

Introduction

This study originates in a personal fascination I had with images of Greek women warriors and the enduring national myths constructed around them. The trail I embarked upon opened up the vast and rich history of symbolism and its relationship to politics, in particular the politics of nation-building and national identity. My initial interest was in the iconography of the Greek Revolution, otherwise known as the 1821 War of Independence, which ended four centuries of Ottoman rule. The heroic exploits of Lascarina Bouboulina, Greece's first naval commander, at sea and on land; the legendary women of Souli, who leapt to their collective deaths in order to avoid capture and dishonour by Ottoman soldiers; and the much-lauded contributions of Mado Mavroyeni to the war effort, represent some of the more renowned instances of feminine valour and 'patriotism', which were as intriguing as they were unconventional. They were neither peaceful nor modest instances of historical agency—in spite of the prevailing social paradigm which rigidly curtailed the scope of women's activities and life choices across the social classes and which persisted well into the twentieth century—and nor were their contributions obscured from the historical record. The paradox of a nation, which celebrated such unorthodox displays of female defiance and agency, juxtaposed against the rather unimpressive fate of Greek women as a group in pre- and post-revolutionary Greece, presented an overwhelming proposition. This paradox eventually drew my attention to the concept of the nation and of national identity as 'gendered'—a concept not only prompted by the celebration of such figures within patriarchal societies but also by the frequent use of the female allegory throughout all modern history to depict nations at key moments of definition or redefinition.

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This trail crystallised into a study of the impact of the symbolism of women-in-arms on Greek feminist discourses and identities, that is, the extent to which representations and histories of women's armed participation in the nation's key conflicts have been utilised by feminists to advance and legitimate women's integration into the nation. Alternatively, it can be conceptualised as an investigation of the relationship between Greek nationalism and feminism, refracted through the image of the female warrior.

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The book focuses on three key nation-building junctures in modern Greek history in which women's armed participation was a defining feature: the War of Independence or the Greek Revolution of 1821 (Elliniki Epanastasi),¹ the National Resistance movement (1941–44) (Ethniki Adistasi), and the Greek Civil War (1946–49) (Emfilios Polemos). These were all instances of total war, waged by 'informally' organised fighting bands or units, the combined outcome of which blurred the separation of the private and public spheres of life, and by extension the space between the home front and the battlefield, and as such, in a sense, paved the way for women's participation. The informal aspects of revolutionary upheaval and the participatory opportunities it engenders highlight the contrasting rigidity of the structure and sociology of the regular and legitimate army, the military apparatus of the state. Enloe (1983)

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and Elshtain (1992, 1987, 1982) have drawn our attention to the gender and other dichotomies, which are fundamental to military culture, and by extension, give form and meaning to traditional wartime discourse and mythology. This book takes the view that informality in the context of conflict has been a vital element of women's unorthodox participation, and while this has been a double-edged sword for women, rarely guaranteeing changes to their citizenship status in the post-war period, such experiences nevertheless have been transformative—for the protagonists themselves and as role models for successive generations.

There have been three significant junctures for Greek feminism since Independence, although this coincidence is in no way intended to present as a neat and linear tally with the three historical conflicts in question. Late nineteenth-century 'protofeminism'² emerged during an era of feverish bourgeois consolidation, and was comprised of a small collective of privileged women of the newly emergent educated middle class. The interwar movement or the 'first wave'³ was quantitatively larger and focused primarily on suffrage and the rights of the growing female workforce in the urban centres. The 'second wave' of Greek feminism emerged immediately after the collapse of the last military dictatorship in 1974, when Greek political life underwent a period of radical liberalisation. It was by far larger and more politically diverse than its predecessors, focussing on both the legislative and cultural aspects of equality and emancipation.

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My deployment of the 'female warrior' as an analytical category to explore the relationship between Greek nationalism and feminism has been prompted by the historical association of citizenship rights with the right to bear arms. Since men were traditionally the defenders of the nation, and women the defended, the implications of women's 'encroachments' on the male battlefield to the 'social contract' are compelling. If the battlefield represents the site at which one is at closest proximity to the nation itself, then women's presence there ought to provide unique insights into the gender citizenship nation nexus itself—particularly since history has shown that this participation has rarely increased women's political power in the post-war period. It invokes the common theme of the nation as female, which implies the gendering of the citizen as male, which in turn sets limits on the forms of national belonging available to women, irrespective of their contributions to front-line battle. Indeed, we often think of the state as masculine, while women are conceptualised as mothers of the nation, an image which places their reproductive capacities at the centre of their service to the nation. Feminists themselves have conceptualised the nation as an extended family in which women are central, in order to argue for their political rights. Accordingly, this book's discussion on the relationship between Greek nationalism and feminism encompasses the ways in which Greek feminists, too, have drawn on the gendered logic within prevailing formulations of nationalism and national identity, to advance their aims—to be included, that is, in their 'imagined nation' without disturbing the existing gender system.

