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**Debating the Greek Educational Reform of
1964: The Press and the Politics of Change**

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ABSTRACT

This work aspires to demonstrate the close correlation of educational conceptions with ideological positions and political attitudes. Even more, it aims to reveal how education is used as a means of national identity building, and as a mechanism of political legitimacy for ruling groups who seek to perpetuate through it their dominant position in the society. In this context, my thesis focuses on the educational reform of 1964 and the loaded public debate that accompanied its introduction. I will explore how its radical measures challenged dominant notions and established interests of Greek society, and thus they were perceived as a severe threat by the political and institutional *status quo*.

The public field where all these factors dynamically interplayed was the Athenian press. The latter is used as my main ‘methodological instrument’ given that it did not only constitute the arena where this intense debate refolded, but also escalated to a crucial agent who reinforced the pressure to the newly elected government. My conclusion will depict that the reform of 1964 was “doomed” to be abolished as it could not transcend the suffocating political climate and deep rooted nationalistic ideology that permeated Greek society. However, as it will be shown, its liberal principles not only survived, but when the broader context of the Greek public sphere was redefined, they managed to become integral part of education.

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Introduction

The postwar period from 1945 to the military dictatorship of 1967 constitutes a catalytic era for the modern history of Greece. The intense political debate, the constant changes in power, the control and violence exercised by the state apparatus, the deep transformation of the economy and society, and lastly the imposition of dictatorship, marked the future development of the country and consolidated social and ideological divisions. The polarized climate after the defeat of the communist army in the Civil War, and the dominance of the West-supported Right governments, became the decisive factors that defined the manifestations and developments of the public sphere.

The transition to the 1960s initiated a number of significant and multilayer transformations in Greek society expressed through the increasing public demands for reforms, democratization, social justice and modernization of education. Especially the latter, operating for a long period in the suffocating climate of political intensities, was unable to proceed to the required reforms that would allow her to cope with the new social and economic developments.

The key event for all the parts of the population who were socially marginalized during the post Civil War period, due to their communist political beliefs, came in an emphatic way with the double national elections of November 1963 and February 1964 and the unconditional victory of the 'Union Center' party. The election of a non-right party for the first time after the Civil War, in combination with the appointment of the well respected, moderate politician George Papandreou as Prime Minister of the country, diffused a feeling of optimism for an essential shift in the country's political and social setting. A few months later, the newly

elected government announced, as one of its first major initiatives, a new reform effort in the Greek educational system and brought to Parliament a bill that planned to radically restructure all three levels of public education. This thesis focuses on the measures of this reform and aims to explore the public debate that accompanied its introduction.

More specifically, despite the political consensus for the restructuring of Greek education, as evidenced in the party platform of the elected officials the attempt of the 1964 educational reform generated a stimulating discourse, including a cascade of fierce reactions. Over the following months, a variety of academics, politicians or even institutions, like the University of Athens and the Church, sharply opposed the reform as they found its measures not only educationally inefficient but also unpatriotic, “aiming at eroding the noble ideas of nation, language and religion.” On the other hand, a number of liberal prominent figures, most of whom were closely engaged to the reform either as members of the government or actively participating in its articulation, contested the criticism and supported with passion the content and aims of the reform. A third, ‘balancing’ pole, was composed from personalities that expressed leftish and broader socialist theoretical views. These scholars offered a critical stance towards the reform either by welcoming its revival spirit and progressive orientation, or by criticizing a number of measures that - according to them - were not quite radical and groundbreaking.

The central arena where this loaded debate unfolded was the Athenian press. In this context, I conducted an extensive research focusing on an extensive number of articles of all three sides, published by the three most popular Athenian newspapers, which covered the ideological and political spectrum of the period. The first, *To Vima*, represented the centre and liberal voices who supported the reform, the second, *H Kathimerini*, expressed the opinions of

conservative and right-wing groups who opposed it, while the third, *H Avgi*, was the official voice of leftish and socialist elements of the public sphere who offered their ‘Marxist view’ to the reform. My analysis sheds light on how each newspaper portrayed the educational measures emphasizing those which turned to be the more controversial.

Furthermore, the press coverage, on one hand, will reveal the key role of the press in mobilizing the people and acting as a crucial agent of the broader discourse, and on the other, will clearly depict that the debate was not limited to technical or strictly educational issues. Given that a number of the reform’s measures openly questioned long standing dominant ideologies, and established political interests deriving from them, the intense controversies recorded in the press soon became a microcosm of the wider latent divisions in Greek society.

Apart from the three Athenian newspapers, which constituted the primary sources of my research, this work was also enriched by a broad variety of fruitful journals and books, primarily written by distinguished historians of education, sociologists or even political scientists. More specifically, the works of the historian of education Sifis Bouzakis constitute a reference point in the field as he emphasized the educational policies that G. Papandreou introduced and promoted during his long political career, while he has made an insightful survey in the educational reforms of the 20th century focusing on their contents and goals. A similarly stimulating view has been added by the sociologist Anna Fragoudaki and pedagogue Christos Noutsos, who have stressed the ideological parameters of various educational reforms revealing that there is no educational endeavor which can be considered ideologically neutral or can be understood detached from the wider prevalent politico - ideological perceptions of the society. Moreover, the noteworthy works of prominent political theorists like Nikos Alivizatos, Hlias Nikolakopoulos and Konstantinos Tsoukalas, although they do not directly focus on

educational issues, thoroughly explore critical social, political and economic aspects of this period, which are necessary to be known in order for someone to comprehend in depth the broader complex conditions in which the 1964 reform took place.

However, in most of the works described, the reform of 1964 is usually not perceived as a central topic, but rather as a link in the long chain of educational reforms that occurred during the 20th century in Greece. Furthermore, it is approached more as a clearly educational issue with the emphasis given to technical and ‘functional’ aspects such as changes made in the curriculum, aims, content and pedagogical methods of educational system. Therefore, what my thesis aspires to add is to extend these previous fruitful works by unraveling the common thread that connected the 1964 educational reform with broader political and institutional mechanisms, and ideological axioms of this period. As my research will demonstrate, the radical character and ‘subversive nature’ of the 1964 reform’s measures clearly came into contradiction with broader dominant notions of Greek society and the powerful elites behind them. Even though it challenged them, it did not develop the dynamic to deconstruct them as it lacked the necessary social support and ideological identification of the population. Inevitably, this led to the gradual undermining and final withdrawal of the educational reform a year later. In this effort to show how all these factors interplayed with several measures of the reform, press will be ‘used’ as my main ‘methodological vehicle’ given that it constituted the public field which depicted but also reinforced this loaded debate.

Nevertheless, I should stress some limitations concerning the time and the space of this research. I focused on articles exclusively published by the Athenian press, although there were a number of newspapers in the countryside that also contributed to the broader debate. However, Athens, as the capital of the country and centre of the political decisions, was the one

giving the paradigm and the place where this debate took its more acute form. Furthermore, my research did not extend chronically more than eight months after the government's official announcement on April 1964 to launch the educational reform, as this was the most turbulent period and thus, it included the most frequent publications of articles regarding the educational discourse. However, the public discussion continued, albeit less intensely, till the summer of 1965, when Prime Minister George Papandreou, after the defection of few of its party's members and the arbitrary political intervention of the King, was forced to resign, marking the "beginning of the end" for the reform.

Regarding the structure of my thesis, in the first chapter I will delineate the major political and educational developments of the period from the end of the Civil War in 1949 till 1964 when the educational reform was introduced by the newly elected government of George Papandreou. The main characteristic of this period was the political sovereignty of the Right, which capitalized its unconditional victory in the Civil War, but also the social alienation of the parts of the society which supported the communist side. On the other hand, education, apart from the severe lack of funding, faced the heavy control of the state which determined its orientation and pedagogical aims.

In the second chapter, I will focus on the ideological aspects of the reform. First an analysis will be conducted concerning the formation and consolidation of Greek national identity from the very first steps of the modern Greek state's establishment, and especially the key role that education played in its reproduction. The demonstration of the Greek state's systematic effort to codify its national identity inseparable from Orthodox religion and ancient glorious civilization will facilitate the explanation of why particular measures of the reform - by renegotiating this identification - caused public debate and controversies. The second part of

the chapter will reveal the challenge and problems that the architects of the reform faced in their attempt to “bridge” ideologically their liberal educational program with the prevailing nationalistic state rhetoric in a manner that would not raise strong opposition from the latter and would give them the opportunity to achieve the necessary social legitimization.

The third part, based on my research on articles published in the three major Athenian newspapers from April to November 1964, focuses on the debate that several measures of the reform raised. The frequency of the articles referring to the 1964 reform, and the diversity and sharpness of the arguments they include, will reveal, on one hand, the ‘spiritual mobilization’ the measures caused, and on the other, how this loaded discourse was politically and ideologically colored, mainly by the right-wing opposition.

Last, the fourth chapter, also derived from my research in the press of this period, examines the newly introduced in schools history textbook ‘Roman and Medieval History’, as a characteristic case of the controversy refolded in the press and the catalytic impact that the systematic attacks of the opposition caused. The chapter ends tracing the gradual deconstruction of the 1964 reform, after the resignation of G. Papandreou’s government on July 1965, and the establishment of the military dictatorship nearly two years later as the outcome of the prolonged political crisis and weak democratic institutions of the state.

Some final conclusions will be drawn based both on the rich bibliography and the research. The analysis of the political conditions and the dominant ideological dogmas, as depicted in the press debate of this period, will disclose that the fate of the reform’s radical measures were in a sense ‘doomed’ not to survive for long. However, its humanitarian values and democratic principles were meant to revive a few years later, when the rapid political and

ideological developments essentially changed the broader context of Greek society in the 1970s.

1. The interplay of politics and education, 1950 - 1964

1.1. Developments in the political scene

In the beginning of the 1950s, Greece was still struggling to recover from the traumatic effects of the Civil War, which had ended with the indisputable victory of the government army over the communists. The following years were marked by various political upheavals and fermentations such as frequent elections, foundation of new political parties, and emergence of new political personalities. The Right capitalized its emphatic victory in the Civil War with the establishment of its political sovereignty, initially with the election of National Alert Party in 1952, and from 1955, with Karamanlis' National Radical Unity (E.R.E) for eleven consecutive years (1952-1963).

People's suffering due to the tragic effects of the civil war, political manipulations of the electoral systems, and economic and moral pressures on the population, ensured the Rights' governance which vindicated the full control of the state, both in its ideological and socioeconomic aspects. Their electoral power and political hegemony were primarily based on the new urban middle strata that had emerged and become prosperous in the 1940s. This new-formed middle class aspired to undertake the social, economic and political management of the state's 'reconstruction' and development, a major mobilizing project and political priority of the 1950s.¹ Moreover, the expansion of the public sector (meaning the, direct or indirect,

¹ This emerging middle class saw the influx of the huge 'Marshall Plan' funds as one more opportunity of gaining economic profits. "The opportunistic character of this class did not facilitate the formulation of a national economic development plan, but simply preserved and reproduced the existence of this "emergent' situation."

dependence of more people from the state), and the central role of the new middle strata in it, consolidated their power and transformed them into the main pole of the Right's sovereignty until the early 1960s.²

Moving left in the political spectrum, on August 1951, the United Democratic Left (E.D.A) was founded, absorbing almost all the small parties of the Left. E.D.A took advantage of the created political vacuum, which was previously covered by the parties that cooperated closely with National Liberation Front (E.A.M), the main leftist movement of resistance during WW2.³ Resistance and the Civil War were defined as the political symbols of the Left; thus, any reference to them constituted their main unifying elements. The creation of a second, 'national' party coming from the political pool of the centre, gave the opportunity to E.D.A to expand by giving political expression to the left-wing populations, which remained socially alienated, and excluded from every kind of sociopolitical developments. As Ioanna Papathanasiou pointed out, "E.D.A's political presence and interference gave voice to all those who composed the communist 'anti-society', and lived with the constant fear of repression and violence."⁴

The political strengthening of E.D.A was demonstrated for first time in the municipal elections of 1954, and escalated in various elections until 1962. The result of 1958 national election, when E.D.A took 24.42% of the votes, revealed that its political appeal was not

H. Nikolakopoulos, *H kahektiki dimokratia, politika kommata kai ekloges, 1946-1967*, [The stunted democracy: political parties and elections, 1946-1967], (Athens: Patakis, 2001), pp.33-34.

² K. Tsoukalas, *Kratos, kinonia kai ergasia sti metapolemiki Ellada*, [State, society and work in postwar Greece], (Athens: Themelio, 1996), pp.91-102.

³ H. Nikolakopoulos, *H kahektiki dimokratia*, [The stunted democracy], p.234.

⁴ I. Papathanasiou, *Enomeni Dimokratiki Aristera 1951-1967*, [United Democratic Left 1951-1967], (Athens: National Centre of Social Research, 2001), p.27.

confined to certain urban areas, but it rather diffused to the whole country.⁵ E.D.A, in less than ten years after the end of the Civil War succeeded, despite the adverse conditions, to become the main opposition party with all the connotations that such a fact could raise during the Cold War.

What should be also stressed is that the so-called ‘emergency’ measures, introduced during the Civil War, were maintained, as they aimed at controlling and repressing the ‘non-national’ citizens.⁶ The ‘emergency’ laws of the post Civil War state were directed not only against the communists, but extended to every kind of dissidents. The state itself marginalized communism as an outlawed political power, while theories of the so called ‘ongoing Civil War’⁷ were used as a legitimization tool to the continuing persecutions of population groups that were not considered as ‘patriots’.⁸ Thus, the legislative arsenal of the Civil War period 1946-1949 continued to be almost fully implemented, while ‘security measures’ constituted the landmark of the repressive legislative mechanism of the 1950s.⁹ Among these were the conviction of those who took part in the Civil War, massive arrests of dissidents, deportations of citizens with ‘suspicious political beliefs’ and deprivation of their nationality,

⁵ Ibid., p.245.

⁶ N. Alivizatos, *Politiki thesmi se krisi, 1922-1974: Opsis tis Ellinikis empirias*, [Political institutions in crisis, 1922-1974: Aspects of the Greek experience], (Athens: Themelio, 1995), pp.523, 578.

⁷ The basic argument for the construction of this ‘case law’ was that no agreement was signed between the government and the communist army for the end of the conflicts and the capitulation of the latter; therefore, the end of the war was not officially declared with a legislative provision. Furthermore, the right-wing governments constantly raised the threat of a new conspiracy against the nation orchestrated by the part of the communists who fled abroad. Legally, the Civil War ended in 1962.

Ibid., pp 583-586.

⁸ Ibid.

⁹ J. Meynaud, *Political Forces in Greece 1946-1965*, (Athens: Byron Press, 1965), pp.172-181.

systematization of police repression, radical cleansing of the state administration from the leftish, and restrictions in workers' right to strike.¹⁰

Consequently, the Constitution of 1952 regulated only the superficial part of the relations between state and society, while the more essential ones were determined by these 'emergency' measures, which constituted an unofficial deviation from Constitution and were addressed to the 'non-national' citizens. In fact, the criterion of the state's nationalistic ideology for dividing and discriminating against the citizens was not their actions, but their political beliefs.¹¹ In this sense, the Constitution throughout this period could only ostensibly be described as a 'Monarchical Parliamentary Democracy', given that the real power was in the hands of para-parliamentary forces such as the army, the king and his entourage, the police and secret services.¹² This aggressive and suppressive state policy, which applied to all aspects of public life, on one hand, forged an autocratic regime of 'limited democracy'- a para-constitution, as the political scientist Nikos Alivizatos calls it - and, on the other, allowed to coercive mechanisms and the army ensuring their constant presence in policy.

