

## Red and Purple?<sup>1</sup> Feminism and young Greek Eurocommunists in the 1970s

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### Abstract

This article analyses the impact of Feminism on one of the most popular left-wing youth groups in Greece, the Eurocommunist *Rigas Feraios* (RF), in the mid-to-late 1970s. It indicates that, rather than a shift to (depoliticised) individualisation, which scholars claim that emerged elsewhere in Western Europe during the 1970s, post-dictatorship Greece witnessed intense politicisation and experimentations in mass mobilisation models, a facet of which was the reconfiguration of the relationship between Eurocommunist organisations and Feminism. It demonstrates that the spread of Feminist ideas in RF led to the sexualisation of feminine representations in its language. Still, it argues that Feminist activity within RF had broader repercussions: it stirred reflection on masculinities and contributed to the reshaping of the collective memory of left-wing activity in Greece endorsed by this organisation. Finally, the article shows that the Feminist members of RF formed women's committees, which functioned as a testbed for novel conceptualisations of collective action that RF tried to develop in the mid-to-late 1970s.

### Keywords

Gender, sexuality, Feminism, Eurocommunism, Greece

### Introduction

<Image 1>

The transition from dictatorship to democracy in Greece in 1974 unleashed a wave of sweeping political changes. Left-wing organisations of all stripes became massive. The country was shaken by diverse protest movements. The Feminist movement was an integral piece of this puzzle. Feminists were steadfast in questioning deeply-entrenched assumptions in the Greek Left about femininity that obstructed the participation of women in politics on an equal basis, as indicated in the image above. However, the Feminist movement of the 1970s in Greece was far from homogeneous; a divisive issue within it was its relationship with left-wing Parties and their youth groups. Some Feminist actors rejected such contacts, while others were active within left-wing Parties in what was often an uneasy relationship.

This article probes the encounter between Feminism and Eurocommunism in Greece in the mid- and late 1970s. Eurocommunism, as explained below in detail, was a trend that

appeared in the 1970s. Organisations that followed this orientation voiced criticism of the USSR and clearly advocated political pluralism. The article concentrates on the Greek Eurocommunist youth group *Rigas Feraios*<sup>2</sup> (hereafter RF), since some of its female members, who were affiliated with the group briefly or throughout the period under study, were trendsetters: they played an important role in helping spread Feminism in the Greek Left.<sup>3</sup> In addition, RF was the Party<sup>4</sup>-affiliated left-wing group that engaged itself in the most durable experimentation, albeit cautiously, with Feminist ideas in post-dictatorship Greece. The article challenges an argument that is prevalent in the historiography of radical activity in Europe in the 1970s, namely that the left-wing collective action that was associated with the protest that erupted in the late 1960s came to an end by the mid-1970s in Western Europe, giving way to “individualistic” tendencies. This argument is best exemplified by the political scientist Claus Leggewie, who claimed that what has transpired from the late 1970s onwards has been the prevalence of neo-liberalism, whose core component is “depoliticised individualisation”.<sup>5</sup> Historian Gerd-Rainer Horn has similarly argued that what growingly appeared from 1976 onwards was the “deradicalisation” of “personal/political itineraries”.<sup>6</sup> Some other historians that explore the cultural politics of the Left in Western Europe in the second half of the 20th century also maintain that the 1970s witnessed a process of individualisation, which, however, they construe in a rather different way: they argue that this process should not necessarily be construed as mutually exclusive with radical politics. Such an argument appears, for instance, in the work of the historian Stephen Gundle: he asserts that, in the case of Italy, subjects that combined “postcollective individualism with a rejection of preexisting political mediations”, such as the naturists, proved much more influential than the youth group of the Italian Communist Party during the 1970s.<sup>7</sup> By “individualisation” and “postcollective individualism”, those scholars refer to loosely-knit radical groups that emerged at that point. By contrast, Greece witnessed no wave of “individualisation” at that point, but a period of experimentation concerning mass mobilisation patterns. Rigidly

structured left-wing organisations did not wither away. Rather, some of them, such as the Eurocommunist ones, developed a contradictory relationship with new, loosely-knit radical actors, which involved both confrontation and interfaces. Actually, Eurocommunist organisations developed such endeavours in close contact with each other across Western Europe. The article indicates such transfers, which have so far been neglected in relevant research, since the scholarly analysis of this ideological current has hitherto concentrated on isolated case-studies in specific nation-states.<sup>8</sup>

While most scholarly articles on the spread of Feminism(s) in Europe in the 1970s tend to limit themselves to the moulding of femininities, I also probe the impact of Feminism on Eurocommunist youth masculinities as well as on the collective memory of left-wing activity in contemporary Greece that was endorsed by RF.<sup>9</sup> Thus, resonating with the conceptualisation of gender developed by historian Joan Scott, the article considers not only the subjective identity of those Feminists, but also the ways in which it influenced the “cultural symbols” and “normative concepts” that figured prominently in the discourse of this “political institution”.<sup>10</sup>

Making use of a variety of sources, such as magazines and leaflets of left-wing youth groups and Feminist initiatives as well as minutes of discussions from the gatherings of RF Eurocommunists and from the congresses of Eurocommunist organisations, the article proceeds in five steps: First, it analyses the gender relations in post-World War II Greece and the intensifying political mobilisation after 1974. Then, it demonstrates the first encounters of female RF members with the Feminist movement of the 1970s and the emergence of Feminist initiatives within this group. The article proceeds to follow on the diversification and intensification of Feminist activity in Greece towards the end of the 1970s as well as on its influence on rhetoric and practice of RF at that point. It also traces the hostility with which other influential left-wing organisations, the pro-Soviet ones, treated its spread. Finally, it

indicates the impact of women's activism, including the Feminist, both within and beyond RF, on legislation introduced by the government after this movement had reached its climax.

### **Gender contradictions in contemporary Greece**

The position of women in Greece underwent a number of contradictory developments in the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. The structure of the labour force changed remarkably from 1961 to 2000: the proportion of women working in the primary sector decreased by about 70%, remained stable in industry and skyrocketed in the service sector. Still, according to demographer Haris Symeonidou, "marriage and children either postponed or terminally interrupted women's entry in the labour force".<sup>11</sup>

In addition, since the 1960s, women's access to higher education improved. From the 1960s to 1970s, the number of women with university degrees doubled from approximately 27,000 to circa 60,000, which was still, however, just 40% of men with the same level of education (around 148,000).<sup>12</sup> Similarly, women acquired the right to vote as well as to stand in general elections in Greece through law 2159, passed in 1952; nevertheless, they voted in general elections for the first time in 1956.<sup>13</sup> Nevertheless, the vast majority of deputies and ministers, as well as all prime ministers, from the 1950s to the present have been male.<sup>14</sup>

The 1960s and early 1970s also witnessed changes in sexual norms and practices. Although relevant historical research is still scant, it apparently became easier for young unmarried women in the cities to mingle and flirt with men in various contexts: at the university campuses for those who studied or at newly emerging commercial leisure venues, such as the cafeterias, which popped up in urban centres mainly from the 1970s.<sup>15</sup> Actually, in the first two post-World War II decades the juvenile justice system tolerated the premarital sexual relationships of male heterosexuals, while, in the case of women, sex before marriage was regarded as evidence of immorality.<sup>16</sup> In addition, male relatives of unmarried women had often escorted them in their leisure time, especially until the late 1960s, and had been

expected to respond violently, when the reputation of their female relatives was supposedly threatened. However, norms began to change during the 1960s: honour crimes, a facet of this practice, were increasingly condemned in public debates from that point onwards, as historian Efi Avdela argues.<sup>17</sup> Nevertheless, sexual transformations that emerged elsewhere in Western Europe during those years did not manifest themselves in Greece as well. Female contraception, which proliferated in other European countries, such as West Germany, and became a staple of sexual openness in the 1960s, did not gain traction in Greece.<sup>18</sup> By contrast, abortions functioned as a means of ending an unwanted pregnancy. Although they were illegal at that point, their number soared in the late 1960s and 1970s, described as an era of an “abortion syndrome” in Greece by anthropologists Peter Loizos and Evthymios Papataxiarchis: about 150,000 abortions per annum were performed in the late 1960s and more than 300,000 in the 1970s.<sup>19</sup> In general, while women in the urban centres of Greece developed more opportunities for courtship from the 1970s onwards, changes to sexual and gender relations were limited. In this vein, marriage remained the expected outcome of heterosexual relationships. The percentage of women ever married rose from 34.9 (1961) to 52.9 (1981) per cent for women aged between 25 and 29 years old and very slightly decreased from 94.2 (1961) to 93.9 (1981) for women aged between 45 and 49 years old.<sup>20</sup> Marriage was not called into question even by left-wing students, male or female, who opposed the dictatorial regime in the early 1970s, although at that point dissident female students engaged themselves in intensive everyday interaction with their male comrades.<sup>21</sup> Moreover, the growing freedom of women to flirt at that point did not apply to lesbians. Homosexuality in general remained a taboo in Greece. It was against this backdrop that the Feminist movement of the 1970s emerged in Greece.

