THE URBANIZATION OF ATHENS AND ITS SUBCULTURE
– WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO REFUGEES AND REMBETIKA –

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I Introduction

In this essay I will discuss some characteristics of the process of urban growth in Greece with special reference to that of Athens. The Social Science Centre of Athens has published a good number of excellent studies on this subject and related problems to which I owe much.[1] My approach to this problem is based on my previous field experiences in Middle Eastern cities.[2] mainly Beirut and Cairo, but comparative analysis is not intended, nor are efforts made to relate these cities along theoretical lines.

However, in Athens, Cairo, and Beirut urban development was spurred on by changes in international relations, linked to the internal situations. This similarity descernible among these cities surprised me, as I had always considered Greece a Western society given her importance as one of the sources of modern Western civilization. It is of course true that Greece belongs to the West but at the same time she also belongs to the East; this is particularly true with respect to her subculture. I shall tentatively call this Eastern aspect Levantine. In fact, a close reading of descriptions of Greece produced by travellers and foreign officials since the last century will show that this is not a new discovery of mine but a well-known fact in the West. However, in Japan this is not generally recognized, and on my first visit to Greece, I was struck by this most important aspect of the society.

II Urbanization in Greece and Athens

1 Growth of the national population

According to the census of April 1971, the total population of Greece is 8,768,641 with a 4.9% growth over the previous count in 1961. The Bureau of Statistics estimates that the population in 1871 was 1,457,894. Therefore, within a century, Greek population increased between six and eight times over that of the 1871's. This extremely high rate of growth is not due solely to natural increase. There is also a socio-political explanation. The annexation of the Ionian Islands in 1864 was the beginning of a period of territorial expansion of Greece: Thessaly and Arta in 1881, Macedonia, Thrace, Crete and the Aegean Islands in the years from 1907 to 1920, and the Dodecanese in 1947. This process is still

going on but it is sufficient for our immediate purpose just to remember this.

In the last hundred years, Greek population twice showed over 30% growth (1860-70, and 1879-89). In the period 1907-1920 growth was 90%, followed by a decade during which the growth rate was 23.6%. Needless to say, a tremendous change occurred in the period 1907-1920. World War I and the Great Depression severely shook every corner of the world and both of them sowed the seeds for further great upheavals after World War II. In Greece tremendous growth of population accompanied these events. I regret that my information on the details of these historic changes is extremely limited. During the time between the two World Wars Greek immigration peaked for the second time in modern history. This increase of national population combined with a decline in employment occurred not only in Greece but also in many of other parts of the world.

Looking at the urban-rural distribution of the Greek population, it is safe to say that from 1910 (1) rapid growth of the urban population began and (2) the rural population started to decrease. The rural population was larger at this stage and reversal trends were not established until the 1950s, but the urban population has kept up a steady growth since the 1920s. The most remarkable aspect in this general trend is the expansion of three major cities, and Athens in particular attracted so great an in-flow as to establish her preeminence as a city.

2   Athens as primate city

Communities are classified in Greek statistics into three categories: (1) urban with a population of over 10,000, (2) semi-urban with a population of less than 10,000 but over 2,000, and (3) rural with a population of less than 2,000. It is neither practical nor meaningful to adjust these categories to internationally comparable terms, as there are specific socio-cultural reasons for these definitions. Thirteen cities were over 2,000 in 1920, and such cities increased in number to 18 in 1928 and in 1950, after a temporary decrease to 16 in 1940. The largest three cities in the 1920s were Athens with 453,042 inhabitants, Salonika with 174,390, and Patras with 52,174 and these three still are the largest three in 1970. One clear difference that can be seen among them, however, is in their rate of population growth in a last half century: Athens grew to 2,540,241, Salonika to 557,360, and Patras to 120,847. Today Athens is nearly 5 times larger than the second largest city Salonika and more than 20 times larger than the third, in contrast to 2.6 and 8.7 times larger in 1920. This is the reason for calling Athens primate city.

Athens was a poor, ravaged community compared to other two on the eve of Greek national independence. Under Turkish rule Athens had recovered a little from the decay she had been in since the 4th century, but she was still no more than a rural town of 5,000 inhabitants at most. Her modern history began in 1834 when the capital of the newly born state was moved there from Nauplia. But the birth of the new capital, and of the state alike, was thanks to the international politics of the day, specifically to the support given by the British government which made use of Greek patriotism and Balkan nationalist movements to stave off a Russian march to the south after the defeat of the Turks. And this British policy

of support for nationalism in Greece was strongly backed by European intellectuals who were nostalgic about the deserted historic city of Athens.

The king of the new state was not a Greek who had fought the war of independence with his fellow nationalists but a Bavarian prince and he built his first palace with a commanding view of the Acropolis which was at the time outside of the city, but is now at the heart of Athens. When this king came to Athens, her population was about 14,000; by 1870 it had reached almost 50,000; in the following two decades it doubled and by 1920 it was over 300,000.