Nevertheless, the 1960s featured a number of ruptures with the past as for the first time the political sovereignty of the Right started being seriously challenged. This was manifested with an increasing social mobilization for the democratization of the society, and triggered the reaction of the right-wing government of K. Karamanlis who slipped into more autocratic

¹⁰ K. Tsoukalas, *Kratos, kinonia kai ergasia sti metapolemiki Ellada*, [State, society and work in postwar Greece], (Athens: Themelio, 1996) p. 32.

¹¹ N. Alivizatos, *Politiki thesmi se krisi*, [Political institutions in crisis], p. 677.

¹² In his influential work about the political powers of Greece, J. Meynaud pointed out that "Greece, on the political level, resembles a democracy dominated by fascist characteristics." J. Meynaud, *Political Forces in Greece*, p.23.

forms of rule, mirrored in the strengthening of para-state organizations, the exercise of pre-election violence and the systematic persecutions against the Left.¹³

In September 1961 the Union Center (E.K) was founded by George Papandreou including political formations of liberals and moderates, but also socialist figures that had taken part on the side of the ‘Democratic Army’ (communists) in the Civil War.¹⁴ The Union Center constituted the alternative among the two political poles of E.R.E and E.D.A. Although, it was ideologically identified with the winners of the Civil War, as it reproduced the arguments for the ‘communist danger’, the Union Center proclaimed that its successful combat would not be achieved with violence and terrorism, but through the ‘rational oblivion’ of the past, and the implementation of a broad program of economic development.¹⁵ The Union Center’s major political claim was ‘democracy’, albeit, with no distinct social connotations, which could hence lead to various interpretations and include diverse ideological trends.

The establishment of the Union Center coincided with the date of 1961 elections in which E.R.E was declared the first party (50, 81% of national votes); however the result of the elections was strongly contested by the opposition parties, which accused the government of fraud.¹⁶ The charges for the lack of validity in the election results got widespread publicity and became a central argument of the opposition parties. The second major accusation concerned the intimidation and violence exercised mainly in the countryside against the voters for the Union Center. The acute parliamentary battle, expressed in Papandreou’s direct challenge of

¹³ A characteristic example was Manolis Glezos, general secretary of E.D.A and director of the newspaper *H Avgi*, who, after accused of being a spy of the Soviet Union, was arrested and convicted to five years of imprisonment. See H. Nikolakopoulos, *H kahektiki dimokratia...*, [The stunted democracy...], p.274

¹⁴ N. Svoronos, *Episkopisi tis sihronis istorias*, [Overview of Modern History], (Athens: Themelio, 1999), p. 148.

¹⁵ H. Nikolakopoulos, *Apo to telos tou emfiliou polemou stin anodo tis Enosis Kentrou*, [From the end of the civil war to the rise of the Union Centre], (Athens: History of the Greek Nation, Modern Hellenism from 1941 until the end of the century, vol. XVI, Editorial, 2000), p. 202.

¹⁶ H. Nikolakopoulos, *H kahektiki dimokratia...*, [The stunted democracy...], pp. 276-277.

E.R.E's governmental legitimacy, converted into a wider confrontation through massive public protests which offered space to the compressed social discontent. The political crisis came to its peak with the assassination of the leftish MP Giorgios Lamprakis by anticommunist groups which had the assistance of police members.¹⁷ His funeral transmuted into a massive political demonstration having as central demand the restoration of the democratic institutions.

In this loaded context, the elections taking place at the beginning of the 1960s were carried out in a reformed political scene. The consolidation of the Union Center, transformed the dichotomy between 'patriots' and 'non-patriots' into one between 'Right' and 'anti-Right', with Papandreou's party becoming the main pole of a wider anti-Right alliance. For the latter, the 'state of the Right', with all its negative connotations, had to be abolished in order for a democratic parliamentary regime to be established. This political transformation presupposed a 'democratic rupture' that would remove all kind of coercive mechanisms and social exclusions.¹⁸

Therefore, the 1960s marked the conscious attempt of large parts of the population to struggle for a transition from what they experienced as an authoritarian and oppressive regime to democracy and political stability.¹⁹ Twelve years after the end of the Greek Civil War, the Greek society demanded a series of civil rights and political freedoms that were constantly circumvented. From 1960 onwards, the dynamic of democratization was such that the state's repressive practices could not anymore be implemented with the extension and intensity of the past decade. This process led the country to experience a 'cultural spring', which had as its main feature its unprecedented massiveness.

¹⁷ H. Nikolakopoulos, *H kahektiki dimokratia...*, [The stunted democracy...], pp. 293-300.

¹⁸ Ibid, pp. 49-50.

¹⁹ K. Tsoukalas, *Ta sintoma 60s*, [The short 60s], (Athens: Kastaniotis, 2008), p. 42.

The plausible outcome of these multiple developments, which challenged the existing political *status quo*, was the electoral prevalence of Union Center in the February 1964 elections (followed by the resignation of E.R.E's leader K. Karamanlis), which put an end to the "long rule and ideological hegemony of the Right in post Civil War Greece."²⁰ From the very beginning the new government abolished a number of repressive mechanisms, identified with the 'state of Right', and embarked on the dismantling of a number of 'para-state organizations.'²¹ However, the internal rivals between government's members, and the harsh conflict between the King and the Prime Minister, soon caused the resignation of Papandreou's government in July 1965. This development marked a period of acute political crisis, with constant changes of transitional governments, which violently ended up with the imposition of the military dictatorship on April 21st, 1967.

1.2. Educational problems and fermentations from 1950 to 1964

The huge economic, social and political problems inherited from the Greek Civil War inevitably left their deep imprint on education. The severe decay into which the Greek education had fallen was depicted in the statistics of the 1950s and early 1960s, indicating that the educational level of the population was tragic. One third of the rural population was completely illiterate, while among women the figure exceeded 55%.²² The level of education

²⁰ H. Nikolakopoulos, *Apo to telos tou emfiliou poleμου stin anodo tis Enosis Kentrou*, [From the end of the civil war to the rise of the Union Centre], p.339.

²¹ D. Papadimitriou, *Apo to lao tis nomimofrosinis sto ethnos ton ethnikiston; H sintiritiki skepsi stin Ellada 1922-1967*, [From the people of loyalty to the nation of Nationalists: The conservative thought in Greece 1922-1967], (Athens: Savalas, 2006), p. 259.

²² In the rural areas, 95% of the children did not continue their studies in secondary schools, while very high rates of withdraws were observed even in elementary school, where 60% already left school at the 3rd and 4th grade.

could not be better, considering that the proportion of national income spent on education was just 1.8%, while in other countries it exceeded 3% (U.S 3.4%, Sweden 3.2%). Moreover, while extremely low amounts were given to education, the Greek military spending kept absorbing more than half of the national budget.²³

A philosophy of education was officially delineated in the Constitution of 1952 in which it was declared that “general education aims to forge virtuous citizens, scientifically prepared for their dedication to higher studies.”²⁴ The purpose of education was defined according to the concept of ‘Hellenic - Christian culture’²⁵, expressing the dominant philosophy of the post Civil War period and the conservative tendencies of the government.²⁶ The values supported by the educational system of this period were reflected clearly in the content of the school textbooks, based on the principles of Fatherland - Religion - Family. As the sociologist Anna Fragoudaki claims, “In a sense, the autarchic pedagogy in family and school prepared the students for becoming the citizens of authoritarian political regimes.”²⁷

Consequently, the 1950s pedagogical model promoted the omniscient teacher whose students uncritically had to accept and assimilate school knowledge. The teacher transmitted to them ideas and values that required obedience, stemming from the principles of passivity and

Furthermore, 15% of the school age population did not attend school at all, while in the general population, 32,4% were illiterate, 2,9% were graduates of high schools and only 1, 1% held a degree of higher education.

S. Bouzakis, *Neoelliniki Ekpaidefsi (1821-1998)*, [Modern Greek Education (1821-1998)], (Athens: Gutenberg, 2006), pp.116-117.

²³ Ibid., p.120.

²⁴ A. Dimaras, *H metarithmisi pou den egine pote*, [The reform that never happened], (Athens: Modern Greek Library, 1973), p. 221.

²⁵ Details about the role of ‘Hellenic Christian culture/ideal’, its formulation by the state and how it was diffused in Greek education and society will be given in the next chapter.

²⁶ A. Dimaras, *Sholiki Ekpedefsi: Nees Metarithmisis stin Istoria tou Neou Ellinismoy 1770-2000*, [School Education: New Reforms in the History of Modern Hellenism 1770 – 2000], (Athens: Ellinika Grammata, 2003), p. 175.

²⁷ A. Fragoudaki, *Ta sholika vivlia tou dimotikou sholiou; Ideologikos eksanagasmos kai pedagogiki via*, [The textbooks of Primary school: Ideological coercion and pedagogical violence], (Athens: Kedros, 1979), pp. 30-44.

religiosity. Hence, the main goal was to prepare them to live in a society which they would never challenge. On the other hand, teachers were forced to conform to the Ministry of Education's instructions as there was the constant fear of a potential negative evaluation.²⁸ The state control was explicitly portrayed not only in the curricula, the pedagogical methods and the content of the textbooks, but also in the assessment of knowledge itself. According to the historian of education Pantelis Kyprianos, 'technical' knowledge was subordinated to 'theoretical', just as 'handicraft' work was considered inferior to "spiritual". In this context, any attempt to develop technical schools was automatically undermined."²⁹

At the same time though, the political voices demanding the modernization of the educational system were gradually increasing. Their proposals for reform, despite their differentiations, shared some essential elements, such as the development of technical and vocational education, the restructuring of the curricula and a number of other requests pending from the beginning of 20th century. Therefore, the dilemma emerging from the late 1950s focused on the orientation of the Greek school, and whether it would remain adherent to the humanitarian ancient tradition, or it would shift into a more technocratic direction, corresponding to current values and the new emerging economic conditions.

Another crucial parameter which heavily influenced the ideological orientation of Greek education was the dominant agricultural character of the Greek economy and its weak industrial development until the end of the 1950s. As the French political scientist Jean Meynaud claims, "The phenomenon of 'social conservatism' constituted the prevalent

²⁸ Only in the period 1953-1956, 1.300 teachers were fired for political reasons.

See C. Noutsos, *Sholika programmata, Defterovathmia Ekpedefsi kai Koinonikos Eleghos (1931-1973)*, [Curricula, Secondary Education and Social Control (1931-1973)], (Athens: Themelio, 1979), p. 184.

²⁹ P. Kyprianos, *Sigkritiki Istoria tis Ellinikis Ekpedefsis*, [Comparative history of Greek education], (Athens: Vivliorama, 2009), pp. 179-180.

perception of this period, expressing peasant's conscience, who is attached to his traditional conservative values, and detests rapid and large-scale social changes.”³⁰ In this context, the emancipation of education seemed to face numerous obstacles, given that ‘Hellenic-Christian ideal’ was consolidated as the theoretical basis of the state’s nationalistic rhetoric in the post Civil War period.

This dominant educational model, with its monolithic emphasis on classical studies and the disregard of technical education’s role as inferior, both in social and cultural terms, started being questioned in the 1960s. Even in traditional conservative parties like E.R.E, tendencies of ‘liberal modernization’ were developed.³¹ On the social level, the strong mobilization of the lower classes, mirrored in the election of E.D.A as the major opposition party in 1958, stimulated a further public discussion about what kind of reforms should be introduced in the existing educational system.³² The social opening of education, and especially the one concerning the admission of students to universities, constituted a basic claim of the lower classes. However, the presence of limiting factors, both in political terms, with the intense polarization, and economic ones, with the scarcity of financial resources for developmental programs, made their fulfillment unrealistic.

Among all these social, economic and political fermentations, the traditional political forces were challenged to cope with the new collective demands, which were manifested in an increasingly dynamic and massive way. Consequently, in 1957, the constantly growing educational problems of the country, forced Karamanlis’ government to set up a committee, which soon published its conclusions about several issues of Greek education. Two years after

³⁰ J. Meynaud, *Political Forces in Greece*, p.18.

³¹ A. Dimaras, *H Metarithmisi pou den egine pote*, [The reform that never happened], pp.34-35.

³² H. Nikolakopoulos, *H kahektiki dimokratia...*, [The stunted democracy...], p.245.

this publication, a legislative decree was passed which, however, did not bring substantial shifts in the characteristics of the Greek educational system. Changes were restricted to a superficial level, as they did not affect the roots of the educational problems, and left untouched critical educational issues such as the form of language, the curricula, the school textbooks and teacher training. Similarly, the orientation of education remained unchanged; a fact revealed in the maintenance of the classical Gymnasium (high school) as the dominant institution of Greek education.³³

Other serious problems that all the educational levels faced were the low wages of the teachers, the obsolete curricula, and the financial burden on students in the form of paying for tuition fees and textbooks. These issues fostered social dissatisfaction, which was expressed through demonstrations and strikes, involving a great number of students and teachers. The student movement demanded a more efficient and democratic management of public issues, and claimed more state funds for education, incarnated in their basic slogan ‘15% for Education.’ It was the first time in the Greek 20th century that a youth movement fought for the social reinforcement of the republic.

1.3. Conclusion

The analysis of the broader framework that characterized Greek society in the first post Civil War years demonstrates the inextricable connection between politics and education. The suffocating conditions and coercive mechanisms implemented from the state apparatus, which

³³ It is characteristic that 74% of pupils who finished primary school at that time entered the classic high school with the equivalent figure for schools of technical direction barely reaching 23%. Statistics taken from: S. Bouzakis, *Neoelliniki Ekpedefsi*, [Modern Greek Education], p. 120.

tried to ensure its political power towards a traumatized and divided society, raised a number of obstacles in the content, methods and goals of Greek education. The constant dependence of education on state's policies undermined its pedagogical role, as it transformed it into a major mechanism through which the state reproduced its nationalistic ideology and legitimized its autocratic power.

Despite the numerous severe problems that education faced, both due to the scarcity of economic sources and its manipulation from the state, the decade of 1960s marked an intense mobilization of the society. Large parts of the population, which for years were socially marginalized, started demanding, in a more massive and persistent manner, a series of vital changes in the states' *modus operandi*, as a necessary precondition for the democratization of the Greek society. This growing social awakening manifested itself in the massiveness of demonstrations and protests in which youth emerged as the leading agent of social changes.

Education, due to its key role, as the institution which forges the character of the new generation, became the pioneering force for the materialization of people's claims, and prepared the ground for its essential reorientation. This new social dynamic was soon translated into the impressive victory of the Union Center in the 1963-64 elections and the prompt decision of the new Prime Minister Papandreou to place education in the centre of the public discussion with the announcement of an extensive educational reform.

2. Ideological aspects of education

2.1 The construction of national Greek identity and the role of education in its reproduction

The election of a non-Right political power in 1964 marked the shift of the pre-existing ‘balance’ between state and education, as it expressed the interests and views of social groups which were for years underrepresented, making thus the claim for educational reform imperative. Through the reform, the new government aspired to ‘use’ education as a genuine exponent of its new agenda that it would espouse in society.³⁴ Such an agenda included distinct ideological elements which though would not be diffused in a society-*tabula rasa*; on the contrary there was a Greek reality with particular consolidated characteristics which the 1964 reform decided to face and question. In order these complex ideological challenges to be fully understood, a further exploration is required regarding the construction of national Greek identity, and the key role of education as a fundamental mechanism for its reproduction.

