

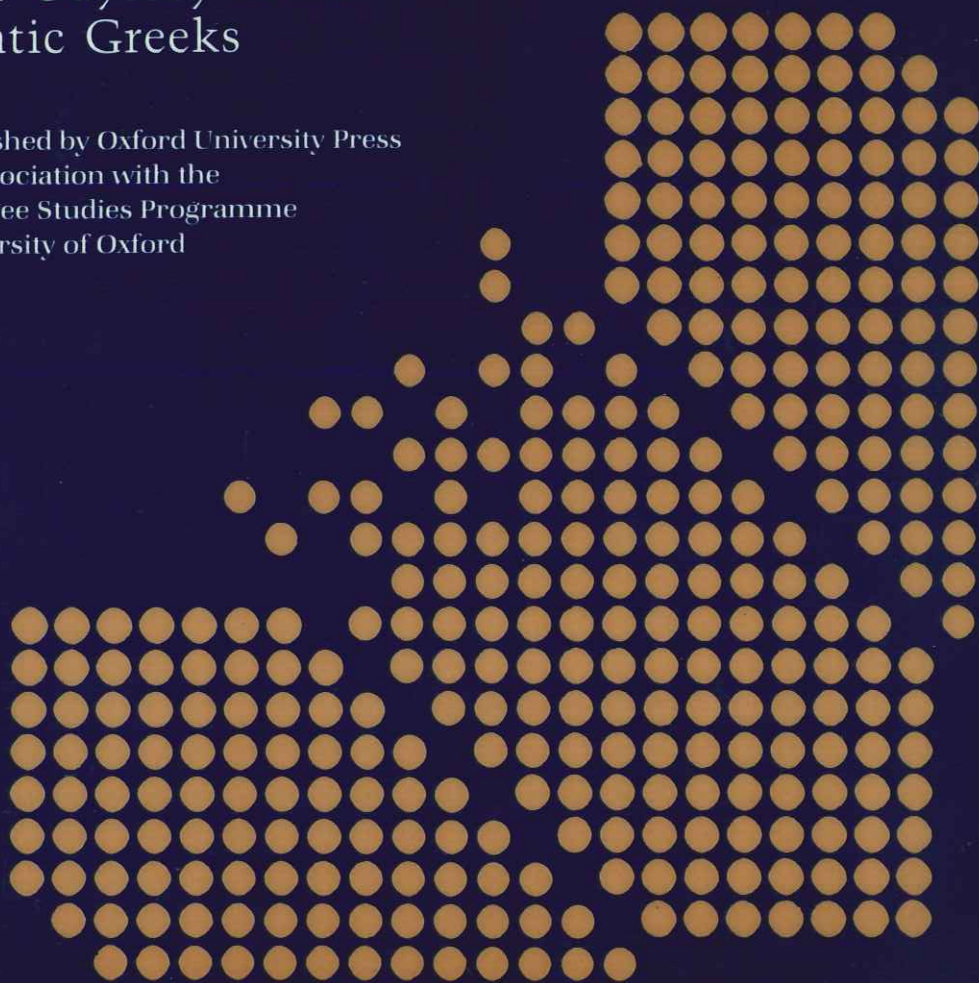
Journal of Refugee Studies

ISSN 0951-6328

Volume 4 Number 4 1991

SPECIAL ISSUE
The Odyssey of the
Pontic Greeks

Published by Oxford University Press
in Association with the
Refugee Studies Programme
University of Oxford



JOURNAL OF REFUGEE STUDIES

Editor ROGER ZETTER, C/O JRS EDITORIAL OFFICE,
QUEEN ELIZABETH HOUSE, 21 ST GILES, OXFORD, OX1 3LA, UK

International Editorial Advisory Board

Howard Adelman, Centre for Refugee Studies, York University, Ontario, Canada
Hisham Awartani, Economic Development Group, Sheikh Jarrah, Jerusalem
Robert Bach, State University of New York at Binghamton, USA
Chaloka Beyani, School of Law, University of Zambia, Lusaka, Zambia
Maurice Eisenbruch, Department of Child and Family Psychiatry, Royal Children's Hospital, Melbourne, Australia
Thomas Hammar, Centrum for invandringsforskning, University of Stockholm, Sweden
Art Hansen, Department of Anthropology, University of Florida, USA
Barbara Harrell-Bond, Refugee Studies Programme, University of Oxford
Edvard Hauff, Psychosocial Team for Refugees in Norway, University of Oslo
Gilbert Jaeger, Brussels, Belgium
Gaim Kibreab, Department of Economic History, Uppsala University, Sweden
Chan Kwok Bun, Department of Sociology, National University of Singapore, Singapore
Gil Loescher, Department of Government and International Studies, University of Notre Dame, Indiana, USA
Vitit Muntarbhorn, Faculty of Law, Chulalongkorn University, Bangkok, Thailand
Vaughan Robinson, Department of Geography, University College, Swansea, UK
Sidney Waldron, Department of Sociology and Anthropology, State University College at Cortland, New York, USA
Loes van Willigen, Refugee Health Care Centre, Rijswijk, The Netherlands
Aristide Zolberg, Department of Political Science, University of Chicago, Chicago, USA

Further details about the Journal and order information can be found on the inside back cover. Full instructions to authors can be found at the back of the Journal.

