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„Imprisonment and Collective Claims: Uprisings in the  
Greek Penitentiaries, 1975-1999“

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## **Abstract**

Are the uprisings in prisons products of collective action and claims or are they individual examples of prisoners' violent reaction? This constitutes the initial basic research question of the present Master's Thesis, which examines three case studies of uprisings in the Greek post-Dictatorial prisons (1975-1999). The main source material for the investigation of these case studies is the press of the period, while other sources such as legislation or prisoners' testimonies are also employed. The study initially analyzes a series of sociological theories on the subject of prison uprisings, which concentrated on the relation between the institutional and administrative authorities and the prisoners in everyday life in prison and the collapse of this stable relation due to a variety of reasons, which led to uprisings. Then the study approaches the issue by concentrating mainly on the prisoners as collective subjects and their organized or spontaneous action. It shows the prisoners' struggle for asserting their claims, which transcended the constant demand for 'a better prison'. It also demonstrates the diversity of uprisings, which, even though they differed, all in their core disturbed and called into question the institution of the prison. The three case studies examined in the Master's Thesis took place in different penitentiaries and in different years, in Corfu prison (1987), in Alikarnassos prison and then spread to many other prisons across the country (1990) and in Korydallos prison (1995). They also differed significantly in their development. In certain instances, the prisoners were organized, formulated specific demands and fought to carry them out, while in others they just wanted to burn down the penitentiary or they fought violently amongst themselves. Finally, significant facets of the social, economic and political context, as well as the media landscape, in which the uprisings took place evolved in the post-Dictatorial period and this process can also be detected in different aspects of the uprisings in the penitentiaries. Through the investigation of the individual characteristics of each uprising and its interaction with the Greek society and the press, the study arrives at certain important conclusions concerning uprisings in Greek penitentiaries, which also constitute a meaningful addition to the European historiography on the subject.

## **Zusammenfassung**

Sind die Aufstände in Gefängnissen die Ergebnisse kollektiver Aktion und Forderungen oder sind sie Einzelbeispiele von gewalttätiger Reaktion der Häftlinge? Dies stellt die erste grundlegende Forschungsfrage dieser Masterarbeit dar, die drei Fallbeispiele von Aufständen in griechischen Gefängnissen in der postdiktatorischen Periode (1975-1999) erforscht. Das hauptsächliche Quellenmaterial für die Untersuchung dieser Fallbeispiele ist die Presse der Periode, nichtsdestotrotz werden auch andere Quellen, wie die Gesetzgebung oder die Erzählungen der Häftlinge, verwendet. Die Untersuchung analysiert erst mehrere soziologische Theorien über das Thema der Aufstände in Gefängnissen, die sich auf das Verhältnis zwischen den institutionellen und administrativen Behörden und den Häftlingen im Alltagsleben im Gefängnis konzentriert haben und den aus mehreren Gründen Bruch dieses stabilen Verhältnisses, der in Aufständen resultiert hat, betont haben. Dann legt die Untersuchung den Fokus auf die Häftlinge als kollektive Subjekte und ihre organisierten oder spontanen Aktionen. Sie zeigt den Kampf der Häftlinge um ihre Forderungen, die über den ständigen Anspruch auf „ein besseres Gefängnis“ hinausgingen, zu behaupten. Sie betont auch die Vielfalt der Aufstände und zeigt, dass, obwohl es Differenzen zwischen den Aufständen gab, sie alle in ihrem Kern die Institution des Gefängnisses durcheinanderzubringen und zu bestreiten vorhatten. Die drei untersuchten Fallbeispiele fanden in verschiedenen Gefängnissen und in verschiedenen Jahren, in Korfu Gefängnis (1987), in Alikarnassos Gefängnis und dann in vielen Griechischen Gefängnissen (1990) und in Korydallos Gefängnis (1995), statt. Sie differenzierten sich auch in ihrer Entwicklung. In manchen Fällen waren die Häftlinge organisiert, sie formulierten spezifische Forderungen und sie kämpften um diese Forderungen zu erfüllen, während in anderen Fällen sie das Gefängnis niederzubrennen versuchten oder sie miteinander heftig kämpften. Zum Schluss entwickelten sich in der postdiktatorischen Periode wichtige Seiten des sozialen, ökonomischen und politischen Kontexts und der medialen Landschaft, in der die Aufstände stattfanden, und dieser Prozess kann auch in verschiedenen Aspekten der Aufstände in den Gefängnissen betrachtet werden. Die Forschung kommt durch die Untersuchung der spezifischen Merkmale jedes Aufstands und seiner Wechselwirkung mit der Griechischen Gesellschaft und der Presse zu wichtigen Schlussfolgerungen über die Aufstände in Griechischen Gefängnissen, die auch eine bedeutsame Ergänzung zur Europäischen Historiografie zum Thema darstellen.



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## Introduction

*'Progress won, the Corfu prison does not exist anymore'*

Uprising in Corfu prison, 1987<sup>1</sup>

*'We revolted against the skimmers of our dreams'*

Prisoners' banner in Alikarnassos prison during the uprising in 1990<sup>2</sup>

*'I slaughtered those as..es'*

Prisoners' words during the uprising in Korydallos prison in 1995<sup>3</sup>

The uprisings or riots in prisons are events that always draw the attention of society, the state and the authorities. They constitute subjects of analysis, not only by experts on correctional policies, but also by the Media and the political authorities. This analysis is a continuous effort to interpret the causes and explain the conditions that lead to outbursts, as well as to propose possible ways of prevention of such occurrences. The various interpretations of these phenomena can converge, but also differ in many aspects. They have elements in common, but can also produce different conclusions, proving that prison riots globally are more particular and complex phenomena, which instigate scientific interest and attract researchers from different disciplines, such as Sociology, Psychology, History and, of course, Criminology.

The case of prison uprisings in Greek penitentiaries does not differ from other similar instances and also presents many interesting aspects. The topic of the present master thesis is titled: 'Imprisonment and Collective Claims: Uprisings in the Greek Penitentiaries, 1975-1999', and concerns three uprisings/case studies in three different Greek penitentiaries during the post-dictatorial period in Greece, known as

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<sup>1</sup> Kostas Chardavelas, 'Isopedosan tis fulakes', *Ta Nea*, 06.02.1987

<sup>2</sup> P. Georgoudi, M. Grapsa, 'Xespasma', *Ta Nea*, 12.10.1990

<sup>3</sup> Gianna Papadaku, Vana Fotopoulou, 'Ta esfaka ta mal..na', *Eleftherotypia*, 10.12.1995

Imprisonment and Collective Claims:  
Uprisings in the Greek Penitentiaries, 1975-1999

‘Metapolitefsi’ 1974-1990s, specifically the uprising that took place in the prison on the island of Corfu in 1987, the uprisings in different prisons across the country, which were instigated by the uprising in the prison in Alikarnassos, in Heraklion, Crete in 1990, and, finally, the uprising in Korydallos prison, the biggest prison in Greece, located in the municipality of Piraeus near the capital city of Athens in 1995. These uprisings were not the only such instances in Greek prisons in the period. However this selection provides the opportunity for a multi-perspective observation of the phenomenon of Greek prison uprisings, which enables the examination of their common elements and their differences. These three cases differed in their intensity, in the goals of the participants and in the course that was followed. Therefore this allows for the examination of the different dimensions of the phenomenon of prison uprisings in general. The research will focus on the place, in which each uprising occurred, namely the different penitentiaries, the time of the uprising (taking into consideration not only the historical context of the period, but also the particular contextual parameters in the prisons), and finally the special characteristics of each case study.

One of the main issues of the thesis is the reconstitution of the main facts that concern the three case studies and their historical presentation. Furthermore it might be interesting to present the possible common elements of the three uprisings, but also the special characteristics of each case. What happened in a prison before, during and after the outburst of an uprising? Did the end of an uprising have any results or caused any changes (as for example improvement of the living conditions or new legislation), and if so to what extent? Were the uprisings products of collective claims or not? What was the extent of the prisoners’ organization and did they have the ability to act as collective subjects? How did the state and the authorities react? Finally, even though the presentation of the uprisings by the media is not the main subject of the present research, there will be a small reference to the different ways that the Greek press presented the events, and how each newspaper interpreted and assigned particular meaning to each uprising in the public speech Discourse.

The common element of the three uprisings is that all of them took place after the fall of the military Dictatorship (1967-1974) and the restoration of democracy. More specifically, the uprisings that were selected occurred several years after the fall



of the military Dictatorship, when the restoration of democracy was firmly established. In the period there were no more political prisoners in Greece. The social divisions of the postwar period also ceased to exist in collective memory. It has been described as a period of national reconciliation. The political prisoners in Greece, because of their importance in the collective memory for decades, have been investigated extensively by researchers of different disciplines, especially by historians. Topics such as the special detentions centers (camps), the living conditions and the policies of exclusion that these people faced due to their political identity as communists/leftists or sympathizers of the communist party have been frequently examined by historians, as well as their special identity of ‘political prisoner’<sup>4</sup>. However, apart from political prisoners, prisoners without this particular status in Greece have not yet been a research subject in Greek historiography. The prisoners that constitute the main actors and research subjects of the present study did not have the status or the identity of ‘political prisoner’. This in fact is the main innovation of the present research.

There is a great amount of publications, especially by criminologists and sociologists, as well as psychologists, which concern the penitentiaries and some aspects of the ‘identity’ of the prisoner in Greek prisons. Furthermore, there are studies, especially from the discipline of criminology, about the change of the character of the Greek prisons, the nationality of the prisoners (for example the increase of the numbers of the migrant prisoners since the 1990s), but not a more detailed historical analysis of the phenomenon of uprisings in the post-Dictatorial period. The subject of the prisoners and their participation in uprisings in Greece in the period 1980-2000, has not yet been part of a systematic historical research and publication. Therefore, the present research constitutes a historical approach to penitentiaries and the phenomena of uprisings in the last decades of the twentieth century, which fills a void in Greek historiography on the subject and can also be associated with broader, European or global, research on prisons and prisoners.

Due to the complexity of the phenomenon, as well as the lack of previous basic empirical research, the use of the press of the period has been considered as an

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<sup>4</sup> On the subject of political prisoners in Greece see: Dimitra Lambropoulou, *Grafontas apo ti fylaki: Opseis tis ypokeimenikotitas twn politikwn kratoumenwn, 1947-1960* (Athens: Nefeli, 1999).

important source for the research. The methodological approach of the material is the qualitative analysis and the theoretical approach is based on the theoretical model of moral panics. The main source material of the present study is the reports on the uprisings by the press. Additional, helpful source material for an all-encompassing observation of the subject, particularly in the examination of the perspective of the prison authorities, would be the official archives of the penitentiaries (for example the official records of the prisoners and the prison staff, records of disciplinary offenses by the prisoners, documents on the organization of supplies in the prisons). However, this source material, especially concerning the 1980s and 1990s, is still kept in the prisons and its access by the researchers is not possible<sup>5</sup>.

The newspapers that were selected for the present research cover almost the whole political spectrum. Most of them were published daily, while some were published only in the weekend. They were the most broadly circulated newspapers in the country. All issues of the newspapers ‘Ta Nea’, ‘Eleftherotypia’ and ‘Kathimerini’ for the years 1987, 1990 and 1995 were analyzed. This decision was made in order to enable a broader view not only of the context of the period, but also of the manner, in which each newspaper presented each event. Additional source material came from the newspapers ‘Avgi’ and ‘Eleftheros Typos’, which were published daily, as well as the newspaper ‘To Vima’, which was published on Sundays. However, only the issues that concerned the particular period of the riots were taken into consideration. In some cases, for the better understanding of the context, newspaper issues from other years, as for example the newspaper Eleftherotypia in the year 1994, were examined. Due to lack of previous research on the uprisings, the events were reconstructed through the newspaper reports as accurately and as detailed as possible, regarding the course of the events and the participants.

Additional sources, which contributed to the recreation of the events and their interpretation, were published testimonies of former prisoners. Some of them concerned the prisons in general, as for example the book of the former prisoner Christos Roussos ‘Pros Sofronismon’ (‘On Correction’), or the book of former female prisoner Sofia Argyriou-Kyritsi ‘Gynaikeies Fylakes Korydallou’ (‘Korydallos

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<sup>5</sup> The archives of several penitentiaries, such as Korydallos prison and the former prison in Aigina island are kept in the General Archives of the State, where researchers can access them. However, the accessible material covers the period only until the year 1975.

Female Prisons’), which is one of the rare testimonies of female prisoners in the period. A chapter of the book ‘Gdartes Oneirwn’ (Skinners of Dreams), of the former prisoner Giannis Petropoulos, which refers to the experience of the writer during the uprising in Alikarnassos prison in 1990 is also important. Most of those books were published by established publishers, except from the book of Sofia Argyriou-Kyritsi, which was a self-publication. It should be emphasized that, even though these testimonies are helpful as auxiliary sources in the recreation of the events, they do not constitute the primary source material. A research based on the analysis of testimonies requires specific methodological tools and approaches, which go beyond the methodological scope of the present study. However, they constitute valuable source material for a potential different approach on the subject<sup>6</sup>.