### **The rising fever of protest in Greece in the 1970s**

Greece was under the iron fist of dictatorship from 1967 to 1974. Towards the end of the regime, a wave of radicalisation emerged, which culminated in the student uprisings in 1973 and, especially, the Polytechnic Uprising in Athens on 14-17 November of the same year. Democracy was not restored, however, until summer 1974. Soon afterwards, Communist organisations were legalised- they had been banned since 1947, during the Civil War. Even though the country was governed from 1974 to 1981 by the Centre-Right New Democracy, the latter distanced itself from anticommunism, which had served as the official state ideology since the mid-1940s; the integration into the institutions of the European Economic Community (EEC) became the core component of its discourse.<sup>22</sup> In line with this orientation, a new constitution was drafted in 1975, which stated that, in the following seven years, all legal bias against women had to be lifted. These reforms came to fruition in the 1980s, as shown below in detail. In addition, the state no longer sought to control all domains of public life. Especially in student associations, Socialist and Communist student groups became particularly influential.

Starting from the mid-1970s, the main left-wing organisations were the Panhellenic Socialist Movement [*Panellinio Sosialistiko Kinima*, PASOK] that distanced itself both from Communism and Social Democracy and was inspired by national liberation movements in the Third World, the pro-Soviet Communist Party of Greece [*Kommounistiko Komma Elladas*, KKE] and the Eurocommunist Communist Party of the Interior [KKE *Esoterikou*]. Maoist Parties gained some influence, limited mainly to university students, while Trotskyites remained marginal in this period. Finally, *Choros* [Space] a fluid network of radical left-wing student groups, autonomous from Parties, emerged in the late 1970s. RF, the youth organisation affiliated to the KKE Es, attracted support mainly from students.<sup>23</sup>

<Table 1>

In line with Eurocommunist groups in other countries, especially the PCI [*Partito Comunista Italiano*, Italian Communist Party] and the PCE [*Partido Comunista de España*, Communist Party of Spain], the KKE Es. and its youth group, RF, despised the Soviet model of Communist organisation. Rather, being particularly influenced by the structuralist Marxist Nicos Poulantzas, they put forth the “democratic path to socialism”. Their critique of the USSR and of the pro-Soviet Communist groups assumed many dimensions. They advocated political pluralism instead of a single-party state. Eurocommunists in Greece – and in general – demanded that each country follow its own particular path to socialism, without being instructed by the Soviet Union. Similarly, Eurocommunist Parties, at least in principle, wished to refrain from directly guiding protest movements. In the case of Greece, RF aimed to clearly distinguishing itself in this respect from one of its most formidable opponents, the pro-Soviet Communist youth group, which it chastised for trying to manipulate such movements. Its opposition to that approach was made particularly clear in its First Panhellenic Conference, which took place from 30 April to 5 May 1976. The relationship of RF to protest movements was one of the main issues discussed on this occasion, with delegates voting that the group should not impose its ideological line on the “autonomous, polymorphous movements operating in Greece”. Still, the Eurocommunist youth organisation was expected to play an avant-garde role in co-ordinating them.<sup>24</sup> The uneasy task of accommodating this guided autonomy of protest movements would prove to be a vexatious problem, with which the young Greek Eurocommunists would have to grapple in the mid-to-late 1970s.

One more important aspect of militancy during those years was women’s activism. The Movement of Democratic Women [*Kinisi Dimokratikon Gynaikon*, KDG] was founded in 1974 by left-wing women. Nevertheless, numerous members withdrew from the group in 1976. Subsequently, the Federation of Greek Women [*Omospondia Gynaikon Elladas*, OGE], affiliated with the KKE, and the Union of Greek Women, aligned to PASOK [*Enosi Gynaikon Elladas*, EGE], were created. Thus, from 1976 onwards, the KDG mainly attracted women

affiliated with or leaning towards the KKE Es. Initially, it committed itself to the stabilisation of democracy. It also aimed at improving the position of women in the workforce and advocated increasing state support for mothers. At this point, the Greek League for Women's Rights [*Syndesmos gia ta Dikaiomata tis Gynaikas*, SDG], was also active. Founded in 1920, it was a mixture of Liberalism and Feminism; it ceased to operate during the Metaxas' dictatorship in the mid-to-late 1930s as well as from 1967 to 1974.

A novelty of the mid-1970s was the Feminist mobilisation of a number of young women who, in contrast to the members of EGE, OGE and KDG, posed questions related with sexuality issues and openly criticised the left-wing Parties of functioning in a "patriarchal" way. Those young Feminists rallied around two organisations in the mid-1970s: the radical left-wing Movement for the Liberation of Women [*Kinisi gia tin Apeleytherosi ton Gynaikon*, KAG] and RF. The former published one of the first texts, in booklet form, on the means of female contraception.<sup>25</sup>

### **Representing femininity in RF, 1974-1977**

While Feminist members of the RF looked afresh at the position of women in the Greek society, this was done against a background of already existing normative descriptions of femininity within the group in the mid-1970s, which focused on the desirable role that women would play in two domains: politics and production. RF publications contained loud critiques of the underrepresentation of women in policy-making and the powerful state institutions. They juxtaposed this condition to the condition of women in the areas controlled by the left-wing partisans of the EAM [*Ethniko Apeleytherotiko Metopo*, National Liberation Front] and its youth group, EPON [*Eniaia Panelladiki Organosi Neon*, United Panhellenic Organisation of Youth], which struggled against the Tripartite Occupation that Greece experienced in 1941-1944 by Germany, Italy (until 1943) and Bulgaria. Concurring with the veneration of those organisations, which was pervasive in the discourse of all left-wing groups in Greece in the



aftermath of the dictatorship, they argued that the female partisans in the early 1940s were actively involved in politics. In a relevant article in *Thourios*, the magazine of RF, an extract outlined the activity of female EPON members at a factory: “they assembled in groups of three or five in a corner; they were so willing to learn what was for them new information”.<sup>26</sup> Quite often these female partisans were held up as role-models for young women of the 1970s in the texts of RF, but also of the KNE and the Maoists in that period.<sup>27</sup> Still, in practice women played a limited role in the decision-making in RF in the mid-to-late 1970s. For instance, from 1976 to 1980 only three female members served on its central council among a total of forty two members.<sup>28</sup>

In addition, the texts of the Eurocommunist youth group depicted women in Greece as suffering due to higher unemployment and lower salaries in comparison to men.<sup>29</sup> In fact, the “working mother” was portrayed as being in the worst position.<sup>30</sup> To an extent, RF’s approach towards women during the mid-1970s, which placed a premium on workplace relationships, resembled the discourse of Communist Parties in other Western European countries before the emergence of the Feminist movement of the 1970s: according to political scientist Jane Jenson, the French Communist Party until the late 1960s put emphasis on “women as workers, albeit workers with special needs because they bore children, and as consumers, responsible for running a household on an ever tightening budget”.<sup>31</sup> New Feminist trends would question, however, such conceptualisations throughout Western Europe.

### **The first encounters between Feminism and Eurocommunism**

These understandings of femininity did not reign unquestioned in RF in the mid-1970s. A couple of women’s committees were formed, one in Paris and the second in Athens, gathering young female Eurocommunists influenced by Feminist ideas. Those committees raised three issues in particular: the autonomy of their operations, however this was conceived, from the apparatus of the RF and the KKE Es; the demand that women be in control of their body and

sexuality; and the postulation that the “women’s question” should not be regarded as an issue of secondary importance to “class conflict”.

In general, the spread of Feminism in the 1970s had triggered reflection in various Eurocommunist Parties in Western Europe on the condition of women. Aiming at introducing a novel approach to Communism, they viewed Feminists with interest, despite the critique that the latter exercised of the “patriarchal” structures of those Parties. Jenson describes quite vividly this encounter in France in 1974-1978: “With Eurocommunism, the PCF<sup>32</sup> opened to ‘new’ women's issues and to the women's movement for a time”; female PCF members that had been influenced by the women’s movement began to raise issues of sexuality.<sup>33</sup> In Italy, PCI members initially approached Feminism with caution. However, according to Gundle, “by 1976 such attitudes had softened markedly”.<sup>34</sup>

In the case of RF, its first Feminist initiative was its women’s committee in Paris. It was founded in 1975, following a decision by the central council of the organisation, which came after the establishment by the United Nations of 1975 as the International Women’s Year.<sup>35</sup> The committee attracted solely women who studied at universities of that city. In general, a growing number of Greeks pursued university studies abroad, especially in Italy, France, the UK and West Germany, during the 1970s: the figure of Greek university students abroad rose from 9,985 in 1970 to 29,480 in 1975 and 39,786 in 1980.<sup>36</sup> Several Greek students in Paris were aligned with the Left. RF alongside the Socialist Youth of PASOK, the pro-Soviet KNE and the Maoist PPSP were the most popular left-wing youth groups among them.<sup>37</sup>