In the early 1920s, Athens went into a period of rapid population growth, to which a new important factor made an enormous contribution; refugees from Asia Minor.

According to the 1928 census, the total number of refugees was 1,221,849, of which 81.5% poured into the cities and suburbs. This marks the turning point of urban-rural distribution of the population. In 1920 the urban sector was 23.1% of the total but in 1928 it had pushed up to 30.6%. Accordingly, the rural sector was reduced to 54.7% from 61.8% in the same span of time. This rapid trend of urban growth paralleled with rural stagnation stands in sharp contrast to the semi-urban areas which have maintained a steady 14–15% of the population over the last three decades.

245,000 refugees (22.9%) settled in Athens and her fringes. The influx of refugees increased the total Greek population by one fourth and their preferential influx to the metropolis made Athens far bigger than the other cities. Salonika was also enormously increased, but in the same period that it increased 44%, Athens increased 77%. There were some cities with 100% growth but their original sizes were not large enough to change the city hierarchy. For example, only one of them had a population of over 20,000; the others were on the order of 15,000.

3   Refugees from Asia Minor

Even today in Greece, and in Turkey as well, the word "refugees" refers to people who were forcibly repatriated to Greece after 1922. The majority of them were born outside Greece. The sole criterion applied to determine Greek nationality was affiliation to the Greek Orthodox church or community. Assimilation or absorption of these people was a difficult and painful national task. A survey done by Eva E. Sandis in 1971 states that "the year 1922 marked the end of an era for Greece; the end of the centuries old dream of a Greek nation with its capital in Constantinople" (p.11). According to Ms. Sandis, the dream harbored since the end of the Byzantine Empire and the beginning of Turkish rule of Greece "began to be concretized in 1830, when Greece won its independence." And this dream was "almost realized at the end of the first World War," when the Allied Powers drew up the Treaty of Sevres, which granted Greece control of Smyrna and Eastern Thrace. It is the prevailing view among contemporary Greek intellectuals that these areas "belong" to Greece. But such a view unavoidably invites criticism and questions. Firstly, what kind of legitimacy do they hold for their national "dream" in terms of the current state system, practically and poli-

Table 1 Population growth in the Greek cities (over 20,000 inhabitants after 1920)

City	Population						Growth rate				
	1920	1928	1940	1951	1961	1971	1920–1928	1928–1940	1940–1951	1951–1961	1961–1971
Greater Athens	453,042	802,000	1,124,109	1,378,586	1,852,709	2,540,241	77.0	40.2	22.6	34.4	37.0
Greater Salonika	174,390	251,254	278,145	297,164	297,635	557,360	44.1	10.7	6.8	25.7	35.0
Kavala	22,939	49,980	49,667	42,102	44,517	46,887	117.9	−0.6	−15.2	5.7	4.0
Greater Patras	52,174	61,278	62,275	79,014	95,364	120,847	17.5	1.6	26.9	20.7	16.0
Greater Volos	30,046	47,892	54,919	65,090	67,424	88,096	59.4	14.7	18.5	3.6	4.0
Greater Iraklion	24,848	33,404	39,550	51,144	63,458	84,710	34.4	18.4	29.3	24.4	21.0
Corfu	27,175	32,221	19,988	27,431	26,991	31,461	18.6	38.0	37.2	−1.6	16.5
Komotini	21,294	30,136	31,217	29,734	28,355	32,219	41.5	3.6	−4.8	−4.6	13.6
Greater Kalamata	20,905	28,955	34,891	37,781	38,211	40,402	38.5	20.5	8.3	1.1	−2.0
Greater Canea	24,976	26,604	28,168	33,211	28,467	53,026	6.5	5.9	17.9	15.8	5.0
Larisa	21,084	23,899	32,686	41,016	55,391	72,760	13.4	36.8	25.5	35.0	30.0
Yanina	20,765	20,485	21,877	32,315	34,997	40,130	−1.4	6.8	47.7	8.3	14.0
Trikala	20,194	18,682	18,892	24,605	27,876	38,840	−7.5	1.1	27.7	27.2	39.3

This is a simplified table made by Eva E. Sandis, *Refugees & Economic Migrants in Greater Athens* (1973, Athens) p.180.

Table 2 Population of the Greater Athens (1920–71)

Census	Athens		Piraeus		Suburbs	
	Population	%	Population	%	Population	%
1920	292,831	64.6	133,482	29.4	26,729	6.0
1928	395,892	49.4	192,877	24.0	213,231	26.6
1940	481,225	42.8	186,542	16.6	456,342	40.6
1951	555,484	40.3	192,626	14.0	630,476	45.7
1961	627,564	33.8	189,728	10.2	1,035,417	56.0
1971	867,023	34.1	187,458	7.4	1,485,760	58.5

Source: Eva E. Sandis, op. cit. Appendix II (p. 183).