The aforementioned particular features of the research on the subject of prisons in general, and Greek prisons in particular, necessitated the broadening of the disciplinary scope of secondary literature. Apart from historical investigations, works from the disciplines of Sociology and Criminology were also employed in the study. Especially concerning the theoretical approach to the uprisings sociological research, such as the book of Bert Useem and Peter Kimball ‘States of Siege: US Prison Riots, 1971-1986’, was essential for the analysis. Therefore, even though the present study is a historical research, which attempts to, at least partially, cover a gap in Greek historiography, it draws from sociological theoretical concepts and ideas, and could contribute to the disciplinary expansion of the research subject, as well as further historical research into the case of Greek prisons.

#### The historical context of the period: From the fall of the Dictatorship to the 1990s

The three prisons riots occurred in the period of ‘Metapolitefsi’, namely the period that started in July 1974 with the fall of the military Dictatorship that had been established in April 1967 and constitutes the broader historical context of the study. After the Turkish invasion in Cyprus in July 1974, the Dictatorship, following a period of internal turmoil, which culminated in the students’ protests and the occupation of the Polytechnic School of Athens in November 1973, collapsed. This

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<sup>6</sup> It must be emphasized that these testimonies do not constitute the main sources of the present research, because testimonies as main sources of research require a different approach and a different methodological tools. Such an approach would be interesting for future research on the subject.

had as a result the return of the politician and later President of the Hellenic Republic Konstantinos Karamanlis back to Greece from France. It is considered more or less a smooth transition to Democracy<sup>7</sup>. Strictly observed, ‘Metapolitefsi’ or ‘Third Greek Democracy’ covers the period from July 1974 until August 1975, when the democratic regime was stabilized<sup>8</sup>. The term ‘Metapolitefsi’ though, apart from the description of the change in the system of government, also concerns a broader historical context, which lasted longer and determined the following decades as well. So, it constitutes a more complex term<sup>9</sup>.

The first election after the fall of the military Dictatorship took place in November 1974. The winner, with fifty-four percent (54%) of the vote, was Konstantinos Karamanlis as the founder and leader of the newly created right-wing party ‘New Democracy’<sup>10</sup>. In the new party participated political figures associated with the pre-dictatorial political system, as well as new politicians<sup>11</sup>. Another newly formed party was PASOK (Panhellenic Socialist Movement), which had a socialist orientation, entirely different from the pre-dictatorial parties of the Center. Its founder and leader was the politician Andreas Papandreou. The main slogan of PASOK in the 1970s was ‘National Independence, Popular Sovereignty, Social Liberation and Democratic Structures’. In the first elections after the fall of the Dictatorship PASOK took fourteen percent (14%) of the vote<sup>12</sup>. Furthermore, in 1974 the ‘Communist Party of Greece’ (KKE) that had been outlawed in 1947, was legalized again. However, already in 1968, the party had split in the ‘Communist Party of Greece’ and the ‘Communist Party of the Interior’<sup>13</sup>.

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<sup>7</sup> Richard Clogg, *A Concise History of Greece* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), 169.

<sup>8</sup> Vaggelis Karamanolakis and Ioanna Papathanasiou, *Metapoliteusi, saranta chronia meta: Apo tin ptwsi tis Diktatorias sthn krisi ths Dimokratias* (Arxeia Syghronis Koinwnikis Istorias, Avgi, 2014), 12.

<sup>9</sup> Manos Avgeridis, Efi Gazi, and Kostis Kornetis, eds., *Metapoliteusi: I Ellada sto Metaixmio duo Aiwnwn* (Athens: Themelio, 2015), 16.

<sup>10</sup> Clogg, *A Concise History of Greece*, 171.

<sup>11</sup> Ilias Nikolakopoulos Nikolakopoulos, “Ta dilimmata tis Metapoliteusis: Metaksi synexeias kai rixis,” *Arxeiotaxio*, 2013, 9.

<sup>12</sup> Nikolakopoulos, 7; Clogg, *A Concise History of Greece*, 171–72.

<sup>13</sup> Nikolakopoulos, “Ta dilimmata tis Metapoliteusis: Metaksi synexeias kai rixis,” 8; Clogg, *A Concise History of Greece*, 170–71.

One of the main actions of the first government that was elected in November 1974 was the restoration of the institutions, the establishment of a parliamentary democracy, as well as the integration in the European Economic Community<sup>14</sup>. A month after the elections, a referendum concerning the continuation or abolition of the Greek monarchy took place. Around sixty-nine percent (69,2%) of the voters chose the abolition of monarchy. Thus, one of the most controversial and divisive issues in Greek politics and society for many decades seized to exist<sup>15</sup>. In 1975 the constitution was restored<sup>16</sup>.

Another important issue in post-dictatorial Greece was the integration of the country to the European Economic Community. The first attempts for integration had already taken place in the 1950s, and in 1961 a first agreement between Greece and the Community was reached, which opened the way for a final agreement. The goal of Konstantinos Karamanlis after his return to Greece was the ‘integration as soon as possible’, according to his words, not only for economic reasons, but also for political reasons, namely the stabilization of the democratic system<sup>17</sup>. A few years later, on 28 May 1979, the treaty for the incorporation of Greece into the European Economic Community, which made full membership possible in January 1981, was signed. The connection of the country with the European Economic Community was not accepted by all members of the Greek political system, as the PASOK and KKE parties were openly against it<sup>18</sup>.

The decade of 1980s on the other hand was a decade of changes that signals the end of long-lasting divisions of the past<sup>19</sup>. It is considered a decade that brings the PASOK party in the political spotlight. The political program of PASOK before the 1981 election, which was named ‘Contract with the people’ and it’s goal was ‘Change’ (‘Allagi’), promised the voters ‘national sovereignty’ and a socialistic direction<sup>20</sup>. In the election in October 1981, PASOK won with forty-eight percent

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<sup>14</sup> Nikolakopoulos, “Ta dilimmata tis Metapoliteusis: Metaksi synexeias kai rixis,” 11.

<sup>15</sup> Nikolakopoulos, 10; Clogg, *A Concise History of Greece*, 172.

<sup>16</sup> Clogg, *A Concise History of Greece*, 173.

<sup>17</sup> Euanthis Chatzivasileiou, *Ellinikos fileleutherismos: To rizospastiko reuma, 1932-1979* (Athens: Patakis, 2010), 515–16.

<sup>18</sup> Chatzivasileiou, 520; Clogg, *A Concise History of Greece*, 177.

<sup>19</sup> Karamanolakis and Papathanasiou, *Metapoliteusi, saranta chronia meta: Apo tin ptwsi tis Diktatorias sthn krisi ths Dimokratias*, 13.

<sup>20</sup> Clogg, *A Concise History of Greece*, 181.

(48%) of the vote. New Democracy with thirty-six percent (36%) was the second largest party in the Greek parliament, and KKE with eleven percent (11%) was the third largest party<sup>21</sup>.

The main social change that the new government brought about was an effort of redistribution of wealth, which increased the welfare of broader social strata. This resulted in massive increase in the access of middle or even lower social strata not only to the public sector, but also to public education in comparison to prior decades<sup>22</sup>. PASOK created a welfare state in Greece. The expansion of the welfare state in the country, in a period, when other western economies followed an opposite, neo-liberal direction, resulted, despite its positive elements, in the increase of public spending and borrowing, and, as a result, the increase of public debt.<sup>23</sup> An example of the expansion of welfare state in the period was the organization, for the first time, of a public healthcare system<sup>24</sup>. The middle class was transformed in the 1980s to a dominant social subject, not only in political discourse, but also in the cultural field<sup>25</sup>. Furthermore, the characteristics of the common people emerged to the public sphere, and as a result they increasingly entered public discourse and became more active political and social subjects and public figures<sup>26</sup>.

Concerning the topic of family and gender issues, the position of women in society improved with their entrance to work and education in mass numbers. The right of the civil marriage and the divorce by consent were also established<sup>27</sup>.

Social movements in the period were increasingly radicalized and abandoned former, more traditional practices of mobilization and protest. Political movements were not directly connected to political organizations, but were centered on specific

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<sup>21</sup> Clogg, 182.

<sup>22</sup> Vassilis Vamvakas and Panayis Panagiotopoulos, eds., *H Ellada sti dekaetia tou '80. Koinwniko, politiko kai politismiko lexiko* (Thessaloniki: Epikentro, 2014), xxxvii.

<sup>23</sup> Karamanolakis and Papathanasiou, *Metapoliteusi, saranta chronia meta: Apo tin ptwsi tis Diktatorias sthn krisi ths Dimokratias*, 23.

<sup>24</sup> Clogg, *A Concise History of Greece*, 187.

<sup>25</sup> Vamvakas and Panagiotopoulos, *H Ellada sti dekaetia tou '80. Koinwniko, politiko kai politismiko lexiko*, xli.

<sup>26</sup> Karamanolakis and Papathanasiou, *Metapoliteusi, saranta chronia meta: Apo tin ptwsi tis Diktatorias sthn krisi ths Dimokratias*, 14–15.

<sup>27</sup> Vamvakas and Panagiotopoulos, *H Ellada sti dekaetia tou '80. Koinwniko, politiko kai politismiko lexiko*, lxiii; Clogg, *A Concise History of Greece*, 183.

issues, such as the struggle of specific persons or groups. An example of such movements is the solidarity movement for the release of the prisoner Christos Roussos<sup>28</sup>.

Even though PASOK was initially against Greece's participation in the NATO alliance and the European Economic Community, its government did not move to withdraw from these international organizations.<sup>29</sup>

Another important aspect of the Greek society in the 1980s was the impact of serious, large-scale economic scandals, which also involved political figures, on social and political life, such as the scandal of the Greek-American businessman Giorgos Koskotas or scandals concerning illegal commissions for the purchase of military arms and equipment<sup>30</sup>. PASOK was the political party mainly affected by these scandals, and it resulted in the loss of the popular vote in the elections in June 1989. In the elections New Democracy took forty-four percent (44%) of the vote, followed by PASOK with thirty-five percent (35%), and the 'Alliance of the Left and of Progress' with thirteen percent (13%). Even though New Democracy won the election, it could not form a government. Therefore, the party came to an agreement with the leader of the Left Charilaos Florakis for the formation of a temporary coalition government with the objective of conducting a new election. Such a cooperation between the two parties occurred for the first time in modern Greek political history. They collaborated, under the slogan 'Catharsis' (Cleansing), which denoted their intent to fight against corruption and the scandals created by the previous governments of PASOK. Apart from the proclaimed goal of the two parties, such collaboration was proof of the end of the divisions that dominated the Greek society from the end of the World War II until the fall of the Dictatorship and the achievement of 'national reconciliation'<sup>31</sup>. After a series of elections that did not lead to the formation of a new government, another election took place on April 1990, when New Democracy with Konstantinos Mitsotakis as its leader won and managed

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<sup>28</sup> Vamvakas and Panagiotopoulos, *H Ellada sti dekaetia tou '80. Koinwniko, politiko kai politismiko lexiko*, xlix.

<sup>29</sup> Clogg, *A Concise History of Greece*, 188–89.

<sup>30</sup> Clogg, 198.

<sup>31</sup> Clogg, 199–200; Karamanolakis and Papathanasiou, *Metapoliteusi, saranta chronia meta: Apo tin ptwsi tis Diktatorias sthn krisi ths Dimokratias*, 13.

to form a government<sup>32</sup>. The new government, in accordance with broader economic trends in the period, followed a new economic policy based more on the neoliberal economic model and imposed an austerity program, in order to put the rapidly increasing public debt under control<sup>33</sup>. This economic initiative was confronted with intense political and social opposition. As a result, in the elections in 1993 New Democracy was defeated and the party also experienced internal turmoil. The then leader Konstantinos Mitsotakis was replaced in the head of the party by Militadis Evert. At the same time New Democracy abandoned the neoliberal orientation of the former government<sup>34</sup>. Apart from the model of neoliberalism, another main concept that was dominant during the 1990s, and was expressed by PASOK as well, was that of ‘modernization’<sup>35</sup>. Furthermore, in the 1990s new political figures emerged, who did not have prior connections with the political scene of the postwar period<sup>36</sup>. Another characteristic of the political field in this decade was the appearance of smaller political parties that experienced short-lived political success, usually in one election and then disbanded or disappeared<sup>37</sup>. An example of such a political party was the conservative ‘Politiki Anoixi’ party, the leader of which was the former member of Parliament and minister of the exterior in the New Democracy government Antonis Samaras. In the national elections of 1993 PASOK came once again in power, and Andreas Papandreou remained prime minister until his death in 1996, when he was succeeded by Konstantinos Simitis. PASOK won the election in 1996 and remained in power until the end of the decade.

#### The Greek press during the post-Dictatorial period (‘Metapolitefsi’)

The press under examination refers to the newspapers with nation-wide circulation in Greece. During the dictatorial period, the Greek press faced a rapid decrease in circulation and many newspapers suspended publishing<sup>38</sup>. In the period

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<sup>32</sup> Clogg, *A Concise History of Greece*, 201–2.

<sup>33</sup> Clogg, 202–3.

<sup>34</sup> Giannis Karagiannis, “‘Kommata exousias’ kai politiki sti sygxroni Ellada,” *Elliniki Epithewrisi Politikis Epistimis*, no. 29 (June 2007): 78.

<sup>35</sup> Karamanolakis and Papathanasiou, *Metapoliteusi, saranta chronia meta: Apo tin ptwsi tis Diktatorias sthn krisi ths Dimokratias*, 24.

