturalists or domestics, landing in Montreal or Halifax, though immigration officials generally characterized them as poor workers who gravitated towards urban centres and service industries. Greeks were not unusual in this respect, however. As historian Donald Avery has noted, many of the European migrants who arrived in Canada as agriculturalists during this period abandoned the farms, or avoided them entirely, for work in construction camps, mines, and factories in urban centres.

Throughout the first several decades of the twentieth century, the numbers of Greek migrants in Canada remained low. The 1901 census indicates there were just less than 300 persons of Greek descent in Canada; ten years later that number had risen to just over 3,500, though it is likely that the actual number of ethnic Greeks was higher (perhaps even double) as these records only counted as Greek those who emigrated from the Kingdom of Greece, which at the turn of the twentieth century was roughly half the size of modern Greece. Still, the influx of Greeks to Canada was significantly smaller than the American wave of Greek migration, which saw more than 186,000 Greek nationals arrive from 1871 to 1910. By 1923 the Canadian government established occupational requirements on Europeans, restricting migrants to agriculturalists and their

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72 Library and Archives Canada (hereafter LAC), RG76, vol. 645, file. 9983588, pt. 1, “Immigration from Greece,” letters from Acting Deputy Minister, October 19, 1928, and Deputy Minister, April 18, 1929.
74 Statistics Canada. Table 075-0015 – Historical statistics, origins of the population, every 10 years, Greek; Eleoussa Polyzoi, “Greek Immigrant Women from Asia Minor in Prewar Toronto: the Formative Years,” in *Looking into My Sister’s Eyes: Explorations in Women’s History*, ed. Jean Burnet (Toronto: Multicultural History Society of Ontario, 1986), 108. This was also the case in the United States, see, Moskos, *Greek Americans*, 11-12.
dependents and, in the case of women, domestics.\textsuperscript{76} Around this time, the United States government imposed a quota system, significantly reducing the number of Greeks eligible for migration to America, resulting in a higher influx of Greek migrants directly to Canada.\textsuperscript{77} By 1921 there were 5,740 persons of Greek descent in Canada, with the largest numbers concentrated in Ontario, followed by Quebec. Ten years later that number had risen to 9,444, but in the two decades that followed Greek migration largely stagnated with the depression of the 1930s and the Second World War.\textsuperscript{78} As I discuss later, the small size of the Greek diaspora in Canada had a significant impact on the ways Greek communities nurtured transnational ties.

The search for job opportunities was a main motivator for Greek migrants in the United States to move north to Canada. Against his father’s wishes, twenty-year-old John Stratas left his village of Keramoti in the island of Crete to join a cousin who had earlier migrated to the United States. “I wanted to go and make some money and help my parents, and I did,” he explained of his decision. Arriving in 1909, Stratas worked for several years in New York City as a hotel pantryboy, busboy, and later as a waiter. When hotel workers went on strike around 1916, Stratas decided to join a group of friends who boarded a train to Kitchener, Ontario (then Berlin) to work for the summer. Rather than return at the end of the season, John moved east to Toronto where he found a bed in a rooming house with other Greeks, and saved enough money to purchase his own grocery store on Queen Street East (Figure 1.2).\textsuperscript{79}

\textsuperscript{76} Avery, Reluctant Host, 86-7.
\textsuperscript{77} Ibid., 108.
\textsuperscript{78} Census, Population of Greek Origin.
\textsuperscript{79} Interview with John Stratas. MHSO, Greek Collection, March 30, 1978/11 May 1978.
Stratas’ experience was typical of Greek business owners who lived in the United States for several years before settling in Canada. Some of the early arrivals included billiard parlour and bowling alley owner Bill Karrys (Vassilios Karapanayotis) who made his way to Toronto from Chicago in the early 1900s, and Gus (Constantine) Boukydis, a 1908 arrival from Chicago, who established Diana Sweets restaurants in Toronto. In turn, these Greek-owned businesses drew sizeable numbers of Greeks from the northern United States. Information about job opportunities was spread through word-of-mouth and letters from family and friends, but also through Greek-language newspapers. When Toronto restaurant owner George Letros needed dishwashers and waiters, he placed job notices in the New York Greek-language newspaper *Atlantis*. This was how Ted Paraskevopoulos’ family made their way to Toronto from Boston in 1908. Paraskevopoulos’ brother-in-law recognized Letros’ name (his old army companion) in the advertisement and he and his wife went to Toronto to work at the restaurant, and Paraskevopoulos joined them soon after.

This case underscores the importance of local and familial ties that drew many Greeks to Canada. George Kleon, a 1909 arrival to New York, also moved to Toronto to join the Letros brothers, his cousins. He worked at their restaurant, the Letros Lunch, for a short period before opening his own restaurant, the West Toronto Café. Peter Marmon (anglicised from Panagiotis Marmaralolgou) arrived in Lowell, Massachusetts in 1911 and within that same year moved to Toronto to join three of his compatriots from his hometown of Pergamon, Asia Minor, who had established restaurants in the city.

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81 Interview with Paraskevopoulos.
82 Interview with Voula (pseudonym) by author, August 14, 2010.
83 Interview with Gus Marmon. MHSO Greek Collection, August 1977/June 1978.
Several of my informants, Canadian-born children of Greek migrant parents, shared how their fathers lived in various American cities, usually arriving as young men under twenty years of age, before moving north to Ontario to join brothers, cousins, or co-villagers in the restaurant or confectionary business.\textsuperscript{84}

Greek male migrants were transient, moving frequently across national and provincial borders in search of work and better living conditions. Gus Lagges provides a striking example of this mobility. Arriving at the port of Halifax in December 1924, he spent the next five years in Sturgeon Falls working in his uncle’s ice cream parlour until 1929 when he opened his own candy shop in Hamilton. Over the next several years he opened confectionaries and restaurants in Sudbury, North Bay, and Winnipeg and eventually returned to Sturgeon Falls in 1937. He later travelled to Florida, Montreal, and British Columbia as work opportunities arose, until he finally settled in Sudbury in the 1950s and began sponsoring relatives from Greece.\textsuperscript{85}

Though the majority of the Greek migrants come from farming families with limited education, a few hailed from relatively more privileged backgrounds. When twenty-year-old Nick Hadjis arrived in Canada in 1930, he came equipped with some knowledge of English. As the son of the village mayor, Hadjis had completed gymnasio (middle school) and even attended five years of American school where he learned English before leaving for Canada.\textsuperscript{86} The small number of Greeks who arrived with university degrees typically took on leadership roles in the community; among them was

\textsuperscript{84} Interviews with Cassandra (pseudonym) December 6, 2009; Arianna (pseudonym) August 28, 2010; Helen (pseudonym), April 11, 2010, all by author.
\textsuperscript{85} Interview with Lagges.
\textsuperscript{86} Interview with Nick Hadjis. MHSO, Greek Collection, January 28, 1978.
Peter Palmer (anglicised from Polymenakos) who arrived in Toronto in 1929 with a business degree from Northwestern University.\footnote{Interview with Peter Palmer. MHSO Greek Collection, October 13, 1977.}

A small number of highly educated women also immigrated to Canada in this period. The best-known cases in Toronto include Sophie Maniates and Smaro Pavlakis who had both left Asia Minor as refugees. Their histories, too, point to the mobility of Greek female migrants. During the 1922 Catastrophe, discussed later in this chapter, Maniates fled with her family to the island of Xios and lived there for several years until moving to the island of Lesbos to attend teacher’s college. She arrived in Toronto in 1930 to join her sister, returning briefly to Greece for a few years before returning to Toronto where she met her husband and decided to stay. She joined Pavlakis, another Asia Minor refugee who arrived in Vancouver in 1926 before making her way to Toronto, in provided Greek language instruction to Toronto-born Greek children (Figure 1.3)\footnote{Interview with Smaro Pavlakis. MHSO Greek collection, August 24, 1977; Interview with Sophie Maniates. MHSO Greek collection, August 15, 1977; Stasia Evasuk, “Hellenic Community pays special tribute to a pioneering trio,” \textit{Toronto Star}, August 21, 1989, B3.}

Variations in dialect and cultural practices marked distinct regional differences among Greek migrants, particularly between those originating from the Kingdom of Greece and those from ‘unredeemed’ territories. This regionalism permeated everyday life, and was reflected in the emergence of village societies and associations that limited membership to men of the same hometown. Even in business, Greeks from certain regions tended to congregate in particular industries, as one migrant recalled of the early 1900s and 1910s: “The Laconians were peddlers, peddling peanuts…The Arcadians had
the shoeshine.” While certainly there were examples of friendships that crossed regional lines, in oral interviews migrants noted that there was a great deal of animosity among Greeks. In particular, those from ‘unredeemed’ territories (especially Macedonia and Asia Minor) were frequently targets of derision by mainland Greeks who viewed their ethnic allegiance with suspicion. Canadian-born Gus Marmon, whose father and mother arrived in Toronto from Asia Minor in 1909 and 1912, recalled that migrants from the Peloponnesus “despised anyone from northern Greece” and commonly accused Greek Macedonians of being “Bulgarians.” Asia Minor Greeks, too, were viewed with contempt especially because they could speak Turkish. Marmon’s comments, however, also show how pervasive this regional chauvinism was, as he explained that Asia Minor Greeks were “vastly superior to the Greeks in Greece” because they were better educated and “were more staunch Greeks.”

As with their counterparts in the United States, the early Greek communities of Ontario were marked by a stark gender imbalance. Most of these migrants arrived as young men without families and lived, at least temporarily, in all-male boarding houses. A small number of Greek women did migrate to Canada independently as domestic workers, including Patra Fouriezos who arrived in Sudbury in 1910 and endured years of gruelling physical labour. During this time, small numbers of well-to-do Greek families in Canada employed the services of Greek maids in their homes. More commonly, women arrived as brides – in some cases migrant men returned to their villages to marry,

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89 Interview with Parasevopoulos.
90 Interview with Marmon.
92 Interview with Patra Fouriezos. MHSO Greek collection, June 7, 1982.
93 Interview with Maniates; Interview with Spyros Loukidelis MHSO Greek collection June 24, 1982; Interview with Georgia (pseudonum) by author, July 11, 2010.
otherwise the matchmaking was facilitated through familial transnational networks in which advice, letters, and photographs were shared across international borders.\textsuperscript{94} Though migration did offer women a chance for upward mobility, it also marked a significant loss of their family support system. In discussing his parents’ experiences, Canadian-born Spyros Loukidelis explained how his mother, who was born in the cosmopolitan city of Smyrna and had completed teacher’s college and a university degree, was betrothed in 1928 to his much-older father, who had left Pergamon decades earlier in 1906 to avoid conscription into the Turkish army. His parents settled in North Bay where his mother struggled with isolation and loneliness.\textsuperscript{95} Arranged marriages could also engender feelings of objectification, as one Montreal Greek woman explained: “We became objects of exchange between our families and the men we were to marry without ever being consulted. I hurt so much inside; I was numb.”\textsuperscript{96} In some cases, women’s migration marked a loss of status. In speaking of her mother who came to Canada in 1920 as a “picture bride” to marry a Toronto restaurant owner, Toula explained, “her father was a doctor and she was very well off in Greece, so this was quite a shock to her. Even to the day she died she was bitter. She would never say she is Mrs. [L], she would say she is Dr. Krontiri’s daughter.”\textsuperscript{97}

By the 1910s and 1920s Greek women began to migrate to Canada in larger numbers, though the gender imbalance persisted until after the Second World War. Of the just over 500 Greeks in Toronto by 1911, 484 of them were men and only 35 were

\textsuperscript{94} For example, Mergelas explains that after migrating to Toronto his father had selected three girls from the village for him to choose, and sent him photos and letters of the potential brides. On the role of letters in match-making in the post-WWII period, see Sonia Cancian, \textit{Families, Lovers, and their Letters: Italian Postwar Migration to Canada} (Winnipeg: University of Manitoba Press, 2010).

\textsuperscript{95} Interview with Loukidelis.

\textsuperscript{96} Quoted in Sophia Florakas-Petsalis, \textit{To Build the Dream: The Story of the Early Greek Immigrants in Montreal} (Montreal: Imprimerie K-Litho Printing, 2000), 115.

\textsuperscript{97} Interview with Toula (pseudonym) by author, August 21, 2010.
women. This gender imbalance continued into the 1930s when two thirds of the Greek population in Canada was male.\textsuperscript{98} The scarcity of Greek women helped to legitimize marriages between Greek men and non-Greek women. George Vlassis’ 1953 monograph identifies a number of Greek migrants in Canada who married non-Greek women, including George Stamos of Ottawa who married Minerva Turner, who Vlassis describes as “an English girl, who came to speak the Greek language like her mother tongue and which she taught to her children.”\textsuperscript{99} Among the best known examples of such unions in Toronto was John Stratas’ marriage to Emma, a woman of German origin. Toronto-born Greeks recall that John and Emma’s marriage aroused little, if any criticism, within the Greek community, though it certainly helped that their children were raised in the Greek church, and that Emma appeared to enthusiastically embrace all things Greek and even became a member of the St. George’s Greek Ladies Philoptoho Society, a benevolent association which served the church.\textsuperscript{100} On the other hand, years later when Canadian-born Greek women started marrying non-Greek men, they encountered disapproval from family and the broader community, including the local priest who criticized their decision to marry outside the Greek culture and lamented that these women were now “lost.”\textsuperscript{101}

On the issue of women’s migration, it is noteworthy that along with the women who arrived in Canada as future brides or wives of earlier arrivals, there were also many women who remained behind. Linda Reeder’s account of Sicilian women in Sutera whose husbands migrated to America in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries,

\textsuperscript{98} Vlassis, \textit{Greeks in Canada}, 1\textsuperscript{st} edition, 13; Douramakou-Petroleka, “Elusive Community,” 262.

\textsuperscript{99} Vlassis, \textit{Greeks in Canada}, 2\textsuperscript{nd} ed., 175.


demonstrates how these women actively participated in the migration process, made use of remittances to improve their economic status, demanded support from state agencies, and improved their literacy skills. Yet, gender hierarchies remained intact and while the departure of male kin enabled women to exercise more authority, they nonetheless continued to live under patriarchal restrictions that denied them full autonomy. Focusing on Greek women who stayed behind on the island of Kythera, Nicholas Glytsos has shown that while men’s migration to Australia before and after the Second World War brought women broader responsibilities and authority, it also left “female family members unprotected, which made them vulnerable to malicious gossip and exposed them to offensive behaviour and verbal abuse by discourteous males.”

The migration of male family members placed enormous strain on both the sojourners, who, as Robert Harney put it, “worried about the virtue of his womenfolk,” and their families left behind who waited anxiously for news and remittances to arrive. Given their motivations for migration, most migrants likely remained in contact with their families, but it is not implausible that there would be cases of familial abandonment. Writing on Hungarian migrants to Canada in the interwar period, historian Carmela Patrias notes that evidence of familial breakdown and adultery by both male migrants and wives who remained in Hungary “underscore the distressing reality of this consequence of transatlantic migration.”

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103 Nicholas Glytsos, “Changing roles and attitudes of women staying behind in split households when men emigrate: the story of the secluded Greek island of Kythera with mass emigration to Australia,” *Women’s Studies International Forum* 31 (2008): 100.
104 Robert Harney, “Men without Women,” 34.
there were married Greek men in Toronto who had left their wives and children behind and “hadn’t seen them in years,” and that “some of them got married with other lovers here.”\textsuperscript{106} Though none of the Greek migrants interviewed by researchers at the MHSO admitted to abandoning their families, Hadjis’ comment suggests that familial abandonment was not altogether uncommon. Toronto-born Arianna also spoke of families abandoned by male migrants. She and her parents returned to Greece in 1928 and lived there for several years until concerns about the imminent war drew them back to Canada. In our interview, she recalled the appeals made by the village women on the eve of their departure:

There were ladies who were married, and their husbands were in Canada for five, six, ten years. The kids were growing up – they needed their fathers. The husbands would send money but the children never knew their dads. There were a lot of them, a lot of them! You wouldn’t believe. I remember so vividly these mothers crying. They would say: “You must tell them to bring us, bring us to Canada.” The husbands were here…and the wives were in Florina, and they were begging, begging my father to talk to their husbands to bring them over.\textsuperscript{107}

Not all migrants fulfilled their promises to their loved ones. Although fragmentary, these accounts suggest that familial transnational ties could be ruptured or abandoned altogether.

\textit{Transnational Material Aid}

While migration entailed a heavy sacrifice on behalf of the migrants’ families who helped pay the cost of passage and made do during the migrant’s absence, it also held the promise of future economic gain. Once migrants began working in Canada, many were eager to send remittances home to their families, however meagre their

\textsuperscript{106} Interview with Hadjis.
\textsuperscript{107} Interview with Arianna.
earnings. “Even if you get a job washing dishes or cleaning up around, it was something which got you money, that was our sole object,” explained John Stratas who added, “and if you made any money you help your parents out in the old country, and we did, I’m sure all of us did more or less.” These remittances made it possible for the migrants’ families to invest in new property and agricultural equipment and, like other southern Europeans, to purchase a variety of material goods that signified the family’s improved economic status. For many families, remittances were essential in continuing traditional practices, notably in supplying sisters or daughters with dowries. Like many Greek immigrants, candy and ice cream parlour owner Gus Lagges used his earnings to supply his sister with a dowry.

The remittances sent home benefited the migrant’s immediate family but also the larger community. In discussing the money he sent, Lagges recalled, “that’s what I did all my life, sent money home to my family, relatives, people who were poor. Try to be like Jesus Christ, help everybody.” Remittances helped to build new infrastructure in the villages left behind. Toronto candy storeowner Anastasios Leousis regularly sent money home to his sister, a nun, who used the money to build a monastery in the village. He did this in secret, however, because he believed that his wife would not agree with him spending the family’s savings in this way.

Typical of many immigrant groups, members of village clubs worked together to raise money for their hometown. Much like other southern Europeans in North America,

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108 Interview with Stratas.
110 Interview with Lagges.
111 Ibid.
112 Interview with Toula.
Greek migrants established a number of mutual aid societies based on their village or region of origin. In addition to the social outlet these clubs provided, they also reflected migrants’ continuing interest in the welfare of their village. In 1934, migrants from the northwest village of Antartiko, of which there were many in Toronto, formed the Antartikon Society. Members donated money for the material benefit of the poorest villagers, providing clothing, shoes, and food during Christmas and Easter. Within five years of its formation, Antartikon members raised enough funds to build a school and water fountains in their village; later they built an aqueduct, communal watermill, improved the village church, and contributed financially to the new hospital. A number of other Toronto-based mutual aid societies also made large contributions to build new or improve existing infrastructure in the home village. Established in 1935, the Ion Dragoumis Society raised $1,300 for the building of a hospital in the town of Florina. Contributions made by these regional associations went beyond financial and material aid, and at times included political support for particular politicians or policies. In 1916, a group of 200 Toronto men from Asia Minor joined together in the Brotherhood of Karteria and proclaimed their support for Greek Prime Minister Eleftherios Venizelos. In response, the group received a cablegram from Venizelos’ office in Greece, congratulating and thanking them for their “patriotic sentiments.”

Greek migrants recalled their contributions to their families and hometowns in a positive light, and in oral interviews offered examples of how their economic aid

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113 Before the Second World War, these clubs were strictly male. Later, by the 1960s and 1970s there was a proliferation of clubs that welcomed both male and female members.
114 Interview with Mergelas (a former president of the association).
116 Ibid. Another example is the Naxian Society established in Montreal 1935, which offered financial assistance to the poorest Naxians, see, Florakas-Petsalis, *To Build the Dream*, 315.
produced material benefits for their loved ones. Certainly, contemporary social
commentators would have agreed. Ioanna Laliotou notes that in the early twentieth
century many advocates of Greek emigration viewed migration as “natural” and lucrative
for the state, as it removed surplus populations, thereby avoided overtaxing limited
national resources, and advanced the Greek economy through remittances, which
comprised the largest component of the national export earnings.\footnote{118} An English visitor to
Macedonia during this period noted that despite the poor harvest and considerable
damage done to the vineyards by hail, peasants continued to pay taxes, purchase new
goods, and were generally able to support themselves, in large part thanks to the money
sent by relatives abroad.\footnote{119} Historians, too, agree, that remittances to Greece comprised a
significant component of the economy. One source estimates that during this period,
remittances totalled approximately five million dollars per year (one-fourth of Greece’s
export income).\footnote{120} Writing on Macedonia, historian Basil Gounaris notes that in the
years before the start of the Balkan Wars in 1912 the annual remittances to Macedonia
totalled around one million pounds.\footnote{121} These figures likely do not fully reflect the total
annual flow of remittances, because although many migrants transferred the funds
through banks, countless others sent money to their relatives through letters and
sojourners returning home.\footnote{122} Given the economic hardships that Southern European
migrants and others endured in their early years in Canada, it is certainly possible that a
portion of migrants were simply unwilling or unable to save enough money to send home

\footnote{118} Ioanna Laliotou, *Transatlantic Subjects: Acts of Migration and Cultures of Transnationalism between
\footnote{119} Basil Gounaris, “Emigration from Macedonia in the Early Twentieth Century,” *Journal of Modern
Greek Studies*, 7, 1 (May 1989), 147.
\footnote{120} Franklin D. Scott, *Emigration and Immigration* (New York: Macmillan, 1963), 56; Richard Clogg, *A
\footnote{121} Gounaris, “Emigration from Macedonia,” 147.
\footnote{122} Agapitidis, “Emigration from Greece,” 58.
to their families and villages. Yet the overall picture suggests that the majority of migrants were committed to sending remittances.

**Military Aid in the Balkan Wars of 1912-13**

During times of homeland crises, Greek immigrants responded enthusiastically, offering more than simply their economic aid. Notably, at the outset of the Balkan Wars in 1912, a sizeable number of immigrant men in Canada returned to Greece to enlist in the war effort. Their decision to return as reservists and volunteers offers a revealing example of early twentieth century transnationalism, and more specifically it demonstrates Greek immigrants’ active participation in their homeland’s nation building.

When the Kingdom of Greece achieved its independence from the Ottoman Empire in the early 1830s following the revolutionary war, and in large part due to the military intercession of the Great Powers and Russia, its territory was limited to the Peloponnese, Attica, Central Greece, and several nearby islands, namely the Cyclades and Saronic Islands. Many regions inhabited by Orthodox Christians, notably Macedonia, Epirus, Thessaly, Asia Minor, Crete, Samos, Chios, and the Dodecanese islands, remained under Ottoman rule. With more than two-thirds of the Greek population in ‘unredeemed’ territory, ardent Greek nationalists espoused dreams of a “Greater Greece,” one that incorporated within a single state and with Constantinople as its capital, all lands inhabited by Greeks or with historical ties to Hellenism. This irredentist project of *Megali Idea* (or Great Idea) dominated Greek political life for decades. When the Balkan states of Greece, Bulgaria, Serbia, and Montenegro joined forces in October 1912, their common goal was to liberate and claim Macedonian
territory from the Ottoman Empire, which had ruled over the Balkans for hundreds of years. In the diaspora, too, Greek migrants recognized the significance of the war towards the fulfilment of the *Megalı Idea*, and many eagerly volunteered their military service.¹²³

Toronto Greeks responded with enthusiasm to the outbreak of the Balkan War. On October 5, 1912 the priest of St. George’s Church, Father Paraschakis, read out to the crowds of Greeks who gathered that Saturday evening, the contents of a telegram from the Greek Ambassador in Washington, D.C., informing them of the war and calling on reservists to return. According to Toronto newspaper accounts, the Greeks responded to the news with “prolonged cheering” and they continued to cheer as Father Paraschakis told the crowd that “the barbarism of Turkey had reached its climax,” that the Balkan States “were prepared to fight for their rights,” and that “[n]ow was the precious moment in the history of the Balkan States” in which “the sons of Greece” would “fight as Christian men.”¹²⁴ The following day in Toronto, Greeks, Bulgarians, and the few Serbians in the city, began working together in spreading the news and mobilizing for war.¹²⁵ The Greeks and Bulgarians worked out of their respective churches to organize the reservists and volunteers, some of whom were reportedly “so enthused...that they attended the churches with their baggage in their hands, ready to start for home at a

moment’s notice.” As Greek men filed into St. George’s Church to enlist, a young Greek boy, stationed outside the church doors, waved a large Greek flag and “occasionally an enthused orator would spring to his side” and recite some “inspiring words to the audience.” Among the speakers was Father Paraschakis who told the cheering crowd: “We are fighting to free the downtrodden Macedonian. It is Christian against pagan Turk. It is the living Christ against the dead Mohammed.” That day, two thousand men in Toronto registered for the war, though this number included not just Greek migrants, but Bulgarians and Serbians as well.

In several cities across Canada, Greek immigrants displayed similar zeal. In Montreal large numbers of Greeks gathered at their church to listen to rousing patriotic speeches and register their names for the war. Though reservists were obliged to return by Greek law, Canadian observers noted that the Greeks “clamoured” to register their names and appeared “anxious” to fight in the war for “patriotic motives solely.” When Montreal Greek Demetrius Bouras spoke to the crowd about the hardship of war and urged his compatriots to be cautious and only enlist if they were ready to fight, throngs of Greeks reportedly interrupted his speech with cries of “We want to fight!” Small numbers of Greeks from other cities and towns, including Galt, Berlin, Stratford, London, Sudbury, Ottawa and Calgary, also returned for military service. Among the volunteers, a significant number were prominent businessmen, owners of restaurants,

126 Ibid.
127 Ibid.
128 Ibid.
129 Ibid.
130 Saloutes, Greeks in the United States, 114; “Greeks Anxious to Fight Turks,” The Gazette, October 7, 1912, 4.
131 “Greeks Anxious to Fight Turks.”
confectionary shops, and shoeshine parlours, including Nick Speal,\textsuperscript{133} members of the Karrys and Letros families in Toronto, Peter Booth from Sudbury,\textsuperscript{134} Gus Campbell from Stratford, Jimmy Kanellakos from Ottawa,\textsuperscript{135} as well as fruit and vegetable wholesaler Peter Theophilos and candy store owner John Thomas, both of Montreal.\textsuperscript{136} These were all successful businessmen who had been in North America long enough to have anglicised their names and acquired enough capital to establish businesses. That business owners comprised a large percentage of the volunteers is not surprising given that volunteers paid for the cost of their transportation.\textsuperscript{137} Some storeowners sold their businesses, while others arranged for friends or family to take over during their absence.\textsuperscript{138} This is significant because it shows that it was not solely sojourners who returned to fight for Greece, but rather long-time residents who had established roots in Canada. For these migrants, the decision to return to Greece was likely a difficult choice. When a reporter asked Montreal Greeks if they would be “glad…to see home again,” their response indicated that Canada was their home: “Oh, but we may never come back home again. We might be killed over there.”\textsuperscript{139}

Military enlistment was limited to men, but Greek women in Canada likely contributed to the war effort in some capacity. In the United States, some Greek women

\textsuperscript{133} Michael Mouratidis, ed., \textit{Greek Community of Metropolitan Toronto Historical Album – Memories} (Toronto: The Greek Community of Metropolitan Toronto, Inc., 1989).
\textsuperscript{135} Vlassis, \textit{Greeks in Canada}, 2\textsuperscript{nd} ed., 175.
\textsuperscript{136} “Greeks Anxious to Fight Turks.”
\textsuperscript{137} Saloutos in \textit{Greeks in the United States} notes that most Greek Americans likely paid their own way, but in some cases the PanHellenic Union (an organization created by the Greek government to connect with Greek diaspora communities in the United States) or “patriotic businessmen” paid the fare, 114. Ted Paraskevopoulos notes in his interview that the Greek government paid for their passage from NY to Greece. He is likely referring to the PanHellenic Union.
\textsuperscript{138} “Greeks Anxious to Fight Turks.”
\textsuperscript{139} Ibid. Florakas-Petsalis in \textit{To Build the Dream} lists the names of seven Montreal Greeks who returned to fight in the Balkan War, 385.
arranged to return to Greece as nurses on the front, however there are no records of similar arrangements made by Greek women in Canada. At the very least, Greek women in Canada prepared their family members for the voyage home and made do during their absence.

The send-offs were public demonstrations of Greek nationalism. In Montreal, large numbers of Greeks “full of enthusiasm” gathered at the Windsor Station to bid farewell to each cohort of volunteers as they boarded the train to New York. As the men prepared to leave, speeches were made and “patriotic songs [were] sung in a stirring manner.” Writing in 1913, the American philhellene Thomas Burgess similarly noted the fervour of Greek migrants in the United States as they prepared for their voyage:

Never before in history has just such a spectacle been seen: hosts of immigrants sacrificing their all and hastening home from all over the world to fight for their oppressed brethren and to gain back the century-enslaved lands which are Greek by right…Splendid enthusiasm was displayed in every colony of Greeks in the United States, and those who did not go, contributed generously. That autumn and winter at our Atlantic seaports the crowds of embarking patriots were familiar and inspiring sights, as they marched to the ships, singing their national anthem and receiving the final blessing from their priests.

The enthusiasm and patriotism evident at these send-offs offer revealing insights into the shifting identities of Greek migrants. Though many arrived in North America with deeply entrenched local or regional identities (evident by the plethora of village or regional clubs that limited membership to men from the same place), their fervour in joining a war aimed at liberating Macedonia from their centuries-old oppressor suggests the beginning of a shift towards a more national identity. Certainly, regional animosities

140 Toronto Daily Star, October 25, 1912, 9.
141 “Off to the War,” Toronto Daily Star, October 11, 1912, 3.
142 Thomas Burgess, Greeks in America: An Account of their Coming, Progress, Customs, Living, and Aspirations (Boston: Sherman, French & Co., 1913), 85.
persisted, and regional clubs continued to proliferate, yet the enthusiasm exhibited by the reservists and volunteers – men not just from Macedonia, but also from Arcadia, Sparta, Asia Minor, and the islands – suggests the burgeoning development of a Greek nationalism, that is, a discernable shift away from a purely local or religious identity and towards a more national identification with the homeland.

This shift from a local identity towards “a national consciousness” was not unique to Greeks. Writing on Italian immigrants in Toronto in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, historian John Zucchi has analyzed the processes through which Italians in Canada came to develop a fully realized Italian identity, arguing that for these migrants identity was not simply a “struggle between national and local allegiances, but rather…of expanding loyalties.” Like the Italians, Greeks arrived with strong local allegiances along with a sense of a national identity. Living and working in close proximity to other Greeks certainly contributed to a growing awareness of Greekness that was not bound by regional affiliations. But other factors played a role as well; indeed, the public dialogue that emerged in response to the Balkan Wars, in which religious and community leaders eloquently espoused a nationalist vision and encouraged immigrants to consider their obligations to the homeland, served to nurture the development of national identities.

Compared to the United States, the numbers of Greek volunteers from Canada was significantly smaller – not surprising given the relative size of the population. Of the 350,000 Greeks in the United States, at least 25,000 returned to Greece by 1913 (though


144 Zucchi, Italians in Toronto.
American historian Theodore Saloutos also notes that later reports estimate the number at 42,000 to 45,000). With a significantly smaller Greek population in Canada (the 1911 census shows there were only 3,594 persons of Greek descent) the numbers of volunteers comprised a much smaller contingent. Still, their absence left an indelible mark on the remaining Greek communities, as some Greek businesses closed and social networks were strained. Notably, among the Toronto volunteers was the priest of St. George’s Church, Father Paraschakis, who declared in a rousing speech, “I am willing to be the first to go. I will take up my place on the field of battle, and will serve in my regiment so long as I am living.” In returning to Greece, Father Paraschakis abandoned his Toronto parish, leaving Greeks in southern Ontario without a permanent priest. The eventual return of Greek soldiers to Canada also significantly shaped the communities. Though some perished in battle, as was the case for Father Paraschakis, those who survived the war brought with them to Canada family members and fiancés. A well-known case involved Michael Janetakis, who originally migrated to America in 1899 from a small town in central Greece. In 1912 he returned to Greece to fight in the war and, according to family lore, saved his army friend, Nick Speal, from bleeding to death on the battlefield. At the end of the war, Michael married Speal’s sister, Politimi. The couple went first to Philadelphia and in 1916 moved north to Toronto to join Speal. The return of Greek soldiers and the new arrival of family members to Canada helped to expand the community.

146 “Balkan Residents of Toronto.”
147 Vlassis, *Greeks in Canada*, 2nd ed., 178. Paraskevopoulos noted in his interview that in the priest’s absence, Toronto Greeks called on the priest in Buffalo.
The Balkan Wars were short but terribly bloody. The Balkan allies quickly defeated Ottoman forces by May 1913, yet dissatisfaction over the partitioning of Macedonia, in particular the capture of Thessaloniki by the Greeks, led Bulgaria to attack its former allies, initiating the Second Balkan War. Bulgaria was swiftly defeated and at the Treaty of Bucharest in 1913 Greece received 50% of the territory, Serbia received 40%, and Bulgaria a mere 10%. Greece made significant gains, adding 70 per cent more land to its territory and almost doubling its population. Members of the Greek diaspora perceived the war as a fight for liberty and freedom and understood their military participation as a meaningful way to lend support to the homeland. In fighting for Macedonian territory, they demonstrated their transnational commitment to the irredentist project of *Megali Idea* and their evolving national identity.

**Humanitarian Aid**

The humanitarian crisis in 1922-3 following the disastrous defeat of Greek forces in Smyrna, the burning of the city that left tens of thousands of innocent civilians dead, and the subsequent population exchange between Greece and Turkey, prompted Greeks in Canada to offer material assistance to their compatriots. The Asia Minor Catastrophe, as it came to be known, had its roots in the *Megali Idea* and Greek nationalists’ visions of reclaiming Asia Minor from the Ottoman Turks. In exchange for Greece’s participation in the First World War, the Entente powers granted Greece territorial gains in the Ottoman Empire, and in May 1919 authorized Greece to occupy the city of Smyrna and its hinterland. In 1920 and 1921 Greek forces expanded their occupation, stretching out over a larger territory, which proved difficult to secure especially with the confusion.

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149 Clogg, *Concise History of Modern Greece*, 83.
following the royalist replacement of pro-Venizelos army officers after the prime minister’s defeat in the 1920 election. During this time, a new Turkish nationalist movement under the leadership of Mustafa Kemal was growing in strength. In April 1921 the Allies declared their neutrality, and Turkish forces began attacks on the Greek troops. By August 1922, Turkish forces launched a major offensive and the ill-equipped and ill-prepared Greek troops fell into disarray and retreated to the coast. As Greek soldiers evacuated the city – “burning and pillaging all before them, and committing ghastly atrocities against Muslim civilians”150 – the Christian civilians were left to defend themselves against Turkish reprisals. When Turkish forces arrived in Smyrna, they massacred around 30,000 Greek and Armenian Christians and set the city ablaze to cleanse it of its non-Turkish population. With the burning of Smyrna, dreams of a “Greater Greece” encapsulated in the irredentist vision of Megali Idea, also came to an end. At the 1923 Lausanne Convention, Greece and Turkey agreed to a compulsory population exchange: 1,200,000 Greeks in Asia Minor were resettled in Greece and 380,000 Muslims in Greece were moved to Turkey. For Greece, the resettlement of this massive influx of refugees proved a difficult burden especially with its stagnant economy and insufficient infrastructure.151

In the wake of the catastrophe, Greek immigrants in Canada offered aid to the victims of the war. In Toronto, special church services offered prayers of intercession for the Asia Minor refugees.152

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March 1924 had gathered around $7,000 for the “Save the Children Fund,” which provided food to Greek and Armenian refugee children. Women played an important role in this fundraising. As members of the St. George Ladies Philoptoho, women comprised the driving force in the fundraising campaign, and their efforts helped significantly in sending over much-needed supplies to the refugee camps in Greece.

As the Greek government struggled to accommodate the massive influx of refugees, it inquired if other countries, including Canada, would be willing to shoulder some of the burden by accepting a portion of the evacuees. These appeals urged Canada to open its doors to the destitute refugees who were forced to flee Smyrna “leaving their fortunes and their possessions in the hands of the Turks,” and assured immigration officials that the “[t]hese people are agriculturalists, well-educated, hard-working, steady characters, family men and very sober.”

Most requests focused on the moral character and economic potential of the refugees, while others highlighted their Christianity and requested assistance on humanitarian grounds, insisting “it would be a welcome act of humanity for the British Dominions to offer their hospitality to these unfortunate refugees the majority of whom would be most desirable immigrants.” Greeks in Canada also appealed directly to the Canadian government to accept Greek refugees. Among the letter-writers were immigrants who requested permission to bring over their relatives to Canada. Greek Orthodox priests also wrote on behalf of their parishes, requesting

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156 Ibid., letter to Sir Horace Rumbold, British High Commissioner, Constantinople from L.P. Chambers, September 20, 1922.
157 Ibid., letter to Hon. E. M. McDonald, Minister of National Defense, August 4, 1925.
Canada open its gates to the Asia Minor refugees. Armenians exhibited a similar response to the genocide. Isabel Kaprielian-Churchill’s lengthy monograph on Armenians in Canada, notes that Armenian immigrants contributed significant financial donations to the relief efforts and also mobilized politically by writing to their Members of Parliament requesting entry into Canada on behalf of their family members.

In response to these appeals, immigration officials remained steadfast that the migration of Asia Minor refugees was prohibited. They frequently quoted from Canada’s immigration regulations, which limited male migrants to “bona fide farmers with sufficient means to begin farming in Canada or farm labourers with assurances of employment as such in Canada” and female migrants to “trained domestic servants with assurance of employment of that kind in Canada.” Officials justified this exclusion by arguing that Asia Minor refugees “do not make desirable immigrants as their conditions of life, their training and their ability militate against their finding employment of a satisfactory character in Canada.” Even those refugees with agricultural experience were deemed ill suited to Canada’s “climate, language, [and] standards of living.” Referring to Armenian refugees, Frederick C. Blair, superintendent of immigration, expressed concern that if these refugees were admitted to Canada in large number, they would surely become “a public charge.”