According to the historian Efi Avdela “The historical development of nation-states over the past 200 years has decisively determined the character of education. In modern nation-states, compulsory education ensures the formation, consolidation, and reproduction of a national identity by reinforcing the nation through courses such as history, language, and religion, as well as by organizing other activities, such as school festivals, anniversaries, and excursions.”³⁵ Such an approach demonstrates the transformation of national education into a

³⁴ C. Noutsos, *Ideologia kai Ekpedeftiki Politiki*, [Ideology and Educational Policy], (Athens: Themelio Press, 1986), p.15.

³⁵ E. Avdela, “The teaching of history in Greece”, *Journal of Modern Greek Studies*, Volume 18, 2000, p.239.

substantial institution of the modern state; it equates the state's existence as a political entity with a national culture, hence legitimizing the principle on which nation states are formed.³⁶

In this context, the examination of the Greek educational system in the 1960s constituted a good illustration of a school system in which national identity was (and still is) a central point of reference. The concept that composed the core of Greek national identity was Hellenism's continuity from antiquity to the present. According to this ideal, the past and present of Greece were conceptualized as an uninterrupted continuum from Ancient Greece through Byzantium to today, while national homogeneity was illustrated in terms of language, religion and territory. The role of education as a safeguard of this concept had been crucial since the birth of the modern Greek nation-state in 1830 and, as Dimitra Karakatsani characteristically pointed out, "national homogeneity has been treated by the educational system as a noble value."³⁷

This emphasis on the peculiar nature of Hellenism through the centuries is rooted in the emergence of Greek nationalism in late 18th century, and consolidated in the romantic view of the Greek nation in the second half of 19th century. According to many scholars of nationalism, Greece, as a part of the powder keg of Europe - the Balkans - developed all the characteristics of the so called 'Eastern nationalism'.³⁸ As Hans Kohn stressed, in juxtaposition to Western nationalism, which pursued to transform the nation in a political entity, "nationalism in Central and Eastern Europe [...], early tended towards a contrary development [...] Nationalists in East

³⁶ Ibid.

³⁷ D. Karakatsani, "Civic Education and socio-political changes: The case of Greek educational system", paper available at <http://www.ioe.ac.uk/ccs/conference2000/papers/epsd/papers/karakatsani.html>

³⁸ There are many theories sharing the assumption that nationalism in the East was essentially different from that in the West. The discovery - the "invention" - of these two areas is dated by Larry Wolff in the eighteenth century. The process of discovery and separation were simultaneous and, from the beginning, ambiguity and inferiority characterized Eastern Europe.

See Larry Wolff, *Inventing Eastern Europe: The Map of Civilization on the Mind of the Enlightenment*, (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1994), pp.6-7.

and Central Europe created an ideal homeland, through the myths of the past and the visions of the future.”³⁹ Greece could not be an exception as, on one hand, its past was full of such “myths”, and, on the other, its glorious ancestry was ‘used’ by the European Enlightenment as the root of the European civilization and main constituent component of the modern European identity. Therefore, Greece developed a, so called, ‘cultural nationalism’ based on the construction of a national identity which had as its primary mission to establish and represent the “imagined community” of the nation, as Benedict Anderson would say.⁴⁰

The Greek state used from the first steps of its existence nationalism as its major ideological tool in order to forge its national identity. Such a strategy was perceived as a ‘high national priority’ in order to achieve the integration of its linguistically, religiously and ethnically fragmented populations (Muslims, Orthodox, Jews, Albanians, and Armenians into a Greek nation).⁴¹ One of the main mechanisms introduced by the state for the accomplishment of this objective was the provision of public education.⁴²

³⁹ Hans Kohn, “*Western and Eastern Nationalisms*”, in: John Hutchinson and Anthony D. Smith (eds) *Nationalism*, (Oxford University Press, Oxford New York, 1994), pp. 162-165.

⁴⁰ Apart from Hans Kohn, who separated by geographically criteria European nationalism, scholars distinguished several types of nationalism. The term ‘cultural nationalism’ was borrowed from John Hutchinson who distinguished European nationalism between political and cultural, while Benedict Anderson, from which the term “imagined community” was taken, talked about civic and ethnic one. See “*Nationalism and Self-Determination*”, in John Hutchinson and Anthony D. Smith (eds) *Nationalism*, Oxford University Press, Oxford New York, 1994.

⁴¹ Particularly, the linguistic differences within and without the Greek borders, made imperative the need for the new state to establish a new common linguistic code. This turned to be an intensely problematic task known in the Greek historiography as the ‘language question’. The linguistic problem, that is the problem of the use of archaic (*katharevousa*) or the public-spoken (demotic) language, was linked both to the debates over the continuity of Greek civilization and, of course, to the problems and discourses over Greek identity and nationalism. More details about the controversial topic of language question are given in the next chapter.

⁴² Paschalis M. Kitromilidis *Imagined communities and the origins of the national question in the Balkans*, in Thanos Veremis (ed.) *National Identity and Nationalism in Modern Greece*, National Bank of Greece Cultural Foundation, Athens 1999, p. 72.

The significant role of education for the reproduction of national identity was depicted in the weight that the state gave to elementary education established already in 1834 (while in countries such as France and England introduced after 1880), and the foundation of the University of Athens in 1837.⁴³ Through both policy and education, classical antiquity emerged as the exclusive source of “Greekness” and reached the modern Greeks from two different paths: directly, through the preservation of the cultural traits and, indirectly, through Europe which, reflected back to Greece the profound influence its ancient heritage exercised on European thought.⁴⁴

Already from the end of the 18th century the Greek ‘enlighteners’ had transplanted to the occupied Greek lands, the values, on one hand, of Enlightenment and French Revolution and, on the other, the philhellenic climate which dominated the West, creating the conditions for the War of Independence in the early 1820s.⁴⁵ The rebelling Greeks were identified with their ancient ancestors, and this perception fostered the development and coherence of national identity. The crucial role of this identification was revealed by the fact that the Liberation War⁴⁶ was not exclusively supported by the elites and the intellectuals, but by ordinary people with different economic and social backgrounds and interests.

In this process of mutually developing of identities, Greece and Europe created a relation of interaction and transaction: Greece gave Europe the foundation to its civilization,

⁴³ Anna Fragoudaki - Thalia Dragona, *Eisagogi*, [Introduction], in Anna Fragoudaki - Thalia Dragona (ed.) *Ti einai i hora mas; Ethnokentrismos tin Ekpedefsi*, [What is our country? Ethnocentrism in education], (Athens: Alexandria Press, 1997), pp. 15.

⁴⁴ K. Dimaras, *Ellinikos Romantismos*, [Greek Romanticism], (Athens: Ermis, 1985), p.339.

⁴⁵ Adamantios Korais, probably the most important figure of the so called ‘Greek enlightenment’ and admirer of Europe, and especially of France, repeatedly stressed to his subordinated compatriots: “Imitate Europe! Study Europe! Seek for laws and institutions in Europe!”

⁴⁶ Ibid.

⁴⁶ The terms Liberation War and War of Independence are used interchangeably as they have the same meaning; they refer to the Greek revolution against the Ottoman occupation which broke out in 1821.

and Europe provided Greece a unified and unbroken identity, a driver for its ‘departure’ from the ‘backward East’ and passport for its entrance to the ‘civilized’ European core.⁴⁷ Hence, it could be argued that the national regeneration of Greece did not simply “coincide” with the European ‘discovery’ of Greek ancestry, but it was mainly its outcome and product. In this sense, the concept of the Greek identity, with the linear continuity of the nation and the selective synthesis of Greek history, could also be considered as constructions and claims of the Enlightenment.

The ‘national historian’, as he was named, Konstantinos Paparigopoulos played a crucial role in this ‘nationalistic project’ for the forging of Greek identity. From 1853 to 1874, he wrote his monumental work entitled *History of the Greek nation from ancient times until today*⁴⁸ in which he presented the unity and unbroken continuity of the nation’s history, incorporating Byzantium which, till then, had been considered “as a dark period”.⁴⁹ According to scholar K. Tsoukalas, “such a narrative of Greek history was necessary in order to cover the twenty centuries that separated the end of the antiquity with the birth of the modern Greek state [...] The central dilemma was how to treat the Greek Medieval - Byzantium - which was questioned for many decades.”⁵⁰

Hence, under the auspices of the state, romantic historiography in the middle of the 19th century undertook the task of covering this vacuum by introducing the invention of “Greek

⁴⁷ European civilization, regardless its equalitarian principles, was erected as a ‘clearly hierarchical building’, which was juxtaposed to the ‘backward and barbarian East’, establishing this way the European cultural dominance “on the fetishism of the native “European” Hellenism.”

See Konstantinos Tsoukalas, *Istoria, Mithi kai Hrismi: H afigisi tis Ellinikis sinehias*, [History, Myths and Oracles: The narrative of Greek continuity] in Nation, State, Nationalism, Conference (21 and 22 January 1994), (Athens: Moraitis School, 1995), p. 300.

⁴⁸ His work was also an indirect response to the theories of the German historian J. P Fallmerayer who in his work published in 1830 questioned the origin of modern Greeks from their ancient Greek ancestors. His view gained many supporters but also caused much opposition and reactions in Greece.

⁴⁹ K.. Dimaras, *Ellinikos Romantismos*, [Greek Romanticism], p.78.

⁵⁰ K. Tsoukalas, *Istoria, Mithi kai Hrismi*, [History, Myths and Oracles], p. 300.

Christian civilization”. As Paparigopoulos himself stated in one of his speeches, “Greeks should not forget that they are descendants not only of ancient Greeks, with whom they are connected through the language, the land and the traditions, but also with the medieval Hellenism of Byzantine era through which they are tied through religion.”⁵¹ From that point on, national identity for Greeks came to co-exist in a dialectical relationship with their traditional religious identity as Orthodox Christians; while their Church membership connected them particularly to the Byzantine Empire, their language and lands connected them to Classical Greece.

More particularly, the contribution of the Orthodox Christian religion and Church of Greece in the development, spreading, and consolidation of nationalism was central. Throughout the whole period of Ottoman rule, the Orthodox Church played a leading role for all the Christian populations of the Balkans as it had significant religious, educational and administrative authority upon them (albeit these authorities were in the hands of a Greek-speaking elite).⁵² Although it preserved "collective identities", by institutionalizing and safeguarding the distinction of the Christian subjects from their Muslim rulers, Kitromilides points out that “the distinction was in its content religious, and not national.”⁵³

The conflict between Orthodoxy and nationalism⁵⁴ very soon (in 1833) led to the unilateral secession of the Greek Church from the Ecumenical Patriarchate (achieved though

⁵¹ Ibid.

⁵² The Ottoman Empire, which dominated the Balkan Peninsula for nearly five centuries, was a state of pre-nationalist period, when the concept of nation was unknown. Therefore, the structure of the society was based, as in its Byzantine predecessor, in religion. It ruled its subjects based on the system of “religious nations” called ‘millets’. The four millets of the Greeks, Armenians, Jews and “Turkish” composed the Ottoman state. See Dimitris Kitsikis *Istoria Othomanikis Aftokratoria, 1280-1924*, [History of the Ottoman Empire, 1280-1924], (Athens: Estia, 1988), pp.23-67.

⁵³ Paschalis M. Kitromilidis, *Imagined communities*, p.52.

⁵⁴ This conflict was explicitly reflected in the clearly hostile stance of the Ecumenical Patriarchate towards the diffusion of the Enlightenment ideas - and the nationalistic movements which were based on them. The strong

only in 1850 due to the fierce opposition of the latter), a process which was followed by the other churches of the Balkans and meant the provision of administrative autonomy from Constantinople. Nevertheless, the collision between Orthodoxy and nationalism did not prevent the new established independent churches from becoming the major instruments for the promotion of the state's national interests. It was exactly the eventual abandonment of the ecumenicism of Orthodoxy and the "nationalization" of the churches - a series of processes homologous to the Western ones - that nurtured the assumption concerning the affinity between Orthodoxy and nationality and the view of the former as 'champion of nationalism'.⁵⁵

Therefore, as it is demonstrated, education, together with other main mechanisms of the state such as the Church and the army⁵⁶, was used to serve the concept of national identity, and primarily its most essential 19th century component, the "doctrine of national unity". This unity was translated, in geographical terms, in the merge of all the Greek-inhabited territories inwards the borders of the Greek kingdom, and, mainly, in historical terms, in the presentation of Hellenism as an unbroken and linear continuity throughout the centuries, from Homer to modern ages.

This ideological construction, made in order to cover all kind of gaps and contradictions, was so well served by state mechanisms, that even after "national adventures" such as the 'Asia Minor catastrophe' in 1922 – which marked the violent end of the Great

reaction of Patriarch Gregory V, who condemned both the liberal ideas of the prominent intellectual R. Fereos in 1798, and the outbreak of the Greek revolution in 1821, constituted the climax of this opposition.

⁵⁵ See Paschalis M. Kitromilidis, *Imagined communities*, p.50-59

⁵⁶ The Greek army undertook the training of the former rebels, who participated in the liberation war, but had come from different places of Greece and shared totally different professional and ethnic backgrounds and interests. The formation of a national army aimed to transplant them a common mentality and, mainly, a common stance towards the enemy, hence cultivating them the feeling of belonging to a common Fatherland. Ibid.

Idea⁵⁷ - the following compulsory exchange of the populations and the assimilation of millions of refugees, Greece managed to have one of the most homogeneous populations in Europe. In this sense, the formation of the national identity could be interpreted as one of the most successful endeavors that the Greek state achieved since its establishment.

Nevertheless, the shock of the Greek defeat in Asia Minor put an end to Greek irredentism, and Greek nationalism itself took a different orientation. The large influx of refugees constituted a watershed with a profound impact on the whole socio-economic, ideological and political life of the country. The years till WW2 were characterized by the struggle of shifting from an ethnic nationalism, as it was expressed in Great Idea, to a civic nationalism, which would be based on modern political institutions. The question whether Greece was going to be a Monarchy or a Republic became central and the division between republicans (Venizelists) and royalists was to dominate Greek political life throughout the interwar period.⁵⁸

The end of the WW2 and the devastating Civil War deepened the existing division and transformed it to the bisectional dilemma of who was a patriot and who a traitor, depending on which side he fought during the Civil War. Consequently, the establishment of the “Kingship of the Right”⁵⁹ after the defeat of the Democratic Army marked a new nationalism, ‘fanatic and

⁵⁷ Great Idea (Megali Idea) was inextricably connected with the concepts of the Greek national identity and nationalism as it constituted an irredentist vision expressing the goal of establishing a Greek state that would encompass all ethnic Greek-inhabited areas, including the large Greek populations that still lived under Ottoman occupation after the Greek liberation in 1830. This visionary nationalist aspiration dominated foreign relations and, to a significant extent, determined domestic politics of the Greek state for much of the first century of its independent existence.

See Steven Sowards, *Greek nationalism, the “Megali Idea” and Venizelism to 1923 in Twenty Five Lectures on Modern Balkan History*, www.lib.msu.edu, 1996.