<sup>36</sup> Karamanolakis and Papathanasiou, 13.

<sup>37</sup> Karamanolakis and Papathanasiou, 50.

<sup>38</sup> Alexis Zaousis and Konstantinos Stratos, *Oi efimerides 1974-92: I atheati opsi mias krisimis poreias* (Athens: Gnosi, 1993), 174–75.



1974-1981 the Greek press increased rapidly in circulation, with more than a million newspapers sold per day<sup>39</sup>. The newly elected PASOK government in 1981 further contributed to the increase in newspaper circulation. Furthermore, during the period 1981-1989 an increase in newspaper readers outside the capital and the big cities can be observed<sup>40</sup>. This could also be associated with the appearance of the first tabloid-style newspaper at the time<sup>41</sup>. In Greece tabloids were introduced later than in other countries. The first tabloid newspaper, 'Ethnos', started publication in September 1981, and, during the decade, other such newspapers followed, like 'Eleftheros Typos', which was first published in April 1983<sup>42</sup>. The main reason for the association of the appearance of tabloids with increased newspaper circulation, especially in rural areas, is the fact that they were colorful, easy to read, and many pages consisted of photographs or big, eye-catching titles<sup>43</sup>.

Apart from the change in the appearance of newspapers, the period of 'Metapolitefsi', and especially the 1980s is characterized by an important change in the big press groups and the publishers. A transition from the traditional press groups, which were engaged only with publication of newspapers, to new enterprises or businessmen that entered the field of media and press can be detected. These formed larger media groups by creating and owning radio stations and television channels alongside their newspapers or other printed media<sup>44</sup>. An example of this trend was the businessman Giorgos Koskotas. Before the revelation of the economic scandal, Giorgos Koskotas had founded the company 'Grammi AE', which owned five magazines, four newspapers and one radio station. If the economic scandal, in which Koskotas was involved, was not revealed and he proceeded to expand his business, his media company would own a significant number of different media outlets<sup>45</sup>. This example shows that the character of the ownership of the Greek press changed in the period by new publishers-businessmen, who were also involved in other economic

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<sup>39</sup> Even though fluctuation in the sales of daily newspapers in the period can be observed, the increase is nevertheless noticeable.

<sup>40</sup> Zaousis and Stratos, *Oi efimerides 1974-92: I atheati opsi mias krisimis poreias*, 176.

<sup>41</sup> Zaousis and Stratos use the term 'tabloid' in order to describe mainly the appearance of a newspaper and not its content. Tabloid newspapers have smaller pages in size, are colorful (instead of black and white), and use more photographs and big, eye-catching titles.

<sup>42</sup> Zaousis and Stratos, *Oi efimerides 1974-92: I atheati opsi mias krisimis poreias*, 159.

<sup>43</sup> Zaousis and Stratos, 157.

<sup>44</sup> Zaousis and Stratos, 140-41.

<sup>45</sup> Zaousis and Stratos, 142-43.

sectors and operated their newspapers in a different way than the traditional press groups<sup>46</sup>. A change that affected the newspapers in the end of the 1980s and the first years of the 1990s greatly, was the creation of the first privately-owned television channels that broadcasted nation-wide. The first two privately-owned television channels were ‘Mega Channel’ and ‘Antenna TV’, which were founded in 1989. In the following years private television channels expanded rapidly and many publishers became owners of television channels as well<sup>47</sup>. Regarding the press, this development resulted in a significant drop of the everyday sales of newspapers<sup>48</sup>.

As mentioned above, the newspapers selected for the present study cover almost the whole political and ideological spectrum. This selection enables a better, multi-perspective view of the reaction of the press to the uprisings.

The newspaper ‘Kathimerini’ was founded in 1919 and is one of the oldest Greek newspapers. In the period of the military Dictatorship it suspended its publication, and in September 1974 it was re-published as a daily newspaper. It is considered a right-wing newspaper directed at a conservative audience, and it has occasionally expressed support for the New Democracy party, for example in the period 1974-1981. In May 1987 it was acquired by Georgios Koskotas. The change in ownership affected its credibility among its audience, especially after the revelation of the economic scandal of its owner, which was reflected in its drop in circulation. In 1988 Kathimerini was bought by the shipping magnate Aristeidis Alafouzos and its sales started to increase again<sup>49</sup>.

The newspaper ‘Ta Nea’ was first published in 1929 as ‘Athinaika Nea’ and, from 1945, as ‘Ta Nea’ by the press group of Dimitrios Labrakis, and later his son Christos Labrakis. It was considered a successful newspaper in terms of its everyday sales, as it was frequently the most sold newspaper nation-wide. It expressed the political center, and, during the period of the first PASOK government, it adopted a pro-government stance. In 1985 it turned to a tabloid form<sup>50</sup>.

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<sup>46</sup> Zaousis and Stratos, 143.

<sup>47</sup> Zaousis and Stratos, 153.

<sup>48</sup> Zaousis and Stratos, 177.

<sup>49</sup> Zaousis and Stratos, 85–86.

<sup>50</sup> Zaousis and Stratos, 97–98.

On the other hand, 'Eleftherotypia' was not a long-established newspaper, but constituted one of the many new publishing attempts of the post-Dictatorial period, as it was published for the first time in July 1975. Eleftherotypia was associated with an operational model different than the big press and media groups, as the personnel and the content of the newspaper did not follow a single, dictated political approach. This differentiation attracted a new audience, as it can be observed by the increase in total press circulation. Even though it was directed at a central-leftist audience, it was not directly connected to a political party<sup>51</sup>. In 1991 the government of New Democracy criticized the newspaper, because it published the statements of a leftist terrorist organization<sup>52</sup>.

The newspaper 'Eleftheros Typos', which was first published in 1983, is directed at a right-wing audience. Especially in the period 1984-1989, Eleftheros Typos was highly critical of the PASOK government<sup>53</sup>. The special characteristic of this newspaper is its appeal in rural areas, where it sells more copies than in Athens. As the researchers Alexis Zaousis and Konstantinos Stratos mention, it is a newspaper with a wider and lighter range of topics, a section with caustic comments and an intense political position<sup>54</sup>. 'To Vima' is another newspaper published by the Labrakis Press Group (DOL). It was first published in 1922 and until 1945 it was published as 'Elefthero Vima'. In 1985 daily publication of the newspaper stopped, and 'To Vima' circulated only on Sundays. The Sunday issues included analysis and commentary on the events of the previous week, which might be the cause of its publishing success. The newspaper is orientated to the political Center<sup>55</sup>. Finally, the newspaper 'Avgi' is examined, which is a left-wing newspaper and, particularly in the postwar period, it was connected to the leftist parties in Greece (but not the Communist Party). It is the only one of the newspapers analyzed in the present thesis, which did not have broad circulation, but a rather restricted audience. On the other hand in the 1960s the circulation of 'Avgi' was expanded, as it was the only newspaper that was directed at

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<sup>51</sup> Zaousis and Stratos, 75.

<sup>52</sup> Zaousis and Stratos, 77.

<sup>53</sup> Zaousis and Stratos, 69.

<sup>54</sup> Zaousis and Stratos, 71–72.

<sup>55</sup> Zaousis and Stratos, 123–24.

a leftist audience. During the Dictatorship 'Avgi' suspended its publication, and was published again in August 1974<sup>56</sup>.

## **Penal and correctional history, prison organization in the twentieth and twenty-first century in Greece**

The first signs of an attempt to build organized facilities that would function as prisons can be traced in the decade of 1830s, after the establishment of the Greek state in 1830. The main model that became prevalent these first decades is the 'punitive model', based on the Classic School of Penal Law. According to that model the prisoner has to be punished for his crime, to experience pain in order to atone to God and to society. The method of punishment associated with this model, was the isolation of the prisoners and the 'silence system', which did not allow any contact between prisoners and only allowed for minimum contact between prisoners and their relatives or third parties<sup>57</sup>. However, this method of punishment could not be properly applied, due to the lack of organized penitentiaries in the first decades after the formation of the Greek state, when the main places that functioned as prisons were old fortresses<sup>58</sup>. The first penitentiaries in Athens were erected in the late nineteenth century through donations of wealthy individuals, as for example Syggros Prison after the donation of Andreas Syggros and Averof Prison after the donation of Georgios Averof<sup>59</sup>.

The 1950s were a period, when a more organized attempt in codifying the correctional and penal legislation in Greece was made. Both the Penal Code and the Penal Procedure Code were established in 1950, and remained active for decades,

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<sup>56</sup> Zaousis and Stratos, 47.

<sup>57</sup> Nestoras Kourakis, "Synolikh apotimish kai syndesh me to parelthon tou Kodika Vasikwn Kanonwn gia th Metaxeirish tw'n Kratoumenwn," in *Sofronistikh Nomothesia*, ed. Kalliopi D. Spinelli and Nestoras Kourakis, first (Athens: Nomikh Vivliothkh, 1990), 79.

<sup>58</sup> Kourakis, 79; Aggeliki Kardara, *Fylakh kai glwssa* (Sakkoulas, 2014), 177.

<sup>59</sup> Kardara, *Fylakh kai glwssa*, 179; Michalis Asimakopoulos and Petros Metafas, "Oi Ellhnikes Fylakes ton 19o kai stis arxes tou 20ou aiwna: Ta ktiria kai oi mhxanikoi tous," *Technika Chronika* 2 (2008): 1–39.

after numerous reforms and amendments<sup>60</sup>. Concerning the Correctional Code, the first attempts to establish an organized legislative code also started in the 1950s with the legislative parliamentary discussions starting in 1953, the end-result of which was the Correctional Code of 1967<sup>61</sup>. Even though the parliamentary discussion started in 1953, the Correctional Code was published on September 4th 1967, as a “Mandatory Law” (like all the laws published during the Dictatorship 1967-1974) with the number 125. The Law was titled “Correctional Code of implementation of penalties and insurance measures”. The Correctional Code had the authorization of King Constantine, as can be seen in the first lines of the law, and was signed by the members of the Ministerial Council, Georgios Papadopoulos, Stylianos Pattakos and Nikolaos Makarezos, who were the leaders of the Dictatorship. Despite the fact that the leaders of the Dictatorship signed this law, it is a product of the 1950s, namely the period before the military Dictatorship, and reflects the changes that took place in the correctional field in that period, mainly the publication of the Standard Minimum Rules for the Treatment of Prisoners by the United Nations in 1955<sup>62</sup>. In general, the Correctional Code of 1967 can theoretically be associated with the utilitarian or the therapeutic model, which became the main correctional model not only in Greece, but in several countries at that period. The aim of this model was not anymore the punishment of the prisoner, but his moral improvement and reformation<sup>63</sup>. This direction is obvious from Article 1 of the Code, where its main goal is stated as the ‘social readjustment of the prisoners through education and improvement’. In general, the Correctional Code of 1967 was based on authoritarianism and strictness and the prisoners were considered dysfunctional subjects that were in need for special treatment. The aim of the Code was the creation of disciplined citizens<sup>64</sup>. The first

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<sup>60</sup> Effi Lambropoulou, “Correctional Policy in Greece: Law in Action,” in *Prison Policy and Prisoners’ Rights*, ed. Peter Tak and Manon Jendly (Nijmegen: Wolf Legal Publishers, 2008), 392; Effi Lambropoulou, “Crime, Criminal Justice and Criminology in Greece,” *European Journal of Criminology* 2, no. 2 (2005): 213.

<sup>61</sup> Maria Andr. Galanou, *Swfronistiki metaxeirisi kai dikaiwmata twn telountwn ypo krathsh proswpwn* (Athens/Thessaloniki: Sakkoulas, 2011), 2.

<sup>62</sup> Kourakis, “Synolikh apotimish kai syndesh me to parelthon tou Kodika Vasikwn Kanonwn gia th Metaxeirish twn Kratoumenwn,” 80.

<sup>63</sup> Kourakis, 80.

<sup>64</sup> Kourakis, 83–84.

attempts to reform the Correctional Code took place in 1971 by the Greek Junta and led to a proposed law plan in 1972, that did not become a mandatory law<sup>65</sup>.

After the fall of the military Dictatorship in 1974 and especially in the 1980s many Greek prisons faced disturbances and turmoil, such as suicide attempts or escapes. As a result, the government of PASOK decided the creation of a new legislative committee in 1983 in order to work on the new Correctional Code. The new plan was presented publicly in 1987. The anti-government press characterized it as ‘inapplicable’, and many academics were concerned that it would not be possible for this law to be practically implemented. The final parliamentary discussion about the “Code of Fundamental Rules about the Prisoners’ Treatment” took place in 1989. The bill became law of the state in the same year and took effect at the start of 1990<sup>66</sup>.

In contrast to the former Code of 1967, the Code of 1989 followed the juristic model. Instead of the reformation of the prisoners, their ‘treatment’ and their ‘reintegration in society’ were considered of greater importance. Moreover, the categorization of prisoners as ‘deviants’ or ‘vagabonds’ was abandoned. In contrast to the previous Code, this one adopted a more humanitarian approach. Examples of specific provisions of the new Code, which stemmed from this new approach were, among others, the establishment of permission to briefly leave the premises for educational purposes or the provision to take a leave for a specific amount of time (one to five days)<sup>67</sup>. Furthermore, the role of the director of the prison and his authority was restricted with the transfer of authority to larger committees. This could lead to a certain degree of democratization of a prison’s administration. The restrictions of the Code of 1967 regarding the prisoners’ contact with the outside world were also lifted, as an important measure for the future reintegration of the prisoner in society. In the Code, the requirements and qualifications of the prison staff

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<sup>65</sup> Kourakis, 88–90; Galanou, *Swfronistiki metaxeirisi kai dikaiwmata tw n telountwn ypo krathsh proswpwn*, 2.