Despite the Canadian government’s refusal to admit large numbers of Greek refugees, some did manage to make their way to Canada, mostly as brides or as

158 Ibid., letter to Rev. George Poulos, of Manchester, N.H. from F.C. Blair, Secretary, December 17, 1923. (This letter is from a Greek priest in America, but I suspect that Greek priests in Canada penned similar letters.)
159 Isabel Kaprielian-Churchill, Like Our Mountains, 142-150.
161 Ibid., letter to Office of the High Commissioner for Canada, December 20, 1922.
163 Kaprielian-Churchil, Like Our Mountains, 157.
sponsored dependents. Small numbers of Armenians also made their way to Canada, though they fared far worse than Greeks since they were classified as “Asiatic” and were obliged, among other requirements, to show possession of $250 dollars upon entry in the country. Many Greek families readily opened their homes to relatives who escaped from Smyrna and tried to ease the pain of wartime trauma. This was the case for Elias’ parents who emigrated from Smyrna several years before the catastrophe. Most of his mother’s family perished in the war, with the exception of her two younger sisters who made their way to Florina in northern Greece and eventually to Canada. At a young age, Toronto-born Elias learned of his aunts’ terrifying evacuation, and in our interview several decades later was still able to recall the fear and loss that marked his family:

Because my mother was the oldest, she took them all in. I can remember my two aunts waking up in the middle of the night screaming and yelling, just terrified, and my mother would be holding them. They had memories of the Turks. I was just this big [motioning with his hand] but I can remember the screaming and crying. They were caught with the Turks. They lost a brother too. They had to escape with the clothes on their back.

Haunted by memories of the war, Asia Minor refugees set out to rebuild their lives in Canada, yet not all received a welcome reception. This was the case for Eddie G. who lingered in a Greek refugee camp for a brief period before making his way to the United States on a visitor’s visa, and later moved north to Toronto. Without English language skills and a family support network, Eddie and other refugees were limited in their labour options and commonly took jobs in Greek restaurants where Greek employers readily exploited newcomers as cheap labour.

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164 Interview with Katerina.
166 Interview with Elias (pseudonym) by author, July 26, 2009.
167 Interview with Antonia (pseudonym) by author, August 14, 2010.
The catastrophe had a significant impact on the pre-1922 Asia Minor migrants and their children. For these migrants, the consequence of the Greco-Turkish war and the subsequent compulsory population exchange was that their homeland was now part of Turkey, as Kaprielian-Churchill notes on the Armenian refugees, “[g]one were their villages, their homes, and their families in their homeland. Henceforth, they would seek their future in the New World.” Any plans for an eventual return to Asia Minor were, by August 1922, completely dashed. That year the Marmon family had sold their property in Toronto with the intention of returning to Pergamon. On route home, they stayed in New York to visit family before their departure, but upon receiving news of “the slaughter of the Greeks” the family decided to return to Toronto and re-build. The burning of Smyrna and the erasure (more specifically, the ethnic cleansing) of the Greek presence there also posed challenges of identification for Asia Minor Greeks. When Peter Marmon had to disclose his place of birth on official paperwork, he resisted writing “Turkey” – believing instead, “I’m a Greek, no matter where I was born.” His comments underscore how in the diaspora, Asia Minor Greeks complicated national narratives of Greek identity.

**Engagement in Homeland Politics**

Early twentieth century Greek immigrants exhibited a keen interest in homeland political affairs. This was particularly the case beginning with the outbreak of the First World War, when political conflicts erupted between Prime Minister Eleftherios Venizelos and King Constantine of Greece. Eager to fulfil the dream of Megali Idea,
Venizlos argued for Greece to enter the war on the side of the probable victors, the Entente powers, who by 1915 were willing to grant Greece territorial concessions in Asia Minor in return for their participation. King Constantine, who believed in the military superiority of the Central Powers and whose wife was the sister of Kaiser Wilhelm II, insisted on Greece’s neutrality in the war. Their political dispute escalated into a National Schism that saw the Greek populace ideologically divided between two opposing factions: conservative Royalists and liberal Venizelists.\footnote{Clogg, \textit{Concise History of Modern Greece}, 83-91; Doumanis, \textit{A History of Greece}, 191-195.}

The political divisions in Greece were paralleled in the diaspora, creating deep rifts between those who supported Venizelos and his liberal reforms and those who, in questioning the cost of fighting for the \textit{Megali Idea}, rallied behind King Constantine. In discussing the “fierce arguments” between Royalists and Venizelists in 1920s Toronto, Canadian-born Helen Baillie recalled, “there was a lot of bickering in those days. I can remember as a child, people coming to our home and talking about politics all the time.”\footnote{Interview with Baillie.} Political quarrels transformed the Greek communities, as another Toronto Greek recalled, “the community was divided; the church was divided, even coffee houses were divided.”\footnote{Interview with Palmer; see also, Douramakou-Petrooka, “The Elusive Community,” 263.} Indeed, in both Montreal and Toronto the churches became embroiled in the political disputes. In Montreal, the Venizelist faction elected to separate from the community and established their own church, the Holy Trinity Greek Orthodox Church. Although several years later the two churches were reunited, during much of the 1920s the political cleavages among Montreal Greeks were so pronounced that both churches...
refused to marry “mixed” couples – that is, of mixed political affiliation.\textsuperscript{174} In Toronto too, rifts between Venizelists and Royalists resulted in the Venizelist faction leaving St. George’s Church for a brief period of time. The circumstances around their departure are not entirely clear, but some sources indicate that the dispute revolved around the Venizelists objecting to the chanting of the \textit{polichronia} (hymn for the King) during church services. The Venizelists arranged for separate church services at a nearby hall, and began discussions to establish their own church, though their plans never materialized and they eventually returned to St. George’s.\textsuperscript{175} According to one member of the Royalist faction, the Venizelists “wanted to break away” from St. George’s church, in part because the walls of the church hall were lined with portraits of the revolutionary fighters of the Greek war of Independence, including Georgios Karaiskakis, Theodoros Kolokotronis, and Konstantinos Kanaris, that is, those “who we all owe for our freedom, and the Venizelists want[ed] their picture there.”\textsuperscript{176} Besides the church, divisions were manifested in other ways, with Greek men patronizing separate \textit{kafenia} (coffeehouses) depending on their political affiliation,\textsuperscript{177} and some Greeks boycotting the businesses of those whose politics they found disagreeable.\textsuperscript{178} In some cases, political disagreements could strain familial relationships, as Ted Paraskevopoulos noted, “I was a Royalist and my brother was with Venizelos.”\textsuperscript{179}


\textsuperscript{175} Douramakou-Petroleka, “The Elusive Community,” 268, Polyzoi, “Greek Immigrant Women from Asia Minor,” 114, 122.

\textsuperscript{176} Interview with Paraskevopoulos.

\textsuperscript{177} Douramakou-Petroleka, “The Elusive Community,” 268.


\textsuperscript{179} Interview with Paraskevopoulos.
Political discussions over homeland politics disrupted community relations and were exacerbated by regional animosities. Oral interviews reveal that there was a general perception that Greeks from the Kingdom of Greece were Royalists, and those from ‘unredeemed’ lands, notably Asia Minor, championed Venizelos and his aggressive pursuit of Megali Idea. This was also reflected in the emergence of separate regional clubs and associations, with Greeks from Laconia and Arcadia forming “Ammonia” in 1910 and Asia Minor Greeks establishing “Karteria” in 1916. One member of Ammonia recalled that when “the boys from Asia Minor” established Karteria, it was “not that we didn’t want them, but they wanted to be separate. As Laconians and Arcadians we were Royalists. The Asia Minors and some of the islanders were with Eleftherios Venizelos. But we were friends.”

Gus Marmon, whose father was one of the founders of Karteria, also emphasized the link between place of origin and political identity, stating, “Oh yes, our people were [with] Venizelos, strictly Venizelos. Liberal,” and identified Peloponnesian Greeks as “strictly Royalists.” This regional animosity shaped everyday relations among Greeks. On his experiences in North Bay before the Second World War, Spyro Loukidelis recalled the hostility among Greeks, noting that Greeks from “the south and from Athens…looked on themselves as true Greeks, and the people who were from Macedonia, they were often called Bulgarians, when they weren’t….Or they would speak of the Cretans in a derogatory way, or hate people from Asia Minor [calling them] ‘Turkish seed.’” Marmon agreed that Peloponnesian Greeks frequently used the derogatory term of ‘Turkish seed’ to insult those from Asia Minor, yet he also asserted that Peloponnesian Greeks “were poorly educated” and “couldn’t even speak proper

180 Ibid.
181 Interview with Loukidelis.
Greek,” demonstrating that this regional chauvinism was expressed by members of both groups.\(^\text{182}\)

Clearly, Greek immigrants retained a deep commitment to their homeland, but what is particularly interesting about this diasporic interest in the Venizelos-Royalist debate was that for many Greeks, politicization developed in Canada and was nurtured, in large part, by Greek-language newspapers. A sizable number of these Greeks immigrated to North America as boys and young men, and given their young ages upon arrival it is unlikely that they brought with them deeply engrained political identities. More importantly, as Charles Moskos notes of Greeks in America, “so few of the early immigrants brought with them the habit of reading newspapers. Reading a newspaper regularly was something they learned to do in the US.”\(^\text{183}\) The same was true for Greek Canadians, many of whom emigrated from rural areas without access to daily papers. Although Greeks in Canada did not have their own newspaper in the 1920s, they were avid readers of Greek American publications out of New York, notably *The Atlantis*, a conservative paper that supported King Constantine, the liberal *National Herald* that championed Venizelos,\(^\text{184}\) and for a brief period the pro-royalist *The Loyal*. This latter publication was available to Greek immigrants in Canada until May 1919 when pro-Venizelist Greeks in Montreal and Edmonton called for the prohibition of the paper on account of its “anti-Allied” sentiments, which the Chief Press Censor of Canada obliged

\(^{182}\) Interview with Lagges.


by banning the distribution and possession of the newspaper in Canada. ¹⁸⁵ Still, the
*Atlantis* and *National Herald* enjoyed a wide circulation by Greeks in Canada. Oral
histories indicate that on trips to the United States, Toronto Greeks often brought back
with them copies of these newspapers. ¹⁸⁶ More commonly, as subscribers Greeks in
Canada received the publications in the mail and likely shared their copies with family
and friends with whom they discussed and debated the contents. Copies of these papers
were also available for reading and discussing in the kafenia and in Greek-owned
restaurants. ¹⁸⁷

These Greek-language newspapers played a vital role in the creation of
transnational communities, linking Greeks in Canada with their counterparts in the
United States and in Greece. By 1926, the *Atlantis* and *National Herald* had a daily
circulation of around 70,000 copies, but it is likely that the actual number of readers was
significantly higher given the ways that ethnic newspapers were shared and read aloud in
public and private spaces. ¹⁸⁸ The vast reach of these dailies created an expansive
community that linked diasporic Greeks together through advertisements for jobs,
boarding houses, immigrant businesses, and carried information about immigrants’

¹⁸⁵ LAC, “Greek Monarchist newspaper, 1919,” RG 6E vol. 625, file 370-G-1 microfilm T-105, letters
from B.K. Salamis to Chief Press Censor for Canada, 7 May 1919 and 23 May 1919; Royal North West
¹⁸⁶ Interview with Mary (pseudonym) by author, June 30, 2009.
¹⁸⁷ Oral interviews attest to the circulation of American Greek-language newspapers in Canada, see,
interviews with Paraskevopoulos, Baillie, and Marmon. In describing the coffeehouse, Marmon explained:
“It was strictly Greek. That’s where they played cards, that’s where they congregated, that’s where they
read the Greek newspaper *Ethnikos Kyrix* [*National Herald*].” See also, Alexandros Kosmos Kyrour,
“Greek Nationalism and Diaspora Politics in America, 1940-1945: Background and Analysis of Ethnic
¹⁸⁸ Kyrou, “Greek Nationalism,” 217; Maxine S. Seller, “‘The Women’s Interests’ Page of the Jewish Daily
Forward: Socialism, Feminism, and Americanization in 1919,” in *The Press of Labor Migrants in Europe
and North America 1880s to 1930s*, eds. Christiane Harzig and Dirk Hoerder (Bremen: Publications of the
activities and associational life, as well as labour conditions, helping to create a sense of community that extended beyond regional loyalties.\textsuperscript{189}

Just as Matthew Frye Jacobson notes in the case of Irish, Polish, and Jewish immigrant journals, Greek-language North American newspapers also “played a critical role in the diffusion of nationalism.”\textsuperscript{190} By providing detailed articles and impassioned editorials on Greek political affairs, these newspapers not only kept immigrants informed about current events in the homeland but also shaped their political attitudes and identities.\textsuperscript{191} Writing on the influence of Greek newspapers in the United States during this period, Alexandros Kyros has demonstrated the role of the Greek press in forging polarized political cleavages among Greek Americans. The founders and editors of the Royalist \textit{Atlantis} and Venizelist \textit{National Herald} engaged in “vitriolic attacks” against each other throughout the 1910s and 1920s, contributing to a deepening rift between Royalist and Venizelist Greek Americans.\textsuperscript{192} S. Victor Papacosma, too, observed that these two newspapers “helped divide the Greek-American community,” arguing that the “succession of vituperative editorials contributed to coffeehouse violence, the termination of long friendships, the breakup of church communities, and the organization of mass


\textsuperscript{190} Jacobson, \textit{Special Sorrows}, 58.

\textsuperscript{191} Jeffrey McNairn, \textit{The Capacity to Judge: Public Opinion and Deliberative Democracy in Upper Canada, 1791-1854}, (University: University of Toronto Press, 2000), 118.

\textsuperscript{192} Kyrou, “Greek Nationalism,” 215.
demonstrations in New York and Chicago, among other urban centres. Along with shaping political attitudes, newspapers also encouraged immigrants to actively participate in homeland affairs. This was the case in 1920 when the National Herald, on the eve of the Greek election, called on Greek immigrants to write to relatives in Greece and urge them to vote for Venizelos, and in the wake of the 1922 Asia Minor Catastrophe when both newspapers encouraged their readers to send generous financial aid to Greece to assist the refugees in their resettlement.

By disseminating information and opinion on homeland affairs, immigrant newspapers created a forum for discussion and debate and, in so doing, contributed to the formation of a diasporic public sphere. Writing on publics and counterpublics, Michael Warner explains that “[s]peaking, writing, and thinking involve us – actively and immediately – in a public.” His analysis outlines several characteristics of publics, noting, among other features, that they are self-organized, constituted through attention, and constructed through the circulation of discourse. In addressing a transnational community and sharing information, newspapers were instrumental in creating a Greek immigrant collective identity. Of course, there is no single identity or public; rather, publics are overlapping, conflicting, hierarchical, and multiple since, as Catherine Squires explains, there may be “groups who share some notion of group identity but are not ideologically monolithic.” As in the case of Hungarian immigrants in interwar Canada, competing scripts on the homeland, mediated by immigrant elites, contributed to

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194 Jacobson, Special Sorrows, 61-64.
195 Saloutes, Greeks in the United States, 190.
196 Kyrou, “Greek Nationalism,” 218.
deepening political antagonisms among Greek immigrants, even as they instilled a national conscience.\textsuperscript{199}

\textit{Religious and Cultural Customs}

For members of the Greek diaspora, cultural and religious rituals were valuable links to their homeland, but these traditions often underwent processes of transformation and adaptation as immigrants remade their lives in Canada. While circumstance and necessity dictated the possibility for religious and cultural expression, Greek immigrants demonstrated a willingness to adapt and a desire to construct their modified practices as authentic expressions of a Greek religious and ethnic identity. In an effort to transcend geographical distances and engage in the collective identity of a homeland they did not physically inhabit, Greek immigrant communities forged relationships with each other.

Before the establishment of the first Greek Orthodox Church in Toronto in 1912, Greek immigrants developed informal ways to observe religious rituals. Greeks in the city arranged for the Greek priest from Buffalo and, after 1906, the Rev. Papageorgos from Montreal to travel to Toronto to perform the liturgy during important holy celebrations, namely Easter, Christmas, and some Name Days.\textsuperscript{200} The services were conducted in the living rooms of Greeks who volunteered their homes, typically business owners whose homes were large enough to accommodate the service, and later in rented halls. Because the itinerant priests had their own congregations to attend to, the services were rarely held on Sunday mornings.\textsuperscript{201}

\textsuperscript{199} Patrias, \textit{Patriots and Proletarians}.

\textsuperscript{200} Interviews with Parasevopoulos, Voula, and Katerina; Vlassis, \textit{Greeks in Canada}, 2\textsuperscript{nd} ed., 143.

\textsuperscript{201} Interview with Voula, Baillie, and Paraseveopoulos.
The traveling priests were called to attend to baptisms and weddings. When George Kleon married Barbara in 1909, they arranged for the Montreal priest to perform the ceremony in the living room of their second-floor apartment, above their West Toronto Café. A few years later, the baptism of their first-born daughter Helen was also performed in the family home with some modifications to the service, as Helen explained: “when I was born I was christened over the store. Instead of having the kolibithra [baptismal font] they dumped me in the washtub! And that’s what they did in those days.”

“Home weddings” and baptisms were common in this period before the establishment of the church. In preserving their religious practices, however modified, Greeks in Toronto relied on the services of priests from more institutionally established communities. These examples point to the resourcefulness and flexibility of Greek immigrants, but also show how in the early twentieth century the boundaries between domestic and public spaces were blurred.

As the population of Greeks in Toronto slowly grew, and especially as the number of women increased, the need for a permanent church and priest became pressing. According to church records, in 1909 a group of 200 Greeks, mostly business owners in the city and surrounding towns, attended a meeting at a local YMCA to discuss the building of a church and formal community. The “St. George Greek Orthodox Community of Ontario” was incorporated, and by 1911 a ten-member council was elected and tasked with the job of soliciting donations among Greeks in Toronto and the nearby cities.

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202 Interview with Baillie.
203 Interview with Voula.
204 St. George’s Greek Orthodox Community of Toronto, 100th Anniversary Commemorative Book, 2009; Interview with Paraskevopoulos.
he and other members “used to go from house to house, or store to store, collecting money for the church.” By 1912 the council had raised enough money for a down payment on a home on Jarvis Street, near Shutter Street. Business owners Paul Letros and Nicholas Speal, as well as the Rev. Paraschakis, signed the deed for the $6,000 property, which the community paid off completely within five years. Over time the interior of the building was converted into a church, complete with the iconostasis and altar. The church adhered to Orthodox traditions, including the separation of genders on the church floor with male parishioners standing on the right and women on the left side of the church.

St. George served as the focal point for Greeks in the city and surrounding areas. It provided a permanent structure for communal prayer, the celebration of the sacraments, and a place for migrants and their children to socialize. The second floor served as a classroom for Greek language instruction as well as a meeting place for the church council and other associations, including the Ladies Philoptoho. By 1937 the Greek community purchased a larger building, the former Holy Blossom synagogue on Bond Street. Again, the church council solicited donations and Greek business owners were among the most generous contributors. This new church continued to serve the spiritual and social needs of the congregation. For Greek immigrants in Toronto, the church offered an important link with the homeland, even as some religious practices were modified. Among some of the deviations from Orthodoxy was the inclusion of a

205 Interview with Stratas.
206 St. George’s Commemorative Book.
207 Ibid.
208 Interview Mary.
co-ed choir – a departure from the all-male *psaltis* (chanter), typical of Orthodox practice (Figure 1.4).\(^\text{210}\)

St. George was also an important institution for Greek communities in surrounding towns and cities. During the most important religious holidays of Easter and Christmas, it was common for Greek families in nearby towns to travel to Toronto to attend church services. One Greek Canadian recalled that during the 1930s and 1940s “Greeks would come from all over Ontario for Easter. It was like a big convention of Greeks. They would come on Wednesday and stay till Sunday.”\(^\text{211}\)

Growing up in North Bay in the 1930s, Canadian-born Spyros Loukidies recalled the “visits of the Greek priest from Toronto who used to come up about three or four times a year,” to perform the liturgy or sacraments.\(^\text{212}\) Growing up in Sudbury at around the same time, Georgia also recalled the visits by priests from Toronto, and later Ottawa, who arrived every three or four months. Her family owned a store in the city, and because their home was the largest home among the Greeks, the gatherings were typically held there, as Georgia recalled: “we had a huge dining room and the priest would use the buffet table as an altar. The dining room went into French doors and into the living room, and my parents would put chairs in there for all the Greeks to come, and the priest did the service in our living room.”\(^\text{213}\) Later, as the community grew, arrangements were made to rent a hall for the services. In recounting his experiences in Sturgeon Falls, Gus Lagges recalled similar experiences of attending baptisms in people’s homes, which were

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\(^{210}\) Interview with Mary, Elias, and Georgia.

\(^{211}\) Interview with Chris (pseudonym) by author, July 11, 2010.

\(^{212}\) Interview with Loukidelis.

\(^{213}\) Interview with Georgia.
usually performed on Wednesdays because the Ottawa priest had to attend to his own congregation on Sunday mornings.\textsuperscript{214}

For the small Greek communities throughout Ontario, living rooms commonly served as the locale for weddings and baptisms well into the 1930s and 1940s. Geographical distance sometimes precluded strict observance of Orthodox practice, though Greeks took care to adhere to Orthodox customs when possible. After Toronto-born Voula married at the St. George church in the early 1930s, she and her husband moved to Galt, Ontario where there were few other Greeks. With the birth of their son in 1939, Voula called on the Toronto priest to perform her son’s baptism in her living room. Without access to a kolibithra the priest used a washtub for the ceremony, but afterwards, as instructed by the priest, Voula made sure to pour the remaining holy water on the soil, rather than down the drain.\textsuperscript{215}

Greeks in small towns and cities throughout Ontario forged relationships with larger Greek communities in Toronto, Ottawa, and Montreal because it was important to practice their religious rituals and preserve their religious identity. Yet they also exhibited a remarkable flexibility of faith and a willingness to adapt religious practices according to circumstance and necessity. Though many looked forward to the arrival of the travelling priests to celebrate the liturgy, during the rest of the year some Greeks opted to attend Sunday service at their nearby Protestant Church, as Voula recalled of her experience in Galt: “we would sometimes go to the Anglican church for Sunday service but we always went to St. George’s in Toronto for Easter.”\textsuperscript{216} Georgia’s family in

\textsuperscript{214} Interview with Lagges.
\textsuperscript{215} Interview with Voula.
\textsuperscript{216} Ibid.
Sudbury also attended the Anglican Church most Sundays. In cases of sudden illness or death it was not always possible to arrange for an itinerant priest to administer the last rites. The Loukidies family of North Bay learned this reality in 1929 when their baby girl was found to be gravely ill. The baby’s parents contacted the local Catholic priest to request a baptism for their dying child, but the priest refused because the family was not Roman Catholic. A French Catholic nun, who was friends with the mother, agreed to instruct the parents on how to baptize their child. In the absence of a Greek Orthodox priest, the father “baptized the child himself as she was dying.”

Transnational networks facilitated the availability of material objects and foods that were important components of the religious and cultural rituals. Icons of the saints and crosses were brought over the Atlantic in the suitcases of new arrivals, especially women who carried these religious objects in their trousseau and were expected to establish an *eikonastasi* (icon corner) in their home. These religious items could also be purchased from Greek stores in large Greek communities. Georgia recalled that her mother purchased holy icons during family trips to Montreal and New York. Toronto-born Mary recalled trips to New York City with her parents where they purchased Greek music records and icons.

As with other immigrant groups, Greek women’s labour was crucial in sustaining religious and cultural practices in North America. For a small fee, Greek immigrant

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217 Interview with Georgia.
218 Interview with Loukidelis.
219 Interview with Katerina.
220 Interview with Georgia.
221 Interview with Mary.
women provided the symbolic objects required for religious and cultural rituals.  

Decorated with lace, pearls, or jewels, the *stefana* (wedding wreaths) serve an important role in the Greek Orthodox wedding ceremony, and were traditionally given to the bride and groom by the couple’s *koumbaro* or *koumbara* (religious sponsor). Maria Marmon had learned the craft of making *stefana* in Smyrna, and when she came to Toronto in 1911 she continued to make *stefana* and sold them to hundreds of Greeks in Toronto and surrounding cities.  

Her labour provided important income for her family, while also fulfilling a religious requirement for immigrants.

Women’s skills and labour were needed to produce certain foods necessary for religious sacraments or celebrations. *Kollyva*, which is made of boiled wheat sweetened with sugar or honey and served with nuts and dried fruit, was used in memorial services to mourn the dead. In Toronto, there was at least one woman who knew how to prepare this dish.  

Certain Greek foods were also offered on Name Day celebrations, during which individuals named after a saint would celebrate the saint’s feast day by opening their home to guests and well-wishers. Many Greeks shopped at an Italian grocer in Toronto who imported olive oil, olives, and some cheeses, but for *phyllo* (a paper-thin Greek pastry dough used in sweet and savoury dishes) many women opted to buy the dough ready-made from a Toronto Greek woman who prepared the *phyllo* in her kitchen and sold it to Greeks throughout Ontario as a means of supporting her large family.  

Sometimes the results were disappointing, as one woman, whose family lived in Ottawa

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224 Interview with Marmon; see also Mouratidis, “Hellenic Album.”

225 Interview with Katerina.

226 Ibid.

227 Interview with Petros (pseudonym) by author, June 29, 2009.
and purchased the phyllo during trips to Toronto, recalled: “I remember that phyllo, it was so dry! They used to bring them in great big Eaton’s coat boxes, and that’s how you made your baklava, out of those stupid dry phylla. Oh god, I remember my mom opening it up and saying to her brother, “Stelios, what am I going to do with this?””

In their role as Greek language teachers, Greek women also facilitated the development of a transnational national identity among the Canadian-born children of immigrant parents. The Toronto Greek language school was organized at the St. George’s Greek Orthodox Church. Smaro Pavlakis was one of the teachers who provided instruction on Greek language, history, religion, and geography. Her students recalled the important influence she had on the second generation, as one former student recalled, “Mrs. Pavlakis’ faith and convictions were Greek, she influenced us, we were very proud to be Greek.” In the Greek schools, too, networks among Greek communities were crucial, as textbooks used in the classroom were imported from Greek communities in New York and, occasionally, were brought in from Greece.

**Conclusion**

The Greeks who migrated to Ontario cities and towns in the early decades of the twentieth century lived in a transnational world. Though not all Greeks participated equally in the creation and maintenance of these transnational networks, they were nonetheless an important aspect of immigrant life in Canada for most Greek immigrants and their children. Certainly, transnationalism was highly gendered, as was the remembering of such activities. Not surprisingly, in oral interviews immigrant men

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228 Interview with Daphne (pseudonym) by author, August 28, 2010.
229 Interview with Elias.
230 Interview with Pavlakis.
recalled with pride their financial contributions to their families and their engagement in homeland political debates, while immigrant women and their children recounted their transnationalism in ways that adhered to prevailing gender norms that confined women to the domain of the family and cultural and religious reproduction. Men and women’s labours produced important benefits for Greek communities in the diaspora and for families left behind in the homeland. The remittances sent home served as an invaluable resource for families to invest in new land and purchase much needed, as well as luxury, goods. Women’s labours made it possible for migrant communities to retain homeland cultural and religious practices, though with slight modifications.

The enlistment of Greek men in the Balkan wars and their mobilization over homeland political affairs during the Royalist-Venizelist dispute provides clear examples of Greek immigrants’ continuing interest in the homeland. Yet, as I’ve shown in this chapter, this transnationalism was very much a product of their North American experience. Ethnic newspapers played an important role in educating Greek immigrants on political events in Greece and helped to shape public opinion. The ideological and political rifts that developed within Greek immigrant communities attests to the influence of the ethnic press in politicizing Greeks.

Compared to the United States, the Greek communities that developed in Canada in the early decades of the twentieth century remained quite small. Their size necessitated the development of diaspora networks that linked immigrant communities to each other. This dependency slowly began to fade, especially after the Second World War, as a large influx of Greeks made their way to Canada and individual Greek

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231 Caroline Daley, “‘He would know, but I just have a feeling’: gender and oral history,” Women’s History Review 7, 3 (1998): 343-359.
communities became institutionally complete. Yet in the early twentieth century, these linkages were instrumental in promoting a transnational identity that linked Greeks together in an imagined community that transcended vast geographical distances, connecting them to each other and the homeland. Even as Greeks sought to integrate into Canada, they maintained a keen interest in homeland affairs and a desire to retain their familial ties and the cultural, social, and religious rituals that affirmed their ethnic identity.
Chapter 2

Transnational Humanitarian Relief, Ethnic Pride, and Community Hierarchies: the Greek War Relief Fund during the Second World War

Within days of the Italian invasion of Greece on October 28, 1940, Greek immigrants in Canada mobilized to form fundraising committees to send humanitarian relief to the homeland. By November 15, the Greek War Relief Fund (GWRF) was registered as a national organization under the War Charities Act and soon sixty-two local branches were established in various cities and towns throughout Canada. In cooperation with a number of prominent Canadians who lent their names to the cause, Greek Canadians worked hard to shore up public support and financial contributions. Greece’s entry into the Second World War and its initial victories against Mussolini’s Italy marked an important turning point for the Allies, and Greek immigrants were quick to capitalize on the outpouring of international admiration for Greece to recast themselves as desirable and respectable immigrants in Canada. After Greece’s fall to Nazi Germany in April 1941, Greek Canadians continued to rally behind the GWRF, using it as a public platform from which to foster narratives of their homeland that coupled the brutal suffering of Axis occupation with references to classical and revolutionary Greece, underlining the cultural and hereditary link between modern and ancient Hellenes. As a vehicle for transnational humanitarian relief, Canada’s Greek War Relief Fund provided a much-needed supply of food and medicine – over six million dollars worth\textsuperscript{232} – to a starving nation, but as a public stage for Greek Canadians to project their cultural worth to a newly receptive Canadian audience, the GWRF also reflected the unequal power

relationships within Greek immigrant communities, particularly as gender and class hierarchies mediated the performance of Greekness and privileged the voices of well-to-do Greek men.

In 1954 as the Fund concluded its operations, Jackson Dodds, the General Manager of the Bank of Montreal, described the GWRF as “one of the Canadian epics of the Second World War.” In Dodds’ assessment, the GWRF “saved countless lives and, above all, it did for the people of Greece what they had done for the peoples of the free world. It restored their hope.” As an honorary member of the Fund, Dodd’s enthusiasm was not surprising, yet he was not overly exaggerating when recounting the achievements of their efforts, as the GWRF did raise millions of dollars worth of food and medical supplies, and by 1942 helped convince the Canadian government to donate fifteen thousand tons of wheat monthly to Greece, a country that suffered gravely under Axis occupation, particularly during the famine that reached its peak in the winter of 1941-2. Despite its significance, however, there is a paucity of academic research on the GWRF. Several studies of Greek migration to Canada have referenced the GWRF, but only insofar as to provide brief outlines that note the amount of money raised and the public praise it received. These accounts are primarily based on Florence Macdonald’s 1954 publication *For Greece a Tear: The Story of the Greek War Relief Fund of Canada* and a chapter in the 1942 and 1953 editions of George Vlassis’ *The Greeks in Canada*.

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233 Foreword by Jackson Dodds in Macdonald, *For Greece a Tear*, v, vi.
Both Vlassis, who served as the Royal Deputy Vice-Consul for Greece and secretary of the Ottawa GWRF branch, and Macdonald, a Canadian who reportedly penned her account to “acquaint the people of Greece with the part played by Canada in their survival during the Second World War, and to make known to Canadians the results of their generosity,” chronicle the inception of the GWRF and outline the membership of the local, executive, and honorary committees. Though Macdonald neglects to provide any references, her work offers a more substantive discussion of all the financial and material contributions made by the GWRF, as well as the logistical challenges of coordinating the shipment and distribution of food and medical supplies to Greece under occupation. The data provided in both works are useful but in need of critical historical analysis.

Canada’s Greek War Relief Fund was not the only transnational charitable organization established in the wake of Greece’s entry into the Second World War. Notably, immigrants in the United States and Australia created their own organizations to send food, clothing, and medical supplies to Greece during the war. Given the substantial size of the Greek American population, it is not surprising that the Greek War Relief Association (GWRA), formed in the United States on November 7, 1940, was the largest of its kind, with 964 local branches. Drawing its manpower from existing

235 “Greek Government Honors Two,” Montreal Gazette, October 15, 1962, 31. Macdonald received the Gold Cross by the Greek Red Cross for her book.
236 Australia’s GWRF received regular coverage in the Sydney Morning Herald. There are brief references to the fund in some secondary literature, see, Reginald Appleyard and John N. Yiannakis, Greek Pioneers in Western Australia (Crawley: University of Western Australia Press, 2002), 220-221. Turkey’s Elliniki Enois Konstantinopoliton (Union of Greeks of Constantinople) is discussed in Elcin Macar’s “The Turkish Contribution to Famine Relief in Greece during the Second World War” in Bearing Gifts to Greeks: Humanitarian Aid to Greece in the 1940s, ed. Richard Clogg (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007), 85-96.
Greek community institutions in the US, notably the American Hellenic Education
Progressive Association (AHEPA), Greek American Progressive Association (GAPA),
the plethora of parochial associations and clubs, and the Greek Orthodox Church, both
the network of local churches and the church hierarchy (the Archbishop Athenagoras, for
eexample, served on the national executive), the GWRA raised an extraordinary amount of
humanitarian relief for Greece\(^{238}\) and, according to historian Alexandros Kyrou who has
authored several articles on the subject, was successful in lobbying the American
government into pressuring Britain to lift the naval blockade it had imposed on occupied
Greece following its fall to Axis powers in April 1941.\(^{239}\) Kyros further argues that when
Britain finally lifted the blockade by February 1942, the GWRA was instrumental in
working with several governments and international aid organizations in devising a plan
to send North American food and supplies to Greece using neutral Swedish vessels,
noting, too, that Canada’s GWRF collaborated in these efforts, particularly in soliciting
donations from the Canadian government.\(^{240}\) Certainly, correspondence between the two
organizations attests to the cooperation between America’s GWRA and Canada’s

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\(^{238}\) The approximate value of all food and supplies sent to Greece by the GWRA was $100 million, see,
Alexandros K. Kyrou, “The Greek-American Community and the Famine in Axis-occupied Greece” in

\(^{239}\) Ibid, 58-84; Alexandros K. Kyrou, “Operation Blockade: Greek American Humanitarianism During

\(^{240}\) Kyrou, “Greek-American Community,” 73.
Still, the plethora of historical studies on the Axis occupation of Greece largely ignore the contributions made by Greek Canadians in this international endeavour, even as they note the involvement of Greek Americans in securing humanitarian relief for Greece. This chapter fills this gap by shedding light on the valuable participation of Greek Canadians in providing humanitarian aid to Greece. Yet it also differs from Kyrou’s work, which focuses on the diplomacy and international negotiations by the executive members of the GWRA, particularly its national chairman Spyros Skouras (a 1910 arrival who yielded enormous influence as a Hollywood film tycoon) in securing aid to Greece. Shifting the focus onto the community level, this chapter unpacks the meanings and messages conveyed by local members of the GWRF to the Canadian public, an issue that is hinted at in Kyrou’s work but is left unexplored. This chapter breaks new ground by going further than other researchers of Greek Canadian migration who have proclaimed that Greece’s participation in the Second World War improved conditions for the Greek diaspora in their host societies, yet have not fully examined the local processes through which this transformation occurred, or how Greek immigrants and their Canadian-born children actively participated in this refashioning of their communities.

241 Macdonald, *For Greece a Tear*, 134-140.
244 Saloutos’ seminal work, *The Greeks in the United States* identifies the Second World War as a turning point that brought Greek Americans “status and dignity,” 362. Migration historians generally agree on this point yet have not explored how Greek immigrants actively participated in this shift in public perceptions.
Throughout the late 1930s and 1940s a number of diaspora communities formed relief organizations to provide humanitarian aid to their homelands. Immigrant communities, aided by non-immigrant sympathizers, organized Ukrainian, Polish, Chinese, Russian Danish, Finnish, and Yugoslavian War Relief Funds, among others. Though Canadian historians have made useful contributions on Canadian relief efforts, especially on women’s labours on the home front, studies on the mobilization by immigrant communities in response to homeland crises during wartime remain sparse. American migration historians have shown more interest in this area, and have produced a number of studies on homeland activism before and during the Second World War. Some of these works are celebratory in nature, underscoring the success of the fundraising endeavours and the continuing emotional or “sentimental” attachments linking migrants with their homeland, among them Donald Pienkos’ work on the Polish War Relief, which raised sizeable financial donations for Poland. Others have highlighted the community or ideological conflicts that arose through these campaigns, among them Peter Kivisto’s account of the politically divided Finish-Americans’ efforts.

