

Nikola Karasová, “*Parakratos* in Post-Civil War Greece: Reality and Interpretation” (Ph.D. diss., Charles University, Prague, Czech Republic, and Aristotle University of Thessaloniki, Greece), May 2021

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- CONTENT AND OBJECTIVE OF THE WORK (brief information about the work, goal formulation)

Nikola Karasova set out to study the meaning and connotations through time of the complex Greek notion of *parakratos*. Because the term *parakratos* was most commonly used in post-Civil War Greece, she places the weight of her study on the this, the early Cold War period. But given that the term has often been taken for granted, or at the very least left underexplored, she also studies the history and evolution of the term, and of the mechanisms that have come to define it, and she places the term in the comparative perspective of similar conditions in Italy and Turkey. She places a lot of emphasis on the characterization of related terms and of the mechanisms that constitute the *parakratos*, in the broader Greek political framework of divisions between the Left, the Center, and the Right. She draws out institutional and constitutional forms of repression and/or undemocratic intimidation, but also military and paramilitary structures of terror and threat. She effectively studies the rhetoric, tools, associations of victimhood or martyrdom, historiographical legacies, and so much more associated with the term *parakratos*. She does so with meticulous attention to detail and structure, and with recourse to a vast number of sources in a variety of modern languages. This is a superbly presented and very mature dissertation that I highly recommend for defense.

- METHODOLOGICAL AND THEORETICAL APPROACH

Karasova’s work is anchored in the methodology of the very close reading of a multitude of sources, including archival sources, in the productive engagement with comparanda from modern Italy and Turkey, and in a close dialogue with theoretical works such as those of Ula Tunander, on the security state, and of Mehtap Söyler, on the Turkish deep state and its formal and informal structures. Karasova displays a keen awareness that the often unreflected use of the word *parakratos* to describe mostly anticommunist oppression in the deep state, or within the democratic structures and boundaries of the state, needed a far more critical

treatment, and she delivers a wealth of information and analysis to fill this lacuna. Karasova's demarcation lines between *parakratos*, parastate, parapolitics, paraconstitution, state of emergency, etc. are particularly helpful.

- LOGICAL STRUCTURE (difficulty, creative approach, argumentation, logical structure, theoretical and methodological anchoring, work with sources and literature, the suitability of annexes, etc.):

Karasova's dissertation progresses logically and operates on clear transitions between sections and subsections. It is densely packed with information, which would set a rather high bar on the attention span of the average reader but allows her to engage more directly with specialists in the field. Her approach is impeccable when it comes to creatively evaluating the uses of words in their synchronic and diachronic contexts. Karasova carefully unpeels the negative connotations of the concept of *parakratos*, so easily bestowed by the Left and at times the Center on oppressive practices of the Right, to then paint a much broader and richer picture of the historical trends and events that have traditionally informed that negativity. Excellent examples are Karasova's treatment of the murder of Grigoris Lambrakis and of the Polk Affair. The analysis of military and police coverup reaches a whole different and at times rather dense level, but again the clarity of Karasova's writing leads the reader through these sections as well.

Karasova also keeps the longer perspective of Greek history in mind, by covering the Greek military dictatorship and referring to Andreas Papandreou's activities before and after this dictatorship. She sees a culminating endpoint in the 1989 destruction of many, but not all, personal files, and again a new flare-up in the conspirational rhetoric of the Syriza government of 2015. The latter leads us back to the notion that the term *parakratos* is usually brandished as a weapon against the Right, but the extreme PASOK liberties of the 1980s do generate the notion of a left-wing *parakratos*, as she aptly points out.

Karasova's work with sources and secondary literature in multiple languages is more than impressive. The annotation by way of footnotes is very precise. The list of abbreviations is very helpful. Occasionally, I am left wondering though, especially in relation to statements made about the Greek Intelligence Service and the CIA, of whether a secondary source is authoritative enough, in the absence of a primary source (which likely remains classified). Here Karasova fittingly recognizes that many of the post-1936 Greek history-writers do bring their personal opinions to their scholarly work, and that a reading of their statements can only be done with great scrutiny and constant cross-checking. Another source that would help

distil this problem for her is the most recent book by Neovi Karakatsanis and Jonathan Swarts, on the much-rumored CIA and broader American involvement in the Greek military coup of 1967 (which will bear on p. 37 of the dissertation, for instance).

- FORMAL AND LANGUAGE STRUCTURE (linguistic expression, the correctness of citations and references to literature, graphic design, formal requirements of the work, etc.): The formal requirements of the work are in order. Graphic design is not an issue, as far as I can tell. The citations are correct as far as I could check (I did some spot checks, since there are so many that it would be impossible to check them all).

Karasova writes in fluent and very clear English. I noticed only a few tiny typographical errors, which can easily be corrected in a matter of a few minutes. I list them here for easy reference:

- p. 55, midway: it was chiefly their ... Whose?
- p. 68: is it Feb. or March for the issuance of the Truman Doctrine? I think March
- p. 89: no period is needed after the Roman numerals I and II
- p. 100, 2nd line: swap fraud and violence, to deliver a correct translation of the Greek expression in parenthesis
- p. 105, line 10: it was fought against it: correct the English here by deleting "was" perhaps
- p. 127, 1st line of the 2nd paragraph: needs to be rephrased for greater clarity, to make clear who does what.
- p. 163, last line: change carrier to career. Same on p. 34, line 8 of the 2nd paragraph, and same again p. 91 last word.

- SHORT EVALUATOR'S COMMENT (overall impression of the thesis, strengths and weaknesses, originality of ideas, fulfilment of the goal, etc.):

Karasova has delivered a very impressive, meticulously researched, and well-structured dissertation that makes a rich contribution to the field. She delivers original ideas and insights in clear, logical writing, and amply fulfils the goals that she set out for herself. The unparalleled strengths of this dissertation are that it covers every possible definition of *parakratos*, its agents, its contexts, its historical and ideological developments, its historiographical distillations, etc. Karasova's work will become the go-to work for the *parakratos* of the post-Civil War but also for a broader interpretation of the early Cold War in Greece in general. This dissertation delivers valuable historical, symbolic-linguistic, and

methodological analyses, but it also leaves us reflecting further on the antithetical poles of authoritarianism and democracy, and all the tension fields in between.

- QUESTIONS AND COMMENTS RECOMMENDED FOR A MORE DETAILED EXPLANATION (one to three)

- Karasova delivers an early definition of the Greek Center, which was weak for most of the time period that she describes. But the Center does become better defined around p. 98 of her work. Why this delay of many pages into the work? What was missing to define a Center earlier in Greek history?
- p. 32-33: This very interesting analysis of “stay behind armies” and especially of Operation Sheepskin in Greece may require a few more sources. Has anything been written recently about this phenomenon? The reference to Daniele Ganser’s *NATO’s Secret Armies: Operation GLADIO and Terrorism in Western Europe* (2005) exists. Does it still stand somehow on its own? How was it reviewed? Has she checked the work of Christina Goulter, who is affiliated with Security Studies at King’s College London?

- RECOMMENDATIONS / NON-RECOMMENDATIONS FOR DEFENSE

I recommend this dissertation for defense without any reservations.