<sup>66</sup> Kourakis, “Synolikh apotimish kai syndesh me to parelthon tou Kodika Vasikwn Kanonwn gia th Metaxeirish tw n Kratoumenwn,” 96–103; Galanou, *Swfronistiki metaxeirisi kai dikaiwmata tw n telountwn ypo krathsh proswpwn*, 2.

<sup>67</sup> Kourakis, “Synolikh apotimish kai syndesh me to parelthon tou Kodika Vasikwn Kanonwn gia th Metaxeirish tw n Kratoumenwn,” 85–87.

were explicitly stated and the different tasks were specified in detail. These ideological cornerstones of the Code of 1989 remained in the next Code of 1999<sup>68</sup>.

On the other hand, certain provisions of the Code were not clearly defined. The Code of 1989 established the conversion of the death penalty in life sentence. However, the death penalty in Greece had not been implemented for decades before the creation of the Code of 1989. Therefore, despite its conversion to life imprisonment, the sentence, namely the years the prisoner had to serve, did not change in practice and the prisoners had to serve many years of imprisonment (approximately twenty-five years) under this system (as it will be demonstrated in the case studies, the revolted prisoners considered this conversion one of the main problematic issues because it determined these longer life sentences). Another issue was the lack of specific legal expertise in the implementation of the new direction of the juristic model, and, as a result, the Code was not completely detached from former ideological perceptions<sup>69</sup>. Since the first years of its implementation, the Code of 1989 was criticized heavily, mainly because of institutional ambivalence about the new direction and its application to the prisons. Already in the first months after the voting of the new Code, some provisions of the law were suspended, others were replaced by the former Code of 1967, while others were reformed, and, as a result, the two Correctional Codes were used as supplementary to each other<sup>70</sup>. The criticism led to the formation of a new legislative committee already in 1991, which presented a plan for a new Correctional Code, which never became law of the state<sup>71</sup>. On the other hand, the suggestions of the next legislative committee on the subject in 1996 constituted the next systematic attempt to form a Correctional Code in post-dictatorial Greece, the Correctional Code of 1999<sup>72</sup>.

The organization of the Greek penitentiaries in the 1980s and the 1990s was divided to the general prisons for long-term convicts, short-term convicts, debtors and those awaiting trial, the special prisons for worker prisoners and the agricultural

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<sup>68</sup> Galanou, *Swfronistiki metaxeirisi kai dikaiwmata tw n telountwn ypo krathsh proswpwn*, 5–6.

<sup>69</sup> Galanou, 6–7; Kourakis, “Synolikh apotimish kai syndesh me to parelthon tou Kodika Vasikwn Kanonwn gia th Metaxeirish tw n Kratoumenwn,” 87.

<sup>70</sup> Galanou, *Swfronistiki metaxeirisi kai dikaiwmata tw n telountwn ypo krathsh proswpwn*, 1; Ioannis Manoledakis, “I ‘sofronistikh’ ekrhkh,” *Dikaio kai Politikh* 19–20 (n.d.): 5.

<sup>71</sup> Galanou, *Swfronistiki metaxeirisi kai dikaiwmata tw n telountwn ypo krathsh proswpwn*, 7.

<sup>72</sup> Galanou, 2.

prisons<sup>73</sup>. There were also ‘therapeutic institutions’, namely hospitals and psychiatric clinics, which were mostly part of bigger prison complexes. The biggest prison complex in the period was, and still remains, Korydallos prison complex, which is located in the district of Piraeus, outside Athens. Korydallos prison started its operation in the 1960s and was the most populated prison in the country. The juvenile prisoners were held in specific separate prisons, for example the Juvenile Section in Korydallos prison complex. It was the same for female prisoners. The first female prison in Greece was the Averof Central Women’s Prison in Athens, which operated from 1889 until 1971. After 1971 the female prisoners were transferred to the female section of Koyrdallos prison, separated from the male prisoners. After 2008, the female section of Korydallos terminated its operation and the female prisoners were transported to the new prison in Eleonas, outside the city of Thiva. The female prisoners (as well as the juvenile prisoners) constituted definitely a minority in the total prison population<sup>74</sup>.

In general, living conditions in Greek prisons were considered harsh, and in many occasions this situation constituted a reason for prison riots. Furthermore, since the 1990s the Greek prisons had to confront the issue of the exponential rise of illicit drug use, especially of injected drugs. Many drug addicts in prisons used and shared the syringes and needles, and this resulted in high rates of HIV/AIDS positive prisoners or prisoners suffering from hepatitis. This situation should be associated with the rise of convictions connected to drug-related offences since the 1990s, and hints at the insufficiency of the medical care and the methadone treatment inside the prisons. Suicide rates and suicide attempts also rose significantly in the 1990s. The rates were considerably higher compared to the general population. The majority of

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<sup>73</sup> The two Codes of 1967 and 1989 define the prisons and institutions differently. As a result, the categorization of the prisons in the period 1980-1999 is mine based on definitions from both Codes. Furthermore, the type of prison described as agricultural prison was developed in Greece during the interwar period. Asimakopoulos and Metafas, “Oi Ellhnikes Fylakes ton 19o kai stis arxes tou 20ou aiwna: Ta ktiria kai oi mhxanikoi tous,” 31.

<sup>74</sup> For additional, detailed information on female imprisonment in Greece, the living conditions of female prisoners and stories from the female sections of prisons see: Andriani Fili, “Women in Prison: Victims or Resisters? Representations of Agency in Women’s Prison in Greece,” *Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society* 39, no. 1 (2013): 7–16.



suicides in Greek prisons were observed in the psychiatric clinic of the Korydallos complex<sup>75</sup>.

Another significant issue of the Greek penitentiaries was overpopulation. In order to understand the problem of overpopulation it is important to refer to the crime rates and criminality in Greece in the 1980s and 1990s. Between the 1980s and the 1990s recorded crimes, and especially more serious crimes, such as felonies, increased, but, according to criminologists, this could be associated with the general increase of the population. There were about one thousand recorded felonies in 1980, while in 1999 there were over five thousand. Other types of crime that also increased were thefts, robberies, homicides, but also drug offences, arms and women trafficking<sup>76</sup>. The rate of imprisonment increased already in the 1980s, and the increase was exponential in the following decade. The increase in serious crime constitutes one of the reasons for this situation, but it is also important to mention the new legislation that criminalized more activities with more severe punishments, which resulted in more offences, charges and arrests<sup>77</sup>. Since 1990 an increasing number of prisoners served sentences connected to drug offenses<sup>78</sup>. In many cases the prisoners were drug users or drug dealers committing theft in order to find money to buy drugs for themselves.

Since the 1990s, due to sociopolitical changes in the neighboring Balkan countries, the number of migrants in Greece increased. The increase of the migrant population led to a heated debate in Greek public discourse. Migrants were stigmatized as a 'social problem', related to unemployment, insecurity and increase in crime rate. The association of migrants with the increasing crime rate was important not only in media discourse, but also in the political agenda of the period. Migrants were inextricably linked to the image of the 'criminal', and especially to the criminal

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<sup>75</sup> Leonidas Cheliotis, "Suffering at the Hands of the State: Conditions of Imprisonment and Prisoner Health in Contemporary Greece," *European Journal of Criminology* 9, no. 1 (2012): 8–12.

<sup>76</sup> Lambropoulou, "Crime, Criminal Justice and Criminology in Greece," 218–20.

<sup>77</sup> Lambropoulou, "Correctional Policy in Greece: Law in Action," 7.

<sup>78</sup> Cheliotis, "Suffering at the Hands of the State: Conditions of Imprisonment and Prisoner Health in Contemporary Greece," 5.

associated with serious or ‘organized’ crime<sup>79</sup>. They were also detained for entering, living or working in the country without the appropriate documents. The migrant population was estimated at around six percent of the total population. Most of them came from Albania, followed by Bulgarians, Georgians, Romanians, Russians, Ukrainians and Polish migrants<sup>80</sup>. Despite their small percentage in the total population, especially since the 1990s migrants were an overrepresented part of the population in Greek prisons. Before the 1990s, the percentage of foreign population in Greek penitentiaries was less than twenty percent, while in 1999 it was almost fifty percent<sup>81</sup>. Despite the provision in the legislation, which allowed for conversion of the detention sentence to monetary penalty, for most migrants it was impossible to take advantage of it, since they had no money or they could not find a lawyer or witnesses. In addition, the law 1708/1987, which gave migrants the opportunity to serve their penalty in prisons in their own country, was rarely applied. Many migrants complained about the strict penalties that Greek courts imposed on them in relation to the severity of their offences. In general, migrant prisoners shared the same detention centers with Greek prisoners. Migrants, according to the Penal and the Correctional Codes, should serve their penalties in the same prisons as Greek prisoners and should have the same rights and obligations<sup>82</sup>. There was no official classification according to the ethnicity of the prisoners in the penitentiaries. However, unofficial organization according to ethnicity by the prisoners themselves was a usual phenomenon<sup>83</sup>. Conflicts between prisoners of different nationalities were also frequent occurrences

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<sup>79</sup> Georgios Antonopoulos, John Tierney, and Colin Webster, “Police Perception of Migration and Migrants in Greece,” *European Journal of Crime, Criminal Law and Criminal Justice* 16 (2008): 353; Lambropoulou, “Crime, Criminal Justice and Criminology in Greece,” 220.

<sup>80</sup> Georgios Antonopoulos, “The Limitations of Official Statistics in Relation to the Criminality of Migrants in Greece,” *Police Practice and Research: An International Journal* 6, no. 3 (2005): 252.

<sup>81</sup> Angelika Pitsela and Athanasia Antonopoulou, “Irregular Migrants under Criminal Sanctions: Rehabilitation and the after-Care Perspectives in Greece,” *European Journal of Probation* 4, no. 3 (2012): 40.

<sup>82</sup> Pitsela and Antonopoulou, 42.

<sup>83</sup> The unofficial organization of the prisoners according to their nationality constituted a significant aspect of their socialization in the prison environment and their confrontation with practical issues of everyday life in prison, due to lack of knowledge of the language or the Greek legislation.

in the Greek prisons. Young migrant prisoners were also detained in penitentiaries for minors together with Greek delinquents<sup>84</sup>.

## What is a ‘Prison Riot’ or ‘Prison Uprising’?

In the last decades, important theories and models on prison riots have been introduced mainly by the disciplines of sociology and criminology. According to Susan Easton, the interest in the examination of prison riots by criminologists in England and Wales for example started to intensify in the 1990s<sup>85</sup>. Despite the frequent disturbances in the post-dictatorial Greek prisons, this topic has also not been thoroughly investigated in modern Greek historiography. Therefore, this chapter examines the most important, mainly sociological, theories on prison riots, starting with theories from the 1980s until the 2000s, in order to demonstrate the evolution of the efforts to understand the disturbances in prisons.

Before a more detailed analysis of the theories and the models, it is necessary to define a ‘prison riot’. In fact, there is no established definition of a prison riot among the researchers. When referring to disturbances or prison riots, it should be noted that every case has different characteristics or evolution. Crucial differences in the manner and execution of riots are the violence in a riot, its organization or its duration. More violent riots occur in some prisons in comparison to others. In some cases, the inmates express their demands in an organized manner, while in other cases tension and conflicts among the prisoners characterize a riot. While in some cases riots lasted for days, in other cases the rioting lasted just for a few hours. Therefore, a prison riot does not follow a specific pattern. As the sociologists Bert Useem and Peter Kimball postulate: *‘a prison riot occurs when the authorities lose control of a significant number of prisoners in a significant area of the prison, for a significant amount of time. It is just about the only thing the riots [...] have in common’*<sup>86</sup>. Susan Easton mentions that what is characterized as ‘tension’ or ‘riot’ is a more complex process, which is not exclusively a result of the prisoners’ reaction. *‘What some might*

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<sup>84</sup> Pitsela and Antonopoulou, “Irregular Migrants under Criminal Sanctions: Rehabilitation and the after-Care Perspectives in Greece,” 42.

<sup>85</sup> Susan Easton, *The Politics of the Prison and the Prisoners: Zoon Politikon* (London and New York: Routledge, 2018), 25–26.

<sup>86</sup> Bert Useem and Peter Kimball, *States of Siege: U.S. Prison Riots, 1971-1986* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1991), 4.

*see as a riot, may be seen by the prison administration or by governments, as merely an incident of disorder. The classification of an event as an incident of disorder, rather than a riot, may reflect the desire of managers to downplay riots or mutinies*<sup>87</sup>.