In the very beginning, the discussions of the women’s committee of RF were oriented towards the “Greek female worker and peasant”.<sup>38</sup> The emphasis on production was the clear mark of the approach of RF towards women at that point, as shown in the previous section. However, the scope of the issues that the committee touched upon soon broadened: beyond gender inequalities in the domain of production, it growingly addressed sexuality issues.<sup>39</sup> In

particular, already in the first texts that participants of the committee authored and circulated among themselves, it was made crystal clear that, in contrast to existing left-wing publications, they did not regard motherhood as a core component or a necessary element of femininity. Their explicit motivation was that women themselves should control whether and when they become pregnant. Their texts cast a poignant light on two sexuality issues: the legalisation of abortion and the popularisation of the use of the contraceptive pill in Greece. The committee also addressed the discrimination that women experienced at work as well as their underrepresentation in decision-making, not only in state institutions, but also in left-wing organisations.<sup>40</sup>

This group of Greek Feminists voiced demands that were also put forward by likely-minded women elsewhere in Western Europe in the 1970s. In 1971, 343 women in France signed a declaration stating that they had performed an abortion, which was at that point illegal. Prominent Feminists, such as Simone de Beauvoir and Christine Delphy, were among the signatories. Shortly afterwards, in 1975, Simone Veil, the Health Minister, introduced a law that rendered abortion within the first ten weeks of pregnancy legal.<sup>41</sup> Italy witnessed a mass Feminist movement in the mid-1970s, which demanded the legalisation of abortion.<sup>42</sup> Nevertheless, the use of the contraceptive pill was far more controversial among Feminists in Western Europe at that point: according to historian Eva-Maria Silies, numerous Feminists in West Germany in the 1970s argued that it offered sexual freedom solely for men, rendering women “sexually available at any time”.<sup>43</sup>

The activities of the Feminist movement of the 1970s in France certainly left their imprint on the women’s committee of RF in Paris and contributed to the shift of its orientation. At least some of its participants were avid readers of French Feminist journals that appeared at that point, especially of *Questions Féministes* as soon as it started circulating in 1977, but also of *Pénélope*.<sup>44</sup> Several prominent French Feminists, such as de Beauvoir and Delphy, actively engaged in the publication of the former: De Beauvoir was its director, while

Delphy was one of the members of its editorial board. Its eight issues that saw print in 1977-1980 dealt with several topics, such as work, violence and sexuality. The journal described itself as an advocate of “radical Feminism”, which it associated with its rejection of the notion that a “feminine nature/essence” existed, a stance that it regarded as crucial to confronting women’s oppression.<sup>45</sup> *Pénélope* was produced by a Feminist group at the University of Paris VII along with historians working at the *Centre de Recherches Historiques* [Centre for Historical Studies].<sup>46</sup> In addition, some of the Greek Eurocommunist committee’s participants had also informal links to those female members of the French Communist Party that were influenced by Feminism.<sup>47</sup> However, the impact of the Feminist ideas that circulated in France in the mid-1970s on the committee’s participants was rather indirect: The Feminist RF members in Paris did not participate at that point as individuals in the activities of a French Feminist initiative and the committee did not run any joint sessions with a French Feminist group, either. Similarly, it did not systematically discuss texts that had appeared in French Feminist publications.<sup>48</sup> It was the echo of the reflection of French Feminist actors that contributed to the fact that the committee’s participants reconceptualised their understandings of women and their demands, assigning growing weight on sexuality.

The novelties introduced by the women’s committee in Paris were not limited to representations of femininity, but extended to the essence of the exchange of ideas among militants: its participants began to talk about their own lives in their gatherings, especially about their sexual relations, to underline that the issues they had to deal with as women were not ones they faced as individuals, but had to be imputed to deeply-entrenched gender hierarchies. This process resembled the consciousness-raising activities of women that spread elsewhere in the “West” among Feminists at that point, although I have found no evidence that the committee participants named it as such. Some of those women also expressed their endeavours in the texts that they distributed to the other participants, whose emotional dimension was not at all negligible.<sup>49</sup> These texts teemed with emotives, or “statements about

how we feel”, to borrow a term introduced by historian and cultural anthropologist William Reddy. As Reddy also argues, “communities systematically seek to train emotions, to idealise some, to condemn others”.<sup>50</sup> The committee was a case in point: the manuscripts were immersed in the desire that those women familiarise themselves with feminine solidarity, in order to dispense with the emotion of fear to express their opinion. In one of those texts, for instance, Roxani Kaytantzoglou maintained that, within the committee, women “find what is missing in the relationship with their male comrades, the authentic, without fear, comradeship”. She also advocated that women develop a female “language and expression” by speaking about “common political, social, sexual, erotic experiences”.<sup>51</sup>

Such “feminine solidarity” was also the cornerstone of a novel conception of their link to RF. They were loudly critical of how RF operated, since they blamed it for reinforcing “patriarchal” patterns, especially differing sexual standards for male and female RF members: Indeed, while it was legitimate at that point for male RF cadres to engage themselves in many ephemeral relationships, when young female Eurocommunists engaged in similar behaviour, their political competence was called into question.<sup>52</sup> In order to achieve their goals, those RF Feminists soon found themselves caught up in a condition of double militancy: The committee ceased to be part of the apparatus of RF and became totally autonomous in 1976. However, they did not cut all ties with the Eurocommunist youth group, since they continued to be affiliated with it as individuals.<sup>53</sup>

While RF proclaimed to be open to “autonomous” social movements, the reception of the women’s group in Paris by their male comrades was not without its complications. In the minutes of a discussion of the Office<sup>54</sup> of RF in Paris on 9 December 1976, the operation of the women’s group was lambasted for “having caused trouble” to the organisation, for being too inwards-looking and refusing to elaborate on “women’s issues” alongside the other RF members in the city.<sup>55</sup> In fact, this Feminist initiative did not affect the rhetoric and political practice of RF both in Paris and in general.

In 1977, another women's committee in RF was formed, this time at the centre of its activities, in Athens. All its participants were female students or university graduates. Similar to the committee in Paris, they raised issues of inequality in the workplace, but also promoted the dissemination of the contraceptive pill and the legalisation of abortion.<sup>56</sup> They argued that women had to be in control of their sexuality. Thus, they challenged the "myth of the feminine nature", which they claimed was prevalent in Greece at that point and which linked femininity with "reduced muscular power, spiritual triviality, dependent creativity, the woman as a sexual object, the woman as sensitive, understanding and cute".<sup>57</sup> In confronting this image, some of them at least resorted to a degree of gender essentialism. For instance, a number of the committee participants were among the signatories of an article, which referred to "special feminine characteristics", without, however, specifying what these were.<sup>58</sup> It seems they juxtaposed these to the very pervasive perception in RF was that women had to "desexualise" their appearance, in order to be treated with respect within the organisation.<sup>59</sup> When addressing women's sexuality, this committee largely limited it to heterosexual patterns. Actually, not only in the mid-1970s, but throughout the period under study, while it did not reject lesbianism, it mentioned it very rarely in its publications. It also refrained from referring to women's sexual self-stimulation, an issue with which Feminists elsewhere in Europe, such as in Italy, dealt at that point.<sup>60</sup>

The language of the women's committee of RF in Athens was clearly influenced by Feminism. The initiative echoed readings especially by psychoanalyst Juliet Mitchell and theorist Sheila Rowbotham, such as *Woman's Estate* and *Woman's Consciousness, Man's world*, respectively, in order to articulate a discourse that would combine a Feminist and an anti-capitalist perspective.<sup>61</sup> The former book identified four pillars of female exploitation: production, reproduction, socialisation of children and sexuality. It claimed that women's status could not improve, unless substantial changes occur in all four. The latter offered a critique of capitalism, while simultaneously urging women to explore their sexuality. The

committee participants were also particularly receptive to the Eurocommunist endeavours on women in other Western European countries, being in close contact with those organisations. Female RF members who studied in Italy in the mid-to-late 1970s provided them with leaflets of the Italian Communist Party and groups aligned with it regarding the legalisation of abortion.<sup>62</sup> Texts of the committee also cited the Italian senator Carla Ravaioli, member of the PCI and well-known Feminist.<sup>63</sup> Actually, those female RF members that studied in Italy at that point had come in contact with the views on abortion that were endorsed by the *Unione delle Donne Italiane* [UDI, Union of Italian Women], namely the women's group, which was affiliated to the PCI. The female RF members in Italy actively participated in the organisation of local and national events of the UDI, especially about the issue of abortions, as well as in the preparation and circulation of its journal, *Noi Donne* [We, women]. They also took part in relevant events held by the Radical Party.<sup>64</sup> The latter had, according to Lumley, "a flexible federal structure which was open to collectives as well as individuals who wanted to join it for a limited period and over specific single-issue campaigns".<sup>65</sup> A group affiliated with it, the *Movimento di Liberazione della Donna* [Movement for the Liberation of Women] argued against the distinction between struggles in the "structure" (economic) and in the "superstructure" in advanced industrial society, asserting that they were all of equal importance. Thus, it campaigned for a wide array of issues, including free contraception, the elimination of discrimination against women at schools and at the workplace as well as the legalisation of abortion, playing an important role in the relevant protests that swept Italy in the 1970s.<sup>66</sup>