245 References to these Funds were made in various Canadian newspapers. See also, Macdonald, For Greece a Tear, 71.
to secure humanitarian relief for Finland, in which he shows how interest in homeland activism shifted over time and generation.\textsuperscript{248}

Migration historians have shown considerable interest in the relationship between immigrants’ integration/exclusion in their adopted country and homeland engagement during this period. On Japanese Americans’ responses to the Sino-Japanese War of 1937-1941, Yuji Ichioka has explored the strong ethnic nationalism that compelled the Issei (first-generation migrants) to organize fundraising campaigns for Japan’s war effort. Acknowledging that such ethnic patriotism was not unique to Japanese immigrants, Ichioka concludes that the exclusionary barriers specific to the Japanese experience played an important role in the Issei’s continuing identification with their homeland.\textsuperscript{249}

On Chinese Americans’ responses to that same war, K. Scott Wong has looked at the Chinese War Relief Association’s (CWRA) work in organizing fundraising campaigns, which utilized protests and parades, as well as the grassroots activism by ordinary Chinese immigrants who boycotted Japanese goods.\textsuperscript{250} According to Wong, this homeland activism contributed to a growing sense of community unity among Chinese Americans and helped to foster “a new era of interaction” between Chinese Americans


\textsuperscript{250} K. Scott Wong, \textit{Americans First: Chinese Americans and the Second World War} (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2005), 33-44.
Taking a more critical view of the Chinese war relief efforts, Karen J. Leong and Judy Tzu-Chun Wu focus on the unequal relationships between Chinese and white Americans in the CWRA. They posit that “in order to ‘sell’ China as an object of compassion,” Chinese Americans conformed to and, especially in the case of the Rice Bowl parades and other public spectacles, actively promoted “exotic fantasies about Chinese culture and people” for the consumption of white Americans. In particular, these spectacles of humanitarianism and “cultural tourism” were highly gendered as they relied on contrasting representations of women as either maternal figures or exotic seductresses. Leong and Wu conclude that while Chinese Americans gained greater societal acceptance through these China relief campaigns, such social advancement was uneven as they did so only by “performing Orientalism” for their American audiences.

These various war relief campaigns of the late 1930s and 1940s shared much in common. They typically drew manpower from existing community institutions, and Canada’s GWRF was no exception. Greek Canadian members of AHEPA, the Ladies Philoptoho, local Greek Orthodox Churches, Greek language schools, and various parochial associations were encouraged to participate, and many eagerly directed their voluntary labours to the Fund. At the same time, these relief funds were not exclusively in the hands of the immigrant communities, as well-known bankers, politicians, and business owners lent their names and public support to the various causes. Certainly,

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253 Ibid., 144-147.
254 Ibid., 148.
Greek war relief campaigns in both the US and Canada benefited from non-Greek public figures that served as honorary members and encouraged the general public to donate. American Harold S. Vanderbilt and Canadian Sir Edward Beatty, president of the Canadian Pacific Railway, served as honorary chairmen of their respective Greek war relief organizations.²⁵⁵ Lastly, with so many relief funds vying for limited charitable dollars, these campaigns commonly enlisted members of their community to attract public interest by dressing in traditional costumes and serving as cultural ambassadors of the homeland, and again Greeks in both the US and Canada were no exception. Yet, unlike the CWRA, which Leong and Wu contend subjected Chinese bodies to the gaze of white Americans and served to confirm American stereotypes of Chinese as hypersexual and Chinatowns as “mysterious, exotic, and vice-ridden,”²⁵⁶ in the case of the Greek relief campaigns, the image of Greece projected through the bodies of young women and children dressed in regional and national garb, was an extension of the Greek community’s well-established collective imagining of their homeland. Although to some extent, Greek women’s bodies were indeed used as props to encourage financial donations to the Fund, the clothing and dances presented to Canadian audiences in service of the war effort were similar to the presentations staged for Greek audiences during commemorative celebrations and other community events. Unlike the Chinese Americans, Greek Canadians more clearly benefited from this transnational humanitarianism, since the GWRF served as a platform for them to transform public perceptions of Greeks from a decidedly unwelcomed migrant group to a respectable community. My study of the Greek War Relief Fund explores Greek Canadians’ efforts

²⁵⁵ “U.S. Sends Greeks Million,” The Toronto Daily Star, January 3, 1941, 30; Macdonald, For Greece a Tear, 6.
to provide meaningful aid to their homeland and, in the process, to recast themselves as a respectable immigrant community in Canada, while keeping in mind how access to this public stage was mediated by gender and class hierarchies.

**Greek Immigrants Respond to War**

Greece’s neutrality during the Second World War came to an abrupt end on October 28, 1940, when the Greek Prime Minister Ioannis Metaxas rejected Mussolini’s ultimatum to allow Italian troops to enter Greece. Having already begun mobilizing for war, Greek soldiers were able to resist the Italian attack and within days succeeded in driving Italian troops back into Albania. By mid-November, Greek forces went on the offensive and on November 22 captured the Italian base of Koritsa. A succession of other territorial victories followed as Greek troops captured one-quarter of Italian-occupied Albania, signalling to the world that an Axis power could be defeated.257

Greece’s military victories against Italy made front-page news, and inspired a new sense of pride among members of the Greek diaspora in Canada. Immediately following the outbreak of war, George Bulucon, a business owner and president of the Greek community of Toronto, proclaimed, “Italy is going to get the trimming of her life,” adding, “Now Greece will be able to aid Britain with more than her sympathy, Greece has always been with England…No Italian army is going to get through Greece, you can

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be sure of that.” Buloucon’s initial optimism was shared by many of Toronto’s Greek community, including restaurant owner Frank Bazos who insisted, “The Greeks have no love for the Italians, and will put up a good fight.” Even decades later, Greek Canadians could still vividly remember their enthusiasm for Greece’s entry in the war. During a 1970s oral interview, Toronto-born Gus Marmon recalled the newspaper coverage at the time, particularly the “three-inch” high headlines splashed across the front pages of the local papers that announced the “Greeks throwing back the Italians.” Although such headlines might well have been part of a larger propaganda campaign intended to shore up public support for the war, it does not diminish the significance of the news coverage for Greek Canadians, as Marmon’s recollections indicate: “everyone was proud, everyone was proud. There wasn’t one person who had Greek blood that wasn’t proud…. We were the only ally the English people had.”

Toronto-born Helen Baille had similar memories: “little Greece was with the Allies, remember when all the countries backed out? There were huge headlines everyday in the Star, the Telegram. It gave us a tremendous boost!”

The initial jubilance that Greek Canadians experienced at the start of the Greek-Italian War marked a stark departure from their wartime experiences just decades earlier during the First World War. When war broke out in 1914, King Constantine of Greece, who was married to Kaiser Wilhelm’s sister and whose sympathy for Germany was well known, insisted on Greece’s neutrality, much to the opposition of liberal Prime Minister

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258 “We’ll win with British Aid’ Greeks Here are Confident,” Toronto Daily Star, October 28, 1940, 26.  
259 Ibid. Several other Greek men, all business owners, expressed similar views in the article.  
260 A survey of Toronto newspapers indicates that Marmon’s recollections were correct, for example, “Greeks Thrust Italians Back,” Toronto Star, 31 October 1940, 1, and “Six-Foot Greek Troops Throw Italians into Rout By Fierce Bayonet Attack,” The Evening Telegram, November 2, 1940, 1.  
261 Interview with Gus Marmon. MHSO, Greek Collection, August 1977 and June 1978.  
262 Interview with Helen Baillie. MHSO, Greek Collection, July 1977.
Eleftherios Venizelos who championed the Entente Powers.\footnote{263} Though Greece did eventually enter the war on the side of the Allies, its initial neutrality had severe consequences for Greeks in Canada since, as Greek nationals whose country could potentially enter the war on the side of the Central Powers, there was the possibility of becoming enemy aliens, and those Greeks who wanted to join the Canadian armed forces were ineligible for service because of their country of origin.\footnote{264} Correspondence between London’s Department of External Affairs and Canada’s Governor General reveals that by December 1916 preparations were being made to identify all Greek royalists (those who professed loyalty to King Constantine) residing in the British Empire in the event of Greece’s declaration of war against Britain.\footnote{265} In January 1917, concerns about Greek Canadian espionage, specifically the role of Greeks as “go-betweens and agents in Germany spying rings” led to the censorship of letters and telegrams addressed to Greeks in Canada.\footnote{266} When Greece did enter the war in June 1917, a small number of Greek Canadians reportedly returned to Greece to enlist in the armed forces on the side of the Allies,\footnote{267} but the perception of Greek men of military age as “slackers”\footnote{268} persisted,

\footnote{264} Interview with Ted Paraskevopoulos. MHSO, July 1977. According to Paraskevopoulos: “About five or six of us, Greek boys…we decided we would go and volunteer, and we spoke to the man…He said ‘where were you born?’ In Greece…‘You’re foreigners, you can’t serve in the Canadian army.’ But after a while, they wanted everybody and anybody. None of us went.”\\
\footnote{266} Letter from the Chief Press Censor for Canada, January 19, 1917, Ottawa; Letter to Deputy Censor, Ottawa, from the Foreign Office, London, January 18, 1917, both cited in Douramakou-Petroleka, *Elusive Community,* 269.\\
\footnote{267} According to Nick Speal, the secretary of the St. George’s Greek Community of Toronto, by August 1918, 125 Greek men in Toronto returned to Greece to enlist, and another 300 were preparing to go, “Greeks not liable, but many fighting,” *Toronto Daily Star*, August 7, 1918, 12.\\
\footnote{268} In a letter to the *Toronto Daily Star* Greek American Kyriakos P. Tsolainos, who identified himself as “Formerly of the Department of Economics and political Science, McGill University” wrote in regards to the anti-Greek riots that “The ‘ringleaders’ in Toronto evidently consider that the Greeks in Canada are slackers,” see, “Says Greeks are with the Canadians,” *Toronto Daily Star*, 7 August 1918, 2.
particularly since a large proportion of them did not serve in the war and worked in highly visible service professions.269

In Toronto, hostility towards Greek migrants during the First World War was manifested in a mob riot by a group of returned soldiers who, in early August 1918, attacked more than a dozen Greek restaurants, breaking windows, doors – “anything breakable in sight” – and “leaving behind a trail of wreckage beyond description.”270 The “anti-Greek riots,” as Toronto’s Greek community dubbed them,271 began on Thursday August 1 when Greek immigrant Paul Letros, owner of the White City Café, removed an inebriated returned soldier from his restaurant. Rumours circulated that Letros had abused the “badly crippled” veteran before “ejecting” him from his restaurant, and the following evening several hundred returned soldiers, accompanied by a rowdy crowd of roughly a thousand civilians, gathered at the corner of Yonge and College Streets and preceded to destroy Letros’ restaurant, smashing the windows, doors, dishes, turning over tables, and looting the register and stock room.272 Later, rioters gathered at the grounds of the Normal School (present day Ryerson University) for an impromptu meeting before continuing along Yonge Street and later Queen Street, destroying and looting Greek restaurants as they went.273 In one case, the rioters chose to spare a restaurant after the owner appealed to the crowd, telling them that he had served in

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269 This point was made in the documentary Violent August: the 1918 Anti-Greek Riots in Toronto, John Burry (Burgeoning Communications Inc., 2009).
270 Quoted in “Angry Mob Wrecks Dozen Restaurants,” Toronto Daily Star, 3 August 1918, 10.
271 Archives of Ontario (hereafter AO), RG8-20, B224242, File 1-1-L Box 18, “Anti-Greek Riots,” letter from Lieutenant Governor, Ottawa, August 12, 1918.
272 There were, of course, conflicting accounts on the cause of the riot. According to one source, several waiters of the café “mauled” the soldier, while Letros, the restaurant owner, claimed that the soldier was inebriated and “had gone out to the kitchen and had attempted to cause trouble, and his partner put him out.” According to Letros, the soldier soon after apologized for his behaviour. See, “Nearly $40,000 Damage Done Mobs Wreck Ten Restaurants,” The Evening Telegram, August 3, 1918, 20-21.
273 “Angry Mob Wrecks Dozen Restaurants,” Toronto Daily Star, August 3, 1918, 10; “Returned Soldiers Raid Many Greek Restaurants,” The Globe, August 3, 1918, 1; AO, RG4-32, file 1918, B420021, Deputy Chief Constable’s Office, Toronto, Re: Recent Rioting in Toronto, September 6, 1918.
France and England and had been wounded in battle. The following day, restaurant owners prepared for another night of violence and took precautions to identify themselves as non-Greek or, if they were Greek, to demonstrate their loyalty to the British and Allied cause. One store owner placed a sign that read “Armenian” in the store window, another displayed the Union Jack and a sign that announced: “We are British subjects and proud of it.” That evening a much larger crowd gathered, well over a thousand men, many of them equipped with stones, bottles, bricks, and pieces of concrete which they used to hurl at the police. Violence directed towards the Greek restaurants had largely ceased, but rioters continued to clash with police until Tuesday evening. In the end, only a handful of men were arrested on charges of rioting and given either small fines or short jail terms, but Greek restaurant owners were never compensated for the estimated forty thousand dollars worth of damage incurred on their properties.

Certainly, there were a number of causes that contributed to the violent riot, but soldiers’ grievances and nativism were the main factors. Soldiers returned from trench warfare emotionally and physically damaged. The compensation they received was considered insufficient, a grievance that was compounded by perceptions that immigrants who did not enlist were benefiting from soldiers’ sacrifices and were “making ‘all kinds of money.’” One Greek restaurant owner recalled the anger of returned soldiers who cried out during the riots: “You dirty Greeks, you’re making money and we’re fighting

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274 “Angry Mob Wrecks Dozen Restaurants.”
275 “Restaurant-keepers Take all Precautions,” The Globe, August 5, 1918, 2.
276 AO, RG8-20, B224242, File 1-1-L Box, Deputy Chief Constable’s Office, Re: Recent Rioting in Toronto, report by S.J. Dickson, September 6, 1918.
277 Ibid.; “Nearly $40,000 Damage Done,” Evening Telegram, August 3, 1918, 20.
This hostility was reflected in the cries of rioters who shouted, “This is the night we get justice!” as they raided and destroyed Greek restaurants, and in the speeches made during a veterans meeting at Queen’s Park just days after the riot. To vigorous applause, one speaker charged the government with giving “aliens” “the best of everything” while “robbing your own citizens in order that they might pile up wealth, in order that they may carry it off to their own country after the war.” Another speaker demanded the government “take these aliens and make them fight.”

In the aftermath of the riot, Toronto Greeks made a concerted effort to demonstrate their allegiance to the Allies, specifically to Canada and Great Britain, and their contributions to the war effort. In speaking with the Toronto Star, Nick Speal, the secretary of the St. George Greek Community, called the violence unwarranted given Greek Canadians’ contributions to the war effort, and insisted that the “Greeks are allies and are fighting for the cause of civilization and will continue to fight until victory is ours.” He went on to say that over 2,000 Greeks had joined the Canadian army (likely an inflated number given the small size of the Greek population in Canada), adding that 125 Toronto men had returned to Greece to fight in the war and another 300 were preparing to return. To underscore Greek Canadians’ loyalty, Speal insisted that, “from the earliest days of their childhood, the Greeks are taught to love the British and French flags.”

Similar comments were made by Greek letter-writers, including McGill

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279 Interview with Bojm Mergelas. MHSO Greek Collection, August 1977.
280 “Nearly $40,000 Damage Done.”
282 Among the volunteers was Greek restaurant-owner John Stratus, pictured in his Canadian Armed Forces uniform in Michael Mouratidis, ed. Greek Community of Metropolitan Toronto Historical Album – Memories (Toronto: The Greek Community of Metropolitan Toronto Inc., 1989).
283 “Greeks Not Liable, But Many Fighting,” Toronto Daily Star, August 7, 1918, 12. On the issue of Greeks in the army, Bojm Mergelas noted in an MHSO oral interview that, “a lot of Greeks went to the [Greek] army, but not everyone.”
graduate Kyriakos P. Tsolainos\textsuperscript{284} who insisted to \textit{Toronto Star} readers that “We are with you in this, and we are willing to help with grateful hearts,” adding that if there were any Greeks in Canada found to be sympathetic to Germany, “then get at them and either isolate them or expel them” since “they are not true Greeks, they are traitors.”\textsuperscript{285} News of the riots reached beyond Canada’s borders to Greek Americans, notably Petros Tatanis, the Greek Consul-General in the United States and founder of the Greek-language newspaper \textit{National Herald (Ethnikos Kiryx)}, who insisted on Greek Canadians’ “indisputable loyalty” to Great Britain and the Allies, and appealed to the Lieutenant-Governor of Ontario to protect Toronto’s Greeks from “unjust molestations.”\textsuperscript{286} Clearly, Greece’s neutrality at the beginning of the First World War and its pro-German King, had real consequences for Toronto Greeks.

The hostility Greeks experienced during the riots was not surprising given that Greeks in Canada encountered daily acts of discrimination as southern Europeans, or “inbetween peoples,” whose cultural stock was considered inadequate and whose racial status was ambiguous.\textsuperscript{287} This prejudice was reflected in the immigration regulations that restricted migrants from Greece to farmers and their dependents and, in the case of

\textsuperscript{284} Born in Asia Minor, Tsolainos graduated from McGill University in 1918 with a degree in economics and political science, and went on to join the Greek delegation at the Paris Peace Conference, and later severed as secretary to Greek Prime Minister Eleftheros Venizelos. He migrated to the United States in 1922, and in the 1940s served as the general secretary of the Greek War Relief Association. See, “Paris Notes: Unredeemed Greece in Asia Minor. “An interview with Mr. Kyriakos P. Tsolainos,” \textit{The Advocate of Peace}, 81, 6 (June 1919), 186-188; “Kyriakos Tsolainos, 77, Is Dead; Leader Among Greek Americans,” \textit{New York Times}, January 31, 1968, 38.

\textsuperscript{285} “Says Greeks Are with the Canadians,” \textit{Toronto Daily Star}, August 7, 1918, 2.

\textsuperscript{286} Chimbos, \textit{Canadian Odyssey}, 38. Tatanis’ letter was also printed in the \textit{Toronto Daily Star}, “Greek Consul Pleads Against Molestations,” August 7, 1918, 13.

women, domestics;\textsuperscript{288} as well as in the labour market which forced many Greek migrants, particularly those with poor English language skills, to “work for their own” in the service industries.\textsuperscript{289} Interestingly, in oral interviews with Greek migrants who arrived in the early twentieth century, they acknowledged the existence of discrimination against them but were generally reluctant to discuss it in much detail. This is certainly evident in the collective forgetting of the anti-Greek riots. Interviews with Canadian-born Greeks, including those whose parents owned restaurants that were damaged in the riots, reveal that they had not known about the riots until watching a recently produced documentary about the anti-Greek riots on television.\textsuperscript{290} Unlike their parents, these children of Greek migrants – those born in the 1910s, 1920s, and 1930s – were much more vocal in discussing the discrimination that they and their families experienced. Canadian-born Greeks recall being admonished by their parents not to speak Greek on the streetcars and in other public spaces.\textsuperscript{291} “Toronto was so Anglo-Saxon,” Canadian-born James recalled, “and they resented anyone speaking a foreign language.”\textsuperscript{292} Greek children confronted racism in the schoolyard where they were called “dirty Greek” and “greasers” by other children. “We were considered foreigners,” explained Helen Baillie who recalled as a young girl asking her mother “is it such a terrible thing to be Greek” after being taunted by other children who called her a “dirty Greek.” Later when applying for work at Eaton’s, Simpsons, and Laura Secord, Baillie was routinely turned down for jobs and believed it had to do with the applications that required her to list her religion (Greek

\textsuperscript{289} Interview with Antonia (pseudonym) by author, August 14, 2010; Interview with Helen Baillie.
\textsuperscript{290} Violent August; Interviews with Fotini, September 28, 2010, and Katerina, June 28, 2009, by author.
\textsuperscript{291} Interview with Mary (pseudonym) by author, June 30, 2009, Arianna (pseudonym) by author, August 28, 2010, and Katerina.
\textsuperscript{292} Interview with James (pseudonym) July 17, 2009, by author.
Orthodox), with the result that “the English people got the jobs, so we had to work for our own.” For Baillie and others of her generation, this discrimination was difficult to accept because “we were born here.” Given this background, it is understandable that Greeks in Canada would respond so positively to the outpouring of international admiration for Greece’s resistance in the Greek-Italian war. It meant that Greece could no longer be considered suspect or undesirable, as in the case of the First World War, but rather a valuable British ally. In this way, Greece’s involvement in the war gave Greek immigrants good reason to publicly proclaim their pride for their homeland.

**Forming the Greek War Relief Fund**

The Greek War Relief Fund had its origins in Montreal. At the outset of the Greek-Italian War in October 1940, local Greek communities in several cities formed separate fundraising committees, but when a group of Montreal Greek businessmen set out to create a provincial fundraising campaign with the goal of raising $100,000 for Greece, the Federal government instructed them to form a national organization instead, so as to avoid issuing additional permits to other provincial campaigns. On November 15 the Greek War Relief Fund was registered under the War Charities Act and its national headquarters was formed in Montreal. Altogether, sixty-two local branches of the Fund (seventy-two by 1943) were established throughout Canada with the goal of providing food, medical supplies, clothing, and other resources to Greece. Class and gender hierarchies mediated access to positions of power within the Fund. Indeed, the

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293 Interview with Baillie.
295 Macdonald, *For Greece a Tear*, 43. Even small Greek communities, such as Chatham, Ontario with 11 Greek families raised large sums of money for the fund, “Greek Envoy in Canada Gives Thanks,” *The Washington Post*, March 17, 1943, B5.
national executive was composed of Greek Canadian businessmen, including George Ganetakos, a 1901 arrival to Montreal who owned and operated forty theaters in the city and surrounding areas, who served as the national chairman of the GWRF. Basil Salamis, a 1915 arrival who earned a bachelor of science in Electrical Engineering from McGill University, served as the national secretary. Another two hundred Greek men – first and second-generation Canadians – served on the executives of the local and national committees, and many more Greek men and women, whose names were not recorded, served as volunteers in some capacity. There were also honorary committees, both provincially and nationally, composed of influential or wealthy non-Greek individuals, including presidents of newspaper organizations and private corporations, bankers, and politicians. In numerous public speeches, the small size of the Greek Canadian community was frequently used to explain the inclusion of non-Greeks in the committees and the necessity of appealing to the larger Canadian public for financial donations. Just as in the US, the involvement of non-Greek elites boosted public awareness for the relief effort, while also providing opportunities for Greek men occupying executive positions in the Fund to form personal and professional relationships with Canadian elites, enhancing their own status.

Grassroots activism took shape immediately in Greek Canadian communities throughout Canada. Many were eager to donate financially, and in the initial days of the war Greek Canadians (a population of at least 12,000) donated $17,139, which they sent

296 Vlassis’ *Greeks in Canada* provides brief biographical sketches of many prominent Greeks in Canada. On Ganetakos, see, Vlassis, 140, 262. See also Florakas-Petsalis, *To Build the Dream*, 40-1.
298 For a complete list see, Macdonald, *For Greece a Tear*, 6-12.
to Greece in cash.\(^{300}\) According to Gus Marmon, Toronto Greeks readily donated to the
cause: “You gave with your heart, you were so happy that the Greek name was being
carried on in the tradition of its history.”\(^{301}\) Greek migrant Ted Paraskevopoulos, too,
insisted that “everybody gave” to the Greek relief.\(^{302}\) Though such statements ought to
be considered cautiously, as there certainly were Greeks who struggled financially and
were in no position to donate their meagre wages, given the amount of money raised and
the small size of the Greek population it is likely that that the majority of Greek families
offered some amount of financial support. In Montreal, GWRF member Spiro Florakas
canvassed local Greek restaurants, gathering assurances from waiters, cooks, and
dishwashers to pledge ten percent of their monthly salaries.\(^{303}\) Donations also came from
Greek business owners who, on set days, donated a full day’s sales,\(^{304}\) and school-age
Greek Canadian children who organized carnivals, bazars, and bake sales in support of
the Fund.\(^{305}\) Examples of Greek immigrants’ financial contributions, large and small,
were recorded in Canadian newspapers. Toronto business owner Peter Copsis’ $1,000
donation was noted in the *The Evening Telegram* and *The Toronto Star*, as was 70-year
old Spiro Papavidis’ fifty-two dollar donation, his “life savings” which he gladly gave,
explaining, “All I want is to see my country win,” adding, “I was saving the money for

\(^{300}\) Macdonald, *For Greece a Tear*, 17.
\(^{301}\) Interview with Marmon.
\(^{302}\) Interview with Paraskevopoulos.
\(^{303}\) Florakas-Petsalis, *To Build the Dream*, 247.
\(^{304}\) Macdonald, *For Greece a Tear*, 151, notes that on March 25, 1943 (Greek Independence Day) Greek
shop owners in Windsor, Halifax, Saint John, and Edmonton donated their sales for the day, and in June
1943, shop owners in Montreal, Toronto, Winnipeg, Calgary, Vancouver and Hamilton did the same. For
an example of an advertisement, see, “Greeks Die In Thousands That Liberty and Justice May survive the
Hellish Cruelties of the Monstrous Hun,” MHSO, “Greek War Relief Records 1941-48, microfilm
MFN278, clipping from *The Windsor Daily Star*.
\(^{305}\) Macdonald, *For Greece a Tear*, 61-63.
my funeral, but that’s not important now.” Labouring Greek men may not have had the luxury of time or class privilege to occupy executive positions in the Fund, but many did extend a portion of their income towards relief for Greece, a significant sacrifice for those who had little to spare.

**Public Narratives of the Fund**

During the Greek-Italian War, which lasted until the German invasion of Greece in April 1941, the GWRF’s message focused on the valour of Greek soldiers, the heroism of the Greek populace, and Greece’s role as a valuable British ally. In inaugurating the Fund’s first nation-wide fundraising drive on December 1, 1940, Sir Edward Beatty, the honorary president of the GWRF, described Greece as “a living wall for the defence of liberty against tyrants” and instructed his radio listeners that “Greek soldiers who are fighting our battle, are wounded and suffering,” and are deserving of the free world’s “unstinted admiration and gratitude.” Ontario Premier Mitchell Hepburn, the honorary chairman of the Ontario committee, made similar appeals that underscored the heroism of Greece “in the cause of freedom” and urged Ontarians to donate generously to the GWRF so as to provide food, clothing, and medical supplies to “this gallant nation.” Hepburn explicitly identified Greece’s military success against Mussolini’s forces as “the most magnificent contribution to Britain’s support in the war to date” and called on

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307 Macdonald, *For Greece a Tear*, 12. Excerpts from the public appeal were reprinted in the *Toronto Star* and *Evening Telegram*, Dec 2 1940, 1, “Calls on Canada to Aid Greeks.”

308 AO, “Greek War Relief,” RG3-10, B295654, Premier Mitchel Hepburn Private Correspondence.

309 Excerpts from Hepburn’s appeal were reprinted in “Greek Relief Appeal Is Made by Premier,” *Toronto Star*, December 12, 1940, 9; “Hepburn Urges Aid to Greek War Fund,” *Toronto Star*, Dec 20, 1940, 13. Smaller local newspapers also featured Hepburn’s appeal, including the *Cobourg Sentinel-Star*, clipping in “Greek War Relief,” AO, RG3-10, B295698.
Canadians to recognize that “Greece’s cause today is Britain’s cause.” The numerous letters and donations that Ontarians sent to Hepburn’s office attest to the importance of Canadian public figures’ endorsement of the Fund in boosting public support for the campaign.

Newspapers were an important medium for reaching the Canadian public. Advertisements for the GWRF emphasized Greece’s role as a British ally with the message: “Help Greece and You Help Great Britain.” Newspaper editors, though not officially associated with the GWRF, also echoed these sentiments in their editorials. A Toronto Star editor wrote of the “valiant stand which the Greek people are making against the Italians,” noting that by their “brave fighting” the “British cause has been strengthened,” and he called on Canadians to donate to their local GWRF “since the Greek cause is also theirs.” The Windsor Star similarly called on Canadians to donate to the GWRF since “Greek heroism and the miracle of Greece’s success” in Albania “may be turning the whole war in favour of Britain at this very moment.”

These editorials, as well as the news stories describing both the fundraising efforts in Canada and the heroism of Greek soldiers in battle, were prominently displayed on the front several pages of Canadian newspapers. Such consistent coverage ensured that most Canadians were aware of the plight of Greece and its significance for the Allies.

Public performances also played an important role in shaping public perceptions of Greece and the Greek community in Canada. In late November 1940, the chairman

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310 RG3-10, B295698, speech “Greek War Relief Fund,” Premier Mitchell Hepburn, Private Correspondence.
311 Ibid.
313 “Aid to Brave Allies,” Toronto Star, Dec 12, 1940, 6.
314 Windsor Daily Star, December 14, 1940, 9, clipping in AO, Greek War Relief Fund, MHSO microfilm MFN313.
and secretary of the Toronto GWRF, local Greek business owners Peter Bassel and Mike Georges, organized a wreath-laying ceremony in front of the City Hall Cenotaph ostensibly to mark Greece’s capture of Koritza from the Italians. Photographs of the ceremony show a sizeable group of mostly male members of the Fund, along with a smaller contingent of Royal Canadian Air Force members, including two officers who placed a commemorative wreath on the Cenotaph and another two flag bearers, one young man holding the Union Jack and the other holding the Greek flag and dressed in the military uniform of the evzone, with its white pleated skirt, embroidered vest, and full sleeves (Figure 2.1). According to Georgas, it was important for Greek Canadians to honour the men of the Royal Air Force who had “contributed vastly to the victory.” One aircraftman explained his motivation for attending the ceremony was to pay tribute to “the Greek community because of its contribution to the life of Toronto and of Canada, and because of the encouragement you are giving to the men who are fighting so heroically in Albania.” In a very public and visual way, the wreath-laying ceremony highlighted not just Greece’s contribution to the Allies, but Greek Canadians’ contribution to the war effort as well. By inviting non-Greeks to participate and speak positively on Greek heroism and the activism of Greek Canadians, the ceremony showcased to a broader audience the worthiness and respectability of the Greek community in Canada.

It is notable that this ceremony was organized and attended largely by male members of the Fund. In later performances women participated in more public ways,

316 Photo available in Mouritidis’ Historical Album; “Toronto Greeks Mark Koritza Victory, The Evening Telegram, November 25, 1940, 11.
317 “Part R.A.F Played.”
though they were rarely offered the opportunity to speak on behalf of the Greek community. A photograph of a 1941 GWRF parade that took place along a main thoroughfare in Toronto shows automobiles adorned with Greek flags and Union Jacks trailing behind a group of marchers. At the front of the procession strode three young men dressed in the evzone uniform, with one holding a banner that read: “Greece War Saving Certificates,” and the other two carrying the Union Jack and Greek flag. Marching behind the flag-bearers were three girls, two of them clad in the Amalia dress with its long skirt, embroidered vest, and hair covered in a mantilla or headscarf. On both sides of the street there stood throngs of spectators, too numerous to be solely of members of the Greek community (Figure 2.2).

The scene captured in this photograph suggests a careful scripting by the GWRF executives. The orderly procession underscored the respectability of the Toronto Greeks, while the inclusion of both the Greek and Union Jack flags suggested to the audience a natural coupling of these two countries, underscoring the point made numerous times in the GWRF advertisements that Greece and Britain shared the same cause. As a fundraising endeavour, the inclusion of traditional Greek costumes was likely purposely included to create a lively and colourful spectacle, intended to stir the spectators’ imagination and curiosity, and encourage financial donations. Yet it is also likely that the use of this clothing was a reflection of Greek Canadians’ newly expressed ethnic pride. Just as the St. Patrick’s Day parades in the nineteenth century provided a public space for Toronto’s Irish Catholics to, as Michael Cottrell puts it, “proudly publicize their

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318 “Parade for the Greek War Relief Fund, 1941,” MHSO, image courtesy of Mrs. Politime Janetakes, GRE-2257-Jan.
distinctiveness on the main streets,” the GWRF parade, too, served as a forum for Greek Canadians to publicly celebrate their difference and, as April Schultz argues in her study of Norwegian American spectacles, “redefine the parameters of ethnic identification,” an early precursor to the ethnic spectacles that gained popularity in the post-1945 period.320

The Greek-Italian war lasted just over five months and during that time the GWRF raised sizeable donations for Greece. By late January 1941 the GWRF cabled $100,000 to the newly created Canadian Relief Committee in Athens for the purchase of food.321 Among the most generous contributors were several Canadian companies, including Eaton’s, the Toronto Star, the Canadian Bank of Commerce, as well as Greek Canadian restaurant owners Frank Bazos, Gus Boukydis, and the Karry brothers, who were also members of their local GWRF executive.322 Altogether, by April 1941 just over $267,000 in cash was cabled to Greece for the purchase of food.323 Additional donations of $85,000 were forwarded to the Canadian Red Cross Society for the purchase of medical supplies, $25,000 was sent to the International Red Cross for the purchase of

321 “Send $100,000 to Greece,” Toronto Star, January 24, 1941, 23. To facilitate the transfer of funds the Greek government and the Greek Red Cross established a Canadian Relief Committee in Athens, see, Macdonald, For Greece a Tear, 16.
322 “Greece’s Gratitude Cabled to Ontario,” Toronto Star, Feb 3, 1941, 11.
323 Some of this $250,000 had to be refunded to the GWRF after Greece fell under occupation in April and it was not possible to securely ship goods to Greece, Macdonald, For Greece a Tear, 20.
milk, and $5,500 was sent to the Canadian Red Cross for the purchase of food parcels for Greek prisoners-of-war.\textsuperscript{324}

The amount of money raised in the short span of time is notable given that other war charities were also vying for donations. In advertisements and speeches, executive and honorary members of the GWRF were careful to cast the Greek fund as a complement to the Canadian war effort. Reminding Canadians that Greece and the Allies shared the same cause was intended to relieve any tensions about diverting funds away from Canada’s war bond drive or other charitable organizations that might aid Canadians at home or Canadian soldiers in battle. That Canadians continued to donate to charities at home, as indicated in Shirley Tillotson’s research, which shows that during the Second World War donations to the Community Chests actually rose,\textsuperscript{325} helped to allay concerns that giving to the Greek Fund was unpatriotic. Greek Canadian members of the Fund also made a concerted effort to demonstrate their Canadian patriotism by donating to Canadian charities in addition to providing relief for Greece. In Toronto, Greek business owners turned over an entire day’s sales to the Canadian Red Cross “in appreciation and gratitude…for the splendid work being done by them for our own Canadian soldiers.”\textsuperscript{326} Greek Canadian children, too, raised funds for the Canadian Red Cross by dressing in Greek costume as they canvassed local neighbourhoods (Figure 2.3).\textsuperscript{327} And as suggested by the “war savings certificate” advertisement in the parade discussed above, Greek Canadians also purchased war bonds. In a Greek-written letter published in the

\emph{Windsor Daily Star} Harry Lukos, the chairman of the Windsor GWRF, called on Greeks

\textsuperscript{324} Macdonald, \textit{For Greece a Tear}, 15-20.
\textsuperscript{326} “All Greek Stores Helping Red Cross,” \textit{Toronto Star}, May 18, 1942, 13.
\textsuperscript{327} Mouratidis, \textit{Historical Album}.
in his city to purchase Canadian war bonds by reminding his readers that while Greece suffers under “a blood dripping conqueror,” in Canada “we enjoy freedom, security and a peaceful life, free of any immediate dangers, thanks to the sacrifices of our foster country’s children.”

Contributing to the Greek War Relief Fund, therefore, did not entail shirking one’s responsibility to support the Canadian war effort or other Canadian charitable funds.

Aid to Axis-Occupied Greece

Relief shipments to Greece ceased temporarily following Greece’s fall to Axis occupation. Coming to the rescue of Italy, Germany invaded Greece on April 6, 1941 and quickly overwhelmed Greek forces. By April 27th, Nazis troops marched into Athens and by June Greece was divided into zones of occupation with Germany in control of Athens, Salonika, Crete, and several Aegean islands; Bulgaria occupying Western Thrace and parts of Macedonia; and Italy controlling the rest of Greece. With Greece under occupation, Britain imposed a naval blockade to prevent valuable resources from reaching the Axis powers, but which also prevented humanitarian relief from reaching civilians. The occupation and blockade had severe consequences for Greece’s food supplies because although Greece was predominately a rural country, with 60 percent of the population engaged in agriculture, much of what its farmers produced were cash crops – namely olive oil, tobacco, and currants – intended for export. In the prewar

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period, Greece had been importing between 400,000 to 500,000 tons of wheat annually, since most peasant farmers typically only produced a small surplus for sale. 331 With the naval blockade, Greece was cut off from all imports, a problem complicated by the division of the country into separate zones of occupation and the Axis authorities’ confiscation of all means of transportation, which prevented the circulation of goods and people within Greece. Any wheat produced in the north or fresh fruits and vegetables produced in the south could not be shared with other regions. 332 Moreover, in the early stages of the occupation, fishing was prohibited and all available food stocks, including olive oil, olives, and fruits such as figs, currants, and oranges, as well as pack animals, were either requisitioned or purchased at low prices by the occupiers. 333

These factors contributed to widespread starvation in Greece, though some areas were more severely hurt than others. In some regions of the countryside, Greeks survived by foraging for weeds and wild grasses, while in the cities children were often found rummaging through garbage bins for discarded food scraps. 334 Rampant inflation and a black market flourished in large cities where civilians sold their clothing and other personal possessions in exchange for food. 335 Athens suffered a particularly high death toll during the famine in the winter 1941-42; by December 1941, hundreds of people were found to be dying in the streets of Athens each day. Among the first victims were Greek soldiers who, after being released from their military posts, were unable to arrange

331 Kyrou, “Operation blockade,” 114
332 Hiondou, Famine and Death in Occupied Greece, 13; Mazower, Inside Hitler’s Greece, 27.
334 Mazower, Inside Hitler’s Greece, 36; Macdonald, For Greece a Tear, 25.
335 Macdonald, For Greece a Tear, 52.
transportation home to their villages and remained stranded in the cities. Photographs of Athens during the occupation, some of them included in pamphlets published by the GWRA, show scenes of barely-clothed skeletal children begging for food, and dead bodies being collected from the streets and buried in mass graves. According to the International Red Cross, between 1941 and 1943 as many as 250,000 Greeks died as a result of the famine.