tically speaking? Their view is understandable, in so far as it is a kind of protest (after the fact) against the malfeasances and cruel oppression suffered by Greece in the decaying course of the Ottoman Empire, but the first intention of Greek nationalists, and of the Arabs and the Serbs as well, one should add, was to liberate themselves. Secondly, it seems possible that this "dream" is the product of nationalist sentiment or even ethnocentric chauvinism in combination with or encouraged by religious faith. This possibility comes from the structure of both the Byzantine and the Ottoman Empires, which were multi-national in their components. Thirdly, their hope was guaranteed by the Western Powers, but what was asked in return? As I see it, their hope was guaranteed by the international political situation in which Greece found itself, wedged in between the Balkan Question and the Eastern Question. Greece's sincere aspiration stood on a thin balance in world power games, and was played with by cunning European politicians. The United States, a newcomer to such games, appealed to the principle of self-determination, but the effect was that the U.S. too was willing to see Greek hopes dashed to protect American interests. Her preference of Anatolia to Armenia where in secret allotted to U.S., America has established a good excuse of supporting self-determination[3] In the same manner, Italy blocked Greece by insisting that her share of Asia Minor be limited to territory where Orthodox churches prospered. In the end, the Greek army which had landed in Asia Minor escorted by the British fleet, was defeated by the Turkish army led by Kemal whom the Powers were to recognize afterward. This was the end of the Greek "dream". The Revolution in Russia also played a role in hastening the decision of the Powers.

This Greek nationalist dream was similar in nature and results to that of the old-style Arab nationalists, who tried to rely on host powers to achieve expansionist goals. There ensued a tragic chain of bloody clashes between the two religious camps of Christians and Moslems. As a result, the Greek dream was crushed, and even Smyrna, the great Greek colony in Asia Minor was burned down and became for Greeks at least a ghost town.

People who had left Asia Minor before 1922 and returned to Greece were put in the category of refugees. The same policy can be seen to have been applied to the Palestinian refugees, but the result was different. Both of these refugee problems were products of power games being played in the former territories of the Ottoman Empire. This is an important subject for sociological analysis in the field of political international affairs, but will not be discussed further in this paper than is necessary to describe urbanization problems in Greece. The points to be remembered are: (1) the 1920s mark a turning point in the history of Greek urban development, (2) Athens became the most important city, and (3) refugees from Asia Minor played a key role in the development of Athens. In this respect, urbanization in Greece parallels that of other non-Western countries in which changes after World War I led to the supremity of the capital city.

III   Problems of rapid urbanization

1   Expansion of the metropolitan area

The expansion of Athens is still going on thanks to a constant rural exodus, spurred even more since the 1950s by accelerated industrialization. Athens and Piraeus, a port city, constitute two nuclei, major and minor, in the metropolitan region, but their populations are exceeded by those of their suburbs. 58.5% of the inhabitants of Greater Athens lives outside the city proper. Urbanization in the 1920s and in 1950s are different in their social contexts; the earlier was due to socio-political changes and the later to industrialization after the Greek civil war. In 1973 Athens contained 35% of the manufacturing industries and also 45% of industrial workers in Greece. This suggests that the major and even most of the larger scale factories are centered in this city.

Statistics show exactly the same rate of population decrease in rural areas as increase in urban areas. The reality is, however, more complicated than this would seem to imply. There has been an immigration of workers to Western Europe and to oil producing countries. And, at the same time, there has been an influx of seamen and sailors to this marine country from less developed countries.

Surveys on the motivation to migrate to the metropolis have made clear that the three major reasons, in order of importance, are "for a better life", "for a job", and "for education". All these reasons belong to an economic aspect, including the third. Because higher education is scarce in Greece, in particular in the rural areas and islands, adults are eager to find opportunities for the job training, as well as free schooling. Greek parents are much concerned with their children's education, but the number of institutions of higher learning is limited and their absorbing capacities are also small. For this reason, a great number of applicants rush them and their level has been pushed up. Privates instructors who help with preparations for the exams of the higher schools are prospering and their social status is well recognized. It is interesting that many experts attribute the bottleneck of Greek economic developement to a shortage of professionals. Not a small number of students from even middle class families are sent to European universities, and it is common for children from wealthy families who are educated in foreign languages from childhood. However, the demand for university graduates is low, and apart from some specific professionals, satisfying jobs are hard to find. Some attribute the government's unwillingness to expand higher education to its fear of ever growing radical trends among the youth and students. It is true that they played a crucial role in some recent political changes but this was at a time when youth riots were seen all over the world. No matter how burdensome it may seem to enlarge institutions of higher education and ensure places for their graduates, the alternative – leaving potential manpower in a state of underdevelopment – is surely a mistake.