⁵⁸ Yet the democratic forces were weak and unable to function due to a weak economy and deep political and ideological divisions. Mavrogordatos describes the developments of the interwar period in Greece as Stillborn Republic.

See G. Mavrogordatos, *Stillborn Republic: social coalitions and party strategies in Greece*, (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1983).

⁵⁹ The term belongs to the Marxist Greek historian N. Svoronos.

self-complacent’, which resembled that previous one of the 19th century. In contrast to that, however, the new nationalism was not embedded in a general holistic irredentist program, but as K. Tsoukalas claims “was reactionary and inward looking.”⁶⁰

In the new content that nationalistic ideology took, the way that the Other was depicted shifted from an external enemy (Turkey) to an internal one (communists) resulting to the discrimination of the population as Greeks and non- Greeks according to their political beliefs. Once more, the Greek education became the key institution for the legitimization of this nationalistic rhetoric, and its content and aims were subordinated to the control of the state. It was towards the multiple implications and complexities of this context that the 1964 reform emerged and towards which it had to juxtapose its own agenda.

2.2 The challenge of the 1964 educational reform

The educational reform of 1964 constituted one of the first major initiatives of the newly elected (February 1964) Union Center government, and, as any educational endeavor, it had a clear ideological profile. The peculiar conditions and polarized climate that characterized the educational and political framework of the post Civil War Greek society brought the architects of the 1964 reform with the crucial challenge of promoting their radical educational program, while not coming into conflict with the prevailing nationalistic state ideology. This critical ideological challenge was translated into their effort to connect two ostensibly colliding fields. Hence, their major choice to build an ideal educational system that would selectively draw elements, on one hand, from the ancient Greek and modern Greek-Christian tradition,

⁶⁰ K. Tsoukalas, *H ideologiki epidrash tou Emfiliou Polemou*, [The ideological impact of the Civil War], in G. Iatridis (ed.), *H Ellada sth dekaetia 1940-1950. Ena ethnos se krisi*, [The Greece in the decade 1940-1950. A nation in crisis], (Athens: Themelio, 1984), p.56.

and, on the other, from the Western liberal-civic tradition, instantly raised the crucial question of how the construction of such an educational program could apply and be compatible with the Greek society of that period.

The main initiator for the articulation of the reform's program was the general secretary of the Ministry of Education pedagogue Evangelos Papanoutsos, who knew in depth the educational issues which constituted his lifelong passionate engagement. Papanoutsos was surrounded by a number of liberal scholars such as his assistant Loukis Akritas, who worked hard for the implementation of the measures (but his considerable effort suddenly stopped with his early death on February 1965), and the prominent philologist, and first president of the newly established Pedagogical Institute, Ioannis Kakridis.⁶¹

These personalities set as starting point of their intellectual work the assumption that the elements deriving from the ancient and Christian Greek tradition with the ones of the modern Western liberalism, could coexist in the broader context of 'humanism', which they posed as their central concept, and to which they gave quite a vague and idealistic content.⁶² It was a conscious decision which aimed, on one hand, at the mitigation of the nationalistic forces' reactions and, on the other, at the legitimization of their reform, given that its democratic values constituted a fundamental claim for large parts of the Greek society as the result of the elections had emphatically shown. Hence, the aspiration of the reform's protagonists was to associate the reform with the current social reality by mobilizing the population.

⁶¹ S. Bouzakis, *G.A Papandreou (1888-1968), O Politikos tis Ekpedefsis*, [G.A Papandreou (1888-1968), The Politician of Education], (Athens: Kedros, 1999), p.42.

⁶² The term 'humanism', widely used by the reformists as the main concept of their discourse, traced its roots from the term of Renaissance "humanitas", which in its turn derived its origin from the ancient Greek concept of "paideia" (pedagogy).

P. Kyprianos, *Sigkritiki Istoria tis Ellinikis Ekpedefsis*, [Comparative history of Greek education], p.277.

What they had to combat was the Greek post Civil War state, established on an reactionary and introverted ideology which rejected the ‘outlandish’ West European thought and its civic-liberal tradition, and sought for a ‘superior Hellenism’.⁶³ This concept, having as its constituent elements, nation, linguistic purity, religion, and Greek-Christian tradition (which coincided with Orthodoxy), was supported by a number of intellectuals, who had espoused the nationalistic rhetoric of the state, but also had led to the censorship of all these liberal voices, who had refused its logic.

Its traumatic effects in education were manifested, on one hand, in the decay of social sciences in Universities, and, on the other, in the superficial approach of classical education, which was coupled with the teaching of religion course in the context of the so-called ‘Greek-Christian pedagogical ideal.’⁶⁴ Under these peculiar conditions, the explicitly democratic content of the 1964 reform, both in terms of its liberal values, and its philosophical background, seemed inevitable to come into contradiction with the prevailing national ideology.

Nevertheless, the architects of the reform were aware of both the idealistic character of their educational program and the underlying danger of dividing the society. In a pragmatist approach to make their program compatible with the state ideology - and thus prevent potential reactions – they introduced the concept of ‘humanism’ as the founding of the educational reform and of the new society they envisioned. Thus, they juxtaposed this concept to the

⁶³ For more details about the concept and the role of the ‘superior, continuous, and unchanging nature’ of Hellenism through the centuries as a cornerstone of the Greek national identity, see in the previous subchapter.

⁶⁴ See more about the ideological concept of ‘Greek-Christian ideal’ and the role it played in the political polarization and developments of this period in:

A. Elefantis, *H ideologia tou tromou kai tis thimatopoihsis. H elliniki kinonia sta prota metapolemika hronia (1945-1967)*, [The ideology of terror and victimization. The Greek society in the first post war period (1945-1967)], (Athens: Saki Karageororga Institution, 1994), pp. 645-654.

‘Greek notion of man’⁶⁵, an idea super-historical, which implied that there was a united, unbroken and linear perception between the ancient Greek worldview and the Modern Greek national ideology.⁶⁶ For strategic reasons, the spiritual father of the reform E. Papanoutsos and his consultants, adopted this perception, though, they loaded it with different connotations.

Specifically, even though they acknowledged the differences between the ancient Greek and the Christian perception of humanism, they approached them as supplementary hues of the ‘Greek notion of man’. Papanoutsos considered that the Greek interpretation of the term ‘humanism’ should not mean only honor, respect and trust to man’s capabilities, but also solidarity and justice, and, in this sense, it could be located close to the concept of Christian love. From this point of view, and regardless the ambiguity or arbitrariness of this association, Papanoutsos claimed that the concept of ‘humanism’, which promoted through the reform, did not conflict with national ideology, and allowed him to present himself as a proponent of the same claims with his rivals.⁶⁷

At the same time, the reformists gave to the concept of humanism a broader, ecumenical meaning, with rationality and moral self-existence being its two axes on which each man could acquire ethic.⁶⁸ According to this approach, Greece had always been the cradle of humanism, thus there was the need of going back to its roots, in order to play the role it deserved. The architects of the reform shared the belief that this ecumenical version of ‘Greek humanism’,

⁶⁵ The term has the same meaning and is used interchangeably with the concepts of the superior ‘Hellenism’ or ‘Greekness’ mentioned before.

⁶⁶ As P. Kitromilidis points out, “The nation’s past, present and future, all merge in this image around the central theme of continuity. It is a self-image that bears all the characteristics of myth and is based on a conception of history which tends to erase historical time. Idealization of the past, bewilderment in the face of the present, and fear about the future emerge as its main features.”

See P. M. Kitromilidis *Imagined communities...*, p.76.

⁶⁷ S. Mpalias, *Energos politis kai ekpedefsh*, [Active citizenship and education], (Athens: Papazisis, 2008), pp.198-200.

⁶⁸ Ibid.

even though it differed significantly from the ‘Greek notion of man’, (as it was propagated by the proponents of nationalism during the post Civil War period), in its very end could possibly converge with it, providing the required legitimization to the reform.⁶⁹

However, such a convergence occurred only on a superficial level, as in its essence the association of the Greek humanism with the modern liberal-civic humanism never ceased to be problematic facing a number of intrinsic antinomies. For instance, how could the organic relation between Orthodoxy and the modern Greek state be reconciled with the major liberal claim for the institutional distinction of Church from the state? A compromise could be possibly achieved only in a very abstractive level. Therefore, fundamental elements of the 1964 educational program, such as free dialogue and critical thought, did not simply claim a creative relation between modern Greek present and ancient Greek past, but also undermined the dominant state ideology. The theoretical gaps between the ideological construction of their program and the reality of the Greek society in which the reform tried to materialize, demonstrated the agony and weakness of the protagonists to legitimize their political and educational agenda.⁷⁰

In conclusion, what the educational reform of 1964 attempted to compromise was the European orientation of the country with the rigid concept of the Greek national identity, as this

⁶⁹ Ibid.

⁷⁰ Scholars such as A. Fragoudaki and K. Tsatsos argued that even though the reform had the support of particular sociopolitical forces (mainly of the left and the centre), this support did not manage to penetrate its deeper ideological layer– which expressed its values and principles – but it was limited on the institutional and political level. Furthermore, the reformists and, chiefly, the spiritual father of the reform E. Papanoutsos, did not accept the politicization of the education and hence, they detached the ‘counter reform reactions’ from their socio political context. Consequently, according to this view, as the educational reform did not take into account the complex and loaded Greek reality, it became socially alienated being unable to mobilize social forces and create the necessary ideological identifications.

See: A. Fragoudaki, *Ekpedeftiki Metarithmisi kai fileleftheri dianoooumeni*, [Educational reform and liberal intellectuals], (Athens: Kedros, 1990), pp.97-110, and K. Tsatsos, *Eksartisi kai Anaparagogi, O kinonikos rolos ton ekpedeftikon mihanismon sthn Ellada*, [Dependence and Reproduction. The social role of the educational mechanisms in Greece], (Athens: Themelio, 1976), pp.378-391.

had been formulated by the state mechanisms and ruling classes from the establishment of the modern Greek state, but also as it had been transformed after the end of the Civil War. Nevertheless, major aspects of the reform, such as the ideal of citizenship, which was based on the principles of the liberal-civil democracy, did not correspond to the existing policies and culture of the modern Greek society and, accordingly, they were ‘doomed’ not to be integrated into its system of values. Regardless of how selectively elements were taken from these two conflicting ideological pools, as time passed, it became clear that the educational reform of 1964 was impossible to transform into a coherent political theory and become the concrete objective of an efficient educational policy. This antinomy was mirrored in the intense controversies that many measures of the reform raised, and constitutes the objective of the following chapter.

3. The Athenian Press response to the measures of the educational reform of 1964

The educational reform was officially introduced by the newly elected government of G. Papandreou in the Greek Parliament on April 1964 in three separate acts which clearly depicted the philosophy of the new reformative attempt. Having as a core these three acts - the first concerning the restructuring of primary and secondary education, the second the revival of technological and vocational education, and the third the upgrading of higher education - a thorough proposal of educational policy was introduced, covering all the aspects of education through the promotion of a series of groundbreaking measures with strong social character.⁷¹

Since the measures of the educational reform were officially announced, a period of an intense public dialogue and an avalanche of fierce reactions were launched. The loaded debate that the reform raised was not a new-born phenomenon, but constituted one more link in the chain of political controversies breaking out after similar educational initiatives throughout the 20th century.⁷² Several political and academic personalities, and institutions such as Universities and the Church, engaged in the public dialogue with several articles which were published in the press of Athens. The latter played a key role as it constituted a ‘window’

⁷¹ The introductory report of the 4379 Act considered education as “the premise and guarantee of the economic development and spiritual regeneration of the nation.” In the report regarding the technological education, it was stressed that “the economic progress of the country is closely depended on the development of technological education which constitutes one of its main preconditions.” Last, in the introductory report about the establishment of universities, it was underlined “the need for the acquisition of high level scientists as neither our economic nor our spiritual progress will be accomplished without having more and better specialized scientists.”

Eisagogiki Ekthesi gia tin Organosi kai Dikisi tis genikis ekpedefsis, [Introductory Report about the Organization and Administration of General Education], Act 4379, 24-10-64, National Printing Office, pp. 2-8.

⁷² Strong controversies also took place during the former educational reforms of 1917 and 1929. The member of the Pedagogical Institute E. Giotopoulou-Sicilianou underlines: “Such a reaction (in 1964) should not impress us, as it was totally expected by a particular group of persons who had as their constant goal the undermining of any reform which attempted to revive education. Standard practice for achieving this goal was the incubating of successors, who, by reproducing the slogans about the threat of the Greek nation, spread fear among the people taking advantage of their low educational level which they struggled with any means to preserve.”

Elli Giotopoulou-Sicilianou, *Ekpedefsh - Ta profani kai anepitefkta*, [Education - The obvious and unachieved], (Athens: Kedros, 2007), pp 39-41.

between public opinion's attitude and the new government's intention to promote its educational agenda. Given that the press (along with the radio), was at that time the most influential means of mass communication, its contribution was not limited to keep the population aware of the government's activities but it became a crucial player of the broader debate as it had a profound social impact in preserving or even escalating the loaded climate of this period.⁷³ Therefore, the daily press coverage of different views about the reform became a critical factor for the mobilization of the public opinion, and an indicator for the government's legitimization to promote its radical measures.

This paper focuses on the extensive number of articles published by the three most popular Athenian newspapers *To Vima (The Step)*, *H Kathimerini (The Daily)*, and *H Avgi (The Dawn)*, which represented the political spectrum of this period as each of them had a distinct political and ideological profile. *To Vima*, was a daily Athenian newspaper published by a group of liberal politicians such as A. Karapanos and D. Labrakis, and, apart from a few years during WW2, it had a constant presence in the press of Athens. Especially after the political elections of February 1964 gave the Union Centre one of the most impressive parliamentary majorities in modern Greek political history, *To Vima* became the official instrument of the government. Its role though was not constrained to praising the governmental work, but also fought for the party's unity, which was constantly under the threat of dissolution, due to its lack of homogeneity and the personal aspirations of many of its members. The majority of the articles related to the 1964 reform were written by the spiritual father and General Secretary of the government Evangelos Papanoutsos. Other distinguished personalities who engaged in the

⁷³ The number of papers that Athenian newspapers sold during this period is impressive as it exceeds more than four times the current ones despite the fact that the range of newspapers published in the 1960s was dramatically smaller than today.

public dialogue in favor of the reform were Ioannis Kakridis, first President of the Pedagogical Institute, and a number of professors from the University of Thessaloniki, which gradually became the cradle of the reform's defense.⁷⁴

On the other hand, *Kathimerini*, traditionally constituted the daily newspaper which echoed the political beliefs of the Right. In this period it was edited by the entrepreneur G. Vlahos who was known for his anticommunist rhetoric and had personal and professional relations with members of the major right-wing opposition party of National Radical Unity (E.R.E). *Kathimerini* adopted the strategy of constant attacks against the Union Center; however, its criticism was not exclusively focused on the governmental initiatives, but also aimed to cultivate the impression that the presence of a central governance raised a severe communist danger for the Greek society. Its major aspiration, reflecting the political purpose of ERE as well, was the removal of Papandreou from power and the creation of a center-right government. In *Kathimerini* the opposition to the reform's measures was basically expressed by Kostas Georgoulis, General Secretary of the Ministry of Education in 1951 and former Director of Secondary School Education. A similar stance was adopted by other academics coming primarily from the University of Athens such as Panagiotis Bratsiotis and Kostas Georgountzos. The latter, in combination with the hard liners of the "Teachers' Union" and the Church, seemed to constitute the most reactionary institutions against the educational endeavor of 1964.⁷⁵

⁷⁴ The University of Thessaloniki at this period - contrast to its counterpart in Athens - was composed from a generation of young professors known for their 'progressive approach' in educational issues. Leading figure of this 'reformist movement of ideas' generated in the university, was the eminent philologist I. Kakridis.