While the Greek Feminist Eurocommunists in Paris soon severed the ties of their group with the RF, the participants in the women's committee in Athens never followed suit. The committee remained affiliated to the apparatus of the RF in the late 1970s. Still, in line with the decision taken by the First Panhellenic Conference about the "autonomous movements", it intended to retain a degree of autonomy from the Eurocommunist youth

group: its participants demanded their aims and their activity as militant women were an issue for themselves to decide. Its operation soon left their impact on the discourse of RF, which became evident particularly in the decision of its first congress in 1978. For the first time an official announcement of the group contained a separate decision on the “women’s question”. The latter was, to an extent, based on a draft proposed by the women’s committee of RF, which named sexuality as a serious issue that the Feminist movement had to tackle with in Greece, adding that the latter had to address all women, namely regardless of their social class. However, it contained next to nothing about the persistence of gender inequality in RF activities, falling clearly short of the demands of the committee participants.<sup>67</sup> Still, the congress also decided that the committee in Athens would turn into an official body of the group, which would function alongside the central council, in order to actively encourage reflection over the “women’s question” within and beyond RF.<sup>68</sup> This was a measure that, despite the continuing difficulties that those Feminists faced within the Eurocommunist youth group, paved the way for the better incorporation of their demands into its language in the following years.

### **Feminism(s) gaining visibility**

As the decade progressed, the Feminist movement in Greece acquired more influence, but also became more diverse. A novelty of the late 1970s and early 1980s was the emergence of a number of Feminist magazines and student groups, which were not guided by any Party, including the Eurocommunist. *Autonomy*<sup>69</sup> was a rallying cry for them, albeit, in contrast with the Feminist Eurocommunists, conceptualised as severing all links with Party politics. Abortions and contraception were also among their major concerns, alongside the thorny issue of rapes of females by males. The Greek media in Greece provided coverage of the latter topic in the 1970s and the 1980s, especially on the occasion of the dreadful attacks of



Kyriakos Papachronis, the so-called “Dragon of Drama”<sup>70</sup>, on women until 1982, when he was arrested. Feminists argued that the coverage reproduced numerous negative stereotypes of women, such as that the raped women had been dressed in a sexually provocative manner and, thus, were also responsible for the ordeal to which they were subjected.<sup>71</sup> One of those Feminist magazines was *Skoupa*, which, however, proved to be short-lived.<sup>72</sup> In line with Feminist initiatives in Greece in the 1970s, *Skoupa* problematised the necessary link of femininity to motherhood as well as the so-called “maternal instinct”. In this vein, it published heavy critiques of a number of medical conferences held in Greece at that point, at which participants discouraged women from using the contraceptive pill. While focused on Greece, its contributors were mindful of broader developments: They published facts and figures about abortion and female contraception across Eastern and Western Europe in the 1970s.<sup>73</sup>

Feminist student groups were created at numerous academic units in Athens, such as at the Law, Philosophy and Agriculture schools of the University of Athens, as well as at its departments of Medicine and Biology. The groups in the School of Philosophy and the Department of Medicine attracted Feminist RF members as well.<sup>74</sup> In November 1980, the House of Autonomous Groups and Women was established in Athens, which hosted discussion groups on a number of topics, especially concerning sexuality issues. It also offered self-defence classes for women, to help them protect themselves from rapists.<sup>75</sup>

The activities of the autonomous Feminists, including those aligned with the RF, but also of other women’s activists, intensified and became increasingly visible in urban spaces in the late 1970s. Alongside the KDG [Movement of Democratic Women], aligned with the KKE Es, they participated in 1978 and 1979 in demonstrations against beauty contests. Upon the occasion of the International Day of Contraception on 31 March 1980, they organised a campaign to inform women about birth control. From 1980 onwards, they also staged a series of protests against the Family Law, which blatantly discriminated against women.<sup>76</sup> It

foresaw, among others, that the husband was the “head” of the family and that the wife had to adopt his surname upon marriage. In addition, while it was legal for women to get married as soon as they became 14 years old, men were not allowed to do so prior to becoming 18. Nevertheless, the 1975 Constitution stated that any piece of legislation that reproduced gender inequalities had to be eliminated. The government assigned the task of suggesting potential amendments to such laws to a committee headed by Professor Andreas Gazis. However, it proved reticent to implement the recommendations made by the Gazis committee. Both autonomous Feminists and the women’s organisations aligned to left-wing Parties reacted strongly. A co-ordinating committee was founded, which included most autonomous Feminist groups as well as the KDG. Quite obviously, combining these divergent approaches to the position of women was not an easy task. Thus, this co-ordinating committee proved to be short-lived and folded in mid-October 1980. Still, the autonomous Feminists, alongside other women’s groups, remained steadfast throughout the late 1970s and the early 1980s: they organised massive protests against the Family Law, such as the one that took place on 7 March 1980 and one that was staged on 6 October 1980, in which around 3,500-4,000 women participated, according to *Thourios*.<sup>77</sup>

### **Vibrations in the Left**

As the Feminist movement gained momentum, it caused stronger turbulence in a number of left-wing subjects, inspiring more members of theirs and causing internal friction.

A case in point is *Choros*, the fluid network of autonomous left-wing students that briefly existed in the late 1970s and early 1980s. Several of its participants were aligned with EKON [*Elliniki Kommounistiki Neolaia*, Greek Communist Youth] RF B Panelladiki, which had split from RF in 1977-78; others were unaffiliated. The former, similar to RF, claimed to subscribe to “Communist renewal”. Still, its members were critical of Eurocommunism, since they argued that such Parties had been integrated into “bourgeois institutions”.<sup>78</sup> The organ of B

Panelladiki hosted positive assessments of the Feminist movement, some of which were authored by former members of the women's committee of RF in Paris, such as Efi Avdela and Angelika Psarra.<sup>79</sup> Both soon withdrew, however, and helped establish the magazine *Skoupa*.

In the meantime, Feminist Eurocommunists continued to make their presence visible within RF through the operation of the women's committee of RF in Athens. Similar to the first congress of RF, the decision of its second congress included a distinct resolution on the women's issues and movement, which bore the mark of its women's committee. This resolution reiterated some of the main tenets of the relevant decision that had been approved in the congress of 1978: it described the "neofeminist"<sup>80</sup> movement as "autonomous" and "cross-class", since, according to the text, women of different social origin faced similar problems due to their gender.<sup>81</sup> Nevertheless, what changed after 1978 was that the Feminist Eurocommunist perspective gained ground in the activities of RF, especially its Festivals, held annually under the title *Festival Avgis-Thouriou*. The women's committee took part in all those festivals since the first, held in 1977. However, from 1979 onwards it introduced new concepts to that event: In 1979, it ran a "women's hangout" [*steki gynaikon*], where it exhibited Feminist books and disseminated leaflets, such as one urging women to become informed about their body and sexuality.<sup>82</sup> One more novel dimension of the participation of the women's committee in those Festivals towards the end of the decade was the fact that it contributed to the face-to-face communication between Greek and non-Feminists: RF hosted Carla Ravaioli at its 1979 Festival.<sup>83</sup> The Festival activities in 1980 also entailed a discussion entitled "Left and Feminism", in which Feminists from diverse Western European countries participated.<sup>84</sup>

<Image 2>

The intensifying activity of Feminist Eurocommunists went to the heart of experimentations that RF undertook with regard to its political practice. Similar to 1976-1978, the autonomous operation of the women's committee continued to be a testing ground for its commitment to respect the autonomy of protest movements, as the Eurocommunist youth group had declared already in 1976. Although such autonomy had been guaranteed since the first congress of the Eurocommunist youth group in 1978, several RF members continued to be unconvinced that a separate and autonomous committee, dedicated to women's issues, was necessary to exist. As the minutes of discussions among its participants record, there were also female RF members, who did not join and seemed reluctant to subscribe to its cause.<sup>85</sup> This is also manifest in texts published in *Thourios*: a component of the Eurocommunist identity of RF was a degree of self-criticism voiced even in its organs. Thus, an article that appeared there in 1981 hosted the views of young Eurocommunists on the operation of the women's committee. A participant in the latter, Vena Georgakopoulou, admitted that only some female RF members dealt with the "women's question".<sup>86</sup> On some occasions, committee participants blamed themselves for being too inward-looking and failing to attract other female comrades of theirs.<sup>87</sup> Nevertheless, the existence of an autonomous women's committee was not really endangered at any point in the late 1970s.