© Oxford University Press 1991

All rights reserved; no part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording, or otherwise without either the prior written permission of the Publishers, or a licence permitting restricted copying issued in the UK by the Copyright Licensing Agency Ltd, 90 Tottenham Court Road, London W1P 9HE, or in the USA by the Copyright Clearance Center, 27 Congress Street, Salem, Mass 01970.

With my compliments
Roger Zetter 6-4-92

Journal of Refugee Studies

VOLUME 4 NUMBER 4 1991

SPECIAL ISSUE

The Odyssey of the Pontic Greeks

Editorial Introduction

Roger Zetter

Articles

The Greek State's Overview of the Pontian Issue	Dimitris Kokkinos	312
The Pontic Greeks Before the Diaspora	Anthony Bryer	315
The Pontic Dialect: A Corrupt Version of Ancient Greek?	Peter Mackridge	335
The Pontic Myth of Homeland	Patricia Fann	340
The Diaspora of the Greeks of the Pontos: Historical Background	Artemis Xanthopoulos-Kyriakou	357
Pontic Culture in the USSR between the Wars	Apostolos Karpozilos	364
The Persecution of Pontic Greeks in the Soviet Union	Vlasis Agtzidis	372
Pontic Greeks from Asia Minor and the Soviet Union: Problems of Integration into Modern Greece	Maria Vergeti	382
The Reception of Pontians from the Soviet Union in Greece	Dimitris Kokkinos	395
Pontic Greeks Today: Migrants or Refugees?	Effie Voutira	400

Pontic Greeks from Asia Minor and the Soviet Union: Problems of Integration in Modern Greece

MARIA VERGETI

Department of Social Policy and Social Anthropology, Panteion University

In the 1920s approximately 400,000 Pontic Greeks took refuge in Greece from Asia Minor and the Soviet Union. The overwhelming majority of them were from Asia Minor. This migration has continued until the present day, with large waves in 1937–1939, 1965–1967 and from 1987 until now. This paper presents the population, locations and first settlement conditions of these refugees, the refugee element in their Pontian identity and their economic and social integration into society in Greece. It also presents the integration problems of Pontian migrants from the Soviet Union from 1965 until now which, though similar, were of lesser extent and intensity. Their endeavour to be incorporated into a society of the same ethnic group was no easier than for other refugee groups. The manner of integration and the cultural, economic and ideological relations of the group to this society and the authorities affected the refugees, their children and grandchildren.

Demography of the First Settlement of Pontian Refugees in Greece

According to the Greek Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Greek population of the Pontos before the outbreak of the First World War was about 700,000 (Valavanis 1986:15). Out of this number about 353,000 did not survive the period from 1914–1924 (Valavanis 1986:24). The remainder followed the road of the diaspora, mainly to Greece and the Soviet Union, but also to America, the rest of Europe, and Persia (Iran). Some of those who migrated towards Greece via Syria stopped and settled in Cyprus (Bryer 1980:189–90). The Pontian diaspora also followed subsequent routes taken in the 1940s from Georgia, the Crimea and southern Russia to Uzbekistan, Kazakhstan and Kirghizia by part of the Pontic Greek population of the Soviet Union (see map following the Editorial Introduction).

As a consequence of the defeat of Greece by Turkey in 1922, the Greek state, which at that time had approximately 5 million inhabitants, faced the problem of integrating nearly 1.25 million refugees from Asia Minor into its social structure. This figure includes the Pontian refugees, who numbered 182,169,

although this is an underestimate. For, as the table shows, 47,091 refugees declared the Caucasus as their place of origin; most of the Greeks of the Caucasus had origins in the Pontos. A more realistic total is thus 229,260—18.76% of the total number of refugees. However, even this figure is still an underestimate since a considerable number of Pontians from the Caucasus appeared in the 1928 census as refugees from Asia Minor and Thrace. For example, the Pontian refugees who migrated from the Caucasus to Greece from 1919–1920, were sent to eastern Thrace and returned to Greek territory after the Asia Minor disaster; but they are recorded as refugees from Thrace (Lavrentidis 1968–69:344). In short, a figure of 400,000 Pontian refugees from Asia Minor and from the Soviet Union in the 1920s would not be an exaggeration.

The Greek population of the Pontos, as a mainly agrarian group, settled chiefly in rural areas. Most settled in northern Greece, with the greatest concentration of population in Macedonia and Thrace (Tsakiridis 1973–1974:339). There were urban settlements in Salonica (*Archeion Pontou* 3 1931:236–237), Athens and Piraeus (Valavanis 1986:300), Kavala, Drama, Kilkis, Kozani and elsewhere.