⁷⁵ The institutions mentioned, traditionally composed the conservative and reactionary block of the *status quo* as in previous similar educational reforms in 1917 or in 1929 which were characterized for their distinct progressive character, they were in the forefront of resistance and opposition against their implementation.

Lastly, the daily newspaper *H Avgi*, founded in 1952, supported the positions of the Left. However, as the Greek communist party was outlawed after its defeat in the Civil War, it mainly constituted the political voice of United Democratic Left (E.D.A), which was in that period the most powerful left-wing party in the Greek Parliament. The editor of the newspaper M. Glezos was also a leading member of E.D.A and one of the best known leftist politicians for his ‘resistant deeds’ against the Axis powers during the occupation of Greece in WW2. The articles published in *Avgi* were primarily written by socialist scholars, and the personality that stood out regarding issues of education was the pedagogue Roza Imvrioti, who had a continuous and consistent presence in the publication of articles commenting measures of the reform.⁷⁶

The initial invitation for the inception of the public discussion was addressed by the General Secretary E. Papanoutsos through the newspaper *To Vima* with his article titled “The time of critique”. In a characteristic excerpt of his article he wrote: “Now that the new bill for the reorganization of our Education is introduced in Parliament and published in daily newspapers, scientific organizations, academic institutions, political parties, and all those interested in the fate of this state, will have the opportunity to judge the government’s measures and to submit their comments, objections, corrections and observations.”⁷⁷

Nevertheless, it should be stressed that even though the debate between all these agents was officially initiated after the election of the government in February 1964, the political

⁷⁶ A few years back, Roza Imvrioti herself became the central figure of a significant debate which had arisen regarding the content and the methods of teaching history in public education. Imvrioti, taught the history of the Greek revolution claiming that the emphasis should be given not to the military events and the personages but to the social significance of the revolution. Imvrioti’s teaching of history, influenced by new, materialistic, Marxist-inspired, views of history, was considered to be antinational and she was finally fired from the training institution Marasleio Didaskaleio, where she worked.

See more in Maria Repousi, *Ta Marasleika*, [The ‘Maraslian’], (Athens: Polis, 2012).

⁷⁷ E. Papanoutsos, “*H ora tis kritikis*”, [The time of critique], *To Vima*, 16-07-1964, p.5.

intention of the Union Center to reform education constituted one of the fundamental aspects of its election campaign already on November 1963. The first relevant article entitled “The measures of the Union Center for the education” was published in the left-wing newspaper *Avgi* on late November, commenting the initiatives that the cadres of the Papandreou’s party would undertake in case their party was elected. In this sense, the emphatic victory of the Union Center on the second round of the elections on February 1964 gave the impetus and the confidence to the new government to proceed to the implementation of its educational program as its electoral agenda was approved from a significant majority of the Greek people.

On the other hand, the ‘delayed response’ of the publications coming from the right-wing opposition raises plausible questions for their motives. It is characteristic that the first article about the reform’s measures was published in *Kathimerini* in the summer of 1964 a few days after the educational acts had already passed from Greek Parliament. Such an element reveals that, contrary to the Left, the interest and intentions of the right-wing opposition from the beginning did not focus on the improvement of educational issues, but were directed at the systematic undermining of the political power of Papandreou and his government.

My research regarding the debate of the measures in the press was based on the examination of articles published in the three Athenian newspapers described for the period from April to November of 1964, including the summer months, when the Act was officially passed by the Greek Parliament. The methodology was based on the analysis of the material found, focusing on the most characteristic articles which reflected the view of each political side. The selection of articles includes a wide variety of statesmen, academics, and other public figures or institutions and, in order the dialogue between them to be reconstructed in a more vivid and interactive manner, the material was categorized in subchapters, according to the

following measures of the reform: The teaching of Ancient Greek texts in translation, free education and the expansion of compulsory education, the issues of language and religion in the curricula, and the establishment of the Pedagogical Institute.

3.1 The teaching of Ancient Greek texts in translation

The most controversial measure of the reform was the government's decision to shift the teaching of Ancient Greek in Gymnasium⁷⁸ from the original texts to translated ones into Modern Greek.⁷⁹ This initiative was explicitly associated with the emergence of two diametrically opposed social movements at the dawn of 20th century, when the one side supported the emphasis on Greek ancient glory, which could only be preserved through the systematic and methodic teaching of the ancient Greek language in schools, while the other claimed that the regeneration of the modern Greek nation would not be achieved through the adherence to our ancient legacy but via its study and understanding in the modern language.

One of the first publications about this measure was a memorandum written in late August by the Philosophy Department of the University of Athens, which argued that the specific measure “leads to the decline of classical studies in our country”.⁸⁰ Its authors, attempting to show the lack of authenticity in the translation, drew parallels between the teachings of ancient

⁷⁸ According to the new measures the secondary education was divided into two separate three-grade types of school called Gymnasium and Lyceum.

⁷⁹ This measure was addressed only to the Gymnasium curriculum as students were in younger age and, therefore, faced more problems in the study and understanding of the Ancient Greek literature.

⁸⁰ The memorandum, signed by 12 members of the Philosophy Department, was published with the title “*O ekfilismos tou klasikismou*”, [The degeneration of classicism] in *H Kathimerini* on 28-08-1964, p.12.

texts in translation with the teaching of ancient Greek architecture based on neoclassical buildings.

Moreover, K. Georgoulis, wrote about “inaccuracies, contradictions, monolithic structure of secondary education and hostility to Greek and Western tradition”,⁸¹ commenting that the reform was anachronistic and obsolete. A similar reaction was shown by people coming from the political arena, as in the case of the deputy of the right party of E.R.E Panagiotis Kanellopoulos who, responding to the reformers’ comments that the teaching hours of Ancient Greek were increased with the introduction of the new reform, claimed: “It is essential for how long the eye, the ear and the soul of the student will be in touch with the ancient texts. In three years, even if the government finds 1,500 hours, it won’t be able to provide them what would be possible in half as many hours in six years.”⁸²

In favor of preserving the teaching of ancient texts in their original form even the proverbial Italian phrase “Traduttore = Traditore” was invoked, meaning the translator is a traitor. Some authors went as far as discovering even a socialist-communist conspiracy behind the ‘degradation’ of ancient Greek, clearly linking education, and specifically language, with policy. Already in July the member of the Teacher’s Union S. Sitos wrote that “the aim of this group of left-wing politicians and intellectuals is to undermine, or even abolish, classical studies, in order to gradually dissolve civil society and replace it by the dictatorship of proletariat.”⁸³

⁸¹ K. Georgoulis, “*Ta parohimena metra ths neas metarithmisis*”, [The obsolete measures of the new reform], *H Kathimerini*, 19-8-1964, p.12.

⁸² P. Kanellopoulos, “*Meros tis sizitisis gia thn ekpedefsi sto koinovoulío*”, [Part of the discussion about education in the parliament], *H Kathimerini*, 29-06-1964, p.8.

⁸³ S. Sitos “*H dialisi ths ekpedefsīs*”, [The dissolution of education], *H Kathimerini*, 21-07-1964, p.14.

Former General Secretary of the Education Ministry, K. Georgoulis, interpreted the educational reform as linguistic propaganda of the Left, noting that “the reform constitutes a crime against national education.” In his article on September 6th he characterized translations as a ‘strange invention’, and averred that “translations as a pedagogical tool inhibit every educational effect of school work and direct the students to passive memorization.”⁸⁴ According to his approach, the study of ancient literature in translation should be condemned as “the literary texts, even if translated in the best possible way, lose 90% of their value.”

The danger of classical education’s degeneration and the undermining of the high and noble meanings of the ancient classics due to the teaching of ancient Greek literature in translation was also criticized by K. Georgoulis in August when he wrote that: “The translations are given in order for the new generations not to feel the need to study original ancient texts [...] this will cause the young generations’ alienation from the original Greek tradition.”⁸⁵ According to his approach, the ultimate goal of the introduction of translations was the expulsion of classical education from secondary education and consequently its gradual death.

August was plausibly the month when the debate escalated - as the Act was passed in the Greek parliament at the end of July – and other academics, mainly members of the University of Athens, were engaged, presenting their views to this measure which was increasingly transformed into a ‘national issue’. Professor K. Georgountzos, in a new long article written in a melodramatic style, stated that “Greece will transmit to the world the slogan of abolishing the Greek language[...]the Greek educational tradition is dissolved[...]Greece

⁸⁴ K. Georgoulis, “*To egklima enantia stin ethniki ekpedefsi*”, [The crime against national education], *H Kathimerini*, 06-09-1964, p.11.

⁸⁵ K. Georgoulis, “*Ta arnitika apotelesmata tis didaskalias arheon ellinikon apo metafrasi*”, [The negative effects of teaching Ancient Greek in translation], *H Kathimerini*, 28-08-1964, p.9.

alone in the entire civilized world eliminates its roots.”⁸⁶ At the end of August, it was Professor F.S Bouzanis who expressed his opposition to the measure by asserting that the translator betrays the text, especially the one written in ancient Greek language “which Cicero considered the only one worth speaking by the Gods,”⁸⁷ while Professor N. Kontoleon caustically commented that “a school of Hellenic character, in which Latin and ancient Greek are not taught in their original form cannot be called a Greek school.”⁸⁸

These attacks were refuted in the press by a number of professors of the University of Thessaloniki such as I. Kakridis, N. Andriotis and M. Sakellariou and of course by E. Papanoutsos, as General Secretary of the Ministry and architect of the reform. Papanoutsos attempted via the newspaper *To Vima*, on August 13th, to give a first response to the criticism, arguing:

The fact that the opposition newspapers do not want to ‘cease fire’ and through their comments try to create confusion in order to reduce the value of the government's educational initiative does not surprise me. This is unfortunately our political ethos. Nevertheless, what causes sadness and disappointment is the fact that people who hold, or once held, senior positions in the educational and journalistic hierarchy of the country accepted to fight with such violence against the reform measures. Everyone can see that the attempt of the malicious and ruthless undermining of the reform derives mainly from various professors of the Philosophical and Theological Department of the University of Athens and the hard liners of the “Greek Teachers’ Institute.”⁸⁹

Papanoutsos in another article on August 20th, opposing the criticism that the reform promoted the undermining of the tradition with the abolition of Ancient Greek in high school, underscored: "Demagogues and manipulators! In order to slander the education reform, critics lie that with the new measures Ancient Greek is withdrawn from Gymnasium and, therefore,

⁸⁶ K. Georgountzos “*H eksalipsi tis arheas ellinikis glossas*”, [The elimination of the ancient Greek language], *H Kathimerini*, 28-08-1964, p.16.

⁸⁷ F.S Bouzanis, “*Prodidontas tous progonous mas*”, [Betraying our ancestors], *H Kathimerini*, 30-08-1964, p.11.

⁸⁸ N. Kontoleon, “*H apodomisi tis ellinikis ekpedefshs apo ti neoisahthisa metarrithmisi*”, [The deconstruction of the Greek education by the newly introduced reform], *H Kathimerini*, 29-08-1964, p.13.

⁸⁹ E. Papanoutsos, “*Apantisi stis kritikes*”, [A response to the critics], *To Vima*, 13-08-1964, p.7.

the link between the students and our great Greek tradition is broken. It is a pure distortion of truth! With the new reform Ancient Greek literature is not abolished, but on the contrary it becomes deeper and wider.”⁹⁰

At the same period, the prominent professor and first President of the Pedagogical Institute Kakridis, referring to the issue of Ancient Greek teaching, wrote:

The dilemma posed to us is either for our children to learn -if they ever manage to learn- from the original a few pages from four or five writers (not very remarkable except Herodotus), or to fill their souls by reading much of Homer, Herodotus, Thucydides, Plato and a lot of tragedies in translation. They will certainly lose the wonder of the original form, but they will benefit from their content. I believe that the new system proposed in the bill constitutes the most successful effort to hold tight in our longstanding Greek tradition and at the same time cope with the needs of our times.⁹¹

The specific educational measure was also supported in the monthly newsletters published in September by the Pedagogical Institute which argued that “during the three-year Gymnasium it is impossible for students from 13 to 15 years old to approach the original texts and understand their aesthetic beauty.” The author criticized the ‘obsession’ of teaching in that way as being an “unnecessary hassle and a waste of time for students” and concluded that the mechanical exercise of students over ‘dead forms’ constituted the ‘degeneration’ of ancient texts.⁹² Nevertheless, it is noteworthy that almost all the supporters of the measure admitted that no translation could completely replace the original, “because no one could approach the author’s absolute spiritual and creative moment”. However, as they stressed, “neither does the writer himself relive the moment of creation with the same intensity. Thus, it is ‘pure

⁹⁰ E. Papanoutsos, “*H diastrevlosi tis metarrithmisis*”, [The distortion of the reform] *To Vima*, 20-08-1964, p.11.

⁹¹ I. Kakridis, “*Aksiologontas tin nea metarithmisi*”, [Evaluating the new reform], *To Vima*, 29-08-1964, p.10.

⁹² Kostas Papanikolaou, “*H fisi kai I stohi tou mathimatos ton arhaion ellinikon apo metafrasi*”, [The nature and aims of the course of ancient Greek literature by translations], (Athens: Pedagogical Institute No. 3-4, September 1964.)

deception’ someone to claim that students are able to comprehend the classic creations with a bunch of words or grammatical rules.”⁹³

The articles coming from the Left were published in the newspaper *H Avgi* and were primarily written by the pedagogue Roza Imvrioti and the Educational Committee of the political party of E.D.A. The latter, reflected the crystallized educational policy of E.D.A, which included explicit socialist components. E.D.A initially saluted the educational reform in late March stressing that “the Greek people were really delighted with this reform in education because it constituted one of their deepest expectations.”⁹⁴ Soon after, their committee presented its arguments more analytically vis-a-vis the educational announcements of the Union Center. In one of her first articles commenting the reform, on April 23rd, Imvrioti claimed that the introduction of the spoken language through the translation of ancient Greek literature in secondary education “clearly constitutes a positive service to education.” Moreover, she argued that “our education should be detached from the obsession with the ancient Greek language as it is an inhibitory factor in the progress of our civilization.”⁹⁵

Therefore, the examination of these articles demonstrates the clearly different view that each side had on this measure. The reformists presented it as a necessary pedagogical change, required from the unpleasant educational experience, which had repeatedly shown that the adherence to the form and not the content of the ancient texts led students to very limited and fragmentary knowledge of them. Leftist voices also supported this measure underscoring the importance of ancient literacy to be taught in a modern language that students could

⁹³ Ibid.

⁹⁴ Educational Committee of E.D.A, “*H thetiki dinamiki tis metarrithmisis*”, [The positive dynamic of the reform], *H Avgi*, 07-03-1964, p.14.