From 1978 onwards, the operation of the women's committee in Athens also facilitated the reconfiguration of the rhetoric of RF. In this vein, Feminism affected to an extent the "cultural symbols" and "normative concepts" that were of crucial importance to the discourse of the Eurocommunist youth group, especially the antifascist memory that RF had endorsed in the preceding years. In this light, at least some RF members became more doubtful about the recent history of left-wing militancy in Greece and began to construe some of their key reference points, such as the Polytechnic Uprising against the dictatorship in 1973, in a more complex way. A discussion of activists who had taken part in that uprising, published on the occasion of the seventh anniversary of the rebellion in *Thourios* and featuring comments

made by the participants, contained some self-critical positions: For instance, Anna Anagnostopoulou, obviously influenced by Feminism, chided the making of masculinities among those rebels: “It was then when the model of the cadre-heartbreaker, who had sexual relationships with thousands of women, emerged”.<sup>88</sup> The RF central council promoted reflection from such a self-critical perspective: it published guidelines in the late 1970s and early 1980s, encouraging young Eurocommunists to organise commemorations of the uprising that promoted the “personal” aspect of activism in the early 1970s and contained reflection on gender and sexual relations.<sup>89</sup> Far from only affecting the forging of femininities within RF, the operation of the committee had broader ramifications that attest to an argument put forth by historian Joan Scott, according to whom “politics construct gender and gender constructs politics”.<sup>90</sup>

Similarly, towards the end of the decade, the activity of Feminist Eurocommunists helped reshape the narrative structure of the publications of RF. In particular, first-person plural narrations had been predominant in RF texts until 1977-78, as was customary in Communist publications of the period. They reproduced a “self-abnegating culture”, in which the individual member had to subordinate herself/himself to the collective struggle.<sup>91</sup> By the end of the 1970s, this attitude became subject to revision: first-person singular narrations were welcome and, actually, began to proliferate in Eurocommunist youth publications.<sup>92</sup> Although such testimonies were not peculiar to the Feminist RF members, the latter authored or published many of these, both in the special page in *Thourios* devoted to the “women’s question”, which the women’s committee in Athens had been editing since the first congress of RF, and in the committee’s leaflets.<sup>93</sup>

A prominent example appeared in a leaflet entitled „Apo tin Eleni stin Anna“, purportedly compiling letters sent by one woman to another. The woman who signed as “Eleni” mentioned: “I have been dating Kostas for a long time, but he has not suggested that we get married so far. This is frustrating, since I have got used to the idea that this is the normal path

(...) I'm ashamed, I'm terribly ashamed, when I make love. Even when I'm alone, I'm ashamed to look at myself in the mirror, to touch myself. When I do so, I feel strange and guilty (...)"'. The experience of having an abortion was also included: "It took me long to write to you. I've been through an ordeal. I was pregnant, those moments were terrible. I wanted nobody at home to know (...) In the clinic it was terrible. In a basement without any care. Many women were waiting, others had finished. The dirty doctor uniforms... I felt like I was in an abattoir". The text ended with a rather normative manner: "I have overcome it, it was painful, but my next relationship will be based on equality. Then again, I often think that you don't have to be in relationship with someone, in order to make love with him. (...) I have joined a women's committee in my area. I think that I am changing, not only I, but the situation is changing due to us changing. We demand, we do not just wait. We discuss our problems and this helps, it helps a lot".<sup>94</sup> The abovementioned text, full of emotives, highlights those emotions that the committee condemned: the guilt that some women at least felt for their body and their sexual activity; and the fear and pain that backstreet abortion inflicted on women. It also sheds light on how these women wanted certain emotions to be redefined: they wanted love to be a pleasurable corporeal experience for women, an experience not confined to marriage and not necessarily to one man. The same emotional repertoire appears in numerous first-person singular narrations that were published in the committee's column in *Thourios*.<sup>95</sup> Those were not mere statements, but part of an emotional training, through which these women could overcome the condemned emotions. This outcome would be achieved through communication, at least in the first instance, solely among women, according to its participants. One context in which they performed such training was consciousness-raising groups. The spread of the latter in Greece at that point as well as the level of the involvement of Feminist Eurocommunists in them is unclear from the available sources. An article in *Thourios* outlined the ways in which they operate, without providing details about specific such groups in Greece.<sup>96</sup> In any case, women involved in group

discussions sought to reconfigure their relationships and become assertive in their interaction with men. Thus, affective bonds with men were not ruled out, not only by Feminist Eurocommunists, but by a broad range of Feminists, such as those of the women's group at the Law school at the University of Athens, who were not affiliated with RF.<sup>97</sup>

The spread of the Feminist movement in Greece in the 1970s had ramifications that were not limited to the moulding of femininities, but extended to patterns of masculinity, at least those of young Eurocommunists. As articles in *Thourios* show, even after 1978 several male young Eurocommunists continued to be sceptical or even hostile towards their Feminist Eurocommunist comrades.<sup>98</sup> Nevertheless, a partial influence of Feminism on male Eurocommunists became evident at discussions held in advance of or during RF congresses. Quite tellingly, a RF cadre, Tasos Ioannidis, maintained at a meeting in Athens ahead of the 1978 congress that young male Eurocommunists should not call their female cadres "gomenes", a term that equates to "chicks" in English.<sup>99</sup> Such reflection was also evident in *Mathitiki Poreia*, the organ of the high school group aligned with RF. One of the texts it published argued that the dominant norms of Greek society favoured young women who were "passive" and "silent". Still, male pupils also described themselves as victims of these norms: "hunting [for a girlfriend] makes me suffer (...) It fills me with anxiety after every failed attempt (...) I am also a victim of the authority I exercise".<sup>100</sup> However, such reflection was limited to individual voices, since the official decisions of RF in the years under study contained no reference to aspects of heterosexual men's behaviour, including the comportment of male RF members, should be reformulated. Moreover, in contrast with Feminist-inspired men, who were advocates of the radical Left in Belgium and France, male RF members did not establish "men's groups", in which they would call into question gender hierarchies.<sup>101</sup>

Actually, the resonance of the activity of the young Feminist Eurocommunists spread well beyond the youth from 1978 onwards. It also affected the women's group linked with the

KKE Es., namely the KDG. No longer limited to the issue of democratisation and the position of women in the workforce, sexuality and the women's body began to feature prominently in its language and activities from 1978 onwards. For instance, in May 1978 it held an open discussion about abortions, which, according to the group, was attended by 250 persons. Similarly, in 1981 it organised an event entitled "sexuality-health-contraception".<sup>102</sup> Still, as social anthropologist Eleni Papagaroufali argues, the approaches towards women's activism varied in the KDG and it was mainly younger members, who adopted such Feminist ideas.<sup>103</sup>

The KKE Es also began to endorse those sexualised representations of femininity, especially from its second congress in 1978 onwards. In an announcement ahead of the 1981 elections about the "women's question", the party addressed not only gender inequalities at work but also stressed that "women must choose themselves whether they wish to become mothers". In this vein, they had to be well-informed about contraception while the legal framework concerning abortions needed to be "modernised".<sup>104</sup> Key concerns of the Feminist Eurocommunists permeated the resolutions of KKE Es congresses in the early 1980s as well. The decision of its third congress in 1982 to a great extent adhered to RF language on the "women's question": it endorsed the "autonomous", "cross-class" and "revolutionary" character of the "women's movement", claiming that it should collaborate with the working-class movement on an equal basis.<sup>105</sup> Actually, Feminist RF members had been actively promoting these notions within the KKE Es.<sup>106</sup> The spread of the Feminism in the KKE Es. was perhaps best epitomised in its election campaign in 1981, when one of its slogans was "The woman [should become] emancipated from the man and both [should be] liberated from capitalism".<sup>107</sup>

### **"Harmful neofeminist ideas"**

The momentum that the Feminist movement gained at that point in Greece did not always cause reflection within the subjects of the Greek Left, however. It was met with indifference



by the young Socialists, namely the Youth of PASOK, and with hostility by the pro-Soviet KNE and the KKE. The pro-Soviet Communists singled out the activities of RF women's committees for critique: they blamed the Eurocommunist organisations for functioning as the quintessential conveyors of "neofeminism", in a total disregard for the disagreements within the Eurocommunist youth organisations about Feminism. Rather, the KNE and the KKE accused them of promoting the "harmful" idea of the "autonomy" of women's mobilisation, which they castigated as conducive to the detachment of such mobilisation from the "working-class struggle". They also criticised them for concentrating on sexuality issues and neglecting, in their view, the position of women in the workforce.

In their reaction, the pro-Soviet Communists lambasted Feminism for being a "bourgeois ideology" which promotes a schism between men and women; therefore, it undermines "working-class solidarity". This tendency, they argued, was reinforced by transnationally flowing Feminist ideas that had reached Greece at that point, such as the work of Juliet Mitchell.<sup>108</sup> Since they placed a premium on class conflict, they viewed Feminism as having the potential to disorienting the "popular struggle". In this vein, KKE publications sought to counter "neofeminist" trends. One high-ranking KKE cadre, Aleka Papariga, authored a book in which she explained in detail the approach of the KKE and KNE towards women's activism.<sup>109</sup> The text venerated the "democratic family", which comprised spouses who cared for and respected each other. For her, this was a "common pattern" among working-class people, especially left-wing and left-leaning ones. The KNE and KKE depicted such families in deeply emotional terms, as a domain that allowed "emotional bonds to be established", especially "true love". The Soviet Union functioned as a role-model for the KKE/KNE on this occasion as well: drawing on data published by Soviet scholars, such as the book *Soviet Women*, published by Zoya Yankova et al, Papariga argued that the family as a "genuine, voluntary union", based on "love", had first appeared there, since, according to the author, exploitation of man by man had been eliminated in the USSR. Solidarity built in

common working-class struggles was expected to help cement mutual respect in stable heterosexual relationships in Greece as well.