News of the deteriorating conditions in Greece reached North American Greeks through letters sent by relatives in Greece, as well as reports by Red Cross workers and foreign diplomats leaving Greece, the contents of which were disseminated in the pages of the Greek-language press, notably the National Herald in the US and Estia in Canada. By June of 1941 there were reports from reputable sources of widespread starvation in Greece. In an effort to provide food to Greece, a number of both state and non-governmental bodies began discussing possible solutions to the crisis, with some calling on Britain to remove the blockade, and others looking to circumvent it. According to Alexandros Kyrou, the executive members of the GWRA in the US, particularly the national chairman Spyros Skouras, played a significant role in these negotiations. By autumn of 1941 the GWRA, in coordination with the American Red Cross, the US State Department, the US ambassador to Greece, authorities in Turkey, and the Greek government-in-exile, had negotiated a temporary measure whereby 50,000 tons of food purchased in Turkey with funds provided by the GWRA would be shipped to

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336 Hiondou, Famine and Death in Occupied Greece, 12, 17.
338 Mazower, Inside Hitler’s Greece, 41.
339 Kyrou, “The Greek-American Community,” 65; Macdonald, For Greece a Tear, 23, 152.
340 For example, upon leaving Greece on June 5, 1941, Lincoln McVeagh, the US minister in Greece, wrote of the starvation and German seizure of all foodstuffs, see, George Kazamias “The Politics of Famine Relief for Occupied Greece,” 40.
341 Ibid., 41-47.
Greece and distributed by the International Red Cross.\textsuperscript{342} Since both Turkey and Greece were in the blockade zone, Britain agreed to the plan.\textsuperscript{343} The Turkish steamship, the \textit{Kurtulus}, arrived at the port of Piraeus on October 26 with over a thousand tons of food and this was reportedly distributed without interference from the Axis occupiers.\textsuperscript{344} Subsequent shipments from Turkey followed, but dwindling food supplies there compelled the Turkish government to announce by November 1941 that it would not be possible to fulfil the initial agreement of 50,000 tons of food for Greece, and in total only 6,500 tons of food were shipped to Greece from Turkey.\textsuperscript{345}

Inadequate food supplies in Turkey put increasing pressure on Britain to remove the blockade, but some members of the British government, notably Hugh Dalton in charge of the Ministry of Economic Welfare, resisted any policy change despite well-publicized reports of famine in Greece.\textsuperscript{346} According to Kyrou, the Greek-American lobby played a crucial role in persuading the American government to pressure Britain to lift the blockade.\textsuperscript{347} Other factors, however, also played a role, including mounting public opposition to the blockade in Britain, and concerns about the political ramifications of letting Greece starve under a British blockade.\textsuperscript{348} In January 1942, Britain announced it would provide a one-time shipment of 8,000 tons of wheat to Greece, and finally on February 22 announced that it was willing to lift the blockade to allow relief convoys to enter Greece.\textsuperscript{349} A new relief program dubbed “Operation Blockade” (later called the “Swedish Plan”) was devised with the involvement of several

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\textsuperscript{342} Ibid., 41.  \\
\textsuperscript{343} Kyrou, “The Greek-American Community,” 66-69.  \\
\textsuperscript{344} Kyrou, “Ethnicity as Humanitarianism,” 118.  \\
\textsuperscript{345} Macar, “The Turkish Contribution,” 90; Kazamias, “The Politics of Famine Relief,” 48.  \\
\textsuperscript{346} Kazamias, “The Politics of Famine Relief,” 44-5.  \\
\textsuperscript{347} Kyrou “The Greek American community,” 69.  \\
\textsuperscript{348} Kazamias, “The Politics of Famine Relief,” 50-51; Macdonald, \textit{For Greece a Tear}, 27.  \\
\textsuperscript{349} Kyrou “The Greek American community,” 71. 
\end{flushright}
governments, notably the American, Canadian and Swedish governments, and non-
governmental bodies, mainly the GWRF, GWRA, and the IRC, to ship food and medical
supplies from North America to Greece. On Britain’s insistence that a neutral party
appear as the source of the relief, the Swedish government and Swedish Red Cross
agreed to act as the originator of the relief and to provide Swedish vessels to transport the
supplies and, after receiving assurances of safe conduct from Axis authorities, began
regular shipments to Greece in August 1942.\footnote{350} To distribute the food and supplies, a
Joint Relief Commission was established composed of Swedish and Swiss personnel.\footnote{351}

Members of Canada’s GWRF were involved in the planning. Florence
Macdonald notes that Basil Salamis, secretary of Canada’s GWRF, made several trips to
the US as a representative of Canada’s Greek War Fund, and that the GWRF itself played
a large role in convincing the Canadian government to donate 15,000 tons of wheat
monthly to Greece.\footnote{352} The first three Swedish ships, the \textit{Formosa}, \textit{Eros}, and \textit{Camelia}
departed from Montreal in early August 1942 after a public blessing by Archbishop
Athenagoras\footnote{353} and an inauguration ceremony attended by representatives of the GWRF
and GWRA.\footnote{354} Over the next three years, fourteen Swedish steamers made just over one
hundred trips to Greece carrying Canadian (and by April 1944, Argentinean) wheat, as
well as pulses (dried peas and beans), dehydrated vegetables, concentrated milk, and
medical equipment supplied by the GWRF, GWRA, the Canadian, American and
Argentinean governments, the Canadian and American Red Cross, and number of other

\footnote{350} \textit{Macdonald, For Greece a Tear}, 28-29. \\
\footnote{351} \textit{Kyrou, “The Greek American Community,”} 73. \\
\footnote{352} \textit{Macdonald, For Greece a Tear}, 28. \\
\footnote{353} “Blesses Mercy Vessel,” \textit{Toronto Star}, August 5, 1942, 7; “Conscious Under Operation No Ether –
Canada Sends It,” \textit{Toronto Star} August 7, 1942, 4. \\
\footnote{354} \textit{Macdonald, For Greece a Tear}, 30-1.
relief organizations.\textsuperscript{355} Although there were concerns about Axis authorities intercepting the supplies, for the most part the governments and organizations involved expressed satisfaction that food and medical supplies were reaching the Greek civilians.\textsuperscript{356}

Transforming Public Perceptions

Throughout this period, as members of the national executive participated in the international effort to transport and distribute aid to Greece, Greek Canadian members of the local committees continued their public campaigns to raise funds and awareness. These committees were composed mostly of middle-class Greek Canadian men; though women were heavily involved in fundraising efforts, Greek men monopolized the executive positions. A portion of the members were Canadian-born sons, but the majority were immigrant men who arrived in Canada in the early decades of the twentieth century and had, by the 1940s, established businesses. Certainly, as business owners in the service sector catering to a predominately non-Greek clientele, they had much to gain from improving public perceptions of the Greek community. To this end, members of the GWRF took it upon themselves to inform the broader Canadian public about the unfolding crisis in Greece, but also to educate Canadians on why Greece was worthy of being saved. Local committees in a number of Canadian cities used print advertisements, wrote letters to editors of Canadian newspapers, and organized a number of public events, namely tag days and cultural performances, with the goal of both raising financial support for their cause, but also teaching Canadians about Greece – its history, culture,

\textsuperscript{356} See, for example, comments made in “260,000 Tons of Wheat Canada’s Gift to Greece,” \textit{Toronto Star}, March 17, 1944, 4.
and its many contributions to western civilization. Greek Canadians certainly recognized the value of the GWRF in transforming public perceptions of Greece and of their own ethnic community. One Toronto-born daughter of Greek immigrants recalled that until the Second World War, “Canadians were not particularly well educated,” and that “not a lot of people knew Greece then,” adding that it was only after the Greeks “repelled the Italians and held their own against the Nazis that Greece became known as a nationality.”

Gus Marmon echoed this sentiment but more directly linked the shifting Canadian perceptions of Greece and the Greek Canadian community to the activism of Greek men in the Fund. When asked who formed the GWRF, he replied, “the brains were the business people” and added, “they wanted to uplift the Greek name.”

GWRF executives and members of the local chapters served as mediators of news, informing the Canadian public about the plight of Greeks suffering under foreign rule. They gathered reports from International Red Cross (IRC) aid workers as well as from letters sent from relatives in Greece, and disseminated this information in their local newspapers in the form of advertisements and letters to editors. A good example of this comes from Windsor, Ontario where local business owner Harry Lukos served as the chairman of the Windsor branch. Lukos arrived in Windsor around 1918 after first immigrating to the US from the village of Rozova in the province of Laconia. With his brother, Gus, Harry bought the White’s Restaurant in Windsor and ran it for many years, and later, with partners, established Windsor Recreation and Palace Recreation Bowling Alleys. Lukos was a successful businessman and president of the Windsor Greek Community when he became chairman of the Windsor GWRF branch in 1940 and held

357 Interview with Katerina (pseudonym) by author, June 28, 2009.
358 Interview with Marmon.
359 Vlassis, Greeks in Canada, 192.
that position for the duration of the war. He was a dedicated advocate for the Fund and under his leadership the Windsor branch raised substantial amounts of money and clothing (over a million dollars by 1944), an impressive feat given that there were only 75 Greeks in the city. In his frequent letters to the *Windsor Star*, Lukos described in vivid detail the deteriorating conditions in Greece, frequently quoting directly from IRC reports. His December 1942 letter included this haunting excerpt from a Red Cross worker:

> Everywhere there are to be seen little children whose parents, often enough, have died of hunger, and who go from door to door begging for food. From the ends of their emaciated little arms swing tin cans, with which they collect the scanty bits of food given to them. Their complexion is straw yellow, their eyes wild and feverish, and their bodies swollen with oedema. On the quayside they can be found picking up heads and bones of fish and eating them greedily. One sometimes comes upon little work skeletons who fall asleep on the pavement’s edge and upon waking are no longer able to rise.  

Lukos concluded this letter with descriptions of Athens littered with dead bodies, of entire villages ransacked by the Axis occupiers, and of the thriving black market where desperate Greeks sold their clothing for food. Letter writing was an effective method for GWRF executives to reach the Canadian public, and throughout the war Lukos continued to pen evocative accounts that depicted Greece on the edge of death and in desperate need of Canadian generosity.

Letters received from relatives living under occupation were utilized to inform Canadians about the conditions in Greece as well as the resiliency of the people. In

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362 Ibid.
another entry to the *Windsor Star*, Lukos included a letter received by his wife from her sister living near Sparta:

My dear Maria, we pray to the Virgin to help and protect our army and give us liberty and victory. We hope that God is with us and we believe we will win because justice and human right are with us. In the event that we lose even a slight part of our country all we women are determined to fight rather than give up some of our brothers to be slaves. There are, of course, many sacrifices, but our moral remains high. To give an example: The parents of our soldiers killed in battle, instead of grieving, rejoice that their children have given their lives for their country."

Other letters gave thanks for the Canadian wheat that was regularly shipped to Greece beginning in August 1942. In a 1943 letter to the *Windsor Star*, Lukos described the difficulty of procuring food from the black market where the high price of bread ($22.40 a loaf) and eggs ($27 per dozen) made it impossible for most families to feed themselves, but noted that Canadian aid was helping to “keep these valiant people alive,” and included this letter sent from relatives in Greece:

Many of those dear to us have died. Now that the long, cold winter is over there is a little hope again in our hearts. A soup kitchen has been set up with food from Canada and people go there to get what they can. One day there is beans and the next soup made from Indian corn. It is all that stands between us and starvation and every day seems hungrier than the next. I write all this so that you will not stop your trying – sending food and wheat. If the ships do not come those of us now living will die like the rest.

Letters sent from Greece, relayed to the Canadian public by Greek Canadians active in the GWRF, validated the Fund’s work, reminded Canadians of Greece’s suffering, and encouraged financial donations.

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365 Only a few letters from relatives in Greece have surfaced in the historical record. This absence may be in part attributed to the difficulty of sending letters under Axis occupation. There are a few mentions in the *Toronto Star*, for example, of Greek Canadians whose motivation for participating in the Fund was out of concern for relatives who they had not heard from since the start of the war.
Many of the same themes addressed in Lukos’ letters were repeated in the Fund’s print advertisements that narrated stories of extreme suffering. Drawing from IRC reports, one full-page advertisement admonished Canadians readers to consider that:

In a single day over 6,000 dead have been picked up on the streets of Athens – victims of starvation!...Mothers bury their dead children in secret so they can retain their ration-cards! Then resume their begging, fighting savagely for food to help stave off death.\textsuperscript{366}

Many of these advertisements depicted young emaciated children and their mothers. One ad included the caption: “5 Slices of Bread…Between Them and Starvation” and showed an illustration of a frail Greek mother cradling her two young children in her arms.\textsuperscript{367} Another advertisement pictured a malnourished mother and child and asked the reader: “Can you turn a deaf ear to this urgent appeal to our stricken Greek Allies? ...Can you picture the appalling conditions that sends thousands of little children skulking through the streets and towns as scavengers, fighting over garbage cans in search of a morsel of food.”\textsuperscript{368}

Even as these stories of deprivation were told and re-told in letters to editors and print advertisements, members of the Fund were keen to remind Canadians of the resiliency of the Greek people and commonly evoked the phrase “unconquerable spirit” to describe Greeks under occupation. In his appeals for donations, Lukos and other members of the Fund pronounced heroism an innate quality of the Greeks who stood alone against the “military mass assembled with devilish cunning by Hitler and Mussolini” holding “the torch of courage and hope,” and reminded Canadians that “Greece could have easily taken the line of least resistance” but instead “this little valiant

\textsuperscript{366} AO, MHSO collection microfilm MFN278, clipping, \textit{Windsor Star}, September 11, 1943.
\textsuperscript{367} \textit{Globe and Mail}, June 9, 1943, 7.
\textsuperscript{368} \textit{Globe and Mail}, June 12, 1943.
country embraced hardships and self-sacrifice.”

His letters asserted that Greece’s collective spirit was undefeatable: “Even though they face extinction through starvation and assassination, the Greeks will not collaborate with their conquerors. The unconquerable spirit of Greece still fights for independence as she fought before. Let us keep them alive.”

In their efforts to elicit public support for Greek War Relief, members of the Fund commonly coupled their appeals for humanitarian aid with references to the cultural gifts that Greece had bestowed upon the western world. Harry Lukos made frequent historical references and proudly proclaimed that the “modern Greeks are direct descendants of our cultural ancestors.” In describing the valour of Greek soldiers, Lukos explained:

They choose to die resisting rather than to live submitting, as Pericles said. Even though Greece has been temporarily conquered, in its living men its bulwark stands secure. The Greeks gave us the four freedoms and taught ‘the world to stand from fear set free,’ as Euripides said.

Drawing parallels between the modern Greeks under occupation and the Hellenes who battled at Marathon, Thermopylae, and Salamis, and fought for independence against the Ottoman Turks on March 25, 1821, Lukos concluded: “This 1821 spirit of Greek independence was repeated in 1941.”

Another Greek letter-writer to the Windsor Star similarly connected the ancient and modern Greeks, and asserted the cultural significance of his ancestors:

No one can deny the fact that Christianity and democracy, the two cardinal pillars of civilization, have been crystallized into our thoughts through centuries by the very existence of the Greeks. To deny the influence of Greeks upon our present thoughts is to deny the existence of God….from ancient times up to the recent

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370 Ibid.
371 Ibid.
372 Ibid.
That both letter-writers explicitly linked modern heroism with the grandeur of the ancient Hellenic world was nothing new. As anthropologist Michael Herzfeld has shown, since the founding of the Greek state in the first half of the nineteenth century, intellectuals strategically employed “cultural continuity” in their efforts to construct a national identity. Elsewhere in the diaspora, migrants commonly evoked references to classical and revolutionary Greece, including Greeks in 1920s America participating in Independence Day parades, to demonstrate the “cultural capital of the Greek nation.” That Greek Canadians in the 1940s continued to appropriate this discourse demonstrates the pervasiveness of this ethnic nationalism and suggests a deliberate effort to publicly privilege their Greek identity.

Visual images reinforced this coupling of the historical gifts bestowed by the ancients and the valour and heroism of modern Greeks. Advertisements that depicted suffering children and families included stock images of ancient Greece, usually in the form of Doric columns and Greek gods. “Help Greece Now!” was the caption of one advertisement printed in a December 1940 edition of the Windsor Star. Funded by the Greek restaurant owners in the city, this ad featured an illustration of an attractive Greek mother holding her child in her arms, with the Parthenon and Greek god Hermes in the background (Figure 2.4). This coupling was repeated in the text which admonished

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373 Ibid., “Greece Called the Source of Freedom” letter to The Windsor Star, Sept 25, 1944.
readers not to let “Greek heroism blind us to the fact that Greek civilians and children behind the lines need help – food, clothing, bomb shelters, medical supplies and equipment” and to donate generously to “the people and land where democracy saw its birth.” Numerous other advertisements similarly featured familiar images of Grecian-robed women as representations of liberty, leaning against toppled Doric columns (Figure 2.5).

Not all of these advertisements originated in Canada, however, as many were borrowed from America’s GWRA. One particularly powerful advertisement featured a painting by American artist Robert Riggs that depicted a stoic Greek family standing in front of Doric columns. The father’s body is both skeletal and masculine, the mother is shown holding a lifeless child in her arms, and beside her are several more children and older men hunched over from hunger (Figure 2.6). Accompanying the painting was “An Open Letter to the Unconquerable Greeks” by American poet Joseph Auslander. Originally published in the Saturday Evening Post, this advertisement was used by various branches of the GWRF, including Windsor and Toronto where local Greek business owners paid for its publication on several occasions. Though Greek Canadians did not commission the work, their decision to pay for its publication in Canadian newspapers indicates their approval of its message and their belief that linking modern Greeks to the ancient Hellenic world demonstrated to a Canadian audience the worthiness

377 AO MHSO, microfilm MFN313, Windsor Star, Dec 14, 1940, 6.
379 Macdonald, For Greece a Tear, notes that the GWRA made “its own publicity” available to Canada’s Fund, 134.
380 AO MHSO, microfilm MFN313, Windsor Star, September 22, 1943.
of Greece as “an object of compassion.”  

Focusing on the best known symbols of Greece – the Athenian temples and Grecian robes – was a way for Greek Canadians to transform Canadian perceptions of Greece, but also to educate Canadians about their own community because they too, as Greeks, belonged to the same cultural stock as their compatriots living under foreign rule. Moreover, the language and imagery employed by members of the GWRF suggests a significant shift in their relations with the broader community. No longer did Greek Canadians resist public displays of ethnicity. Instead, Greeks proudly proclaimed their ethnicity and, more than that, asserted the cultural superiority of the Greek people. Significantly, however, it was Greek men, acting as representatives of their communities, who most publicly expressed these views.

Throughout the existence of the GWRF, middle-class Greek men were most vocal in their public pronouncements about Greece and Greek identity. As self-appointed spokespersons they hoped to convey both the historical and cultural value of Greece and the respectability of its descendants in Canada, and as business-owning men catering to a predominately Canadian clientele they would presumably profit from improved public perceptions of Greeks. No doubt, many men volunteered their labours out of a genuine desire to help their homeland, yet they nonetheless gained materially and professionally, particularly through their collaboration with the Canadian elites who occupied honorary positions in the Fund. The improvement in their social status and personal confidence gained from their association with influential Canadian men, likely served to further widen the gap between middle-class Greek men and their working-class counterparts.

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381 Leong and Wu, “Filling the Rice Bowls of China,” 133.
A significant number of the Greeks who participated in the GWRF were also members of the American Hellenic Educational Progressive Association (AHEPA), a fraternal organization established in 1922 in Atlanta, Georgia in response to the anti-nativism of the Ku Klux Klan.\(^3\) Founded by Greek American businessmen who, according to historian Theodore Saloutos organized out of “self-protection” against “the menacing hand of nativist opposition,”\(^4\) AHEPA’s main goal was to “to advance and promote pure and undefiled Americans among the Greeks of the United States.”\(^5\) As such, meetings were conducted strictly in English and followed democratic practices. Encouraging assimilation was a main goal of AHEPA, and according to Yiorgos Anagnostou its members responded to widespread perceptions of Greek Americans as inferior by employing “cultural amnesia” or “selective forgetting” of certain aspects of Greek culture and nationalism that were considered “incompatible with American ‘whiteness.’”\(^6\) At the same time, AHEPA cultivated an understanding of Greek Americans as “cultural inheritors of classical Greece,” and positioned this continuity as compatible with American Republicanism.\(^7\)

Greek Canadian members of AHEPA shared similar values with their American counterparts. The first Canadian AHEPA chapter was established in Toronto in 1928 and soon several more branches were founded in various cities across Canada.\(^8\) Just as in the US, AHEPA’s membership was constrained by class and gender – limited to business

\(^{4}\) Ibid., 249.
\(^{5}\) Quoted in Saloutos, *Greeks in the United States*, 249.
\(^{6}\) Anagnostou, “Forget the Past,” 40.
\(^{7}\) Ibid., 38.
owning or professional Greek men. Among its stated goals, the Canadian AHEPA sought to “promote and encourage loyalty to Canada and the British Empire,” as well as to “promote in Canada a better and more comprehensive understanding of the Hellenic people and nation and to revive, cultivate, enrich and marshal into active service for Canada the noblest attributes and highest ideals of true Hellenism.” To this end, AHEPA advocated conformity to Canadian institutions, practices, and values while seeking to promote the cultural prestige of Greeks among Canadians by glorifying aspects of Greek history. This was very much in-line with the objectives of the GWRF. The middle-class Greek men who were members of both organizations recognized the usefulness of recasting Greek history and identity as compatible with Canadian values. They hoped to showcase Greece’s contribution to the world and, more specifically, Greek immigrants’ contributions to Canada.

Greek women, too, were important players in the fundraising campaigns, though they typically worked behind the scenes. Canadian-born Greeks discussed their memories of their immigrant mothers filling empty sugar sacks with clothing to donate to the Fund, or as members of the Greek Ladies Philoptoho mending used clothing and knitting new pieces to send to Greece, particularly by 1944 when it became apparent that most Greeks were clothed in tattered rags, having sold most of their clothing in the

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389 Married women were excluded but could join the Daughters of Penelope. The Maids of Athens and the Sons of Pericles catered to young women and men.  
392 Interview Elias (pseudonym) by author, July 26, 2009.  
black market in exchange for food.\textsuperscript{394} In Windsor, Maria Lukos played a leading role in organizing that city’s clothing drive, which raised “two and a half railway box cars loads of clothing.”\textsuperscript{395} By 1946, the GWRF collected nearly five thousand blankets and over seven hundred thousand pieces of clothing for Greece, in large thanks to the fundraising efforts of women.\textsuperscript{396}

Young unmarried women and girls also participated in the Fund, and in more public ways. In Toronto, benefit concerts were staged at Eaton Auditorium, with the profits from admission and the sale of Greek War Relief posters going to the Fund, though according to a representative of the GWRF, the stated aim of the performance was to “acquaint the public with the culture of old and new Greece.”\textsuperscript{397} Helen Baillie participated in the concert as part of the St. George’s youth group and fondly recalled performing Greek dances dressed in Greek costumes.\textsuperscript{398}

Large numbers of Greek Canadians also contributed to the Fund by volunteering in their cities’ tag days. This typically involved single women and children dressed in traditional Greek clothing as they canvassed local neighbourhoods offering blue and white silk ribbons in exchange for donations.\textsuperscript{399} One Toronto-born woman recalled standing in front of a Greek restaurant on the corner of Yonge and Dundas streets wearing a traditional Macedonian dress: “We were collecting money and sending it over. They were starving to death!”\textsuperscript{400} Another remembered canvassing by Spadina and Bloor

\textsuperscript{394} Gus Boukydis speaking to the \textit{Toronto Star}, “Old Suit of Cloths May Save Greek Life,” March 16, 1944, 11.
\textsuperscript{395} MHSO, MFN313, clipping, “Hellenic Committee Grateful for Clothing Donated for Suffering Greeks.”
\textsuperscript{396} LAC, RG44, vol. 17, Greek War Relief – Relief Supplies Sent to Greece from November 15th, 1940 to January 31st, 1946.
\textsuperscript{397} “Festival Here Aids Greek War Relief,” \textit{Toronto Star}, Nov. 7, 1944, 16.
\textsuperscript{398} Interview with Baillie.
\textsuperscript{399} Photographs of tags days are available in Mouratidis’ \textit{Historical Album}.
\textsuperscript{400} Interview with Arianna.
wearing an Amalia dress and “cashed out” at the Greek-owned Varsity restaurant.401 Helen Baille canvassed in front of Diana Sweets restaurant and recalled fond memories of the tag day: “I was on Bloor and Avenue road and I don’t know how many times they had to empty my box, because it got so heavy! I knew so many people there, and I stood right on the corner and I got everybody. It was interesting – it was a cold, wet day, and we were so excited, we had great big posters on the doors, on the windows.”402 In Windsor, Harry Lukos’ niece and nephew were photographed canvassing in front of the Fund’s headquarters. The boy wore “the gay fustanella with its full shirt and blouse, red velvet jacket, girdle of blue, white and gold…the red fez and the tsarouhia, or shoes, decorated with pompons” while his sister wore “an intricately embroidered velvet jacket and shirt and the silk shawl of a Spartan peasant” (Figure 2.7).403 During the 1943 tag day in Toronto, siblings Chris and Bill Letros canvassed their neighbourhood dressed in fustanellas while their sister, Pauline, wore a white Grecian tunic (Figure 2.8).404 There were, however, some exceptions to these “costumed bodies”405 as single young women usually canvassed local neighbourhoods dressed in their Sunday best. In Toronto, members of the St. George’s Greek Ladies Association canvassed “Eaton’s and around town asking for donations” dressed smartly in fashionable dresses (Figure 2.9).406 Even then, several photographs of these female taggers show them posing in front of GWRF posters depicting references to classical Greece.

401 Interview with Toula (pseudonym) by author, August 21, 2010.
402 Interview with Baillie.
403 The photograph appeared in the Detroit-based Greek-language paper Athens, December 19, 1940, clipping in MHSO, microfilm MFN313, as well as in the Windsor Daily Star, “Greek Costumes Worn by Children Here,” December 17, 1940, 5.
404 “Seeking Help For War Victims of Greece,” Evening Telegram, June 16, 1943, 15.
405 Anagnostou, “Forget the Past,” 43.
406 Interview with Mary.
Publicity for the tag days typically included photographs of attractive Greek women dressed in traditional costumes. Canadian-born Greeks Mary Fallis and Francis Charal were featured in Toronto newspapers in the days leading up to the tag days. Dressed in either white tunics or traditional folk costumes, they were photographed standing in front of, or gazing at, posters for the Greek War Relief Fund (Figure 2.10). Other photographs show members of the Toronto GWRF executive, all of them men dressed in suits, posing with Frances Charal dressed in ethnic garb. Never did adult Greek men canvas their neighbourhoods or pose for publicity photos dressed in the fousanella; in this way gender explicitly mediated the performance of Greekness.

The tag days are remembered fondly by the women and children who canvassed local neighbourhoods in support of Greece, yet the use of Greek costumes raises some interesting questions. The wearing of this clothing does suggest an element of cultural consumerism or tourism – the taggers dressed in colourful ethnic garb for the consumption of Canadian spectators. In her discussion on the immigrant gifts movement in the Progressive-era US, Kristin Hoganson notes that such costumes “resembled urban tourism” and encouraged audiences to view “immigrants as cultural

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408 “Greek Relief Asks Your Help Through Tag Day Tomorrow,” Toronto Star, June 25, 1943, 12.
Yet compared to the Chinese War Relief Association, as described by Leong and Wu, in which non-Chinese organizers underscored the “otherness” of the Chinese to the American public, and instructed Chinese Americans to dress in “native” attire, in the case of the GWRF non-Greeks played a much less intrusive role in orchestrating these public displays. Moreover, though the intended goal was to raise financial contributions, the performance of Greekness did not stray far from the immigrant community’s collective imagining of the homeland. In Toronto, for example, photographs of commemorative celebrations in the 1920s and 1930s show scenes of women and girls dressed in Amalia dresses and Grecian robes, and boys and young men dressed in fustanellas as they performed dances and plays celebrating Greek Independence in the church basement (Figure 2.11). Though commemorations are, by their nature, shaped by class and gender hierarchies and capture constructed and selective versions of the past, the wearing of such clothing by members of the GWRF was part of a familiar tradition of celebrating the homeland. For Greek Canadians, the use of traditional dress for a Canadian audience was not a matter of exoticizing their culture for Canadian consumption, but was rather understood as a way of expressing ethnic identity.

413 See photographs “Independence Day Celebration, Toronto, March 25, 1933”; “Theater group from the Greek Community along with teacher Mrs. Smaro Pavlakis (early 1930s)” in Mouratidis, Historical Album; “St. George Greek Orthodox youth group participating in Toronto centennial celebrations, 1934” MHSO photograph collection.
and distinctiveness, as Marmon recalled of the Toronto tag day, “that’s when we got the Greek name to the Canadian people”\(^{415}\) and Baille recalled of the Greek War Relief Fund more generally, “it gave us a tremendous boost!”\(^{416}\) Of course, there was also a significant irony of the performance: while second-generation Greek women, as cultural ambassadors, performed in intricately beaded and colourful gowns, their compatriots in Greece made due with tattered and dirty rags.

Just as the GWRF boosted the morale of Greek Canadians, it also significantly improved conditions for Greeks suffering under famine. Letters and reports by IRC workers involved in distributing the relief supplies, conveyed the appreciation of the recipients in emotional terms. Describing the arrival of aid in the village of Issari, one IRC letter noted, “At once, all the ‘skeletons’ are on their feet. Hands instinctively make the sign of the Cross, lips murmur the hymn of Christ resurrected. The cart arrives, bearing with it life for so many human beings.”\(^{417}\) The gratitude of the Greek nation was also expressed by a number of representatives, including Dr. Leonidas Polymenakos, the deputy minister of health in the Greek government (and who later immigrated to Canada and served as president of the Greek Community of Metro Toronto for several years), who told the Canadian press: “We should most surely have disappeared as a nation had it not been for the wheat shipments from this country during the war.”\(^{418}\) The acknowledgement that gift giving created new hierarchies of power and obligation was articulated by Polymenakos who stressed, “We do not relish the idea of living continually

\(^{415}\) Interview with Marmon.
\(^{416}\) Interview with Baillie.
\(^{417}\) Macdonald, *For Greece a Tear*, 36.
on the world’s charity.”\textsuperscript{419} Photographs of Canadian officials presenting “the Canadian gift of flour” to the Greek Red Cross show that it was not without fanfare that the Canadian government bestowed this charity.\textsuperscript{420} At the conclusion of the war, the Greek government formally expressed its gratitude to the Greek War Relief Fund by honouring several of its members, both Greek and non-Greek, with the Cross of Commander of the Order of the Phoenix.\textsuperscript{421} As well, the Greek Red Cross awarded the Silver Medal, “its highest distinction” to many of the same individuals.\textsuperscript{422} Street names and public squares in several Greek cities were re-named in gratitude for Canada’s gift of flour, including a street in Vathy, the capital of Samos that was renamed “Canada Square.”\textsuperscript{423}

Greek civilians also responded enthusiastically to this aid. In the period before the Second World War, Greeks subsided on a diet of mainly cereals, legumes, and wild greens, though of course there were differences based on region and level of affluence.\textsuperscript{424} Bread was a central component of the Greek diet, and played an essential role in Greeks’ cultural and religious rituals.\textsuperscript{425} The absence of bread during the war left an indelible mark on Greeks, as Violetta Hionidou has shown in her research using oral interviews

\textsuperscript{420}Macdonald, For Greece a Tear, 108-109.
\textsuperscript{421}“Prominent Local Men Honored for Greek War Relief Fund Work,” The Montreal Gazette, January 20, 1948, 11.
\textsuperscript{422}Macdonald, For Greece a Tear, 141-148.
\textsuperscript{423}Ibid., 184.
\textsuperscript{425}In the years before the Second World War, bread contributed up to 70% of the “nutritional intake” of Greek peasants, see, Hiondou, “What do starving people eat?” 118. The consumption of bread played an important part in the religious rituals of Greeks, particularly as holy bread. On the religious and cultural significance of bread, see, Juliet du Boulay, “Bread and Sheep: A Comparative Study of Sacred Meanings Among The Ambeliotis and the Sarakatsani,” in Networks of Power in Modern Greece: Essays in Honor of John Campbell, ed. Mark Mazower (New York: Columbia University Press, 2008), 209-230.
with famine survivors. Therefore, it is likely that Greeks greeted the arrival of Canadian wheat with enthusiasm and gratitude. But what of the other food supplies, such as the “Indian corn” that Harry Lukos’ relatives described being served in the soup kitchens, and which in the pre-war period was fed to livestock? That Greeks were not accustomed to some of the foods received through international aid might have not have mattered much given the degree of their suffering. Hionidou’s research shows that even before international aid began arriving in Greece, villagers on the island of Hios resorted to making bread with corn, as one of her respondents recalled, “for the first time on our island as food for humans.”426 In some regions, villagers survived by foraging for wild greens on nearby mountains, yet as conditions worsened Greeks began consuming other types of food that had previously been reserved as fodder, including carobs, lupin seeds, millet, dari and acorn. Animals such as cats, dogs, tortoises, horses, and donkeys, were also reportedly consumed by starving Greeks.427 Given the depths of their suffering it is likely that most Greeks were genuinely grateful for the international aid and the voluntary efforts of their counterparts in the diaspora, and some of them expressed their gratitude in letters that thanked Canadians “for their kindness.”428

Over the course of its existence, the GWRF provided millions of dollars worth of food and medical supplies to Greece. In 1945, the GWRF and other relief agencies in Canada were consolidated under a large umbrella organization called the Canadian United Allied Relief Fund (CURAF), and under the auspices of CURAF, the GWRF continued its fundraising efforts until 1948 when the executive committee decided to

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426 Hiondou, “What do starving people eat?” 120.
427 Ibid., 123-4.
428 Macdonald, For Greece a Tear, references some of these letters, 119, 185.
terminate the Fund.429

**Conclusion**

Greece’s military success in repelling Mussolini’s armies, its fall to Axis occupation by April 1941, and the widespread famine that followed, elicited a strong response by Greek Canadians who mobilized to send humanitarian relief to their compatriots. Established in November 1940, the Greek War Relief Fund was a nationwide charitable organization that brought together Greek immigrants, their Canadian-born children, as well a number of high-profile non-Greek men, with the goal of raising awareness about conditions in Greece and to encourage the Canadian public and government to contribute to the cause. In its efforts to secure financial donations, the GWRF contributed millions of dollars worth of food, clothing, medicine, and other supplies to Axis-occupied Greece. Yet the GWRF also had a significant impact on the Greek Canadians who rallied to the cause. Having been cast as disloyal slackers in the First World War, and generally perceived as undesirable foreigners, Greeks in Canada were keen to remake public perceptions of their communities. Benefiting from the new cultural currency afforded to them by Greece’s resistance in the war, Greek immigrants and their Canadian-born children utilized the GWRF as a vehicle to express and privilege their ethnic difference, while also demonstrating how their Greek identity was compatible with Canadian values. Through public performances and newspapers, Greek members of the Fund presented a more positive portrait of themselves as the cultural descendants of the ancient Hellenes, and as the sisters and brothers of the modern Greeks fighting against tyranny. In so doing, they “expressed a diasporic form of imagination” that

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429 Ibid, 130.
projected a vision of Greek identity that coupled Greece’s gifts to the world with assertions of Greek immigrants’ worthiness and respectability.\footnote{Laliotou, Transnational Subjects, 16.}

Yet, as a platform for the cultivation of meanings and messages, not all Greek Canadians participated equally in the GWRF, as business-owning Greek men generally dominated the Fund’s executive committees and, together with Canadian philhellenes, scripted the messages conveyed to the Canadian public. In this way, class and gender hierarchies imposed real boundaries on access to positions of power for women and working-class men, and often limited women to working behind-the-scenes and performing as props in public displays. In dressing in traditional costumes and performing folk dances for the purpose of raising financial donations, Greek women and children exposed themselves to the gaze of Canadian spectators who may have viewed them as colourful ethnics who “posed little threat to the existing social order.”\footnote{Hoganson, Consumer’s Imperium, 232.} Yet for the performers such public displays marked a turning point in their relationship with the broader Canadian public, especially given that they had earlier been scorned for speaking Greek on streetcars and other public spaces. In the process of securing humanitarian relief for their homeland, Greek Canadians challenged prevailing stereotypes about southern Europeans by proclaiming their cultural distinctiveness in their local neighbourhoods.
Chapter 3

“We presented the forbidden voices of Greece”: The Anti-Junta Resistance Movement in Toronto

Confronted with the news that in the early morning hours of April 21, 1967 the constitutionally elected government of Greece had been overthrown in a coup d’état by a small group of relatively junior right-wing military officers, and that thousands of real or assumed communists and other political opponents had been rounded up during the night in a massive wave of arrests, Greek immigrants in Canada organized resistance groups in a determined effort to denounce the military dictatorship and, as the quote in the chapter title suggests, to give voice to their compatriots struggling under the fascist regime. Throughout the seven-year reign of the junta, from April 1967 until its demise on July 24, 1974, a small but dedicated collection of individuals appealed to the Canadian government and public to oppose the military regime in Athens. They staged numerous political protests and publicized the injustices perpetrated by the junta in various newspapers. These groups professed to represent the majority of Greek Canadians and, indeed, at key moments mobilized large numbers of Greeks in protest, particularly in Toronto and Montreal. Yet not all Greek Canadians openly opposed the military regime, and just as the resistance movement united diverse groups of Greeks, engagement in homeland politics also served to polarize Canada’s Greek immigrant communities.