The time difference between the first settlement of Pontian Greeks and other Greeks from Asia Minor is due to the fact that waves of migration from the Pontos to Greece began before 1922. Written sources refer to 1918 as the year of the first mass migration (Sakkas 1979:218–219, 245; Kladas 1979:45).

Table 1

Number of Refugees according to Place of Origin, 1928 Census, Statistical Yearbook of Greece 1930

Place of Origin	Number of Refugees			Proportion per 1,000		
	Total	Before 1922	After 1922	Total	Before 1922	After 1922
Asia Minor	626,954	37,728	589,226	513.12	248.39	550.70
Thrace	256,635	27,057	229,578	210.04	178.13	214.57
Pontos	182,169	17,528	164,641	149.09	115.04	153.87
Bulgaria	49,027	20,977	28,050	40.12	138.10	26.22
Caucasus	47,091	32,421	14,670	38.54	213.45	13.71
Constantinople	38,458	4,109	35,349	31.48	27.05	32.10
Russia	11,435	5,214	6,221	9.36	34.33	5.81
Serbia	6,057	4,611	1,446	4.96	30.36	1.35
Albania	2,498	1,600	898	2.04	10.53	0.84
Dodecanese	738	355	383	0.60	2.34	0.36
Romania	722	266	456	0.59	1.75	0.43
Cyprus	57	25	32	0.05	0.16	0.03
Egypt	8	1	7	0.01	0.01	0.01
Total	1,221,849	151,892	1,069,957	1,000.00	1,000.00	1,000.00

SOURCE: Statistical Yearbook of Greece, 1930, p. 41.

According to oral evidence (Vergeti 1989) a small number of Pontian families migrated from Kars to Greece and settled in Kilkis in northern Greece in 1912.

In 1918 and 1919 the Pontians left the Trans-Caucasus, and particularly Georgia, because of the advance of the Turkish army to the Caucasus in 1918, the violence used by the Armenian government to conscript them and the invitation by the Greek government in 1919 (Karapatakis 1975:29). They went to Batumi and from there by boat to Salonica (Karapatakis 1975:29). Because ships were not immediately available they stayed in Batumi in wretched conditions for one whole year, resulting in the death of one third of the group at Batumi alone (Karapatakis 1975:29). Transport conditions were very poor, as were sanitary conditions in quarantine at Salonica, and further deaths resulted (Karapatakis 1975:29). Survival in the urban quarters of Salonica was no easier. The mortality rate rose to 13%; thus 46% of the Pontic Greeks who had been at Batumi died either in Batumi or Salonica.

Following the request made in March 1919 by the Association of Soviet Union Greeks at Ekaterinodar for assistance from the Greek government, a delegation from the Greek Welfare Ministry went to Batumi in July 1919 to administer relief to the Greek population. The delegation was divided into two sections. One, based in Ekaterinodar, was responsible for southern Russia and the northern Caucasus and the other, based in Tbilisi, the capital of Georgia, for the Anti-Caucasus (Georgia, Armenia, Azerbaijan) and the Pontos (Elianos 1921:89–90).

By April 1919 the descent of Bolshevik troops into the southern Crimea made it impossible for the delegation to remain at its base. It withdrew via Novorossisk, accompanied by 9,000 Greeks (Lavrentidis 1986:13). By contrast, due to the relative order prevailing in the newly-established Soviet Republics in the region, the Anti-Caucasus section remained at its base from July 1919 until February 1921. It administered relief to the Greek population and from May 1920 until the end of February 1921 sent 52,878 Pontic Greeks from the port of Batumi to Salonica. Three quarters of them were from Armenia and one quarter from the Sukhumi region of Georgia. They settled in Macedonia and Thrace in northern Greece (Elianos 1921:94, 97).

Refugee Features of Pontian Identity at the Beginning of the Century

The efforts of Greece to aid the Pontian refugees in the years 1918–1922 were less adequate than urban and rural reintegration programmes implemented after 1922. Yet, even after 1922, the government was unable to give essential assistance to Pontic Greeks or to other Greeks from Asia Minor in their efforts to integrate into their new social context. This resulted in the preservation of a refugee trait in the collective identity of Asia Minor Greeks for many decades after their settlement in Greece.

As refugees, the Greeks from Asia Minor were marked out and so marginalized. In the years following settlement, refugees ended up as a source of cheap labour and exploitation. The hosts' attitudes towards the refugees

ranged, according to their educational level, their prejudices, the location and their special interests, from mistrust to downright contempt and hostility.

In the case of Pontic Greeks, cultural attributes were more conspicuous than those of other Asia Minor groups. The Pontian dialect, which developed from and is the final form of the ancient Ionian dialect, is the most significant distinguishing characteristic of Pontic Greeks. However, it is not understood by the people of Greece, nor does its unusual pronunciation and vocabulary help Pontic Greeks to learn modern Greek quickly, with the result that native-born Greeks called them 'a-ooti' from the pronoun 'ootos' which is pronounced 'a-ootos' in the Pontian dialect (O. Lampsidis 1982:527).