At the same time, it is necessary to clarify the use of the terms ‘riot’ or ‘uprising’, when referring to more violent or destabilizing events in prisons. As Useem and Kimball mention, in English the term ‘riot’ has mainly a negative or pejorative meaning and characterizes unorganized, mindless events, unlike the term ‘protest’, which characterizes more organized events with specific demands and slogans. However, the inmates in the US prisons, with who the researches came in contact, used the term ‘riot’ as a positive term, in order to describe organized events, which concerned the demand for reforms or the attempt to gain public attention<sup>88</sup>. Furthermore, as it will be demonstrated below, in many theoretical approaches the term ‘riot’ is used in order to describe the events in the prisons, but not with negative connotations. On the other hand, in Greek public discourse, the Greek press, and even the prisoners, use mainly the term ‘uprising’ (εξέγερση/exegersi) instead of the term ‘riot’ in order to describe the various events of disruption in the penitentiaries. The term ‘uprising’ has a positive connotation not only in Greek, but also in English. The Greek press, which is the main source material of my research, used (and still uses) almost exclusively the term ‘uprising’. The term described the disturbances in prisons without the intention to confer any positive or negative connotations in the reporting of the actions and demands of the prisoners and it was not necessarily used in order to express sympathy for the prisoners or the authorities. Because of the frequent use of the term in Greek public discourse in order to describe such events in a prison, the term ‘uprising’ is also used in the present study. Other researchers in their essays use neither the term ‘uprising’, nor the term ‘riot’, as for example Susan Easton, who considers the term ‘protest’ more appropriate<sup>89</sup>.

Despite their differences, there are five stages that can be observed in different prison riots and define the course of the phenomenon from the beginning of a riot,

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<sup>87</sup> Easton, *The Politics of the Prison and the Prisoners: Zoon Politikon*, 25.

<sup>88</sup> Useem and Kimball, *States of Siege: U.S. Prison Riots, 1971-1986*, 4.

<sup>89</sup> See the Chapter of her book on political protest in English and US prisons in: Easton, *The Politics of the Prison and the Prisoners: Zoon Politikon*, 17–61.

until its end, when the prison authorities regain control of the prison. First is the *pre-riot stage*, namely the period when both prisoners and the forces of the state develop the material and cognitive resources that determine the course of the riot event. Then is the *initiation*, when the first prisoners start the riot and the initial reaction of the state occurs. It is then followed by the *expansion*, when prisoners take control of as many resources (human, material, spatial) as possible and then the *state of siege*, when prisoners take control of a specific part of the prison, the state assembles its forces for recapture and probably some form of bargaining takes place. Finally, the last stage is the stage of *termination or recapture*<sup>90</sup>. The period after the termination of a riot is usually a period of public discussion or examination of the causes of the incident<sup>91</sup>.

Riots are inevitable phenomena in prisons, and the only feasible way to prevent an outburst is the 'lock-down' in prison terms, which is not generally considered an acceptable way of imprisonment in most prisons<sup>92</sup>. Furthermore, prison riots are incidents that can occur both in male and female prisons. Before the 1990s, in studies of imprisonment, including in studies of prison riots and disorder, women were marginalized or considered more vulnerable and, as a result, less likely to riot compared to male prisoners<sup>93</sup>. The main focus of the research was placed on the male population, which dominated, and still dominates, the total prison population in Greece, but cases of disorder and riots can also be observed in female prisons<sup>94</sup>. Michel Foucault postulated that discipline and power, which constitute the basis of the prison function, concern all aspects of social life. In this context Foucault understood prison riots as revolts against this power<sup>95</sup>. In his book "Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison", he wrote about prison riots: *'They were revolts against an entire state of physical misery that is over a century old: against cold,*

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<sup>90</sup> Useem and Kimball, *States of Siege: U.S. Prison Riots, 1971-1986*, 5.

<sup>91</sup> Easton, *The Politics of the Prison and the Prisoners: Zoon Politikon*, 25.

<sup>92</sup> Arjen Boin and William A.R. Rattray, "Understanding Prison Riots: Towards a Threshold Theory," *Punishment and Society* 6, no. 1 (2004): 48.

<sup>93</sup> Easton, *The Politics of the Prison and the Prisoners: Zoon Politikon*, 47.

<sup>94</sup> In one of my cases studies, in Korydallos prison in 1990, the women in the female section of the prison participated in the uprising together with the male population and stated their demands.

<sup>95</sup> Jack A. Goldstone and Bert Useem, "Prison Riots as Microrevolutions: An Extension of State-Centered Theories of Revolution," *American Journal of Sociology* 104, no. 4 (1999): 987.

*suffocation and overcrowding, against decrepit walls, hunger, physical maltreatment. But they were also revolts against model prisons, tranquillizers, isolation, the medical or educational services. [...] In fact, they were revolts at the level of the body, against the very body of the prison. What was at issue was not whether the prison environment was too harsh or too aseptic, too primitive or too efficient, but its very materiality as an instrument and vector of power; it is this whole technology of power over the body that the technology of the 'soul', that of the educationalists, psychologists and psychiatrists- fail either to conceal or to compensate, for the simple reasons that is one of its tools<sup>96</sup>.*

Bert Useem and Peter Kimball developed one of the most important sociological theories on the subject in their book “States of Siege: U.S. Prison Riots, 1971-1986”, in which they researched prison riots in five different US states. The pre-existing sociological approach to prison riots was the theory of Gersham Sykes, which was based on the classical ‘breakdown theory’ and appealed to many sociologists<sup>97</sup>. The authors initially present the two basic theoretical explanations of the reasons that can lead to a riot. The first is the ‘deprivation theory’, which views riots as a response to the harsh living conditions. According to this approach, people are by nature orderly and peaceful, but they are ‘forced’ to react or riot when their living conditions worsen. The second approach is the ‘breakdown theory’. According to this theory, social life is a product of controls, which restrict the natural aggressiveness of the people through mechanisms such as religion or ideology. When these mechanisms do not function effectively, riots occur<sup>98</sup>. These theories can also be applied to the prison environment. The deprivation theory views prison riots as a response to the harsh living conditions of the prisoners, while, according to breakdown theory, social peace in prisons is based on the relation between the prisoners and the administrative staff. As long as this relation works for both sides, prisons remain peaceful. In cases, in which this status quo changes, prisoners are impelled to riot<sup>99</sup>. Despite the fact that these approaches seem contradictory, Useem and Kimball propose a combination of

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<sup>96</sup> Michel Foucault, *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison*, trans. Alan Sheridan, Second (New York: Random House, 1995), 30.

<sup>97</sup> Useem and Kimball, *States of Siege: U.S. Prison Riots, 1971-1986*, 6.

<sup>98</sup> Useem and Kimball, 232.

<sup>99</sup> Boin and Rattray, “Understanding Prison Riots: Towards a Threshold Theory,” 48–49.

these theories in order to explain prison riots in their totality<sup>100</sup>. According to the authors, the riots erupt in prisons with a particular ‘sort of pathology’, a type of organization that can be described in terms of ‘administrative breakdown’ or ‘systemic crisis’. In other words, these prisons fail to restrain the possible tensions and they “convince the inmates that the imprisoning conditions are unjust”. The main factor that contributes to a riot is not the organization of the prisoners but the disorganization of the state. Another key factor is the ‘administrative breakdown’ in control and in the operation of a prison. Examples of ‘administrative breakdown’ are escapes, scandals, weak administrators, conflicts between the administration and the guards or disruption of the everyday program and routine. Despite their interesting remarks on ‘administrative breakdown’, their analysis of the concept is relatively narrow. The prisoners willing to riot are driven by grievances against the prisons or the state<sup>101</sup>. To sum up, the administrative breakdown creates an environment of arbitrariness that reduces the legitimacy of the prison. The breakdown in control and operation convinces the prisoners that the prisons are vulnerable and a riot is possible to occur<sup>102</sup>.

However, according to Arjen Boin and William Rattray in their article “Understanding prison riots: Towards a threshold theory”, the notion of ‘administrative breakdown’ that Useem and Kimball used, was interesting but incomplete. In order to solve the problems that arise in the theory of Useem and Kimball and in order to explain why riots occur in some prisons and not in others, the authors propose the separation of the term ‘administrative breakdown’, to ‘administrative’ and ‘institutional breakdown’. With the term ‘administrative breakdown’ the authors refer to the administrative pathologies that undermine the functional operation of the administration during a period of imposed changes. In cases, in which the administration adapts to the changes and, at the same time, takes in consideration the needs of the prisoners, then the changes do not affect the prison’s routine. On the other hand, the riots occur frequently in periods of changes, when the administration fails to adapt to them. The term ‘institutional breakdown’ refers to the difficult relationship that begins to develop between the prison’s staff and the

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<sup>100</sup> Useem and Kimball, *States of Siege: U.S. Prison Riots, 1971-1986*, 234.

<sup>101</sup> Useem and Kimball, 218–19.

<sup>102</sup> Useem and Kimball, 204.

prisoners. In everyday life in prison there is an established relationship between prisoners and the staff that keeps the prison stable and functions positively for both sides. Any change in this relationship undermines this stability and shapes the ground for the riot<sup>103</sup>. A more complicated organization in a prison makes the institution more vulnerable to riots. A prolonged institutional breakdown increases the complexity of the organization of a prison and creates an atmosphere of tension that makes the prison increasingly difficult to manage. At the same time the prison's staff contributes to a widely felt sense of deprivation. The last step before the outburst of a riot is the lack of effective crisis management, due to the institutional and administrative breakdown. In cases where these steps can be observed, riots can be considered normal occurrences according to the authors<sup>104</sup>. Boin and Rattray consider prison riots as failures of the system, as the end-result and not as the cause of the failure. The prisoners do not revolt for a specific purpose in terms of political demands, but the riots are the result of structural and cultural maladies<sup>105</sup>.

Bert Useem and Peter Kimball in another article titled "A theory of prison riots" provide another model for understanding prison riots, which is not based on structural sociological explanation, but it concentrates on the social-psychological variation across settings as an explanation of collective action by inmates. As an independent variable they used 'identification', which explains certain characteristics of the riots, such as the choices of the prisoners, the intensity or the level of violence<sup>106</sup>. They use the term 'identification' in order to describe the process of modeling one's behavior according to others and the process of taking into account another person's welfare. They distinguish two types of identification: 'object identification' and 'subject identification', which function supplementary to each other<sup>107</sup>. By researching different case studies of US prisons, they observe differentiations according to variables of **a.** the degree of inmate unity **b.** the violence against the prison's staff and the property **c.** the demands and negotiations **d.** the

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<sup>103</sup> Boin and Rattray, "Understanding Prison Riots: Towards a Threshold Theory," 50–51.

<sup>104</sup> Boin and Rattray, 54–55.

<sup>105</sup> Boin and Rattray, 60.

<sup>106</sup> Bert Useem and Peter Kimball, "A Theory of Prison Riots," *Theory and Society* 16, no. 1 (1987): 87–88.

<sup>107</sup> Useem and Kimball, 98–102.



intensity **e.** the success<sup>108</sup>. In order to explain these different variables, the authors argue that the '*character of a prison riot depends upon the predisposition of the inmates in that prison*',<sup>109</sup>.

There are several ways, in which prisoners can identify themselves with the official or unofficial groups in a prison. Useem and Kimball proposed a categorization of the different types of behavior by inmates during prison riots: **a. inmate torture of other inmates**: torture is a way to inflict pain and fear to the victims. Torture of other inmates occurs when some inmates strongly anti-identify with other inmates and try to harm them, **b. inmate torture of guards as hostages**: this phenomenon reveals a strong anti-identification with the administration and a desire to inflict damage to the group, **c. stealing from other inmate cells**: this is the case when inmates anti-identify with other inmates and try to benefit through stealing or show their personal grudge, **d. counter-riot**: inmates try to stop a riot as they identify with the prison administration, and they also do not want to damage or promote inmate groups, **e. institutional grieving**: in this case some inmates try to take less disruptive forms of action. They are the ones who start the negotiations with the administration. In this category, some prisoners tend to identify with other inmates and not with the administration, but at the same time they 'feel tied to a non-defiant counter-community', **f. destruction of property**: this action indicates anti-identification with the administration and identification with a peripheral social control community or with no social control community. Lower levels of identification produce vandalism rather than torture as destruction of property is a less extreme act, **g. 'non-participation'**: in this category prisoners feel the same identification with the administration as with the other inmates, **h. 'revolutionary action'**: during this type of action prisoners try to change the prison structure or its relation to the external environment. In this case there is a strong identification between inmates and anti-identification with the administration that motivates prisoners to express this kind of behavior<sup>110</sup>. Although this categorization provides an interesting and thorough description of such occurrences, Useem and Kimball also mention its limitations. They argue that prison riots are complex events and the identification of the prisoners

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<sup>108</sup> Useem and Kimball, 96–97.

<sup>109</sup> Useem and Kimball, 97.

<sup>110</sup> Useem and Kimball, 105–6.

alone is one possible, though not all-encompassing, explanation of these phenomena<sup>111</sup>. Three more steps are important: a. testing the theory in the prison setting, b. research the causes of identification, c. study the effects of identification on inmates organization and mobilization<sup>112</sup>.

Another compelling concept that can contribute to our understanding of prison riots is introduced by Jack Goldstone and Bert Useem. In their article “Prison Riots as Microrevolutions. An extension of the State-Centered Theories of Revolution” the authors examine riots as forms of revolution from a state-centered perspective. First of all, they present the similarities and the differences between revolutions and prison riots. They argue that: Just like revolts are part of the function of a society, prison riots are part of the function of a prison<sup>113</sup>. Prison riots are frequent occurrences, and as revolutions are part of political history, prison riots are part of prison history. Prison riots, like revolutions, usually occur in waves and both vary a lot in form and process. They are ‘subjects to the role of contingent events’ that determine the outbreak and the duration of the event. Another similarity is that both riots and revolutions can lead to important changes. In both cases, the reaction of the authorities is similar, as they try to improve the condition in the prisons or the society and both phenomena share similar dynamics. On the other hand, the duration and the outcome between revolutions and prison riots vary significantly. Although many revolutions as well as prison riots are temporary disturbances, prison riots cannot be compared to certain revolutions such as the October Revolution, when revolutionaries took permanent control. The number of the participants in the occurrences also varies a lot.