2.   Urban communities

Athens is now in a state of chaos with a huge encampment of urban villagers

due to rapid growth of her population. The new urbanites are all quite inactive, unwilling to join in citizens' movements or other social activities. They are reserved, if not aloof, from general cultural activities, and even from schools. Their only enthusiastic participation is in club activities with others from the same village. There are more than 6,000 of these clubs in all Greek cities but the majority is in Athens. Few of them are active for more than several decades and not every village has its own club at a given time. One report informs us that only 15% of villages have clubs in Athens and another source tells us that active village clubs might number less than 100 while the others are dormant for a variety of reasons one of which is certainly political. One of these clubs, the Filoti Union, has a history of over a half century. It is reputed to be one of the oldest in Athens and had gone dormant, but this club was reactivated suddenly in 1960s under the military regime. A key factor in the revival was an incident that occurred during the course of a dispute over the water supply between Filoti and a neighbouring village. One intellectual commented that the Filoti Union was an exceptional case because this incident strengthened the tie between the urban club and the home village, and revitalized club activities as well. Observers at the time watched the matter closely and described in detail the course of development of the dispute leading to the incident over the water supply, explaining it in the light of the then government's policy toward urban club activities, and as an example of interplay between the village leaders and the central power. However, the following two points attract special attention. (A) At that time, the authorities required every club and association to register, but many of them could not because they were led by "communists and/or their agents". As in many other uncivilized polities which use labels of this kind to isolate groups which oppose the regime and critical intellectuals, only "authentic" groups were given financial aid. (B) The neighbouring small village of Danakos, with less than 150 inhabitants an abundant supply of excellent fresh water had once been annexed to the village of Filoti, with 1500 inhabitants the largest on the island of Naxos. But Danakos recovered independence from Filoti under the military regime and stopped the water supply to Filoti. Neither the military nor the succeeding civilian government was able to make them compromise. The villagers of Danakos preferred running the water off to selling it to Filoti which was then forced to buy inferior water from another village. Pipes for bringing this inferior water to Filoti were installed by the government. With my limited experience in this country and only slightly richer experience in the Middle East, at some risk, I would say that this inter-village relationship is deeply rooted in the history of the two villages and that it has been complicated by an overlay of the patron-client structure of presentday Greek political culture. Whether my view is acceptable or not (and I am ready to revise it when enough counter evidence is provided) these sociological matters raise another question related to the urban socio-religious institution of *enoria* (parish).

It is well known that priests have made enormous contributions to the encouragement of Greek nationalist movements since the beginning, and that they are still keeping alive the old Greek dream. Today, they are in a sense civil servants, salaried by the government. But surely it not because of this that they are

not able to command an influence over the daily social life of city dwellers. Neither is it because people respect them only in religious matters. Rather, it seems to me, urban priests are not interested in leading the masses in urban settings. This is in sharp contrast to priests in rural communities who are still key figures and indespensable leaders. In a sense, in the cities, the *enoria* has come to mean nothing but an election unit to which 500 voters are registered. Of course this may be attributed as well to rapid urban growth.

According to a survey made by C. Moustaka in 1964, only 21% of the new urbanites goes to church against 80% while they were in the village. This corresponds to the stagnant condition of the urban *enoria*, certainly. In the village, the church has many functions besides the religious one, but in the city every function is allotted to a specialized agent or organization. It is natural that the function of the church in the city is narrowed, purified and simplified. At any rate, there is no doubt but that priests in urban settings are losing direct and full contact with *enoria* members.

More important, sociologically speaking, is the fact that no well-organized neghbourhoods can be found in the metropolitan areas. With only slight exaggeration one can say that apart from personal and imdividual social contacts, the neighbourhood as a system or built-in network of society does not exist in Athens. Societally Athens has no structure, except for classes which are mapped only roughly by an ecology of residence. This lack of structure is reflected in the loss of function of urban churches and *enorias*. Although, most of migrants to Athens are satisfied, according to the survey mentioned above, with their life in the capital, their mental isolation makes them seek something to affiliate with as they struggle to adapt to urban society. The lack of strong neighbourhoods or *enoria* to put down roots in is responsible for the persistence of village identification and village clubs in Athens.

Generally speaking, migrants from the same village prefer to live near each other, particularly in the case of relatives, a typical case being male casual migrants living together, sharing a flat or room. Unfortunately, housing conditions do not always allow people to live as near each other as they would like. Migrants are scattered throughout the metropolitan area in tiny groups, but on the average more than once a week, they go to some cafes run by fellow villagers, to meet people, exhange news and gossip. A cafe keeper stays open from 6 am to midnight and prepares meals for his customers, most of whom are seasonal workers at construction sites. These cafes are places for petit patrons from the same village who have already advanced along the urban social ladder, to exercise influence over the migrants and the home village. Their influence may be extended through various types of access when they have a patron of their own. Because it serves a real need in the city, the future of this patron-client system is promising. Perhaps this patron-client system developed as a natural reaction to and defense against the insecurities born of periodic changes of political regimes and polities. In a country like Lebanon, a similar patron-client system has deep links to power factions in the government and with so many people having such stakes in factional struggle, class and other conflicts have easily drifted (sometimes by the manipula-

tion of external powers) into communal strife as was the case in the Beirut War, but in Greece this system takes the form of provincial disputes and also disputes of Romios versus Hellas (periphery vs. center or barbarian culture vs. civilization, etc.), a split which seems to overlay the urban-rural split in terms of national culture, economic development, social identities, etc.