Conflict with locally-born Greeks was aggravated by political differences, even in exclusively Pontian villages where they formed constituencies with host population Greeks. Pontians, as refugee voters, favoured the Venizelos party and this, for the large number of locals who were anti-Venizelists, spelt antagonism in political life as well. At the same time the Greek state was judged to be inadequate in establishing rural settlements, and incapable of satisfactorily achieving urban settlement programmes. This aroused distrust as to its ability to manage exchangeable property, and especially to exchange it justly (G. N. Lampsidis 1982:209–242). Moreover Pontic Greeks consider that the Greek state shared responsibility with the great powers of the day for the failure to create a Pontian republic, and thus they doubted its ability to fulfil its national role in caring for and protecting Greeks within Greece or abroad (Anthemidis in Anathasiadis 1986:106; Agtzidis 1988:20; Vergeti 1989).

Completing the Process of Integration into Greek Society in Greece

The unfavourable circumstances of initial settlement, the attitude of society in Greece and the prolonged term spent in the socially disadvantaged position of refugees, led Pontians to the realization that the assistance supplied both by fellow Greeks and by state agencies in the country they had always considered their homeland was not what it should have been. They perceived their lost homeland as a lost paradise and this fostered the dream of returning home—a widespread phenomenon common to all refugee groups at that time. The belief that the present settlement was impermanent and their forced displacement only temporary was a significant factor inhibiting integration, especially amongst the middle aged and elderly (O. Lampsidis 1982:528). In some cases this dream of returning was so powerful that Pontian farmers refused to collect agricultural supplies provided for them (Elianos 1921:244).

In 1930 the reality of the Greek–Turkish Agreement put an end to the dream of returning home. Years passed and Greeks from the Pontos, like the other refugees, accepted Greece and struggled to integrate into its social structure. They began to be socially upwardly mobile, moving away progressively from the image of the deprived refugee.

Yet this social mobility was not achieved easily nor at an equal rate by all Pontian families. A small number of families began their new life under more

favourable circumstances than the majority. Among them were a very few members of the upper class who, because of exchanges with Greece, had part of their property in Greece, and some families which had migrated from the Soviet Union before the Soviet reforms were implemented. The latter group included both families from the Eastern Pontos who had fled from persecution to the southern Soviet Union, and also some families who migrated directly from that area. In urban areas these privileged groups bought their own homes.

In northern Greece the rural Pontian population, together with other refugees, transformed vast areas into arable land. However, living conditions there were difficult too, not only for the first generation but also for the second. Thus in the 1950s, waves of migration began to America, Australia and western Europe. Pontians had already emigrated in large numbers to America from the time of the persecutions. Migration to Australia began in the 1950s and to western Europe, especially West Germany, in the 1960s.

Integration into the social structure of Greece was fully achieved when the refugees on the one hand improved their economic position, and on the other hand having been exposed for decades to the cultural influence of the society around them, ceased to be a conspicuous group in society. The Greek hosts also gradually accepted the refugees. The Second World War proved to be a decisive factor in changing social relations between native-born Greeks and refugees. The common struggle and subsequent political realignments helped reduce antagonism considerably (Lavrentidis 1968–1969:381). The split between locally-born Greeks and refugees was replaced in the 1940s by the split between left and right and Asia Minor Greeks took sides independently of their place of origin (Vergeti 1989).

The integration of the refugees was not so much achieved by processes of incorporation by the authorities and society of the ethnic homeland, but by means of the Pontic Greeks' own efforts to assimilate elements of the lifestyle of the society around them. This does not mean, however, that the lack of support and, in many cases, absence of tolerance of differences, required that they submerge their identity totally in order to achieve integration. On the contrary, the influence of Greek refugee populations on Greece has been ethnologically, economically, politically and culturally decisive (Pentzopoulos 1973:125–195, 216–219; G. N. Lampsidis 1982:105–164, 177–208). Ethnic homogeneity in Greece was achieved by the exchange of populations. Regions such as Macedonia which had not been ethnically homogeneous became completely Greek.

At the same time the economy recovered with the help of the professional experience of refugees in urban and rural areas. In the agricultural sector in particular, refugees imported advanced methods of cultivation and promoted new production. At the political level the refugee problem and also the political behaviour of such a large number of people played an important role in subsequent political developments. At the cultural level participation in literature and the arts gave new impetus to intellectual development. However, the processes of social interaction were based, above all, on the reality of integration

into the homeland, without either the Greek government or society displaying any interest in the possibility of preserving diversity within the ethnic group, a fact which subsequently created problems for later generations born in Greece.

The state, in attempting to respond to practical demands, did not carry out settlement according to place of origin, despite its initial intention and plans (Pentzopoulos 1962:107–108). In the case of Pontic Greeks this led to purely Pontian villages (mainly in Macedonia) and Pontian settlements and neighbourhoods in the cities. But there were Pontians scattered throughout Greece. More than any other special cultural attribute, the Pontian dialect was harmed by this dispersal of the population.