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Hall (1993: 97) confirms the great contribution to the terms of debate on nations and nationalisms as presented in Benedict Anderson's *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* (1983). His critique of the failure of Marxism to deal with the 'national question', his notion of the nation as an 'imagined community', imagined both politically and culturally, his insistence on the historical specificity of the meanings of nation and nationalism, his emphasis on the place of print culture in the construction of the nation, and his suggestive comment that it might be helpful to think of nationalism as akin to religion, have all fuelled discussion and further research. But as Hall notes, Anderson is not interested in gender. Feminist scholars 'who comb his book for inspiration on ways of thinking about women's or men's particular relation to the nation, or nationalism's relation to feminism, will find little joy.

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This book is located within what is now a vast literature on the gendered character of both nationalist discourse and national identity, which highlights the historically specific ways in which gender and nation are indubitably linked.⁴ This new canon has drawn vastly on Anderson's idea of the nation as 'imagined', but establishes that that imagining has gender dimensions.

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The absences of gender from mainstream analyses of nationalism, despite the fact that crucial nationalist discourses of the late modern era 'explicitly reflect gender national polities and identities' (Sluga, 1998: 106), is also true of the scholarship on Greek nationalism,⁵ with the exception of Kitromilides (1994, 1983), who has dedicated one paper specifically to the relationship between Enlightenment values and their impact on the construction of Greek womanhood in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. But it is the work of feminist historians, including Efi Avdela, Angelika Psarra, and Eleni Varika, which has established the importance of the gender and nation nexus within Greek historiography.

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Augoustinos (1995: 1112) states in her survey of Kitromilides that the evolution of ideas from the universal values of Enlightenment rationalism in its modern Greek context to the 'politicisation of the new ethnography' after Independence (1829) was instituted through references to common ancestry, culture, and language, which in turn led to militant nationalism. Since far more Greeks lived outside than within the new state, Greek efforts to solidify the nation culturally and politically, or to 'nationalise' space, co-existed and contradicted the aims of the Greek irredentist project, namely the 'Megale Idea' (Great Idea), to expand the nation's borders and absorb Greece's 'unredeemed' populations. As Peckham (2001) argues, the task of creating a unified society out of the new country's many political and cultural fragments, required a multipronged effort, often uncoordinated and often laden with contradiction. The first feminist collective was comprised of women who were the beneficiaries of pioneering national education initiatives designed to bolster national consciousness and to lift the burden of perceived cultural backwardness and illiteracy, inappropriate for a country aspiring to European membership. Varika (1987, 1993) has noted the gendered character of the nation-making discourses of the nineteenth century, in which national identity was constructed through a

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complex but often contradictory process of differentiation that situated gender at the centre of national self-definition. Late-nineteenth-century feminists were to make full and astute use of the 'identity question' to facilitate women's integration into the new nation.

A survey of the collective efforts of these scholars suggests that the most promising instances of Greek nationalist discourse for the progressive 'regendering' of the nation, and/or for the spread of feminist ideas, were those in which the Greek desire for Western integration was paramount. This history begins with the formative influences of the French Revolution and Enlightenment in the early phase of Greek nationalism in the late eighteenth century, and resurfaces with vigour in the post-junta era after 1974, which witnessed a renewed desire for Greece to be counted amongst the enlightened nations of Europe, as expressed through aspirations for EU membership, an important undercurrent of the great feminist successes in the domain of legal reforms in the 1980s. 10

The highs and even the lows of Greek irredentism have also provided opportunities for Greek feminism, though these coordinates are far more complex and unstable to evaluate. Avdela and Psarra (2005: 70) note that by the end of the nineteenth century, a nationalist fervour that overtook the country with the disintegration of the Ottoman Empire and the rise of rival Balkan nationalisms, assigned to women a decisive role in the fulfilment of the civilising mission of Hellenism and the realisation of the irredentist ideal. This environment was ripe with political opportunity and in the last quarter of the nineteenth century the first feminist collective in Greece emerged, founded and led by journalist, Kallirhoe Parren (1861–1940). Drawing on the prevailing arguments of nationalism, the collective outlined for women (of their own class—from educated and upper socio-economic strata) a 'legitimate' scope of action in the public domain through which they would be integrated into the national body. The Greco-Turkish War of 1897, effectively a Cretan uprising against the Turks, gave these feminists the opportunity to realise their ambitions. The war quickly turned into a political economic moral and military disaster, but paradoxically it was the defeat and the need for national rehabilitation that granted Greek women and feminists more active roles, which included the collection of funds, caring for Cretan refugees, organising employment for refugees and the families of poor soldiers, sewing uniforms, training nurses, equipping hospitals to meet the needs of the front line, and so on. These women believed the 1897 war was a legitimate and noble cause, and were slightly embittered that their nature excluded them from the highest honour of fighting and dying for their country, even as they took pride in their roles as healers and preservers of life on the home front. 11

The effects of Venizelism on Greek nationalism created a mixed canvas for Greek feminism—nourished by the ethos of liberalisation but constrained by the negative effects of expansionism. One of the latter's greatest failures was the Asia Minor expedition of 1922, which ended with the disastrous exchange of populations and the subsequent empowerment of a conservative strain of Greek nationalism. Triantafyllidou (2000) argues that the Asia Minor incident destroyed the Greek irredentist dream, but simultaneously solidified the Greek nation by creating clearly 12

and unequivocally delineated Greek borders for the first time since independence. The territory of the state was thus incorporated into the dominant nationalist discourse as one of the features of the nation, together with ethnic origin, culture, language, and religious faith—thereby forming a unitary conception of national identity. This process was further consolidated by the war's confirmation of the Turk as the quintessential 'other' for Greeks. While these unfortunate events 'liberated' Greece from territorial uncertainty and simplified the question of national identity, they also brought an insular formulation of nationalism to the fore, which was focused on ethnic authenticity and tradition, a project at perfect odds with the goals of interwar feminism.