3   Formation of the metropolis

The outskirts of Athens where Asia Minor refugees originally settled are no longer suburbs and some have become upper middle class residential areas. The new capital was developed according to a plan, starting from the north-east of the old town, with Sindagma Square between the Acropolis and Mt Lykabettos. Sindagma, the heart of Athens, is connected with Omonia, the heart of Greece, by two main streets, Stadhiou and Leoforos Venizelou. Another main street, stretching from Sindagma to the south, meets with a wide street from Omonia at Monastiraki forming a triangular urban centre with Omonia and Sindagma. The base of this triangle is the downtown district and the other two sides are the key business zones of Athens. The southern base of the triangle retains its old characteristics although industries are now penetrating. The Filoti Union's social centre, the cafe Naxos is located on a corner in this district.

Most Asia Minor refugees moved into shanties and huts outside the city in such areas as Pangrati, Nea Smyrna, and Kesariani in Athens and Nea Kokkinia in Piraeus. The first permanent housing was built in Pangrati and then building continued in other quarters with the help of the government and the Refugee Treasury Fund. The development of Nea Smyrna was initiated by a group of refugees with a bank loan in 1926. The absorption of a quarter of a million people to the two cities and suburbs in such a short time as 5 years naturally had serious impacts socially and politically and caused cultural & economic tensions and conflicts as well. For instance, the Greek Communist Party established bases in refugee communities and new factories were started. Bad housing conditions, chronic epidemics, unemployment, poverty, and crime helped to produce negative attitudes among the common populace, which is reflected even today in the low price of land in the former refugee areas.

IV   Cultural conflicts

1   Refugee cultures

In this paper I will leave untouched the problems of Balkan and other refugees, discussing only the cultural conflict produced by refugees from Asia Minor. This conflict is in part one between Romis and Hellas but also a conflict between "demotic" and "katharebousa" (vulgar and literary language).⁴ From another viewpoint, it may be seen as a conflict between laymen and churchmen, with their different values in daily life. And this is related to the confrontation of two elements in society, the elites and the masses, which takes the form of differ-

ing orientation towards national culture; it can easily be seen in attempts by the leadership of the centre to "integrate" provincial, rural, and ethnic living styles into a presumed higher elite civilization. The problems refugees brought in can be classified as a part of this greater confrontation however different in nature or background. What is most important is that these new elements were planted in both Athens and Piraeus. Among the non-Greek elements introduced, let us consider the music.

The music the refugees brought in was new but not foreign to the Greeks, as this type of music was enjoyed there under Turkish rule as were Balkan folk songs and dances. Even before this music was brought in by the new refugees, shadow plays originating in Turkey were popular among the people, and very much loved because of the keen criticism they offered of current political affairs and the humor and pathos which characterized them. Shadow plays flourished in many Muslim countries: in Egypt it was, according to a famous travel guide book, the only humorous entertainment available before World War I, shortly after which it disappeared. In Indonesia and Malaysia they are still preserved. In his autobiography[5] one famous puppeteer and puppet maker recalled that his social status was humble and that he was treated as inferior to ordinary citizens. The music the refugees brought was even less acceptable than the shadow plays to the elites and also to the rural populace who were fans of the shadow plays.

There were, however, close human ties between the puppeteers and the new musicians. Both were at the bottom of the urban social scale with disrespectable callings. Hard working artisans, for instance, although they were not rich either, were not friendly to them as must be expected in a society with a thin strata of middle-class skilled workers who are rather conventional and traditional because their lives depend on conservative middle and high class customers and patrons. Urbanites on the lower and marginal levels usually cultivate some specific social values of their own, to which a new aesthetic sense is combined, and out of which manners and life styles emerge. This type of sub-culture is then modified by a sense of pride and dignity. This culture, hostile to the elite Katharebousa and to the rural Romis overlaid with Hellas alike, thus developed into a peculiarly of urban ideal, a behavior model for the common man. It is the culture of the mangas and rebetis, both deviations from orthodox norms and the ruling codes.

The sharp contrasts produced by this cultureal gap resulted in a new style of social life, in the metropolis. In Turkish cities, even in the predominantly Greek city of Smyrna Greek families used to go out after dark several times a month to dine or listen to music or both. However, in Greece, even in Athens and Piraeus, except for a small proportion of the sophisticated (in the Western sense) population which adopted this way of socio-family life, going out after dark was generally limited to male adults.