Following the description of the similarities and differences between prison riots and revolutions, Goldstone and Useem present the state-centered theory of revolution by Theda Skocpol and attempt to locate analogues to prisons. The theory of Skocpol consists of the following elements: (a) external pressure, (b) elites with institutional power that are opposed to state efforts, and (c) autonomous, self-

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<sup>111</sup> Useem and Kimball, 115.

<sup>112</sup> Useem and Kimball, 116.

<sup>113</sup> Goldstone and Useem, “Prison Riots as Microrevolutions: An Extension of State-Centered Theories of Revolution,” 988–91.

organized rural population willing to act against the state's incapacity<sup>114</sup>. The theory of Skopcol is based on a structuralist conception. As an additional state-centered theory of revolutions, the authors turn to the model of Goldstone, who refers to five conditions needed for the development of a revolutionary situation: (a) state fiscal stress and other conditions that unsettle the balance between the state resources and capacities and the administrative burdens, (b) the "divisions and alienation among elites" as an important factor that can lead to revolution, (c) grievances of the population about state actions that prove the state's ineffectiveness or unjust behavior and work as motivation against the state, (d) the spread of ideologies that propagate a desire for change, and (e) the state's response to the actions and the grievances, which plays a crucial role in inducing further actions by the actors<sup>115</sup>. Based on this five-part theory, Goldstone and Useem argue that it can form a new approach, which could explain the dynamics of prison riots. This should not be considered a deterministic approach to revolutions or riots, but the five stages can be assumed to foreshadow the possibility of an outburst of a prison riot<sup>116</sup>.

The aforementioned theories constituted certain important sociological approaches to the phenomenon of prison riots, but they are not the only theories on the topic. Some researchers have viewed the outburst of a prison riot as an organizational failure and focus on crisis management in a prison<sup>117</sup>. Other researchers concentrate on the diverse forms of social order in prisons, and claim that prison riots are not just spontaneous events, but they are also not exclusively caused by administrative disorganization, legitimation crises or prisoner deprivation<sup>118</sup>. Furthermore, computer-stimulated models of prison riots use a different number of variables, and demonstrate how each variable is important in the development of a

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<sup>114</sup> Goldstone and Useem, 992.

<sup>115</sup> Goldstone and Useem, 993–95.

<sup>116</sup> Goldstone and Useem, 999.

<sup>117</sup> For a detailed description, see: Arjen Boin and Menno J. Van Duin, "Prison Riots as Organizational Failures: A Managerial Perspective," *The Prison Journal* 75, no. 3 (1995): 357–79.

<sup>118</sup> For more information on the subject, see: Eamonn Carrabine, "Prison Riots, Social Order and the Problem of Legitimacy," *The British Journal of Criminology* 45, no. 6 (2005): 896–913.

riot<sup>119</sup>. An interesting opinion of Goldstone and Useem is that both revolutions and riots are not directly caused by overpopulation. What matters most according to the authors is not overpopulation, but how the authorities react to the population changes, as well as the available resources<sup>120</sup>. There is a period of 'preparation' when the prisoners attempt to promote changes in prisons in alternative ways. In cases, in which the answer of the authorities is unjust or ineffective, the possibility for the outburst of a riot increases. Riots erupt frequently when the grievances of the prisoners have already been expressed. However, the authors suggest that these have to be examined carefully by the authorities and that they should not overreact to them<sup>121</sup>.

The theories that attempt to explain prison riots mentioned above can be useful in an analysis and can provide a starting point for further research on understanding the circumstances under which prison riots erupt, the reasons for their outburst, as well as the occasions, in which they are more likely to occur. Despite the importance of the sociological approaches, it is necessary to remark the limitations of their application in the three case studies investigated in the present research. The main issue for this analysis is that most theories do not focus at all on the subject, namely the 'prisoner'. Useem and Kimball in their book "States of Siege" focus on the administrative breakdown and ascribe to it a special importance, which for the present research remains an open question. In the present study the prisoners are observed as 'collective subjects'. Emphasis will be placed on the collective claims of the prisoners, on the examination of the degree of their organization and on the way they react. Even if some of these elements do not exist, specifically if certain riots were spontaneous, unorganized events or the inmates did not express any demands, the (collective or individual) subject-prisoner should nevertheless be observed and adequately examined.

A further issue with most sociological theories concerns their perception of a riot as a definite case of structural failure of the prison, as an administrative and

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<sup>119</sup> For a detailed analysis of such a model of prison riots, see: Barbara Pabjan and Andrzej Pekalski, "Model of Prison Riots," *Physica A: Statistical Mechanics and Its Applications* 375, no. 1 (2007): 307–16.

<sup>120</sup> Goldstone and Useem, "Prison Riots as Microrevolutions: An Extension of State-Centered Theories of Revolution," 996.

<sup>121</sup> Goldstone and Useem, 1016–18.

institutional failure. Boin and Rattray by characterizing prison riots as failures of the system, incorrectly disregarded the participation of the prisoners in them. Even though the shift in the discussion about prison riots to the administration of the prisons expanded the research field and added new perspectives and additional parameters to the way in which a riot occurs, it constricted the observation of the prisoners and greatly restricted their capacity for action either as individual or as collective subjects. The prisoners constitute an important part of the structure and the function of a prison, and, as a result, they greatly affect its operation. The decision to start or to participate in a riot, even when the riot is spontaneous and not organized, is to some degree a product of decisions of the active subjects, namely the prisoners. On the other hand, the position of Michel Foucault that the organized riots are, broadly defined, actions of political and collective claims, is useful, but also restrictive as it refers mainly to organized actions by the prisoners. Foucault states that ‘the political or no political character of an action is not exclusively confined by the aim of this action’<sup>122</sup>. This observation is useful if the prisoners are observed as collective subjects, but it confines the actions solely in organized actions or in actions, in which particular claims are expressed. Spontaneous or not initially organized actions initiated by individual prisoners and then spread to bigger parts of the prison’s population, can also be observed and categorized as ‘political action’. Certain forms of action, such as the destruction of sections of the prison or vandalism, might be the only means the prisoners had to draw the attention of the authorities, the state and the public opinion to existing problems in the institutions. However, not all violent or protest actions by prisoners reach the point of a riot. It is critical to remark that the state, the prison authorities and the prisoners all constitute significant parts of the function of the prison and all play a role in any change in its stability, or in a disturbance or riot in a prison. Most sociological theories and models are useful in understanding the environment, in which a riot occurs, but there is no all-encompassing, comprehensive model and there should be skepticism towards models, which exclude one or more parts in this process.

An additional difficulty in the application of these theories to the case studies of the Greek prisons concerns the lack of available material or material suitable for

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<sup>122</sup> Michel Foucault, *O Megalos Egkleismos: To peirama ths omadas plhrorisis gia tis fylakes*, trans. Spyros Pantelakis (Athens: Mavri Lista, 1999), 49–50.

such an analysis. In order to examine the institutional or the administrative breakdown in a penitentiary, access to administrative documents of the prison (such as prison reports) is indispensable. However, as mentioned above, these documents are kept in the Greek prisons, and they are inaccessible to researchers. Even though the sociological theories, despite their limits, can be very useful in understanding prison riots, the sources of the present study, namely the Greek press in the period, dictate the shift of focus to the observation of prison riots through the mass media. The analysis of the perspective and the role of the press constitutes the subject of the following chapter about mass media, delinquency, prisons and the concept of 'moral panics'.

### **Prisons and prisoners as 'phenomena of deviation' in mass media representation**

The sources of my research are articles in the Greek press in the period 1987-1995, with emphasis on the years 1987, 1990 and 1995. This type of source material requires an investigation of the perspective and the role of mass media in the presentation of the events in the prisons. It is important to examine the way, in which prisons were presented by the mass media, as well as the meaning that the mass media ascribed to prisons in each case. The meaning that the media ascribed to prisons transcended specific events, such as a riot. The press generated, and consequently established, a broader conception of the prison in public discourse.

Mass media are the main transmitters of news in modern societies and they operate in a specific political and economic context that influences this process. As a result, the information that the audience receives is not only transmitted, but, concerning the pieces of information, which can be considered and presented as 'news', it is also attributed meaning by the media.

It is also necessary to mention that the sociological model of 'media effect', which is important for the present study, has been reconsidered in the last decades. The power of the media, according to numerous researches, is strong, but not absolute. The readers/viewers are not completely isolated from the facts that the media transmit to them. However, the role and the influence of the media on the way

the audience receives information about social phenomena are still powerful<sup>123</sup>. According to Marshall McLuhan, the press as a medium gives meaning to the facts, by choosing which to present and which to ignore. In contrast to other media, press '*is a group confessional form that provides communal participation*'. The facts are presented as an inside story, and the meanings are products of the interaction with the audience, to which the message is addressed. '*[...] the press page yields the inside story of the community in action and interaction. It is for this reason that the press seems to be performing its function most when revealing the seamy side. Real news is bad news-bad news about somebody, or bad news for somebody*'<sup>124</sup>.

The description of the three case studies is reconstructed through their presentation in the press of the period, due to lack of other primary sources or detailed secondary literature on the issue. The theoretical approach to the presentation of prison riots in the media in the present study is the concept of 'deviation', which is used by the media in order to shape social groups or subcultures.

In order to understand the concept of 'deviation' it is important to examine how crime and criminals are presented in a society. According to Elias Daskalakis, the presentation of crime as a direct threat to society is used as a way to elicit consent to the social system. The conformity of the public to the rule of law is achieved not through the positive presentation of law and order, but through the dramatization of chaos, crime and the criminal. According to this concept, the prison is part of this protective structure, both in a practical and in a symbolic way. It creates a feeling of security to the public and, simultaneously, a feeling of effectiveness of the state. The 'law abiding' population is clearly separated from the 'deviant' parts of the society. Aristotelis Nikolaidis takes this theory one step further and claims that the uprisings of the prisoners are directed against the stability not only of the prison itself, but also

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<sup>123</sup> Matthew David et al., "The Idea of Moral Panic – Ten Dimensions of Dispute," *Crime Media Culture* 3, no. 7 (2011): 223–24.

<sup>124</sup> Marshall McLuhan, *Understanding Media: The Extensions of Man* (Cambridge, London: The MIT Press, 1994), 204–5.

of its general social role. During an uprising the prisoners are also opposed to the symbolic, official and unofficial, operation of a prison<sup>125</sup>.

Furthermore, Nikolaidis argues, from a cultural perspective, that the uprisings, more or less violent, organized or spontaneous, and despite the goal of the leading actors, constitute a way of disorganization of the penal order. They are directed against the cultural role of the penal system and practices, and they symbolically unsettle the penal normality and its importance for society. In this perspective, an uprising can be seen as an action, which transcends its political and social dimensions. It goes beyond the penal system and affects broader parts of society<sup>126</sup>.

The conception of the 'deviant' presupposes social reaction. 'Deviance' is a basic element of the news presented by the mass media. Journalism can be considered as an active mechanism of social control and therefore mass media are able to stigmatize and marginalize social groups, or perform social control. This function leads to the establishment of the desired social consent<sup>127</sup>.

Mass media made the prison population more visible than before. The field of vision exceeded the spatial and temporal properties of here and now and it was shaped by the properties of communication media. However, this visibility is morally laden and does not question the marginalization of the prisoners. The prisoners, in spite of their confinement, receive information from the outside world, and the outside world also receives messages from the prison population<sup>128</sup>. However, the communication is not carried out in the form of dialogue, but in the form of monologue, as the prison population does not have the ability to transmit information to the outside world directly. The mass media play the role of transmitters and construct the image of the prisoners as 'stigmatized others'. The majority of the population receives information about crime and criminals, prison and prisoners only through mediated representations by the mass media. Through the overrepresentation of crime, the

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<sup>125</sup> Aristotelis Nikolaidis, "Mesa Mazikis Epikoinwnias kai Fylaki: H periptwsh ths exegersis stis fylakes Korydallou ton Noemvrio tou 1995," in *Eikones Fylakis*, ed. Afroditi Koukoutsaki (Athens: Patakis, 2006), 266.

<sup>126</sup> Nikolaidis, 267–68.

<sup>127</sup> Nikolaidis, 268.

<sup>128</sup> Leonidas K. Cheliotis, "The Ambivalent Consequences of Visibility: Crime and Prisons in the Mass Media," *Crime, Media, Culture: An International Journal* 6, no. 2 (2010): 170–71.



media contribute to the tendency of constantly demanding stricter disciplinary measures for the prison population<sup>129</sup>.