The pro-Soviet Communists described motherhood as a core and desirable component of such relationships founded on “true love”, adding that housekeeping activities should be “equitably distributed” to both spouses.<sup>110</sup> They initially sidelined women’s sexual pleasure: the “blue pill” (namely the contraceptive) was not a concern for working-class women, *Odigitis* proclaimed.<sup>111</sup> Still, the spread of Feminist ideas in the 1970s did not leave the discourse of the KNE and the KKE totally unscathed. Some breaches were manifest in the sexual norms that the pro-Soviet Communists endorsed. For instance, from 1979 onwards, especially *Synchroni Gynaika* [Contemporary Woman], the organ of OGE, the Party’s women’s organisation, increasingly published on abortions and contraceptive pills. The magazine expressed some cautious support for the Feminist call for the popularisation of the pill, on the grounds that woman should decide when to become pregnant. However, in stark contrast with Feminists, it stressed that its support for the use of the pill and the freedom to have an abortion was only conditional on the state actively promoting motherhood and taking steps to ensure that working mothers were financially supported.<sup>112</sup>

### **The 1980s: The challenge of institutionalisation**

The Feminist movement in Greece continued to be active until the mid-1980s. This was no Greek peculiarity: in other Western European countries, such as Italy, it had petered out already in the late 1970s, at least according to Lumley.<sup>113</sup> Similarly, RF promoted Feminism through its events until that point. Nevertheless, the early 1980s ushered in a new era to an extent, one marked by government efforts to incorporate some of the demands posed by the Feminist movement and other women activists in the previous decade. The victory of the Socialist party PASOK in the 1981 general election led to the creation of the first left-wing government since the civil war. By 1983, it had revised the family law, long a demand of

diverse women's groups.<sup>114</sup> The husband was deprived of the privilege of being the head of the family; rather, the concept of the joint responsibility of both spouses was introduced. Similarly, the obligation of a bride's family to provide a dowry was formally abolished. Another measure taken in 1986 foresaw the legalisation of abortion.<sup>115</sup> Such reforms lend support to the argument put forth by media studies expert Vassilis Vamvakas and sociologist as well as political scientist Panagis Panagiotopoulos, that the 1980s in Greece witnessed a "democratisation" of the state apparatus.<sup>116</sup> However, versions of femininity, such as the lesbian, did not benefit from such reforms: for instance, lesbian women in Greece are still not allowed to get married, since the law does not foresee same-sex marriage.<sup>117</sup> Thus, the democratisation of state institutions, at least in the domain of gender relations, was partial. In addition, despite the legal reforms, even heterosexual women remain in a position of inferiority in various domains: for instance, according to political scientist Maro Pantelidou-Malouta, women MPs are grossly outnumbered by their male colleagues.<sup>118</sup> However, this effort to institutionalise Feminist demands, its potential deficits, the reaction(s) of the Feminist movement in Greece and the stance RF kept at that point are deserving of a further article on the topic.

## **Conclusions**

This article analyses the interdependencies between the intensification of feminist activity and reconfiguration of left-wing youth politics in Greece in the mid-to-late 1970s. The collapse of the dictatorial regime in Greece in 1974 heralded an era, which was by no means characterised by a shift to (depoliticised) individualisation. Although the government was formed by a Centre-Right Party until 1981, left-wing militancy proliferated in diverse domains, most prominently the universities. The mid-to-late 1970s were also a turning point with regard women's activism in Greece: Women's associations that were affiliated with left-wing Parties (re-)appeared during those years. Meanwhile, several actors who described

themselves as Feminist and many of whom cut ties with those Parties, also emerged. Such activism not only impacted the political practice of mainly the Greek Eurocommunist Left, but also voiced demands, which were considered in the legislation passed by the Socialist government that ruled the country from 1981 to 1989.

Feminists in various “Western” countries during the 1970s propelled feminine sexuality and the demand that women control their body into the limelight. Greek Feminists, including those who were RF members, followed suit, stressing in particular their support for the legalisation of abortion and the popularisation of the contraceptive pill. They also rallied against rape of females by males. Their publications teemed with emotives that condemned the fear and guilt that several women felt, when battling those issues. As the decade progressed, Feminist activism in Greece intensified and diversified: numerous initiatives emerged, in some of which Feminist Eurocommunists participated.

Amongst the Greek left-wing youth, the emergence of the Feminist movement of the 1970s especially affected the rhetoric and practice of Eurocommunists. A staple of left-wing politics in post-dictatorship Greece were various efforts to reconfigure the meaning of collective action. Driven by its aim to distinguish itself from one of its main opponents, the pro-Soviet Communist youth organisation, which it accused of trying to manipulate protest movements in general that were active in Greece at that point, the Eurocommunist youth organisation had declared in 1976 its intention to respect the “autonomy” of those movements. The establishment of women’s groups within RF, which embraced a Feminist perspective, nonetheless remained a challenge for the group’s internal climate, a testing ground for group’s capacity to respect political “autonomy” of its own feminist activists. The outcome of this encounter was ambiguous and can be described as cautious experimentation: While several young Eurocommunists were sceptical about the activity of the “autonomous” women’s committees of RF, the year 1978 signalled an internal rupture, when RF officially recognised the autonomous operation of its women’s committee that was active in Athens.

The intensifying mobilisation of Feminist RF members led to the sexualisation of feminine representations in the language of the group by the end of the 1970s: Relevant congress decisions and other official texts no longer orbited solely around the position of women in the workforce. The momentum that Feminism gained within RF especially after 1978 also encouraged self-reflection among some male Eurocommunists about their understanding of masculinity. In articles in *Thourios* as well as in their speeches to RF congresses, they called into question ways in which their approach to sexual encounters with their comrades reinforced gender inequality at the expense of women. However, such self-reflection was only voiced by some individual members and cadres and did not leave its imprint on the decisions of the organisation. Moreover, the activities of the women's committee played contributed to the reshaping of the collective memory of left-wing struggle in Greece, which RF had hitherto embraced, as well as of the narrative structure of its publications at the end of the 1970s. The initiatives of Feminist Eurocommunists also had an impact beyond the Eurocommunist youth: they functioned as a transmission belt from 1978 onwards, helping spread their understanding of women's body and sexuality to the language of the KKE Es and the KDG. This process was not at all uncomplicated, however, as the Feminist RF members got often involved in conflicts with male and female comrades of theirs.

The complex relationship between Feminism and Eurocommunism in the 1970s was certainly not a Greek peculiarity. Many Eurocommunist organisations, especially in Western Europe, developed similar internal dynamics. Since these Parties and youth organisations were in close contact with each other during that decade, further comparative and transfer analysis of the ways in which Eurocommunists tried to reconfigure collective action and the extent to which their encounters with Feminism affected those efforts will contribute to a more comprehensive understanding of left-wing politics in Western Europe during those years.

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Image 1: The caption reads “assemblies, administrative councils, organisations, Parties, politics. Where and how do I position myself in relation to all these? How would I like to be? How would I like all these to be?”<sup>119</sup>



Image 2: RF publication on the need “to discover our body and its functions”, that was distributed at the third Festival of the group in 1979. It was prepared by the women’s committee in Athens.<sup>120</sup>



	1974	1975	1976	1977	1978	1979	1980	1981
<i>PASP (affiliated to the Youth of PASOK)</i>	24.6	26.2	25.9	21.6	27.6	26.7	26.8	25.2
<i>PSK (affiliated to KKE)</i>	20	23.2	27.4	27.3	30.6	31.2	31.3	32.3
<i>DA-DE (affiliated to RF)</i>	19.8	17.3	18.1	21.2	16.7	7.5	8.9	10.1
<i>Groups linked with Choros</i>						7.2	11.3	8.4
<i>DAP-NDFK (affiliated to the Centre-Right New Democracy)</i>	16.2	17.05	11.1	13.4	12.1	10.9	10.3	11.4
<i>AASPE (Maoist)</i>	3.8	3.7	5	4	3.2	1.9	n/a	n/a
<i>PPSP (Maoist)</i>	2.7	4.5	5.6	4.9	5.4	5.6	5.6	2.1
<b>Turnout (in number of voters)</b>	<b>23,863</b>	<b>45,460</b>	<b>39,383</b>	<b>47,743</b>	<b>49,656</b>	<b>50,513</b>	<b>50,690</b>	<b>47,916</b>

Table 1: The results of university student elections in Greece, 1974-1981 (in percentages).<sup>121</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>I have chosen those two colours, as they denote, among others, Communism and Feminism, respectively.