To return to this book's focus on the implications and consequences of women's armed participation in key nation-building conflicts, much of the scholarship has served the purpose of rectifying sins of omission in traditional accounts of wars and revolutionary efforts and thus of re-educating scholars and lay people alike. It has raised consciousness, promoted women's pride and aimed to restore 'fullness' to the historical event. Such studies of activism and heroism have often been descriptive rather than analytical. As valuable as they are, they have been criticised by feminist historians for reinforcing a sense that women only deserve notice when they are active and heroic, the implicit contrast being with a passive, non-political, timid sex (Berkin & Lovett, 1980: 2). Subsequent scholarship in women's history has adopted a more analytical approach, choosing to concentrate on the real outcomes of women's patriotic and revolutionary contributions.⁶ 13

This body of scholarship has shifted the focus to the expectations raised among women by (a) the exigencies of war and revolution, (b) the explicit promises made by revolutionary leaderships which sought their cooperation, (c) the ideology they were asked to embrace, and finally, (d) the implicit promises to women of the transformations at work during nation-building or nation-defending exercises which were simultaneously patriarchal in nature. For example, in the context of the French Revolution, Margaret Higgonet (1987: 7) comments that '... the organic discourse of wartime patriotism with its emphasis on national solidarity, discouraged expressions of women's rights and needs, labelling them selfish, divisive or even treasonous'. Much of the literature documents the remarkable fluidity of circumstances and the innovative quality of the experience that characterised these national crises and/or social transformations, yet each also attests to the resilience of traditional roles and structures and to the fragility of egalitarian reform. Indeed the attention is focused almost exclusively on the gloomy implications for real and lasting change vis-à-vis traditional gender hierarchies; the contrast between radical changes which occur as societies pull together to face external threats but which are then exposed as ephemeral soon after the crisis ends. 14

The unprecedented participation of women in the great conflicts of the twentieth century yielded similar results. In the context of the Second World War and the large array of national liberation conflicts it spawned, it was not unusual for women to be recruited into military campaigns and even in some cases to trespass into the traditionally exclusively male domain of military 15

warfare. The image and experience of women raising arms was and is at once the most exciting and disconcerting for post-war societies to deal with and, at best, problematic for feminists engaged in the relationship between wartime participation and citizenship rights.

Feminist scholars are concerned that such a focus, valuable as it may be, reinforces a sense that women only deserve notice when they are active and heroic in the (historically) male tradition. McClintock (1996), for example, has expressed concern about women receiving attention or acknowledgment as historical actors, only in the context of national liberation wars. Nevertheless, the examination of the phenomenon of women's armed participation in men's wars can illuminate our understanding of nationalism and the nation as gendered concepts and the continuing association between the raising of arms and citizenship. Moreover, the dismissal of these historical episodes as political disappointments amounts to a dismissal of the historical agency of women who fought in many national struggles for their own purposes. 16

Using the example of republican Spain, Nash (1993) focuses on the inability of the *milicianas* to reinscribe standard gender and social roles as a result of their own changing identity. In this case, their efforts at the front were interrupted by the 'professionalisation' of the fighting forces. This led to a backlash against women fighters, a reinforcement of the home-front heroine, as the representative of a more authentic female contribution to the war, and ultimately, in the name of discipline, the elimination of women from the trenches. The transition from non-hierarchical voluntary militia formations, or guerrilla warfare, to highly stratified regular armed forces effectively made armed participation for women untenable. As Spanish women lost control of the terms in which their struggle took place and lost their credibility as combatants, an analogy was drawn in the post-war period between this demobilisation and the reinstatement of pre-war gender relations. 17

Molyneaux (1985) recounts the way in which Nicaraguan women from all social classes became political subjects—many for the first time—during the resistance to the widespread repression and brutality of the Somoza regime. Women's participation in the Nicaraguan Revolution almost equalled that of Greece during the Second World War, and later Vietnam, with women making up approximately 30 percent of the revolutionary combat forces. The generalised struggle against the dictatorship, in the words of Jose Luis Corragio, '... dissolved the specificity of political subjects', and it was this unity that accounted for the ultimate success of the opposition movement. Molyneaux, however, disputes that genderised identities were dissolved, as most women entered the conflict in a familiar capacity (as nurses, cleaners, and seamstresses, for example). The critical question is that which arises from 'the subordination of women's specific interests in the universal struggle for a different society', which in the case of Nicaragua seems to indicate that women have been sold out in the post-revolutionary period, not by a 'new bureaucratic bourgeoisie, but by a more pervasive and at the same time analytically elusive entity, the patriarchy' (231). 18

