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One country, two homelands? 17N's perception of national identity and independence and the reaction of the Greek political system

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Citation

Voulgaropoulos, C. (2021). *One country, two homelands? 17N's perception of national identity and independence and the reaction of the Greek political system.*

Version: Not Applicable (or Unknown)

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**One country, two homelands? 17N's perception of national
identity and independence and the reaction of the Greek political
system**

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MA History

Politics, Culture and National Identities 1789 to the Present

Thesis Supervisor: Professor Dr. Joost Augusteijn, Senior University

Lecturer

Amount of EC Thesis: 20

Date: 30/11/2021

Acknowledgments

'Keep Ithaca always in your mind.

Arriving there is what you're destined for'.

C.P. Kavafis 'Ithaca', 1910.

'A sign that is time

for the dreams to take revenge'

O. Elytis 'Axion Esti – Profitikon', 1959.

Arriving at a destination has the feeling of completing a journey. The emotions that accompany it are many and mixed. What remains, is the hard work one did in order to reach the destination and the people who stood by him on this journey of fulfilling his dreams. So, I want to express my gratitude to my supervisor Prof. Dr. Joost Augusteijn. Without his remarks and notes this paper would not have been completed. Moreover, I would like to thank Giorgos Petropoulos, director of political reportage in the newspaper 'Efimerida ton Sintakton (ESFYN)', who provided me with the archive of newspaper 'Eleftherotypia'. In addition, I would like to thank my girlfriend for her emotional support, patience and understanding. Finally, I would like to thank the two people to whom I owe everything, and mainly who I am, my father Nikos and my mother Dimitria. Without their love and support, nothing would have been achieved.

*Thesis word count (excl. Title page, Acknowledgments, Table of Contents, Primary Sources, footnotes and Bibliography):17.948

Table of Contents

1. Introduction	4
1.1 Methodology.....	4
1.2 National Identity.....	8
1.3 The communist approach	10
2. National identity: The case of Greece	13
2.1 The ‘continuation’ of <i>Hellenism</i>	13
2.2 The modern Greek national identity.....	15
2.3 Critical spots in the modern Greek history.....	17
2.4 Greek communists and the foreign intervention in Greece	21
3. The Greek political parliamentary parties of the Metapolitefsi	23
3.1 Konstantinos Karamanlis and Nea Dimokratia	23
3.2 Andreas Papandreou and PASOK.....	26
3.3 The two communist parties	28
4. The “17 November” perception of national identity and independence	32
4.1 The beginning of the end.....	32
4.2 The execution of Richard Welch and the Cyprus issue.....	33
4.3 The ‘war’ against the Americans.....	36
4.4 The escalation of violence	41
4.5 The upgrade of the armament.....	46
4.6 A turn to nationalism?	47
4.7 The last - bloody - dance	53
5. Conclusions	58
Primary sources	62
Bibliography	65

1. Introduction

Identities in general are a subject that is researched through the years by various scientific fields. In the historical sciences one important matter is the question about nations and, by extension, national identity: Are nations a modern construction or something that has always existed? Different scholars studying nations and national identities argue that there is not a common acceptable term for what a nation is or what it constitutes.

What can be noticed is how various perceptions regarding nations and national identity created acts of violence, either between states or among people of the same state. Many wars begun because of differences regarding national borders or even due to arguments political powers inside a nation-state had concerning their different perceptions about its governance. Nation-states were established after the French Revolution (1789), which also brought to the fore the masses and their politicisation. People had the opportunity to actively participate in the political life after centuries of being governed by kings and emperors. Different political theories surfaced such as liberalism, socialism, communism and other, providing masses with a different perspective of the way a nation-state could be governed. Inevitably, the participation of people in the political life and the different perceptions they had adopted about several matters created in many cases tensions which, most of the times, were followed by violent acts. From wars or uprising a nation group engaged in to obtain its national and political freedom, to acts of violence on behalf of the state against the people or the opposite, the matter of political violence exists throughout the ages.

1.1 Methodology

17N was an urban guerrilla far-left armed organisation, considered by the Greek state as terrorists, which acted in Greece for a period of 27 years, from 1975 to 2002. They committed numerous attacks against Greek politicians and businessmen, U.S.A.'s diplomats, officials and soldiers, Turkish diplomats and one against an officer of the British army. Moreover, they launched rocket attacks, planted bombs and committed bank robberies. 17N with its actions created tensions in the Greek political system as

well as in the external affairs of Greece. For instance, U.S.A. characterised them as ‘the most dangerous active terrorist organisation in Europe’ in 1990 and in 2000.¹

A prominent researcher of the organisation’s actions is George Kassimeris. Kassimeris wrote many articles and books investigating 17N. Moreover, Greek journalists also researched the organisation’s actions and the influence they had on the political life of Greece. Regarding 17N’s ‘identity’, Kassimeris noted among other things that the organisation was ‘fanatically communistic and in the same time nationalistic’.² Another researcher of the organisation, Georgios Karyotis, characterised them as ‘left-wing terrorists’³, while John M. Nomikos talked about ‘leftist terrorism’.⁴ Dora Bakoyiannis, whose husband Pavlos, member of the Greek Parliament, was killed by 17N in 1991, characterised the organisation as ‘an extreme, dogmatic organisation with hard-line Marxist characteristics’.⁵ Konstandopoulos and Modis claimed that 17N was an ‘urban guerrilla group emerged from leftist movements’.⁶ Eleni Gorogosi stated that ‘around 1986-87 [...] the organisation’s ideology developed and was oriented towards more nationalistic matters’⁷, while Toula Vlahou wrote that 17N ‘represents the violent fringe of a left-wing nationalism’.⁸ Finally, Floros and Newsome stated that 17N ‘was an urban left-wing and nationalist guerrilla group’.⁹ So, it is clear that 17N has been characterised as terrorists who were inspired by the Marxist ideology. What is noticeable though is

¹ Karyotis, Georgios. “Securitization of Greek Terrorism and Arrest of the ‘Revolutionary Organization November 17’.” *Cooperation and Conflict* 42, no. 3 (September 2007): 271–93. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0010836707079932>.

² Kassimeris, George. *Europe’s last red terrorists. The Revolutionary Organization 17 November*. Athens, Kastaniotis, 2002, p.14

³ Karyotis, Georgios, op.cit.

⁴ Nomikos, John M. “Terrorism, Media, and Intelligence in Greece: Capturing the 17 November Group.” *International Journal of Intelligence and Counterintelligence* 20, no. 1 (2007): 65–78. <https://doi.org/10.1080/08850600600888896>.

⁵ Bakoyannis, Dora. “Terrorism in Greece: Revisiting an Issue.” *Mediterranean Quarterly* 12, no. 3 (2001): 1–7. <https://doi.org/10.1215/10474552-12-3-1>. Dora Bakoyannis is a member of the Greek parliament elected with the New Democracy Party.

⁶ Konstandopoulos, Athanasios G, and Theodore Modis. “Urban Guerrilla Activities in Greece.” *Technological Forecasting & Social Change* 72, no. 1 (2005): 49–58. [https://doi.org/10.1016/S0040-1625\(03\)00063-5](https://doi.org/10.1016/S0040-1625(03)00063-5).

⁷ Gogorosi, Eleni. “Metaphor in the Discourse of Revolutionary Organisation November 17: Analysis Based on a Corpus of the Organisations Communiqués.” Order No. 11003734, Lancaster University (United Kingdom), 2009. <https://login.ezproxy.leidenuniv.nl/login?url=https://www.proquest.com/dissertations-theses/metaphor-discourse-revolutionary-organisation/docview/2124311195/se-2?accountid=12045>.

⁸ Vlahou, Toula, Jeffrey Barholet, and Amanda Bernard. “A Blind Eye to Terror?(November 17 Revolutionary Organization's Crime).” *Newsweek (International, Atlantic Edition)*, 2000, 43.

⁹ Floros, Christos, and Bruce Newsome. “Building Counter-Terrorism Capacity Across Borders: Lessons from the Defeat of “Revolutionary Organization November 17th”.” *Journal of Security Sector Management* 6.2 (2008): 1-15.

that the organisation has also been accused by different parts of the society of being ‘nationalistic’ and turning to nationalism, when its attacks against Turkish targets took place. Moreover, as it was shown some academics and journalists claimed the very same thing. Such category is strange for an organisation inspired by the Marxist-Leninist theory, as the founders of the communist theory have not been characterised as nationalists.

Prompted by the abstract idea of identity in conjunction with the specific concept of political violence, this paper attempts to examine, at first, the validity of this allegation concerning nationalism, and subsequently identify which perception of national identity and independence the Revolutionary Organisation 17 November had. Moreover, the Greek political system’s reaction to the organisation’s acts alongside with their perception of national identity and independence is also to be examined. This is crucial, as in theory they both addressed the same audience, the Greek people. Greek politics accused the organisation of being anti-national and of harming the country’s national interests, while 17N blamed the Greek political system of exactly the same, which is that with their policy they did not serve the national interest of the country but the interest of the bourgeoisie, to which they belonged. Establishing the perception of the national identity and independence of the various Greek political parties will demonstrate whether the characterisation of 17N as nationalistic holds up.

In order to investigate the matter, a critical analysis of the organisation’s published proclamations and of their strikes towards non-Greek targets will be made. Before 17N’s arrest in 2002, the only known things about the organisation’s thinking were their proclamations, a fact that led the Greek press to give them the nickname ‘phantom organisation’. After 2002, the trial’s records alongside with the books of the ‘operational leader’ of the organisation, Dimitris Koufontinas, were published.¹⁰ However, the validity of the justification after a long period of time one could provide when looking back in the past is questionable. Thus, mainly their proclamations will be examined, as they are considered to be more valid since they had been written when the incidents happened. The limitation in these sources is the fact that they present a one-sided view of things, and that it is not possible to determine who exactly out of 17N’s members wrote them. Moreover, it is unknown whether the context of

¹⁰ Dimitris Koufontinas published two books while being in jail serving a 13 life sentence. The one was titled “*I was born 17 November*” published on 2019, while the other was titled “*The geopolitics of 17N*”, published on 2020.

the proclamations expressed equally all of the members' views or not. Also, it should be noted that these proclamations functioned not only as texts of taking responsibility but also as propaganda texts of the organisation, in order to convince the public, which in their case was the Greek people. Thus, it is possible that in some cases they expressed views they may not have believed so much, but were driven by propaganda reasons and the goal to convince the public of their purposes.

Regarding the attempt to examine the Greek political parties' perception of national identity and independence as well as their reactions to 17N's actions and proclamations, their press releases and statements as published in the newspapers 'Eleftherotypia' and 'Rizospastis' will be used, alongside with their founding declarations or ideas that were expressed in their conferences.¹¹ It is important to note that the research was conducted during the Covid-19 pandemic and thus the physical access to places where more sources could be found, such as party archives, was limited. Thus, the research was conducted mainly online and the only sources for the reactions of the parties are the files of Eleftherotypia and the online edition of the newspaper Rizospastis (until 1983). In the mentioned sources, it was not possible to find reactions of the parties to all strikes 17N committed against non-Greek targets.

In order to identify the particular concept of national identity of 17N's and the political parties', the theoretical context around national identity will be discussed first.

¹¹ Eleftherotypia was a newspaper published in Greece from 1975 until 2003. Its political references were close to the political party of PASOK and in general of the broader left side of the political spectrum. Many of the 17N's proclamations had been sent first in this specific newspaper.

1.2 National Identity

In this part of the introduction, the three main schools of thought about national identities and independence are presented. Most people and groups adopt a national identity and the debate regarding this matter is not new. As far back as the end of the 18th century and the French Revolution (1789), people went from being subjects of a king ‘by the grace of God’, to becoming citizens of a state and claiming rights they never had before. One could claim that it was then, when a new identity gradually came into existence, the national identity.

Benedict Anderson in his well-known book ‘Imagined Communities’ asseverates that nation is an imagined political community.¹² He also notes that:

[...] the convergence of capitalism and print technology on the fatal diversity of human language created the possibility of a new form of imagined community, which in its basic morphology set the stage for the modern nation.¹³

Thus, according to Anderson the (modern) nation is imagined and man-made. Since these attributes apply to the nation itself as a term, the same remain in effect, by extension, when it comes to national identity. However, is this actually true? Was national identity a concept suddenly created, or did it pre-exist among people and simply emerged when nation-states were created? In general, there are three schools of thought regarding this controversial matter, the so-called *primordialists*, the *modernists* and the *ethnosymbolists*.¹⁴

The so-called Primordialists claim that nation is something eternal and its roots are lost in time. As Hanoli notes primordialists are: ‘a group of theorists who walks under German Romantics steps Herder, Fichte, Kant, Schiller and others who defend the idea that nations are essential, eternal entities [...]’.¹⁵ Modernists, on the other hand, support that nations are constructed and are a result of the modern world. As A. Smith writes: ‘the nation is a purely modern phenomenon, a product of strictly

¹² Anderson, Benedict. *Imagined Communities, Reflections on the origin and Spread of Nationalism*. Verso, London, New York, U.K., U.S.A., 2006, p. 6.

¹³ *Ibid*, p.46.

¹⁴ There are also and many other schools of thought influenced by the three major mentioned here, for instance the feminist approach or the post-colonial theory.

¹⁵ Hanoli, Votim. “*National Identity and the “Great Divide” between Two Theories. Where Does the Albanian National Identity Take Part.*” (2015).

modern developments like capitalism, bureaucracy and secular utilitarianism [...] Nations and nationalism [...] can be dated with some precision to the latter half of the eighteenth century [...]'.¹⁶ Finally, Ethnosymbolism recognises that nations are a modern structure but also acknowledges how vital myths, symbols and traditions had been during the formation of the nations. Thus, according to Özkirimli: 'Ethnosymbolism emerges from the theoretical critique of modernism [...]the term refers to an approach which emphasises the role of myths, symbols, memories, values and traditions in the formation, persistence and change of ethnicity and nationalism'.¹⁷

In the 1980's, the research concerning the matter of nations and nationalism flourished. New theories developed such as the one on 'invented traditions' Hobsbawm and Ranger posited. According to them:

invented tradition' is taken to mean a set of practices , normally governed by overtly or tacitly accepted rules and of a ritual or symbolic nature , which seek to inculcate certain values and norms of behaviour by repetition , which automatically implies continuity with the past . In fact, where possible, they normally attempt to establish continuity with a suitable historic past.¹⁸

Thus, the two writers believe that modern nation-states are built on the base of invented traditions, a fact which sometimes can create tensions among countries. It is important to subsequently highlight that in the framework of this paper, the ethnosymbolic approach is believed to be the most valid as it is believed that the role that myths, symbols and traditions played in the creation of the modern nations cannot be left out of consideration. Thus, although nations are modern constructions, they do have roots in the past which helped them emerge as entities in the 18th century. Moreover, the reason why nations emerged during those years and not earlier or later, has to do with the development of capitalism and the effort of the bourgeoisie to obtain political power and to distribute its wealth in a way that the aforementioned socio-economic and political system would work properly.

¹⁶ Smith D., Anthony. *The Ethnic Origins of Nations*. Blackwell publishing. 1986, p.8.

¹⁷ Özkirimli, Umut. *Theories of Nationalism. A Critical Introduction*, Palgrave Macmillan, London, 2010, p.143.

¹⁸ Hobsbawm, Eric, and Terence Ranger, eds. *The Invention of Tradition*. Canto Classics. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012. doi:10.1017/CBO9781107295636.

1.3 The communist approach

Now that the three main school of thoughts regarding nations (and that consequently apply to the matter of national identity) have been expressed, and given that one of the main purposes of this paper is to demonstrate the perception that the far-left organisation 17N had adopted concerning national identity and independence, what Marx and Engels, by whom the organisation was highly influenced, have posited on the topic of nation is worth mentioning. Throughout the years 17N in their published proclamations adopted a rhetoric clearly influenced by Marxist theory. In addition, after an attack they committed they published a picture with the flag of the organisation, surrounded by the photos of people influenced them, with Marx photo in the frame. Thus, in the following lines there will be an attempt to briefly project the communist approach regarding nations and national identities.