The process of integration of Pontic Greeks was more or less completed by the first generation. Yet the Greek government, faithful for decades to the Greek–Turkish Agreement of 1930, was indifferent in supporting the historical memory and cultural particularity of Greeks from the Pontos. This is essential if Pontians are to retain their cultural identity. The extent of this neglect appeared many years later in the 1980s when the younger generation demanded the right to represent this unique identity from the state. It was not until 1982, for example, that the history of Pontic Greeks was included in secondary school text-books.

Pontian Migrants from the Soviet Union in Greece

The Patterns of Migration

In 1918 the Pontian Greek population in the Soviet Union was about 700,000 (Elianos 1921:84). The first mass migration of Pontians from the Soviet Union to Greece took place from 1918 to the end of the 1920s, mainly from 1921 to 1923. It consisted of refugees from the Pontos who had fled to the Soviet Union from persecution by the Young Turks in the years 1914–1924, but also of Pontians permanently settled in the Trans-Caucasus (now the Soviet Socialist Republics of Georgia, Armenia and Azerbaijan), the Ukraine and Russia who had taken refuge in Greece as a consequence of various political upheavals: the 1917 October Revolution; the nationalist policy conducted by the Mensheviks in Georgia (Kesidis 1989:38); the advance of the Turkish army into the Caucasus in 1918 (Samouilidis undated); the violence used by the Armenian government to enlist them (Karapatakis 1975:29); and the unsuccessful Entente campaign in the Ukraine against Bolshevik troops in 1919 (Alexandris 1980:440–441, Sakkas 1979:218).

The Pontians who did not manage, or did not wish to migrate to Greece in the 1920s, were a population with Greek ethnic identity which was hemmed in for the next sixty years by a multi-ethnic state. Different theories and political practices of nationalism and internationalism determined not only whether they could retain and further develop their collective identity but also whether they had the right to residence on the shores of the Black Sea or would be forced to migrate to remote areas such as Central Asia.

There are three historical periods governing the lives of Pontic Greeks in the Soviet Union. The first period, from the 1917 October Revolution until 1937, is characterized by the dominance of Leninist ideology and the political freedom of ethnic groups to use their mother tongue and follow their own way of life. As a result of this policy Pontic Greek culture flourished and was accompanied by economic prosperity until 1929, the year when Stalin fully implemented the collectivization plan.

The second period, during which Stalin held absolute sway, began in 1937 and was one of persecution and exile of a large proportion of the population. This policy, and in particular the first persecutions which were carried out from 1937–1939, caused the great waves of migration in 1939 to all parts of Greece where Pontians had settled in the 1920s. The ideology and consequences of Stalinist policy continued during the time of his successors until the third period, that of *perestroika*, which essentially began in 1985. During those years only a small number of families managed to get permission to migrate to Greece, as exit from the Soviet Union was virtually forbidden. From 1946 until 1948 and in 1957 a few families arrived (Vergeti 1989). From 1965 to 1967 there was another wave of migration from Central Asia; this was interrupted during the years 1967–1974 because of the imposition of the dictatorship in Greece, but continued after the return to civilian rule. Families which came to Greece from 1965–1985 settled mainly in the Athens–Piraeus complex.

1985 saw the beginning of the policy which created the preconditions for the 1987 wave of migration which has continued to increase significantly from 1988 until the present day.

Greeks of Pontian descent still remaining in the Soviet Union, now live in widely separated areas. There are population concentrations in: the Soviet Republics of the Trans-Caucasus (mainly in the republic of Georgia and less in the republics of Armenia and Azerbaijan); the Ukraine; Russia; Kazakhstan; Uzbekistan; Kirghizia and even in Siberia. Georgia, Armenia, the Ukraine and Russia have traditionally been reception areas for Pontian refugees from Asia Minor. Pontic Greek communities in the other republics were created by entire Pontian populations exiled during the Stalinist period, particularly in 1942, 1944, 1946 and 1949.

According to the Soviet census of 1979 the Greek population numbers 344,000. The real figure is much greater than the census figure since many may declare Russian or the local nationality (e.g. Georgian, Ukrainian etc.) and so are registered in the corresponding statistics. Soviet censuses refer to all the Greek population, the vast majority of which is Pontian. It has been estimated (Kiahopoulos 1988) that in the Soviet Union today there are approximately 500,000 Greeks of Pontian descent.