The Greek Resistance movement in the 1940s, just like the Spanish republican movement in the 1930s, does not lend itself to such an appraisal. It differs from Nicaragua in the fact of its defeat, which occurred before any opportunity to refashion state power and to dash expectations was given. Consequently it cannot be scrutinised in terms of its loyalty to revolutionary narratives and objectives. However, as a two-pronged movement, driven by both resistance to Nazi occupation and a vision of radical reconstruction of national political culture to include previously marginalised groups, the Greek Resistance acquired a mass following, and the legacy of political participation and solidarity still resonates in Greek political life today. **19**

According to Janet Hart (1990: 50), the communist-led Resistance movement, EAM (Ethniko Apeleftherotiko Metopo or National Liberation Front), had two facets: '... defensive nationalism, which concerned the defence of national borders and took as its primary objective the expulsion of Axis invaders, and political nationalism which involved the extension of citizenship rights to marginalised or disenfranchised groups'. In the Greek case, as in the rest of occupied Europe, defensive nationalism provided the framework for the mass mobilisation of Greek men and women into politics. This was a phenomenal achievement in itself given the pre-modern codes of conduct governing women's lives in pre-war Greece, and thus this mobilisation of women into the public domain on a mass scale was a powerful symbol of the political intent of the new movement and created the impetus for the renegotiation of citizenship norms and national political culture more broadly. In this sense, as Hart (1990, 1992, and 1996) has argued, the Greek Resistance acted as a 'socialising movement', where new participatory values were taught and national identities formed. A defining feature of this new social order was the female political subject, the female citizen. **20**

The intellectual architects of the Greek Resistance were inspired by a combination of European Enlightenment ideals and the success of the Russian Revolution. Some of the Resistance movement's modernist features included a utopian quest for communal reason and rationality; the desire to break with the old regime of clientelism; and the urge to catch up economically, socially, and pedagogically with other countries that had been at the heart of the Industrial Revolution, which had largely bypassed Greece. **21**

The movement excited urban and rural Greece at a grass-roots level, with its narratives of universal human rights and the twin goals of national and social liberation. Although its reach was broad, the Resistance cause signalled different things to different people. For women, it offered an opportunity to extend the boundaries of a rigidly defined existence; traditionally excluded from formal education, the lot of Greek women centred on domestic duties and the raising of children. In the areas liberated from the occupying forces and administered by EAM (referred to as Liberated Greece or Eleftheri Ellada), women were able to vote and to participate actively in local government. Many girls and women held posts within the political structure of EAM (particularly in recruitment), while a small number became combatants in the military wing, ELAS.⁷ The opening up of politics and public life to Greek women had an uneven success against the weight of entrenched patriarchal attitudes and values. But on the basis of **22**

the movement's intentions alone, and its successful encouragement of large numbers of Greek women into political life for the first time, this book takes the view that it represents a significant milestone in the trajectory of gender politics in Greece. This, in spite of the outcomes of the subsequent Civil War, amongst whose consequences was precisely the rolling back of these advances.

This book, however, is not focused on the reinstatement of traditional gender orders in the post-war era per se. While a 'backlash' of this order did occur in the Greek case, this book is more concerned in the ways that gendered national(ist) narratives and imagery were moulded or manipulated to legitimate this type of backlash, and indeed how identical imagery had served progressive agendas at previous junctures. While this study does not require an examination of the wars themselves, chapters 3 and 4 do examine the Greek Resistance and the Civil War in some detail, not only because they constitute key points in the trajectory of gender politics in Greece but also because the interplay between gender, war, and national identity is explicit in the narratives of both conflicts. Indeed, the latter was marked by one of the highest ratios of female to male combatants in the history of the Second World War, a curious phenomenon in itself, and one which provided a crucial subtext to the tirades hurled at the partisan army by an outraged 'national-minded' countermovement on the ascendancy. The relative wealth of archival material (in contrast to the Revolution) and my often moving encounters with survivors, made the writing of these chapters amongst the most inspired and enjoyable. This decade in Greek history demonstrates, perhaps more vividly than any other, Anderson's (1980: 23) influential assertion that 'nationalism has something to offer everybody', but not all at the same time. The exclusionary impulse of nationalist ideology comes to life during the Greek Civil War, particularly when observed through the treatment of partisan men and women by the Civil War state. This chapter of Greek history provides a vivid example of the fate of 'national feminisms' or national-based emancipatory projects, when political fortunes shift and ideals of the nation and the social order shift along with them.

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In the case of the Greek Revolution, the experience of women who took part in battle is left to the imagination, although the fact of such participation is certain, as was the total reinstatement of women's pre-revolutionary status in the post-war period in spite of such contributions. Lascarina Bouboulina's name is etched in national history books as the commander of the first naval force that carried the Revolution's flag, as well as the owner of the first modern Greek warship, *Agamemnon*. Her iconic status in Greek culture is entrenched and unquestioned. In her time, this weapon-clad 'modern Amazon'⁸ was celebrated by romantic literature and iconography, haunted national legends, and fascinated the European philhellenic imagination, in particular. Indeed, her legend is owed not to the fledgling Greek state with whom there was political conflict but to the philhellenes who recorded their encounters with her.⁹ Although her image is widely celebrated by popular culture in Greece today, a dearth of data prevents new and substantive considerations of her life and times.