<sup>2</sup> The name of RF changed in 1976 from PON RF [*Panellinia Organosi Neolaias Rigas Feraios*, Panhellenic Youth Organisation *Rigas Feraios*], to EKON RF [*Elliniki Kommounistiki Neolaia Rigas Feraios*, Greek Communist Youth *Rigas Feraios*].

<sup>3</sup> The existing literature on Feminism in Greece in the 1970s has so far paid scant attention to its encounter with Eurocommunism. For instance, in her recent work, which also deals with the Feminist movement of the 1970s in Greece, historian Margaret Poulos does not address its impact on RF at all. See: Poulos, *Arms and the Woman*;

Poulos, "The Burden", 176-196. The only exception is an article authored by historian Maria Repousi, which concentrates on the period from 1974 to 1978. See: Repousi, "To 'deytero fylo'", 121-153. However, Repousi focuses her analysis on the initiatives, in which RF Feminist were involved, without addressing in detail the impact of the activities of RF Feminists on the rhetoric and the political practice of their group.

<sup>4</sup> When the term Party refers to a political organisation, it will henceforth appear with a capital P; when indicating a gathering of people for the purposes of socialising, I will use small p.

<sup>5</sup> Leggewie, "A Laboratory", 277-294.

<sup>6</sup> Horn, *The Spirit*, 232-234.

<sup>7</sup> Gundle, *Between Hollywood and Moscow*, 157, 163.

<sup>8</sup> See, for instance: Hellman, *Italian Communism in Transition*.

<sup>9</sup> Only a few scholarly works have so far explored the impact of the Feminist movement of the 1970s on masculinities across Europe. See, for instance, the ongoing doctoral research of Philippe De Wolf at the University of Ghent and the University of Paris 8, entitled "Male feminism: the participation of men in women's emancipation movements in Belgium, France and the Netherlands (1960--1990)"; see also Owen, "Men and the 1970s". For endeavours on the topic that refer to, but are not limited to the 1970s, see: Jardine, Smith, *Men in Feminism*.

<sup>10</sup> Scott, "Gender. A Useful Category", 1067.

<sup>11</sup> Symeonidou, "Women's Employment", 141-42, 152.

<sup>12</sup> Kaytantzoglou, *Paradosi kai neoterikotita*, 33.

<sup>13</sup> It should be noted that women in Greece had already had the right to vote in the areas controlled by left-wing partisans in the early 1940s.

<sup>14</sup> Pantelidou-Malouta, *To fylo tis dimokratias*, 212-16.

<sup>15</sup> For instance: Loizos and Papataxiarchis, "Gender", 231.

<sup>16</sup> Avdela, "Neoi en kindyno'", 325-341.

<sup>17</sup> Avdela, *Dia Logous timis*, 235-236.

<sup>18</sup> Silies, "Taking the pill".

<sup>19</sup> Loizos and Papataxiarchis, "Gender", 224; for abortion figures in Greece in the 1960s, see: Valaoras, Polychronopoulou, Trichopoulos, "Abortion in Greece", 31-44. The figure for the 1970s is an estimate that appeared in the feminist magazine *Dini*. See: Avdela, Papagiannaki, Sklaveniti, "Ektrosi 1976-1986", 8-28.

<sup>20</sup> Maratou-Alipranti, "Matrimonial Models", 128-139.

<sup>21</sup> Kornetis, "Student Resistance", 273.

<sup>22</sup> Voulgaris, *I Ellada tis Metapolitefsis*, 28-31.

<sup>23</sup> See Yfantopoulos, "I organotiki", 94-99. About left-wing youth politics in Greece in 1974-1981 in general, see also: Papadogiannis, *Militant around the Clock?*

<sup>24</sup> Decision of the First Panhellenic Conference of RF, 1976, ASKI, Archive of the First Panhellenic Conference of RF, 5.

<sup>25</sup> Kinisi gia tin Apeleytherosi ton Gynaikon, *Antisylliptika mesa*, Athens 1977, Delphys Archive, Athens (hereafter DAA).

<sup>26</sup> "Oi nees protopores ston agona", 12.

<sup>27</sup> About RF, see, for instance: "I nea gynaika sto simerino agona", 14. See also: Papadogiannis, "Shifting Feminine Representations", 11. About the other groups, see: Papadogiannis, *Militant*, especially chapter 2.

<sup>28</sup> List of members, ASKI, Archive of the central council of RF, 1974-78.

<sup>29</sup> "Merika stoicheia kai skepseis gia tin koinoniki anisotita ton dyo fylon", 2.

<sup>30</sup> M. Karra, article without title, *Thourios*, 13 April 1975, 3.

<sup>31</sup> Jensen, "The French Communist Party", 124.

<sup>32</sup> *Parti communiste français*, French Communist Party.

<sup>33</sup> Jensen, "The French Communist Party", 135, 144.

<sup>34</sup> Gundle, *Between Hollywood and Moscow*, 150.

<sup>35</sup> This decision did not mention the creation of the committee in Paris in particular, but it generally encouraged the creation of committees within RF that would examine the "women's question".

<sup>36</sup> Hadjiyanni, "Youth", 54-60.

<sup>37</sup> "I PASP proti dynami sto exoteriko," *Agonistis*, 5 January 1979, 2.

<sup>38</sup> Manuscript without title and date; Documents of the women's committee in Paris, Personal Collection of Maria Repousi (hereafter PCMR). According to Repousi, it was the first text of the women's committee of RF in Paris. See: Repousi, "To 'deytero fylo'", 128. It should be clarified that the material stored in the PCMR had been collected not only by her, but also by Eleni Alitzoglou, Sofia Vogiatzi, Nassia Yakovaki, Vicky Kotsovelou, Maria Liapi, Eleni Stamataki and Lili Hadjigeorgiou, all of whom had been active in Feminist initiatives in the 1970s-1980s.

<sup>39</sup> Maria Tzevelekou, Statement of the Women's Committee in Paris for the eight years of the existence of RF, 1976, 5, PCMR.

- <sup>40</sup> See, for instance: Statement of the women's committee in Paris for the eight years of the existence of RF, written by Tzevelekou, 1976, 1, Documents of the women's committee in Paris, PCMR.
- <sup>41</sup> "La manifeste des 343 salopes", *Nouvel Observateur*, 5 April 1971. The text can also be retrieved in the following link: <http://tempsreel.nouvelobs.com/societe/20071127.OBS7018/le-manifeste-des-343-salopes-paru-dans-le-nouvel-obs-en-1971.html> (last accessed: 17 October 2014).
- <sup>42</sup> Lumley, *States of Emergency*, 321-25. See also: Bracke, *Women and the Re-Invention*.
- <sup>43</sup> Silies, "Taking the pill".
- <sup>44</sup> Discussion with E. A., 18 August 2014. E. A. participated in the women's committee of RF in Paris.
- <sup>45</sup> "Variations sur des thèmes communs. Une revue théorique féministe radicale", *Questions Féministes*, November 1977. Text found in a volume that includes the issues of *Questions Féministes* that were published in 1977-1980 on pp. 25-42. The volume was published in Paris in 2012 by 'Editions Syllepse and also includes a preface by Sabine Lambert.
- <sup>46</sup> About *Pénélope*, see: Duchén, *Feminism in France*, 160.
- <sup>47</sup> Discussion with E. A., 18 August 2014.
- <sup>48</sup> Interview with A. P., 2 June 2006. A. P. also participated in the women's committee of RF in Paris.
- <sup>49</sup> Actually emotions are growingly considered in the examination of the Feminist movement of the 1970s in Europe. See, for instance: Bracke, "Building a 'counter-community of emotions'", 223-236.
- <sup>50</sup> Reddy, *The navigation*, 322-23. Reddy goes further to argue that "the complex of practices that establish a set of emotional norms and that sanction those who break them I call 'emotional regime'". He adds: "An ideal emotional regime would be that which allowed the greatest possible emotional liberty". However, I believe that "liberty" can be conceptualised in diverse ways by different actors and, thus, it is difficult to judge which provides the greatest "emotional liberty". Thus, I refrain from aiming to reach such a conclusion, when dealing with the emotional training of the Feminists under study.
- <sup>51</sup> Second text by Roxani Kaytantzoglou for discussion among the members of the committee in Paris, 1, Documents of the women's committee in Paris, PCMR.
- <sup>52</sup> For more relevant details, see: Papadogiannis, "Confronting 'imperialism' and 'loneliness'", 219-250.
- <sup>53</sup> Papadogiannis, "Shifting Feminine Representations", 13.
- <sup>54</sup> The Office was the higher body of Rigas Feraios in every city where members of the organisation existed.
- <sup>55</sup> Recommendation of the Office of Rigas Feraios in Paris for an ideological discussion on the women's movement, 1-5, Documents of the women's committee in Paris, PCMR.
- <sup>56</sup> Recommendation of the women's committee of RF to the central council of the organisation, June 1977, 13-16, Documents of the women's committee of RF, PCMR.
- <sup>57</sup> Ibid, 10.
- <sup>58</sup> Alitzoglou, Asser, Konstantelou, Decastro, Trantzi, "Gia to gynaikeio provlima", 5-6.
- <sup>59</sup> Papadogiannis, "Confronting 'imperialism' and 'loneliness'", 240.
- <sup>60</sup> Lonzi (ed.) *Sputiamo su Hegel*, 11-18.
- <sup>61</sup> Extracts from the work of Rowbotham, for instance, appear in the recommendation of the women's committee of RF to the central council of the organisation, June 1977, 13-16, Documents of the women's committee of RF, PCMR, 6.
- <sup>62</sup> Such a leaflet was entitled "Lo, la salute, la maternità, la sessualità, l' aborto". I found it in the personal archive of Paki Kyriopoulou. See also Papadogiannis, "Shifting Feminine Representations", 16.
- <sup>63</sup> Recommendation of the women's committee of RF to the central council of the organisation, June 1977, 1, Documents of the women's committee of RF, PCMR.
- <sup>64</sup> Discussion with N. K., 12 June 2006. N. K. was a female RF who was inspired by Feminism and studied in Italy in the mid-1970s.
- <sup>65</sup> Lumley, *States of Emergency*, 320-321.
- <sup>66</sup> Ibid, 320.
- <sup>67</sup> Decision of the first congress of *Rigas Feraios* concerning women issue, June 1978, 1-4, ASKI, Archive of the first congress of RF. See also: Repousi, "To 'deytero fylo'", 148-151.
- <sup>68</sup> Repousi, "To 'deytero fylo'", 152.
- <sup>69</sup> Actually, "autonomy" served as a byword for diverse novel configurations of collective action. It was employed not only by the Feminists, but also by a wide array of many radical actors in Greece in the late 1970s. For instance, it was also embraced by the participants in *Choros*, signified again as opposition to top-bottom Party structures.
- <sup>70</sup> Drama is a city in northern Greece.
- <sup>71</sup> Avdela, Igglesi, Kondyli, Mpakourou, Ntousia, Papagiannaki, Papadopoulou, Perri, Tsoukala, Frangoudaki, Charemi, "O 'goiteytikos drakos' kai I gynaikeia enochi".
- <sup>72</sup> It circulated from 1979 to 1981. Details about the period during which these magazines circulated can be found in: <http://www.genderpanteion.gr/gr/indexvasi84.php> (last accessed: 17 October 2014).
- <sup>73</sup> "Oi giatroi miloun", 37-40; "Se alles chores tis Evropis", 40-48.