This chapter examines the transnational activism of a small group of Greek Canadians in response to the right-wing military dictatorship in Greece. In contrast to the Greek War Relief Fund discussed in chapter two, the anti-junta resistance did not attract widespread support among Greeks in Canada. Sizeable numbers of Greeks, many of
them well-to-do pre-WWII arrivals and their Canadian-born children, supported the Greek king and/or the military dictatorship, and even larger numbers remained publicly neutral on the issue. Still, at key moments students and working-class men and women joined in the transnational struggle for democracy in Greece, though they were rarely afforded opportunities to shape the official narrative. A small group of Greek immigrant men, most of them well-educated, fluent English speaking post-1945 migrants who worked in various middle-class professions, dominated leadership roles and claimed to represent the majority of Greek Canadians. While drawing upon some examples from Montreal, this chapter focuses mainly on Toronto and details the formation of the resistance, highlights some of the key individuals involved at the leadership level, and sheds light on the experiences and motivations of the rank-and-file who occasionally and informally participated in the movement. This chapter pays close attention to the role of public performances and newspapers in the creation of a diasporic public sphere for Greek migrants. It also examines the impact of homeland political developments on immigrant communities in Canada and shows how their transnational activism contributed to deepening rifts between supporters and opponents of the military regime.

As armoured tanks surrounded the Greek parliament buildings, royal palace, and all major crossroads, and capitulated police officers patrolled the quiet streets of Athens, Greeks awoke from their sleep on the morning of April 21, 1967 to the news that a military triumvirate led by Colonels George Papadopoulos, Nikolaos Makarezos, and Brigadier Stylianos Pattakos had executed a successful coup d’état. The constitution was suspended, and thousands of people, including the Prime Minister Panagiotis Kanellopoulos and the leader of the Centre Union party George Papandreou and his son
Andreas, were arrested and put under house arrest, jailed, or shipped to prison camps in remote islands in the Aegean. King Constantine II, the twenty-seven year old Greek monarch, reluctantly acquiesced and that evening stood as witness as a small group of army officers were sworn in as the “National Revolutionary Government” with a civilian, Constantine Kollias, installed as the puppet Prime Minister.\textsuperscript{432}

For the next seven years the military dictatorship, or junta as it was commonly called, ruled Greece. Proclaiming the coup as a necessary measure to “restore, to stabilize, and to safeguard stability,” the new regime issued a number of edicts that authorized arrest and detention without time limit, established trial by court-martial, forbade public and private assemblies, declared strikes illegal, and censored the press. Trade unions and political parties were abolished, as were local elections. A long list of books including plays by Sophocles, Aristophanes and Shakespeare were banned, as was the music of known or assumed communists including the beloved composer Mikis Theodorakis who, like thousands of others, was arrested and detained. A number of edicts verged on the ridiculous: long hair on men and short skirts on women were banned, and all students were ordered to attend church on Sundays.\textsuperscript{433}

The junta leaders claimed that their “Glorious Revolution” was necessary to protect Greece from an imminent communist takeover and to defend Greece’s “Helleno-Christian civilization” from secular influences.\textsuperscript{434} Historians generally agree, however,

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\textsuperscript{434} Clogg, \textit{Concise History of Greece}, 160.
that the communist threat was a fabrication and that the coup was largely instigated, in part, as an act of “self-preservation” – a preventative measure to forestall the very likely possibility of a landslide electoral victory for Papandreou’s Centre Union party in the upcoming May election.\textsuperscript{435} The Harvard-educated Andreas Papandreou, who had served as the economic minister in his father’s government during its brief period in power in 1964-5 and was expected to take on an increasingly prominent role in the party, made no attempt to disguise his intentions to reduce military spending and “democratize” the army.\textsuperscript{436}

Active resistance to the regime within Greece was largely silenced in the immediate aftermath of the coup. Student protests at the University of Ioannina and University of Iraklion in Crete were easily suppressed and leaders arrested and tried.\textsuperscript{437} Largely unprepared for the coup, leftist Greeks were unable to respond quickly, particularly since the Greek communist party was undergoing significant divisions following their failure in the Greek Civil War. A number of resistance organizations were formed, including the Patriotic Anti-dictatorial Front (PAM), the Democratic Defence (DA), and the Anti-dictatorial Workers’ Front (AEM), but these groups were forced to operate underground and were largely restricted to distributing leaflets and illegal newspapers.\textsuperscript{438} The Greek people’s hostility towards the regime was manifested in a small number of spontaneous mass demonstrations, including the 1968 funeral for George Papandreou which saw tens of thousands of Greeks take to the streets demanding

\textsuperscript{437} Woodhouse, Rise and Fall of the Greek Colonels, 30.
\textsuperscript{438} Ibid., 38.
the restoration of democracy. Most of these protests, however, were quelled by the regime, notably the November 1973 student uprising at Athens Polytechnic, which the police brutally suppressed.\textsuperscript{439} Such repression in Greece meant that the most vocal criticism of the regime came from individuals and organizations from outside the country. The Panhellenic Liberation Movement (PAK) formed by Andreas Papandreou after his release from prison in December 1967 provided one of the most sustained and publicized international campaigns.\textsuperscript{440} Originally headquartered in Stockholm, Papandreou’s relocation to Canada in 1969 to take a professorship in the economics department at York University meant that Toronto became the new center of PAK and spawned other pro-Papandreou organizations, such as Friends of PAK. Until that time, however, it was local organizations headed by Greek immigrants that took the initiative in organizing a vocal anti-junta resistance.

The resistance movement in Canada provides an illuminating window to historicize transnational activism and community conflict, yet aside from brief descriptions this topic has received little attention by researchers. One of the few works to address this topic, Peter Chimbos’ 1980 monograph, \textit{The Canadian Odyssey: The Greek Experience in Canada}, briefly reviews the origins of the movement, the involvement of non-Greek Canadian politicians and social activists, and the conflict between anti-junta Greeks and supporters of the regime.\textsuperscript{441} Chimbos’ work provides a useful starting point, but since its publication few others have contributed to this

\textsuperscript{441} Peter D. Chimbos, \textit{The Canadian Odyssey: The Greek Experience in Canada} (Toronto: McClelland and Steward, 1980), 123-128.
literature. On the success of Greek lobby groups in influencing Canadian foreign policy, Stephanos Constantinides does include a short overview of the anti-junta resistance but concludes that it was largely ineffective in convincing the Canadian government to end diplomatic relations with the military government.

Historians of Greek American transnationalism have similarly paid little attention to the anti-junta movement. Most works on this topic include cursory descriptions of the resistance and conclude, as political scientist George Kaloudis does, that anti-junta groups in the US were largely ineffective in achieving their goals. Comparing the resistance movement to Greek Americans’ mobilization over the Turkish invasion of Cyprus in July 1974, Kaloudis notes that while the Cyprus issue unified Greek Americans, the junta divided them into opposing camps and this division “precluded any effective efforts by Greeks to affect the direction of American foreign policy.” Sociologist Charles Moskos attributes the weakness of the anti-junta movement in the US to the “conservative ethos” of Greek Americans, the majority of whom emigrated from the Peloponnesus (“the region which in modern Greek history is the most conservative on social and political matters”) in the early decades of the twentieth century and had, by the 1960s, firmly established themselves in the upwardly mobile middle-class. While there were vocal individuals and groups who rallied around the resistance movement, including Elias Demetracopoulos “who became something of a legend in his one-man lobby against

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442 Brief references are found in Anastasios M. Tamis and Efrosini Gavaki, *From Migrants to Citizens: Greek Migration in Australia and Canada* (Melbourne: National Center for Hellenic Studies and Research, 2002), 188.
the Greek dictatorship in Washington,” Moskos argues that the “bourgeois orientation” of
pre-WWII migrants meant that most Greek Americans were either neutral or supported
the junta. Historian Dan Georgakas was a leader of the anti-junta movement in New
York and his recollections support Moskos’ observation that most Greek Americans
supported the regime, either because they were not aware of the politics and practices of
the junta or they believed “Greece was so backward that it needed an occasional law-and-
order dictatorship.” According to Georgakas, though the resistance movement in the
US failed in its efforts to create a mass movement against the military dictatorship, it “did
not allow the ongoing Greek tragedy to slip from public view.” Still, the task of
educating the American public on the brutality of the regime was complicated by Vice-
President Spiro Agnew’s (a Greek American) endorsement of the junta.

Much of the historiography on post-1945 Greek transnationalism has focused
instead on Greek Americans’ mobilization following the Turkish invasion of Cyprus in
July 1974. Researchers have examined the involvement of church leaders, parochial and
ethnic organizations, and the Greek American press in rallying large numbers of Greek
Americans in protest, particularly over the issue of American military weapons to
Turkey. Historians have also paid close attention to the formation of the Greek

446 Ibid., 107-108.
448 Ibid.
449 Ibid.; on the anti-junta movement in the US, see, Dan Georgakas, “The Immigrant Left in the United
States,” in The Immigrant Left in the United States, ed. Paul Buhle and Dan Georgakas (Albany: State
450 Paul Watanabe, Ethnic Groups, Congress, and American Foreign Policy: the Politics of the Turkish
Arms Embargo (Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Press, 1984); Gregory Jusdanis, “Greek Americans and the
Diaspora Relations: The Greek Case in the 19th-20th Centuries,” in Proceedings of the First International
Congress on the Hellenic Diaspora From Antiquity to Modern Times, ed. John M. Fossey (Amsterdam, J.C.
Gieben Publisher, 1991), 233-249.
American lobby and debated its effectiveness in influencing American policy.\textsuperscript{451} Others have used the case of Cyprus to revisit the debate on the relationship between transnationalism and assimilation, as Anna Karpathakis does in arguing that immigrant activism over Cyprus fostered Greek American engagement in US political structures by encouraging immigrants to gain citizenship and to vote with the goal of influencing American foreign policy.\textsuperscript{452}

While much of the literature on transnational activism evaluates immigrants’ efforts to affect change in homeland politics, my concern in this chapter is to explore the experiences and motivations of individuals involved in the resistance movement, as well as to understand how this transnationalism reshaped relations within immigrant communities. That the anti-junta movement actually made little headway in convincing the Canadian government to end all relations with the junta, or that the military regime’s collapse in July 1974 was in no part the result of Greek immigrants’ activism, does not diminish the significance of the movement in the lives of those who rallied around the cause. Using oral interviews with individuals involved, newspaper archives, and various archival documents, notably Royal Canadian Mounted Police records, this chapter aims


to fill an important gap in the historiography of post-1945 Greek Canadian transnationalism.

**Origins of the Anti-Junta Resistance Movement**

Toronto and Montreal were the main centers of anti-junta activity in Canada, and in both cities resistance groups formed quickly. In Montreal several hundred Greeks gathered on April 23rd at a Park Avenue community center to denounce the regime and form an organization called the Panhellenic Democratic Association Makrygiannis, named after Yannis Makrygiannis, a Greek military hero from the revolutionary war of 1821.453 A similar meeting was held in Toronto in the basement of St. George’s Greek Orthodox Church the day after the coup. Attendees resolved to form a group called the Committee for the Restoration of Democracy in Greece Rigas Fereos, named after the Greek poet and pre-revolutionary hero who, in his 1797 Thourios (War Song), famously penned the oft-quoted phrase: “Better one hour of freedom than forty years of slavery and prison.” At a rally organized a week later, a 25-person executive was elected and tasked with the job of coordinating resistance efforts, which focused mainly on organizing protests, writing press releases and newspaper articles denouncing the regime, and lobbying the Canadian government to not recognize the military dictatorship as the legitimate government of Greece.454 With the 1968 arrival of Andreas Papandreou to Canada, the Committee began to split. Those who supported Papandreou joined PAK or

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453 Chimbos, *Canadian Odyssey*, 123.
454 Ibid., 123; Interviews with Nick Skoulas, August 21, 2012 email correspondence, and Petros Belegris, September 30, 2012 by author.
the newly formed Friends of PAK, while leftists who opposed both the junta as well as Papandreou formed a separate organization and took the name Rigas Fereos. Until this split, all anti-junta activity in Toronto was directed through the Committee.

Among the founding members of the Committee were Petros Belegris and Nikos Skoulas. Originally from the island of Crete, both men had served together on the executive council of the Toronto Cretan Association in 1961 (one of many parochial associations in Toronto), and had collaborated in writing for the Toronto Greek-language newspaper, *New Times (Neoi Kari)*. Born in 1935, Belegris spent much of his youth in Athens before immigrating to Canada in 1958, sponsored by his sister. He arrived in Toronto at twenty-three years of age and began working at a car wash while studying English, later taking a job at a bank. Belegris was an aspiring writer and poet who, in addition to penning editorials for the *New Times*, wrote and directed a number of plays for the Cretan Experimental Theater group in Toronto. After the military coup, Belegris resigned from his job to devote himself entirely to the resistance movement. Skoulas immigrated to Canada from Crete in 1960 at twenty-six years of age with his wife and young daughter. Fluent in English, Skoulas had begun his law training at the University of Athens and, once in Canada, continued his studies while working as a marketing executive in a wholesale food company.

Like many Greeks of their generation, both men had endured the brutality of authoritarian regimes during the Second World War. At age ten, Skoulas witnessed Nazis soldiers demolish his hometown of Anogeia and execute all male inhabitants over

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455 Interview with Belegris who explained that members of Friends of PAK supported Papandreou’s PAK but were critical of his willingness to “use armed resistance if necessary.”


457 Interview with Belegris.

458 Interview with Skoulas.
the age of fourteen “as a reprisal for the fact that Anogeia was one of the centres of the resistance against the Axis forces.”⁴⁵⁹ Later, he and his brother published a weekly newspaper “with an emphasis on democratic and civil liberties” called *Cretan Light* (*Kritikon Fos*). Belegris too recalled in our interview the “terrorism of the occupation forces” during his youth in Athens where he watched “people dying in the streets” and was forced to scavenge for food to survive.⁴⁶⁰ Such experiences contributed to their politicization or, as Skoulas put it, “explain, in part, my psychological profile and the subsequent course of my life.”⁴⁶¹ Unlike the early twentieth century Greek migrants discussed in chapter one who became politicized in Canada, these men arrived in Canada with deeply entrenched political identities and first-hand experience in resistance movements.

Philip Tsarnas was another key figure in Toronto’s anti-junta organization, serving as the first chairman of the Committee. Originally from the island of Ikaria, Tsarnas immigrated to Canada in 1964 with his wife, Vasiliki, and teenage daughter, Anna. Fluent in English, Tsarnas had begun law school in Athens before the Second World War interrupted his studies. During the war he worked for the British Intelligence and, according to family lore, narrowly avoided execution by German soldiers by escaping through a window. “You can understand,” Anna recalled of her late father, “he was very patriotic, he loved his country.”⁴⁶² In Toronto, Tsarnas worked as a bookkeeper and during the military dictatorship his Bloor Street office was frequently used as a

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⁴⁵⁹ Ibid.
⁴⁶⁰ Interview with Belegris.
⁴⁶¹ Interview with Skoulas.
⁴⁶² Interview with Anna Tsarnas, September 21, 2012, by author.
meeting place for Committee members. Along with Belegris and Skoulas, Tsarnas also contributed editorials on Greek politics in the *New Times*.

To a large extent, the Toronto Committee had its roots in this close circle of friends and colleagues at the *New Times*. “We were together before the junta,” explained Belegris in referring to key members of the group, naming himself, Skoulas, Tsarnas, and several others as the founders of the Toronto anti-junta movement. “We started the newspaper to elevate the level of intellectuality within the Greek community; it was sort of a progressive movement and we needed a newspaper to publish our ideas.” For a short time before the April 1967 coup, the *New Times* provided a forum for discussion on homeland politics as well as the particular problems faced by Greek immigrants in Canada. The personal relationships forged among the writers meant that when news of the coup broke, they were able to mobilize quickly. “Peter Belegris phoned me on April 22\textsuperscript{nd}, the day after the coup, and suggested that we should do something,” explained Skoulas, adding, “We agreed to call a meeting of Greeks in Toronto. The response was immediate and overwhelming, mostly by students and workers. We decided there and then to organize the first demonstration.” Belegris recalled that though he was not surprised by the coup, he was shaken by the events in Athens and eager to act: “We were angry, all of us, of course. Action was the key word. What do we do now? We formed the Committee for the Restoration of Democracy in Greece and decided to publish our ideas.”

Most of the founding members of the Committee self-identified politically as liberals or democrats, but there were also a number of vocal leftists. Jim Kabitsis was

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463 Interview with Belegris.
464 Interview with Skoulas.
465 Interview with Belegris.
among the Greeks who crowded into the basement hall of St. George’s Church for the first meeting. Originally from the island of Zakynthos, Kabitsis arrived in Canada in 1959 at twenty-seven years of age, and by 1962 was a member of the Communist Party of Canada. Kabitsis’ politicization, however, began much earlier in Greece during the Civil War when he was a member of a “pioneer youth association organized by the liberation forces.” An outspoken and dedicated communist, Kabitsis joined the executive council of the newly formed Committee. Though this unity would later unravel and eventually lead to a split in the organization between liberals and communists, in the first two years following the coup, most anti-junta Greeks agreed to put aside their ideological differences to work together.

The Committee members were part of a larger influx of post-1945 migrants to Canada, yet they were not representative of the majority of Greeks. From 1945 to 1971 roughly 107,780 Greeks immigrated to Canada, with the largest numbers arriving in 1967 during the military dictatorship. Most of these migrants entered Canada through the sponsorship system (approximately 80%), came from rural villages, had little education or technical skills and typically found work in restaurants, factories, and as cleaners. By their level of education, fluency in English, and middle-class professions (which included accountants and business owners) the leaders of the movement stood apart from the majority of post-WWII Greek migrants who arrived in Canada with limited English language skills and laboured in various low-income jobs.

466 Interview with Kabitsis.
467 Ibid.
Gender, too, marked access to positions of power within the Committee. There certainly were a number of women who were active and dedicated members of the resistance. They attended meetings, participated in political protests, and offered their homes and offices as meeting spaces for Committee meetings (Figure 3.1).\footnote{Interview with Skoulas.} The wives of Committee executives, notably Belegris, Skoulas, and Tsarnas, were all dedicated members, as were many students and working-class women including Aliki Modopoulou who volunteered as a secretary for Skoulas, often working long hours into the night and going to her factory job in the morning.\footnote{Jacqueline Swartz, “…but the Danforth’s dancing,” Toronto Star, March 26, 1983, B5.} Yet, while Greek women were active participants of the resistance movement, they were not represented among the executive of the Committee or, later, PAK. That women occupied less visible roles in the anti-junta campaign is consistent with other examples of transnational activism discussed in this thesis, and was likely due to structural inequalities and the prevailing cultural and social norms that continued to define the public work of political activism as a masculine activity. The combination of work along with familial and domestic responsibilities for women may have also played a role in precluding them from participating more formally in the Committee executive. Yet, for the women involved, choosing to contribute informally or occasionally in the resistance movement, did not mean that they were any less committed to opposing the military regime.\footnote{Interview with Vasiliki Tsarnas, September 5, 2012, by author.}

Committee executives claimed to represent the majority of Greek immigrants and nowhere was this more apparent than in the pages of their anti-junta newspapers. For example, in an open letter to King Constantine published in the New Times, Skoulas informed the King that “[t]he developments of the past few days in Greece have caused
us a great deal of anxiety. The Canadians of Greek descent feel deep concern and even shame for the degeneration of the political situation in Greece which you and your courtiers have caused.” Insisting that the opinions conveyed in the letter “are also the thoughts of thousands of Greek immigrants,” Skoulas asserted that Greek Canadians have a “right” to intercede in Greek politics – a right derived not only from the millions of dollars in remittances supplied by the Greek diaspora but also, and more importantly, “from the deep love and affection we have for Greece which has not weakened by our emigration,” – and, on behalf of all Toronto Greeks, implored the King to abdicate: “In the name of Greece we urge you to make the supreme sacrifice for your people. Retreat.”

As fluent English speakers, committee executives also regularly penned letters to the editors of various Toronto newspapers, in which they similarly claimed to speak on behalf of the Greek community in criticizing the regime. On a practical level, fluency in English enabled resistance leaders to reach a broader public to spread their message, something that precluded the majority of labouring Greek newcomers.

By August 1967 Committee members founded a new weekly newspaper called the New World (Neos Kosmos) and continued to condemn the dictatorship on behalf of all Toronto Greeks. For three years, the newspaper provided Toronto’s Committee a crucial means of reaching vast numbers of Greeks with news reports and commentary on the unfolding crisis in Greece. Like its counterpart in Montreal, the Hellenic Postman (Ellenikos Tahydomos), the New World featured impassioned editorials written by Committee members that denounced the junta’s use of torture on political prisoners, its

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473 For example, Philip Tsarnas, “Greek demonstrations,” letter to editor, Globe and Mail, August 26, 1967, 6.
censorship of the press and imposition of martial law. Writers were also critical of those Greeks in Canada who chose to support the regime or remain neutral, and expressed particular disdain for the representatives of the regime, namely the Greek Consulate and informers, who, they argued, attempted to silence Canadian anti-junta resistance efforts through blackmail and threats of violence. These newspapers were also indispensable in mobilizing large numbers of Greeks by publishing announcements on upcoming protests, and urging Greeks to participate by appealing to their patriotism, asking readers: “Are you a true Greek? Do you love your country?”474 Afterwards they recounted the demonstrations in glowing terms, and included photographs and lengthy excerpts of the speeches. They frequently reported on anti-junta activities in other cities, with the New World including photographs and descriptions of protests in Montreal and vice-versa. Without offering specific numbers on the readership, Committee members insisted that the New World was “widely distributed – even far beyond the limits of Ontario.”475 While such comments need to be considered cautiously, especially given that the newspaper ceased publication in 1970 reportedly due to lack of funds,476 oral interviews with former readers of the paper attest to the significance of the New World in providing information on the junta’s activities and framing the key issues of the resistance movement.477

While the New World addressed a Greek-speaking audience, anti-junta Greeks also sought to rouse the Canadian government and broader public in opposition to the regime. Critical of the Canadian government’s decision early on to recognize the

474 “Are you a true Greek?” Ellenikos Tahydromos (Hellenic Postman), May 11, 1967, 3.
475 Interview with Skoulas.
476 Reportedly because of lack of funds, see, Homatides, Report on the Greeks in Metro Toronto, 17.
dictatorship as the legitimate government of Greece.\textsuperscript{478} A delegation of Committee members, including Skoulas and Belegris, accompanied by several non-Greek supporters, appealed to the Acting External Affairs Minister Paul Martin in December 1967, requesting that Canada sever all ties with the junta and call on the United Nations to demand the military triumvirate release all political prisoners and return free elections to Greece.\textsuperscript{479} Their efforts to influence Canadian foreign policy made had little impact. In the context of the Cold War, most NATO members, with the exceptions of Denmark and Norway, were unwilling to take a firm stance against the regime.\textsuperscript{480} Over the next several years, leaders of the Committee and, later, PAK continued to appeal to the Department of External Affairs, calling on Canada to force Greece’s expulsion from NATO and to intervene in the torture and execution of political prisoners.\textsuperscript{481} External Affairs Minister Mitchell Sharp denied these appeals, arguing that Canada ought to maintain “good relations” with Greece, questioned reports of the junta’s use of systematic torture, and refused to oust Greece from NATO “so that we and other members may maintain our lines of communication with the Greek government.”\textsuperscript{482} It was only by 1970, when widespread reports of human rights violations, made public by Amnesty International, the

\textsuperscript{478} Both the Canadian Ambassador in Athens H.F. Feaver and the Department of External Affairs argued early on that Canada ought to maintain “good relations” with the regime, see, “Love Against Tyranny,” \url{http://www.canadainternational.gc.ca/greece-greece/bilateral_relations_bilaterales/forward-cheminer2.aspx?lang=eng}


\textsuperscript{482} James Eayrs “Ignoring Papandreou was a foreign policy mistake,” \textit{Toronto Star}, August 22, 1974, B4; Pedaliu, “A Discordant Note.”
Red Cross, and the Council of Europe, brought international condemnation of the regime, that Sharp called on the Greek government to restore democracy to Greece.\textsuperscript{483} Yet even with Sharp’s timid request to the acting foreign minister of Greece to restore free elections, Canada continued to maintain ties with the regime.\textsuperscript{484}

\textit{Political Protests}

Though resistance leaders were not directly successful in influencing Canadian foreign policy towards Greece, they were able to raise public awareness about the regime through other avenues, namely, political protests. During the seven-year reign of the junta, protests were organized annually on the anniversary of the military coup, each March and October in conjunction with Greek Independence Day and \textit{Ohi} (No) Day, which commemorates Greece’s resistance during the Second World War, as well as in response to particular crises in Greece, such as in September 1968 when around 150 Greeks gathered at Queen’s Park to protest a referendum conducted under martial law that approved a new constitution (Figure 3.2).\textsuperscript{485} Some of the largest demonstrations in Toronto attracted Greeks from Montreal and other nearby cities.\textsuperscript{486} Protest organizers

\textsuperscript{484} James Eayrs, “Our foreign policy keeps us in company with tyrants,” \textit{Toronto Star}, March 1 1972, 6.
\textsuperscript{486} Members of Montreal’s Makrygiannis joined Toronto protests, including at least 100 Montrealers at the anti-king protest in August 1967, see, “Angry Greeks plan to maintain pickets,” \textit{Telegram}, August 29, 1967, 25. Interview with Panos Andronidis, August 20, 2012, by author, who noted that some Greeks from Hamilton traveled to Toronto to take part in the protests. Greek Americans attempted to enter Canada in August 1967 to join the Toronto protests but were turned away at the Niagara Falls border, see, Arthur C. Cole, “Anti-Royalist Greeks turned back at border,” \textit{The Telegram}, August 31, 1967, 8.
maintained that “as citizens or legal immigrants and taxpayers in Canada” Greeks had “a right to speak out against the oppression of our motherland,” and they sought to convey to the broader Greek community that through protest Greeks in the diaspora could play a meaningful role in the struggle for democracy by making “the world know that Greece has an unjust state and dictatorship.”

The demonstrations aimed to draw public attention to the plight of political prisoners, the censorship of the press, and human rights abuses perpetrated by the junta. They called on Canadians to boycott Greek goods and forgo vacationing in Greece (to divert Canadian tourism dollars away from the regime), and to consider the complicity of their government in bolstering the fascist regime through its diplomatic relations. Protesters chanted slogans and carried placards with messages such as, “Down with Dictatorship,” “Tourism in Greece Now Helps the Junta,” “What is Canada doing for the 1500 Prisoners of the Junta,” and “Recognition of the Junta Means Endorsement of Tyranny.” Speeches condemning the regime were given by executive members of the Committee, leaders of various other anti-junta groups, notably Montreal’s Makryiannis, as well as non-Greek social activists and politicians including anti-war activist Rabbi Abraham Feinberg, Ontario New Democrat Party president James Renwick, Unitarian minister John Morgan, and national vice-president of the Voice of Women Meg Sears. At a number of rallies, these non-Greek activists occupied highly visible roles, as was the case during an August 1967 protest when Feinberg and Morgan led protesters in a march to the Greek Consulate (Figure 3.3).

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487 Interview with Skoulas.
489 See, for example, New World, September 1, 1967; “3,000 Greek-Canadians protest king’s visit,” Toronto Star, August 28, 1967, 1; “Flortilla guards Greek King,” 4.
The inclusion of non-Greek activists was not always at the request of Committee executives. According to Belegris, these individuals “grabbed every opportunity to promote their own agenda. They would find us, instead of us finding them.” At times, these speakers would diverge from the immediate subject of the junta to address broader issues of civil rights and resistance against other fascist or corrupt governments. This was the case during the August 1967 protest when Rabbi Feinberg referenced the Vietnam War. Yet organizers agreed to let them speak at the anti-junta rallies since, as Belegris explained in our interview, “we were fighting for democracy and one of the things about democracy is to let everyone say their piece.” Belegris’ comments, however, downplay the significance of non-Greek activists to the anti-junta movement. According to Skoulas, the Committee worked hard to forge relationships with “prominent Canadian personalities,” including New Democratic Party provincial secretary John Harney who “provided political guidance and training to our members, as well as valuable contacts in the Canadian society.” Harney was also a key member of an organization called the “Committee of Canadians for a Free Greece,” whose membership included authors, labour leaders, and politicians such as NDP Members of Parliament David Lewis and Jim Renwick, and the President of the Canadian Labour Congress Donald MacDonald, among several others. According to Skoulas, this organization and its prominent members provided “a great boost to our movement,” as it helped to legitimize the anti-junta campaign for the broader Canadian public.

490 “3,000 Greek-Canadians protest king’s visit.”
491 Interview with Belegris.
492 Interview with Skoulas.
493 Ibid. Skoulas also identified author Janet Rosenstock, “Red Tory” Flora MacDonald, Rabbi Feinberg, and Federal Liberal MP Charles Caccia as former members.
The involvement of leftist politicians and social activists in the Committee is not surprising given the social and political climate of this period. Indeed, the 1960s witnessed the emergence of widespread activism throughout North America and Europe by workers, students, civil rights activists, and others who protested over a range of issues.\footnote{Bryan D. Palmer, \textit{Canada’s 1960s: The Ironies of Identity in a Rebellious Era} (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2009); Lara Campbell, Dominique Clément, and Gregory S. Kealey, eds., \textit{Debating Dissent: Canada and the Sixties} (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2012); Sean Mills, \textit{The Empire Within: Postcolonial Thought and Political Activism in Sixties Montreal} (Montreal: McGill-Queen’s University Press, 2010); Christopher William Powell, “Vietnam: It’s Our War Too: ‘The Antiwar Movement in Canada: 1963-1975 (PhD dissertation, University of New Brunswick, 2010); Dimitry Anastakis, ed., \textit{The Sixties: Passion, Politics and Style} (Montreal: McGill-Queen’s University Press, 2008).} The rise of the military dictatorship in Greece, the birthplace of democracy, provided particularly powerful and evocative imagery for progressive activists who were already actively engaged in denouncing authoritarian regimes. Significantly, the junta in Greece coincided with the Vietnam War, and while it is not evident that anti-junta Greeks in Toronto forged sustained relations with the anti-war movement, on a number of occasions they did join anti-Vietnam war protests to publicize their own campaign against the military regime and to discourage Canadians from spending tourism dollars in Greece.\footnote{“Viet Cong rally draws 1,200 persons, $2000,” \textit{Toronto Star}, February 4, 1969, 48.} Marching alongside anti-Vietnam war protesters at Queen’s Park in October 1968, Committee members carried banners that read: “Planning a Trip to Greece this Summer? Forget it. Go to Vancouver”\footnote{On the protest, see, Robert Cameron, “Police outwit rival factions,” \textit{The Telegram}, October 28, 1968, 31; see also, photographs of protest AO, MSR 1330 #4-28 Toronto Democratic Committee, political demonstration.”} (Figure 3.4). In their own protests, organizers commonly drew parallels between Greece and Vietnam with English-written banners that read: “Don’t Make Greece Another Vietnam.”\footnote{\textit{New World}, September 1, 1967, 5.} Taking advantage of any available public platform to promote their message, unionized members of the Committee also
marched in the 1968 Toronto Labour Day parade carrying placards denouncing the regime’s use of torture and imprisonment of political opponents.  

The most frequent sites of protest in Toronto included Queen’s Park, City Hall, as well as outside the Greek and American consulate offices. The choice of protest locations was strategic and symbolic: protests outside the consulates targeted representatives and supporters of the regime, while rallies outside the provincial legislature, and other government or public sites, offered the potential of attracting media interest and the attention of politicians. These sites also reflected the activists’ belief that as Canadian citizens or residents, their homeland concerns ought to be considered seriously by all and not just by members of their own ethnic community. Practically speaking, protests staged along or near major streets or squares had the added advantage of halting traffic, forcing bystanders to stop and take notice. No matter the location, organizers maintained a generally consistent message that denounced the fascist dictatorship, called for the release of political prisons and the return of parliamentary rule. The numbers of protesters ranged, from less than fifty persons to several thousand, with the two largest demonstrations, discussed below, staged during the first year of the military takeover. 

The first of many anti-junta protests in Toronto took place outside of City Hall on April 29th, just days after the coup. Several hundred protesters circled Nathan Philips Square waving Greek flags and carrying large placards inscribed with messages such as “Greece Deserves Justice,” “Restore the Constitution,” “Release the Political Prisoners,” as well as some with more highly charged language such as “Death to the Junta,” and

499 “3,000 Greek-Canadians protest king’s visit.”

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“Democracy or Death.” Speakers were drawn from the executive of the Committee, and included Skoulas and Pericles Economides, another post-WWII Greek migrant. In his impassioned speech, Economides referred to Greece’s long struggle for democracy— from the ancient Greeks who “were the first to bring the meaning of democracy to humanity” to the modern Greeks who “sacrificed for democracy and freedom” during the Second World War. On April 21st, Economides told the protesters, “under the sound of the tanks and the burst of the machine guns, the darkest pages of modern Greek history was written” in which a “military clique…abolished the constitution and imposed a brutal dictatorship in the place where democracy was created.” To thunderous applause, Economides demanded justice for Greece and called on the military officers and soldiers “to become the defenders of the people and not its tyrants.” A resolution that denounced the military regime and called for “all liberal nations and organizations” to “provide their moral support for the reinstatement of democracy in Greece, where civilization and democratic ideals were born,” was read out and endorsed by the protesters through their applause.

In its coverage of the protest, the New Times called the demonstration a “great success” and hailed it as clear evidence of the democratic spirit of Toronto Greeks. One writer described it as a “spontaneous” and “orderly” demonstration and noted that the “passionate” protesters were composed of “people of all ages – men and women – and from every corner of Toronto – proof,” the writer proclaimed, “that the majority of

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502 Ibid.
503 “A Great Success for the Protest of Toronto Greeks Against the Military Coup.”
Greeks despise the dictatorship.”  Though not all of the protesters were formal members of the Committee, their involvement in the protest demonstrated their deep concern for homeland political affairs. Yet, as much as the New Times boasted about the spontaneous and democratic nature of the protest, it was nonetheless carefully scripted by the Committee members who painted and distributed the placards, instructed protesters to chant slogans, delivered speeches condemning the regime, and drafted the resolution outlining their opposition to the regime.

King Constantine’s acquiescence to the military regime marked him as a target of disdain by anti-junta Greeks who took the monarch’s visit to Toronto in August 1967, as an opportunity to publicly denounce “the King of the Junta” in a series of protests. A week before the King’s arrival, Committee members resolved to picket him at all times. “We’re going to be wherever he is,” explained the Committee secretary, adding, “We don’t want even passive acceptance of the King’s visit here to be construed as acceptance of the junta.” Announcements published in the New Times and New World called on Greeks to join the protests. Leaflets, too, were circulated and word-of-mouth utilized to spread the news. “We had Toronto and the surrounding communities divided and assigned members to do the distribution, door-to-door, at meeting places and shops sympathetic to the cause,” recalled Skoulas. Committee members understood well the utility of public demonstrations in raising awareness about the regime and conveying to the Canadian public the legitimacy and worthiness of their cause, and were determined to present a tasteful and respectable protest. Writing in the New World, Skoulas implored

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504 Ibid.
507 Ibid.
his readers to “show by the dignity of our orderly demonstrations that our oppressed
brothers…deserve the freedom and democratic government we are pleading for on their
behalf,” adding, “let’s also show to our hospital adopted country that we are worthy of
the freedom and privileges we enjoy here.”

Though some of the anti-King protests were so small in size that they went largely
unnoticed both by the Greek monarch and the Canadian media, the protest at Queen’s
Park was difficult to ignore. A boisterous crowd of several thousand Greeks gathered
to denounce the King and the regime (Figure 3.5). Carrying placards inscribed with
messages such as “King Constantine is Responsible for the Greek Tragedy,” and “Down
with the Dictatorship,” protesters shouted in Greek “down with the junta” and “one-one-
four” (a reference to an article of the Greek Constitution guaranteeing freedom of
speech), sang the Greek national anthem, wept as Belegris recited Odysseas Elytis’ poem
“Prophetic,” and cheered enthusiastically as the speakers (both Committee executives as
well as non-Greek left-leaning politicians and social activists) demanded the return of
democracy to Greece. Hailing the protest as a “celebration of democracy in Toronto,”
the New World proclaimed that in participating in the rally, Toronto Greeks not only
condemned “the King’s attitude toward the military coup and the introduction of fascism
into Greece,” but confirmed “their faith in democracy’s ideals as well.” Photographs
of the protest show throngs of men and women of varying ages gathered in protest.

509 For example, upon the royal couple’s arrival to Toronto, a small group of protesters waited for several
hours at the airport to protest the King who apparently did not notice them as he was welcomed by a group
of Greek Canadian well-wishers and several Canadian dignitaries before being driven away from the crowd
of demonstrators.
510 Toronto newspapers estimated the crowds at around 3,000 while the New World placed the number of
protesters at 8,000 to 10,000.
There were also small numbers of children in attendance, suggesting that Greek parents used the rally to teach their children about homeland affairs and encourage political engagement. By their applause, protesters approved a resolution drafted by the Committee that renounced the military dictatorship, and called on the King to demand the release of political prisoners, return democracy to Greece, and to abstain from any future interference in the political affairs of the country.  