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While Bouboulina's conflict with, and subsequent ostracism from, the post-revolutionary political pantheon may have cancelled the likelihood of changes instituted to Greek women's citizenship in her name, but the harsher reality is that the Revolution did not inspire a grass-roots women's movement for social change of any description. Bouboulina and other prominent female figures of the Revolution made no comment or impact on the prevailing social structure nor did they inspire a drive to '... ward off the dangers represented by a too palpably embodied female cult figure', as in the case of the earlier French Revolution.¹⁰ Traditional gender hierarchies remained fundamentally unchanged and, in any case, Bouboulina's political potential was short-circuited by her untimely death in 1826. Eleni Varika (1993: 269) suggests that most of the women who fought in the War of Independence did so under the strict control of the male heads of their households, and that this would account for their exclusion from citizenship after the Proclamation of Independence (1827), an exclusion which met with little resistance from the great revolutionary heroines themselves. 25

However, if feminism is a by-product of the Enlightenment, it is also a repercussion of the same process that led to the formation of nation-states. During the nineteenth century in particular, the various nation-building projects that sprang out of the collapsing *ancien régime* gave women an opportunity to reconsider their status. In the case of Greece, 'proto-feminism' emerged towards the end of the nineteenth century, some decades after the establishment of the Greek nation. The first chapter of this book examines the considerable extent to which the armed participation of Greek women in the Greek Revolution was utilised to legitimise the feminist campaigns of this era. 26

As discussed earlier, feminist historians have spent much energy describing the contradictory process by which women warriors both challenged the foregone conclusion of natural feminine weakness and subservience and provided foundational myths for the emerging nation-states, which nevertheless marginalised them. Marianne of France and Greece's own Bouboulina are but two examples. The prominence of these images in early discursive constructions of Greek feminist identity lends another dimension to the debate. 27

The gendering of the French nation, in the passage from absolutism to democratic republicanism, has been well documented by scholars of the French Revolution and the Enlightenment, such as Joan Scott (1986, 1987, 1988, 1989, 1996), Joan Landes (1988, 2001), and Genevieve Fraisse (1994), while Carol Pateman (1988) has demonstrated that Rousseau's social contract theory, upon which the legitimising ideology of modern nations is based, is constitutionally sexist. 28

The history of the Greek nation offers a long and rich perspective on the relationship between national and gender identities, as well as on the uses and abuses of the national past and the highly conflictual issues at stake in the transmission of collective memory, but it is a history which has not received due scholarly attention. This perhaps derives from an entrenched and 29

widespread perception of Greece as 'peripheral' by virtue of its small economy as well as culturally ambiguous—not quite a European or a wholly Eastern entity. This book aims at making partial amends.

The shifting and often volatile nature of Greek national identity has been of central importance to the 'woman question' throughout modern Greek history. The initial imposition of a Bavarian administration soon after Independence, the effort to shed traces of 'obscurantism' and the 'barbarity' of Ottoman rule; the Western bourgeois invasion of local customs and traditions; the long-standing effort to reconcile the Ottoman past with the legacy of Greece as the centre of European civilisation; and the intense conflict between right and left visions of Greek society since the Second World War have all generated tensions about national identity that have often found expression through various treatments of the 'woman question'. The efforts of feminists to turn such tensions into political opportunities, with varying results, make up an important part of this political and cultural history. In turn, this history illuminates the Janus-faced nature of nationalism, remarkable in its fluidity and ability to accommodate a wide spectrum of political agendas, from the radically democratic to the most conservative and insular. As such, the book's objective reaches beyond its subject, and its significance resonates beyond Greek national borders. 30

Finally, the meaning I attribute to 'feminism' and 'feminists' in this book requires some explanation. While I do not offer a 'correct' definition of feminism, my guiding principle is expressed in Offen's (2000: 20) suggestion that feminism is always 'a system of ideas or a movement for socio-political change based on a refusal of male privilege and women's subordination within any given society'. Additionally, in agreement with Rosalind Delmar (2001), I do not assume the visible social movement is feminism's apotheosis and privileged form, although this book does single out the historic significance of these junctures—the Greek feminist and women's movements—which have emerged since the founding of the nation-state. Why the distinction between women's and feminist movements? This is a basic acknowledgement that not all women fighting for women's rights or emancipation¹¹ consider themselves to be feminists—this is particularly relevant to the social movements which emerged in the context of occupied Greece in the 1940s, in which the vast numbers of women who joined the communist-led anti-fascist resistance movement did so as patriots, as members of the non-landed peasantry engaged in exploitative waged labour, as communists, and so on. The great majority of women and girls who found specific inspiration in the movement's commitment to gender equality were not self-identified feminists either, nor were they aligned with feminism in any way. On the one hand, many, if not most, Greek women in 1940s Greece, a period in which Greece was still a predominantly agricultural society, would not have been aware of feminism at all. On the other hand, women (and men) in the Greek Communist Party, especially those of middle or high rank, like Chrysa Hatzivasileiou,¹² were well aware of the march of feminism on the world political stage, but they referred to it mostly in oppositional or disparaging terms or dismissed it as strictly middle class. Indeed, communist anti-feminism was unequivocal in Resistance narratives, as evidenced most clearly in the mission statement of 31

EAM's youth wing, EPON,¹³ and also in the narratives of PDEG, the voice of the partisan women's movement during the Civil War (affiliated with the Women's International Democratic Federation).