⁹⁵ R. Imvrioti, “*H simasia tou na didaskete I arxaia grammatia sth mitriki mas glossa*”, [The importance of Ancient Literature to be taught in our spoken language], *H Avgi*, 23-04-1964, p.13.

understand. On the other hand, the opponents of the reform constantly approached the introduction of this measure as a threat to the glorious ancient legacy and ascertained that the diminishing of the ancient Greek language would undermine one of the basic safeguards of the Greek tradition. Consequently, they perceived language as a national and historical tool, as a means to preserve tradition and cultural heritage, therefore, the unity and continuity of the Greek language was seen to be put at risk by diminishing Ancient Greek in schools.

3.2 Free education and the expansion of compulsory education

Two major measures of the reform which raised opposition was the decision of the government to expand compulsory education from six to nine years and establish free public education. According to the introductory report of the Act, a wide package of economic relief measures such as the abolishment of tuition fees, the free distribution of school textbooks and the free transfer of students to schools.⁹⁶ A few days after the Act was officially passed in the Greek Parliament in July 1964, the Philosophical Department of Athens published a memorandum in which it stressed that “providing humanitarian education to everyone simply demonstrates the devaluation of our educational system.”⁹⁷

In the same period, Georgoulis referred to the two ‘glorious promises’, as he ironically characterized the establishment of free education and nine years of compulsory education, claiming that they constitute the surface under which the real pursuits of the government are hidden. Invoking the experience of other states he concluded that “free education cannot be

⁹⁶ *Introductory Report about the Organization and Administration of General Education*, Act 4379, 24-10-64, National Printing Office, p.25.

⁹⁷ The memorandum, signed by 13 members of the Philosophy Department was published with the title “*Apaksionontas tin Elliniki ekpedefsi*”, [Devaluating the Greek education] in *H Kathimerini*, 02-08-1964, p.9.

limited to the abolishment of tuition fees and the distribution of some textbooks or a daily lunch, but has an essentially broader width, and hence it must be planned very carefully in order not to cause negative effects.”⁹⁸

Moreover, at the end of August, in an article entitled “The crime against the national education” Georgoulis underscored that “the expansion of free education constitutes an unattainable idealization”, and tried to justify his opposition by claiming that the massive entrance of students will sacrifice the quality of our education.”⁹⁹ A few days later, the deputy of E.R.E Kostas Aposkitis, after his party proposed to abolish the reform, also expressed his opposition to the measure of free education by claiming in parliament that “this decision marks the opening of the gates of ignorance for everyone.”¹⁰⁰

Moving to the side of the advocates of the reform, the professor of the University of Thessaloniki Nikos Andriotis refuting the criticism coming from his colleagues of the University of Athens, claimed on August 27th that the criterion for the cultural level of a nation should not be the insignificant minority of Gymnasium graduates, but the general education of the people. “Even in backward and underdeveloped countries”, he noted, “there is always a highly educated elite, however below them there are millions of illiterate people, totally deprived from any educational good [...] Our cultural line will always start at the point where the education of the millions stops.”¹⁰¹

⁹⁸ K. Georgoulis, “*Dio iposhesis gia tin ekpedeftiki metarithmisi*”, [The two ‘promises’ of the educational reform], *H Kathimerini*, 04-08-1964, p.10.

⁹⁹ K. Georgoulis, “*To egklima enantia stin ethniki ekpedefsi*”, [The crime against the national education], *H Kathimerini*, 20-08-1964, p.9.

¹⁰⁰ K. Aposkitis, “*H metarithmisi anigi tis portes tis amathias gia olous*”, [The reform opens for everyone the gates of ignorance], *H Kathimerini*, 21-09-1964, p.11.

¹⁰¹ N. Andriotis, “*H geniki ekpedefsi tou plithismou mas, kathreftis tou politismikou mas epipedou*”, [The general education of our population, mirror of our cultural level], *To Vima*, 27-8-1964, p.13.

The voice of the Left was represented a few days later by the educational committee of E.D.A which evaluated positively the announcements of Union Center for free education from kindergarten to universities, and characterized the measure “as a deeply democratic and socially fair initiative.” The radical nature of the measure was illustrated by the fact that “until this moment no country in Western Europe had achieved it. Only the Eastern ones have completely implemented it, liberating the family from all the economic burdens that a child requires. It is necessary for this initiative to be extolled as a very pioneering step.”¹⁰²

To sum up, the reformist block approached the measures as necessary preconditions of the humanitarian and social character they aspired to give to the Greek education. Both the establishment of free education in all levels and the expansion of compulsory education were compatible with their philosophy to bring education closer to society and hence, create better conditions for the democratization and cultural upgrading of the country. Such an orientation was espoused enthusiastically by the authors of *Avgi* who interpreted these issues, as moving in the same directions that the Soviet educational system first implemented after 1917. On the other hand, the opponents of the reform, usually with quite abstract and vague arguments, downplayed the social dimension of the measures by stressing that they constituted populist and not well organized initiatives, through which the quality of education would be sacrificed on the altar of quantity.

¹⁰² Educational Committee of E.D.A, “*H kathierosi tis dorean ekpedefsis os aparaititi dimokratiki anagkh*”, [The establishment of free education as an imperative democratic need], *H Avgi*, 30-08-1964, p.13.

3.3. The issues of Language and Religion in the curricula

The measure of the reform to use exclusively demotic (public) Greek in primary schools, and both demotic and *katharevousa* ('purified') Greek in secondary education, constituted another crucial facet of the debate. Exaggerations such as 'rape' or 'barbarization' of the language are frequently met in the newspaper *Kathimerini*. For the opponents of the reform, demotic was a synonym of decay, characterized by its limited vocabulary which was heavily responsible for the illiteracy of the youth. On 4th of October, the member of Teacher's Union Panagiotis Tsatsos averred that "the proponents of demotic Greek will lead our children to think and talk by using the 800 or 1,000 words that the vocabulary of our spoken language includes."¹⁰³

In many articles language was inextricably associated with the moral principles that should be transmitted to students, hence, the danger of their 'moral erosion' was constantly connected to the use of the 'vulgar' demotic Greek. They did not hesitate to characterize it as the "language of the streets" or "of the underground world", while there were ironic comments, regarding the lack of essential grammatical or vocabulary rules in demotic. The 'degeneration' that this language variation caused, was frequently juxtaposed to *katharevousa*'s superiority. The 'unity' and 'continuity' of the language from Homer's era was once more argued in several articles, consequently *katharevousa*, as a 'pure descendant' of ancient Greek, was approached as a more eloquent language while the "legitimization" of the 'low' demotic Greek constituted a threat to the language as a whole.

¹⁰³ P. Tsatsos, "*O ekvarvarismos tis Ellinikis glossas*", [The barbarization of the Greek language], *H Kathimerini*, 04-10-1964, p.14.

On the other hand, advocates of the reform criticized the irresponsible policy that was followed for many years in the matter of language “due to the dishonest practices of all those who did not want to recognize the fundamental right of the spoken language of the nation, causing linguistic anarchy and illiteracy for the youth.”¹⁰⁴ They also stressed the need for Greece to ‘normalize’ its written language according to the rules of the ‘mother tongue’ which is spoken by all Greeks from their childhood. For the establishment of demotic Greek Papanoutsos claimed: “Our aim is to establish demotic language throughout all levels of education from kindergarten to University. However, until the state and the society accept demotic in all aspects of national life as their only linguistic instrument - meaning that a transitional period is required, the duration of which will depend on the developments of everyday life - *katharevousa* will still be taught in high schools in parallel with demotic.”¹⁰⁵

The articles published in *Avgi* mainly expressed the hesitations of its authors regarding the fact that the reform did not solve the maintenance of ‘bilingualism’ in Greek society. The scholar Lena Kottou argued that “the establishment of demotic language throughout the six years of preliminary school is clearly a positive decision”, however she expressed her doubts to which extent these six years are enough for a child to learn sufficiently his mother tongue. According to her view, “all the progressive countries have established the systematic teaching of their ‘mother tongue’ as the first main course of their compulsory education. Therefore, the parallel teaching of demotic and *katharevousa* in secondary schools cannot be scientifically justified, as *katharevousa* is an artificial language opposing the internal nature and peculiarity of our mother tongue and preventing the smooth development of our linguistic ability.” Hence,

¹⁰⁴ A. Psalidas, “*H Dimotiki apoteli ti rahokokalia tis ekepedefsis mas*”, [Demotic Greek constitutes the backbone of our education], *To Vima*, 06-10-1964, p.19.

¹⁰⁵ E. Papanoutsos, “*H eisagogi tis dimotikis sta dimotika sholia*”, [The introduction of demotic in elementary schools], *To Vima*, 20-04-1964, p.9.

she pointed out the imperative need for education to be deprived from the burden of *katharevousa* which “stands as a negative factor in our civilization’s progress.”¹⁰⁶

The conflict concerning the linguistic form that should be established in the educational curricula as the official “national” language, can fully be understood if it is approached as a facet of the broader and complex issue, which plagued Greece for more than two centuries, called language question (*glossiko zitima*). This issue focused on the, initially linguistic, and later social and political dichotomy of the Greek language into two variations: a vernacular one (which was later named demotic), and a written one, imitation of the ancient Greek (which constituted the basis of *katharevousa*).

At the heart of the Greek language question was the desire of the modern Greeks to develop a written language that would reflect an ideal national image and would embody and express their relationship to the ancients. The problem was rooted mainly in the beginning of 19th century when the newly established modern Greek nation-state made its first steps and started formulating its national identity, a fundamental element of which was its language. However, different members of the Greek elite entertained different versions of this national image. Archaists and purists claimed that the best way to demonstrate the modern Greeks’ connection with the ancients was to imitate Ancient Greek linguistic models (chiefly in vocabulary and morphology), while vernacularists (later known as demoticists) argued that they could best demonstrate their direct cultural descent from the ancients by writing in a variety of Greek that was as close as possible to the spoken tongue, since, they asserted, the spoken

¹⁰⁶ L. Kottou, “*To fortio tis katharevousas stin elliniki ekpedefsi*”, [The burden of *katharevousa* in Greek education], *H Avgi*, 07-04-1964, p.12.

language was the outcome of the natural and continuous development of the Greek language from ancient to modern times.¹⁰⁷

The Greek language debate turned to be more intense at the dawn of the 20th century, when it coincided with the consolidation of the Greek bourgeoisie, the beginnings of industrialization, and the growth of the national expansionist movement, all of which demanded a more efficient educational system.¹⁰⁸ Gradually the language question acquired explicit political dimensions, transforming into a “civil war” and a serious national issue as the use of each of these two varieties was identified with the performance of a specifically political identity, that was, either ‘conservative’ or ‘progressive’.¹⁰⁹ As Rena Stavridi - Patrikiou has pointed out, the *demoticist* movement was constantly accused of ‘anti-religiousness, anti-nationalism and immorality’. The threat posed to the political and cultural *status quo*, she concludes, ‘did not concern a language variety but a view of life which had to be protected by all means: ideological, political, legislative and constitutional’.¹¹⁰ Moreover, during the Balkan Wars, *demoticism* was demonized by nationalists, who connected it with the Slav threat and accused it of collaborating with Greece’s enemies to divide and destroy the nation. Once the existence of a ‘communist threat’ had been established, the transition from Bulgarian nationalism to Russian-dominated communism as the greatest threat to the Greek nation was easily made.¹¹¹

¹⁰⁷ P. Mackridge, *Language and National Identity in Greece 1766-1976*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 2009), p.4.

¹⁰⁸ A. Fragoudaki, “Greek societal bilingualism of more than a century”, *International Journal of the Sociology of Language*, 2002, p.105.

¹⁰⁹ It is characteristic that the publication of the Bible and the performance of the ancient tragedy ‘Orestia’ in demotic for first time in 1901 and 1903 respectively, created violent demonstrations and blood conflicts between the supporters of the two sides.

¹¹⁰ Rena Stavridi-Patrikiou, *To glossiko zitima*, [The language question], http://www.komvos.edu.gr/glwssa/odigos/thema_d2/thema_pdf.pdf

¹¹¹ Ibid.

Therefore, when the reform was introduced in 1964, all these previous developments had already transformed language question into a highly politicized and deeply contentious national issue, as for large parts of the population *demoticism* was identified with socialism.¹¹² Furthermore, regarding the social role of language, the fact that *katharevousa* and demotic Greek were used in order to proclaim and enact competing versions of national identity soon led to the transformation of language as a weapon of exercising power or even oppression. Given that *katharevousa* had constituted the official language of the state and administration from the establishment of the modern Greek state, its supporters constantly presented themselves as the sole guardians of national values. Consequently, there was a deep rift gradually created over the previous years between the educated classes and the illiterate people, who could not speak or write in *katharevousa*. Such a development raised social discriminations as people were excluded from power, and obedience to the existing status quo as a safeguard of the tradition was cultivated.¹¹³

On the other hand, religion, as the second vital criterion which defined Greek national identity, constantly interplayed with the concept of language. Therefore, the decision of the reformists to reduce the hours for religious teaching was also frequently criticized in the columns of *Kathimerini* in which the modern vernacular was considered to be a ‘profane’ language, while *katharevousa*, as a “true born child” of ancient Greek, was inextricably connected with the Greek Christian tradition and the ideals of the Orthodox belief.¹¹⁴

¹¹²The strong bonds forged between the demotic language with left and *katharevousa* with right became more explicit during the Civil War when advocates of demotic Greek were even prosecuted as communists and anarchists.

¹¹³ Rena Stavridi-Patrikiou, *To glossiko zitima*, [The language question], http://www.komvos.edu.gr/glwssa/odigos/thema_d2/thema_pdf.pdf.

¹¹⁴ Such an approach stemmed from the fact that the archaic written language of the literate elites (precursor of *katharevousa*), was the one that prevailed in education during the Ottoman occupation and hence, constituted since then the model for the language of Church.

Almost all the articles of the counter reform block shared the essential assumption that education should primarily have a national and orthodox character. For them, *katharevousa* was the language of Gospel, identified with Orthodoxy, hence measures such as the establishment of demotic Greek in combination with the translation of ancient Greek texts and the downgrading of religious teaching threatened both Greek civilization and Christianity. The professor of Theology in the University of Athens Panagiotis Bratsiotis, in one of his articles warned that “with the new educational reform, after 5-6 years, the new generation will not be able to comprehend neither the Gospel nor the Divine Liturgy in their original form,”¹¹⁵ while the bishop of an Athenian church wrote: “We immediately have to deal with the crucial issue of how Greek-Christian civilization is treated in the new educational reform and the consequences that such a reform could entail in Greek Church and nation.”¹¹⁶ It is characteristic that the General Secretary of the Ministry of Education E. Papanoutsos was accused of being an atheist and the Holy Synod decided to excommunicate him.

On their side, the supporters of the reform, by promoting such measures, aspired to weaken or even deconstruct this long standing nationalist political rhetoric, which they criticized as based on a distorted interpretation of the concepts of nation, Ancient Greek language, religion, and Greek-Christian tradition. Thus, they opposed both the epidermal approach of classical education and the ideologized teaching of religion, and tried to modernize Greek education by giving to it a modern and secular orientation.

¹¹⁵ P. Bratsiotis, “*To ethniko zitima*”, [The national issue], *H Kathimerini*, 26-07-1964, p.13.

¹¹⁶ Bishop Dionisios, “*H prospathia na apoksenosoun ti thriskia apo to Elliniko ekpedeftiko sistima*”, [The attempt to alienate religion from our Greek educational system], *H Kathimerini*, 25-09-1964, p.18.