Organizers aimed to tightly control the message of the protest presented to the Canadian public. An important visual focal point was a procession that depicted the abuse of democracy by the junta. Most media attention focused on the float featuring Anna Tsarnas, the teenage daughter of Committee chairman Philip Tsarnas, draped in a white gown, bound in chains, and seated below a large banner that read: “Democracy lives in a concentration camp.” Representing Greece, Anna sat chained to her seat as three young men clad in military uniforms used their rifle butts to act out a beating on her (Figure 3.6). Though the use of women’s bodies to symbolize democracy and liberty was a familiar trope in public spectacle, Committee members and other speakers explicitly spelled out the meaning of the display in their speeches. Afterwards Anna and her captors posed for photographs in front of the 48th Highlanders of Canada Regimental Memorial beneath a banner that read: “Long Live Greece the Patriotic Front” (Figure 3.7). Using the backdrop of the war memorial, organizers purposely juxtaposed

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514 “Greek rally protests King’s backing of junta,” Globe and Mail, August 28, 1967, 1, 2; “Gathering and March.”
Canadian democratic freedom with Greece’s fascist dictatorship.\textsuperscript{516} Although the banner was written in Greek, non-Greek spectators would have easily understood the meaning of the display. Such performances offered a striking contrast to the generally positive coverage the royal couple received by Toronto newspapers, particularly \textit{The Telegram}, which described the king as charming and spontaneous.\textsuperscript{517}

Following the speeches, Anna led the protesters in a short march along University Avenue to deliver the resolution to the King, stopping first at his hotel and later, after being denied an audience with the monarch, to the Greek consulate. The \textit{New World} described the “triumphant march” to the Park Plaza hotel as a “pilgrimage for democracy,” adding that the protesters were so numerous that by the time the front of the procession reached the hotel, the last of the protesters were still waiting at Queen’s Park.\textsuperscript{518} In oral interviews, Committee members described the enthusiasm of the marchers. “It was heavy rain that day,” recalled Belegris, “the whole University Avenue was filled with people. Hour after hour, they were still passing us by…It was something I would never believe I would experience. It marked every one of us, it was incredible.”\textsuperscript{519}

The evocative display of “the beautiful girl, in all white and in chains” resonated with both organizers and participants.\textsuperscript{520} More than forty years later, one protester, a newly arrived working-class immigrant at the time, could still vividly recall the sight of “Tsarnas’ daughter dressed in all white and chains around her” representing Greece.\textsuperscript{521}

\textsuperscript{516} \textit{New World}, September 1, 1967, 5.
\textsuperscript{517} See, for example, Grant Maxwell, “How a casual king captured The Island,” \textit{The Telegram}, August 28, 1967, 37; Gillian Robertson, “King’s gift was ‘private,’” \textit{The Telegram}, August 31, 1967, 54.
\textsuperscript{519} Interview with Belegris.
\textsuperscript{520} Interview with Andonis Artemakis, August 29, 2012, by author.
\textsuperscript{521} Interview with Stratos Kloutsinotis, September 30, 2012 by author.
Organizers acknowledged that the striking visual spectacle “had a much greater impact than most of our other activities, statements or publications. It made first page news across Canada and made a lasting impression.”

Though Anna was the main attraction of the procession, she had little input in the staging of the spectacle. It was the executive members of the Committee who came up with the idea for the float, and it was Committee chairman Tsarnas who volunteered his daughter for the role. In our interview, Anna recalled going to a theatre supply shop with protest organizers who selected her costume: “I had no say, it was whatever they decided. One gentleman said…ancient Greek girls were blond. So they had to find a blond wig for me.”

Anticipating the media coverage, Anna’s father admonished her not to smile, reminding her: “You are Greece in chains. Don’t you dare crack a smile!” Yet, even within the limits imposed on her by male organizers, Anna was a willing participant and eagerly took on the role of Greece in chains, viewing it as a meaningful way to aid her homeland.

Clearly, committee members were closely involved in all details of the demonstration; yet the students and working-class Greeks who came out in large numbers also contributed significantly to the making of the protest. The chance to protest in the presence of the King enticed many to Queen’s Park, including eighteen-year-old Andonis Artemakis, a recent immigrant from Crete who, along with a group of his friends, was eager to challenge the King and “face him eye to eye.” Artemakis participated in a number of anti-junta protests and later became a member of Friends of PAK. His

522 Interviews with Skoulas and Kabitsis.
523 Interview with Anna Tsarnas.
524 Ibid.
525 Or, as Anna put it in our interview, “I thought I was doing my duty.”
526 Interview with Artemakis.
decision to join the movement was rooted in his experiences as a young man in Crete where he became disenchanted by politicians on the right and the Greek monarchy that appeared to support instability and corruption. When George Papandreou’s Centre Union party won a large majority in 1964, Artemakis followed the elections closely, recalling: “As a young man I wanted justice, the people’s power, never mind the power of the few.”\textsuperscript{527} It was this desire for fairness and equality that motivated Artemakis to join the resistance in Toronto. Other protesters, too, expressed similar sentiments. “I was seeking to see fairness in the world,” explained Anna Tsarnas of her reason for protesting.\textsuperscript{528} Repulsed by the colonels’ abuse of democracy, a 1966 arrival explained of his motivation to join the protest: “I’m allergic to this kind of system…for me it was important to fight against the dictatorship. No one has the right to make martial law. Laws can only be made with the democratic process, with the vote.”\textsuperscript{529} Twenty-six year old Stratos Kloutsiniotis, a laundry worker and recent immigrant to Canada, was stunned by the news of the coup and the King’s complicity, and could not remain passive in the face of such injustice, explaining of his motivation to protest: “I was worried about what would happen, what was going to be. I exploded. I knew I had to do something.”\textsuperscript{530} 

Having confronted authoritarian rule in the homeland, many working-class Greek immigrants welcomed the demonstration as an opportunity to denounce the right-wing dictatorship. On her reason for joining this and other protests, Vasiliki Tsarnas, the spouse of the Committee chairman, stated: “I believe in freedom, democracy. I was born

\textsuperscript{527} Ibid.  
\textsuperscript{528} Interview with Anna Tsarnas.  
\textsuperscript{529} Interview with George (pseudonym) by author, September 25, 2012.  
\textsuperscript{530} Interview with Kloutsinotis.
to be a democrat. It’s in my blood.” Vasiliki’s dedication to the resistance movement was forged through her experiences of war in Greece. As a young girl she was sent to Athens to live with relatives, and during the Axis occupation experienced first-hand the brutality of authoritarian power: “I went through the hunger, I saw children dying in the streets, I saw the big mass graves where they threw the bodies, all the young generation.” Yet she refused to kneel to her oppressors, recalling in our interview a terrifying ordeal with German soldiers who attacked her family. Such confrontations hardened her resolve to resist agents of tyranny. Though she did not occupy a high-ranking position in Toronto’s anti-junta movement, she, like other women, were committed protesters who demonstrated their opposition to the regime by marching in the streets of Toronto.

As Canadian residents or citizens, Greeks in Canada enjoyed freedoms that were unavailable to their compatriots in Greece, and many felt a responsibility to use their status as members of a democratic country to give voice to their homeland. This rationale was frequently invoked by New World writers in urging Greeks to join the anti-King and other protests, reminding readers: “our voice is free here.” Certainly, members of the Committee and, later, PAK viewed themselves as speaking on behalf of a silenced people, as one member recalled of the protests: “We presented the forbidden voice of Greece.” Writing to the editor of the Toronto Star, one newly arrived working-class immigrant expressed a similar sentiment: “In Greece there is not freedom.

531 Interview with Vasiliki Tsarnas.
532 Ibid.
533 New World, September 1, 1967, 2.
534 “…but the Danforth’s Dancing,” Toronto Star, March 26, 1983, B5.
In Greece there is not humanity. In Greece there is tyranny.” Remaining passive was not an option for anti-junta Greeks who believed, as Petros Belegris explained in a New World editorial, that silence equated to complicity.  

The Queen’s Park rally was one of the largest Canadian protests against the dictatorship but, to be clear, the majority of Toronto Greeks did not attend. With a population of just over 40,000, the roughly 3,000 protesters (according to reports in English-language Toronto newspapers, though Committee members estimated the number to be closer to 8,000 protesters), constituted roughly 7.5% of Greeks in the city. Reasons for the abstention varied. Some newly arrived immigrants privately opposed the military regime, but were preoccupied with the daily grind of work and family to take part in the protests. A number of Greeks opposed the regime but found other ways of expressing their opposition to the dictatorship. Stavros, a newly arrived student in Toronto, was appalled by the coup but did not join any of the demonstrations, and instead chose to defy the regime by writing and listening to anti-junta poetry and music. Later, when composer Mikis Theodorakis was released from prison and performed in Toronto, Stavro attended the concert “as a political act.” Another Greek immigrant, a 1952 arrival from Egypt living in Hamilton, occasionally travelled to Toronto to protest but, as he recalled in our interview, was most proud of his work in writing songs of protest.  

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537 In a number of interviews with post-WWII migrants, informants recalled the protests but explained they simply were too busy with work and family to take part.
539 Interview with Stavros (pseudonym), February 2, 1013, by author.
1970, he put together a music record and donated the profits “for the fight against the dictatorship.”

Some Greeks chose to abstain from the protests out of fear. Rumours had begun to circulate that protesters would be deported back to Greece. An article in the New World dismissed these claims as “deliberate manufactured lies” and informed readers that “Canada wants us to be free and to speak our mind in public affairs.”

More significantly, Greeks also feared that participation in such protests would attract the attention of the junta’s spies and lead to reprisals against their relatives both in Canada and in Greece. By August 1967, there were reports of informers circulating throughout Toronto and Montreal terrorizing protesters through anonymous phone calls and letters, and blackmauling them with threats against their relatives. For his role in the resistance movement, Skoulas received numerous threatening phone calls, often in the middle of the night, demanding that he cease his “traitorous activities.” Such intimidation tactics frequently targeted his wife with threats against their children. “The main theme [of the phone calls] was ‘we know the route your two children follow everyday on the way to school. If your husband doesn’t stop the nonsense you will find them dead in a ditch.’”

Anna Tsarnas also reported being attacked by one of the junta’s “goons” when a pick-up truck brushed against her as she crossed a city street and the driver shouted at her: “Tell

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540 Interview with Andronidis.
544 “Anti-Junta Greeks charge intimidation,” 2.
545 Interview with Skoulas.
your father next time I won’t miss.” Anti-junta Greeks accused the “unscrupulous representatives of the Junta” of trying to “eliminate the protesting voices of the Greeks,” and though leaders of the resistance alerted the Department of External Affairs and wrote numerous letters to Members of Parliament, the threatening phone calls, smashed store windows, and death threats continued to be reported by Greeks in Toronto and Montreal until the fall of the regime in 1974.

Conflicts between pro- and anti-junta Greeks

Despite claims by protest organizers that the majority of Toronto Greeks opposed the dictatorship and the King, there were individuals who unapologetically supported the King and/or viewed the military government as a welcome reprieve from the political instability that had become all too common in Athens in the years before the coup. Many of these monarchists had immigrated to Canada in the early decades of the twentieth century, or were the Canadian-born adult children of immigrant parents. They were well represented in the ranks of the Greek Community of Metropolitan Toronto, an organization affiliated with the Greek Church, often referred to by its members as the Kinotita or Community. Membership was restricted to those who paid the annual fee, which in the late 1960s accounted for just over a thousand Greeks in the city. Just as the anti-junta leaders claimed to represent all Toronto Greeks, the executive council of the Kinotita also viewed themselves as the voice of the larger community, despite the fact

546 “Anti-Junta Greeks charge intimidation,” 1; interview with Anna Tsarnas.
that the majority of Toronto Greeks were not voting members and had not elected the executive council as their representatives.\footnote{For example, at the 1969 executive council election, 638 individuals (twice the usual number of voters) voted for 78 candidates, “Greek politics are out for new local council,” \textit{Globe and Mail}, June 17, 1969, 5.} In 1969 it was reported that all but one member of the 25-person executive council identified politically as moderates or supporters of the regime.\footnote{Ibid.} Indeed, it was members of the Kinotita, among others, who welcomed the royal couple upon their arrival in Toronto, publicly supported the King’s decision not to abdicate, and dismissed the Committee for the Restoration of Democracy as a few “fanatics.”\footnote{“Greek rally protests King’s backing of junta,” \textit{Globe and Mail}, August 28, 1967, 1, 2; “The Royals arrive in Canada,” \textit{Elleniki Estia}, September 1967, 5; “Protests were rude, Greek leaders says,” \textit{Globe and Mail}, August 30 1967, 5; “Metro Greeks read to fight for homeland’s freedom,” \textit{Toronto Star}, December 14, 1967, 3.}

Another organization whose members generally supported the King was the American Hellenic Education Progressive Association (AHEPA). Founded in Atlanta, Georgia in 1922 in response to anti-immigrant sentiment, the first Canadian chapter was established in Toronto in 1928 with the goal of celebrating Hellenism while encouraging members to adapt linguistically, economically, politically, and socially to Canadian life. The annual membership fees and strict use of English during meetings precluded most post-1945 working-class Greeks from joining. Like the Kinotita, most members of AHEPA were early twentieth century migrants and their Canadian-born sons (women joined the sister organizations Daughters of Penelope and Maids of Athena, while young men joined the Sons of Pericles), and were well-established professionals or business owners. According to the \textit{New World}, AHEPA extended a warm welcome to the King.\footnote{Nick Skoulas, “The Uncles from America,” \textit{New World}, January 19, 1968, 1.} Writing in the \textit{Elleniki Estia}, a monthly Toronto newspaper that served as an organ of AHEPA, publisher and editor Marios Georgiades recognized the difficulties posed by the
King’s visit and its potential to divide Greek Canadians, yet identified the King as essentially blameless in the coup, faulting instead the corrupt politicians and Greek people, especially their “temperamental behaviour, low level of education, as well as their colonial character” for the political turmoil in Athens, and insisting that only “after they get over their passions and their personal differences” will Greeks be ready to undertake the responsibilities of a democratic system. His message shared an unnerving similarity to the metaphor appropriated by Colonel George Papadopoulos, the leader of the military triumvirate, who likened himself to a surgeon who aimed to purge or cure Greece of its illnesses. Though Georgiades claimed that his newspaper had always avoided polarizing political issues, he concluded his editorial with a warm welcome to the King: “Your excellency, the people are waiting.”

During the King’s visit, anti-junta Greeks and supporters of the King clashed. At the Queen’s Park demonstration, for example, a small group of monarchists interrupted the protesters with shouts of “Long Live the King!” before being escorted away by police. Another confrontation took place during a black-tie reception for the royal couple organized by the Kinotita. Among the 350 guests attending the banquet were members of the Kinotita, AHEPA, and a number of Toronto officials and dignitaries, including Mayor William Dennison. An equal number of demonstrators gathered across the street from the venue carrying placards that denounced the King and the military regime, and called for the release of political prisoners Mikis Theodorakis and

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556 Ibid.  
557 “3000 Greek-Canadians protest king’s visit,” Toronto Star, August 28, 1, 2.  
Andreas Papandreou.\textsuperscript{559} Some protesters carried hand-drawn caricatures of the King, including one that depicted him waving a swastika.\textsuperscript{560} Although prepared to submit to a silent protest, the King’s arrival spurred a wave of boos by protesters who shouted angrily in Greek: “The King is not wanted!”\textsuperscript{561} During the dinner, protesters remained outside chanting “democracy,” “one-one-four” and “down with fascism.”\textsuperscript{562} Later, some of the dinner guests confronted the protesters and a fight broke out. Committee member Paul Astritis blamed the brawl on the inebriated diners who were “feeling dazed from the alcohol they drank in the name of their enslaved brothers.”\textsuperscript{563} 

Protesters and guests described and remembered the event quite differently. In the pages of the \textit{New World}, Committee members called the protest “a culmination of the democratic surge of Greeks in the community” and declared it a success because it showed the King “that in every free corner of the earth, the people are helping to overthrow the traitors of freedom and fascist enthusiasts.”\textsuperscript{564} Andonis Artemakis recalled the protest as “one of the best times of my involvement because I faced the King who was responsible for all this mess.”\textsuperscript{565} Guests had very different experiences of the reception, however. Evangelos, a member of AHEPA, remembered the dinner as a wonderful event and could only vaguely recall the protesters standing outside, explaining in our interview: “There was a bit of protest but not much. It wasn’t that big of a brouhaha.”\textsuperscript{566} He recalled with particular fondness the King’s visit to Toronto and dismissed the protests as largely insignificant: “All I saw was a lot of people welcoming

\begin{footnotes}
\textsuperscript{559} Ibid. \\
\textsuperscript{560} Ibid. \\
\textsuperscript{561} Ibid; interview with Vasiliki Tsarnas \\
\textsuperscript{562} Paul Astritis, “Protest outside the Granite Club,” \textit{New World}, September 6, 1967, 8. \\
\textsuperscript{563} Ibid. \\
\textsuperscript{564} Ibid. \\
\textsuperscript{565} Interview with Artemakis. \\
\textsuperscript{566} Interview with Evangelos (pseudonym) July 12, 2009 by author.
\end{footnotes}
the King, that’s about it.” In Evangelos’ view, the protesters “were just a few communists.”

Marianna, a Canadian-born daughter of pre-WWI Greek immigrant parents and a member of the Daughters of Penelope, also attended the reception. Her memory of the event centered on her personal interaction with the Queen and only when probed could she vaguely recall the protesters.

In the days that followed, leaders of the Committee and the executive council of the Greek Community criticized each other publicly. Protest organizer Stratis Someritis, an Athens lawyer who fled from Greece after the coup, told reporters that the reception was given “by some vain Greeks who wanted their picture taken with the King,” and a New World writer referred to the banquet organizers as “a few elected friends of the Junta.” Members of the Committee also mocked the Kinotita for having a difficult time selling tickets to the event, insisting that Greek restaurant owners – who Skoulas ridiculed as “zealous supporters of the junta” – went so far as to give the tickets away for free to their waiters, only to find their invitations rebuffed. Greek Community president Paul Kanas retorted that the protesters acted shamefully and created “very bad feelings towards Greek people here among their fellow Canadians.” He insisted that the majority of Toronto Greeks did not support the protests and felt that “the least we could do was to be courteous and cordial to the King.”

His sentiments were echoed in an editorial in the Greek-language paper Hellenic Tribune (Elliniko Vima), which accused protest organizers of being “trouble makers” and dismissed claims that the majority of Greeks supported the demonstrations. In an editorial, monarchist Dimitrios Zotos

567 Ibid.
568 Interview with Marianna (pseudonym) August 2, 2010, by author.
569 “Booing pickets.”
570 “Protest outside the Granite Club.”
572 “Protests were rude.”
implored his Toronto readers to abstain from any future protests because they “do not reflect the wishes of the people… but rather spoil the good Greek name in the eyes of the Canadian public.”

The monarchists were not the only Toronto Greeks who opposed the protests, as there were also a number of vocal supporters of the junta. Many of them accepted the rhetoric of a communist threat, viewing the events of April 21st not as a dictatorship but as a revolution. Leaders of the Greek Orthodox Church, too, defended this position, as Bishop Timothy did when he told Toronto reporters that the coup was made necessary by the “pressure of communism.” Government commissioned reports on the Greek community produced during this period observed that political allegiances generally fell along class and generational lines – that is, while the majority of post-1945 working-class Greeks opposed the military dictatorship, either publicly or privately, members of the ‘establishment’ (namely, pre-war migrants and their Canadian-born children affiliated with the Kinotita, church officials, as well as wealthy professionals and business owners) were either neutral or expressed approval for the regime.

Supporters of the military regime commonly dismissed the anti-junta resistance as the work of communists. An editorial published in the pro-junta newspaper *Hellenic Times* called on readers to be “be good Canadians” and to not “forget Greece,” explaining

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“[w]e must protect Greece from the venomous jaws of the red snake.” Executive members of the Committee frequently defended themselves against accusations of communism, insisted that such accusations were the work of paid agents of the regime, and charged the Kinotita of serving as a “a front for the Junta.” Though there were a number of self-identified communists, the majority of anti-junta Greeks saw themselves as democrats and dismissed charges of communism, as one Toronto Greek explained: “Our purpose is to restore democracy in the country where it was founded. We do not want to throw out black fascism just to replace it with red fascism.” Still, many junta supporters continued to associate the resistance effort as the work of “left leaning propaganda among the Greeks here,” as one wealthy Montreal businessman, a pre-WWII Greek migrant, put it.

At least several hundred Greek Canadians joined pro-junta organizations in Canada, particularly in Toronto and Montreal. Established in March 1969, the Greek Canadian National Brotherhood in Toronto was founded in opposition to Andreas Papandreou’s PAK. In discussing the motivation behind the Brotherhood, president Sam Pappas explained: “we are loyal Canadians who refuse to be denied our heritage, our love for our country of birth, our mother language, our religion,” adding, “We will support any government of Greece recognized by our beloved Canada except

579 Chimbos, Canadian Odyssey, 126; Bill Davies, “The 80 Goes to Sparta,” National Film Board of Canada (Montreal, 1969).
communism.” Similar views were also expressed at a meeting of the Greek Canadian Nationalist Brotherhood in Montreal commemorating the second anniversary of, what members termed, the “national revolution of the Greek army.” Banners proclaiming the military coup a revolution, including one that read “Long Live April 21st”, adorned the walls of the hall where several hundred Greeks gathered in support of the military government. A representative of the group explained that members identified as “nationalists” in opposition to the “communists,” adding that among Montreal Greeks “the division is very long and actually there is blood between us.” Describing the military coup as a “peaceful revolution,” the spokesman insisted “the Greek army is the Greek people.” In his speech, the Consul General of Greece in Montreal, Dimitrios Makris, underscored the importance of unity among Greek immigrants and stressed the responsibility of all Greeks to “pay tribute” to the homeland. To thunderous applause another speaker shouted passionately into the microphone: “no to the Persians, no to the Turks, no to the Germans and Italians, no to communism!” Comparing this to Economides’ speech at the April anti-junta protest, it is noteworthy that both supporters and opponents of the junta called on the collective memories of the national Hellenic past to buttress support for their own positions.

Anti-junta Greeks were critical of the regime’s representatives in Canada, particularly the consulate officials who used the occasion of Greek Independence Day and Ohi (No) Day to speak positively about the regime. During church services in Toronto, violent clashes broke out between supporters and opponents of the dictatorship.

580 Sam Pappas, President, Greek Canadian National Brotherhood, letter to editor, “A special word,” Toronto Star, June 26, 1969, 6; See also, LAC, RG 146, stack 4, Protests and Demonstrations, Province of Quebec, Greek Canadian National Brotherhood Toronto 6, October 1969.
581 Davies, “The 80 Goes to Sparta.”
582 Ibid.
when, after the liturgy, consulate officials endeavoured to deliver speeches to the congregation but were drowned out by the Greek protesters who objected to the junta’s representatives’ use of commemorative celebrations to “preach the gospel of political hatred and national division.”583 One protester recalled in our interview being “beaten badly by paid bullies, thugs, when we were trying to stop the Colonels’ agents who were delivering speeches at St. George’s and St. Demetrios Church.”584 Petros Belegris also remembered the “clashes with the so-called super-nationalists, the brothers of the brotherhood – people of the rightist persuasion who sort of clung around the Greek consulate to create situations like that.”585

Similar confrontations took place in Montreal churches. In 1969 the Greek Consul General attempted to give a speech commemorating Greek Independence, and was interrupted by anti-junta Greeks who objected to “the use of the church for propaganda purposes.”586 Fistfights broke out between supporters and opponents of the regime, and protesters were forcibly removed from the church by police officers and private security guards who were hired in anticipation of violence. Later, as the Consul General exited the church, protesters confronted him with shouts of “democracy” and “down with the Junta!”587 In another confrontation, representatives of the Greek Community of Montreal, the church hierarchy, the Consul General, and members of an organization called the Association of Greek Ex-Officers, gathered at Dominion Square for a wreath-laying ceremony, but were interrupted by protesters carrying placards and

583 Nikos Skoulas, “Gospel of National Division, New World, November 2 1967, 1; RG 146, stack 4, Protests and Demonstrations, Province of Quebec, RCMP report, April 17, 1969.
584 Interview with Giannakos Xylouris, August 30, 2012, by author.
585 Interview with Belegris.
587 LAC, RG146-1, vol. 2619, Protests and Demonstrations Re: Greek Junta, Province of Quebec, RCMP report April 2, 1969, and 15 April 1969 prepared by W.L. Higgitt, Assistant Commissioner, Director, Security and Intelligence.
shouting: “long live democracy” and “down with the junta.”588 Scuffles broke out between protesters and pro-junta members of the crowd, during which “[f]ist flews and placards were shattered as the two sides used them to club each other.”589

Commemorative celebrations offered public stages for Greeks to forge a collective memory, yet as the extensive historiography on public pageantry, spectacle, and commemoration has shown, the official messages of such displays were often subverted by the participants and spectators who offered their own interpretations of the homeland.590 This was certainly the case during the reign of the dictatorship when pro- and anti-junta Greeks used commemorative celebrations for their own political purposes.

**Latter Years of the Resistance Movement**

The anti-junta movement provided Greeks in Canada a forum to confront representatives of the regime, a meaningful goal for those who experienced the trauma of dictatorial power directly. This was the case for Giannakos Xylouris who arrived in Toronto in December 1968 as a graduate student after completing his compulsory one-year service in the Greek army. It was in the army, Xylouris recalled, that “I had a first-hand experience of what dictatorship was like in Greece from the point of view of the

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588 Ibid., report March 26, 196.
colonels who called it a revolution.” He became further politicized after one of his uncles was court-martialed and imprisoned after being “caught by the junta for writing anti-junta slogans.” In Toronto, Xylouris joined the resistance because, as he put it succinctly, “I felt it was my duty as a free person.” Laundry worker Stratos Kloutsinoitis’ commitment to the resistance movement was also strengthened after confronting the regime directly. During a visit to Greece in the summer of 1968 to marry, he was arrested, held in prison for nineteen days, and beaten by police officers who demanded information about the resistance movement in Toronto. As he explained to a Toronto Star reporter in 1968, and again in our interview several decades later, “they tortured me, they said I have to tell them about Skoulas, Tsarnas, and Papandreou…They knew everything about me, they were watching me.” At his trial, five individuals, including a cousin, testified against him for distributing copies of the New World among villagers. A photograph showing Kloutsiniotis with Papandreou and other anti-junta Greeks provided the most incriminating evidence against him, but a family friend with political clout intervened on his behalf and he was allowed to return to Canada. This experience left an indelible mark on Kloutsiniotis and strengthened his resolve to resist the regime.

Greek Canadians’ experiences of the resistance movement were also significantly shaped by the arrival of exiled Greek politician Andreas Papandreou to Toronto. Born in 1919, Papandreou was a member of Greece’s underground anti-monarchy resistance movement in the 1930s before fleeing to the United States in 1939. During the Second

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591 Interview with Xylouris.
592 Ibid.
593 Interview with Kloutsinotis.
594 Ibid. Kloutsinotis was also quoted in Mark Starowicz, “Anti-Junta Greeks charge intimidation,” Toronto Star, June 11 1969, 1, 2
World War Papandreou served in the US navy, and later received a doctorate in economics from Harvard University. Upon his return to Greece, Papandreou served as the economic minister in his father’s Center Union party. On the night of the coup, he was arrested and, like thousands of others, imprisoned without trial. Intense international pressure forced the junta to release Papandreou from Averoff prison in December 1967 and allow him and his family to leave Greece. Papandreou went first to Paris and then to Stockholm where he formed his anti-junta resistance organization, the Panhellenic Liberation Movement (PAK) with the aim of overthrowing the military junta. He visited Toronto first in April 1968 and again the following April before accepting a professorship in the economics department at York University in September 1969.

As an international leader of the anti-junta resistance, Papandreou’s arrival to Toronto generated a great deal of fanfare. During his first visit to the city, several thousand Greeks gathered at the airport chanting “democracy,” “long live Papandreou,” and “freedom” as others enthusiastically rapped on the windows and roof of his car, hoping to catch a glimpse of the PAK leader. Later, at Varsity Arena before a crowd of over seven thousand enthusiastic Greeks from across Ontario and Quebec, Papandreou spoke of the junta’s continued use of torture on political prisoners and urged the attendees to “rise up” because “[n]ow is the time to act and we will liberate the country.”

Greeks applauded vigorously and shouted in agreement as Papandreou blamed the United

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597 “7,000 Greeks greet exiled Papandreou;” “Greek Canadians denunciation of junta,” Globe and Mail, April 8, 1968, 5.
States for engineering the coup and supporting the junta militarily and economically. Spectators made their voices heard by chanting “down with the junta,” “freedom to Greece”, and “1-1-4” (in reference to the article of the Greek constitution guaranteeing freedom of speech and action), occasionally drowning out Papandreou, forcing him to intermittently pause his speech.598

With Papandreou’s decision to accept a faculty position at York University in 1969, Toronto became the new base for PAK and Papandreou increasingly became the public face of the Canadian anti-junta movement. In editorials and speeches, Papandreou continued to attack the United States for bolstering the regime, calling Greece a “Pentagon-occupied county, occupied through its agents to protect the strategic interests of the United States,”599 and argued that Canada ought to pressure Washington to sever ties with the dictatorship.600 With Papandreou’s relocation, many members of the existing anti-junta organizations, including Toronto’s Committee for the Restoration of Democracy and Montreal’s Makrigannis, joined PAK or the newly formed Friends of PAK, the moderate wing of PAK.601 Anti-junta Greeks continued to organize against the dictatorship by writing press releases and staging protests calling on the international community to sever all ties with the junta, but they did so under the direction of Papandreou and increasingly took on more supportive roles, such as providing PAK with

600 Starowicz, “Pentagon, CIA toppled democracy.”
601 Interviews with Belegris and Skoulas.
administrative, security, and communications support (Figure 3.8).\textsuperscript{602} Papandreou became the main speaker at political rallies and oversaw the ideological direction of the movement. The \textit{New World} and other anti-junta newspapers were highly supportive of the PAK leader, and published interviews with Papandreou as well as lengthy excerpts from his various speeches.\textsuperscript{603} The enthusiasm that accompanied his arrival to Toronto may be partly attributed to his charismatic personality and his international celebrity status. That his arrival coincided with increasing international impatience for the regime, whose human rights abuses were becoming more widely known, is also significant. Still, not all anti-junta Greeks agreed with Papandreou’s politics and tactics, and indeed his arrival served to alienate those “hard line communists,” as Skoulas described them, from the Committee. Leftists like Jim Kabitsis and others split from the Committee and formed a separate resistance organization.

Despite disagreements over Papandreou’s policies and practices, many anti-junta Greeks shared a deep commitment to the cause and a willingness to commit personal sacrifices for the sake of their homeland. Members of the resistance volunteered their time, as Skoulas did working full-time as a marketing executive and devoting his evenings and weekends to the cause, recalling, “it was not unusual to be up all night and then go to my regular job in the morning.”\textsuperscript{604} His colleague in PAK, a graduate student at York University, shared similar experiences, recalling, “It was an intense and impassioned time…we were on call 24 hours.”\textsuperscript{605} Of the many rallies and late-night meetings another anti-junta Greek recalled fondly, “It was like De Gaulle’s centre of

\textsuperscript{602} Interview with Skoulas
\textsuperscript{603} “Interview with Andreas Papandreou,” with Nikos Skoulas \textit{New World}, March 28, 1968, 1; “Thousands of Toronto Greeks Celebrate the Hero of Democracy;” “The Speech of Andreas Papandreou at Varsity Arena,” \textit{New World}, April 25, 1968, 1
\textsuperscript{604} Interview with Skoulas.
\textsuperscript{605} “…but the Danforth’s dancing.”
Involvement in the movement proved to be a heavy financial burden for many of the most dedicated members. In separate interviews, both Vasiliki and Anna Tsarnas discussed the financial strain Philip’s dedication to the movement had on their family, as Vasiliki said of her husband: “He was a bookkeeper but had no time for work. He was always worrying about Greece. Whatever we had, he gave it,” and Anna recalled of her father, “Every penny we had he put it into the Committee. We missed a lot of things growing up because of his involvement, a lot of sacrifices were made.” Working-class Greeks also made significant contributions to the cause. Skoulas and other Committee executives recalled the generosity of Greek immigrant factory and restaurant workers who endorsed their weekly cheques to the movement.

The military regime collapsed in July 1974 following its failed coup d’état in Cyprus and the subsequent Turkish military invasion of the island. All anti-junta groups disbanded and Papandreou returned to Greece the following month as the leader of a new political party called PASOK (the Panhellenic Socialist Movement). In 1981 Papandreou was elected prime minister of Greece and he offered many of his former Toronto colleagues positions in his government, including Skoulas who joined Papandreou as his Minister of Tourism. Returning to Greece was an important turning point for Skoulas and other former PAK members whose Greek citizenship had earlier been rescinded by the junta for their activism in the Committee. Another close friend of Papandreou’s, Philip Tsarnas, was also offered a position but declined because of his

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606 Ibid.
607 Interviews with Vasiliki Tsarnas and Anna Tsarnas.
608 Interviews with Skoulas and George.
610 Interview with Skoulas; “…but the Danforth’s dancing.”
611 Interview with Skoulas.
deteriorating health but also, according to his daughter Anna, because of his humility and his decision not to benefit from the movement he sacrificed so much for.\textsuperscript{612}

\textit{Conclusion}

During the seven years of military rule in Athens, Greek Canadians organized resistance organizations with the goal of raising public awareness about the junta’s abuse of democracy and human rights violations, discouraging the Canadian public from aiding the regime with its tourist dollars, and persuading the Canadian government to sever all ties with the dictatorship. The most sustained and vocal criticism of the regime came from Toronto and Montreal where small numbers of well-educated, post-1945 immigrant men dominated leadership roles. Before the arrival of Andreas Papandreou to Canada, most resistance activity in Toronto was directed through the Committee for the Restoration of Democracy, an organization that united together democrats and communists. The Committee lobbied the Canadian government directly but their efforts to shape Canadian foreign policy were negligible. Committee members had far more success in raising public awareness about the regime by staging political demonstrations in strategic locations in the city, notably outside government buildings and major public squares. On occasion these protests drew thousands of Greeks to the streets and attracted the attention of Canadian spectators and newspapers. Organizers frequently boasted about the spontaneous manner in which protests developed, concealing their own role in crafting the messages presented to the public by creating the placards, instructing protesters to chant particular slogans, staging evocative visuals displays, and giving speeches to the assembled crowds. Well aware that some Greeks viewed them as

\textsuperscript{612} Interview with Artemakis and Anna Tsarnas.
communist troublemakers, organizers also admonished protesters to conduct themselves in an orderly and respectable way. Overall, the Committee presented a fairly consistent message that denounced the regime, called for the release of political prisoners and the return of democratic rule.

The anti-junta resistance in Canada was never a mass movement. Unlike the military enlistment in the Balkan Wars or the Greek War Relief Fund during the Second World War, which offered aid to the ruling Greek government and was generally supported by Greek Canadians, the anti-junta movement engendered deep political and ideological divisions among Greek immigrants. Though the Committee claimed to speak on behalf of the majority of Greeks, the dictatorship proved to be a highly divisive issue. While many agreed on the basic premise that democracy ought to be restored, there were some factions that supported the Greek king and/or the military regime, believing that it would stabilize Greece’s political landscape. Members of the “establishment,” especially priests and executive members of the Kinotita and AHEPA, expressed public support for the junta, as did consulate officials and various individuals who Committee members described as informers or agents of the junta. These opposing factions viewed each other with contempt or, in some cases, ambivalence, and on a number of occasions, especially during commemorative celebrations, clashed in violent confrontations.

Even within the anti-junta camp, there were different motivations and attitudes, though these divergent views are far more elusive in the historical record, especially given how immigrant elites, privileged by their fluency in English and upwardly mobile status, dominated the narrative presented to the Canadian public. The working-class women and men, students, and others who joined the movement occasionally or
informally had their own reasons for protesting, as was the case for Anna Tsarnas, the woman representing Greece in chains at the anti-king protest. Although she had little hand in orchestrating the spectacle in which she performed in as a prop, her commitment to the role emerged out of her own desire to contribute in a meaningful way to the struggle for democracy. Silent here are those Greeks who abstained from the protests for a range of reasons: some out of fear of reprisals by the regime, others because they lacked the resources to engage in homeland political activism.

Along with the public performances, newspapers were the main vehicles for anti-junta Greeks to voice their criticism of the regime. In Toronto, the *New World* provided readers with information on the junta’s activities, announcements on the various resistance activities in Toronto and other Canadian cities, as well as scathing editorials penned by members of the Committee. This newspaper, like the protests, reflected the concerns of Committee members, but in its role as a conduit of information and a forum for political discussion, the *New World*, and other anti-junta papers, served to create a diasporic public space for Greek immigrants to debate homeland politics and consider their obligations to Greece as members of a democratic country that afforded them freedoms and privileges unavailable to their compatriots.
Chapter 4

“Get your hands out of Macedonia!” Identity Politics and Competing Claims to Macedonia

“Macedonia was, is, and always will be Greek!” This message, frequently proclaimed in Greek political rallies during the 1990s, was prominently displayed on the hand-written placards carried by Greek Canadian protesters gathered at Mel Lastman Square on December 6, 1992, the site of an intense confrontation between at least two thousand Toronto Greeks and Macedonians. 613 That day members of the United Macedonian Association 614 assembled at the square for a flag-raising ceremony, where they were met by a group of Toronto Greeks who objected both to the Macedonian flag itself, which features the Star of Vergina, an ancient symbol belonging to Philip of Macedon that Greeks claim as their own, but also to the mayor’s approval of the ceremony given the Canadian government’s decision not to recognize the newly independent state as the Republic of Macedonia. More than fifty police officers were called in to restrain the two opposing groups. Standing on the lower portion of the square, angry Greek protestors, a mix of both immigrants and Canadian-born Greeks, including some dressed in Greek Macedonian garb, chanted angrily: “Get your hands out of Macedonia!” 615

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613 Although Greeks from the region of Macedonia in northern Greece may also identify as Macedonian, in this chapter Macedonian refers to those who identify ethnically or nationally (not regionally) as Macedonian.
614 A Toronto-based organization whose members identify the Republic of Macedonia as their national homeland, see, http://unitedmacedonians.org/
The conflict escalated as the opposing sides “kicked, punched, spit, and called each other names over who has the right to claim Macedonian origin.” Along with the insults and odd snowball hurled by individuals from both sides, some Macedonians, standing on the upper portion of square, dropped “a few half-full garbage bags at the crowd below.” Yet Greek protesters refused to leave until the mayor cancelled the ceremony. The enmity between the two communities was clearly evident to the bystanders, including the mayor who told reporters, “I saw hate for the first time in my life…real hate.” In the days that followed, members of both groups denounced the actions of the other side. Speaking on behalf of the Hellenic Canadian Congress, George Manios expressed regret for the violence but insisted that “[r]aising that flag was an act of provocation against the Greek community,” adding that “no group has the right to steal our history.”