Perestroika has allowed the concealed national spirit of ethnic groups to re-emerge, resulting in such demands as return to the land from which they had been violently expelled during the Stalinist period, autonomy, political connection to a republic of the same ethnic group and even independence from

the multi-ethnic state. As the ideology of Leninism collapses, borders open, and nationalistic disturbances intensify, ethnic groups have started to migrate and 'reassemble' in their perceived homelands. Pontians come into this category, with tendencies both to demand an autonomous region and to migrate to Greece. The latter tendency is increasingly enhanced by the unrest caused by the demands of other ethnic groups in areas where a significant portion of the Pontian population lives. The Trans-Caucasus, for example, is supremely vulnerable to nationalistic disturbances. So too are the Asian Muslim republics where Islamic fundamentalism is developing alongside the Turanian awakening and the local nationalism. Reflecting these developments, while in 1987 only 527 people migrated from the Soviet Union to Greece (according to the Greek Ministry of Foreign Affairs), in 1988 the number increased to 1,365, in 1989 to 6,791 and in 1990 to over 20,000. The last great wave of migration will perhaps be reduced by the creation of an autonomous Greek region on the northeastern shores of the Black Sea in the Russian Republic (RSFSR). The demand was examined officially in 1990 by the Soviet authorities and has been agreed on condition that it is accepted by the local population—something which is considered feasible in this particular area (the region of Kuban).

Reception in Greece

Pontians from the USSR who settled in Greece in the 1920s experienced first settlement conditions and an integration process similar to those of Pontian refugees from the Pontos. There are very few statistics available for the total number and integration process of Pontian Greeks who arrived in 1939. There is however no doubt that the socio-historical context following the Second World War and large-scale migration of the labour force to Western Europe in the 1960s, had the same effects on all groups of Pontian Greeks regardless of when they settled.

There is virtually no information on the integration process of the 30,000 mentioned by Kiahopoulos (1988) who migrated from the Central Asian Muslim republics from 1965 until the last great wave during the past three years. More recent field work suggests, however, that the absence of any kind of state assistance was a decisive factor in the economic marginalization of these Pontians, at least in the early years.

According to statistics from the Greek Foreign Ministry, approximately 10,000 people arrived in the period 1980–1989. Of this number 68% migrated in 1989. It has been estimated that in the years to come approximately 15,000 more will arrive every year (Agtzidis 1990:19). Until 1988 the vast majority migrated principally from the Central Asian Republics of Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan and Kirghizia since almost all Pontian families in those republics hold Greek passports and consequently are more able to leave the Soviet Union than are Pontians who are citizens of other Soviet republics. However, the current policy of the Soviet authorities, which permits migration flows causing larger and more homogeneous ethnic groupings, has caused a change in the demographic

distribution in the place of origin of those who have arrived in the last three years. In particular, as is shown by the first extensive research by the Greek state on the problems of newly-arrived Pontian migrants, which was carried out in 1989–1990, 55% of those questioned who had arrived in the previous two years were born in Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan, and 40% in Georgia, chiefly in Abkhazia (Agtzidis 1990:19).

Pontian migrants from the Soviet Union face significant difficulties in integration in Greece, corresponding to, but of lesser extent and intensity than, those faced by refugees from the Pontos at the beginning of the century. The overwhelming majority of them know only the Pontian dialect, a factor which inhibits the children from adapting to the educational system and the adults from finding work. It is difficult, sometimes impossible, to relate the degrees they have in certain fields to degrees from Greek tertiary education institutions; their social insurance entitlements are not transferred from the USSR and they face grave accommodation problems. As far as accommodation is concerned, state assistance granted in Komotini and Xanthi is no real incentive since the labour market in these towns is small. This leaves the Pontians with little choice but to settle in the urban complexes of Athens–Piraeus or Salonica where there are greater opportunities of finding work. Most new arrivals settle in municipalities where Pontians from the Soviet Union make up the majority or a significant proportion of the population. Usually they settle close to relatives and friends who give substantial assistance in adaptation to the new social environment. It must be stressed, however, that this form of assistance has become much less effective since 1988. The already established families are unable to cope with the increasing numbers as well as their own family commitments. This tendency to settle close to relatives and friends has created purely Pontian settlements in under-privileged areas of the capital.

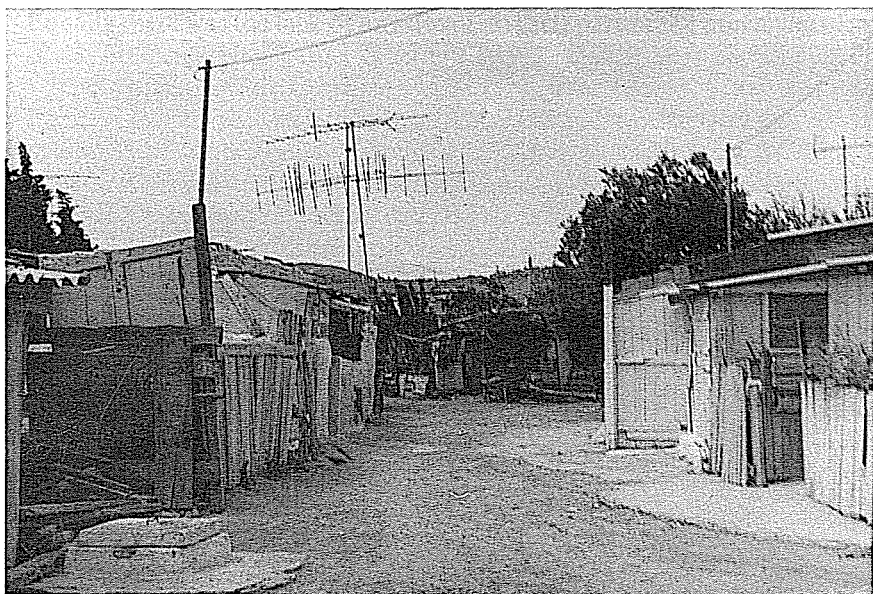
The economically-disadvantaged status of Pontic Greeks added another refugee element to Pontian identity. In the early years the majority of arrivals ended up as cheap labour, regardless of their educational level and work experience, chiefly due to the language problems and the fact that their qualifications had no local equivalent. Perhaps the most shocking case of people being trapped in weak economic positions is that of the Pontian families who were settled temporarily in Lavrio, Attica and who still remain there in the same unsuitable accommodation after 25 years. As families grew the original dwellings were extended with temporary materials which were later replaced by more suitable materials. The photographs from Lavrio provide graphic illustration of how problems like housing which are faced by the first generation continue to exist and affect some of the second generation (Plates 1–4).

For migrants who have arrived in the past three years, prospects of state assistance are much better. The great influx into Greece of Pontian migrants from the Soviet Union and the expected increase in their number, poses a similar problem of integration into the social structure of Greece for the first time since the Asia Minor disaster of 1922. This has activated state machinery which for thirty years had remained indifferent to, or been exceptionally slow to deal with,

Plate 1



Plate 2



A main road in the settlement of Pontian Greeks from the Soviet Union in Lavrio, Attica.

Plate 3



Plate 4



Temporary settlement in Lavrio has lasted twenty-five years.

the integration of Pontians from the Soviet Union. In 1987 lessons in Modern Greek began. The first official study to identify the social characteristics and integration problems of this group was made in 1988–1990. Other research projects were subsequently assigned to universities and research centres. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs is preparing the reception settlements which will provide free accommodation for six months during which there will be lessons in Modern Greek and on society in Greece. After six months a plot suitable for building and a loan will be granted.

The interest of the state had already been demonstrated in the early 1980s by action such as introducing Pontian history into school text-books, broadcasts by state information media on distinctive features of Pontian culture (such as Pontian dances), and support by state agencies for two world Pontian congresses held in 1985 and 1988. As a result the mistrust of the host Greek society towards Pontic Greeks from the Soviet Union subsided. This contrasts with the suspicious and even prejudiced treatment which Pontic Greeks had faced in their new social environment in the 1960s and 1970s, due partly to ignorance of the history of Pontians. Besides this, the dictatorship of 1967–1974 did not permit the new arrivals to found associations, nor the Pontian organizations already in existence to operate in ways which would have informed their hosts that the new arrivals had no specific political convictions but on the contrary were the victims of Stalinist persecution. And so the name ‘a-ooti’ was replaced by ‘Russians’. Similarly, people with left wing political views refused to believe personal evidence of the experiences of Pontians in the USSR. Their behaviour is understandable since left wing persecution was widespread in that period. Equally there was the lack of any doubt on their part of the prevailing ideology of the left on any choice whatsoever made by the leadership of socialist countries.

The suspicion which typified the behaviour of Greek society towards the Pontians from the Soviet Union in the 1960s and 1970s marginalized them socially in a way that was even more distressing than their economic marginalization. The hope of migration to their homeland had accompanied Pontians for decades during the course of forced expatriation. When their own state and their own people, fellow Greeks, did not offer them the anticipated sense of security, the problems of adaptation were perhaps far greater than those of any other migrant group. In recent years decisive interventions have been made by the Pontian associations in the Athens–Piraeus area in informing, at least those in the immediate neighbourhood of settlement areas, about the history and problems of the new arrivals. These efforts, together with the contribution made by the mass media to this objective, have both led progressively to fuller acceptance by Greek society.

The specific problems of integration of Pontians rests on the fact that they constitute a refugee group which has chosen migration to a country of the same ethnic group. This is why social marginalization is perhaps more distressing than economic marginalization. Moreover, the particular manner of integration and the cultural, economic and ideological relationships between hosts and refugees who possess a common ethnic identity, have consequences not only for the first generation but on their children and grand-children. Thus knowledge of the

experiences of integration of Pontian refugees at the beginning of the century and the consequences of specific ways of solving them can help towards finding not only short-term solutions to immediate practical demands such as housing but also long-term needs, such as ensuring the right to historical memory and cultural identity.

Sources in Greek

- AGTZIDIS, V.** (1990) 'The First Large-scale Research by a Public Agency on Pontian Greeks from the USSR', *Moscow News*, 3 (30), p. 19.
- (1988) 'The Greek Republic of the Pontos that Almost Came Into Being. The Other Greece', *Tote*, 35, pp. 16–20.
- ALEXANDRIS, A. et al.** (1980) *Studies on Venizelos and his Era*, Athens, Phillipotis.
- ATHANASIADIS, D. et al.** (1986) *First World Pontian Congress*, Thessaloniki, Organising Committee 1st W.P.C.
- ELIANOS, M. C.** (1921) *The Task of Greek Welfare*, Athens, Foreign Ministry Press Office.
- GIZELI, V. D.** (1984) *Social Transformations and the Origins of Public Housing in Greece (1920–1930)*, Athens, Epikerotita.
- KARAPATAKIS, G.** (1975) 'Memorandum on Caucasian Migrants and Pontian Refugees', *Pontiaki Estia*, 3, pp. 28–33.
- KESIDIS, T.** (1989) 'The Territorial Distribution of Greeks in the USSR', *New Times. Soviet Political Journal*, 3, pp. 36–39.
- KIAHOPOULOS, T.** (1988) 'The Problems of the New Arrivals from the Soviet Union and of Their Fellow Countrymen in the Soviet Union', Paper Presented at the Second World Pontian Congress, Thessaloniki.
- KLADAS, S.** (1975) 'The Shooting-range at Kallithea, Athens. The First Pontian "Beehive" in the Capital City', *Pontiaki Estia*, 3, pp. 49–52.
- LAMPSIDIS, G. N.** (1982) *The Refugees of 1922*, Athens, Greek Voice.
- LAMPSIDIS, O.** (1982) 'The Reminiscences of Greek Refugees from the Pontos Idealizing the Past and Their Effects on Research Into the Pontian Dialect', *Archeion Pontou*. Appendix 14. Publications on the Greek Pontos and Greek Pontians, pp. 525–532.
- LAVRENTIDIS, I. N.** (1986) 'Greeks of Pontian Origin from the Soviet Union and Their Rights Under the Treaty of Lausanne', *Archeion Pontou*. Appendix 15.
- (1968–1969) 'The Settlement of Pontian Greeks in Greece. 1st District of Serres', *Archeion Pontou*, 29, pp. 341–382.
- SAKKAS, G. E.** (1979) *The History of the Greeks from Tripoli in the Pontos*, 2nd edn., Athens.
- SAMOULIDIS, C.** (undated) *The Chronicle of Kars*, Athens, Govosti.
- TSAKIRIDIS, P. H.** (1973–1974) 'The Settlement of Pontian Greeks in Greece. 2nd District of Kozani', *Archeion Pontou*, 32, pp. 337–349.
- VALAVANIS, G. K.** (1986) *Modern General History of the Pontos*, 2nd edn., Thessaloniki, Kiriakidis Bros.
- VERGETI, M.** (1989) This reference applies to doctoral research still in progress on *Ethno-regional Identity: the Case of Pontian Greeks*. Department of Social Policy and Social Anthropology, Panteion University.

Sources in English

- BRYER, A. M.** (1980) *The Empire of Trebizond and the Pontos*, London, Variorum Reprints.
- HERZFELD, M.** (1986) *Ours Once More. Folklore, Ideology, and the Making of Modern Greece*, 2nd edn., New York, Pella Publishing Company.
- HIRSCHON, R.** (1989) *Heirs of the Greek Catastrophe. The Social Life of Asia Minor Refugees in Piraeus*, Oxford, Clarendon Press.
- MARRUS, M. R.** (1985) *The Unwanted. European Refugees in the Twentieth Century*, Oxford, Oxford University Press.
- PENTZOPOULOS, D.** (1962) *The Balkan Exchange of Minorities and its Impact upon Greece*, Athens, Publication of the Social Sciences Center.
- SANDIS, E. E.** (1973) *Refugees and Economic Migrants in Greater Athens*, Athens, National Centre of Social Research.

SPECIAL ISSUE

The Odyssey of the Pontic Greeks

Contents

Editorial Introduction

ROGER ZETTER

Articles

The Greek State's Overview of the Pontian Issue

DIMITRIS KOKKINOS

The Pontic Greeks Before the Diaspora

ANTHONY BRYER

The Pontic Dialect: A Corrupt Version of Ancient Greek?

PETER MACKRIDGE

The Pontic Myth of Homeland

PATRICIA FANN

The Diaspora of the Greeks of the Pontos: Historical Background

ARTEMIS XANTHOPOULOS-KYRIAKOU

Pontic Culture in the USSR between the Wars

APOSTOLOS KARPOZILOS

The Persecution of Pontic Greeks in the Soviet Union

VLASIS AGTZIDIS

Pontic Greeks from Asia Minor and the Soviet Union: Problems of Integration in Modern Greece

MARIA VERGETI

The Reception of Pontians from the Soviet Union in Greece

DIMITRIS KOKKINOS

Pontic Greeks Today: Migrants or Refugees?

EFFIE VOUTIRA