However, in the intensively denominational character of the Greek educational system¹¹⁷, the religious course did not simply constitute a subject in the curricula. It had the vital role of cultivating the notion that Orthodoxy was an intrinsic characteristic of Hellenism and given that this notion did not only reside in school knowledge but was shared in a considerable part of Greek society as well, the strong opposition against the particular measure was inevitable.¹¹⁸ As the historian Elli Zambeta characteristically stresses, “In the Greek political and cultural context, the term “Greek-Christian civilization” has been used in order to emphasize the nature of Greek identity as well as its distinctiveness from its neighbors and Europe. Throughout modern Greek history, the continuity of the language and the Orthodox Christian religion have been perceived as the strongholds of national identity”. The strongest advocates of this view have been the Greek Orthodox Church and the conservative political wind.”¹¹⁹

In conclusion, the strong opposition from these social groups against these measures depicted the suffocating relationship between politics and education, as the latter was perceived as an institution reflecting the nature and aims of identity politics exercised by the state. Thus religion and language, as key elements of the Greek nation’s self-identification, had to be protected from “anti-national” measures which tried to undermine them. In a society characterized by its modernity deficit,¹²⁰ and in the rigid frame of a school knowledge which

¹¹⁷ Religious teaching has always constituted a peculiarity of the Greek education, given that in Greek society there was never a division of State and Church, as had occurred in other European countries.

¹¹⁸ The social role of religion in school textbooks was constantly weighty, preventing among others, the demonstration of the socio economic dimensions of history and in general the development of critical thinking. It fostered fatalism- meaning the passive acceptance of the social reality with all its negative elements- and presented the abstract and timeless God as having a special love and care for the “chosen” Greeks, whatever was their opponent.

See A. Fragoudaki, *Ta sholika vivlia tou dimotikou sholiou*, [The textbooks of Primary school], pp. 45-52.

¹¹⁹ E. Zambeta, *Religion and national identity in Greek education*, (Athens: Intercultural Education, 2000), p.148.

¹²⁰ Even in nowadays Orthodox belief and Greek language constitute the landmarks of the “pure” Greek to such extend that it is questioned the Greekness of those who are not Orthodox. Something which is clearly reflected in

had as its main concern to present the continuity of the Greek nation and identity, the preservation of Orthodoxy and language constituted for a considerable part of the population a ‘sacred duty’.

3.4 The establishment of the Pedagogical Institute

The last controversial measure on which my research focused was the newly established institution of the Pedagogical Institute [P.I]. The former General Secretary of the Education Ministry Georgoulis characterized it a ‘bizarre construction’ which aspired to put under its arbitrary rule every educational authority and jurisdiction. According to him, the measures about the management and supervising of education were planned in such a manner that they will be soon totally controlled “by a dynasty of fifty small dictators composed by the members of the Pedagogue Institute.”¹²¹

His strategy of presenting through his articles communist tactics as the model of the reform measures reappeared on September 13th when he wrote in *Kathimerini* that the antidemocratic perceptions of the educational reform were disclosed by the new philosophy they wanted to give to Greek education, shared only by the states of Eastern Europe. “The legislators do not have the honesty and dignity to reveal their true purposes. The program

the article 3 of the Greek Constitution which still provides that “the prevailing religion in Greece is the religion of the Eastern Orthodox Church” proclaiming that one of the main aims of education should be its safekeeping. E. Zambeta, *Religion and national identity in Greek education*, (Athens: Intercultural Education, 2000), p.149.

¹²¹ K. Georgoulis, “*H periergi kataskevi tou Pedagogikou Institoutou*”, [The ‘bizarre construction’ of Pedagogical Institute], *H Kathimerini*, 13-09-1964, p.15.

which they attempt to promote is absolutely similar with the educational programs of the Soviet Union and the countries of the iron curtain.”¹²²

What Georgoulis mainly found worrying was that the P.I undertook the administration of education and the training of the personnel, jurisdictions that would make P.I “a powerful organization capable of exercising its authoritarian rule to education. It is obvious that it is prepared the establishment of a tyranny and a dictator who would play the role of a commissar”.¹²³ Furthermore, he claimed that the P.I presented amazing similarities with its counterpart German Pedagogical Central Institute of Eastern Berlin. In his article on September 30th, he noted that “the P.I is planned as a beast which will gobble all the services of the Ministry...It is included in the institutions of the Eastern Bloc where the imposition of Marxist worldview through education is pursued.”¹²⁴

On the other hand, Professor Kakridis, as the first President of the Pedagogical Institute, supported the role and work of the new institution. Already in the middle of July he wrote in *Vima* that the foundation of the P.I constituted one of the most groundbreaking measures of the government. He assessed necessary the presence of a supreme scientific institution which will offer its consultations to all kind of educational issues. As he pointed out, “the scientific research and solution of educational problems, the training of the personnel and the guidance of

¹²² K. Georgoulis, “*Oi apolitarhikes armodiotites tou Pedagogikou Institoutou*”, [The authoritarian jurisdictions of Pedagogical Institute], *H Kathimerini*, 20-9-1964, p.19.

¹²³ K. Georgoulis, “*Pedagogiko Institouto –Ena thirio pou tha katavrohthisi tin ekpedefsi*”, [Pedagogical Institute - A beast which will gobble education], *H Kathimerini*, 06-08-1964, p.14.

¹²⁴ Ibid.

the administrative mechanism of the education are only a few of the important assignments that the Institute will undertake.”¹²⁵

A positive stance towards the establishment of the Pedagogical Institute was also expressed by the newspaper *H Avgi* from the very first moment when the government announced its plans to found such an institution on November 1963. The pedagogue Antigoni Kollia stressed, that the presence of P.I will operate as a “useful link between school class and administration, while the experience of its members can give essential solutions to several open educational issues.”¹²⁶

Once more, the effort of the counter reform block to give political connotations to the particular measure and cultivate the fear of a communist conspiracy through education to the population is explicit. Especially Georgoulis, systematically drew parallels between the centralizing structure and multiple jurisdictions of the P.I with its counterparts operating in the Eastern European countries. On the other hand, the reformists’ side tried to approach it as a clearly educational decision emphasizing the technical aspects of the measure and the necessity for the existence of a central institution that would efficiently coordinate several educational issues. A similar stance was espoused by the Left which received positively the introduction of the measure.

¹²⁵ I. Kakridis, “*H pollapli simasia tou Pedagogikou Institoutou*”, [The multiple importance of the Pedagogical Institute], *To Vima*, 12-07-1964, p.11.

¹²⁶ A. Kollia, “*H idrisi tou Pedagogikou Institoutou*”, [The establishment of the Pedagogical Institute], *H Avgi*, 23-11-1963, p.11.

3.5. Conclusion

The analysis of diverse articles, which either defended or criticized the reform, clearly reveal, on one hand, the fruitful debate and exchange of ideas that the educational reform of 1964 triggered, but on the other, the dominant climate of polarization that characterized Greek society of this period. Measures of the reform such as the reduction of the teaching hours for religion courses or the teaching of Ancient Literacy in translation were approached by the right-wing opposition not as simple educational issues, but were constantly loaded with further political and ideological connotations.

Their methodic effort focused on constantly politicizing education by raising the severe threat of a communist conspiracy which the reformists promoted through education in order to impose the dictatorship of proletariat. Furthermore, they criticized the ‘antinational’ or ‘atheist’ character of the reform and stressed the increasing danger for the deconstruction of Greek national identity through measures which aimed at undermining its constituent elements such as the language, the religion and the close connection with the glorious ancestry. This kind of polarized rhetoric though did not seem to be espoused by the reformists who tried to emphasize exclusively the required technical and pedagogical changes that the measures introduced. Thus, they justified their initiatives as necessary for education to be updated according to the current economic and social needs of the society.

Nevertheless, a necessary distinction should be made between the monolithic character and extreme comments espoused by the right wing opposition, and the positive but critical attitude adopted by the left, which was usually accompanied by fruitful proposals or alternatives. This indirect support provided by leftist circles to the 1964 educational reform

acquires more importance, especially considering the turbulent period that the relationship between the left and Papandreou had passed in the recent past.¹²⁷

¹²⁷ During his first ministerial service as Minister of Education in the government of Venizelos in 1928-1932 Papandreou was accused of his tolerance against the arbitrary actions of educational councils which were explicitly directed against left teachers. He was also the Prime Minister during the intense period of the bloody clashes of December 1944 between the communist and governmental military forces which presaged the beginning of the Civil War in Greece.

4. The controversy about the History school textbook of K. Kalokerinos and the 1967 abolishment of the reform

4.1 The press debate on the school textbook “Roman and Medieval History”

The most characteristic example of the catalytic effects of the harsh attacks against the reform was the history school textbook “*Roman and Medieval History*” written by the historian Kostas Kalokerinos. Before being released to schools in the summer of 1964, Elli Sisilianou, the member of the Pedagogue Institute who had the scientific supervision of the textbook, evaluated it as follows: “Despite the fact that it covers a huge historical period, it succeeds to manage successfully the material and to offer a sufficient and objective knowledge of economic, social and religious issues, although it is clearly a textbook of political history.”¹²⁸

The textbook was written in an impressively short time in order to serve the school needs of the two following academic years. Its model was the foreign textbooks of the more advanced European countries, which were considered as the avant-garde of the educational movement. Nevertheless, from the very first moment of its release in September 1964, it received fierce criticism from the opponents of the reform even on the book’s title. On October 10th 1964 the professor of the Philosophy Department of the University of Athens Sotiris Konstantopoulos expressed his indignation about the substitution of the word ‘Byzantine’ by ‘Medieval’ asking: “Why has Byzantium, the Greek Byzantium, disappeared from the title of the book?”¹²⁹ Furthermore, he accused Kalokerinos’ textbook of “distorting Greek history in

¹²⁸ E. Giotopoulou - Sisilianou, *Education - The obvious and unachieved*, (Athens: Kedros, 2007), p.64.

¹²⁹ S. Konstantopoulos, “*Diastrevlosis kai paralipsis sto neo sxoliko vivlio istorias*”, [Distortions and omissions in the new history school textbook], *Kathimerini*, 09-10-1964, p.15.

high schools” and of “failing to serve the pedagogical aims that a school text book should have.”¹³⁰

According to the discourse espoused by several conservative groups, Byzantine history was the Christian Greek Empire having two main pillars, Hellenism and Christianity; thus it should affirm its continuity from Ancient Greek history and be dissociated from the Roman one. Similar arguments were posed by representatives of the Holy Synod, who commented the title as “unacceptable, ignoring the scientific assumption that Byzantine history is continuation not of the Roman, but of the Greek history throughout the Middle Ages.”¹³¹

Reactions also focused on the maps included in the book, which were judged as ‘nationally dangerous’; especially parts such as the one arguing that the 14th century Serbian leader Stephen Dusan raised - on behalf of the south Serbians - claims for territories, that constitute a large part of today’s Greece, or the one depicting the disintegration of the Balkans after 1204, when a huge part of Western Macedonia’s population is titled with the provocative name ‘Bulgarians.’¹³² The writer was further accused of being partial to the Slavs in a number of other arguments he elaborated in his book which the Holy Synod characterized as “inaccurate claims which somebody can read only in the school textbooks of our northern neighbor countries.”¹³³

Surprisingly, the author was attacked even for a number of topics in which he followed the approaches of prominent foreign Byzantinologists, or sometimes of those who became his

¹³⁰ Ibid.

¹³¹ Memorandum of the Holy Synod of the Greek Church, published in *Kathimerini* with the title “*H dioksi tis Ekklesias sto ne sholiko vivlio Istorias*”, [The persecution of the Church in the new history school textbook], 15-10-1964, p.5.

¹³² Ibid.

¹³³ Ibid.

own critics. Reactions were raised about the ‘secular content’ of the book, with figures such as the Professor of Theology Panagiotis Bratsiotis emphasizing “the inaccurate perception of the Orthodox doctrine”, “the ridiculous notion about the rivalry of Christianity and idolatry in the 4th century” or the ‘misleading argument’ of the writer that the “Church’s Fathers ‘compromised’ the Greek with the Christian thought.”¹³⁴

Once more, the counter-reformists, as a common thread of their opposition, objected to the Marxian background which, according to them, permeated the textbook. As they argued it “deliberately emphasizes economic and social issues, which are inappropriate for the age and the education of the students, creating the impression of an ongoing propaganda based on revolutionary social ideas.”¹³⁵ Therefore, in this case the criticism was directed against the relation, on the one hand, between historical events, causes and interpretations and, on the other, between political, social and economic history. For the opponents of the new textbook, history course in schools should be teaching the historical events of political and military history, otherwise, the personality of the student may become deformed.

A few days later, a statement was also published by the Philosophical Department of the University of Athens which characterized Kalokerinos’ textbook as “scientifically, pedagogically and nationally unacceptable.” According to the statement, “this assessment was made by the most specialized History and Pedagogy professors, and aims to reveal who are hidden behind this malicious attempt, and impose upon them the appropriate punishment.”¹³⁶

These reactions, and particularly the one coming from the Philosophy Department, were soon

¹³⁴ P. Bratsiotis, “*To antikliriko periehomeno tou neou sholikou vivliou istorias*”, [The secular content of the new history school textbook], *H Kathimerini*, 30-10-1964, p.16.

¹³⁵ Ibid.

¹³⁶ “*Ypomnima tis philosophikis sholis tou Panepistimiou Athinon*”, [Memorandum of the Philosophy Department of University of Athens], published in *H Kathimerini*, 15-11-1964, p.12.

mirrored in the right-wing press that reproduced it with grandiose headlines, but without examining the validity of its content.

On the other hand, this statement, due to its various distortions and exaggerations, also raised the disapproval of a number of scholars, who refuted its arguments and published their view in the daily press. Therefore, four days after the publication of the Philosophical Department's memorandum, a historian (who kept his name secret, signing his articles as 'Historian') defended the book. Based on primary sources, and his deep knowledge of Byzantine history, he deconstructed one by one the arguments, and revealed the distortions of the memorandum.¹³⁷ On November 16th, the author of the text book Kalokerinos published a long article in the newspaper *To Vima* in which he challenged many of the accusations, presented the Greek and foreign bibliography that constituted the sources of his work, and ascertained that some parts of his book were condemned simply because he did not espouse the views of the members of the University of Athens.¹³⁸

One day later, the Professor of the University of Thessaloniki, Manolis Sakellariou, claimed that "the assets of the book are much more than its weaknesses, which can be primarily attributed to the short time in which it was written." He presented the rare synthetic capabilities of the writer and underlined that "his work constituted the first sample of a Greek school textbook which incorporates the modern educational trends of progressive Europe."¹³⁹ Commenting on the conclusions of the memorandum, he stated a number of points criticized in the textbook, which had been approached in a similar way in former school textbooks but,

¹³⁷ The 'Historian', "*Antikrouontas ta ephirimata tou ypomnimatos tis philosophikis sholis*", [Refuting the arguments of the Philosophy department's memorandum], *To Vima*, 19-10-1964, p.12.

¹³⁸ K. Kalokerinos, "*Apantisi sti kritiki enantion tou vivliou 'romaiki kai meseoniki istoria*", [A response to the criticism against the 'Roman and Medieval history' school text book], *To Vima*, 16-11-1964, p.12.