But this book takes the view that, in practice, and despite their anti-feminist rhetoric, these organisations and many of the individual actors which shaped the historical events in question were thoroughly and unrepentantly feminist in their aspirations and activities. For the most part, I have simplified the issue of definition and identity by focusing on the ways in which the actors and participants identify themselves, as well as on the ways in which their contemporaries see them. For example, in chapter 6 the reader is alerted to the fact that the Greek women's movement of the 1970s and 1980s was dominated by mass women's organisations like the socialist-feminist Union of Greek Women (EGE/Enosi Gynaikon Elladas), which unquestionably saw itself as a feminist outfit; a point which is disputed by other 'autonomous' activists who claimed 'feminism' exclusively for themselves. On a final note, the protagonists in this history, as in all histories, have multiple identities, and the order of their importance shifts according to the specific events with which they are confronted. Indeed, in many of the historical events this book studies, it is the social and political diversity of women and feminists within the same nation which is most striking, although this book does not privilege the history of these divisions and differences. My frequent use of universalising terms like 'Greek feminist' and 'Western feminists' is less an oversight than a necessary tool of classification, vital to making the most basic of historical connections.

Chapter Guide

The first chapter provides an overview of hegemonic (Anglo-American) feminist theories of the relationship amongst women, war, peace, and the nation, in which I try to situate the discourses of our Greek feminist counterparts. The chapter seeks to illuminate the difficulty of disentangling overlapping discourses of feminism, nationalism and militarism, and the way contemporary feminist theory has grappled with this relationship. Examining this relationship in a Greek context demonstrates clearly the importance of national historical differences in determining the trajectory of feminist thought and discourse in general, and in relation to women, gender, war, and peace, in particular. Here the vastly different experiences of imperialism, occupation, and colonisation come to the fore as central determinants in the shaping of feminist discourses and identities.

The second chapter discusses dominant constructions of Greek womanhood in pre-revolutionary Greece as gleaned through folk songs and within women's literature of the period. It traces a shift in the expression of gender consciousness across genres, which coincided with the outbreak of the Revolution and the narratives of national sovereignty that it inspired. The consolidation of the Greek nation-state in the latter half of the nineteenth century provided a suitable habitat for the emergence of proto-feminist discourse amongst women of the new educated classes. The chapter examines the attempt of these feminists, led by the charismatic

figure of Kallirhoe Parren, to create a 'national feminism' or to ground feminist discontent in the myriad nation-centred narratives which defined the late nineteenth century. Parren found an opening in the political opportunity structure through a language and symbolism grounded in the Greek Independence movement itself, which drew deliberately and heavily on that of the French Revolution. It was within these narratives that Parren invoked the images of Bouboulina and Mado, and unearthed other obscured histories of female heroism, to legitimate the integration of women into the nation.

The interwar period (1920–36) saw the emergence of a more radical feminism, referred to in retrospect as the 'first wave', and is the subject of the third chapter. The interwar *movement*, in contrast to the small collective of the nineteenth century, was firmly located in the liberal tradition and utilised a language which revolved around equality, rights, and obligations. Interwar feminism emerged amid vigorous efforts to establish an industrial base in Greece and to shift the political institutions from an Ottoman/feudal framework to a liberal bourgeois order, a project of modernisation instigated and driven by the liberal politician Eleftherios Venizelos. Venizelist modernisation went hand in hand with his irredentist project of enlarging Greece through both war and diplomacy. Such powerful winds of change provided the climate for the (re)vitalisation of many other social, political, and cultural movements, including feminism. 35

The vibrant interwar context was also, however, a volatile and conflicting one, at both a local and global level. First-wave feminists in Greece witnessed and participated in the international pacifist movement whose momentum had advanced rapidly, following the barbarity of the Great War. Greek feminist involvement in international pacifism was almost a natural development as the feminist anti-war movement was one of the most important movements during the Great War, and the war veterans' movement against the Asia Minor expedition of the 1920s was one of the biggest pacifist left-wing movements in Europe. But as Sluga (2000: 495) notes, and as the history of Greek feminism also attests, the international arena has been an important site of activity for women eager both to create a feminine political space, as an alternative to the masculine space of nations, and to be incorporated into national imaginaries on an equal basis with men. The internationalist ethos of Greek interwar feminism, however, was at odds with the conservative nationalism powered by the Asia Minor disaster of 1922, a bungled attempt at Greek expansionism by a royalist government, which culminated in a large-scale population exchange and the introduction of Slavic minorities into the New Territories of Greece. These were unfavourable features of the interwar climate for Greek feminism, further complicated by tensions generated by unemployment, a growing labour movement, and the ascent of fascism. It is therefore not surprising that this historical juncture inspired a very different feminist symbolic order, one which did not draw on militarist images that had been meaningful to nineteenth-century feminism, but rejected them outright. 36