Although Marx and Engels did not extensively examine the issue, it is crucial to mention the well-known excerpt from the ‘Communist Manifesto’, since it does approach the theory of nation:

The working men have no country. We cannot take from them what they have not got. Since the proletariat must first of all acquire political supremacy, must rise to be the leading class of the nation, must constitute itself the nation, it is, so far, itself national, though not in the bourgeois sense of the word. National differences and antagonisms between peoples are daily more and more vanishing [...] the supremacy of the proletariat will cause them to vanish still faster.¹⁹

As it can be extracted from the above, Marx and Engels accepted the existence of nations. Although they did not define the term ‘nation’ they did believe it exists and that the proletariat, the working class, has to rise as the leading class and constitute itself a nation.²⁰ In this way, if everything they supported that has to happen applied to

¹⁹ Marx, Karl, and Friedrich Engels. *The Communist Manifesto*. [Waiheke Island]: The Floating Press, 2008. “<https://search-ebSCOhost-com.ezproxy.leidenuniv.nl/login.aspx?direct=true&db=e00xww&AN=313563&site=ehost-live>”, p.40.

²⁰ As Antonis Liakos notes: ‘Marx and Engels did not develop a theory about the nation, because they were not interested in the nation. What they both analyzed was the tidal wave of capitalism and the industrial revolution that was transforming the world before their eyes’. (translated

all nation-states worldwide, nations would, theoretically, stop existing. The two men thought about nation in terms of their era. For them nation-states were created in order to serve better the purposes of the bourgeoisie. Thus, one can say that even if they did not define what a nation is, they examined the matter in depth and concluded that nations were a ‘tool’ in the hands of the upper class.

Marx and Engels theory inspired plenty of people in the ensuing years and in fact provided the theoretical context for the first revolution of the 20th century, the Russian one. Few years before this revolution broke out, one of its leaders, Vladimir Ilyich Lenin, wrote in 1914 ‘The Right of Nations to Self-Determination’ giving his own view on the matter of nation-states. By examining the matter of nations and of self-determination, Lenin transformed the national demand into a social one, considered it as a class one and for this reason he supported it.²¹ Specifically, Lenin believed that a modern nation-state would create the context in which the class differences would escalate and the socialistic revolution would become sooner or later a reality. By transforming the national demand into a social one, Lenin supported that the demand of the self-determination of the nations is political and has to do with the effort of one class to obtain political power. If the class in question is the bourgeoisie, then the proletarians first have to support the demand for national independence and after that fight for the socialistic transformation of the society by taking advantage of the social and economic contradictions that the capitalist system creates. Thus, according to Lenin, nation-states would serve better the purpose of the revolution and that is why all the national demands for the creation of nation-states had to be supported by the proletarians.²²

As it is evidenced, Marxists regarded nations as a very important ‘weapon’ for capitalism in order to spread its purposes. In addition, as Lenin posited ‘bourgeois nationalism of any oppressed nation has a general democratic content that is directed against oppression, and it is this content that we unconditionally support’.²³ That means that for Marxists, the national consciousness had to obey class-consciousness

from Greek by the author of this paper). Liakos, Antonis. *How those who wanted to change the world thought of the nation*, (in Greek). Polis, Athens, 2005, p.13.

²¹ Vladimir Ilyich Lenin, “*The Right of Nations to Self-Determination*”, February-May 1914, pp.409-414. Can be found online: <https://www.marxists.org/archive/lenin/works/1914/self-det/>

²² Vladimir Ilyich Lenin, “*The Right of Nations to Self-Determination*”, February-May 1914,. Can be found online: <https://www.marxists.org/archive/lenin/works/1914/self-det/>

²³ *Ibid.*

in a way that would serve what is supported in the well-known excerpt ‘Proletarier aller Länder vereinigt Euch’.²⁴

The historical experience, though, showed that the differences between nations in the Soviet Union were very strong. For this reason, violent methods were applied so as to unify these nations under the Soviet leadership. Those differences were also visible in the collapse of the Soviet Union (which also influenced 17N in an ideological level as after it acted more against Turkish targets) when every socialistic democracy demanded its self-determination, while projecting its special national characteristics. Similar phenomena were observed in the whole so-called Eastern Bloc (e.g. Yugoslavia, Czechoslovakia), proving that the Marxist view, according to which proletariats of every country should unify and confront the bourgeoisie, did not manage to persuade the working class.

Having examined in general the main schools of thought regarding national identities, it is time to draw the attention to Greece’s case as far as nation and national identity are concerned.

²⁴ In English, “Workers of all lands, unite”. Marx, Karl, and Friedrich Engels. The Communist Manifesto. [Waiheke Island]: The Floating Press, 2008 <https://search-ebSCOhost-com.ezproxy.leidenuniv.nl/login.aspx?direct=true&db=e000xww&AN=313563&site=ehost-live>.

2. National identity: The case of Greece

2.1 The 'continuation' of *Hellenism*

The matter of Greek national identity is no less complicated than the complicated nature of identities described above. The prevailing view in Greece is the opinion which Konstantinos Paparrigopoulos posited in his book 'History of the Greek Nation' published in late 19th century, and has to do with the theory of the 'continuation' of the Greek nation from ancient times until now, while considering the Byzantine Empire as the connecting link between antiquity and the modern era.

In Greece, modern national identity is based on the aforementioned view, and the majority of modern Greeks strongly believe that they are -at least culturally- direct descendants of the Ancient Greeks; they live in the same geographical area in which the ancient Greek civilisation thrived, they speak the same language, at least at the core of it, and sometimes they even have the same names as the Ancient Greeks.²⁵ All of the above redounded to making the phenomenon of the Greek national identity most complex. It gets even more convoluted if we also take into account one more aspect when investigating the matter and that aspect is the influence of the Greek Orthodox Church.

Understandably, it seems difficult for someone who is not familiar with modern Greek culture to understand how there can be a connection between the ancient past and the modern Greece when it comes to religion and identity; Ancient Greeks were pagans while modern Greeks are, in their majority, Christian Orthodox.²⁶ But what exists in the core of the modern Greek identity is a combination of both. Proud of their ancient past, modern Greeks combine it with the Christian Orthodox dogma. This combination becomes clear when examining the curriculum of Greek schools, as Education is considered to be one of the main factors a state uses in order to formulate

²⁵ A good example about the linguistic connection between ancient and modern Greek is the one that Zervas mentions in his book: "[...] the common Ancient Greek word for "not" [...] is *Ouden*. In Modern Greek *Ou* is dropped almost entirely and *Den* is used exclusively to mean "not" [...]" Zervas G. Theodore "The making of a Modern Greek identity: Education, Nationalism, and the teaching of a Greek national past", U.S.A., East European monographs distributed by Columbia University Press, 2012, p.13.

²⁶ In a poll published on 2015 in the newspaper "To Vima" the percentage of the Greeks feeling Christian Orthodox was 81,4%, while up to seven out of ten, officially state their faith to God. Newspaper "To Vima", 11 April 2015, (in Greek). <https://www.tovima.gr/2015/04/10/society/dimoskopisi-kapa-research-xristiano-i-orthodoksoi-alla-mia-fora-ton-xrono/>. The link was visited on 13/10/2021.

the consciousness of its citizens. In Greek schools, there is a compulsory lesson regarding religion education which is already taught from the early classes and is mainly focused on the Christian Orthodox dogma. At the same time, a most important lesson in the curriculum is History, the teaching of which constitutes of plenty units regarding the Ancient Greek past. Parallel to this, children also annually celebrate the two major National Holidays, the 28th of October and 25th of March by doing parades with special school uniforms.²⁷ The latter, is not only a National celebration but also one of the biggest religious celebrations of the Orthodox Church, the ‘Annunciation of the Theotokos’. It is clear that the religious and the national element coexist with the pride an ordinary Modern Greek feels of his ancient ancestors, as he has been taught to do so. Another example of this coexistence is that everywhere in Greece one can see many Orthodox churches while at the same time statues of Ancient Greek philosophers or streets named with a name of something that has to do with ancient Greece, e.g. person, place, can be found everywhere. By extension, this combination comprises a very distinguishing feature of the modern national Greek identity.²⁸

The commonly supported sequence ‘Ancient Greece-Byzantine Empire-Modern Greece’, which indicates the continuation of *Hellenism* from the ancient years until nowadays, is based -among other things- on combining these three eras in every way possible. Byzantine Empire is the key in this connection and that also explains why it is thoroughly mentioned in Greek history and taught in Greek schools.²⁹ Were we to apply Hobsbawm’s and Ranger’s theories, we would probably characterise all of the above as ‘invented traditions’ [see 1.2.]

On the other hand, each religion, history and language are traits which make people feel they have a common identity and in that way differentiate themselves from other people with a different religion, history and language. In fact, this differentiation is sometimes the element which defines our personal theory about who

²⁷ On the 28th of October 1940, fascist Italy declared the war in Greece. The denial of Greek people to surrender to the Italians and the “No” that was replied to the demand of the surrender is celebrated as a National Holiday with military and student parades every year. The 25th of March 1821 is considered to be the day in which the Greek Revolution for national independence began. This day is also celebrated annually.

²⁸ As Zervas notes: ‘[...]pagan celebrations were superseded by Christian holidays, pagan gods transformed into Christian saints and pagan prayers and rituals into Christian practices[...] for many Greeks accepting that the Church has links to paganism not only better connects the Modern Greek to Ancient Greece, but also further strengthens the historicity of the Church[...]’ Zervas G. Theodore “The making of a Modern Greek identity: Education, Nationalism, and the teaching of a Greek national past”, U.S.A., East European monographs distributed by Columbia University Press, 2012, pp. 13-15.

²⁹ *Ibid*, p.33.

we are and who others are. For instance, it is unclear if a villager during the Ottoman rule of the Balkans realised that he had a national consciousness, but he certainly conceived that he spoke Greek and not Turkish, that he was Christian and not Muslim and, maybe by listening to the narratives of his ancestors, that he indeed had a connection with the Greek past. So, he was actually able to perceive himself as part of a specific whole, different from any other.³⁰

2.2 The modern Greek national identity

It was no later than the middle of the eighteenth century that the modern Greek national identity emerged. And it emerged from the printed forms of the books of Greek classics made available in Europe. According to Benedict Anderson:

In the last quarter of the century, this ‘past’ became increasingly accessible to a small number of young Greek-speaking Christian intellectuals, most of whom had studied or travelled outside the confines of the Ottoman Empire. Exalted by the philhellenism at the centres of Western European civilisation, they undertook the ‘de-barbarising’ of the modern Greeks, i.e., their transformation into beings worthy of Pericles and Socrates.³¹

The historical link between the present and the ancient past is critical when discussing the formation of the Modern Greek national identity and has also determined the foreign politics of the Greek nation-state until 1922, when the Greek Army was defeated in the Minor Asia military campaign resulting in the end of this policy.³² National Greek identity was constructed at least from 1830 to 1922 around the policy of the so-called ‘Great Idea’ (*Megali Idea*) which was the idea of the integration of the Greek Christian Orthodox populations who lived in areas outside the borders of the

³⁰ Zervas G. Theodore op. cit., p. 49.

³¹ Anderson, Benedict. *Imagined Communities : Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*, Verso, 2006. *ProQuest Ebook Central*,
“<http://ebookcentral.proquest.com/lib/leidenuniv/detail.action?docID=5176951>”.

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³² “The ‘Great Idea’ [...] was [...] the dominant ideology of the emergent state”. Clogg, Richard. *A Concise History of Greece*. 3rd ed. Cambridge Concise Histories. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013. doi:10.1017/CBO9781139507516.

Greek state into an expanded one³³. With the Asia Minor Catastrophe (as it was named in Greek historiography) in the Greco-Turkish War of 1919-1922 this idea came to an end for various reasons.

Specifically, Greece after a decade of wars (the Balkan Wars 1912-1913) had to deal with a major issue that occurred as a result of the Minor Asia defeat and changed its population statistics; over one million Greeks that used to live in Smyrna, Aivali, Constantinople and elsewhere in Minor Asia became refugees in Greece. Moreover, after the Treaty of Lausanne (1923) and the Convention concerning the exchange of Greek and Turkish Populations, the historical presence of Greeks in the Minor Asia lands from the ancient years, ended except some small Greek communities in Constantinople.³⁴ The Greek state had to handle the arrival and restoration of the refugees and also cope with the shock the defeat provoked. In fact, the ‘Greek state almost 100 years after its independence was forced into a new beginning’.³⁵

It is essential to mention such historical events as the ‘Asia Minor Catastrophe’ since they contribute to the attempt of defining each nation’s national identity.³⁶ Accepting the belief that historical events do have an impact on national identity, and so as to better understand the perception that 17 November and the Greek political parties had about the matter of Greek national identity and independence, highlighting several other phases of the modern Greek history is needed as well. By doing so, the political and social context which 17N’s violence emerged from and the political parties’ ideological references are expected to be better comprehensible.

³³ Koulos, T. “Nationalism and the Lost Homeland: The Case of Greece.” *Nations and Nationalism* 27, no. 2 (2021): 482–96. <https://doi.org/10.1111/nana.12710>.

³⁴ The Convention determined among other things that: “As from the 1st May, 1923, there shall take place a compulsory exchange of Turkish nationals of the Greek Orthodox religion established in Turkish territory, and of Greek nationals of the Moslem religion established in Greek territory”. Source: Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Hellenic Republic, Treaty of Lausanne. <https://www.mfa.gr/to-ypourgeio/diethneis-symvaseis/semantikes-diethneis-suntheke-pou-aphorounten-ellada.html>

³⁵ Margaritis G., Azelis, A., Andriotis, N., Detorakis T., Fotiades, K., “*Issues of Modern Greek History*”, Athens, 2007, Organization for Educational Book Publications. This book is the official book being taught in the last class of secondary education in Greece.

³⁶ James H. Liu, Fouad Bou Zeineddine, Sarah Y. Choi, Robert Jiqi Zhang, Roosevelt Vilar, Dario Páez, *Living Historical Memory: Associations with National Identity, Social Dominance Orientation, and System Justification in 40 Countries*, *Journal of Applied Research in Memory and Cognition*, Volume 10, Issue 1, 2021, Pages 104-116, ISSN 2211-3681, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jarmac.2020.09.007>.
(<https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S2211368120300942>)

2.3 Critical spots in the modern Greek history

Historically, Greece's struggle for national independence and for the creation of a nation-state started in 1821. The geographical area, in which the Greek state is located nowadays, was under the rule of the Ottoman Empire from 1453, when the so-called 'Fall of Constantinople' took place. Driven by the French Revolution (1789) and the ideas of Enlightenment, Greeks decided to revolt against the Ottomans and claim their right to an independent Greek nation-state, which was finally created in 1830, as a result of the uprising.³⁷

Later, with the Balkan Wars of 1912-1913 Greece expanded its borders to the north and in the Aegean Sea; during 1919-1922 in the Greco-Turkish war and the Treaty of Lausanne (1923) that followed, the boundaries of Greece and Turkey were delimited. On 28th October 1940, fascist Italy declared war on Greece. The Greek army fought in Albania against Italians and prevailed. However, after a few months on April 6, 1941, Nazi Germany invaded and the Axis occupation of Greece started and lasted for three years, until 1944.³⁸ During the occupation the National Resistance was developed mainly in the mountains of Greece³⁹. One of the most important resistance organisations in occupied Greece was Ethniko Apeleftherotiko Metopo-E.A.M. (National Liberation Front) and its military arm Ellinikos Laikos Apeleftherotikos Stratos- E.L.A.S (Greek People's Liberation Army), mainly driven by the Greek Communist Party (K.K.E).⁴⁰

After Greece's liberation from the Axis occupation, the Greek Civil War was fought. The clash was between the Democratic Army of Greece (DSE), a continuation of E.L.A.S and the military branch of K.K.E., and the Greek Government's army (at

³⁷ Paschalis M. Kitromilides, The Enlightenment and the Greek cultural tradition, History of European Ideas, Volume 36, Issue 1, 2010, Pages 39-46, ISSN 0191-6599, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.histeuroideas.2009.06.001>, (<https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0191659909000461>).

³⁸ 'In the spring of 1941, the country was split between three occupiers: the Italians held central Greece, Epiros, the Peloponnese, and the Cyclades; the Germans held most of the remaining points of strategic importance, including central Macedonia (with its capital, Salonika) and Crete; the Bulgarians took over eastern Macedonia and western Thrace'. Mazower, Mark M.. *After the War Was Over: Reconstructing the Family, Nation, and State in Greece, 1943-1960*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2016. " <https://doi.org.ezproxy.leidenuniv.nl/10.1515/9781400884438> ", p.4.