¹³⁹ M. Sakellariou, "*Mia nifalia apopsh gia to neo sholiko vivlio istorias*", [A clear-headed view of the new history school text book], *To Vima*, 17-11-1964, p.12.

surprisingly, they had not raised any opposition from the members of the Philosophy Department. Thus, he concluded, “I have the right to doubt if the memorandum published by the Philosophical Department of Athens was the outcome of the most competent professors as it was announced.”¹⁴⁰

A few months later, the rapid political developments with the defection of a few members of Papandreou’s government, and the conflict of the King with the Prime Minister, led the latter to his resignation on July 1965 and presaged the final withdrawal of the textbook.¹⁴¹ The ominous perspectives were revealed when the Minister of Education of the newly formed transitional government Efstathios Savopoulos announced to the press in October the installment of a committee that would reevaluate the new textbooks introduced by the 1964 reform. According to their conclusions, it would be decided if the textbooks would be used or destroyed. In the latter case, they would also ask for the support of the Greek justice for the punishment of those who were responsible for the demolition of education. Under the constant pressure of the conservative circles against the textbook, and despite the fact that it was previously approved unanimously by an authorized council, the new committee evaluated the text book as insufficient, and submitted its negative recommendation to the Ministry of Education on November 1st. The history textbook “*Roman and Medieval History*”, after being published and used in schools for a few months, on December 1st 1965 was officially withdrawn from the Greek educational curriculum.

¹⁴⁰ Ibid.

¹⁴¹ During his governance, G. Papandreou had several conflicts with the young King Constantine II who followed the traditional policy of the Palace to constantly intervene in the political life and especially in the military affairs. Their disagreement escalated in summer 1965 when Papandreou was forced to resign due to the refusal of the King to permit Papandreou’s appointment as Minister of Defense. This was the starting point of an intense political anomaly which ended up with the military coup of 21st April 1967.

Despite the acute attacks against it, the textbook was received with enthusiasm from the overwhelming majority of students, professors and ordinary people who, due to the intense debate that the book had raised, expressed their interest in reading it. This was confirmed, on one hand, by the high number of copies that the book sold in the market (estimated at more than 100,000) and, on the other, by the fact that, after its withdrawal, a number of protests were organized by teachers' unions, students' committees, and parts of the population who wanted to manifest their opposition to the antidemocratic, political developments.¹⁴²

In spite of the intense social reactions, the Pedagogical Institute [P.I], which was the *de jure* responsible institution, remained inactive, as the Minister of Education banned the members of the Institute from refuting the arguments criticizing the textbook. It was only after the case was discussed in court, and after the persistent requests of the member of the P.I Elli Sisilianou - scientific supervisor of the text book - that she was allowed to publish an answer in the press. She had already elaborated her arguments to the Minister of Education hoping - in vain - that the demonstration of the ungrounded accusations would make him change his mind.¹⁴³

In conclusion, the unpleasant adventure of the history textbook by Kalokerinos, constitutes an explicit manifestation of the *a priori* political decision of reactionary circles to undermine the whole reform by using as a 'Trojan horse' the withdrawal of the particular textbook. The policy of antidemocratic deformation, followed by the Ministry of Education in the second half of 1965 (after the resignation of Papandreou's government and the appointment of a transitional government by the King), showed its dependence and guidance by the

¹⁴² E. Giotopoulou - Sisilianou, *Education...*, pp 92-93.

¹⁴³ See more about the long response that E. Sisilianou published in the press in: Elli Giotopoulou-Sisilianou, *Education...*, pp 89-91.

orchestrated attack of reactionary elements against the 1964 reform. Paradoxically, a few years after Kalokerinos' textbook had been mashed by the military dictatorship in 1967 (as were all the books edited during the period of the educational reform), it was promptly reintroduced in schools after democracy's restoration in 1974.¹⁴⁴ Despite all the previous fierce opposition, the textbook reappeared in schools as if nothing had happened, a development which demonstrates, in a clear but also sad way, the disastrous effects of acute political polarization and 'blind' ideological prejudices.

4.2 The 'interment' of the reform by the dictatorship and its 'revival' after the reestablishment of democracy

The final shot to the educational reform of 1964 was given on April 21st 1967, after the *coup d'état* led by a group of colonels, who took advantage of the prolonged political instability, and proceeded to the 'mashing' not only of the school textbooks edited during the 1964 reform, but also of the democratic rights and political freedoms of the Greek people. The reform was violently withdrawn, while the abolishment of the elementary parliamentary and institutional framework marked the restoration of the post Civil War state ideology in an even more nationalistic and aggressive version.

¹⁴⁴ With very small changes in its content the history school textbook 'Roman and Medieval History' was reintroduced in the educational curricula during the educational reform of 1976. The only essential difference was that at this time it addressed to students of the forth – instead of the second - grade of secondary education. Ibid.

Among the first educational initiatives of the dictatorship, were the abolishment of both the Pedagogical Institute and the expansion of compulsory education.¹⁴⁵ *Katharevousa* was brought back to all levels of education, with the exception of the first two classes of elementary education in which the teaching of the ‘mother tongue’ was maintained. New exams were reintroduced for the admission of students to the Gymnasium, while the course ‘Political Principles of Democracy’ was substituted by a course of totally different content and pedagogical aims, called ‘Education of Civilians’.¹⁴⁶ Among the other decisions taken by the Ministry of Education after the coup of April 1967 were the dissolution of the elected educational councils, the diminishing of studying in Pedagogical Academies from three to two years¹⁴⁷ and the dismissal of many ‘incompetent’ teachers.¹⁴⁸

The introduction of these anachronistic measures and the conservative orientation that the dictatorship imposed to education created a number of negative effects. Greek education slipped back to its obsolete content, having as its main characteristics pseudo-classicism,

¹⁴⁵ A. Fragoudaki, – T. Dragona, (ed.) “*Ti einai h hora mas? Ethnokentrismos stin ekpedefsi*”, [What is our country? Ethnocentrism in education], (Athens: Alexandria Publications, 1997), p.47.

¹⁴⁶ The introduction of the course ‘Political Principles of Democracy’ constituted one of the symbols of the educational reform of Union Center. It raised criticism from the opponents of the reform for teaching to the youth a ‘left approach’ of the democratic regime - a fact which explained, according to them, the massive youth mobilization during the summer of 1965, after the resignation of Papandreou’s government. On the contrary, the new course introduced by the dictatorship, had as its main pedagogical aim the political and moral obedience of the students in order to become “good Greek citizens and Christians.” Such a purpose was compatible with the general directions of education; according to the constitution of 1968 it was explicitly defined that “education served the spiritual and moral development of students based on the principles of Greek-Christian civilization.” K. Katsapis, “*Politiki ekpedefsi tis neoleas-mia prospathia tis stratiotikis diktatorias na xalinagogisi tis anekselekti neolea*”, [Political education’ of the youth - An attempt of the military dictatorship to ‘bridle’ the ‘uncontrolled’ youth], (Corfu: Ionios Logos, *Journal of the history department of Ionian University*, 2011), pp. 197-198.

¹⁴⁷ The authoritarian approach that the dictatorial regime espoused in its attempt to abolish the reform of 1964 was portrayed in the fact that apart from decreasing to two years the studying in Pedagogical Academies, it also violently ceased the studies of the students who were accepted in 1965, before they even completed their studies. Their diplomas were given to them in the middle of the academic year (March of 1968), a decision which led to their ‘facetious’ characterization as ‘two and a half’ graduates.

S. Bouzakis, *G.A Papandreou...*, p. 80.

¹⁴⁸ See more about the autocratic educational policies of the military dictatorship in S. Bouzakis, *Neoelliniki Ekpedefsi*, [Modern Greek Education], pp.126-137.

ancestor worship and verbosity elements which completely detached school from Greek society and its modern socio-economic needs. Classical studies became again the only educational path for students, and scientific knowledge was neglected, thus fading the humanitarian ideal that the reform of 1964 had posed as its major educational goal.

A new educational attempt was launched after the fall of the dictatorship and the reestablishment of democracy in 1974. The consensus created among the political personnel of the country, after the traumatic dictatorial period, towards a number of vital issues which aimed at the ‘deepening’ of the democratic institutions, brought education once more in the centre of public discussion. Soon the newly elected conservative government of New Democracy in order to face the numerous problems that the junta inherited in Greek education promoted a new educational reform which was passed by parliament in 1976.

The antinomy of this story was explicitly revealed when the forces that had previously strongly opposed the 1964 reform characterized as ideal the measures of 1976, espoused its basic principles and presented them as ‘theirs’. Paradoxically, even Papanoutsos, the architect of the 1964 reform, but also the figure that had experienced the most intense criticism by the right-wing press, politicians and academics, was asked to provide them his scientific assistance. A number of articles were also published praising the measures which had been formerly subjected to the most extreme attacks, such as the teaching of ancient texts in translation, the introduction of demotic Greek in all levels, and the nine year compulsory education.¹⁴⁹

However, such an impressive change raises the plausible question why the measures which were rejected in 1964, twelve years later, were promoted by the same political party as

¹⁴⁹ S. Bouzakis, *Ekpedefitikes Metarithmis*, [Educational Reforms], p.145.

desirable. As the scholar Alexis Dimaras points out “the explanation for this complete shift seems to be primarily political, and related to the need of the conservative wing, on one hand, to be disconnected as clearly as possible from the 1967-74 dictatorship, and, on the other, to gain political benefits from the ‘progressive climate’ that dominated the public sphere of this period. The adoption of the measures introduced by the Union Centre in 1964, diversely served these goals.”¹⁵⁰ Furthermore, it could be claimed that in 1976 the rapid developments that had taken place in the political, economic and social life of the country after the fall of the junta, had already deprived the measures of 1964 from their ‘revolutionary nature’. The inconsistent and dishonest behavior of many people in the state apparatus should not though overshadow the decent intentions of the Minister of Education Giorgios Rallis to essentially reform education in 1976.¹⁵¹

Additionally, it was surprising, that, even though the educational reform of 1964 was clearly used as a model for the one of 1976, the new Ministry of Education disregarded the affinities and similarities between them as if they had never existed, and announced the measures as something totally new and groundbreaking. It is characteristic that the personalities who constituted the protagonists of the 1964 reform, many of whom were later prosecuted by the dictatorship, were not even able to participate in the body that would undertake the reorganization of education, as for their employment such a combination of qualifications was required which ensured their exclusion.¹⁵²

¹⁵⁰ A. Dimaras, “*Ekpedeftika zitimata*”, [Educational Issues], *H Kathimerini*, 12-05-99, p.24

¹⁵¹ During the presentation of his last book entitled ‘With a clear conscious’ in the old Greek Parliament in 2002, G. Rallis stated with honesty and bravery, virtues that followed him throughout his entire political life, that his party should not have opposed to the reform of 1964.

¹⁵² S. Bouzakis, *Ekpedeftikes metarrithmis*, [Educational Reforms], p.147.

In conclusion, regardless of its possible ideological contradictions and functional weaknesses, the reform of 1976 was smoothly implemented in the Greek educational system and contributed to the ‘spirit of optimism’ that permeated Greek politics at the first steps of the Third Greek Democracy. Its critical advantage was the lack of severe polemic as the applying measures were to a large extent similar to the ones of 1964 hence, they were supported almost by the whole political spectrum of this period. Unfortunately, this political consensus was temporary, given that as time passed the political conflicts and personal interests raised new obstacles undermining once more the route of Greek education.

Conclusion

The wide range and radical character of the 1964 educational reform render it in Greek educational history as one of the most complete and methodical proposals for the modernization of education. Nevertheless, this reform, despite its consistent attempt to reorient education, and bring it closer to the current needs of the society and economy, should be judged more in terms of its aspirations than of its outcomes as the relevant acts were never implemented in depth, due to the short-lived governance of the Union Center and the early abolishment of the reform.

The liberal principles and democratic elements that characterized its measures instantly engendered a cascade of strong and systematic attacks deriving from the most reactionary and conservative parts of Greek society. The different points of view about the role and meaning of the educational measures were soon depicted in the Athenian press, which became the public arena, where supporters and opponents of the reform ardently elaborated their approaches. The presence of the “balancing role” that the left wing newspaper *Avgi* aspired to play did not lessen the loaded debate taking place between the authors writing in the newspapers *Kathimerini* and *Vima*.

More interestingly, as the analysis of a significant number of articles illustrated, the criticism stemming from the right-wing opposition was not addressed to exclusively educational issues, such as technical aspects or pedagogical aims that the measures probably did not achieve according to their view, but, methodically and persistently, pointed to broader political and ideological targets. Measures, such as the introduction of demotic Greek and the diminishing of school hours for religious teaching, were perceived from several groups of the political and academic *status quo* as a direct threat against their established interests.

More specifically, on the ideological level, they interpreted the measures as an orchestrated effort for the demolishing of the elements composing the national Greek identity and the undermining of Hellenism as an unalterable and unified entity; a widespread notion, deeply rooted in the consciousness of large parts of the population, which reflected the principles that the nationalistic state rhetoric imbued in the society from the first steps of the modern Greek nation-state's establishment. Similarly, on the political level, the measures were translated as a malevolent campaign of an 'atheist and antinational' group of politicians and scholars who wanted to diffuse communism in Greek society through education; an approach which derived from the post Civil War state discourse that espoused anticommunism as one of its main axis in order to reinforce its power through the dichotomy of Greek society.

Therefore, the analysis of the 1964 educational reform constitutes a clear example of the closeness of educational conceptions with ideological positions and political attitudes. Even more, it demonstrates how education is used as a means of national identity building and as a mechanism of political legitimacy for several ruling groups who aspire to consolidate and reproduce their dominant position in the society. On the other hand, this work reveals the key role of the press as the public terrain where all these factors refolded and interplayed dynamically. The loaded debate that this research delineated explicitly portrays the significant role of the press not only as a 'democratic instrument' through which all political voices were expressed, but also as a central agent, which operated as a multiplier of the existing controversies and contributed to the erosion of the government's viability.

The large number of attacks in a hostile and aggressive style, the distortion of the measures and the exaggerations regarding the potential threats that their implementation engendered, demonstrated that, in many cases, the aim of those engaged in the debate was not

to contribute to the upgrading of Greek education, but to undermine it through the abolishment - at any price - of the reform. However, all those who were in a hurry to declare the “spiritual funeral” of the 1964 reform saw its latent legacy emerging dynamically in the context of the 1976 reform. The “shock” of the seven year military dictatorship diffused a spirit of consensus across the political parties prepared the ground for the adoption of the measures. Since then, several objectives of the 1964 reform have been integrated, not only in the curricula of the education, but also in the democratic institutions of the Greek state.

On the other hand, although the 1964 reform’s influence is still profound, it is more than obvious that there is a lot to be done in order the liberal principles and humanitarian values it supported to become the key stone of the Greek society; a condition which constituted for the protagonists of the 1964 reform the fundamental premise for the democratic regeneration of the country. Today’s educational landscape once again seems to be plagued by a deep crisis as the serious educational problems are interconnected with wider economic and political pathogenesis that torture Greek society for decades.

Nevertheless, the educational level of a nation defines the quality of its living standards. Efficient education can provide each civilian with the possibility of wise assessments and mature choices that will lead him to an upgraded life, based on the self knowledge of his rights and responsibilities towards the society and the state. In the fluid globalized environment that we daily experience, the provision of high-quality education constitutes the only solid ground on which the conditions for a better future can be established. In this sense, the 1964 reform and its humanitarian content should not simply constitute an idealistic vision, but a vivid request of our times, inextricably associated with people’s welfare in a democratic society that education must preserve.

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