This protest was one of many that took place in the years following the Republic of Macedonia’s declaration of independence from Yugoslavia in September 1991. The Greek government accused the new state of cultural theft and argued that the name and its constitution indicated irredentist ambitions into Greece’s northern borders. Elsewhere, Greek and Macedonian immigrants rallied in response to the Macedonia issue – the question of who are the rightful and exclusive owners of the name, history, and identity

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616 Ibid.  
617 Ibid.  
of Macedonia.\textsuperscript{621} While in Toronto, Greek immigrants had for decades infused their cultural celebrations with political messages proclaiming their ownership over Macedonia, the 1991 declaration marked a significant resurgence of interest in the issue and inspired a large-scale mobilization among Greek Canadians that crossed class, gender, and generational lines. Significantly, these transnational performances and protests took place during a period of tremendous flux, in which competing claims to Macedonian identity were being pronounced and disputed by members of the diaspora.

Contrary to Mayor Lastman’s suggestion – namely that “[w]hen people come to Canada, they’ve got to leave their hate at home,”\textsuperscript{622} – the animosity between Greeks and Macedonians was not solely a matter of immigrant baggage; rather, it was as immigrants in Canada that their identities were politicized and the divisions between these communities became further pronounced. Focusing on community celebrations and public protests, this chapter examines how Greek Canadians’ activism over Macedonia transformed local realities. After providing a brief overview of the genesis of the conflict, I demonstrate how competing claims over Macedonia politicized Greek Canadians by drawing them into a public dialogue on historical symbols and ethnic and national identities. Like other cases discussed in this dissertation, well-educated or professional men served as mediators between their immigrant communities and Canadian society and often provided the most vocal criticism of, what they termed, Slavic propaganda. Yet increasingly by the post-1991 period, non-elites also joined the public debates and at times acted independently of community leaders in expressing their


\textsuperscript{622} Mays, “Flawed notions.”
frustrations over Macedonians claiming particular historical symbols as their own. In
documenting the shifts over time, this chapter also examines how this transnational
conflict polarized immigrant communities, creating tensions in local neighbourhoods and
disrupting further the already tenuous relationship between Greeks and Macedonians in
Canada.

**Origins of the Macedonia issue**

Competing claims to Macedonia have existed since the nineteenth century when
the geographical region of Macedonia was still under Ottoman rule and inhabited by
religiously and linguistically diverse groups of people. After Greece and Serbia gained
independence by the 1830s, both states looked to Macedonia for territorial expansion,
though this contest was complicated by the establishment of the Bulgarian Orthodox
Church in 1870, which began its own efforts to win over the loyalties of the
Macedonians. By October 1912, Bulgaria, Greece, Serbia, and Montenegro joined
together in a coalition against the Ottoman Empire, and in the First Balkan War the allies
succeeded in liberating Macedonia. Dissatisfaction over the partitioning of the spoils
formalized at the 1913 London Conference led Bulgaria to attack Greece and Serbia,
initiating the Second Balkan War, but it was swiftly defeated. At the 1913 Treaty of
Bucharest, Greece received roughly fifty percent of the territory, Serbia nearly forty
percent, and Bulgaria a mere ten percent.624

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Following the Balkan Wars, Greece and Serbia pursued policies of assimilation to ‘Hellenize’ or ‘Serbanize’ the people of their newly acquired territories. In Greece, forced Hellenization reached its height during the Metaxas regime from 1936 to 1941 when the speaking of Slavic dialects was strictly forbidden, and all Slavic names – including villages, towns, and even personal names – were Hellenized. The ethnic homogenization was aided by population exchanges between Greece and Bulgaria (1919) and Greece and Turkey (1923), though there did remain a minority of Slav-speaking Macedonians in northern Greece who resisted Hellenization. In the case of Serbia, its mostly unsuccessful assimilation campaign changed dramatically during and after the Second World War. In 1944 Josip Tito and the leaders of the Communist Party of Yugoslavia established the People’s (later Socialist) Republic of Macedonia as one of the states of the new federal Republic of Yugoslavia – a dramatic departure for Yugoslavia, which had earlier identified the Slavs of Macedonia as ‘South Serbs’ and denied they constituted a unique ethnic group.

During the Greek Civil War, Tito’s partisans also made significant inroads with the Greek communists. Until the 1948 Tito-Stalin split, Tito backed the Greek communists, supporting the democratic army of Greece (DSE) in return for their support for an independent Macedonia. Such promises for equality in an independent Macedonia encouraged roughly 14,000 Slavophones to join the communist resistance, but following

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the defeat of communist forces in 1949, tens of thousands of Slavic-speakers, around 67,000, fled Greece to avoid retribution. In addition, there were also 28,000 to 32,000 child refugees known as the ‘paidomazoma’ (gathered children), who were either forcibly taken or voluntarily given by their parents to be sent to the eastern block beginning in 1948. A significant portion of these refugees, both adults and children, eventually made their way to Canada and Australia, where large concentrations settled in Toronto and Melbourne. Precisely because these migrants were forced to flee Greece to escape persecution, many of them, as Hugh Poulton has observed, “exhibit a fiercer nationalism than their compatriots” who remained in Greece.

While there exists a plethora of opinions on the history of Macedonia, in the official Greek perspective the Macedonian nationality is described as an artificial construct “invented” by Josip Tito in 1944 for political gains. Greek nationalists claim that since earlier efforts at assimilating the Slav-speaking ethnic Bulgarians had failed, Tito “conceived an ingenious plan” of creating a Macedonian ethnicity within the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia as a way of enticing ethnic Bulgarians into the federation and to pave the way for Yugoslavia to eventually annex all three parts of Macedonia

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630 Poulton, Who Are the Macedonians, 120.
631 Danforth, Macedonian Conflict, 33.
under its control. This view has been championed by Evangelos Kofos, a historian and former Greek Foreign Affairs consultant, who has called the 1944 creation of the People’s Republic of Macedonia, “a surgical-type operation for the mutation of the indigenous Slavonic inhabitants and their transformation into ethnic ‘Macedonians.’”

Yet Macedonians who identify the Republic of Macedonia as their national homeland insist that they are a unique ethnic group, with their own language and identity. As with the Greeks, in this group there are moderate and extremist views, with some claiming that modern Macedonians are the descendants of Alexander the Great (who they argue was not Greek), while others trace their cultural ancestry to the Slavic tribes who migrated to the region in the sixth and seventh centuries AD. But it is generally agreed that the so-called “liberation” of Macedonia from the Ottoman Turks in 1913 following the Balkan Wars was really the replacement of one foreign ruler for three others. They contend that they are not ethnically Greek, Bulgarian, nor Serbian, but rather a unique people whose history dates back well before Tito’s declaration of the Macedonian state in 1944.

As an international political issue, the Macedonia Question remained largely dormant for several decades but resurfaced with the breakup of Yugoslavia. In September 1991 the Republic of Macedonia declared its independence, eliciting a strong

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635 For a good overview, see, Danforth, *Macedonian Conflict*, chapters 2 and 3.
reaction from the Greek government which opposed the republic’s use of the name Macedonia, calling it a blatant appropriation of Greek history and identity, and began diplomatic efforts to thwart the republic from gaining international recognition under the name Macedonia on the grounds that the name and its constitution revealed the republic’s irredentists interests in Greece’s Aegean Macedonia. In the Balkans and throughout the diaspora, Greeks staged massive public demonstrations, charging the new republic of falsifying history and appropriating Greek symbols, notably the sun of Vergina (an emblem of Philip of Macedon found during the 1977 excavation of his grave in Greek Macedonia), which the Macedonian Assembly adopted for its new flag. At the same time, Macedonians also engaged in public campaigns for international recognition of their national homeland, though their messages also revolved around the Greek government’s mistreatment of Macedonian minorities in northern Greece.

Greece enjoyed initial success in its diplomatic campaign, but towards the end of 1992 the republic of Macedonia gained recognition from a handful of European states and by 1993 had gained membership into the International Monetary Fund and the United Nations under the provisional name of the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia (FYROM). Responding to the rising tide of qualified recognition, the Greek government imposed a strict trade embargo on the republic in February 1994, banning the movement of goods through the port of Thessaloniki. This lasted until 1995 when US intervention led to the signing of an Interim Accord. Greece agreed to lift the embargo and recognize

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639 Roudometof, *Collective Memory*, 35.
the state as FYROM, and FYROM agreed to remove the sun of Vergina from its national flag.  

Recent scholarship on this geopolitical issue includes a growing body of work on immigrants’ activism over Macedonia. Focusing on Melbourne and, to a lesser extent, Toronto, anthropologist Loring Danforth has documented the rise of ethnic nationalism and the mobilization of Greek and Macedonian immigrants, documenting the involvement of homeland governments, technological advancements, and the plethora of cultural and intellectual exchanges that have contributed to the establishment of “transnational national communities.” In particular, his work provides fascinating insights into the construction and politicization of ethnic identity. Danforth’s work remains the most substantial study on the topic, but other scholars have also made useful contributions. Anthropologist Anastasia Panagakos has similarly explored the Macedonia issue in the “production of ethnicity” by looking closely at one Greek Canadian rally in Calgary. Chris Kostov’s work on the formation of Macedonian identity in Toronto provides a good account of the frictions that developed between Bulgarian, Macedonian, and Greek immigrant communities. Focusing mostly on

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Toronto, my study adds to this literature by analyzing the politicization and polarization of Greek and Macedonian immigrants, and pays particular attention to the role of historical symbols in each group’s effort to defend their claims to Macedonia.

**Becoming Political**

Like many Greek immigrants, Cretan-born Andonis Artemakis’ introduction to the Macedonia issue came soon after migrating to Canada. While working as a busboy in a Toronto restaurant in the mid-1960s he overheard a dispute between two employees, with one demanding, “How can you be a Macedonian and not be Greek?” and the other responding, “I’m from Florina, I’m Macedonian but I’m not Greek.”  In his re-telling of the exchange, Artemakis emphasized how surprised he was by the Macedonian’s denial of a Greek identity given that “this issue never existed in Greece.”

His experience was typical of post-1945 Greek migrants, many of whom insist that they first learned of competing claims to Macedonia only after immigrating to Canada. Stavroula, who immigrated in 1961 as a domestic worker explained: “We found this in Canada – ‘Oh, I’m not Greek, I’m Macedonian’ – what the hell is that? You come with a Greek passport and now you say you’re not Greek, you’re Macedonian?”

In interviews with working-class Greeks, as well as former presidents of various Greeks associations in Toronto, many of them professionals and business owners, informants discussed their introduction to the Macedonia issue as newcomers in Canada. In their workplaces,

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646 Interview with Andonis Artemakis by author, August 29, 2012.
647 Ibid. Danforth records a similar exchange between a Macedonian and Greek immigrant in Melbourne, see Macedonian Conflict, 222-223.
648 Interview with Stavroula (pseudonym) by author, February 24, 2009.
churches, and English language classes, they encountered Greek-speaking migrants from northern Greece who, to their initial surprise, identified as ethnic Macedonians.

This was also the case for Greeks who emigrated from bilingual villages. Jim Karas, president of the Pan-Macedonian Association of Ontario (a Greek-Macedonian umbrella organization) since 2004, learned of the Macedonia issue after immigrating to Canada in 1961 when a family friend asked him if he was Greek Macedonian. In an article for Diaspora: the Voice of the Greeks in Toronto, he recounted the exchange: “I told him that I did not understand the question. He briefly explained my problem and I have been getting and giving explanations about it for a quarter of a century.” Karas’ “blissful ignorance in Greece” is particularly noteworthy given that he emigrated from a bilingual village and that he and his family spoke both languages – Greek and a Slavic dialect he identified in our interview as “Nashi” meaning “ours.” At the level of everyday experience in postwar Greece, it mattered less what languages one spoke and more whether one’s family had supported communist forces during the Civil War. Like Karas, Dr. Basil Soklaridis, a past-president of the Pan-Macedonian Association, had emigrated from a bilingual village near Florina. The murder of his family members by government forces on suspicion of communism “hardened” Soklaridis and he decided to migrate to Canada in 1965 where he, too, first encountered competing claims to Macedonia.

The emergence in Toronto of a politicized and increasingly vocal Macedonian diaspora beginning in the 1950s, helps explain why it was after leaving Greece that

649 Danforth, Macedonian Conflict, 95.
651 Interview with Jim Karas by author, August 15, 2012.
652 Interview with Dr. Basil Soklaridis by author, August 30, 2012.
Greeks first encountered the Macedonia issue. Yet, to be clear, ethnic Macedonians began migrating to Canada long before this period. Motivated by land shortages and a desire for improved economic conditions, male Macedonian sojourners began arriving in Toronto in the early decades of the twentieth century. According to historian Lillian Petroff, Macedonians initially settled in three main areas: Cabbagetown in the east end, and along Niagara Street and the Junction in the city’s west-end. Macedonian men commonly found work in slaughterhouses, abattoirs, tanning and fur-processing industries, and in various other factories, as well as in street-railway construction. By the end of World War I, increasing numbers of Macedonian women came to Canada to join their husbands and fiancés and, according to Petroff, by 1940 there were approximately 1,200 Macedonian families in Toronto. Macedonians continued to find employment as factory workers and labourers, but increasingly established businesses in the service industry, particularly restaurants. They also formed their own benevolent associations and social clubs, as well as churches, notably the Sts. Cyril and Methody Macedono-Bulgarian Orthodox Church in 1910. Petroff’s account illustrates that in the early decades of the twentieth century, Toronto Macedonians had established a vibrant community life, though as both Loring Danforth and Chris Kostov argue, most of these early arrivals had either a Bulgarian or Macedonian-Bulgarian ethnic identity. Petroff acknowledges that within this group there were significant divisions – while the

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654 Ibid, 32-34.
655 Ibid, 14.
656 Ibid, 14.
659 Danforth, *Macedonian Conflict*, 87-88; Kostov based this conclusion, in part, on the Macedonian and Bulgarian oral interview collections at the MHSO, see, *Contested Ethnic Identity*, 119-154.
majority of Toronto Macedonians were Exarchists, those who identified with the Bulgarian Orthodox Church and attended the Sts. Cyril and Methody Church, there were also a number of Patriarchists, those who supported the Greek patriarch in Istanbul and attended the St. George’s Greek Orthodox Church in Toronto. These religious divisions crossed familial lines, and though on the whole most Exarchists and Patriarchists coexisted peacefully, occasionally “arguments or fights broke out on the job or on the streets.”

Following the Greek Civil War, a new influx of Macedonian migrants arrived in Canada, many of whom had experienced mistreatment by the Greek government and exhibited a keen interest in homeland politics. Still, this politicization was not simply a matter of immigrant baggage, but was partly, and for sizeable numbers of Macedonians, developed in Canada. As anthropologist Judith Nagata observed in the early 1970s, this “Macedonian resistance…is as much North American inspired as locally fomented, and represents an exporting of New World Macedonian attitudes to the old.” In 1959 a group of Toronto Macedonians formed the United Macedonians Association, and by 1965 established the first Macedonian church in the city (and North America), St. Clement of Ohrid Macedonian Orthodox Church. According to Kostov, the United Macedonians was initially a pro-Yugoslav organization created “to infiltrate and divide the Bulgarian community,” adding that the formation of this Toronto Macedonian church was done not out of religiosity but to attract parishioners from the Bulgarian and Greek

659 Petroff, Sojourners and Settlers, 112.
660 Ibid., 113.
661 Judith Nagata, “A Study of the Effects of the English Language Classes for Immigrant Women with Preschool Age Children within the Greek Community of Metropolitan Toronto,” (Report prepared for the Citizenship Branch, Department of the Provincial Secretary and Citizenship, Ontario, 1970), 47.
churches. As the community developed institutionally in the 1960s, 1970s, and 1980s – adding more churches, philanthropic and parochial associations, and developing print, radio and television programs in the Macedonian language – members of the United Macedonians continued to voice increasingly critical views of Greece and Greek Macedonians.

The development of this highly politicized Macedonian diaspora struck a nerve among Toronto Greeks. After immigrating to Canada in 1969 from Thessaloniki, Thomas Stephen Saras found in Toronto “a group of strangers trying to tell me that I was not what I was.” Before emigrating from Greece, Saras had regularly taken the train through the Macedonian capital of Skopje but, as he explained in our interview, was not aware of any competing claims to Macedonia: “although I am from Macedonia, there was nothing there to tell me that there was another Macedonia.” It was as an immigrant in Toronto that Saras first met ethnic Macedonians who questioned his own Greek identity and asserted that he had “been brainwashed by the Greeks to believe I am a Greek.” Sara’s encounter with members of this highly politicized and anti-Greek community is not entirely surprising given that many Macedonians suffered persecution in Greece and were forced to flee at the end of the Civil War to evade retribution for real or alleged communist activities. Yet Greeks were troubled by this vocal Macedonian diaspora, a point underscored in the writings of Pantelis Vyssoulis, a Greek medical doctor from Western Macedonia, who visited Toronto in 1979 and claimed to find “a small minority of Greeks of Macedonian descent who want to appear as belonging to a

662 Kostov, *Contested Ethnic Identity*, 195
663 Ibid., 196-202.
664 Interview Thomas Stephen Saras by author, August 20, 2012.
separate nationality they call ‘Macedonian.’” Most disconcerting to Vyssoulis was that they appeared to be “motivated zealots,” “very well organized,” and intent on spreading “strong propaganda.”

In my interviews with former presidents of the Greek Community of Metro Toronto and the Pan-Macedonian Association of Ontario, there was a general consensus that “Slavic propaganda” in Toronto emerged decades before FYROM’s 1991 declaration of independence, but that consulate and embassy officials discouraged Toronto Greeks from raising the issue publicly. On this matter, Saras was the most emphatic, insisting that he found in Toronto “an organized campaign to change the historical facts” but that “no one wanted to address the problem, not the diplomats, nobody.”

Spurred on by this apparent apathy, Saras made the Macedonia issue his personal crusade. He wrote frequently to Toronto newspaper editors and welcomed any opportunity to speak to reporters about his concerns. He also founded an organization called the Hellenic Canadian Committee for the Truth About Macedonia, and published a Greek-language newspaper in Toronto called Patrides (Fatherlands) in which he argued that Macedonia belongs to Greece and accused the United Macedonian Association of perpetuating “Yugoslavian political propaganda.”

In our interview, Saras recalled being “under constant pressure” by the Greek diplomacy to be silent, attributing this resistance to

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666 Ibid.
667 Interview with Saras.
Athens’ policy of maintaining friendly relationships with Skopje at the time. Dr. Athanassios Foussias, who served as president of the Greek Community of Metro Toronto during the 1990s, concurred that the Greek consulates were “not openly challenging publicly the issue of Slav Macedonians.”

Though Dinos Siotis, Press Counsellor for the Greek Embassy in Ottawa, occasionally penned letters to Canadian newspaper editors throughout the 1980s, my informants considered his comments to be “tame.” Moreover, in their visits to Canada before 1991, Greek diplomats and politicians generally showed little concern for the Macedonia issue. When the Minister for Northern Greece, Nicholas Martis, visited Toronto in the early 1980s, he told reporters that Greece and Yugoslavia enjoyed “very good relations” and that he did not understand why Toronto Greeks were so concerned about Macedonia since “[e]verybody knows Macedonians are Greek.”

If representatives of the Greek government were actively discouraging political discussions about competing claims to Macedonia at this time, is it clear that Greek Canadians, at least among the community leaders and intellectual elites, did not adhere to such directives. Troubled by the emergence of what they viewed as Slavic propaganda, Greeks from the region of Macedonia formed an umbrella organization called the Pan-Macedonian Union in 1960 “to stand against this false and unfair propaganda.”

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670 Interview with Dr. Athanassios Foussias by author, August 29, 2012.
672 Anastasios Tamis described a similar situation in Australia where “ignorant and indifferent highly-ranking Greek politicians and dignitaries visiting the Hellenic Diaspora communities were often reprimanding Greek-Macedonian leaders and academics for their initiatives to demonstrate the existence of an aggressive propaganda on the part of the Slav-Macedonians,” see, “Macedonian Organizations, the Macedonian Issue and Greek Foreign Policy in the Diaspora,” in *Macedonian Identities through Time: Interdisciplinary Approaches*, ed. Ioannis D. Stefanidis et al. (Athens: Epikentro Publishers & the Foundation of the Museum for the Macedonian Struggle, 2010), 329.
perpetuated by “the Slavs.” Their politicization was not solely a reaction to a homeland crisis, but was also shaped by their interactions with Macedonians in Canada. Well before 1991, Greeks in Canada, especially those from Greek Macedonia, saw the Macedonian Canadian lobby, particularly the members of the United Macedonians Association, as spreading dangerous propaganda that threatened not just Greece’s cultural sovereignty but also their own conceptions of themselves.

**Historical Symbols and Ethnic Identity**

As it developed in Canada, the Macedonia Question provided a forum for Greek and Macedonian immigrants to engage in a public dialogue on the complicated issues of identity, belonging, and cultural ownership. Members of both communities frequently employed history in their arguments, making extensive use of historical symbols to publicly stake their claims to Macedonia. The most often-used symbol and script was that of Alexander the Great, the military general and Macedonian king who ascended to his father’s throne in 336 BC and within ten years united the ancient Greek city states and conquered much of the Persian Empire, spreading Hellenic culture and language. Greek-language newspapers in Toronto were keen to recount the military triumphs of Alexander in the pages of their journals. Evoking Alexander served to solidify the cultural link between modern and ancient Greeks. Doing so allowed Greek Canadians to legitimize their cultural ownership of Macedonia and distinguish themselves from “Slavic

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677 See, for example, “Our Macedonia” in *Macedonian Echo (Μακεδονικη Ηχω)*, Toronto, December 1973, in Panepirotic Federation of America Convention, AO MHSO collection, microfilm #722.
Macedonians” – a point underscored in a 1988 announcement printed in the *Toronto Star* in which Pan-Macedonian members declared: “we, the descendants of Alexander the Great, born and raised in Greek Macedonia, the sacred region which our forefathers have bestowed to us as a result of their gallant fight in the course of centuries…are proud of being Greeks.”

Histories have demonstrated the role of collective memory, which is selective and constructed, in the production and consumption of public commemoration, parades, and other spectacles. Although not overtly political, such performances offer organizers and participants a stage to express their identities and convey political messages to a broader audience. Certainly, Greek Canadians infused their cultural and civic celebrations with political messages about Macedonia’s history and identity, frequently using Alexander the Great as an identity marker. In some cases, these political messages were intended for Canadian audiences. During Windsor’s 1954 centennial “All Nations Day” parade, Greeks in the city organized an “awe inspiring” float which included white tunic-clad women standing in front of Doric columns and young men marching in foustanellas carrying flags and banners, including one that displayed Alexander the Great (Figure 4.1). The coupling of recognizable Greek objects and dress with the banner was a deliberate move by float organizers, meant to inform the Canadian public that Alexander belonged exclusively to the Greek narrative. A writer for the Greek-language newspaper *Estia* reported that this message was not lost on the spectators, insisting that it “proved to the many Canadians that historically Macedonia was an integral part of

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This observer also noted that the float sent a strong message to the city’s Macedonian community, explaining that “[t]he so-called Macedonians, Bulgarians or others, who are trying to present Macedonia as another country, were disillusioned.” Yet the public nature of parades meant that the intended message could be reinterpreted in different ways. For Windsor Greeks, this banner displayed an important political message, yet for non-Greek spectators unfamiliar with the emerging conflict over Macedonia, this “symbolic exhibition” may have been viewed as simply a colourful display by one of their city’s ethnic groups. As an early precursor to the multicultural festivals that would gain increasing popularity by the 1960s, spectators at the “All Nations” parade likely focused on the non-threatening aspects of Greek culture and history, namely the ancient and folk costumes, giving little thought to any political issues.

References to Alexander the Great also frequently appeared in public spectacles orchestrated for consumption by Greek audiences. In the annual summer picnics organized by the Pan-Macedonian Association, young Greek men were enlisted to dress as the Macedonian king. At the 1962 summer picnic, a procession weaved around the park which included a small replica of the White Tower of Thessaloniki, a historical landmark commonly used to symbolize Greek sovereignty over Macedonia, and a young man dressed in ancient warrior garb, wielding a shield and sword, representing Alexander the Great (Figure 4.2). These historical symbols were purposely presented to affirm the Greekness of Macedonia, a message that was reinforced in the speeches made that day by members of the executive council of the association. One speaker called for the

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681 Ibid.
682 Panagakos, “Citizens of the Trans-Nation,” 58.
“preservation of our dearest Greek Macedonia, often threatened by new and old enemies,” while another spoke of his pride “for our fatherland and for our historic origin,” and to much applause told the audience, “surely no Canadian citizen of Greek origin will forgive any falsification of the historical truth concerning the past of Northern Greece.”

Anchoring their ethnic identities in the collective imagining of the past, Greek Canadians forged a defense against competing claims to Macedonia.

Toronto’s ‘Greektown’ became a battleground for debates over Alexander the Great’s ethnic identity after a bronze bust of the military general was erected in a parkette just off of Danforth Avenue in May 1990 (Figure 4.3). This bust was a collaborative effort by several Toronto Greek organizations, notably the Pan-Macedonian Association. While controversy over the bust arose almost immediately, with Macedonians objecting to the wording of the plaque that identified Alexander as “King of the Greeks” rather than “Alexander, King of the Macedonians,” it was on the anniversary of Alexander the Great’s birth (two months later) that Toronto Greeks and Macedonians clashed in a “boisterous push-and-shove.” Members of the United Macedonians (reportedly acting against the advice of the Macedonian-Canadian Human Rights Committee) converged on the parkette on July 29 to commemorate Alexander’s birth with a wreath-laying ceremony. Having heard of their plans in advance, Greek community leaders called on Toronto Greeks to prevent the ceremony from taking place. With Greek flags wrapped around their bodies, Greek protesters formed a “human wall” around the statue. Police

684 Danforth, Macedonian Conflict, 173.
686 Danforth, Macedonian Conflict, 173.
officers were called in to break up the “shoving match” between the two groups, altogether a crowd of about 2,000.\textsuperscript{687}

Motivations for attending the ceremony varied. Some United Macedonian members were there to proclaim in a tangible way their historical origins, while others intended to lend meaningful support to their compatriots by publicizing the mistreatment of Macedonian minorities in northern Greece, evident by some placards that read: “Freedom for Macedonians in Greece.”\textsuperscript{688} Toronto Greeks viewed the attempted wreath-laying as a provocation not only against Greece but their own immigrant community. In explaining her motives for attending the protest, Sophia, a 1968 arrival to Toronto who worked as a hairdresser, explained simply, “they [the United Macedonians] had no right to be there.”\textsuperscript{689} Greek diaspora publications commended the Greek protesters for preventing the “defiling” of Alexander’s bust, a “symbol of the unity and the fighting spirit of Hellenism.”\textsuperscript{690}

The bust continued to serve as a focal point for conflict in Toronto. The following summer, a shoving match broke out when United Macedonian members again attempted to mark Alexander’s birth with a wreath-laying ceremony and were, again, prevented from doing so by the hundreds of Greek protesters who assembled at the parkette. To the exasperation of many Greeks, United Macedonian leader George Robev insisted, “We didn’t come here to fight,” yet later declared to reporters: “Alexander was Macedonian and always will be…These Greeks are not aware that they are Macedonians.

\begin{itemize}
\item\textsuperscript{687} Honey, “Ancient rivalry.”
\item\textsuperscript{688} Ibid.
\item\textsuperscript{689} Interview with Sophia (pseudonym) by author, March 17, 2009.
\item\textsuperscript{690} Makedhoniki Zoi, Oct 1990, 48-49, quoted in Danforth, Macedonian Conflict, 174.
\end{itemize}
They are brainwashed Macedonians.” Greeks made similar declarations about Alexander, announcing that he “is our person, it’s a Greek person.” Members of both groups accused the other side of “falsifying history.” While United Macedonian leader John Bitove insisted that Alexander was “unquestionably” Macedonian, Greek community leaders dismissed such claims asking, as George Manios did, “How can they turn history upside down?...How can we say that the man who spread Hellenism throughout the ancient world is a Slav.” Speaking on behalf of the Hellenic Canadian Congress, Manios announced no one would be permitted to use the bust for political purposes, explaining that “[w]e see this as a way of stealing our heritage. Alexander the Great is an integral part of Greek history and civilization.”

Along with these street clashes, debates about Alexander the Great’s ethnic identity took place in other public forums. In the pages of ethnic newspapers and in radio programs, coffee shops, and even in televised debates, Greeks and Macedonians debated history and interrogated the others’ claims to Macedonia. Notably, in 1993 Dr. Athanasios Foussias, president of the Greek Community of Metro Toronto, and Mr. John Bitove of the United Macedonian Association participated in a televised debate for Channel 47 (Toronto’s first multicultural and multilingual channel). Not surprisingly, in debating the contemporary political instability in the Balkans, both of these community leaders drew upon the ancient world to bolster their positions. In explaining Greece’s objections to FYROM’s use of the name Macedonia, Foussias asserted that “for 4000

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692 Ibid.
693 Ibid.
696 Ibid.
years, Macedonians were as Greek as anyone else, as Athenians, as Spartans,” adding that, “Alexander the Great himself, his father Philip II, and their predecessors were participating…in the Olympic games, where only Greeks could participate.” In his response, Bitove challenged the Greekness of the ancient Macedonians, stating: “[Foussias] speaks of history, he speaks of Alexander the Great. He speaks of his father, Philip. Alexander the Great was a Macedonian. He was born on a piece of land called Macedonia.”697

While male community leaders were most often cited in newspaper reports and served as speakers at public rallies, by the 1980s and increasingly during the 1990s non-elite Greeks and Macedonians also contributed their voices to the public debate, and similarly evoked Alexander the Great to support their arguments. Macedonian John Semanis, a frequent letter-writer to the Toronto Star and Globe and Mail, used the occasion of the Greek prime minister’s 1982 visit to Toronto to raise the issue of Greece’s mistreatment of its Macedonian minorities.698 The newspaper published three letters in response to Semanis, all of them by Greek Canadians who made the point that since Macedonians are, and have always been, Greek, there can be no Macedonian minorities in Greece. One of Greek letter-writers reminded readers that, “King Philip (Alexander the Great’s father) was the first one to bring together all the small kingdoms of Greece, and his son Alexander, having had the purest Greek education from Aristotle himself, spread Greek culture and language all over the known world.”699 Debates in Toronto over Alexander’s ethnicity continued. Writing to the Globe and Mail in 2007 in response to “anti-Macedonian rhetoric,” letter-writer Vasil Yancoff hoped to “set the

697 Channel 47 Debate Athanassios Foussias and John Bitove, moderated by Andrew Taylor, March 1993.
record straight” by pointing out that “Alexander the Great was Macedonian and, in fact, defeated the ancient Hellenes in battle,” adding that “Macedonia and Macedonians have every right to honour this ancient Macedonian hero.”

Editorial pages provided a public space for Greeks and Macedonians to debate historical claims to Alexander. Though executive members of various Greek associations, privileged by class and gender hierarchies, frequently took it upon themselves to articulate the concerns of their broader communities, Greeks from all classes, genders, and generations participated in public protests and raised arguments about the Greekness of Alexander the Great. Photographs of protests show that it was not just community elites, but also working-class Greeks, many of them women, as well as second generation Greek Canadians who participated in protests and debates over Macedonia. Yet in the course of my research, I found middle-class Greek men to be most willing and eager to discuss the Macedonia issue with me. Interestingly, I had met three working-class Greek men who, I learned from their relatives, had participated in the protests at Mel Lastman Square and at the Danforth parkette. In first meeting them, all three expressed interest in my project and with much passion conveyed their opposition to the “Slavic propaganda,” yet politely declined my requests for formal interviews, insisting they had little information to offer and instead encouraged me to seek out past presidents of the Greek Community. A number of immigrant women I met also had much to say about the Macedonia issue, yet similarly declined my requests for interviews, explaining they were “not involved in politics,” even though they had in fact participated in protests. Such comments suggest a narrow view of politics as residing within the sphere of politicians and lobby groups. Yet, even if these individuals did not view their actions as political or if they chose to

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remember and narrate their experiences as apolitical (or perhaps believed that as poorly educated immigrants they were not qualified to speak authoritatively on the issue), their involvement in these protests suggest the need for a more expansive view of political engagement – one that recognizes how political messages could be expressed in multiple ways and by various actors. In the case of the Macedonia issue, politics was clearly interwoven in various aspects of cultural and community life.

**Polarized Communities**

While the Macedonia issue provided a platform for immigrants to proudly assert their ethnic identity, it also created an environment of suspicion and hostility. This section traces the origins of this antagonism and explores how this homeland crisis polarized immigrant communities here. Conflicts between Macedonians and Greeks in Canada may be traced to the 1930s, a period that coincided with extreme repression of Slavic-speaking Macedonians by the Metaxas government in Greece. This regionalism persisted among immigrants, evident by the plethora of village associations, which limited membership to individuals from the same hometown. Oral histories with early twentieth century Greek migrants and their Canadian-born children indicate that it was not uncommon to find, for example, Peloponnesian Greeks who “would speak of the Cretans in a derogatory way, or hate people from Asia Minor [calling them] ‘Turkish seed.’” In the case of Macedonians, however, this regionalism took on a more antagonistic tone. Canadian-born Spyros Loukidelis recalled that in the years before the

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702 Interview with Spyros Loukidelis. MHSO Greek collection, June 24, 1982.
Second World War, “people of the south and from Athens…looked on themselves as true Greeks. And the people who were from Macedonia, they were often called Bulgarians when they weren’t. They were ethnically Greek.”\textsuperscript{703} Toronto-born Gus Marmon agreed that beginning in the 1930s, Peloponnesian Greeks “looked at the Macedonian people, because they spoke that Slavic language, as Bulgarians.”\textsuperscript{704} The terms “Bulgar” and “Bulgarian” were considered offensive because they called into question northern Greeks’ ethnic identity. Interviewed in the 1970s, Marmon insisted that this animosity “doesn’t exist in Greece” but was “created” in Canada by southern Greeks who treated Greek Macedonians with disdain and viewed them with suspicion.\textsuperscript{705}

If this regionalism began in the early twentieth century, it intensified in the post-World War II period when sizeable numbers of Aegean Macedonians, as part of a larger influx of migration, made their way to Canada following the end of the Greek Civil War. Many of these migrants and their families had earlier suffered persecution during the Metaxas regime when “they were forbidden to speak the language that came naturally to them in their home” and later, during the Civil War, were “suspected of communist sympathies if they served in the army.”\textsuperscript{706} As they settled in Canada they continued to find themselves in a hostile environment where their ethnic allegiances were questioned.\textsuperscript{707} Like many Toronto Greeks, Foussias believes that a number of these migrants initially identified ethnically as Greek and attended the Greek Church, but because they did not speak Greek well or because they were bilingual, they were often

\textsuperscript{703} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{704} Interview with Gus Marmon, MHSO Greek collection, August 1977 and 11 June 1978.
\textsuperscript{705} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{706} Interview with Karas.
targets of disdain by some Toronto Greeks. This was the case for Soklaridis, a Greek Macedonian who worked as medical doctor in Toronto and advertised that his office provided services in English, Greek, and Slavic. In our interview he recalled, “there were those Greeks who were saying I am not Greek…they had even changed my name – ‘Soklarov’ they were calling me.” Observing the Toronto Greek community in the late 1950s, anthropologist Charles Price noted that in disputes among community members it was not uncommon for a Peloponnesian Greek to refer to a Macedonian as “Buglarian,” and further insult the person by using the Slavic version of the Greek name. Such animosity infused other aspects of community life, even rules around courtship, as one second generation Toronto Greek recalled of the 1960s and 1970s: “Macedonians” as dating partners “were totally off-limits; they were [considered] half-breeds, you stuck with your own kind.”

Macedonians in Canada also suffered mistreatment by representatives of the Greek government. Greek consulate officials routinely delayed processing paperwork and passports, and in some cases refused to serve Slavic-speaking Macedonians whose ethnic allegiances were suspect. According to Kostov, this mistreatment went further and involved “Greek diplomats and priests in Toronto… [using] pressure and intimidation to persuade the Slavophones from Aegean Macedonia to declare, at least

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708 Interview with Foussias.
709 Interview with Soklaridis.
711 Interview with Chris (pseudonym) by author, July 11, 2010.
712 Interviews with Foussias, Saras, and Soklaridis; Judith Nagata notes in *English Language Classes for Immigrant Women* that she interviewed Macedonians in Toronto who claimed that they had been “unnecessarily held up in sponsoring relatives from their home village in Macedonia, and that the various Consulates would not investigate. This they attributed to ‘prejudice.’” 45.
publicly, a Greek identity." In particular, Greek authorities blacklisted individuals who expressed an ethnic Macedonian identity. Such blacklisting depended on the involvement of informers who, as Dr. Foussias explained in our interview, “were making a profession out of it” by acting as the “consulates’ ears and eyes” and denouncing anyone they suspected of being “from the other side,” which “created a lot of fear, a lot of frustration.” Charles Price’s observations in the late 1950s supports these claims, as he notes there were “many immigrants who are Slav-Macedonian in sentiment” yet joined, at least temporarily, the Toronto Greek Orthodox Church “so that they can keep the road clear for bringing their relatives to join them, or even to stop their relatives from receiving harsh treatment from Greek authorities in Macedonia. Once their relatives are safe in Canada they then revert to the Slav-Macedonian Community.”