In the 1920s, new cafes, bars and restaurants began to prosper in Athens and in Piraeus reflecting new ways of life. To attract customers, some of them provided music; shadow plays were staged in the summer in an open space outside. The new life style provided a stage for a genius puppeteer who produced a hybrid form of puppet plays accompanied by music and narration. "Cafe Aman" and

"Cafe Chantant" flourished. The former were so called because they featured Aman songs which characteristically end in the refrain "Aman, Aman". This word certainly comes from Turkish as does the term "rebetis" (Turkish, rebet) used to refer to people who frequented such cafes. At that time the memory of the tragedy in Smyrna was still strong enough as a national experience, that the mere playing of this kind of Turkish style music was irritating to some sectors of the Greek population and to the ruling elites as well. Therefore it was quite natural that the singing & playing of this music evoked anger against the marginal urbanites and the refugees who seemed the more partial to the culture of their happy days in Smyrna and other Asia Minor cities in the face of hardships in their "native" land. Fans and players were not necessarily refugees but it is undeniable that the new music, with its unusual techniques and music theory, was introduced by musicians mainly from among the Smyrna refugees. Thanks to them, rembetika became songs of the underground and/or underworld in the cities of Greece.

All cafe music was not rembetika, of course, as Gail Holst points out. [6] And all rebetis were not refugees. There were rebetis in Greece long before the refugees. But rebetis and refugees share something in common. Both were hostile to the Westernization that the elites were pushing. Aman singers and players smoked hashish, as did many music fans among the refugees as well, since they were from Asia Minor. This "oriental" habit was under a ban in Greece, where anything "oriental" was disgraceful and hateful to the Hellas elites. However, the island of Syros was famous for its excellent hashish production and many Romis enjoyed narghile (water pipe) smoking instead of alcoholic drinks or in combination with them for a stronger effect. The distribution of this outlawed habit among the population follows a pattern and makes it easy to observe what parts of society were united in their protests against the police and government policy. One group of urban poor makes its living on music and the other is a marginal group persistently clinging to old habits. Together, they constitute a lumpen-proletariat stratum to use doctrinaire terms. They were partners in their crime of hashish smoking, and this made them closer, the stronger the control. Hashish addicts were put in jail when they were discovered, but in prison, a new type of "rembetika" began to be sung and a new instrument, the "buzouki", was invented, small enough to be easily hidden from the eyes of prison officers. This small, 3-stringed instrument, similar to a mandolin, thus became an inseparable accompaniment to rembetika of the desperate, insecure, urban life. The present-day buzouki, which looks like a guitar, with four strings, is an innovation by a remarkable musician of the 1930s. Needless to say, the change to a large buzouki corresponds to other changes that occurred in the playing and singing of rembetika music.

2   Aman songs and rembetika

Rembetika originated from Aman songs, but the rembetika played beginning in the 1930s differs from earlier ones, which can be called "classic". One of the most famous Aman songs is important enough that it should be introduced here in a translation by Gail Holst, the most important pioneer contributor to the

study of this music:

ΣΑΝ ΠΕΘΑΝΩ ΣΤΟ ΚΑΡΑΒΙ

῎Αντε, σὰν πεθάνω τί θὰ ποῦνε: Πέθανε κάποιο παιδὶ
Πέθανε κι' ἕνας λεβέντης ποὺ γλεντοῦσε τὴ ζωὴ
᾿Αμάν, ᾿Αμάν!

῎Αντε, σὰν πεθάνω στὸ καράβι, ρίξτε με μὲς, στὸ γιαλό
Νὰ μὲ φᾶνε τὰ μαῦρα τὰ ψάρια καὶ τὸ ἁρμυρὸ νερό
᾿Αμάν, ᾿Αμάν!

If I die on the boat
Ah, if I die, what will they say? Some fellow died.
A fellow who loved life and enjoyed himself. Aman! Aman!

Ah, if I die on the boat, throw me into the sea,
So that the black fish and salt can eat me, Aman! Aman!

This is music for dancing composed around 1900 for "zembekiko", and the composer and writer are both unknown. Anonymity was common for both the Aman and rembetika, which indicates something of the social position of the rebetis as composers, writers and singers, and something of their fans as well. They were drop-outs or outlaws, and for them namelessness must have covered a certain pride in their identity. Mikis Theodorakis, one of the few living composers in the tradition of the old rembetika, produced a song entitled "A boy from Piraeus", which an Egyptian music critic said was so similar to the songs of boat-man on the Nile that no one would think it strange if it were renamed "A sailor on the Nile".[7] Common themes of rembetika are drink, women, love, sorrow, death, strife, hashish, poverty and so on. The mood trends to be dark and dull, sometimes with undertones of resentment, resignation, or decadence, sometimes punctuated with a curse.[8]

"If I die on the boat" is especially interesting because of the strong opposition to a normal church yard burial in the line, "throw me into the sea, so that the black fish and salt can eat me". Rebetis fear *Kharos* , the irresistible power of fate, which controls every human being, more than any authority of this world; their style of faith and nihilism is that of the ancient idolatrous Greeks. Their polytheism leads them to resist the establishment composed primarily of Western oriented intellectuals and the churchmen who flamed the modern Greek nationalist movement, which strongly antagonistic to the tradition of trans-nationalism that is the legacy of both the Byzantine and the Ottoman Empires and that the rebetis retain. The straightforward anti-governmental or simply non-political sense of the rebetis can be seen in many cartoons and jokes they have made, but the following is the most merciless and keen;

ΟΣΟΙ ΓΙΝΟΥΝ ΠΡΩΘΥΠΟΥΡΓΟΙ

Ὅσοι γινοῦν πρωθυπουργοί, ὅλοι τοὺς θὰ πεθάνουν
Τοὺς κυνηγάει ὁ λαὸς ἀπ'τὰ καλὰ ποὺ κάνουν.

