

# **‘The treason of the intellectuals’: The Shadowy presence of the Congress for Cultural Freedom in Greece, 1950-1965**



ZINOVIA LIALIOUTI

TRANSATLANTIC STUDIES ASSOCIATION  
16<sup>TH</sup> ANNUAL CONFERENCE  
UNIVERSITY COLLEGE CORK, IRELAND  
10-12 JULY 2017

Acknowledgements: This presentation is part of my post-doctoral research titled “Cultural Cold War and Anti-communism: The Congress for Cultural Freedom (CCF) and Greece, 1950-1965”. The research has received a grant from the State Scholarship Foundation (IKY) as part of the Action “Support for Postdoctoral Researchers”, OP “Development of human resources, education and lifelong learning” with priority axes 6, 8, 9, co-funded by the European Social Fund - ESF and the Greek State.

# THEORETICAL AND METHDOLOGICAL CONSIDERATIONS



- Literature on the various branches of the Congress for Cultural Freedom (CCF) is particularly rich.
- However, the Greek case is an exception in terms of publications and research. Is there a “conspiracy of silence”?
- The Cultural Cold War as an interdisciplinary field of research.
- Scholar debates: i) how can ideology, culture and propaganda be delimited during the Cold War period? ii) How does the ‘state-private network’ structure affect individual autonomy?

# THEORETICAL AND METHDOLOGICAL CONSIDERATIONS



- The CCF experience: The perspective from smaller countries is quite different from the perspective of core CCF countries (e.g. France, Germany, Great Britain).
- Points of differentiation involve: the extent and depth of transatlantic ties. These consisted mainly in networks of people and involved to a much lesser degree a community of ideas and interests. Also: the availability of resources.
- Anticommunism as the principal unifying element and the cohesive force in these networks. Anticommunist commitment accounts for most of the initiatives involving the CCF in the Greek case.
- The story of CCF in Greece from the early fifties to the early sixties is a story of contradictions. It is also a story of inadequate presence and of expected and unexpected absences.

# Working Assumptions and Context



What is absent in the Greek case?

- The Vital Center as conceptualized by A. Schlesinger
- Liberal institutions in the Western standards (The 'sickly' democracy hypothesis. The contradictions of the post-civil war regime)
- A sizeable Non-Communist Left

*Working Assumption: that the presence of CCF in Greece was weak as can argued by the reluctance, and ultimately inability, to form an official committee, but also by the absence of an original intellectual and textual production in Greek.*

➤ The contradictions of CCF in Greece are personified by Manolis Korakas. Korakas was a lawyer and a journalist, specializing in trade unions; he had joined the Socialist Workers Party of Greece (SEKE) in 1918, but withdrew 5 years later. He was recruited to the CCF by Irving Brown.

Inaugural CCF conference: Berlin 1950. Greek representatives: Korakas and Panayotis Kanellopoulos. Kanellopoulos was a philosopher and a conservative politician, with significant social standing and participation to the Greek resistance movement. He lost contact with the CCF after Berlin.

# RECONSTRUCTING THE PRESENCE OF CCF IN GREECE



## Milestones in CCF activity in Greece:

- Contact between Korakas and Michael Josselson [CCF Executive Secretary]: since November **1952**.
- **1953**: Korakas is employed by the CCF as its unofficial representative on a part-time basis
- Autumn **1954**: Nicolas Nabocov [CCF General Secretary] visits Greece. Contacts with Greek elites' representatives (e.g. Giorgos Theotokas, Thomas and Konstantinos Doxiadis etc.) Nabocov's perception of Korakas: he appreciated his devotion to the cause and his many connections to the Greek elites, but he felt that Korakas did not have any significant intellectual standing of his own and thus could not serve as the public image for CCF.
- The **1954** Greek municipal elections: difference of opinion between Korakas and the CCF. Korakas was particularly critical of Greek post-civil war politics.

# RECONSTRUCTING THE PRESENCE OF CCF IN GREECE



## Milestones in CCF activity in Greece:

- Autumn **1958**: the CCF opts for collaboration with a Greek public relations firm in order to promote its activities and publications in Greece more efficiently. This choice to ‘**professionalize**’ CCF activities is revealing for the absence of a strong involvement by the Greek intellectuals. However, it was terminated in 1959.
- The **1958** Greek **national elections**. The CCF was alarmed by the electoral gains for the pro-communists.
- October **1958**: The CCF **Rhodes conference** (theme: ‘Representative Government and Public Liberties in the New States’). Limited Greek involvement.
- **1958**: Korakas (with Vyron Stamatopoulos) launches the journal ‘**International Life**’. Korakas managed to get CCF funding.
- Summer **1960**: Korakas joined the **10<sup>th</sup> CCF conference in Berlin** and traveled to the US as a foreign leader grantee of the US government.
- June **1962**: CCF stops funding ‘International Life’. Its content and readership were considered unsatisfactory by the CCF.

# RECONSTRUCTING THE PRESENCE OF CCF IN GREECE



## Milestones in CCF activity in Greece:

- Autumn **1962**: Korakas angrily realized that he could not mobilize Greek intellectuals in signing a public letter condemning Chinese foreign policy as had been requested by the CCF. He wrote of the “treason of the intellectuals” .
- **1961-1963**: the Greek Centre is strengthened. The cleavage communists vs. anticommunists is gradually substituted by the cleavage Right vs. Anti-Right.
- May **1963**: Contacts between the CCF and the editor Christos Lambrakis. Lambrakis launches the monthly journal *Epoches* and receives CCF funding.
- Spring **1963**: the CCF ends its working relationship with Korakas as well as all Congress activities in Greece.

# Concluding Remarks



- The story of the CCF in Greece is to a large extent the story of the vigorous commitment of Manolis Korakas—a socialist and passionate anti-communist—who, nevertheless, remained in the shadows due to Congress’ elitist bias.
- On the other hand, Korakas could hardly provide intellectual activity suitable for the standards of the CCF. His engagement with the CCF was not imitated by prominent intellectuals with the same vigour or durability, thus failing to shape a movement of liberal anticommunism and resulting in a feeble and incomplete CCF presence in Greece.
- The argument of a weak presence is not only sustained by the inability to form an official Greek committee—reflecting the inability to form a strong and active network, in essence—but also by the lack of an original intellectual and cultural production in Greek.
- Moreover, the CCF in Greece did not manage to become attached to a party formation or political group of centrist or social-democratic orientation.
- Interpretation: the features of post-civil war Greek politics, namely the polarization between Left and Right and the weakness of the Centre, but also the inability of anti-communist Greek elites to identify themselves with social and cultural modernization.
- The civil war and its legacy were decisive in differentiating the Greek case from the Western European experience of the CCF.
- Overall, the national context is indispensable for understanding the actual form of transatlantic intellectual endeavours.