The dictatorship of General Ioannis Metaxas (1936–39) installed itself on 4 August 1936, effectively freezing the trend of modernisation spearheaded by Venizelos till the late 1970s. The dictatorship gave way to a tripartite occupation of Greece by the Axis powers, which in turn 37

created the circumstances for the regrouping of communist forces and the formation of the National Resistance movement led by EAM/Ethniko Apeleftherotiko Metopo (National Liberation Front) and its military wing, ELAS (Ellinikos Laikos Apeleftherotikos Stratos or People's Liberation Army of Greece). The generic name of the movement defied the scope of its ambition which was twofold: to expel the occupied forces from Greek soil and to establish national independence and, more importantly, to democratise national political culture to include traditionally marginalised groups. The Resistance mobilised great numbers of Greek women into all facets of its structure. It was not a feminist movement, but its mobilisational narratives were located within a framework of cultural and defensive nationalism, which held broad appeal, thus enabling the mobilisation of women and girls in terms deemed legitimate by the broader community. Chapter 4 complements Vervenioti's (1994) and Hart's (1990, 1992, 1996) studies of the impact of political participation on Greek women's subjectivity, by examining the specific experience of the relatively small number of women who entered the battle zone. The chapter examines the appeal of battlefield participation for women but also the parameters and limits of the new type of citizenship envisaged for women by EAM, as gleaned through their experiences in the traditionally male domain of combat.

The social order envisaged and to some degree enacted by the communist-led Resistance was short lived, as the growing pressure of the Cold War led Greece into civil conflict, shortly after 'liberation'. Indeed, it is commonly argued that the Cold War began in Greece. Existing tensions between partisans and conservatives from the outset of the Resistance, were further inflamed by Allied interventions whose new purpose was to undermine EAM's influence in Greece for fear that it would culminate in the loss of Greece to the Soviet bloc. While the effects of the backlash gained momentum after the Varkiza Treaty of 1945, full-scale civil conflict became a reality by 1946. The anti-EAM movement was organised around 'security' and incorporated the paramilitary forces, which formed during and for the Axis-occupation authorities as well as for the Government Army, which was reconstituted by the Great Powers. Partisan forces regrouped to form the Greek Democratic Army (Dimokratikos Stratos Elladas or DSE).

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During the Civil War (1946–49), the number of partisan women engaged in some aspect of warfare rose to an unprecedented 20 to 25 percent of total DSE forces, and this level of participation was maintained practically throughout the four-year conflict between the DSE and the Government Army (Kyvernitikos Stratos). Chapter 5 is divided into two parts: the first examines the basis of this marked increase in the number of female combatants in the partisan army, and the second focuses on shifting conceptions of Greek national identity as expressed through the symbol of the *adartissa*. The chapter will juxtapose partisan constructions of the *adartissa* on one hand, and countermovement constructions on the other. As Greek society entered a new phase of extreme polarity on the question of national identity, the once deified figure of the *adartissa*, the embodiment of Greek modernity during the Resistance, became a demonic figure, a symbol of national disorder. This chapter's division into two sections reflects

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the special richness of the Civil War as regards the relationship between gender and national identity, which is expressed in atypically explicit terms during this intense phase of conflict where the 'national goods' at stake were higher than ever before.

The Civil War ended in partisan defeat in 1949, and the scene was set for a long and protracted period of hounding and systemic persecution of those associated in any way with it. The symbolic end to this status quo was the legalisation of the Greek Communist Party, following the collapse of the colonels' junta in 1974. The new era of liberalisation was further consolidated in 1981 with the rise to power of the Pan-Hellenic Socialist Party (PASOK/ Panellinio Sosialistiko Komma), which made partial but important symbolic amends to this generation by reviving the Resistance legacy and restoring it to the record of national history. But the legacy of the Civil War lingers very strongly on both sides; the residual fear and caution, in conjunction with the passage of time, have conspired to obscure the history of the Greek Civil War—and this is doubly so for the history of partisan women. In recent years, however, a new scholarship of the period has emerged, which has introduced new and fresh analytical perspectives and which both reflects and encourages a new openness towards this history after decades of taboo, silence, and stigma. 40

It was only in 1974, with the collapse of the colonels' junta, that Resistance participants began to tell their stories. As the imposed silence lifted, long-concealed private archives of the Resistance and the Civil War surfaced, while memoirs, biographies, and tributes flourished and have gone some way towards redressing the imbalance. Much of the material in the fourth and fifth chapters of this book was only recently made available when the Archeia Syghronis Koinonikis Istorias/ASKI (Contemporary Social History Archives) was established in 1992,¹⁴ the single most important archival event in recent times for historians of twentieth-century Greece. 41

The final chapter (chapter 6) is set in the new era of democratisation, which dawned after the collapse of the final military dictatorship in 1974, an era referred to as the *metapolitiefsi* or 'regime change/transformation'.¹⁵ It was a period of transition defined by a historic shift in the post-war (im)balance of power between a defeated and ostracised left and a hegemonic right—an ethos of reconciliation, which led to the legislative elections of 1974 and the victory of the new centre-right party named 'New Democracy' (Nea Dimokratia) under Constantine Karamanlis. This period of left-wing resurgence coincided with the emergence of the 'second-wave' of feminism, which was far more politically and culturally heterogeneous than its predecessors, comprising multiple generations of women with vastly different experiences and perspectives on the appropriate course for feminism and the nature of equality. Chapter 6 investigates the link between the history of the 1940s and the defining discourses and internal conflicts of the post-junta feminist/women's movement, and as such returns to a central theme of the book that emphasises the importance of national specificities in shaping feminist discourses and identities. 42

Notes

Note 1: All translations and transliterations of Greek language sources throughout this book are the author's own.