Πέθανε ὁ Κονδύλης μας, πάει κι'ὁ Βενιζέλος
Τὴν πούλεψε κι' ὁ Δεμερτζῆς ποὺ θάφερνε τὸ τέλος.

Βάζω ὑποφηφιότητα πρωθυπουργὸς νὰ γίνω
Νὰ κάθομαι τεμπέλικα νὰ τρώω καὶ νὰ πίνω.

Καὶ ν' ἀνεβαίνω στὴ βουλή, ἐγὼ νὰ τοὺς διατάζω
Νὰ τοὺς πατῶ τὸ ναργιλὲ καὶ νὰ τοὺς μαστουριάζω.

THOSE WHO BECOME PRIME MINISTERS

Those who become Prime Ministers are sure to die of it;
The people hunt them down because of the good they do.

Our Kondylis died and Venizelos is gone,
And Demerdziz split when he might have come up with the answer.

I think I'll be a candidate and get to be Prime Minister
So I can laze about all day, eating and drinking like mad.

And I'll stand up in the Parliament and give them all the orders.
I'll get them on the narghilé and turn them on together.[9]

3   Changes in rembetika

Heroes in rembetika are men of the night or underworld. Holst calls them spiv; without saying this is a reverse in spelling of V.I.P.s. In the 1930s, after the great depression and between the World Wars, several excellent players, composers, and writers emerged. After them, however, the free, strong style of personality in playing disappeared and at the same time the names of the writers began to be printed. Due to these changes, some commentators speak of the death of rembetika at this stage. But another change occurred in the 1950s with the development of tourism as a national industry in Greece. Rembetika became a popular entertainment for foreigners and some of the pre-war rembetika such as "Cloudy Sunday" of 1934 were revived and earned international fame. The social status of singers and composers improved and some even became rich. In the 1930s, rembetika were not accepted among middle class families who kept away from the folksy, vulgar cafes, taverns, and restaurants. In the 1950s women singers began to appear who were simply female version of the rebetis; they were called derbede-

rissa. I am not clear about the difference between the terms *rebetis* and *mangas* but tentatively I would define the former as a group of marginal urbanites who have no desire to work at ordinary jobs and who conceive of themselves as socially useless appendants or deviates protesting banal modernization along western lines, while the latter is a rather tough or underworld boss, but not a professional gangster. Together, rembetis and mangas as marginal urbanites living at the bottom of society prior to the arrival of the industrialization, and in isolation from other more mobile elements of the nation developed a peculiar counter-culture. Even leftists and progressives in politics were hostile to this kind of peculiar urban sub-culture. World War II, however, provided the Greeks with an opportunity, in the form of foreign occupation, to share with rebetis their nihilism and desperation, originally feelings cultivated for minority sub-culture. Note the patriotic mood behind the modern rembetika "The Night without Moon".

Νύχτωσε χωρὶς φεγγάρι, τὸ σκοτάδι εἶναι βαθὺ
Κι' ὅμως ἕνα παλληκάρι δὲν μπορεῖ νὰ κοιμηθεῖ.
῎Αραγε τὶ περιμένει, ὅλη νύχτα ὡς τὸ πρωΐ,
Στὸ στενὸ τὸ παραθύρι ποὺ φωτίζει τὸ κελί.
Πόρτ' ἀνοίγει, πόρτα κλείνει, μὰ διπλὸ 'ναι τὸ κλειδὶ
Τὶ ἔχει κάνει καὶ τὸ ρίξαν τὸ παιδὶ στὴ φυλακὴ,
Πόρτ' ἀνοίγει, πόρτα κλείνει, μὲ βαρὺ ἀναστεναγμὸ
῎Ας μποροῦσα νὰ μαντέψω τῆς καρδιᾶς του τὸν καημό.