³⁹ National Resistance was officially recognised by the Greek State on September 20, 1982. Source: Law 1285/1982, Government Gazette (Efimeris tis Kyverniseos) , 20 December 1982.

⁴⁰ Mazower, Mark M.. *After the War Was Over: Reconstructing the Family, Nation, and State in Greece, 1943-1960*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2016. " <https://doi.org.ezproxy.leidenuniv.nl/10.1515/9781400884438> ", p.4.

that time government was the coalition of right wing forces under the name ‘Inomeni Parataxis Ethnikofronon’ [United Patriotic Front] with Prime Minister Konstantinos Tsaldaris) which was supported by Great Britain and U.S.A.⁴¹ The fighting resulted in the defeat of D.S.E. During the war, the K.K.E. was outlawed.⁴² In the years that followed, KKE was considered an ‘internal enemy’ and communists were prosecuted, jailed or exiled.⁴³

On April 21, 1967, a military Junta was established in Greece. The Colonels who took the power justified their action by saying that it was an attempt to confront the ‘threat of communism’.⁴⁴ Specifically Colonel Georgios Papadopoulos ‘Prime Minister’ of the regime, in his first public speech said that: ‘Greeks, both historically and in terms of basic social perception and education, are never vulnerable to communism, because communism can have nothing in common with Greek Christianity which is the basis of the education of Greeks along the path of history. In the face of this situation, the National Army and the country’s armed forces [...], judged that they had to intervene to prevent the road to the precipice’.⁴⁵

On November 14, 1973, students occupied the National Technical University of Athens (*Polytechnio*) in order to protest against the Junta. The students’ main demand-slogan was ‘Psomi-Paideia-Eleftheria’ (Bread-Education-Liberty) while there were many other anti-NATO and anti-American ones, as it was strongly believed that the Greek Junta had been established by the intervention of the CIA and the USA.⁴⁶ Finally, the uprising was confronted with violence from the regime. On November 17,

⁴¹ James Edward Miller. 2009. *The United States and the Making of Modern Greece : History and Power, 1950-1974*. Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press. <https://search-ebSCOhost-com.ezproxy.leidenuniv.nl/login.aspx?direct=true&db=e000xww&AN=275239&site=ehost-live>., pp.18-21.

⁴² Source: Emergency Law 509/1947, Government Gazette (Efimeris tis Kyverniseos) , 27 December 1947.

⁴³ Samatas, Minas. “Greek McCarthyism: A Comparative Assessment of Greek Post-Civil War Repressive Anticommunism and the U.S. Truman-McCarthy Era.” *Journal of the Hellenic Diaspora* (1986), pp.5-75.

⁴⁴ Kassimeris, Christos. “Causes of the 1967 Greek Coup.” *Democracy and Security* 2, no. 1 (2006): 61–72. <https://doi.org/10.1080/17419160600623459>.

⁴⁵ The speech can be found online (in Greek) in the following link: <https://youtu.be/ahOJGXQJtQY>

⁴⁶ Miller states that: ‘The Americans, particularly the embassy, shared responsibility for the events of 1967. However, placing the Americans at the head of the list of culprits for the collective suicide of the Greek political establishment is to reverse the order of responsibility’. Miller also claims that the biggest part of the responsibility for the imposition of the military dictatorship was held by the generals and colonels of the Greek Army and mainly by Andreas Papandreou (later founder of PASOK political party) whose “mixture of unbridled ambition, irresponsible action, and explosive rhetoric created a situation that the Colonels exploited to overthrow a parliamentary system they despised”. James Edward Miller. Op.cit., p.134.

1973, a tank crashed the gates of the University and snipers fired upon the students leading to the end of the protest.⁴⁷

A few months later, on July 20, 1974, Turkey invaded Cyprus and occupied the north part of the island; Cyprus was under British rule until 1960, when with the Zurich-London agreements signed in 1959, it became an independent state.⁴⁸ Great Britain, Greece and Turkey signed also the Treaty of Guarantee; with this Treaty the aforementioned countries became 'guarantee powers' of the island:

Greece, Turkey and the United Kingdom [...] recognise and guarantee the independence, territorial integrity and security of the Republic of Cyprus, and also the state of affairs established by the Basic Articles of its Constitution. Greece, Turkey and the United Kingdom likewise undertake to prohibit, so far as concerns them, any activity aimed at promoting, directly or indirectly, either union of Cyprus with any other State or partition of the Island.⁴⁹

What is more, this Treaty gave the right of intervention to each one of the guarantee powers 'in order to restore the state of affairs established under the 1960 constitution'.⁵⁰ On July 15, 1974 a coup organised by the military regime of Greece in order to overthrow the President of the Republic of Cyprus, Archbishop Makarios III, and replace him with a person who would have the ultimate support of the Greek dictatorship, took place on the Island. 'The coup was perceived by Turkey as the first step towards the unification of Cyprus with Greece'⁵¹. The Turkish Prime Minister Bulent Ecevit decided to intervene wheeling the Treaty of Guarantee out. On July 20, 1974 Turkey invaded Cyprus and occupied the north part of the island.⁵² The Turkish

⁴⁷ The video of the tank crashing the entrance of the Polytechnio can be found in the following link: <https://youtu.be/EMGcdzTuwxM>.

⁴⁸ James Ker-Lindsay. 2011. *The Cyprus Problem : What Everyone Needs to Know*®. What Everyone Needs To Know®. Oxford: Oxford University Press. <https://search-ebSCOhost-com.ezproxy.leidenuniv.nl/login.aspx?direct=true&db=e000xww&AN=365850&site=ehost-live>, p.25.

⁴⁹Source: Treaty of Guarantee no.5475. Can be found online: https://peacemaker.un.org/sites/peacemaker.un.org/files/CY%20GR%20TR_600816_Treaty%20of%20Guarantee.pdf

⁵⁰ James Ker-Lindsay. 2011, op.cit., p. 27.

⁵¹ Katsoulas, Spyros. "The "Nixon Letter" to Ecevit: An Untold Story of the Eve of the Turkish Invasion of Cyprus in 1974." *International History Review* ahead-of-print, no. ahead-of-print (n.d.): 1–17. <https://doi.org/10.1080/07075332.2021.1935293>.

⁵² Turkey until nowadays occupies almost the 40% of Cyprus territory in the north.

invasion of Cyprus caused thousands of deaths, while almost 160.000 people were displaced and many are still missing.⁵³

Many Greeks and Greek-Cypriots then believed, and still do until nowadays, that the ‘Turkish invasion was part of a wider conspiracy that involved the government of the U.S.A. [...]’.⁵⁴ Especially Henry Kissinger was considered as someone who played a crucial role against Greece and Cyprus, and favoured Turkey.⁵⁵ On July 23, 1974, the military regime in Greece regime collapsed as it was held responsible for the situation by the Greek people.⁵⁶ As a consequence, the conservative politician Konstantinos Karamanlis, who had been residing in Paris since 1963, officially returned to Greece and founded a new political party, Nea Dimokratia (New Democracy). With the restoration of parliamentary democracy, and the era of *Metapolitefsi* (political transition) as it was called, Karamanlis, who prevailed over the other parties in the elections of 1974, legalised the K.K.E that participated as well.⁵⁷

As is going to be explained in the following chapters, the sequence of events described above is intimately related to 17N’s frame of reference. Nonetheless, a relation between 17N and one of the aforementioned events in the modern Greek history can be pointed out at this very stage; The actual name of the organisation, 17 November, is a reference to the occupation of *Polytechnieio* by students, on November 17, 1973, when the regime attacked violently to confront the uprising, signalling the end of the protest.⁵⁸

⁵³James Ker-Lindsay. 2011, op.cit., p. 47.

⁵⁴*Ibid*, p. 45.

⁵⁵ Antonopoulos, Athanasios. “Justified at Last? Kissinger's Cyprus Legacy, 1974-1976.” *International History Review* 41, no. 3 (2019): 471–92. <https://doi.org/10.1080/07075332.2018.1428210>.

⁵⁶ Kassimeris, George. “Junta by Another Name? The 1974 Metapolitefsi and the Greek Extra-Parliamentary Left.” *Journal of Contemporary History* 40, no. 4 (October 2005): 745–62. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0022009405056128>.

⁵⁷ Nea Dimokratia received 54.37% of the votes and elected 220 out of 300 MPs the Greek parliament has. The pre-elections campaign slogan of the party was “Karamanlis or tanks”.

⁵⁸ Kassimeris, George. *Europe’s last red terrorists. The Revolutionary Organization 17 November*. Athens, Kastaniotis, 2002, p.14 (translated from Greek by the author of this paper).

2.4 Greek communists and the foreign intervention in Greece

In the context described above and having in mind that 17N was inspired by Marxist theory it is important to take a brief look at the history of the communist movement in Greece after WWII, because this historical ‘womb’ was the one from which the organisation emerged.

During the Greek Civil War (1946-1949) government forces were supported militarily and financially first by the Great Britain and later on by the U.S.A.⁵⁹ After the end of the war, Greek governments did not deal mainly with the reconstruction of Greece after a decade of disaster (Greece suffered the Axis occupation of 1941-1944 before the civil war) but they cared more about the ‘interior enemy’, the communists. Greek governments were not alone in the effort to eliminate the ‘communist danger’ but they were helped by the Americans. As a consequence, the post-civil war Greek state was utterly dependent upon the decisions of the United States.⁶⁰

The defeated of the Greek Civil War, the communists, were deemed by the post-civil war state as having ‘anti-national’ beliefs and therefore the government established internment camps in which the communists were imprisoned.⁶¹ Many others became political refugees in the countries of the Eastern Bloc.⁶² A law passed in 1948 allowed the government to fire all civil servants who were deemed not law-abiding. This law -among others things- determined what the exact criteria were for one to be considered as not law-abiding.⁶³

⁵⁹ ‘By 1948, U.S. military and economic aid was all that stood between victory and defeat for the Greek government forces in the ongoing civil war’. Gerolymatos, André. 2016. *An International Civil War: Greece, 1943-1949*. New Haven: Yale University Press. <https://search-ebSCOhost-com.ezproxy.leidenuniv.nl/login.aspx?direct=true&db=e000xww&AN=1362411&site=ehost-live>.

⁶⁰ According to Clogg: During the second half of the decade the meagre resources of the enfeebled state were not devoted, as elsewhere in Europe, to repairing the ravages of war and occupation, but rather to the containment of ‘the enemy within’[...] Much of the American aid that in western Europe was being devoted to economic development was channelled into military objectives[...] But the government’s dependence for its political and military survival on external patronage effectively made Greece a client state of the United States. Clogg, Richard, op.cit., pp.142-143.

⁶¹ ‘In August 1950, there were 18,816 political prisoners, 3406 exiles, 4641 soldiers and officers detained in the camps of Makronisos island’. Voglis, Polymeris. “Political Prisoners in the Greek Civil War, 1945-50: Greece in Comparative Perspective.” *Journal of Contemporary History* 37, no. 4 (2002): 523–40. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/3180758>.

⁶² Karpozilos, Kostis. “The Defeated of the Greek Civil War: From Fighters to Political Refugees in the Cold War.” *Journal of Cold War Studies* 16, no. 3 (2014): 62-87. muse.jhu.edu/article/556076.

⁶³ ‘As not being law-abiding [...] is considered [...] the one who is driven by anti-national beliefs or propagandizes with any way in favor of the Communist Party’. Source: Emergency Law 516, *Government Gazette (Efimeris tis Kyverniseos)*, 6, 8 January 1948, article 3.

The persecution of the Greek communists lasted until the fall of the military regime (1967-1974) and the legalisation of the KKE by Karamanlis. It was also a common belief among the communists that in the general context of the Cold War, the U.S.A's guidance of Greek governments throughout the years from 1949 until at least 1974 was one of the main reasons for the persecutions they suffered. Despite the fact that the Greek Civil War had ended in 1949, the post-war situation seemed a continuation of the war with other means. In 1950, Greece sent troops to support the United Nations in the Korean War. This military alliance with the Western world was sealed with the inclusion of the country in NATO on February 18, 1952.⁶⁴ One year later, on October 12, 1953, Greece and the U.S.A. signed an agreement in which the right to use the Greek defence facilities in a NATO context was given to the U.S.A.⁶⁵

The polarisation of Greek political life and the division between communists, who had 'anti-national' ideology (communists themselves believed that during the Axis occupation they fought for national independence of Greece), and right-winged people, who had a 'national' one, lasted for many years intoxicating the effort for national reconciliation.

⁶⁴ '[...] On February 18, 1952 Greece was formally welcomed as one of NATO's first new members since the creation of the Alliance in 1949, along with Turkey'. Source: Official website of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization https://www.nato.int/cps/fr/natohq/declassified_181434.htm , retrieved online on 27/10/2021.

⁶⁵ Source: *American Foreign Policy, 1950-1955: Basic Documents*. Washington, U.S. Govt. Print. Off. "UNITED STATES USE OF DEFENSE FACILITIES: Agreement between the United States and the Kingdom of Greece, October 12, 1953" pp. 2188-2189. <https://heinonline.org/HOL/P?h=hein.forrel/amfopbd0002&i=540>

3. The Greek political parliamentary parties of the Metapolitefsi

In this chapter there will be an attempt to present the main Greek political parliamentary parties of the *Metapolitefsi* alongside with their perception about national identity and independence. Thus, what is going to be examined is the four major parties participated in the Greek parliament from 1975 to 2002, namely Nea Dimokratia, PASOK, KKE and KKE-interior (or as it was named later, Synaspismos). In the political life of the country, various political formations appeared from time to time, but they had a short life and mainly constituted political fragmentations from other larger parties. An exception among all of these was the KKE-interior party, which evolved into a coalition of forces of the Left, and is the ancestor of the current political party of Syriza. In order to research the perception of national identity and independence the aforementioned parties had, their founding declarations and/or the decisions that were made in their conferences are going to be examined, alongside with a brief historical review.

3.1 Konstantinos Karamanlis and Nea Dimokratia

K. Karamanlis (b.1907- d.1998) was a Greek politician who sealed the political life of the country for more than fifty years. He participated in many conservative governments from 1946 to 1956 before he established the National Radical Union (*Ethniki Rizospastiki Enosi* -ERE) in 1956. 'ERE' won the elections of 1956, 1958 and 1961.⁶⁶ In 1963 Karamanlis was in dispute with the Palace because the latter intervened in government's tasks, so he resigned as a Prime Minister and moved to Paris.⁶⁷ After the fall of the Junta, Karamanlis returned to Greece and found the party of Nea Dimokratia (New Democracy –ND.) ND, won the first elections of the new-born democracy while Karamanlis organised a referendum in which the issue of Monarchy was decided by the people. In this referendum 69% of Greeks who voted, decided that Greece should be a republic parliamentary democracy.⁶⁸

⁶⁶ Source: "Konstantinos G. Karamanlis Foundation". See the link: <https://ikk.gr/en/biography-political-career/>.

⁶⁷ Greece was a Kingdom from 1832 to 1974 with a short period of governing without a monarch between 1924-1935.

⁶⁸ Source: "Konstantinos G. Karamanlis Foundation".

Nea Dimokratia is a conservative party of the right, one of the leading parties in Greece from its foundation.⁶⁹ The ideology of the party can be displayed in its founding declaration on October 4, 1974.⁷⁰ In this text, written in the first person singular and signed by Karamanlis, one can detect a perception closer to the one primordialists have about nations. For him, ‘modern Greece adopted democracy as a system of government. And it was natural, since democracy was born in our place’.⁷¹ The presence of the belief that there is a historical continuity between ancient and modern Greece is evident, as there is no distinction made between the ancient Greek land, in which democracy was born, and modern Greece. The first person plural (our place) that is used confirms this very perception of continuity. Further down the text, one can read: ‘[Democracy] will require vigilance but also the mobilisation of the people in strong political formations, capable of protecting democracy, not only from communism and fascism, but also from the causes that caused its downfall in the past’.⁷² The political systems that were considered to be threatening to democracy are confronted as even in these lines. It could be alleged though that if we exclude the Greek civil war, Greece never came up against any actual ‘hazard of communism’. As is shown in chapter 2.4., Greek communists did not have the ability or the power to threaten the Greek democracy. Additionally, by supporting such things a few months after the collapse of the military regime, one might assume that ND attempted to convince -among others- two specific parts of the people to vote for the party, maybe the one which was sympathetic towards the Junta and certainly the one that was against communists.

Next, it is mentioned that ‘New Democracy is its political faction identifying the Nation with the People, the Homeland with its People; the State with its Citizens; National Independence with Popular Sovereignty; Progress with the Common Good; Civil Liberties with the Legal Order and Social Justice’.⁷³ One could support that by identifying nation with the people and national identity with popular sovereignty, ND perceived the party as the only exponent of the nation and of the homeland. Also, by claiming that they in particular adopt these specific values and thus can offer them to the people, ND implied that they were the only ones capable to do so. Reasonably,

⁶⁹ Britannica, T. Editors of Encyclopaedia. "New Democracy." *Encyclopedia Britannica*, January 28, 2015. <https://www.britannica.com/topic/New-Democracy>.

⁷⁰ Source: Official website of Nea Dimokratia, <https://nd.gr/idrytiki-diakiryxi> (in Greek).

⁷¹ *Ibid.*

⁷² *Ibid.*

⁷³ *Ibid.*

one can wonder, which is the ‘common good’? What does ‘social justice’ mean? Who exactly the term ‘people’ refers to, and does it include, for instance, both the workers and the owners of factories? Although these bold terms (homeland, social justice, common good) are not elaborated in the text, the next lines reveal a little more about their perception: ‘New Democracy is the system by which the few and the famous lead [...], representing instead of oppressing’.⁷⁴ So, the ‘few and famous’ are the ones who will guarantee and express all of the above despite the statement that ‘Every citizen of this country must become a worker together and an owner of economic prosperity’.⁷⁵ Finally, the opinion about national identity and independence is repeated:

With the modernisation of the Armed Forces, the independence of Greece will be secured. And it will be respected by all, without the need for other protectors except the collective organisations in which it will participate with its free will and in accordance with the established interests of Hellenism, which includes the fate of Cyprus [...] Regardless of its size Greece with its intellectual heritage, the radiance of Hellenism [...] can contribute politically, morally and culturally to the realisation of the idea of a united Europe.⁷⁶

As it is written, ND supported the accession of Greece in the EEC.⁷⁷ Judging from the above, ND’s perception of national identity is compatible with the primordialistic approach. Specifically, Karamanlis saw in Greece attributes the ancient one had, considering modern Greeks descendants of the Ancient. This becomes evident also in his statement that ‘the intellectual heritage and radiance of Hellenism’ can contribute to the common European good.

Moreover, Karamanlis’ attempt to build the new democracy after the fall of the Junta on the basis of the ancient Greeks’ footsteps, could be considered as an invented tradition. Regarding the matter of national independence, one can notice the presence of a militaristic perspective, as the demand for modernisation of the Armed Forces would guarantee for ND national sovereignty, together with the external help from the collective organisations (probably NATO and EEC) the country participated in ‘with

⁷⁴ *Ibid.*

⁷⁵ *Ibid.*

⁷⁶ *Ibid.*

⁷⁷ Greece accessed EEC on May 28, 1979.

its free will'. Finally, in Karamanlis' speech in the Greek Parliament on June 12, 1976, one can notice the 'commitment' to the West: 'Greece - and I will repeat it even though I am aware that I am going to bother PASOK's president- politically, defensively, financially, culturally, belongs to the West'.⁷⁸

3.2 Andreas Papandreou and PASOK

Andreas G. Papandreou (b.1919-d.1996) was Georgios Papandreou's son, the first Greek Prime Minister after the end of the German occupation of Greece.⁷⁹ G. Papandreou founded the political party of Enosis Kentrou (Centre Union) in which his son Andreas served as minister. On April 21, 1967 when the coup of the Colonels took place, Andreas Papandreou was imprisoned by the regime. However, few months later on December 1967, he was granted partial amnesty so he went abroad to Sweden.⁸⁰ In 1968 Andreas Papandreou founded in Stockholm the Pan-Hellenic Liberation Movement (PAK) which acted as a resistance organisation against the Junta. In 1970 Andreas Papandreou wrote the following text:

Dictatorship in Greece is not an internal issue. It is an occupation. And the occupation is American. The purpose of this occupation is the use of Greek territory to promote the strategic interests of the Pentagon in the Eastern Mediterranean and the financial interests of various international adventurers. Of course, the popular sovereignty in Greece, which goes hand in hand with national independence, would be a decisive obstacle in the realisation of the goals of the conquerors of our country.⁸¹

⁷⁸ K. Karamanlis speech in the Greek Parliament on 12/6/1976. The speech can be found in the following link: https://youtu.be/wi75X_IGWoo (in Greek, translated by the author of this paper).

⁷⁹ For a short depiction of Andreas Papandreou see: Kassimeris, G. (2019), Greek Everyman: Andreas Papandreou at 100. The Political Quarterly, 90: 304-309. <https://doi.org.ezproxy.leidenuniv.nl/10.1111/1467-923X.12685>

⁸⁰ Monteagle Stearns. 2021. *Gifted Greek: The Enigma of Andreas Papandreou*. ADST-DACOR Diplomats and Diplomacy Series. Lincoln: Potomac Books. <https://search-ebSCOhost-com.ezproxy.leidenuniv.nl/login.aspx?direct=true&db=nlebk&AN=2654512&site=ehost-live>, p.85.

⁸¹ Source: Simitis Foundation Repository, *Text of speech by Andreas G. Papandreou, leader of the PAK and representative of the EC. abroad at the political memorial service for George Papandreou in Toronto, Canada on November 8, 1970*, Folder 1970-1972 Panhellenic Liberation Movement – Announcements/ Item ID A1S2_PAKAna_F1T60/ <http://hdl.handle.net/11649/9527> (In Greek, translated by the author of this paper).

As one can observe, Papandreou perceived that dictatorship was provoked by the Americans. His words were very anti-American and in a sense close to Marxist analysis, as he considered that the financial factor was crucial. Regarding his perception of national identity, he thought of people and popular sovereignty as guards of the national independence. Papandreou also claimed that ‘Greece has become a military and industrial “satellite” of the United States’.⁸² As it can be evidenced from the above, for him Greece was a protectorate of the U.S.A. and only the Greek people could change this situation.

After the fall of the Junta, Papandreou returned to Greece where he created a new political movement based on the principles of PAK. On September 3, 1974 the PanHellenic Socialist Movement (PASOK) was founded. In its founding declaration, various matters were mentioned, such as the ‘Cyprus tragedy’, the intervention of the U.S.A. in the political issues of Greece, anti-NATO slogans and accusations against the economic oligarchy of Greece.⁸³ The main goals of PASOK were:

[...] a Greece that belongs to the Greeks [...] PASOK [...] fights for the following goals: NATIONAL INDEPENDENCE, POPULAR SOVEREIGNTY, SOCIAL LIBERATION, DEMOCRATIC PROCEDURE.

The struggle of the Panhellenic Socialist Movement for our national rebirth, for a socialist and democratic Greece, is based on the principle that our national independence is a precondition for the fulfilment of popular sovereignty, that popular sovereignty is a precondition for the realisation of social liberation. Social liberation is a precondition for the realisation of political democracy.⁸⁴

PASOK’s goals were very radical for the situation Greece was in at that period, as the military dictatorship had just ended. With a socialistic speech, sometimes ‘touching’ the limits of Marxism (‘to stop the exploitation of man by man’),⁸⁵ Papandreou tried to convince that part of the people who were against the Junta and had democratic and left beliefs. Moreover, he was totally against the Americans and their presence on the

⁸² Papandreou, Andreas, 2006, *Democracy in Front of the Firing Squad*, Athens, A.A. Livani, p. 507. The book was written during the military dictatorship in Greece and was published first on 1974. (translated in Greek by the author of this paper).

⁸³ Source: PASOK’s Founding Declaration, September 3, 1974. It can be found online through the link <http://pasok.gr/diakhyxh/> (in Greek).

⁸⁴ *Ibid.*

⁸⁵ *Ibid.*

military bases in Greece, while supporting the withdrawal of Greece from NATO ('of course Greece must withdraw from both the military and the political NATO. And of course all the bilateral agreements that have allowed the Pentagon to turn Greece into a stronghold for the promotion of its expansionist policy must be cancelled').⁸⁶ Were we to apply the Marxist theory in this program, Papandreou did not want the existing socio-political situation of his era to be continued. One would say that PASOK's founding declaration was very close to a non-revolutionary transition to socialism through parliamentary procedures. PASOK's president 'dreamed' the 'Third Way' for Greece, an independent and socialistic one away from any American or Soviet dependence.

PASOK's program did not manage to convince the voters in the first years of its existence. However, On October 18, 1981, PASOK prevailed over the other parties. With the slogan of 'Change', PASOK won 48,07% of the votes and had elected 172 MPs. It was a crucial change as a non-right wing party, managed to obtain power.⁸⁷ Despite the fact that Papandreou was elected as Prime Minister with the aforementioned socialistic program, when he obtained the power, he did not fulfilled it, at least as far as the foreign policy was concerned: Greece never left NATO and the American military bases continued to exist. This fact was considered by the communist parties and by the organisation in question in this paper, '17N', as cheating and a failure to respect the Greek people's will. In reality, though, Greeks voted again for PASOK and Papandreou in the elections of 1985, showing that despite the fact that the program was not applied, the electorate continued trusting him.

3.3 The two communist parties

The history of the communist party in Greece goes back in the beginning of the 20th century. In the following lines there will be an attempt to project it very briefly as the purpose of this paper is not to delve deeply into the story of the political parties, but to present generally their perception about national identity and independence.

Communist Party of Greece (Kommounistiko Komma Elladas –KKE) was founded in 1918. After the defeat in the Greek Civil War many of the Greek

⁸⁶ *Ibid.*

⁸⁷ Clogg, Richard. "The Greek Elections of 1981." *Electoral Studies* 1, no. 1 (1982): 95–99. [https://doi.org/10.1016/0261-3794\(82\)90132-9](https://doi.org/10.1016/0261-3794(82)90132-9).

communists left abroad to the 'Iron Curtain's' countries,⁸⁸ among them the General Secretary of the Party, Nikos Zachariadis. Other Greek communists stayed in Greece where they confronted the persecutions described in chapter 2.4. In 1951, the party of United Democratic Left (Eniaia Dimokratiki Aristera –EDA), a coalition of Left forces that were legal during that years, was founded. The outlawed KKE supported EDA while trying to run its illegal organisations using the party's forces.

In 1956 the 20th Conference of the Soviet Communist Party took place, where Nikita Khrushchev condemned the 'personality cult' and started the so-called period of the de-Stalinisation. This situation in conjunction with the existing accusations for Zachariadis on behalf of the Greek communists, as they believed he was responsible for the defeat in the Civil War, led to his removal from the KKE leadership during the 6th Plenary Session of the party. In the same year, the Soviet invasion in Hungary caused disputes among the Greek communists. These disputes together with the polarisation of the members of KKE (advocates and opponents of Zachariadis) lasted until 1968, when the party was split. On the one side there was the 'traditional' leadership, in the countries of the Eastern Bloc, which kept the name and the symbols of the party and was influenced ideologically by the Soviet Union. On the other side there was the 'Renewing' left which supported in general more democratic procedures, influenced by Euro-communism. They characterised their party as KKE interior, since it was created by the former members of KKE who had stayed in Greece. Of course, both parties were illegal as the military dictatorship had been established in Greece since 1967.

The separation of the two parties became even clearer when, on 1968, the Warsaw Pact invaded Czechoslovakia. The KKE interior condemned the invasion while the KKE justified it. In the first elections of the *Metapolitefsi*, KKE, EDA and KKE interior collaborated under the coalition formation of United Left, taking 9,47% of the votes. In the elections of 1977 the parties participated separately in the elections; KKE took 9,36 % of the votes while KKE interior, with the name 'Alliance of Progressive and Left Forces', took 2.72%. Meanwhile, EDA dissolved in 1985 and its members participated in PASOK and the two parties of KKE. In 1978 the 10th Conference of KKE, the first legal one after 1945, took place. In its political decisions one can read that 'NATO encourages the aggressive views of the Turkish chauvinists

⁸⁸ Mazower, Mark. *Inside Hitler's Greece: the Experience of Occupation, 1941-44*. Athens, Alexandria, 1993, p.406.

against Greece'.⁸⁹ Moreover it was stated that 'KKE believes that the Aegean problem has to be confronted based on the interest of Peace and the respect of the national independence'.⁹⁰ In addition KKE stated its internationalist policy while at the same time believed that Greece was dependent by the 'American-NATO imperialists'.⁹¹ Finally, KKE believed that the 'Greek people will flourish only when capitalism abolishes and socialism is established'.⁹² As one could support from the above, KKE believed in the Marxist-Leninist class struggle theory about nations and national identity and that the real independence would come only when their perception about socialism take place. KKE supported -and still does- 'the revolutionary worldview of Marxism-Leninism' and remains 'faithful to the principle of proletarian internationalism'.⁹³ Also KKE 'never denounced the class struggle, the socialist revolution, the dictatorship of the proletariat'.⁹⁴

In 1987, the KKE-interior was renamed 'Greek Left' (E.A.R.). KKE and EAR collaborated in order to win again the part of the voters who had supported PASOK, creating the 'Coalition of the Left and Progress' in which resigned executives from PASOK and members from the dissolved EDA also participated.

After 1991 and the collapse of the Soviet Union, KKE left the 'Coalition' keeping its name and symbols (hammer and sickle), while the 'Coalition (Synaspismos)' was renamed 'Coalition of the Left, the Movements and the Ecology' at first, and then on 2004, 'Coalition of the Radical Left (SY.RIZ.A)'. On June 1992, in the first Conference of Synaspismos after the division of 1991, one can read that the party aimed at 'a national force and at the same time part of the European Left, which wants to radically transform social relations [...] We are building the new democratic, radical Left beyond traditional social democracy and bureaucratic totalitarian "socialism" [...]'.⁹⁵ As for Greece's foreign policy, 'Synaspismos' stated that: 'We believe that [...] the main threat [...] is [...] coming from the Turkish side, which is expressed both by the on-going occupation of Northern Cyprus, as well as

⁸⁹ Source: Decisions of the 10th KKE Conference, May 1978, published by the Central Committee of KKE, p.9.

⁹⁰ *Ibid.*

⁹¹ *Ibid.*

⁹² *Ibid.*

⁹³ Source: Official website of Greek Communist Party (KKE). Can be found online (in Greek) in the following link: <https://www.kke.gr/arxes-stoxoi/programma/>

⁹⁴ *Ibid.*

⁹⁵ Source: Political decision of the 1st Conference of SYN. It can be found online in the official Synaspismos website: <http://www.syn.gr/gr/keimeno.php?id=13386> (in Greek).

with its unacceptable claims in the Aegean'.⁹⁶ Thus, the 'Coalition' wanted to express this part of the left-wing people who were disappointed with PASOK's policy and wanted a different kind of left than the communist one KKE proposed. Regarding the matter of national independence 'Coalition' considered, as every political party did, the Turkish threat as crucial for the national interests of Greece. Finally, one could characterise the party as social-democratic, inspired from euro-communist ideas, wanting a social change into the existing political system of capitalism.

⁹⁶ *Ibid.*

4. The “17 November” perception of national identity and independence

Having examined briefly the perception regarding national identity and independence the major Greek political parliamentary parties had, it is time to focus on the one of 17N's. To do so, the organisation's proclamations referred to non-Greek targets and strikes will be examined next. Subsequently, the reactions of the Greek political parties to these will also be presented.

4.1 The beginning of the end

It was on Saturday, June 29, 2002, at the ticket office of the shipping company 'Hellas flying dolphin' in the port of Piraeus in Athens, when a bomb mistakenly exploded in the hands of a man, leading him to being severely injured. Almost immediately, strong forces of the Coast Guard and the police reached the place of the incident, and the injured man was transported to the nearest hospital. Without them knowing it yet, the Authorities were about to unravel the tangle of the most notorious armed organisation that had been acting in Greece for the last 27 years: the Revolutionary Organization 17 November.