While numbers are difficult to ascertain, it is probable that a fairly sizeable number of migrants who arrived in Canada with Greek passports from the northern Greek region of Macedonia, later joined the Macedonian community, rejecting a Greek ethnic identity altogether. It is likely that a portion of these migrants never identified ethnically as Greek and only felt comfortable declaring their true feelings once in the safety of Canada. Others might have emigrated without a strong sense of national identity at all, as Danforth argues in the case of some Macedonian migrants to Australia before the 1950s who developed a Macedonian identity only after living in Australia. Yet throughout this period, members of Greek Macedonian organizations in Canada asserted,

713 Kostov, Contested Ethnic Identity, 236; Vasiliadis, Whose Are You, 268-269.
714 Kostov, Contested Ethnic Identity, 240.
715 Interview with Foussias.
717 Danforth, Macedonian Conflict, 197-247.
as one writer did in an editorial for the Toronto Greek-language newspaper, *Hellenic Tribune*, that Slavic agitators were using “significant amounts of money to lure and mislead…naïve immigrants.”\(^{719}\) Writing in the early 1970s, Nagata observed that “the ‘Greeks’ assert that many people of their region are being politically seduced by infiltrators and guerrilla activities from Yugoslavia into supporting the Pan-Slavic movement. Many of the ‘Greeks’ are truly amazed that their countrymen can so brazenly reject their Greek heritage in favour of a Slavic one.”\(^{720}\) Several of the Greek community leaders I interviewed expressed similar beliefs, insisting that in most cases migrants arrived in Canada with Greek identities but were persuaded to join the “other side” by the United Macedonian Association who eagerly welcomed them into their fold by providing the newcomers with assistance in finding jobs and housing and in dealing with government bureaucracy, in return for their ethnic allegiance.\(^{721}\) Of course, this assertion that the rejection of a Greek identity was solely the result of Macedonian propaganda ignores the multiple and complicated factors involved in the formation of identity.\(^{722}\)

Against this backdrop, the declaration of one’s ethnic identity became loaded with political significance with implications for the broader communities. Macedonians could declare their identities in a number of ways: by the language they spoke, by the church and community association they joined, but also by the community picnic they attended. Beginning in the 1960s, the Pan-Macedonian Association and the United Macedonian Association began organizing annual summer picnics. Ostensibly, these social outings were for recreational purposes, but they were also political stages for organizers and


\(^{720}\) Nagata, *English Language Classes for Immigrant Women*, 44.

\(^{721}\) Interview with Costas Menagakis by author, September 12, 2012; interview with Dr. Anastassios Karatonis, September 4, 2012, by author; interview with Foussias.

\(^{722}\) See, Danforth, How Can a Woman Give Birth to One Greek and One Macedonian.”
participants to declare their identity. These picnics were usually held on the same day when the Macedonian community celebrated the anniversary of the Illinden Uprising (an unsuccessful revolt against the Ottoman Empire in 1903) and the Greek community celebrated the feast day of Profit Elias. On occasion the picnics were held at the same park, sometimes adjacent to each other. Government officials from Greece and Yugoslavia were often invited to attend the picnics, which were also quite theatrical with both sides trying to outshine the other. Beauty pageants, musical performances, and even helicopter theatrics were used by both groups to “attract as many people as it could.”

In recounting the picnics, Jim Karas explained how they deepened the cleavages between the two communities because “on the Sunday of the picnic, there would be buses lined up along Pape Avenue – there would be dozens of buses, most people didn’t have cars in those days – and you would watch who goes in what bus…it was the war of the buses. It was sort of the earliest declaration of loyalty.” A Toronto Star report similarly observed that on the morning of the 1969 picnic, “[t]here were minor scuffles and shouts of abuse as the opposing groups tried to persuade undecided picnickers to ride in their buses.”

This “war of the buses” served as a public stage for the demarcation of ethnic identity for Toronto immigrants. In this way, the declaration of identity was very much a public spectacle and a political act.

While Greek and ethnic Macedonians were forced to publicly declare an ethnic identity, there was at least one exception to this community pressure. Steve Stavro was a wealthy and well-known Toronto businessman who amassed a fortune with his massive
grocery stores (or ‘food terminals’) Knob Hill Farms. Stavro was a small child when he and his family left their village of Gavro (known as Gabresh in Macedonian) in the northern Greek province of Macedonia to come to Canada in 1934. He was a proud Macedonian – he named one of his racing horses Bucephalos (after Alexander the Great’s horse) and even commissioned an equestrian statue of Alexander to mark his gravesite at Mount Pleasant Cemetery upon his death in April 2006 – yet he never openly declared whether he was Greek or Slavic Macedonian (Figure 4.4). Because of this ambiguity, many Toronto Greeks viewed the successful businessman as a fellow Greek, most evident in their re-naming of Stavro, a point discussed by Foussias who explained that Toronto Greeks “were calling him Stavros” – adding an ‘s’ to the end of his name to make it a Greek surname, “as if he was Greek somehow.”726 Greek Canadian publications, too, identified him as Greek, including the obituaries that listed his place of birth as “Gavro, Macedonia, Greece.”727 Yet unlike his first cousin, John Bitove, who was a major driving force in the United Macedonian Association and who used his personal fortune to fund the Macedonian diaspora lobby, Stavro was silent in his political views on Macedonia and his own ethnic identity. This silence and ambiguity made it possible for both Greeks and Macedonians to claim Stavro as their own, just as they had done with Alexander the Great.

Aside from the annual picnics, the animosity between the two ethnic communities infused other cultural and social celebrations, especially as migrants increasingly mobilized around homeland injustices. Caravan, the multicultural festival held annually in Toronto beginning in 1968, provides a good example of how cultural celebrations

726 Interview with Foussias.
727 “Steve Stavro Former owner of Maple Leafs and Knob Hill Farms, dies at 78,” Emphasis: The magazine that makes you feel proud to be a Greek-Canadian, issue 7, 2006, 21.
became political and how transnational activism exacerbated the strained relationship between the Greek and Macedonian communities. Caravan was touted as “a chance for all to sample some traditions and beliefs of Metro’s ethnic communities.”

Travelling by passports, visitors could assume the role of “world travelers” as they enjoy the “exotic foods, exhilarating drinks, wild folk dancing and singing, floor shows, [and] souvenir hunting” in pavilions throughout the city, usually located in church basements or community centers, and “learn more about the people with whom we share this diverse city.”

A founding member of Caravan praised the festival for giving “the newer Canadian a chance to show his culture and the other Canadians an opportunity to see how rich Canada is because our doors have been open.” Such comments illustrate how neatly Caravan fit within the post-1945 emerging narrative of ethnic pluralism that, as Franca Iacovetta notes, “both celebrated and appropriated ethnic customs through a mosaic discourse that often viewed Canada as a treasure chest collecting enriching talents and folk customs.”

Both Greek and Macedonian communities in Toronto took part in Caravan. Toronto Greeks organized two pavilions: the Athens pavilion at the St. George’s Greek Orthodox Church and the Thessaloniki pavilion at the St. Demetrios Church, while Macedonians organized a Skopje pavilion at the St. Clement of Orchid Cathedral. For Caravan organizers Leon and Zena Kossar, the beauty of the festival was that it fostered diversity and tolerance by helping to “break down barriers by making everyone feel

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welcome in each other’s homes.” Yet the spectacles on display were more than simply folk songs, colourful costumes, and lively dances. In spite of Leon Kossar’s insistence that “Caravan is non political” and that during the nine or ten day festival “[f]rictions are put aside and people go around in a spirit of friendship and getting to know your neighbor,” Caravan was not immune to political debates and controversies, and on a number of occasions community groups attempted to, or were accused of, using Caravan as a platform to promote their political viewpoints.

The Greek and Macedonian pavilions became embroiled in questions of political interests, particularly over the matter of pavilion names and alleged propaganda materials. The contentious issue of names first arose in 1974 when the Macedonian pavilion adopted the title “Skopje-Solun.” Members of the Athens pavilion objected to this name, viewing it as an appropriation of Thessaloniki (Solun “is the Yugoslav name for Thessaloniki”) and an indication that Toronto Macedonians supported territorial ambitions into northern Greece. The pavilion’s name continued to be a problem after the republic’s declaration of independence in 1991. That year, the chairman of the Thessaloniki pavilion threatened to withdraw from Caravan because the Skopje pavilion decided to display a banner that read: “Macedonian Pavilion Skopje.” In his letter to Caravan officials, chairman John Kakagiannis argued that “[t]he Skopje pavilion has no authority to pass itself off as the ‘Macedonian pavilion,’ since we, as the Thessaloniki pavilion, represent Greek-Macedonian culture.” Yet Caravan officials refused to intervene in what they viewed to be “a political squabble between

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733 Ibid.
communities,” but did request the Skopje pavilion only use ‘Macedonia’ in parenthesis. For the chairman of the Skopje pavilion, Vera Jankulov, this was unacceptable: “What can we call ourselves if not Macedonians? We are Macedonians.”

Members of the Greek community also criticized the Skopje pavilion for using the festival to spread propaganda. What Toronto Greeks found particularly alarming was the display of a map at the Skopje pavilion that presented northern Greek territory as belonging to the Republic of Macedonia. Andonis Artemakis, who served as the chairman of the cultural department for the Greek Community of Metropolitan Toronto in the 1980s and was involved in organizing the Greek pavilions, recalled his dispute with the Skopje pavilion over their use of propaganda material. Having heard rumours of the map that showed much of northern Greece, as far down as Larissa, as belonging to the republic, Artemakis went personally to the Skopje pavilion to confirm the situation. There he found both the map as well as pamphlets on the Macedonia issue.

Concerns about Macedonian propaganda continued to unnerve Toronto Greeks following FYROM’s declaration of independence. When the Thessaloniki pavilion threatened to withdraw from Caravan in 1991, John Kakagiannis explained that this was due in part to the Skopje pavilion’s name but also because the pavilion was “distributing literature that was political in nature, and the content of which was highly offensive to Greek Canadians.” Among the most offensive material on display was the map that, according to Kakagiannis “claims half of Greece.” The Greeks’ allegations are confirmed by a Toronto news article that described the Skopje pavilion as having a “map

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736 Ibid.
738 Dispute over names shuts Greek pavilion.”
of Macedonia’s regions before it was disrupted by the Balkan War of 1913...displayed at
the centre of the ballroom while a flag representing the reign of Alexander the Great, king
of Macedonia, hung majestically from the wall, lit by a crimson spotlight.”

The Skopje pavilion’s use of this pre-1913 map, along with images of Alexander the Great,
was denounced by Toronto Greeks who viewed it as a clear attempt to “legitimize
territorial claims” on northern Greece.

The example of Caravan reveals how cultural festivals intended to promote
cultural sharing and minimize tensions between ethnic groups actually became political
battlegrounds for immigrant communities invested in homeland issues. As a multiethnic
festival that purported to bring together diverse groups and promote cultural tolerance
among all Canadians, Caravan fit with the discourse of multiculturalism introduced as an
official policy of the federal government in 1971 by Prime Minister Pierre Trudeau.

Yet, as Neil Bissoondath has argued, such displays represent a commodification of
culture – or as he puts it “Culture Disneyfied” – since a “traditional dance performed on a
stage is not a people’s cultural life but an aspect of it removed from context, shaped and
packaged to give a voyeuristic pleasure.”

That Caravan organizers viewed the festival
as apolitical reveals a fundamental flaw with the underlying ideology and discourse of
multiculturalism. Though such displays of immigrant spectacle were never meant, as

741 Stephen Tierney, ed. Multiculturalism and the Canadian Constitution (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2007);
Evelyn Kallen, “Multiculturalism: Ideology, Policy and Reality,” Journal of Canadian Studies, 17, 1
(Spring 1982) 51-63; Will Kymlicka, Multicultural Citizenship: A Liberal Theory of Minority Rights
(Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1995). Some critics have argued that Trudeau’s vision was nothing more than a
political maneuver to exclude calls for biculturalism while others have viewed the allocation of government
grants to immigrant communities as “vote-catchers.” See, Kenneth McRoberts, Misconceiving Canada: the
Struggle for National Unity (Toronto: Oxford University Press, 1997); Patricia K. Wood and Liette Gilbert,
Journal of Urban and Regional Research, 29-3, (September 2005), 684.
742 Neil Bissoondath, Selling Illusions: The Cult of Multiculturalism in Canada (Toronto, Penguin Books,
2002), 77.
Franca Iacovetta notes in her study of the International Institute, “to challenge the dominant liberal myths of Canada,”\(^{743}\) such “seemingly apolitical activities” were often, as Carmela Patrias concludes in her examination of Hungarian immigrants, “charged with political content.”\(^{744}\) Indeed, Caravan and other folk spectacles were never simply a matter of cultural celebration and sharing but, rather, were complicated by the competing narratives presented by members of immigrant and ethnic communities.

Greeks expressed concern that multiculturalism, as both a “philosophy” that “recognizes, officially, the value of all minority ethnic cultures,” but also a “set of specific programs which allow ethnocultural groups to legitimately request state support,” might serve the interests of the Macedonian lobby.\(^{745}\) In particular, some worried that government grants were being used to perpetuate and legitimate Slavic Macedonian propaganda.\(^{746}\) This was the case in 1982 when the president of the Greek Community of Toronto, Leonidas Polymenakos, criticized the Minister of Multiculturalism Jim Fleming’s decision to approve a financial grant to a Toronto Macedonian publication which, “apart from torturing the truth, contains maps which clearly show territorial claims against Greece.”\(^{747}\)

Commemorative festivals, particularly the celebration of Greek independence from Ottoman rule on March 25, also became sites of transnational protest. Following FYROM’s declaration of independence, large segments of Greek Canadian communities mobilized to urge the Canadian government not to recognize the new republic under the

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\(^{743}\) Iacovetta, “Immigrant Gifts,” 35.

\(^{744}\) Patrias, *Patriots and Proletarians*, 233.


\(^{746}\) Panagakos, “Citizens of the Trans-Nation,” 61.

name of Macedonia. As part of this effort, they infused their annual parades with overtly political messages, as was the case in 1992 when Toronto and Montreal Greeks marched along Danforth Avenue and Jean Talon Street, respectively, carrying placards that read: “No More Hijacking of Greek History,” “We are Macedonians, We are Proud Greeks,” “All Macedonians are Greek and nothing else,” and “Macedonia – 4,000 years of Greek history.”\(^{748}\) Organizers in Montreal explained the purpose of the political placards was to send a message to the federal government not to recognize FYROM as Macedonia, while spectators and participants expressed their own motivations for participating. One Greek Canadian woman told reporters she wanted to “set history straight,” adding that when it came to Macedonia, “[n]obody’s going to take it away from us.”\(^{749}\)

Macedonians, too, utilized the Greek commemorative celebrations for political purposes. During Greek Independence day in Toronto, they regularly staged protests in front of the Greek consulate and at Queen’s Park to demand international recognition for Macedonia, to raise awareness about the mistreatment of Macedonian minorities in northern Greece, and to affirm their Macedonian history and identity. On a few occasions these protests threatened to erupt into violence as Macedonian protesters and Greek revelers clashed in the streets. In March 1990, as 30,000 people converged on Danforth Avenue for the Greek Independence Day parade, a small group of about 200 Macedonians picketed outside the Greek consulate office chanting, “Long live Macedonia! Free our people,” and later booed at Greek parade participants as they entered Nathan Philips Square for a flag-raising ceremony. Protesters objected to the

\(^{749}\) “Macedonia issue dominates.”
mistreatment of Macedonian minorities in Greece and the historically forced Hellenization of Slavic villages. The confrontation, which required the presence of riot-clad police officers, is noteworthy because it illustrates how transnational politics shaped local relations in Canada. Though the protest was ostensibly directed towards the Greek government, news reports that protesters “waited for the Greeks to arrive…pushed past officers and jumped on benches to be heard”\textsuperscript{750} as they shouted and jeered at the Greek procession, reveals how homeland politics polarized Greek and Macedonian communities in Toronto.\textsuperscript{751}

FYROM’s declaration of independence in 1991 marked a turning point for Greek immigrant communities in Canada, igniting a surge of popular interest in the homeland issue. No longer were Greek community leaders the main organizers and spokespersons of the protests. Increasingly, non-elites added their voices to the debate, which began to intervene in various venues. In May 1992, for example, friction between Greek and Macedonian high school students threatened to cancel their school’s multicultural festival. Similar to Caravan, the Greek students objected to the Macedonian students’ use of the name Macedonia for their pavilion.\textsuperscript{752} Greek Canadians staged informal protests at sporting events as well, as was the case during a game at the 1994 World Championship Basketball tournament in Toronto when a group of spectators unfurled an oversized banner that read: “There is only one Macedonia – the Greek Macedonia” before they were whisked away by security guards.\textsuperscript{753}

\textsuperscript{751} Interview with Karantonis.
In addition to the politicization of commemorative and cultural festivals, Greek Canadians also participated in more formal protests over the Macedonia issue. The two largest protests, staged on Parliament Hill in Ottawa in February 1992 and October 2007, were attended by several thousand Greek Canadians who proclaimed, both in the placards they carried and in the slogans they chanted in unison, “Macedonia is Greek.” On both occasions, the protesters were composed of both men and women, immigrant and Canadian-born, from a range of professions and classes, many of whom travelled several hours by bus or car to demand the Canadian government not recognize the “Republic of Skopje” as the “Republic of Macedonia,” insisting that doing so legitimized the cultural appropriation of Greek history and encouraged the republic’s territorial ambitions into Greece.\(^754\) Among the protesters was Stavroula, a 1961 arrival, who journeyed to Ottawa from Toronto with her children. “Macedonia belongs to Greece, there is a whole history,” she asserted in explaining her motives for protesting, adding, “the Canadian government has to see how the history is.”\(^755\) Several of the protest speakers expressed similar views, as did Greek Canadian Liberal Member of Parliament, Jim Karygiannis, who explained of his reason for joining the rally: “People say, what’s in a name? Well, it’s history, man. Alexander the Great was Greek – he was a Macedon but he was Greek…don’t you go changing our history.”\(^756\) Following the rally, the Canadian government upheld the decision to not recognize FYROM as Macedonia, and Greek Canadians hailed the move as a victory, though critics argued that the decision had to do with the Greek community’s larger numbers (the 1991 census lists 151,150 Canadians of

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\(^{754}\) “’Macedonia belongs to Greece’ Thousands in Ottawa claim country’s name ‘stolen,’” Toronto Star, March 1, 1992 A3; see photo in Globe and Mail, March 2, 1992, A7; Interview with Jim Karygiannis by author, August 14, 2012.

\(^{755}\) Interview with Stavroula.

\(^{756}\) Interview with Karygiannis.
Greek origin compared to just 14,030 of Macedonian origin) which enabled them to exert more political muscle. Members of the Macedonian lobby attributed the decision to the government’s pandering to the Greek vote, as John Bitove put it: “They’re just trying to please the Greek community here, which has got nothing to do with the Macedonia question.”

The Greeks’ success was short-lived, however, and by 2007 the Conservative government under Stephen Harper decided to recognize the country as the Republic of Macedonia in bilateral relations. Macedonians welcomed the move while Greeks prepared for another massive protest. Carrying familiar placards, including some that read, “No! To the Falsification of History,” “FYROM is Not Greek,” and “Macedonia is Greek,” Greek protesters converged on Parliament Hill to denounce the federal government’s decision. Once again, protest organizers and participants utilized history to articulate their collective grievances. As the protest took place on October 27, the day before Ohi (No) Day, which commemorates Greece’s resistance to Mussolini in 1940, protester coordinators utilized the language of Ohi to construct a narrative of continuity between Greeks of the past and the Greek community of the present, as one organizer explained: “as a Greek, I feel that every Greek that’s born into this life has the responsibility to protect anything that’s Greek throughout their lives. In 1940 our

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757 Members of the United Macedonians, notably John Bitove, as well as some politicians, including Member of Parliament Chris Axworthy made this point, see, “Liberals bow to pressure on Macedonia,” Toronto Star, March 7, 1994, A3.
758 Ibid.
ancestors said ‘No’ – ‘Ohi’ – to Italy and right now [we] Greeks....have to say No, Ohi, to the decision taken by Mr. Harper. This is why we’re here today.” 760

Whether the official message of the protest was successfully communicated to the Canadian government and public is doubtful. Former presidents of the Greek Community of Toronto and the Pan-Macedonian Association expressed disappointment with the Hellenic Canadian Congress’ organization of the demonstration. Jim Karas called it a “farce” and argued that the demonstration was so poorly organized that it made little impact on Canadian foreign policy: “No press release, no publicist, no invitation to any politicians. It was us speaking to ourselves.” 761 Foussias made similar comments, adding that the protest actually served to harm the cause and the reputation of the Greek Canadian community more generally. Without identifying him by name, both Foussias and Karas referred to a Greek Canadian politician, most likely MP Karygiannis, who in his speech used derogatory language against Prime Minister Harper and who, according to Foussias, “used it as an anti-government rally, rather than a protest with a cause.” 762 Such comments underscore the potential for spectators and participants to subvert the intended or official message of the protest with their own agendas.

The widespread use of new technologies, namely the Internet, also contributed to the decentralization of authority and voice away from community elites. Focusing on a 1992 Greek Macedonian rally in Calgary, Alberta, anthropologist Anastasia Panagakos points to some of the ways that Greek Canadians used new social media as a forum for “ethnic, religious, political, and cultural expression,” as well as a propaganda tool,

761 Interview with Karas.
762 Interview with Foussias.
explaining that the Internet often becomes “a location of nationalist activity and the production of cultural difference based on conflated notions of ‘us’ and ‘them.’”

Websites, personal blogs, and online forums provided technologically savvy immigrants, and especially their Canadian-born children, the means to publicize and project their own views on the protests and the Macedonia issue more generally, allowing them to complicate the official message of the protest and undermine the authority of community leaders who organized the protest and professed to speak on behalf of the majority.

For decades Greek Canadians challenged Macedonians’ claims to Macedonia, but to what extent was this activism a product of intervention or influence by the Greek state? Lina Venturas has argued that for much of the latter half of the twentieth century, and particularly after the return of democracy to Greece in 1974 following the fall of the military dictatorship, the Greek government has taken an active interest in the Greek diaspora. It funded cultural programs abroad, provided immigrant communities with resources for Greek language instruction, and was closely involved in the selection and processing of labour migrants. More recently, the government created a number of transnational organizations to promote positive relations between immigrant communities and the homeland, including the General Secretariat for Greeks Abroad (GSGA) in 1983 and, more recently, the World Council for Hellenes Abroad (SAE) established in 1995. According to Venturas, the establishment of SAE reveals the Greek state’s “desire

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to control the diaspora,” arguing that the government’s concern “is not so much to look after the ‘omogeneis’ living far beyond Greece’s borders, as to create conditions conducive to their mobilization in order to promote the national, economic and other objectives set by the ‘national centre.’” 766 In the case of the Macedonian issue, there is evidence that the Greek government recognized the value of the diaspora in promoting its views and worked to cultivate transnational ties. In the 1980s, for example, the president of Greece, Constantine Karamanlis, reportedly called Greek immigrant communities “the largest and most powerful weapon which Hellenism possesses” and urged them to mobilize in response to “the gross falsification of Macedonian history.” 767 Yet in my interviews with members and former presidents of various Greek organizations in Toronto, there was a general consensus that while the Greek consulates supported the Pan-Macedonian associations and attended their social and cultural events, they did not, as Foussias put it, “openly and publicly challenge the issue of Slav Macedonians” until well into the 1980s. 768 Thomas Saras, the publisher of *Patrides*, explained in our interview that for most of the 1960s and 1970s he was “under attack” by members of Greek diplomacy who wished to silence his efforts to raise the alarm against Slavic propaganda concerning Macedonia. 769 Their accounts suggest that Greek immigrants in Canada were working independently of the desires and directives of the Greek state.

Even after FYROM’s declaration of independence in 1991, there continued to be cases of disagreement between the Greek state and the Greek diaspora on the issue of Macedonia. Notably, in July 1997 Greece’s Foreign Minister Theodoros Panagalos was

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766 Venturas, “‘Deterritorialising’ the Nation,” 136. The term ‘omogeneis’ refers to people of the same birth or origin.
768 Interview with Foussias.
769 Interview with Saras.
quoted in a *New York Times* article calling for a resolution to the name issue, stating, “I want to get rid of this problem because there is no substance to it.”\textsuperscript{770} In response, Pan-Macedonian Associations of the United States and Canada demanded Panagalos’ resignation and called his comments, “irresponsible and unacceptable for our national interests.”\textsuperscript{771} Such comments suggest that while the Greek government worked to promote interest in homeland affairs among the Greek diaspora, its involvement in the Macedonia issue was uneven. Greek Canadian engagement in the Macedonia conflict was not simply the product of intervention or influence by the Greek state but, rather, was shaped by their interactions and disputes with Macedonian activists in their local communities.

**Conclusion**

The Toronto Greeks who rallied in response to the Macedonia issue viewed themselves as defending not only the cultural and territorial sovereignty of their homeland, but also their own identities from what they considered to be highly offensive and dangerous propaganda by members of the Slavic Macedonian diaspora in their city. It was as immigrants in Canada, beginning in the 1950s, that Greeks first encountered competing claims to Macedonia by vocal and highly politicized individuals, many of whom experienced harsh repression at the hands of the Greek state and who, once in the safety of Canada, identified themselves ethnically and nationally as Macedonian but not Greek. What followed was a sporadic but deeply impassioned public campaign by


members of both diasporic communities to stake their claims to Macedonia. In public squares and city streets, and in the pages of the press, members of the opposing groups engaged in tense debates on this homeland conflict, frequently appropriating history, particularly the figure of Alexander the Great, to bolster their respective positions. Civic and commemorative parades, as well historical monuments, became key battlegrounds in the disputes as members of both groups, but especially community elites privileged by gender, education and/or class, accused the other side of falsifying history and appealed to the broader Canadian public to accept their script as the truth.

The Macedonia question compelled Greeks and Macedonians in Canada to join a transnational public dialogue on the meaning of their ethnic and national identity. Decades before the breakup of Yugoslavia and the establishment of the Republic of Macedonia, Greeks in Toronto were actively engaged in this issue, even when the Greek government and its representatives in Canada were largely silent. After the 1991 declaration of independence when the newly formed state set out to gain international recognition, widespread opposition emerged in Greece and throughout the diaspora, and in Canada large numbers of Greeks from across class, gender, and generational lines, joined mass protests denouncing the republic’s use of the Macedonian name and history. Increasingly, non-elites contributed their voices to the transnational movement, occasionally staging their own informal protests.

This homeland conflict took on a particular form in the diaspora, and in Toronto it engendered deep divisions between immigrant communities, as individuals from both sides argued over who may claim Macedonian identity. Those who emigrated from northern Greece and who had previously viewed their identity in fluid terms – that is, not
easily captured by the strict boundaries of language or nation – were now compelled to
clearly declare their ethnic allegiance in the highly contested terrain of community
picnics and festivals. In the context of multiculturalism, some Greeks expressed concern
about the use of government funds and multicultural festivals in legitimizing
Macedonians’ misuse of history. In their efforts to position themselves as the true
Macedonians, Greek activists appropriated strategic spaces in their city to project their
message and police the self-identification of members on the opposing side. Clearly,
their construction of a diasporic political identity was profoundly shaped not just by
homeland affairs but by local conditions in Toronto.
Conclusion

Reflecting on his enduring relationship to Greece, John Stratus, a 1909 arrival to North America who spent most of his life in Toronto, explained to a researcher in a 1978 interview: “You feel, well, you don’t forget your mother country. No matter how stupid a person could be, you never forget about the country you were born and raised.”772 Yet, Stratus’ suggestion that continued ties to a national homeland are an automatic or natural outcome of migration conceal the more complicated nature of transnationalism demonstrated in his own experiences and those of his compatriots. Having emigrated as a young man from a rural village in the early years of the twentieth century, it is unlikely that Stratus arrived with a deeply entrenched national identity but developed it later as an immigrant. In Toronto he and others of his generation sent remittances to family in the “old country,” contributed financial support to the hometown, kept informed about homeland political affairs through letters and Greek-language North American newspapers, and practiced many of the cultural and religious rituals that structured and gave meaning to their lives in Greece. Yet, transnational linkages could also be uneven and shaped not solely by events in the homeland but by conditions in Canada as well. Motivations often differed, as did the results – in some cases, transnationalism produced tangible improvements, both locally and nationally, yet at other times immigrants’ activism made little discernable difference to conditions in Greece. While many immigrants framed their continued homeland ties in terms of a strong allegiance and love for Greece, this thesis has drawn attention to the ways that engagement in transnational practices and politics contributed to the construction of a diasporic identity and mediated

772 Interview with John Stratas. MHSO, Greek Collection, 30 March 1978/11 May 1978.
immigrants’ relationship with the homeland, with other groups in the diaspora, and with the host society. Focusing on Greek Canadians’ use of public performances, notably political protests, parades, commemorative and cultural celebrations, as well as newspapers, both Greek and English language North American publications, this thesis demonstrates how transnationalism drew Greek immigrants and their Canadian-born children into a public dialogue on questions of history, identity, and their collective relationship to a homeland they did not physically inhabit.

Like other immigrant groups, Greeks in Canada engaged in various forms of transnationalism. Remittances provided families in Greece with capital to invest in property, agricultural equipment, and livestock, but also contributed to the formation of more consumerist societies by injecting an influx of cash, allowing the migrants’ families to purchase items of luxury and convenience, and helping to build new or improve infrastructure in the hometown. Economic linkages transformed the lives of those who remained behind, but also helped perpetuate traditional practices, such as providing female kin with dowries for marriage. Greek immigrants also contributed life-saving humanitarian relief, particularly during the Second World War when they raised millions of dollars’ worth of food and supplies and convinced their government to donate shiploads of Canadian wheat to Greeks starving under Axis-occupation. Such economic aid produced tangible results in Greece, but also allowed immigrants in Canada to fulfil familial obligations and, especially in the case of the Greek War Relief Fund, served as a vehicle to counter prevailing nativist stereotypes of Greeks as undesirable with more positive portraits that privileged their ethnicity and demonstrated their compatibility with Canadian values.
Homeland political crises mobilized sizeable numbers of Greek immigrants in protest. In response to the 1967 military coup in Athens, Greek Canadians formed resistance groups to oppose the dictatorship and raise awareness about the regime among the broader Greek community and the Canadian public. They appealed to the Canadian government to sever all ties with the regime and to pressure the junta leaders to restore democratic rule. The emergence of the Macedonia issue also prompted Greeks to publicly challenge competing claims to Macedonia and stake their ownership over particular historical symbols. Reacting to the 1991 declaration of independence by the Republic of Macedonia, Greeks urged the Canadian government to not recognize the state by that name. In both cases, activists organized political demonstrations on strategic and symbolic spaces in their cities. In Toronto, the grounds of Queen’s Park, City Hall, and various public squares and streets were utilized to cast homeland issues as subjects worthy of the broader Canadian public’s attention and action. Cultural, civic, and commemorative festivities were also appropriated and invested with political significance by Greeks wishing to aid the homeland and express their own views by supporting or subverting the official messages of the celebrations. While concern over homeland affairs could unite immigrants together under a common cause, more commonly it engendered ideological and political strife, and exacerbated existing regional or class divisions.

Most of the transnational activity discussed in this thesis has dealt with public forms of homeland activism. It has demonstrated how political conflicts or humanitarian crises in Greece became localized in the diaspora and how Greek Canadians took their concerns to the public space of city streets and squares, and the pages of the press, to
mobilize broader support for their cause. Some were motivated by past experiences of repression in Greece, while others were politicized as immigrants in Canada, in large part by Greek-language North American newspapers that provided information on homeland affairs as well as polemical editorials by middle-class or intellectual elites, and served as a springboard for discussion and debate for Greek readers. In their efforts to assist the homeland, Greeks recognized that it was precisely as immigrants – as Greeks living beyond the borders of the state and particularly as citizens of a democratic country – that made them well positioned to contribute meaningful material and moral aid to Greece.

Yet, in acting transnationally these Greeks were not solely responding to homeland crises but to particular conditions in their local neighbourhoods as well. The 1967 military dictatorship roughly coincided with the development of the anti-Vietnam war protests, which Toronto and Montreal Greeks joined, borrowed from, and appropriated for their own purposes. Anti-junta Greeks organized demonstrations that opposed the regime in Athens and the Canadian government for continuing relations with the dictators, while also criticizing the junta’s Greek Canadian supporters and alleged informers operating in their cities. Long before the Republic of Macedonia’s 1991 declaration of independence, Greeks mobilized in response to the vocal Macedonian lobby in Toronto which they believed was spreading harmful propaganda that threatened their own identity. Nativism in the first half of the twentieth century and the emergence of multiculturalism in the second half also significantly informed the contours of their homeland activism.

Of course, there were limits to this transnationalism. In most cases, Greek immigrants were largely unsuccessful in shaping Canadian policy. Despite their appeals
following the Asia Minor Catastrophe of 1922, immigration officials steadfastly refused to admit Greek refugees to Canada because they did not fit the criteria as agriculturalists or domestics. Several decades later, anti-junta Greeks urged the Canadian government to take a strong stance against the military regime, but it only did so when widespread international opposition made the junta’s human rights violations difficult to ignore. In the case of Macedonia, the Canadian government agreed to abide by the decision of international bodies to identify the state as the Former Republic of Macedonia (FYROM) until the name dispute could be resolved, though in September 2007 the Harper government quietly decided to recognize the state as the Republic of Macedonia in bilateral relations, a move that Macedonians hailed as a victory but which prompted several thousand Greeks to register their opposition in a protest on the grounds of Parliament Hill.

If Greeks were generally ineffective in shaping Canadian foreign policy, their ability to inform broader public opinion is less clear. Certainly, many of the individuals involved in the various transnational campaigns believed that their actions alerted Canadians as to the conditions and conflicts in Greece. Some of the Toronto leaders of the anti-junta movement and Macedonia affair insist that by the sheer number of the protesters and the media coverage that some of their larger demonstrations attracted, they succeeded in drawing public attention to their cause. Yet, as the example in chapter four of the Greek parade participants holding a banner of Alexander the Great at the Windsor Centennial suggests, non-Greeks unfamiliar with the issues at stake may not have necessarily considered or even understood the intended political meanings of the various performances.
Another limitation was that not all Greeks participated equally in these transnational activities. Throughout the twentieth century, women and working-class men made important contributions to the various transnational movements, but their voices were constrained by gender and class hierarchies that privileged middle-class, upwardly mobile, or highly educated immigrant men who claimed to represent the will of the majority of Greeks in their cities and who took leading roles in organizing the various campaigns. Significantly, at key moments sizeable numbers of Greeks joined in the transnational activities, but aside from the small groups of dedicated activists, Greek immigrant participation in homeland affairs may best be characterized as intermittent or uneven. In some instances, large segments of the Greek communities avoided political protests altogether, as was the case with the anti-junta movement when some Greeks abstained because they feared that publicly opposing the regime would lead to retribution against them or their family, or because they were preoccupied with work and familial obligations to play an active role.

Still, even if the transnational campaigns fell short of capturing their immediate goals, or that not all Greeks formally joined the protests or other performances, most Greeks were profoundly shaped by this transnationalism. The public performances and newspapers that made homeland concerns visible and relevant, served to draw the broader communities of Greeks into a public dialogue on the meaning of Greekness, historical memory, and cultural ownership. If, as Michael Warner outlines, publics “exist by virtue of being addressed” and are “social space[s] created by the reflexive circulation of discourse,” among other characteristics, it is clear that participation in transnational acts played a significant role in the formation of a collective public sphere for
Certainly, it served as a catalyst for Greeks to consciously and publicly consider their relationship to Greece, Canada, other immigrant groups, and each other, and provided them a public stage from which to refashion and project their ethnic and national identities. Each of the four chapters of this thesis demonstrates how, by engaging in homeland practices and politics, Greek Canadians transcended geographical distances to imaginatively, materially, and symbolically inhabit a transnational space through which they collectively negotiate the meaning of a Greek diasporic identity.

In probing the ways that immigrants acted locally in response to transnational concerns, this thesis contributes to a number of historiographies. It adds to studies on the formation of collective and national identities, community mobilization and conflict, humanitarian relief aid, processes of politicization, the appropriation of historical symbols and scripts, and the mediating role of immigrant elites and the valuable, though limited, participation of women and working-class men. It highlights the need for migration historians to historicize transnational networks and practices, and move beyond national paradigms to consider the discursive and material landscape that immigrants created that were not bound by, but continued to be shaped by, nations. It demonstrates the importance of analyzing immigrant public performances, since they were more than simply sources of recreation or outlets for patriotic expression, but complex and conflicting arenas for political debate that both reflected and created opinion. The findings of this study suggest the value of making transnationalism, and particularly making the ways immigrants and their children continually construct a diasporic identity and public space, a central subject of study.

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Interviews

Beginning in November 2008 I began interviewing working-class Greeks and, as per the ethics review protocol, pseudonyms were used for all of the interviewees. Under a separate ethics protocol beginning in July 2012, I began a second batch of interviews with members and organizers of various Greek associations and other public figures. In most cases, their real names are used.

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Arianna (pseudonym) interviewed by author, August 28, 2010.
Artemakis, Andonis, interviewed by author, August 29, 2012.
Cassandra (pseudonym) interviewed by author, December 6, 2009.
Chris (pseudonym) interviewed by author, July 11, 2010
Daphne (pseudonym) interviewed by author, August 28, 2010.
Eleni and Lina (pseudonyms) interviewed by author June 6, 2009.
Elias (pseudonym) interviewed by author, July 26, 2009.
Evangelos (pseudonym) interviewed by author, July 12, 2009.
Fotini (pseudonym) interviewed by author, September 28, 2010.
Foussias, Athanassios, interviewed by author, August 29, 2012.
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