- <sup>74</sup> “Gynaikeia douleia tis EKON *Rigas Feraios* meta to synedrio (stin Athina)”, late 1979, PCMR.
- <sup>75</sup> “Ena neo feministiko kinima gennietai”, 12.
- <sup>76</sup> Kotsovelou, Repousi, “Feministika entypa, 1978-1985: mia proti proseggisi”, 58; “Gia ti riziki anamorfosi tou Astikou Kodika”, 4-5.
- <sup>77</sup> “Ena neo feministiko kinima gennietai”, 9-13.
- <sup>78</sup> Milios, Psarras, “I theoria tou Evrokommounismou: ananeosi (i) (kai) synecheia?”, 32-40.
- <sup>79</sup> Avdela, Psarra, “Pos mia diakiryxi anoigei ena metopo”, 38-39.
- <sup>80</sup> This was a reference to the Feminists of the 1970s.
- <sup>81</sup> It can be found in the booklet containing the decision of the second congress of RF. See: “Gia mia nea poreia ton kinimaton tis neolaias. 2o Synedrio E.K.O.N. Rigas Feraios”, 1980, 34-37, PCMR.
- <sup>82</sup> “Gynaikeia douleia tis EKON Rigas Feraios meta to synedrio (stin Athina)”, late 1979, PCMR.
- <sup>83</sup> About Feminism(s) in the 1970s as an international phenomenon, see, for instance: Schulz, “Echoes of Provocation”, 137-154.
- <sup>84</sup> *Thourios*, 17 September 1980, 48.
- <sup>85</sup> “Gynaikeia-Rigitiki Douleia”, without date, PCMR.
- <sup>86</sup> “Emeis sto Riga ti kanoume gia tin gynaikeia douleia?”, 20.
- <sup>87</sup> See, for instance: Georgakopoulou, Yakovaki, “Gia na ‘ta poume sto synedrio’”, 14.
- <sup>88</sup> “Oi agones tou Polytechnείου kai I anthropini diastasi mias genias”, 11.
- <sup>89</sup> ASKI, Archive of EKON *Rigas Feraios*, RF Thessalonikis, 1980-82, box 38, envelope 2, Announcement of the Bureau of the Central Council of RF concerning the commemoration of the Polytechnic Uprising.
- <sup>90</sup> Scott, “Gender. A Useful Category”, 1070.
- <sup>91</sup> In raising this point, historian Jo Stanley refers to the attitude of Communists in the UK. However, this remark applied, at least to an extent, as shown in this article, to Communists in Greece as well. See: Stanley, “Including the Feelings”, 65.
- <sup>92</sup> For more details on this issue, see: Papadogiannis, *Militant*, especially chapter 6.
- <sup>93</sup> It is not clear in the sources whether those narrations stemmed from the lives of the Feminist Eurocommunists and whether some of those narrations were fictional.
- <sup>94</sup> “Apo tin Eleni gia tin Anna”, 1979, PCMR.
- <sup>95</sup> For instance: “O Nikos, o Giorgos, o Giannis... Ti simainei gia sena i yparxi tou?”, 4-5.
- <sup>96</sup> Roumpani, “Nai, to prosopiko einai politiko!”, *Thourios*, 25 February 1981, 18.
- <sup>97</sup> About Feminists not aligned with RF, see, for instance: “Diastaseis, distagmoi kai dichasmoi”, 14, DAA.
- <sup>98</sup> See, for instance: “Emeis sto Riga ti kanoume gia tin gynaikeia douleia?”, 20.
- <sup>99</sup> ASKI, Archive of EKON *Rigas Feraios*, Speech of Tassos Ioannidis, Pre-congress Athens Gathering, 1978.
- <sup>100</sup> “Ena agori metaxy mas”, 18-19.
- <sup>101</sup> About such “men’s groups” in Belgium and France, see: De Wolf, “Male Feminism”, which is contained in this theme issue.
- <sup>102</sup> “Merika stoicheia apo ti drastiriotita tis Kinisis Dimokratikon Gynaikon”, without date (most probably early 1980), PCMR.
- <sup>103</sup> Papagaroufali, “Kinisi Dimokratikon Gynaikon”, 15-29.
- <sup>104</sup> “Politiki thesi tou KKE Esoterikou gia ta gynaikeia provlimata”, 1981, PCMR.
- <sup>105</sup> “Apofasi gia to gynaikoio zitima”, third congress of the KKE Es., PCMR.
- <sup>106</sup> A case in point is Marisa Decastro, who had been involved in the women’s committee of RF in Paris and, subsequently, remained aligned with the Eurocommunist youth group. She actively participated in the second congress of the KKE Es., promoting Feminist ideas. See: Speech of Marisa Decastro in the second congress of the KKE Es. 1978, PCMR.
- <sup>107</sup> For instance, flyer distributed by the Women of the KKE Es. in Piraeus and collaborating Feminists, 1981, PCMR.
- <sup>108</sup> “Antras-katapiestis i antras-synagonistis?”, *Odigitis*, 4 January 1980, 9.
- <sup>109</sup> Aleka Papariga, *Gia tin apeleytherosi tis gynaikas*, Athens 1981.
- <sup>110</sup> Ibid., 102-08.
- <sup>111</sup> “O Rigas Feraios kai i stratigiki tis antidrasis”, 21.
- <sup>112</sup> “To antisylliptiko chapi”, 16-19, DAA.
- <sup>113</sup> Lumley, *States of Emergency*, 329.
- <sup>114</sup> Samiou, *Gynaika, Fylo kai Politiki*, 67.
- <sup>115</sup> Ibid., 68.
- <sup>116</sup> Vamvakas, Panagiotopoulos, “Introduction”, XLIV.
- <sup>117</sup> Despite that, the 1980s in Greece witnessed lesbian activism in Greece, such as the publication of the magazine *Lavrys* in 1982-83.

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<sup>118</sup> In the elections that took place in June 1989 thirteen female deputies were elected; in November 1989 twenty; in 1990 sixteen; in 1993 eighteen; in 1996 nineteen and in 2000 thirty one. Throughout those years, the total number of the Members of the Parliament was 300. Pantelidou-Malouta, *To fylo*, 212-216.

<sup>119</sup> *Gynaikes kai Politiki*, 1981, cover page of a booklet published by Feminists in Greece in the late 1970s, who were also active in the Greek Left.

<sup>120</sup> “Gia na gnorisoume to soma mas kai tis leitourgies tou”, 1979, PCMR.

<sup>121</sup> Percentage of votes received by each of the student groups mentioned and voter turnout in the student elections in the period 1974-1981. The table was prepared by the author, based on data from: Aravantinos, “To Metapoliteytiko”, 465-560. I have cross-checked, as far as possible, the figures he provides with those that appear in left-wing youth publications of that period.