Night is fallen without a moon; the darkness is deep;
yet a *palikari* cannot sleep.
Wonder what he is waiting for, all night long
by the narrow window that lights the cell?
A door opens — a door closes, but the key is turned twice;
what's the kid done that they threw him in jail?
A door opens — a door closes with a heavy groan;
if only I could guess the sorrow of his heart.[10]

This song was written during the Greek civil war (1946-1949) by a political prisoner and became so popular during the military regime that the government deemed it necessary to ban it. It is strongly critical and political, in sharp contrast to the beautiful lyricism that "Cloudy Sunday" represents. In a way, it forms a bridge from the classic rembetika to the innocuous folk music played today for tourists. After the peak in the 1930s, the next peak came during the civil war when rembetika became a vehicle for patriotic feeling. This was the only time in the history of rembetika that the general populace identified with this music. Neverthelesss, the most popular rembetika were of love and sorrow, of mother and not about politics. The Greek civil war, a forerunner of agents wars and the ensuing Cold War, split the nation into two uncommunicative camps and killed more Greeks than were lost in the fascist occupation during World War II.[11]

Across this huge communication gap, rembetika was the only bridge. At that time, conditions were so deteriorated and dismal that the mood was essentially the same as that under which rembetika were produced earlier. Under German oc-cupation, young boys scoffed at and caricatured German soldiers in vulgar songs laced with deep feelings of resentment. Rembetika matched the reality of peo-ple's lives. Everyone wanted to curse in the spirit of the rebetis. The present-day rembetika being played in the Plaka district filled with foreigners on a summer evening is not rembetika any more, but a cheap, quasi-rembetika.

Rembetika, a phenomenon of urban sub-culture developed by rebetis and mangas before the Depression, and sung by the general populace during the civil war, was banned by the military regime that preceded the present government. But despite the bans, the spirit of the old rembetika was preserved in the music and songs of Mikis Theodorakis who fled from the military rulers of Greece. From exile he sent his music back into Greece by radio and smuggled tapes.

During the last few years, once more the populace has begun to sing rembe-tika. Because they are disappointed by the new government, to the same degree their hopes for the new regime and their hate for the old military regime have faded away, and they are ready to express their bitterness again. A Greek trans-lation of Holst's book has come out in response to this situation and the old rem-betika increasingly attract young people and students. This trend toward a search for cultural identity among the Greek populace is backed by the efforts of intel-lectuals to place the old shadow plays, karagiozis, and even a biography of the for-gotten vagabond painter Theofilos written by a famous poet into the context of their cultural heritage. [12]

Notes

(1) Calliope Moustaka: *The Internal Migrant,* 1964.
A. Th. Angelopoulos, et al: *Essays on Greek Migration,* 1967.
B. Kayler, P-Y. Pechoux et M. Sivignon: *Exode rural et attraction urbaine en Grèce,* 1971.
C. L. Papageortion: *Regional Employment in Greece,* 2 vols, 1973.
Eva E. Sandis: *Refugees and Economic Migrants in Greater Athens,* 1973.
(2) Cf. T. Hayashi; Ibn al-bald (son of the town) Today, *Orient* Vol XIII (Tokyo) 1977.
(3) Cf. for instance, the recent work by Marjorie Housepian: *Smyrna 1922 – The Destruction of a City* – (London) 1972.
(4) David Holden: *Greece without Columns – The Making of the Modern Greeks –* (London) 1972, p.29ff.
(5) Sotiris Spatharis: *Behind the White Screen* (New York) 1976, p.22. The original Greek edition was beyond my reach. The English version, divided into the two parts of "Memoirs" and "The History and Art of Karagiosis", was far more useful for the purpose of this paper than any other studies of fine art available to me.
(6) Gail Holst; Road to Rembetika – *Music of a Greek Sub-Culture, Songs of Love, Sorrow and Hashish* –. (Athens) 1975. 2nd ed. 1977, p.36. The author is an Australian music critic and professional harpsichorist, now living in Athens to complete a book on Theodorakis. Since her first visit to Greece in 1965, she has been interested in rembetika. The Greek military government forced her to leave the country, but her passion for rembetika led her to find numbers of rembetika records among Greek immigrants to Australia. She recalls her first visit to Greece, "In 1966, I found it hard to talk to Greeks about rembetika. The middle class, educated Greeks I met told me they weren't interested in that sort of music – it was old, Turkish style music..." On her return to Greece she published her excellent pioneer work on the subject and after the second English edition came out, a Greek version was published with useful supplementary materials written by Greek critics, historians and other replacing the bibliography attached to the original English edition.
(7) According to a famous historian T. Bournas's essay compiled in appendix, of over a dozen of

excellent papers by current Greek intellectuals, to the Greek edition of the book by Gail Holst.

(8) For details see, Στάθης Δαμιανάκος, Κοινωνιολογία τοῦ ρεμπέτικου (1976) and also O. Revault d'Allonnnes: *La création artistique et les promesses de la liverté, klincksieck* (Paris) 1973.

(9) English translation by Holst. op. cit. p.105.

(10) English translation from Butterworth & Schneider eds; Rembetika, Songs from the old Greek underworld. Athens, 1975) p.117.

(11) D. Hoden; op.cit., p.59

(12) Important suggestions and help were given by members of the study group headed by Prof. K. Watanabe. Valuable hints were also afforded by Prof. H. G. Beck's series of lectures given in 1978 in Japan and his article "Die Griechische Volkstumliche Literatur des 14. Jahrhunderts" and other articles available in Japanese.

Postscript: