

“This was our Liberation”. Women of the Resistance in Greece and Yugoslavia.

The research of Resistance during World War II has been mainly dominated by doctrinal approaches and points of view, connected with the attempt not only to suppress the political courses and demands of its participants, but also to conceal the political process that led to the Liberation. Therefore, the historical analysis of the Greek Resistance is oriented to the beginning of War and Occupation and focuses on the history of strategy and not on the social or political aspects concerning the people involved or the liberating struggle.

The aim of this paper is to demonstrate one of these suppressed perspectives, the role of women in two of the most massive and grass-rooted resistance fronts in the Balkans. The women in the National Liberation Front (EAM- ELAS) and National Liberation Army of Yugoslavia (Partizanke) took action during the most crucial phase of war. Starting from the massive demonstrations against famine and the draft for mandatory labor and following their enrollment to the guerrilla and partisan battalions as combat fighters, they managed to shape women's collective memory and practice. Given that, the Resistance can be seen as the first massive introduction of women in the public and political sphere and by extension a procedure that re-established their social role in Greek and Yugoslavian society by affecting the course of their respective societies.

To evaluate this process, we shall examine the characteristics of women's involvement in the National Liberation Armies, their number, social background, political beliefs and the degree of equality with their comrades. The research will then try to indicate their contribution not only to the Resistance but to the way that women as historical subjects viewed and confronted their role since then. The image of the fighting partisan woman will be seen not as a project of propaganda, but as a conscientious life choice for thousands of women who sought national freedom but also justice, freedom for the people, as well as respect and liberty for themselves.

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