In the period 1955-1965 the ‘new deviancy theory’ was developed by American sociologists. According to the new deviancy theory, deviance should be considered a constructed category that requires both actors and reactors<sup>130</sup>. A few years later, one of the most influential theories, which resulted from the new deviancy theory was introduced. It was the theory of ‘moral panics’ as it was presented in 1972 by Stanley Cohen in his book “Folk Devils and Moral Panics: The creation of the Mods and Rockers”<sup>131</sup>. The theory of moral panics has been used, with additions or variations, in multiple occasions in order to describe the way, in which a moral panic concerning different phenomena of deviation or subcultures is constructed and spread in society. The contribution of mass media in this process is of great importance. The approach of moral panics constitutes one of the basic theoretical tools, with which the main source material of the research, namely the press of the period, is analyzed. Due to the wide range of participants during the creation of a moral panic (for example the State, the authorities etc.), in the present study only the reaction of the mass media, and especially the press, is examined. It is an important aspect of the study to demonstrate the extent, to which this theory can be applied to the three case studies. The principal parameters of examination concern the reaction of the press to the uprisings, the newspapers’ presentation of the main participants and the way, in which their coverage of the events contributed to the construction (creation?) of a moral panic.

Moral panics vary in intensity, duration and social impact. Certain facts, which could evolve to moral panics, are more serious than other, perhaps imaginary, facts. These facts which are described as ‘problems’, are frequently products of collective

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<sup>129</sup> Cheliotis, 177–78.

<sup>130</sup> Jock Young, “Moral Panic: Its Origins in Resistance, Ressentiment and the Translation of Fantasy into Reality,” *The British Journal of Criminology* 49, no. 1 (2009): 6–7.

<sup>131</sup> This was not the first time that the term ‘moral panics’ was used by researchers. The term had appeared already in the 1960s. Some researchers postulate that Marshall McLuhan was the first who referred to the term ‘moral panic’. However McLuhan used the term with a different meaning than Cohen. While, according to other researchers, Jock Young was the first who gave the term the meaning that it has until today. Kirsten Drotner, “Dangerous Media? Panic Discourses and Dilemmas of Modernity,” *Paedagogica Historica* 35, no. 3 (1999): 597; David Garland, “On the Concept of Moral Panic,” *Crime Media Culture* 4, no. 1 (2008): 20.

negotiation, whether they are controversial issues, or issues of collective interpretation and agreement. A panic can occur spontaneously, driven by local actors or anxieties, or it can be engineered for political or commercial gain. The social reaction that follows is not necessarily consensual. Reactions can also differ. The cause of a moral panic might involve an already prepared and sensitized public audience, certain outsider groups that are suitable as 'folk devils', or the existence of sensationalist mass media<sup>132</sup>.

Stanley Cohen states that a moral panic can be attributed to an event, the significance of which has been exaggerated, either in comparison to the event itself or compared to more serious events<sup>133</sup>. The creation and spread of a moral panic follows five steps: The first step is the concern, not fear, about a threat, real or imagined. In the second stage, hostility begins against the main actors of the threat, which are the 'folk devils', and also the agencies, that are considered responsible. Then follows the consensus, namely a widespread agreement about the importance of the threat and, as a result, a demand for reaction against it. Important factors that contribute to the establishment of consensus are the mass media, among other elite groups. The next step is the disproportionality. The public concern is disproportionate to the real damage and there is an exaggeration especially concerning the numbers or the strength of the targeted 'folk devils' or the damage they cause. They also become objects of moral criticism. The last stage is the volatility of the phenomenon. The panic is disseminated without warning<sup>134</sup>. Apart from these five stages, there are two more basic elements in the theory of Stanley Cohen, as they are mentioned by Garland: (a) the ethical dimension of the social reaction and (b) the interpretation of the phenomenon by 'society's guardians' as a symptom of more serious problem. These two elements reveal the true nature of the problem, namely the threat to the established social values. It is about the displaced politics of group relations and status competition<sup>135</sup>.

According to Garland mass media are the '*prime movers and the prime beneficiaries*' during a moral panic, as they sell papers, keep the readers entertained,

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<sup>132</sup> Garland, "On the Concept of Moral Panic," 13–14.

<sup>133</sup> Stanley Cohen, *Folk Devils and Moral Panics: The Creation of the Mods and Rockers*, 3rd ed. (London and New York: Routledge, 2002), vii.

<sup>134</sup> Cohen, xxvi–xxvii.

<sup>135</sup> Garland, "On the Concept of Moral Panic," 11.

take sides<sup>136</sup>. The role of mass media in the process of creation of a moral panic has three basic characteristics: First of all, the media set the agenda, by selecting the events that are newsworthy and can induce a moral panic. Then, by transmitting the images the media constitute the main rhetoric about the panic, and thereafter break the silence, by naming the ‘guilty’<sup>137</sup>. Furthermore, the development of the so-called ‘information society’, along with the development of new technologies of transmitting information, creates new networks that can increase the speed of creation as well as the spread of moral panics<sup>138</sup>.

In the agenda of the mass media, a moral panic does not affect solely the vulnerable victims, but its effects extend to the majority of society and concern several aspects of everyday life<sup>139</sup>. The moral panic reflects the interests of the media and the political elites, and the role of the media in this process is not only to disseminate the panic, but also to reproduce the dominant ideology. Furthermore, most moral panics, in order to erupt and affect a great part of society, have to conform to and be associated with wider anxieties. Cohen postulates that a moral panic does not operate ‘outside the stable, patterned structures of society’, and without such structures as politics, crime control or religion, it could not be generated or sustained<sup>140</sup>. Cohen uses the example of the Teddy Boys, Mods and Rockers, and argues that these groups as ‘folk devils’ are placed in opposition to society and are used as ‘visible reminders of what we should not be’<sup>141</sup>. The social groups that are ascribed the status of the ‘folk devil’ often possess the appropriate characteristics, which make large parts of society feel guilt or ambivalent<sup>142</sup>. According to Jock Young, those social groups are created by the forces of social control, social indignation and prejudice<sup>143</sup>. In the present research, the identity of the prisoner and the way it is presented by the media is observed from the perspective of the creation and reaffirmation of the dominant ideology of the ‘visible other’. However, the

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<sup>136</sup> Garland, 15.

<sup>137</sup> Cohen, *Folk Devils and Moral Panics: The Creation of the Mods and Rockers*, xxviii–xxix.

<sup>138</sup> Stanley Cohen, “Whose Side Were We on? The Undeclared Politics of Moral Panic Theory,” *Crime Media Culture* 3, no. 7 (2011): 239.

<sup>139</sup> Cohen, *Folk Devils and Moral Panics: The Creation of the Mods and Rockers*, xxix.

<sup>140</sup> Cohen, xxxvi–xxxviii.

<sup>141</sup> Cohen, 2.

<sup>142</sup> Garland, “On the Concept of Moral Panic,” 15.

<sup>143</sup> Young, “Moral Panic: Its Origins in Resistance, Ressentiment and the Translation of Fantasy into Reality,” 7.

‘visible other’ has to be formulated by the dominant discourse as an ‘everyday anxiety’, while simultaneously it has to be presented in the news as spontaneous and unexpected<sup>144</sup>. Concerning the identification process of the deviants, once they are identified as parts of a specific deviant group by society, every aspect of their action is ‘translated’ through the characteristics, which are ascribed to them in the collective conscience<sup>145</sup>.

However, apart from the decision on the news that are deemed worthy to be presented, mass media also define the way news are presented, and the presentation always involves a moral dimension. In cases, in which the moral values or the acceptable rules that define a society are questioned, then the event is presented as a ‘social problem’. The media do not only mention the problem, but they also aim to solve it, usually by suggesting new, stricter measures and rules than the already existing ones. This process is characterized by Cohen as a symbolic ‘moral passage’, as it gives new meaning to the presented problem, while the demand for new, stricter rules, even though they cannot be realized, familiarizes the audience with that rhetoric<sup>146</sup>. The final selection of the news reflects the wider interests and fears of society. The opinion that is dominant in public discourse about an event is associated with the main carrier of power in a society, and, as a result, through this hierarchical structure the opinion of the deviants is excluded<sup>147</sup>.

From the moment that the ‘folk devils’ have been created, they acquire specific characteristics. One of the most important characteristics of these groups is their image as ‘vandals’, whose actions of vandalism are considered illogical. In contrast to ‘normal’ activities in a society, such actions are presented as unacceptable and as having no place in society. Vandalism is considered senseless and is viewed as a threatening action. In case of an outburst of a moral panic, practices of vandalism are considered unreasonable and strengthen the broader consensus of disapproval of the phenomenon<sup>148</sup>.

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<sup>144</sup> Cohen, *Folk Devils and Moral Panics: The Creation of the Mods and Rockers*, xxxviii.

<sup>145</sup> Cohen, 4.

<sup>146</sup> Cohen, 9–10.

<sup>147</sup> Cohen, 44.

<sup>148</sup> Cohen, 77–78.

The media create ideal-typical categories of presentation of deviant groups. Some of the most common are: **a)** The ‘disaster model’, which involves a prediction that things will get worse, and the events are presented as ‘prophecy and doom’. **b)** The clear, comprehensive images about the nature of the deviants and their behavior, which stigmatize people that belong to specific groups, have a specific common look or perform specific acts. These acts, which appear to go against the normative context, are important for the creation of the moral panic. As Cohen states, for the creation of the folk devils the ‘stereotypical portrayal as typical actors against a background that is overtypical’ is required. **c)** Furthermore, the deviants are portrayed as ‘symptoms’ of much deeper phenomena, and, in the search for the causes of their behavior, they are not considered themselves the root of the ‘sickness’, but its result. They are presented as a ‘disease’, which will spread to broader parts of society, so society must find the ‘cure’. Despite the fact that their actions might not be organized, they are presented as planned, providing space for the development of conspiracy theories as well<sup>149</sup>. The stereotypical way of presenting the folk devils does not offer any space for different opinions or deeper interpretations of the phenomenon. The media-presented facts are given a more dramatic character. The context in which these facts occur, or the possible causes of a phenomenon are rarely examined by the media<sup>150</sup>. In cases, in which the media look for the deeper causes of a problem, this effort remains restricted in a more simplistic level or can be characterized as ethical admonition.

From the moment of outburst of a panic, certain phases frequently follow. After an unexpected incident follows the warning phase, when the authorities appear prepared and organized, taking all the necessary measures for protection. The authorities, for example the police, project the image of preparedness to the media. In cases in which the threat cannot be directly confronted, a climate of aggressive and projective behaviors, scapegoating and increased sensitization to the danger is generated<sup>151</sup>. The crowd scenes are also common. They show not only the deviant groups that participate in an event, but also the rest of the people that are present and their reactions. The participants in an incident are presented more as a crowd, than as

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<sup>149</sup> Cohen, 49–63.

<sup>150</sup> Cohen, 78.

<sup>151</sup> Cohen, 163–64.

a group or even a gang<sup>152</sup>. In cases, in which the transmission of news in the media is restricted, then rumors take their place as a substitute. The main characteristic of the rumors is their lower degree of formalization, which is inversely related to collective excitement. Stereotypes, preconceptions and non-confirmed images constitute the basis of rumors, which are important for the validation of a specific action. Rumors are not only important to the control agents, but also to the deviants themselves, as they create a collective imagery that justifies the activities that follow. The most important issue is not the truth of a rumor, but its ability to find a receptive audience and create a homogenous crowd. This process shows the importance of symbolization for the control agents as well as the deviants, as both sides use symbols in order to justify their perception or their actions. Folk devils during a moral panic are formed, only after these symbols become recognizable, even in an exaggerated form, are processed, and then disseminated<sup>153</sup>.

A further issue is the way, in which a moral panic ends. It is a fact that in most cases, the media as well as the audience lose their interest in them. Even in cases, in which the moral panic is greatly spread, creates tension and endures longer in a society, it frequently fades away. Another reason for a panic to end, according to Cohen, is that the social control associated with the panic fulfilled its goal. The social control instead of the creation of wider deviation, results in a broader consensus, which was its initial goal<sup>154</sup>. The success or not of a moral panic is relatively difficult to grasp. In some cases, the results are tangible, for example the formation of new legislation or the expansion of the already existing laws. In other cases though, the result is the so called 'culture of fear', which could be a more abstract and difficult to define result than the issuing of new legislation, but it is nevertheless considered a successful result of a moral panic<sup>155</sup>.

Finally, it is also important to refer to the participation of the prisoners in public discourse on the subject of the prison. In general, the position of the prisoners is presented as marginal. The identity of the 'prisoner' or 'deviant' is more powerful and prevails over any other characteristic. As a result, the prisoners' discourse is

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<sup>152</sup> Cohen, 168.

<sup>153</sup> Cohen, 175–78.

<sup>154</sup> Cohen, 230–31.

<sup>155</sup> David et al., "The Idea of Moral Panic – Ten Dimensions of Dispute," 225.

considered unreliable and illegitimate. However, in some cases the prisoners' discourse manages to enter and become part of the public discourse. However, the form, which this discourse takes in order to enter the public discourse is an issue. The prisoners do not have the same power as the mass media or the state. Moreover, their discourse has to be transmitted and is mediated by the media and the state. In cases, in which the state appears to negotiate with the prisoners for the creation of a 'better prison', the prisoners' discourse appears to be part of the official discourse. The state, as a more powerful discourse carrier, is the one that determines the 'penal problem' and its parameters. The prisoners' discourse, in order to fit in this framework has to be neutralized, and the mass media constitute the most important factors in the neutralization process. It should be noted that this process of neutralization of the prisoners' discourse is also achieved through the media, which are more supportive of the prisoners' rights or use a more progressive rhetoric<sup>156</sup>. As Michel Foucault remarks, the criticism to the prison as an institution is a part of its history. The attempts to create 'a better prison' are unsuccessful and demonstrate the failure of the prison. However, despite this failure, the prison system is not fundamentally questioned as it has become established over the centuries<sup>157</sup>. According to this approach, the prisoners' discourse does not enter the public sphere in order to question the institution itself.