Note 2: 'Protofeminism' is meant to denote the first organised protest against male domination and the redefinition of gender hierarchies. The Greek feminist collective in question began life in 1887, just prior to the era in which the terms *feminisme* and *feministe*, first coined in 1880s France, became popularized terms to describe the campaigns for women's emancipation in Europe. They were terms which Greek feminists, whose orientation was bourgeois European, utilized readily and with which they identified. For more on the genesis of 'feminism' in Europe, see Offen (2000).

Note 3: First-wave feminism is a term derived from a period of feminist activity during the nineteenth and early twentieth century in the United Kingdom and the United States, which focused on de jure (officially mandated) inequalities, primarily on gaining the right of women's suffrage. The term 'first wave' was coined retroactively after the term 'second-wave feminism' began to be used to describe a newer feminist movement that focused as much on fighting de facto (unofficial) inequalities as it did de jure inequalities.

Note 4: This literature is too vast to list here but some of the key texts include Yuval-Davis (1997); Blom, Hagemann, & Hall (2000); Parker, Russo, Sommer, & Yaeger (1992); Hall, Lewis, McClelland, & Rendall (Eds.) (1993).

Note 5: Some of the established studies of the last two decades include the essays in Veremis (Ed.) (1997); the essays in Epistimoniko Sinedrio (1994); Veremis (1990); and the essays in Blinkhorn and Veremis (Eds.) (1990).

Note 6: See for example the essays in Berkin, Carol, & Lovett (Eds.) (1980). This volume includes essays on women of the popular classes in revolutionary Paris; the relationship between women, class, and war in Nazi Germany; the legal status of women after the American Revolution; institutional changes for women of the people during the French Revolution; the question of political equality for women during the Chinese Communist Revolution; women in revolutionary Cuba; and women after the Italian Revolution. For essential reading on the gender politics of the French Revolution, see the essays in Melzer & Rabine (Eds.) (1992); Levy, Applewhite, & Johnson (Eds.) (1980); Godineau (1998); Levy & Applewhite (Eds.) (1990); Landes (1988); Scott (1996); Hesse (2001); Desan (2004); Hunt (1995); and Fraisse (1994). For studies in the history of the feminine form as allegory, see Agulhon (1981) and Warner (1985). Judith Stiehms edited volume, *Women and Men's Wars* (1983), includes essays on the outcomes of women's participation in national liberation wars which founded Zimbabwe and the Philippines. For an analysis of the gendered character of wartime discourse, which moves beyond an examination of women's status before, during, and after the Second World War, see Higonet, Jensen, Michel, & Weitz (Eds.) (1987). For an excellent study of the *milicianas* during the Spanish Civil War, see Nash (1989, 1993), and for Nicaragua, see De Volo (2001) and Molyneaux (1985). For the partisan women of Vichy France, see Schwartz (1989); and, finally, for women's armed involvement in the communist revolutions of Yugoslavia, Czechoslovakia, and North Vietnam, see the 1981 Special Edition, 'Women in Communist Systems', *Studies in Comparative Communism*, 14 (2–3).

Note 7: The incidence of partisan women in combat units increased to 25 percent during the Greek Civil War.

Note 8: In Tennent, Pecchio, & Humphreys (1826).

Note 9: In her own lifetime, Bouboulina was declared an enemy of the new state for her close alliances with the popular heroes of the Revolution, rather than with the pre-war elites who resumed power in post-war Greece in their incarnation as the new Greek ruling class. She was, thus, more of a popular heroine in spite of her privileged origins in the merchant classes of Hydra and Spetses.

Note 10: See Schor (1992: 45) for an analysis of French fiction in post-revolutionary France.

Note 11: See Lerner (1971) for the distinction she makes between women's rights feminism and women's emancipation—the former characterized by the struggle to elevate women's legal and civil status, the latter more inclusive of wide-ranging social, psychological, and political change. In the case of Greece, this corresponds with the 'first' and 'second' waves of feminism respectively.

Note 12: For Hatzivasilieou's (and the Greek Communist Party's) attitude to feminism and the women's movement, see Hatzivasileiou (1946).

Note 13: See chapter 4, page 163.

Note 14: Its main asset is the complete archive of EAM (the National Liberation Front), including the archives of the 'Mountain Government', which administered the liberated regions of Greece. Other sources include newspapers, magazines, and the archives of EDA (Eniaia Dimokratiki Aristera), the main left-wing political party (until 1969).

Note 15: The term *metapolitefsi* was deemed more appropriate than 'reconciliation', for example, because of its neutral connotations—at a time marked by uncertainty and a lack of consensus—on the type of regime which would follow dictatorship and the appropriate way in which to deal with the authoritarian past.