By the next morning (30/6/2002), the investigation of the explosion had been assigned to the Counter-Terrorism Service (official title: Directorate for Special Crimes of Violence).⁹⁷ A few days later, the injured man's identity was disclosed. The man in question was Savvas Xiros, member of the organisation 17N. The briefing from the Chief of Greek Police to the journalists was clear:

[...] from the on-going investigation we were led to a hideout of the terrorist organisation 17 November at 84 Patmou Street in Kato Patisia. In the den,

⁹⁷ The Press release that was published by the Greek police headquarters stated the following: 'With a prosecutor's order, given today (30-6-2002) and around 11.00, the preliminary investigation for yesterday's explosion at the ticket office of the shipping company HELLAS FLYING DOLPHIN, was assigned to the Directorate for Special Crimes of Violence, to investigate whether it is related with other explosion cases.

The evidence, found at the scene of the explosion, have been sent by the Central Port Authority of Piraeus to the Directorate of Criminological Investigations, where they are being examined'. “http://www.astynomia.gr/index.php?option=ozo_content&perform=view&id=65893&Itemid=142&lang=”

among many other objects, were found: Announcements of 17N, the banner and the seal of the organisation, computers and armament [...].⁹⁸

That was the beginning of the end of 17 November, that had been acting in Greece for 27 years, from 1975 to 2002. During the summer of 2002, the members of the organisation were arrested by the Authorities, one after another. On 18/7/2002 Alexandros Giotopoulos, 17N's leader according to the police, got arrested as well.⁹⁹ On 5/9/2002 Dimitris Koufontinas surrendered to the authorities, taking the political responsibility for the actions of 17 November.¹⁰⁰ During the trial that followed, 15 people were convicted as members of the organisation.¹⁰¹

Driven by their conceptions of Marxist theory but also by the traditions of the Greek Left, 17 November developed their own perception of national identity and independence. This perception becomes clear when going through the organisation's published proclamations, so these are going to be analysed next.

4.2 The execution of Richard Welch and the Cyprus issue

On December 23, 1975, Richard Welch, CIA Station Chief in Athens, was killed by an unknown group of men. The responsibility for the assassination took the organisation 17 November. Under the title 'Execution of CIA leader in Greece', the proclamation 17N sent claimed that the logic of U.S.A. 'is the logic of the tyrant, the oppressor, the gendarme of the peoples [...]'.¹⁰² In addition, it was stated that

⁹⁸ Press release of 04/07/2002, from the official website of Greek Police: "http://www.astynomia.gr/index.php?option=ozo_content&perform=view&id=65895&Itemid=142&lang="

⁹⁹ George Kassimeris notes that: '[...]Giotopoulos, whose fingerprints were identified by Greek police in 17N's two Athens hideaways containing the group's arsenal, maintained throughout the trial that he had no involvement whatsoever with 17N.' Kassimeris, George. 2007. "For a Place in History: Explaining Greece's Revolutionary Organization 17 November". *Journal of Conflict Studies* 27 (2). <https://journals.lib.unb.ca/index.php/JCS/article/view/10547>.

¹⁰⁰ For a short biography of Koufontinas see: Kassimeris, George. 2007. "For a Place in History: Explaining Greece's Revolutionary Organization 17 November". *Journal of Conflict Studies* 27 (2). <https://journals.lib.unb.ca/index.php/JCS/article/view/10547>.

¹⁰¹ Kassimeris, George. "Last Act in a Violent Drama? The Trial of Greece's Revolutionary Organization 17 November." *Terrorism and Political Violence* 18, no. 1 (2006): 137–57. <https://doi.org/10.1080/095465590953479>.

¹⁰² Source: Proclamation of "17N" under the title "Execution of CIA leader in Greece" with date December 1975. All the proclamations can be found online in multiple websites or blogs (in Greek) such as <https://www.scribd.com/document/33742012> or <http://kufontinas.blogspot.com/p/17.html>. They also are published by the "Kaktos" publications.

American imperialism was responsible for the coup of 1967 and the ‘betrayal’ of Cyprus.

By the context described above, one can draw up the conclusion that 17N perceived the USA politics as the main enemy of the Greek independence in cooperation with the Greek government, which was accused of ‘participation and complicity’ in the plans that USA had for the Aegean Sea and the Cyprus problem. Moreover, it was mentioned that: ‘The slogan “Americans out”, which was one of the basics of the Popular Uprising in November 1973 [...] remains unfulfilled; [...] Greece is [...] a Latin American Banana Republic in the Eastern Mediterranean area’.¹⁰³

17N tried to play the role of the expression of Greek people’s will and of a force which continued the *Polytechneio* uprising. In a way they were looking for legitimisation through the people’s support and appealed to an audience for attaining this support. This audience was, at least in the minds of 17N’s members, Greek people who had been disappointed by the progress after the fall of the military regime. Moreover, driven from their conception of Marxist theory, the members of the organisation saw themselves as popular fighters who fought for the ‘real’ independence of Greece and for the creation of another political system in which the struggle between the classes would not exist. They were calling the Greek people, the Greek working class, to ‘rise as the leading class of the nation’, as Marx and Engels posited. According to Koufontinas’ statement during the organisation’s trial in 2003: ‘17N claimed from the beginning that it was an organisation of ordinary popular fighters. It came from the bowels of the people, listened to his own voice, tried to serve his own interests and in front of the people feels that it must answer for’.¹⁰⁴

For 17N, the People (which is written with a capital P in the proclamation) were the dominant power of the country, for the rights of which someone had to fight. Although the word ‘nation’ itself is not mentioned in the proclamation, it becomes clear while reading it that they created a concept in which People are identified with the nation. Moreover, throughout the text, there are references to other countries in which the U.S.A. had intervened, which also shows the internationalist character of

¹⁰³ Source: Proclamation of “17N” under the title “Execution of CIA leader in Greece” with date December 1975

¹⁰⁴ Source: Statement of Dimitris Koufontinas at the court during the trial of “17 November” on 24 July 2003. It can be found online (in Greek) in the website <https://athens.indymedia.org/post/792715/> and on Youtube <https://youtu.be/9Xxvmsm00A>.

17N.¹⁰⁵ The proclamation ended with a statement which would guide the organisation's actions in the future; the allegation that the new era of *Metapolitefsi* brought to the surface a new regime 'of dependence and subjugation a new fascism with a parliamentary cloak'.¹⁰⁶ 17 November called for resistance which 'will lead us to real Independence, to real Democracy for the working people [...] will lead to People's power and Socialism'.¹⁰⁷

Welch's assassination was seen by the Greek political system as a provocation, on behalf of some politicians, or as an act of secret agencies that had been operating in the country, on behalf of others. The Government's announcement, *Nea Dimokratia* at that time, was: 'the cowardly murderers do not belong, at least mentally, to the Greek people whose honour and national interests they intended to insult'; PASOK's president Andreas Papandreou claimed that Welch's assassination had nothing to do with Greece and was a provocation. KKE believed that the assassination was related to disputes between Secret Services of foreign countries that had been acting in Greece: 'our country is gradually turning into a centre in which secret networks of imperialism are acting against the interests of the Greek people'.¹⁰⁸

The Greek political system and the press ignored the proclamation and regarded it as fake. The Press did not publish it while the parties were talking about provocation. This fact frustrated 17N. On December 26, 1976, the organisation published another proclamation in which their rage over the 'lies of the newspapers' was expressed, but that proclamation was not published either.¹⁰⁹

17N managed to assassinate a very high-ranked official of the U.S. embassy in Greece. However, the effectiveness and professionalism which the operation was carried out with, created suspicions among the political system and the press, making them believe that they had to do with a war between secret agencies.¹¹⁰ Finally, the first proclamation was published one year later not by a Greek newspaper but by the

¹⁰⁵ "In front of this situation [...], there is only one way left: people themselves should take their destiny into their own hands. To fight with their force, using all means of struggle and opposing the anti-popular oppressive violence of imperialism, which has been terrorizing the People for decades, the fair popular revolutionary violence. It is the only path that the American imperialists take into account, as the heroic Vietnamese people have proved". Source: Proclamation of "17N" under the title "Execution of CIA leader in Greece" with date December 1975

¹⁰⁶ *Ibid.*

¹⁰⁷ *Ibid.*

¹⁰⁸ Source: "Rizospastis" newspaper, 25/12/1975, pp. 1, 11. *Rizospastis* is the official newspaper of the Greek Communist Party.

¹⁰⁹ Source: Proclamation of "17N" under the title "To the Press", on 26/12/1975.

¹¹⁰ Kassimeris, George. *Europe's last red terrorists. The Revolutionary Organization 17 November*. Athens, Kastaniotis, 2002, p.126. (translated from Greek by the author of this paper).

French *Libération*. More specifically, on December 24, 1976, after one more assassination was carried out by 17N on September 1976, the one of Evangelos Mallios, a high ranked police officer and torturer of the military dictatorship, the proclamation about Welch was published.¹¹¹

4.3 The ‘war’ against the Americans

On November 1983 17N struck against an American target, one more time; Victims of the attack were the U.S Navy Officer George Tsantes and his chauffeur, Nicholas Veloutsos.¹¹² At that time, Tsantes was serving as chief of the naval section of the Joint US Military Aid Group Greece (JUSMAGG).¹¹³

The situation described in a chapter 2.4 regarding the participation of Greece in NATO and the use of Greek defence facilities by the U.S.A. forces was judged as a state of dependency by 17N as was mentioned in their proclamation about Tsantes’ and Veloutsos’ assassination. In that text the organisation explained their two-year pause of action, by claiming that they did it out of respect for the popular verdict, despite the fact that they did not actually believe in the success of PASOK’s program (PASOK had won the elections on 1981). After first sharply criticising PASOK’s government because they did not implement their promised plans and after expressing the opinion that ‘we do not believe in a peaceful parliamentary transition to socialism’, the organisation gave an analysis of the choice of target and to a rhetoric against the Americans.

More specifically, 17N defined as its goals ‘breaking the bonds of dependence, saying NO to the EEC, leaving NATO, and expelling the [military] bases’. In addition, 17N perceived American imperialism and Greece’s international ties with several other organisations (NATO, EEC) as an impediment to achieving national

¹¹¹ It is believed that the proclamation ended up to *Libération* through Jean Paul Sartre. *Ibid*, p.128.

¹¹² Source: New York Times newspaper. Article with the title: “U.S. NAVY OFFICER IS ASSASSINATED IN ATHENS BY UNKNOWN GUNMEN”, published on November 16, 1983. Retrieved online from the website: <https://www.nytimes.com/1983/11/16/world/us-navy-officer-is-assassinated-in-athens-by-unknown-gunmen.html> , on 26/10/2020.

¹¹³ “[...]back at the close of WWII, the United States established the first elements of what was to become the Joint US Military Aid Group, Greece (JUSMAGG), per US-Greece agreement signed on 20 Jun 47. JUSMAGG [...] played an important part in channeling over 6 billion dollars in Marshall Plan postwar and Cold War security assistance aid to Greece between 1947 and 1997, helping to make Greece the single-largest recipient of Western aid in all of postwar Europe [...]”. Source: U.S Embassy & Consulate in Greece. <https://gr.usembassy.gov/embassy-consulate/odc/history/>

independence.¹¹⁴ For them, national identity was inextricably linked with the aforementioned desired objectives. But what remained at their discretion was just that the expulsion of foreign powers from Greece was a step towards national independence. What they did not specify though was what all of the other steps that must be taken were, in order to attain it. One could support that these next steps, according to their ideology, would be the transition to socialism but such a direct connection cannot be made, at least at this point.

17N, insisted on arguing that the political system was a puppet of the Americans, who were responsible for the country's woes:

U.S. military mission [...] is charged with countless crimes [...], including the coup of 1967, the tragedy of Cyprus in 1974 and the current repeated violations of our airspace and challenges to our sovereignty, both by American and Turkish planes [...] At the same time, these forces are an advanced outpost, which acts as necessary support for military interventions against all the peoples of the region who are fighting for independence. Thus, our action is at the same time an [...] act of international solidarity.¹¹⁵

What can be extracted from the above is that faithful to its Marxist references, 17N speaks of an act of international solidarity. This is where, perhaps, an opinion can be extracted regarding the organisation's perception of national identity; it was not a concept based on any 'national superiority' nor one that pertained to all Greeks in general, as it can be seen from the proclamations that have been analysed so far. In the 'mind' of the organisation, national identity was identified with the people, the working class and popular power. For 17N, the prevailing view was that the people, and when using the word 'people' they mean the proletariat, should rise to become the leading class of the nation and form a nationally independent nation-state, free from foreign supremacies in the country. Such opinion is in complete accordance with the Marxist point of view which was demonstrated in the beginning of this paper (*see* 1.3). Their conception of national identity was also defined by a historical continuity

¹¹⁴ “[...] Since we cannot leave NATO, the EEC, expel the bases with 65% of the people expressed in favor of such a policy [A/N PASOK's program], this means that not only socialism, but not even the goal of national independence -which of course is not completed by the above alone- can be achieved within a peaceful and parliamentary, constitutional framework.”, Source: Proclamation of “17N” under the title “Tsantes and Veloutsos” published on October 1983.

¹¹⁵ *Ibid.*

which was related to the struggles of the Greek people in the past, whose fight 17N thought to have been carrying on, while being driven from the struggles of EAM and Polytechnio.¹¹⁶

One year later, on April 1984, 17N executed another American member of JUSMAGG, Robert Judd. In the proclamation taking the responsibility for the action 17N noted:

Those who offer their services as mercenaries, in the main functions of this military occupation force [...] have a specific responsibility, as did those who participated in the German Nazi occupation forces [...] By striking out at American imperialism, we are not fighting only for expelling the Bases and the Americans from the country but also for the change of the social regime.¹¹⁷

As can be evidenced from this, 17N regarded the American military forces in Greece as a force of occupation similar to the one that Greece suffered in WWII by Nazi Germany. In addition, whoever was serving this force was considered by the organisation a collaborator and, thus, had to be punished by them. Moreover, the connection that was not made in the previous proclamation regarding the steps that must be taken in order to achieve national independence is clearer at this point; for 17N, what would serve this cause more efficiently was the change in the social status of the country transitioning it to socialism. Although they perceived themselves as socialists-communists in the same proclamation they inveigh against the communist party by saying that ‘as for the leading clique of the KKE that [...] characterised us as suspects, professional executors and agents [...] we state that: Stalin may have died, but Stalinism is alive and kicking’.¹¹⁸ This indicates that the organisation rejected the Stalinist type of socialism but envisaged a different one, the structure of which they do not actually specified.

¹¹⁶ “[...] this policy is a right-wing policy that not only violates the popular mandate of the elections of 1981, but also buries all the long-standing hard struggles of the people for independence, having the audacity to ostracise them. This policy does not respect the blood that was shed in the heroic struggles of EAM and the Polytechnio. These struggles were, among other things, struggles for national independence, a goal that will not be achieved as long as foreign bases exist in Greece. Nothing, therefore, is more harmful today, betrays these struggles more than their supposed justification, their pretended, false conquest of their goal”. *Ibid.*

¹¹⁷ Source: Proclamation of “17N” under the title “For Judd”, published on April, 1984.

¹¹⁸ *Ibid.*

The views of the organisation did not seem to convince the Greek people whose name they constantly invoked. Just two years after the action against Tsantes and Veloutsos (1983) and one after Judd's assassination (1984), PASOK won the elections again (1985), losing only two points (from 48.07% to 45.82%), which proves that despite the non-implementation of its program, PASOK still managed to convince the electorate. In addition, the country seemed to be moving steadily towards the path of parliamentary democracy.

The 'war' against the Americans continued when in 1987 the organisation hit twice by targeting in April and August two buses that were transporting U.S. soldiers. In the proclamation regarding the strike of April, 17N repeated the opinion that the American military bases should be expelled from Greece. Moreover, the attack against the KKE continued accusing them as 'Papandreou's and grande bourgeoisie's servants'.¹¹⁹ KKE did not respond to the accusations at all.

On late March 1987, Greece and Turkey found themselves in a state close to war that had to do with the oil fields in the Aegean Sea.¹²⁰ The crisis ended with a reciprocal retreat by both sides.¹²¹ 17N in their proclamation regarding the acceptance of the responsibility for the second attack in August, the one against an American bus full of mercenaries-soldiers, referred to PASOK's 'scam' concerning the status of the bases which, according to the organisation's statements, were undermining national independence. 17N embraced a rhetoric which belonged to both the left of the political spectrum and the founding declaration of PASOK, as it is shown above [*see chapter 3.2*]. In this way, 17N ultimately tried to influence that specific part of the people and of the society which had accepted the philosophy of PASOK and by extension had voted for it in the elections of 1981 and 1985. In addition, 17N supported that:

Behind the Turkish expansionism is American imperialism [...] the issue of national independence is a matter of principles, it is not bargained, and it is not

¹¹⁹ Source: Proclamation of "17N" under the title "American bus (Renti)", published on April, 1987.

¹²⁰ Dimitrakis, Panagiotis. "Greek Military Intelligence and the Turkish "Threat" during the 1987 Aegean Crisis." *Journal of Modern Greek Studies* 25, no. 1 (2007): 99-127. doi:10.1353/mgs.2007.0002

¹²¹ Source: "Los Angeles Times" newspaper. Article with the title: "Greece, Turkey Ease Tensions in Aegean Dispute", published on March 29, 1987. Retrieved online from the website: <https://www.latimes.com/archives/la-xpm-1987-03-29-mn-1224-story.html> on 28/10/2021.

negotiated [...] The roots of this demand, the demand for an independent life without foreign interventions -which will remain as long as we have American bases in the country-, are very deep-seated. From generation to generation, fighters have drenched these roots in their blood, in the most diverse struggles, with or without a gun in their hand, in order to achieve the fulfilment of this request. We will not let Papandreou or anyone else to sell out these struggles, which are the soul of our people and its history'.¹²²

As it can be extracted from some of the phrases mentioned above –‘from generation to generation, the soul of our people and history’- the members of the organisation continued the narrative of the historical continuity of the Greek people’s struggles for national independence and consider themselves as guardians of these struggles. It is also worth focusing on their on-going references to Cyprus and the Cypriot Hellenism but also to Palestine on an international level, reports that come to confirm two things: Firstly, that the Cyprus Issue was something that 17N judged as particularly important and secondly that ‘international solidarity’ was what emanated from their class view of society and of the historical, social and political life.

What is more, one could allege that the organisation, seeking to increase its influence over a part of the Greek people, embraced a rhetoric against the Turkish state -by speaking about ‘Turkish expansionism’ and referring to the Turkish occupying forces in Cyprus- which regarded the so-called national issues as primary ones.¹²³ Especially after the Greek-Turkish crisis of 1987, these intense references to national issues and to Turkey were intensified, as it will be seen below. Finally, 17N, considering that the country is under occupation, believed that national independence should be won first and then, only after it is accomplished, a social change could take place towards a ‘world of peace and freedom, a world without inequality, exploitation, and injustice that will be estimated by a distorted form of justice’.¹²⁴

¹²² Source: Proclamation of “17N” under the title “American bus (Kavouri)”, published on August, 1987.

¹²³ “These just popular revolutionary actions will continue until all American bases in the country are closed, until the last American mercenary-soldier leaves, until the last Turkish soldier of the occupying forces in Cyprus leaves. GREECE, TURKEY, PALESTINE, NO AMERICANS WILL STAY. OUT OF NATO, FOR PEOPLE’S POWER AND SOCIALISM. THE STRUGGLE CONTINUES”, Ibid.

¹²⁴ Source: Statement of Dimitris Koufontinas at the court during the trial of “17 November” on 24 July 2003. It can be found online (in Greek) in the website <https://athens.indymedia.org/post/792715/> and on Youtube <https://youtu.be/9Xxvmbm0OA>

The next attack on a foreign target, once again an American, took place in January 1988 and was against the Special Agent in charge of the Drug Enforcement Agency (DEA) in Athens, George Carros. According to the organisation Carros was: ‘an important CIA agent who is working behind the cover of a specialist hunting narcotics’.¹²⁵ ‘17N’ published two proclamations about this attack repeating the demand for expelling the foreign bases from Greece, while explaining in the second one the reasons why the act did not lead to Carros’ death, as the bomb they placed was not actually set off.

The next action of the organisation differed significantly as far as the choice of the target is concerned. This time, 17N did not attack an American (or a Greek target as they had done several times in the past) but against a Turkish one. This countermarch regarding the nationality of the chosen target, was justified as another hit for the American imperialism, which they also blamed for the ‘Turkish expansionism’.

4.4 The escalation of violence

From 1988 onwards, the organisation’s attacks significantly increased, with numerous hits against various Greek, American and Turkish targets.¹²⁶ On May 20, 1988, ‘17N’ published a proclamation taking the responsibility for blasting the cars of Turkish diplomats in Athens. In the proclamation, they sharply criticised part of the Western World, the Americans and the EEC, while making mention of the Cypriot Issue as well.¹²⁷ Moreover, they clarified their position concerning the Soviet type of Socialism, by condemning U.S.S.R.’s intervention in Afghanistan; It is important to note this differentiation, as it indicates the different perspective, from the one that was the official of the Soviet State and supported the Greek Communist Party, they had about the implementation of socialism.¹²⁸ Their critique of the Soviet regime seems to

¹²⁵ Source: Proclamation of “17N” under the title “Carros”, published on January, 1988.

¹²⁶ During the years 1988-1991 “17N” committed more than 40 attacks. See: Kassimeris, George. *Europe’s last red terrorists. The Revolutionary Organization 17 November*. Athens, Kastaniotis, 2002, p. 363

¹²⁷ ‘Turkey is the “spoiled child” not only of the USA but also of the EEC, which has developed multifaceted relations with this fascist dictatorship, helping it economically and militarily. [...]’ Source: Proclamation of “17N” under the title “For the cars of the Turkish diplomats” published on May 20, 1988.

¹²⁸ ‘You all remember [...] the Western cries about Afghanistan and that the Soviet Union violated the principles of independence and territorial integrity of Afghanistan. (In order to avoid

be deriving from the theses of Lenin regarding the self-determination of nations (*see Introduction, 1.3*). Their references to their Marxist – Leninist approach of things are confirmed also by the following statement the organisation made as after the strike against Turkish targets criticised by part of the society as turning towards nationalism:

[...] because we anticipate that various people [...] who, while claiming that Marxism is anachronistic, do not miss an opportunity to give us lessons about Marxism [...], will again claim that the 17N has abandoned Marxism and socialism and has turned to nationalism, we will remind you that one of the basic and established principles of Marxism is the right of peoples and ethnicities to self-determination.¹²⁹

Finally 17N, made clear that their action ‘was not against the brotherly Turkish people, to whom we express our militant support and solidarity’, while called for international solidarity with the peoples of the Eastern-Mediterranean area.¹³⁰ These references to the Turkish people, as well as the need they felt to clarify their position on any possible accusation of a tendency towards nationalism one might accuse them, may indicate the organisation’s concern both regarding this particular act and future ones that could be described by some as nationalistic. Wanting to prevent any misinterpretation and trying to integrate these specific actions within their Marxist ideological background, they turned to the very founders of the communist theory, justifying their actions as being in line with the communist principles they, in their own judgment, stood for. Greek political system’s reaction was furious. All the political parties condemned the act but no one responded to the organisation at an ideological level. The government spokesman (PASOK) said that: ‘The government expresses its disgust at the criminal bombings [...] such acts serve exclusively the

creating any misunderstandings [...] we clarify that we condemn the intervention of the Soviet Union in Afghanistan, as well as any intervention in another country or violation of its independence and territorial integrity, apart from the case of international solidarity to a developed popular revolutionary movement that is in danger, a case that did not exist in Afghanistan)’. *Ibid.*

¹²⁹ *Ibid.*

¹³⁰ “So we decided to bomb the cars of the Turkish fascist regime's diplomats. This action goes directly against the Turkish fascist regime, the gendarme of American imperialism in the region, and not against the brotherly Turkish people, to whom we express our militant support and solidarity. We address a militant salute to all the oppressed who are fighting against this regime; To the Cypriot people, to the Turkish and Kurdish revolutionaries, to the Armenian fighters [...], *Ibid.*

interests of those who plot social peace and democracy in our country [...]'.¹³¹ ND condemned the bombings by saying said that: 'Such acts not only undermine democratic normality and social peace but can also damage our sensitive national issues'.¹³² KKE mentioned that: 'Car bombings and criminal acts, regardless of their pretext, do not promote national goals and also undermine our national interests', while EAR supported that: 'The terrorist acts undermine the democratic normality'.¹³³ As can be seen from the above, the whole political world decided not to enter into a direct dialogue with the organisation and the positions it expressed. On the contrary, they condemned the act while considering it as an anti-national one which, in their view, created unnecessary tensions between Greece and Turkey and also destabilised the situation in the region. Few days after the organisation placed explosives in Turkish diplomats' cars, 17N would assassinate another American official, William Nordeen, on June 28, 1988, justifying its action, for one more time, as a strike against imperialism. In addition, speaking in the name of the 'Greek people' they accused the Greek political system of major military expenditure, which deprived Greek people of several necessities.¹³⁴

What is most crucial in this proclamation is the fact that 17N actually stated its point of view concerning what national independence means for them. Thus, one can point out while reading the following proclamation:

Prerequisites for a policy of national independence are the seizure of political power by the working class (we do not mean the KKE) and its allies and the implementation of a set of measures to break the ties of imperialist dependence. The minimum conditions at the political level are the immediate closure of all American bases and the country's exit from NATO. [...] Such a set of measures

¹³¹ Newspaper *Eleftherotypia*, 24/05/1988, p.11.

¹³² *Ibid.*

¹³³ *Ibid.*

¹³⁴ 'The Greek people have the largest military expenses, after the United States, as a percentage of domestic products. They reach almost 7% while the middle imperialist powers like France and England, which have very strong armed forces but also nuclear arms, spend about half 3.5-4%. These spendings weigh the Greek economy down and are one of the causes for the unique phenomenon in Europe, where the Greek deceitful state is not able to offer the basic services of Education [...] Health, Social Welfare, Insurance, which are offered by private mechanisms [...]'. Source: Proclamation of "17N" under the title "Nordeen", published on June 28, 1988.

is a precondition for achieving substantial national independence, for Western imperialism to stop determining our own destinies.¹³⁵

Ultimately, 17N repeated the opinion that Marx and Engels posited in the Communist Manifesto (*see Introduction, 1.3*) showing clearly in this way what its political references points were. Moreover, the organisation suggested a clearly socialistic program so that the country would achieve its independence again. Considering that Greece was under the ‘imperialistic’ occupation from U.S.A., the organisation justified their actions as being actions of national resistance and not only as actions for attempting to change the social status quo. This point of view was not something that 17N itself came up with but was actually Lenin’s perception that had already been expressed since 1914 in his text ‘The Right of Nations to Self-Determination’.¹³⁶ Lenin posited that: ‘the self-determination of the nations in the Marxists’ Programme cannot, from a historic-economic point of view, have any other meaning than political self-determination, state independence, and the formation of a national state’.¹³⁷

Therefore, it is obvious that for Lenin, achieving state independence was the basic prerequisite before attempting to proceed to the construction of socialism in countries that had not yet gained their independence. Being on the same wavelength and inspired by Leninist theories, 17N considered themselves as fighters for state and national independence, but also for the future socialistic society they aspired to construct. One could say that this justification does not make 17N any less nationalistic. On the other hand, considering that they thought of their struggle as national-liberating, in a way like the one conducted by EAM-ELAS during the Nazi occupation, but at the same time also social, aiming at political self-determination and state independence, the organisation remained faithful to the Marxist -Leninist view of things. Thus, if one were to accuse the organisation of nationalism, then one should also accuse Lenin himself of being a nationalist. It is crucial to highlight that no comparison between 17N and Lenin is attempted at this point, and by no means their ideas are being examined as far as their value or validity is concerned. Simply, what is supported is that 17N faithfully adopted the Leninist approach regarding nation and national independence.

¹³⁵ *Ibid.*

¹³⁶ Vladimir Ilyich Lenin, “*The Right of Nations to Self-Determination*”, February-May 1914. Can be found online: <https://www.marxists.org/archive/lenin/works/1914/self-det/>

¹³⁷ *Ibid.*

Greek parties once again condemned the assassination. Prime Minister Andreas Papandreou stated that he was ‘now afraid to leave Greece’ after several similar actions had taken place while he was abroad, while PASOK’s government in total published a statement in which the following were mentioned: ‘Greeks [...] know that acts of indiscriminate violence, wherever they come from, have as their main goal the undermining of the democratic normality, the peaceful progress and the social peace of this place [...] All Greeks, regardless of political affiliation, unequivocally condemn the would-be ‘underminers’ of the institutions and of democracy itself’.¹³⁸

ND expressed its ‘disgust for this cowardly murder and the wish that the relations between the two countries [A/N Greece and U.S.A] will not be disturbed in the slightest due to this fact.’¹³⁹ KKE mentioned that ‘such acts in no way turn against the presence and role of the United States in our country. Instead, they support the plans of foreign and local circles, which seek to create a climate of concern among the people. They also support the taking of new authoritarian measures against the popular movement under the pretext of fighting terrorism’.¹⁴⁰ EAR commented that: ‘These acts are purely criminal. They despise human life. They create problems in the international relations of Greece, at a time when their strengthening is required in every way, but also in the democratic development of the country with the encouragement of the repression mechanisms’.¹⁴¹ Once again, the politics of Greece did not enter into a theoretical dialogue with the organisation but simply condemned the act. Formerly a supporter of extreme anti-American positions, Papandreou thought of action as a threat to democracy. KKE insisted on speaking for agents’ actions and ‘dark’ foreign powers, while both it and EAR considered the operation to be an opportunity to express an anti-popular policy of restricting freedoms on behalf of the government, perhaps not unjustly.

¹³⁸ Newspaper Eleftherotypia, 29/06/1988, pp. 20-21.

¹³⁹ *Ibid.*

¹⁴⁰ *Ibid.*

¹⁴¹ *Ibid.*

4.5 The upgrade of the armament

On December 24, 1989, 17N attacked military warehouses in the village of Sykourio, near Larissa, Greece, stealing a large amount of 2.36 and 3.5 inch rockets, bullets, grenades and other weapons. A couple of months later, in a sudden attack on the War Museum in the centre of Athens, members of the organisation restrained the guards and stole two 2.36 and 3.5 bazooka launchers¹⁴². Finally, the stolen weapons were used on June, 1990, when a rocket hit the offices of “Procter & Gamble”.

On December 17, 1990, 17N attacked using rockets to hit the EEC offices in Athens. In the proclamation they published, they accused the European Community of policies of harsh austerity against Greece, policies that would ‘transform Greeks into servants and waiters’.¹⁴³ On January 24, 1991, the organisation stroke again; this time they placed bombs, all of which went off in the same night, in the American bank ‘Citybank’, in the English ‘Barclays’, and the office of the French military attaché. A few days later, they attacked ‘American Express’ and the offices of the British oil company ‘BP’ using a bazooka rocket, claiming that their actions applied to the context of the international solidarity with the countries of the Third World which are suffering by the policies of the West, while also being a response to the American Operation in Iraq ‘Desert Storm’.

In March of the same year, ‘17N’ executed the U.S. Air Force Sergeant Ronald Stewart who was serving at the time on the U.S. military base in Elliniko, Athens. Once again, the organisation claimed that their attack constituted an action of solidarity with the Iraqi people, accused the West of crimes against humanity, and repeated the request for expelling Americans from the country.¹⁴⁴ The government, Nea Dimokratia at that era, disapproved of ‘the cowardly murder. The criminal act offends the Greek people and damages the country. The enemies of our place are the

¹⁴² After this attack, 17N published a photo which depicted their armament under the photos of Karl Marx, Che Guevarra and Aris Velouchiotis (leader of ELAS during the period of Greek National Resistance). The flag of the organisation, a yellow star with the initials ‘17N’ in a red background, was also in this picture. By publishing this picture, they clearly showed their frame of reference alongside with the upgrade of their armament.

¹⁴³ Newspaper Eleftherotopia, 29/06/1988, pp. 20-21.

¹⁴⁴ ‘The total destruction of a poor Third-World country for decades and the genocide of 130,000 Iraqis, most of them civilians, are a crime against humanity committed by Western governments and led by the United States [...] As we have said in the past, we will continue striking these killers[...]until the last American mercenary leaves our country and the last Turkish soldier leaves from Cyprus’. Source: Proclamation of “17N” under the title “Sergeant Stewart” published on March 12, 1991.

perpetrators of yesterday's criminal act [...]'.¹⁴⁵ According to PASOK, 'the action undermined the normality with the goal of destabilising democratic procedures [...] the terrorists are never going to be considered as regulating factors of the social and political life of this country'.¹⁴⁶ As one can extract from the above, ND claimed that enemies were the perpetrators, meaning that they did not consider the American intervention in Greece as the main problem, while PASOK was concerned about the destabilisation of the constitution, rightly considering the organisation as a threat to democratic normality.

On May 7 and 28, 1991, 17N attacked several other targets, hitting -among others- the Siemens' factory in Athens. To justify these particular attacks, 17N pleaded again the harsh austerity policies that were imposed on Greece, and also stated that Germany had to pay back the reparations for the 'atrocities Nazi Germany had committed in WWII'.¹⁴⁷

4.6 A turn to nationalism?

On July 16, 1991, the organisation attempted to blow up the car which the Turkish Deputy Ambassador, Deniz Bölükbaşı, and other Turkish diplomats used, by using remotely controlled explosives. Nobody was killed in this attack, which was an outcome different from the one of October 1991, when 17N shot and killed the Press Attaché of Turkish Embassy in Athens, Çetin Görgü. To justify its actions the organisation made a comparison between Iraq's attack on Kuwait and the Turkish invasion in Cyprus, accusing the Western world of hypocrisy.¹⁴⁸ Moreover, they wanted to clarify that they were in solidarity with the Turkish people and the other peoples of the region maybe worrying that they might be accused of expressing

¹⁴⁵ Newspaper Eleftherotypia, 14/03/1991, p. 12-13.

¹⁴⁶ *Ibid.*

¹⁴⁷ 'The verbal condemnation of the Nazi atrocities by the current leaders of Germany has absolutely no value as long as it is not accompanied by the practical condemnation, the just reparation of our country that has suffered enormous damage from the Nazi atrocities.' Source: Proclamation of '17N' under the title 'Pentelikon' published on June 4, 1991.

¹⁴⁸ 'If 7 months were enough to resolve the issue of the occupation of Kuwait, 17 years were not enough for Cyprus. The butchers of Ankara, in order for us to use the Western terminology, can invade, destroy, occupy undisturbed one third of Cyprus. English-Americans and the Turkish fascist expansionism are responsible for this new conspiracy against the country, the new shrinking of Hellenism[...].'Source: Proclamation of "17N" under the title "Turkish diplomats" published on June 16, 1991.

nationalism¹⁴⁹. 17N held Görgü's responsible for 'promoting the interests of Turkish expansionism and [...] working to perpetuate the crime of the invasion and occupation of one third of Cyprus [...]'.¹⁵⁰ Although the purpose of this paper is not to examine society's reaction, there will be a reference to the organisation's reply to accusations of terrorism made by different parts of the society, as this exact reference of theirs indicates their perception of national independence. Thus, in a proclamation published on October 24, 1991 17N supported that:

Turning to the issue of 'terrorism', we observe here again a confusion [...] First of all, it is not 'terrorism' [...] but the armed revolutionary struggle or the armed guerrillas, which are divided into three categories: the national liberation movements mainly of the Third World, the struggle against dictatorial regimes and the struggle in parliamentary democracies. Terrorism is a form of this armed struggle and may even exist in national liberation movements. Terrorism is blind actions, without a specific human goal, mainly in busy places, shops, cafes, streets, stations, etc. and that aim mainly at mass intimidation and terror [...] These are acts of blind terrorism, which "17N" never thought to carry out.¹⁵¹

Once again, this perspective was not something that 17N invented. Lenin in his pamphlet 'Where to begin' posited that:

In principle we have never rejected, and cannot reject, terror. Terror is one of the forms of military action that may be perfectly suitable and even essential at a definite juncture in the battle [...]the immediate task of our Party is not to summon all available forces for the attack right now, but to call for the formation of a revolutionary organisation capable of uniting all forces and guiding the movement in actual practice and not in name alone, that is, an organisation ready at any time to support every protest and every outbreak and

¹⁴⁹ '[...]We make clear with particular emphasis that our energy is not directed against the Turkish people, but against the fascist policy of the Turkish politico-military complex, of which the Turkish people themselves are victims. We extend our warmest greetings to the Turkish armed resistance organizations and to the Kurdish guerrilla organisations', *Ibid.*

¹⁵⁰ Source: Proclamation of "17N" under the title "Cetin" published on October 7, 1991.

¹⁵¹ *Ibid.*

use it to build up and consolidate the fighting forces suitable for the decisive struggle.¹⁵²

It is clear that this is where 17N based their point of view concerning what terrorism is and also what their duty, as a 'revolutionary organisation', was. Therefore, their perception of national identity appears one more time; they did not perceive themselves as terrorists, but as a revolutionary organisation ready 'to support every outbreak and prepare people for the struggle', as Lenin posited. Their 'national' identity was indissolubly connected with their class struggle point of view, and in this way they believed that they were not terrorists but not 'just revolutionaries' either. They perceived themselves as revolutionaries and fighters for the national liberation of their country. Finally, the fact itself that they felt the need to reply to society's accusations, shows that they did care about the impact their strikes had to society and that they were looking for legitimisation from a part of it.

As it has already been shown, the non-Greek targets of the organisation were mostly Americans. Of course, strikes against cars of Turkish diplomats had been committed too, in 1988, but this was an exception to the general rule of striking at 'American Imperialism'. From 1991 onwards, 17N differentiated the way they chose their targets. Until the end of the 1980's, their attacks were mostly against Americans which, according to the organisation, were expressing Western imperialism in Greece. This pattern concerning their selection of targets changed, but their rhetoric remained the same; from 1991 to 1994 17N turned, but not exclusively, against Turkish targets considering the 'Turkish fascist regime' as a 'spoiled child of the West' and 'gendarme of the peoples of the Eastern Mediterranean Area'. The organisation in every proclamation they published after an attack against a Turkish target had taken place, emphatically noted that their action was not related to any turn towards nationalism, but was particularly directed at the Turkish state and not the Turkish people. By emphasising that they aimed at the state and not the people, 17N essentially separated peoples from states, considering that the nation-states in the way they are formed nowadays, meaning that they're defined by a capitalistic structure of society, do not express the people's will.

¹⁵² Vladimir Ilyich Lenin, "Where to begin", published in *Iskra* on May, 1901. It can be found online <https://www.marxists.org/archive/lenin/works/1901/may/04.htm#fwV05E001>

One could assume that this turn towards Turkish targets had to do with the collapse of the Soviet Union and, by extension, with the absence of the organisation's ideological references. Nevertheless, 17N in a fifteen pages long text they published in 1992 under the title 'Manifesto 1992', described the implementation of Marxist ideas in the former Soviet Union as 'fossilised'. The organisation claimed that 'we never had these regimes as a point of reference and [...] we characterised them non-socialist'.¹⁵³ So what kind of society did they imagine? The organisation gave the answer in the same text:

[17N] was fighting for another model of Socialism that would be characterised by procedures of direct democracy and self-management of the workers in the economic units. Of course, we recognised these regimes as not being similar to Western ones and had indeed some significant social achievements to their credit [A/N referring to the regimes of the Eastern Bloc].¹⁵⁴

Regarding this turn towards Turkish targets one could claim that it may also had to do with some need of the organisation to gain wider public support. By striking against Turkish targets, they would gain access to a bigger 'audience', having in mind the tensions between Greece and Turkey and that most of Greeks are being taught to consider Turkey as an 'enemy'.

On the other hand, the Cyprus issue is mentioned even from their first strike, the one against Welch, in 1975. From this point of view, their rhetoric did not change, as they kept having as a priority the Cyprus issue, this time by striking directly the occupation force of the island, Turkey. Finally, as Koufontinas noted, 'it was difficult for someone to accuse 17N of nationalism regarding the anti-American actions. But after the strikes against Turkish, the organisation was easily burdened with such accusation. Almost as if we randomly hit any Turkish and not as if we purposely hit prominent members of the Turkish fascist politico-military complex'.¹⁵⁵ Koufontinas expressed the very same opinion that 17N supported in their proclamations regarding the strikes against Turkish, according to which they did not hit, for example, a Turkish

¹⁵³ Source: Proclamation of "17N" under the title "Manifesto 1992" published on November 18, 1992.

¹⁵⁴ *Ibid.*

¹⁵⁵ Koufontinas, Dimitris. *The geopolitics of 17N*. Athens, Monopati, 2020, pp. 203, (translated from Greek by the author of this paper).

tourist on vacation in Greece, but on the contrary people with a specific role and position in the ‘political-military complex of Turkey’ and in the ‘Cyprus issue’.

On July 4, 1994, the Turkish diplomat Ömer Haluk Sipahioğlu, was shot to death by commandos of 17N. In contrast to other far-left urban guerrilla organisations of the West, such as Action Directe or the R.A.F., 17N had never undersigned any of their proclamation using the name of a deceased commando. However, in the proclamation they published after Sipahioğlu’s assassination, for first and last time, they undersigned with a name of a Greek-Cypriot activist. Thus, the proclamation was signed not only with the usual Revolutionary Organisation 17 November but also with the phrase ‘Commando Theofilos Georgiadis’. Georgiadis was a Greek-Cypriot who was allegedly murdered by the Turkish secret services, MIT, in Nicosia on March 1994 because he was acting in solidarity with the Kurds, a fact the organisation also mentioned in their proclamation.¹⁵⁶ The usage of Georgiadis’ name may indicate that in the minds of the members of 17N the strike against Sipahioğlu was also a revenge to Georgiadis assassination.

‘17N’ justified Sipahioğlu’s assassination by accusing him of being ‘a member of the Turkish politico-military complex, implementing and promoting its expansionist policy at the political-diplomatic level and repeating once again that we emphasise that our energy is not directed against the brotherly Turkish people but against the fascist practice of the Turkish political-military complex’.¹⁵⁷ Moreover, they accused the West of hypocrisy because although they spoke about national cleansing in Bosnia, they ‘did not care for the national cleansing that happened in Kurdistan and Cyprus by the Turks’.

Once again, 17N claimed that this act was related to their anti-imperialistic goal. At the same time, they did not fail to mention in every single one of their proclamations referring to Turkish targets that their act was not nationalistic and not directed towards the Turkish people, but was exclusively against the Turkish regime. However, the fact alone that they were excessively worried of the accusations of nationalism is worth to be mentioned. One might attempt to allege that this fact shows signs of an introjected fear as far as the ‘purity’ both of their Marxist frame of

¹⁵⁶ Kassimeris, George. *Europe’s last red terrorists. The Revolutionary Organization 17 November*. Athens, Kastaniotis, 2002, p.168-169. (translated from Greek by the author of this paper).

¹⁵⁷ Source: Proclamation of “17N” under the title “Sipahioğlu” published on July 4, 1994.

reference and the struggle they thought they were making in the face of opposition are concerned.

On the other hand, it can be said that they were furious regarding these accusations. According to their perception, when they hit a Turkish target they were not driven by nationalistic motivation but by anti-imperialistic one. Either way, the organisation committed numerous attacks against Greek exponents of the bourgeoisie as they considered them, too. Thus, in their minds, it was their duty to strike against imperialism in all of its forms. Therefore, by perceiving Turkey as a 'tool' of the U.S.A. in the area and as an imperialistic power which occupied Cyprus in order to achieve its goals, 17N's strikes was not prompted by nationalistic motives but by the perception they had about imperialism. Probably, their own explanation was that the U.S.A, the Greek and the Turkish state were governed by the bourgeoisie and thus were the common enemy, without distinctions of nationality. This can be confirmed not only by the fact that they hit against all of the aforementioned 'enemies', including Greeks, but also because their strikes were carefully directed towards specific targets of these three states and not against their people in general, meaning that 17N did not place, for instance, a bomb in the metro station of Athens or assassinate ordinary Turkish or American people. It goes without saying that this is not an attempt to justify their actions, but simply an attempt to discover the ideological background behind their choice of targets. By extension, it can be supported that their criteria were not nationalistic but anti-imperialistic. By perceiving the whole world as a complex of societies under class-struggle terms, their enemies were not Greeks, Americans or Turkish, but the imperialists regardless of their nationality: They fought Americans, and not an American farmer for whom they felt solidarity, they fought the Turkish diplomats and militants, and not a poor Turkish proletarian, and they fought the Greek bourgeoisie and not a Greek factory worker.

Greek political parties condemned Sipahioğlu's assassination. PASOK characterised it as an 'anti-Greek action that aims at the creation of problems in the external affairs of the country' while ND commented that 'it defames the country and creates tensions with Turkey'.¹⁵⁸ KKE stated that these actions 'inflame the relations of neighbouring states' and Synaspismos expressed its concern 'because the criminal act happened in a very crucial period for our national issues and aims to damage our

¹⁵⁸ Newspaper Eleftherotypia, 05/07/1994, p. 21

national interests'.¹⁵⁹ As it can be seen once again Greek politics did not engage into a direct dialogue with the organisation, nor tried to reply to any of the accusations or to ideological matters. This 'denial' may have to do with the fact that they did not want to 'legitimise' 17N by considering it as a governing factor of the country's political life. In reality though, 17N was such a factor as its action for 27 years indisputably influenced the political life of the country and in many times created tensions in Greece's external relations.

4.7 The last - bloody - dance

On January 1996, Greece and Turkey were on the verge of war again, this time over control of the rocky islets of Imia (*Kardak* in Turkish) which are located between the Greek island of Kalymnos and the Turkish peninsula of Bodrum. The question was to which of the two countries Imia belonged, after a Turkish cargo ship accidentally ran aground on the eastern islet and had to be salvaged. Special Forces of the two countries went to the island and the crisis escalated. Finally, each country's troops retreated after consultations with the U.S.A and the European Union¹⁶⁰. In the Greek Parliament, PASOK's president and Prime Minister of Greece at that time, Kostas Simitis, who had succeeded Andreas Papandreou after his death, on June 1996, stated that 'I would like to thank the U.S.A government for their initiative and their help'.¹⁶¹ This statement provoked several reactions from the opposition parties and from Greek society as well.

As a reaction to the Imia crisis, on February 15, 1996 17N launched a rocket attack on the U.S. Embassy in Athens, without causing any casualties. The organisation did not publish any proclamation for this action but in a later one in May, 1997, took the responsibility: 'we fired the rocket against the American Embassy on February 15, 1996. The reasons for this action were so obvious and understandable that we did not send a notice. The laughter, the general sadness and the cracking that

¹⁵⁹ *Ibid.*

¹⁶⁰ Kiesling, John Brady. *Greek Urban Warriors. Resistance & Terrorism 1967-2014*. Lycabettus Press, Athens, 2014, p. 263.

¹⁶¹ The extract from Simitis speech (in Greek) can be found online in the following link from YouTube: <https://youtu.be/UWUuEBpw07M>. 00.00 – 02.15 min.. Accessed on 20/11/2021.

spontaneously caused even to these MPs, the public thanks of Prime Minister Simitis to the Americans were eloquent enough'.¹⁶²

The next attack against a non-Greek target the organisation performed was when they placed explosive devices in some particular companies (McDonalds, General Motors and Citibank), repeating in their proclamation their anti-imperialistic rhetoric. This specific proclamation does not have any notable value as far as research for this paper is concerned, if the organisation had not provided a detailed analysis of the issue of nationalism.

17N accused the media of disinformation and of deliberately confusing the terms 'nationalism' and 'nationism'¹⁶³. Thus, the organisation claimed that the media, when using the word 'nationalism' where the word 'nationism' should be used, misguide the Greek public opinion purposely. In this way, 17N said:

On the one hand, they neutralise their main enemy, patriotism, through slander, and on the other, they skilfully silence another ruthless nationalism, of which the country is a victim[...]The demand of the Americans to take over the Aegean and to place the Turks as gendarmes in the middle of the Aegean, thus making the Greek islands of the Eastern Aegean hostage to the mighty Turkey, does not constitute nationalism on the part of the Americans and the Turks, but what does constitute nationalism is the refusal of the Greeks to accept these plans of modern annexation [A/N expressing irony].¹⁶⁴

As one may observe from the aforementioned, 17N wanted to make a clear distinction between 'nationism' and 'nationalism'. According to their judgment, 'nationism' can

¹⁶²Source: Proclamation of "17N" under the title "Peratikos" published on April 7, 1997.

¹⁶³ In Greek language the word for nation is 'ethnos'. The word for nationalism is 'ethnikismos'. In their proclamation members of "17N" use the word 'ethnismos' which has a different meaning from 'ethnikismos'. 'Ethnismos' could be translated as 'ethnism', 'nationism' or 'patriotism'; In "The Dictionary of Common Modern Greek", published in December 1998 by the Institute of Modern Greek Studies of the Aristotle University of Thessaloniki one can read about 'ethnismos': "*εθνισμός, ο [εθνισμός]:* The opinion that encourages the expression and cultivation of national consciousness and at the same time recognizes and respects national differences. One's absolute belief and dedication to the ideals of the nation he's/she's part of, without any willingness to disdain or devalue the ideals of another nation". https://www.greek-language.gr/greekLang/modern_greek/tools/lexica/triantafyllides/search.html?lq=%CE%B5%CE%B8%CE%BD%CE%B9%CF%83%CE%BC%CF%8C%CF%82&dq= . Moreover in sociolinguistics the word 'nationism' is 'The practical concerns of running a nation, especially seen as divorced from emotional beliefs about national identity'. See the link: <https://wikidiff.com/nationalism/nationism>

¹⁶⁴ Source: Proclamation of "17N" under the title "For McDonalds, General Motors and Citibank" published on April , 1998.

also be combined with internationalism a notion which they claimed to be advocates of.¹⁶⁵ For the organisation, ‘nationalism’ was acceptable and necessary and ‘belonged’ to the working class, while nationalism - which was a ‘tool’ of the bourgeoisie - was not. Out of all these, one can elicit 17N’s perception of patriotism and national identity as well as their perception of national independence. As Koufontinas stated, in an interview he gave almost immediately after his surrender to the Greek Authorities, in 2002:

Nationalism will coexist [...] with internationalism [...] but it will be in fundamental opposition to nationalism. As a revolutionary organisation, “17N” could not have any relation to nationalism, the regime’s main ideological weapon. The organisation was accused of such thing though, when hitting important representatives of the Turkish political-military complex, responsible for crimes against the Cypriot, Kurdish and Turkish people. We could not ignore the crime of invading, occupying, uprooting thousands of refugees [...] and turning Cyprus into a weak protectorate, which will serve the plans of imperialism out of fear of being considered nationalists.¹⁶⁶

On February 16, 1999, the leader of Kurdish PKK, Abdullah Öcalan, who was hiding in the residence of the Greek ambassador in Kenya, was mysteriously kidnapped by the Turkish Secret Service and was flown handcuffed to Turkey.¹⁶⁷ This triggered a storm of reactions among the Greek political scene as there were suspicions, which were never actually proven, that the Greek government had come to an arrangement with the Turkish one in order to hand over the Kurdish leader. In a furious statement 17N published, they accused the Greek Government and the Prime Minister Kostas Simitis of treason, while speaking for domination by America, a torn-apart Greek state, and ‘bankruptcy’ of the Greek political system.¹⁶⁸

¹⁶⁵ As Dimitris Koufontinas mentions: ‘We considered our struggle an integral part of the liberation struggle around the world’, Koufontinas, Dimitris, I was born 17 November. Athens, A.A.Livanis, 2014, pp. 259, (translated from Greek by the author of this paper).

¹⁶⁶ Newspaper Eleftherotopia, 07/12/2002, Koufontinas’ interview at ‘Ios’.

¹⁶⁷ For the detailed history and purposes of PKK see: <https://www.counterextremism.com/threat/kurdistan-workers-party-pkk>

¹⁶⁸ “We express our deep sorrow for the arrest of the popular leader of the Kurdish people, the president of the PKK, Öcalan. The grief becomes even greater by the treacherous role played by the Simitis government in it.”. Source: Proclamation of “17N” under the title “Ocalan” published on March 8, 1999.

The references of 17N to international matters in combination with national issues continued until the last attack of the organisation. On June 8, 2000, the British Army officer Steven Saunders, serving as the British military attaché in Athens at that time, was fatally shot by members of the organisation. In the proclamation published after the assassination, 17N connected the attack with the NATO operation in Serbia on March-June 1999, by claiming that Saunders ‘took an active part in planning last year’s barbaric airstrikes in Yugoslavia and is therefore one of the perpetrators of last year’s Nazi crime’.¹⁶⁹ In the same text, they also took the responsibility for several other attacks in the previous years, among them were the rocket attack on the house of the German Ambassador Karl Heinz Kuhna and the attack against the Dutch Embassy in Athens, on May 7, 1999, as ‘retaliation for NATO’s bombings in Serbia’.¹⁷⁰

Finally, a few months later, on December of 2000, ‘17N’ published another proclamation in which they explained how exactly they committed Saunders’ assassination, while also replying to the allegations of Scotland Yard, according to which Saunders had nothing to do with the war in Serbia, by supporting that ‘we do not hit [...] English tourists (the equivalent of the civilian victims of Yugoslavia) nor do we “fight” risk-free from a height of 5.000 meters [...]’.¹⁷¹ Saunderson’s assassination was the last 17N committed; The epilogue of the organisation that ‘haunted’ the Greek life of *Metapolitefsi* for 27 whole years had be written in the port of Piraeus on Saturday, June 29, 2002 when a bomb exploded accidently in the hands of Savvas Xiros, leading in this way to the end of the Revolutionary Organisation 17 November.

The organisation perceived every one of their strikes as a struggle against imperialism in general, and the American one specifically, which was considered by them as a force of occupation in Greece. Moreover, they denied the democratic political transition that occurred in Greece after the fall of the military regime by claiming that it was a ‘regime of fascism covered with a parliamentary cloak’.¹⁷² 17N’s members regarded themselves not only as revolutionaries who wanted to bring social change but also as members of a national resistance movement against the occupation forces they believed that existed in Greece by controlling the political system and Greece’s social wealth.

¹⁶⁹ Source: Proclamation of “17N” under the title “Saunders[A]” published on March, 2000.

¹⁷⁰ *Ibid.*

¹⁷¹ Source: Proclamation of “17N” under the title “Saunders[B]” published on December 11, 2000.

¹⁷² Source: Proclamation of “17N” under the title “Execution of CIA leader in Greece” published on December 1975

The rhetoric by which they tried to justify some of their attacks seemed nationalistic, but what seemed to be ingrained deep in the mind of 17N's members was actually their Marxist approach. Strongly believing that the proletariat must obtain the political power and 'constitute itself a nation', and guiding every one of their actions by their own Marxist perception of class struggle, 17N believed that their 'struggle' was also national, since they would first have to liberate Greece and then the proletariat would have to rise up as the political power. By perceiving national independence in such way, the organisation essentially embraced the Leninist approach, according to which there is something radical and democratic in every liberation movement, which is directed against oppression and the revolutionaries have to support. Parallel to this, they perceived that their 'struggle' was also social, as they claimed they fought for social change, for socialism in combination with international solidarity with the proletarians, and for the revolutionary movements of other countries. Finally, concerning the matter of the perception of national identity, it is crucial to note the distinction 17N made between the terms 'nationalism' and 'nationism'. Dimitris Koufontinas' explained this distinction in his last book:

17N followed this scientific approach which considers that the nation is a historical category with a past, a present and [...] future which is lost far away in the universal classless society [...] Ideological confusion arises when the national consciousness is used by bourgeois states to fuel its bloody wars, expansion and colonisation. [...] Competitive classes have conflicting interests and develop opposing ideologies, the 'nationalist' one and the nationalistic one [...] 'Nationism' is the ideology of our homeland, the homeland of the working people, which expresses the popular values, the national self-consciousness and is fuelled by the great tradition of the struggles for the national self-determination. 'Nationism' is internationalist. 'Nationism' wants the parity of nations and rejects the idea of the superiority of one nation over others [...]

On the contrary, nationalism is the homeland of wealth. [...] Nationalism [...] defines as a national goal the interest of the bourgeoisie. [...] From the

beginning, 17N tried to combine the national issue with the social one in a country where these two issues are intertwined [...].¹⁷³

5. Conclusions

On August 19, 1952, the Radio Station of Warsaw broadcasted a letter of the Turkish novelist and poet Nazim Hikmet addressed to the Greek people.¹⁷⁴ In this letter Hikmet, among others, said that:

There are two Turkeys and two Greeces; the real one and the fake one. The independent one and the slavish one; One is the Greece of Beloyannis and of the thousands of Greek patriots who suffer in the prisons; the homeland of the Greek people. This is the genuine Greece. One is Turkey with the thousand Turkish patriots who are rotting in the dungeons; The Turkey of the Turkish people. This is the genuine Turkey. But there is also the Turkey and Greece of Menderes and Plastiras. They are the official ones, not the real ones. They are those which with their few supporters sold out both countries to American Imperialism.¹⁷⁵

Having examined the proclamations referring to the attacks against non-Greek targets 17N published, it is time to draw a conclusion regarding the group's perception of national identity and independence. As presented in the introduction, 17N has been characterised as 'left wing terrorists' by Karyotis¹⁷⁶, 'leftist terrorists' by Nomikos¹⁷⁷,

¹⁷³ Koufontinas, Dimitris. *The geopolitics of 17N*. Athens, Monopati, 2020, pp. 201-203, (translated from Greek by the author of this paper).

¹⁷⁴ **Source:** Newspaper "Rizospastis", article under the title "My Greek Brothers", June 9, 2013 (in Greek). A translation of the letter in English can be found in the following link: <http://www.idcommunism.com/2016/07/nazm-hikmet-my-greek-brothers-1952.html>

¹⁷⁵ *Ibid.*

¹⁷⁶ Karyotis, Georgios. "Securitization of Greek Terrorism and Arrest of the `Revolutionary Organization November 17'." *Cooperation and Conflict* 42, no. 3 (September 2007): 271–93. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0010836707079932>.

¹⁷⁷ Nomikos, John M. "Terrorism, Media, and Intelligence in Greece: Capturing the 17 November Group." *International Journal of Intelligence and Counterintelligence* 20, no. 1 (2007): 65–78. <https://doi.org/10.1080/08850600600888896>.

‘dogmatic organisation with hard-line Marxist characteristics’ by Bakoyianni.¹⁷⁸ Others, such as Kassimeris commented that except of its Marxist background 17N was ‘fanatically communistic and in the same time nationalistic’¹⁷⁹, that at some point they also ‘oriented towards more nationalistic matters’ as Gogorosi stated¹⁸⁰ or that they were an ‘urban left-wing and nationalist guerrilla group’, as Floros and Newsome wrote.¹⁸¹

With a first glance, one could support that 17N was indeed communistic as described, as well as nationalistic. However, having examined thoroughly the organisation’s proclamations referring to non-Greek targets, and bearing in mind both the emphatic way in which they denied the ‘accusation’ of nationalism by mentioning quite frequently the Marxist-Leninist theory and the strong effort they made when doing so, one could argue that the aforementioned allegation is not so precise.

Indeed, the rhetoric by which they tried to justify some of their attacks seemed nationalistic, but as it was shown in the previous chapters, what guided them was their own perception of Marxism-Leninism. Considering themselves as patriots who fought for the ‘real national independence of Greece’, and strongly believing that this goal could only be achieved with a socialist program, 17N’s motives cannot be considered nationalistic. Taking into account the crucial distinction between ‘nationalism’ and ‘nationism’, their perception of national identity and independence can be only explained on the basis of their own socio-political view of society. 17N perceived the existence of nations from the viewpoint of the ethnosymbolic approach, according to which nations are modern structures but also have roots in the past, combined with the Marxist approach of class struggle. Being in total agreement with the perception that there are two homelands in every country, the homeland of the powerful (capitalists, the bourgeoisie, imperialists) and the homeland of the weak (the people, proletarians, working class), 17N believed that it carried out a struggle in the name of the latter.

¹⁷⁸ Bakoyannis, Dora. “Terrorism in Greece: Revisiting an Issue.” *Mediterranean Quarterly* 12, no. 3 (2001): 1–7. <https://doi.org/10.1215/10474552-12-3-1>. Dora Bakoyannis is a member of the Greek parliament elected with the New Democracy Party.

¹⁷⁹ Kassimeris, George. *Europe’s last red terrorists. The Revolutionary Organization 17 November*. Athens, Kastaniotis, 2002, p.14.

¹⁸⁰ Gogorosi, Eleni. "Metaphor in the Discourse of Revolutionary Organisation November 17: Analysis Based on a Corpus of the Organisations Communiqués." Order No. 11003734, Lancaster University (United Kingdom), 2009. <https://login.ezproxy.leidenuniv.nl/login?url=https://www.proquest.com/dissertations-theses/metaphor-discourse-revolutionary-organisation/docview/2124311195/se-2?accountid=12045>.

¹⁸¹ Floros, Christos, and Bruce Newsome. "Building Counter-Terrorism Capacity Across Borders: Lessons from the Defeat of “Revolutionary Organization November 17th”." *Journal of Security Sector Management* 6.2 (2008): 1-15.

The roots of this opinion can be traced back to the Greek people's struggles for independence, from the creation of the modern Greek nation-state until now. The differentiation, however, lies in the view held by the parties and 17N on how this independence will be achieved. 17N believed that only by breaking the shackles of dependence with the 'powers of imperialism' the real independence of Greece could be achieved. In order to implement this concept, the organisation chose the path of armed violence and not, for example, the creation of a political party that would operate within the framework of parliamentary democracy. The reason behind this choice is disclosed by organisation in their proclamation after the strike against Tsantes and Veloutsos in 1983: 'we do not believe in a peaceful parliamentary transition to socialism'.¹⁸² Thus, it caused a cycle of bloodshed and violence that lasted for 27 whole years and affected the political life of the country.

But, this was their own perception of their action. As it was previously presented, the Greek political system did not agree with their point of view, characterising their action as terrorist and in many cases anti-national. The political parties did not want to engage in a direct dialogue with the organisation regarding theoretical issues of national independence and identity. What acted as a deterrent to their persistence by simply condemning 17N's bloody act, was probably their concern that if they actually engaged in a dialogue, they would 'legitimise' the organisation by treating it as an equal interlocutor, and that they would also allow them to be perceived as a governing factor of the country's political system. Moreover, each party had its own agenda regarding the issue of national independence. What they agreed on, however, was that the organisation's actions often harmed the country's national interests. For ND this was something expectable, based on its ideology, which -as it turned out- was conservative and on the issue of the nation had a view closer to primordialism, while on national issues considered Greece as part of the West. Moreover ND thought that national independence would be ensured through alliances with the West countries. For the other parties that were examined such agreement could be characterised as a little paradoxical. Both PASOK with its anti-American rhetoric -at least in its first years- and Synaspismos, did not directly express a pro-Western view but quite the opposite. As for the KKE, faithful as it stressed to the principles of Marxism-Leninism, rejected any measure of approach to the Western

¹⁸² Source: Proclamation of "17N" under the title "Tsantes and Veloutsos" published on October 1983

powers. Finally, even if in their founding declarations or reactions after 17N's strikes they shared the same 'concerns' with the organisation regarding national issues (f.i. the Cyprus Issue or the threat of Turkey), they had not been accused of nationalism, as 17N was.

Regardless of the parties' will, however, the organisation undoubtedly played the role of a governing factor as, with its actions, it caused tensions both in the internal and external relations of the country. For many years, the confrontation of political violence and anti-state terrorism was an unsolved problem that Greece could not overcome, thus affecting many aspects of economic and political life.

In summary, it can be proposed that the difference between the organisation's and the parties' perception of Greece's national identity and independence had to do with each one's stance in the political spectrum. 17N visualised a socialistic world, far from any dependence on foreign powers, a world in which people and nations would harmonically cooperate until the latter disappear in the classless society. For the realisation of this vision they decided to use armed violence, a decision which differentiated them, for instance, from KKE which -one could say- they shared a common ideology with.

The political parties that were previously examined believed in the procedures of parliamentary democracy. They thought -except KKE- that the national interests of the country, its national independence and territorial integrity could be better served only through strong alliances with other countries and Greece's participation in international organisations.

Finally, both 17N and the political parties of Greece addressed to Greek people. As it has been shown, 17N's 'struggle' did not manage to convince this audience while the parliamentary democracy managed to confront the organisation's violence. Nonetheless, as long as the causes that generated this violence are not eliminated, so will parliamentary democracies be confronted with similar phenomena. Thus, in order to avoid an endless cycle of violence, modern democratic societies must find ways to eliminate those causes that breed organisations that embrace acts of violence.

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