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<sup>156</sup> Afroditi Koukoutsaki, "Keimena Tis Fylakis Kai o Logos Peri 'Swfronistikis' Metartythmisis," in *Eikones Fylakis*, ed. Afroditi Koukoutsaki (Athens: Patakis, 2006), 341.

<sup>157</sup> Foucault, *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison*, 271.

## **Case Study no1: Uprising in Corfu Prison, 1987**

In contrast to political prisoners, the non-political prisoners in Greek penitentiaries remained outside public attention and discourse in the period after the fall of the Dictatorship. Most operational prison facilities in the period had been constructed decades before. The living conditions were bad for the prisoners, not only due to the old facilities, but also due to the behavior of the prison officers and guards. The situation was even harder for the inmates due to the legislation, which did not keep up with the correctional approach of the period, as the correctional code that dictated the operation of the penitentiaries was the ‘Correctional Code of implementation of penalties and insurance measures’ created in 1967.

One of the first series of newspaper articles on Greek prisons was published in 1979, five years after the restoration of the democracy, by the journalist of the newspaper ‘Ta Nea’, Giorgos Lianis, who visited several prison facilities in Greece, such as the prisons in Kassandra, in Eptapyrgio, in Chalkida and others. In this series of articles personal testimonies and interviews of prisoners, who were serving their sentence, were published. The topics concerned their experiences and their views on the institution of the prison and the living conditions. Photographs of the prison facilities were also published in the articles. This is the first series of newspaper articles on prisons in the period, in which the journalist entered the prisons and interviewed the prisoners. Therefore the point of view of the prisoners is also presented<sup>158</sup>.

In the 1980s, Greek prisons were gradually coming in the spotlight and, as a result, a wide solidarity movement concerning the prisoners’ rights and living conditions was starting to develop. According to the testimony of a female prisoner at that time, Sofia Argyriou-Kyritsi, at first the solidarity movement was restricted and comprised only a small number of participants, while in its climax it managed to mobilize two thousand protesters. Certain important initiatives organized by the movement were protests in solidarity to the prisoners and even an appeal to the Amnesty International, which alerted the international community to the issue of the

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<sup>158</sup> The whole series of articles of the journalist Giorgos Lianis in the newspaper ‘Ta Nea’ covers the period 25.04.1979-08.06.1979.



Greek prisons<sup>159</sup>. In 1981 four issues of the 'Magazine of the prison' were published. These issues were self-published by the lawyer and prisoners' rights activist Katerina Iatropoulou. They included testimonies and complaints from prisoners in several Greek prisons. Until it came to power in 1981, the PASOK party was sympathetic to the prisoners' claims and announced new measures for the improvement of living conditions in prisons and the closure of obsolete, antiquated prison facilities. This gave hope to the prisoners for the improvement of their living conditions, while journalists entered the prisons more frequently in order to document the harsh existing conditions. However, despite the announcements, the new PASOK government did not immediately bring great changes to the prisons or the correctional code. Even though sympathy to the causes of the prisoners was demonstrated by the government with visits by officers of the Ministry of Justice to several penitentiaries and cultural events organized by the government, such as theatrical plays in the prisons, the PASOK government did not fulfil their campaign promises and decided to only close down the prison on Aigina island, due to the inhuman living conditions. At the same time, tensions and uprisings that burst in several prisons were suppressed by the riot police<sup>160</sup>.

It is in this context that the prison on the island of Corfu was always mentioned. Prisoners' testimonies make special mention of the inhuman living conditions. It was characterized as a 'disciplinary prison', which caused fear among the prisoners. The prison was built in 1836 by an English architect, in a period when the island of Corfu was under British rule. The prison complex is an octagonal building, based on the model of the Panopticon. Already in the 1930s and until the fall of the military Dictatorship in 1974 it was a prison for the incarceration of communists and other political prisoners. During the first post-dictatorial years (officially after 1976) the Corfu prison was converted into a high security prison, while complaints about the bad living conditions in the penitentiary persisted<sup>161</sup>. The building was old and made of stone, as a result, there was no insulation from the cold and humidity in the winter, the tubing was rusty, so the water was not drinkable, while

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<sup>159</sup> Sofia Argyriou-Kyritsi, *Gynaikeies Fylakes Korydallou* (Athens: Self-published, 1986), 15–16.

<sup>160</sup> Argyriou-Kyritsi, 16–18., Kostas Moskof, 'Tis Dikaiosunis...', *Ta Nea*, 02.01.1987

<sup>161</sup> Giorgos Lianis, 'I Zwi en tafw... Ena odoiporiko stis fylakes', *Ta Nea*, 04.06.1979

the prisoners were forbidden to possess or use televisions and other such devices<sup>162</sup>. Most prisoners that were detained or transferred to Corfu prison had committed disciplinary or other offences in other prisons or were considered dangerous because they were convicted of serious crimes. Upon entering Corfu prison, new prisoners usually faced torture. Prison guards threw their clothes and personal belongings on the floor under the pretext of conducting a thorough search of new prisoners<sup>163</sup>. The guards also awaited new prisoners in a row in the entrance of the prison and hit them with their buttons, without any prior offence, provocation or justification. As the former prisoner in Corfu prison, Vaggelis Rochamis mentions:

*'The corridor from the main gate to the entrance was approximately 30 meters long. In these 30 meters I felt my bones braking by the buttons. When I had almost reached the end, I could not manage to stay standing any longer. I collapsed.'*<sup>164</sup>

From the entrance, the prisoners were transferred directly to the disciplinary cells for several days before they were transferred to the prison wings. They were not allowed to go to the prison yard. They had to remain in an unlit cell all day and had no access a toilet<sup>165</sup>. Furthermore, during the 1970s Corfu prison was infamous for the torturing of prisoners. As a reaction to torture in prison, many inmates attempted to burn their cells, consume chemical detergents such as shampoo or thermometers. Some even committed suicide<sup>166</sup>. One of the most characteristic examples of torture at that time was the so called 'cross'. As Vaggelis Rochamis describes:

*'In a special cell they planted two big copper rings into the wall. From there they locked one part of the handcuff to the ring and the other part was locked to the hand, the same for the other hand as well. Hanging like Christ. My feet were touching*

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<sup>162</sup> Kostas Samaras, *Kataziteitai* (Athens: Kedros, 2008), 299; Christos Roussos, *Pros Sofronismon: Apo tis nautikes fylakes ews thn apofylakish, 1976-1990* (Athens: Ekdoseis tou Eikostou Protou, 1991), 119.

<sup>163</sup> Roussos, *Pros Sofronismon: Apo tis nautikes fylakes ews thn apofylakish, 1976-1990*, 111.

<sup>164</sup> Vaggelis Rochamis, *To hmerologio enos drapeth* (Athens: Patakis, 2001), 68–69.

<sup>165</sup> Rochamis, 69; Roussos, *Pros Sofronismon: Apo tis nautikes fylakes ews thn apofylakish, 1976-1990*, 113.

<sup>166</sup> Roussos, *Pros Sofronismon: Apo tis nautikes fylakes ews thn apofylakish, 1976-1990*, 191. Giorgos Lianis, 'I Zwi en tafw... Ena odoiporiko stis fylakes', *Ta Nea*, 02.06.1979

*the ground with the toes. A couple of minutes later I was hanging. [...] Several minutes later I fainted, and then I felt that they dragged me down.*<sup>167</sup>

The first PASOK government did not close down the Corfu prison. A decree for its closure was issued and signed by the first Minister of Justice of the first PASOK government, Eustathios Alexandris, but was later recalled by the next Minister of Justice, Georgios Maggakis and Corfu prison continued its operation<sup>168</sup>. According to the press of the period, the only reason why the prison continued to operate was as a threat to prisoners that they could end up there<sup>169</sup>. At the time the case of the prison in Eptapyrgio, Thessaloniki, drew the attention of the press, due to the prisoners' complaints about humiliating living conditions and torture. The prosecutor of Thessaloniki investigated the case and confirmed the allegations. Before long the case of Eptapyrgio prison became a topic of political confrontation between the PASOK government and the New Democracy opposition party<sup>170</sup>.

Two years before the uprising, Corfu prison was already since 1985 in turmoil with hunger strikes or even escapes taking place<sup>171</sup>. In 1987 in Corfu prison the prisoners continued to protest frequently, as, despite reportedly fewer instances of torture, their living conditions had not improved. While from January 1987 the prisoners in Corfu refused to return and be locked in their cells unless they met with the prosecutors and submitted their demands concerning the operation of the prison. Approximately sixty of the total one hundred prisoners participated in the protest. After the prosecutors went to the prison and received the demands of the prisoners, they returned to their cells without police intervention. The most important demands were the immediate improvement of the living conditions in the prison, for example the improvement of the prison meals, and the gradual closure of Corfu prison<sup>172</sup>. Some Greek newspapers published certain false demands, such as the request that a prisoner's luggage should not be searched, when the person is transferred from another prison to Corfu, or that the objects prisoners received from visitors during

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<sup>167</sup> Rochamis, *To hmerologio enos drapeth*, 70.

<sup>168</sup> Argyriou-Kyritsi, *Gynaikeies Fylakes Korydallou*, 18.

<sup>169</sup> Giorgos Oikonomeas, 'Oi floges esvhsan, I fwtia kai ei', *Eleftherotypia*, 09.02.1987

<sup>170</sup> 'Fylakes Kolasi', *Ta Nea*, 19.01.1987, G. Kontrarou, 'Ti friki!..', *Ta Nea*, 20.01.1987

<sup>171</sup> Stratis Mageiras, 'Deka isovites se ennea pteruges!', *Kathimerini*, 10.02.1987

<sup>172</sup> 'Epestrepsan sta kelia', *Ta Nea*, 07.01.1987, 'Teleiose omala I antarsia', *Eleftherotypia*, 07.01.1987

prison visits should not be checked<sup>173</sup>. The prisoners blamed the Ministry of Justice for the publication of these fake demands. They stated that the Ministry did this in order to ‘humiliate’ their struggle and asked again for the Minister of Justice, Apostolos Kaklamanis, to visit the prison<sup>174</sup>.

At the same time, set in motion by the situation in Corfu and Eptapyrgio prisons, actions of solidarity with the prisoners took place, which demanded the improvement of the prisoners’ treatment<sup>175</sup>. The tension in Corfu prison drew the attention of several newspapers, which expressed concern for the situation in the penitentiary and urged the state to improve its correctional policy. The journalist of the newspaper *Ta Nea* was wondering, whether the end of the prisoners’ unrest in January would be the end of turmoil in the prison in general or the prisoners were preparing for potentially more impactful actions in the future. Even though the journalist did not clearly repudiate commonly expressed arguments that the prisoners were ‘dangerous’ or ‘criminals’, and therefore they did not deserve better living conditions, he also mentioned that the Greek state did not aim at the correction of prisoners, but instead only provided ‘irrational retributive punishment’. He criticized the correctional system of the country, which he considered insufficient. However his criticism constitutes an example of what Foucault mentions as criticism that aims to the improvement of the system<sup>176</sup>. Newspaper correspondents in Corfu described the prison with the term ‘Dachau of Corfu’, a term, which they continued using after the outburst of the uprising. Corfu prison was also described by the prisoners and the press as ‘Well’, ‘Claw’ or ‘Human-eater’, most of these descriptions should be associated with the octagonal shape of the building<sup>177</sup>. Another topic brought up in newspapers articles was the behavior of the director of the prison, Iosif Kollas. He was characterized as the absolute ruler of the prison, who possessed great power. A few days before the outburst of the uprising, several newspapers such as *Eleftherotypia*, published extended reports on Corfu prison, in which Kollas was described negatively<sup>178</sup>. Iosif Kollas was presented as the one with absolute control of

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<sup>173</sup> ‘Antarsasia upo th... skia tou Rochami’, *Eleftheros Typos*, 07.01.1987

<sup>174</sup> Giorgos Oikonomeas, ‘Kollas-tirio’, *Eleftherotypia*, 12.01.1987

<sup>175</sup> ‘Oi fylakes aforoun olous mas’, *Eleftherotypia*, 27.01.1987

<sup>176</sup> ‘O fovos...’, *Ta Nea*, 07.01.1987

<sup>177</sup> Rochamis, *To hmerologio enos drapeth*, 81.

<sup>178</sup> In many reports it was mentioned that the director Kollas was rude to the journalists.

the penitentiary. He had also appointed his wife as a social worker-employee in the prison<sup>179</sup>. The issue of the director Iosif Kollas, concerned not only the newspapers at the time, but also the Ministry of Justice, which deliberated replacing him. However, the Ministry did not proceed with the replacement and Iosif Kollas remained in his position<sup>180</sup>. Furthermore, the issue of the living conditions in the penitentiaries was repeatedly brought up in public discourse in the period through a series of solidarity actions, mainly due to the complaints about the Eptapyrgio and Corfu prisons. Statements signed by public figures or demonstrations about the living conditions in the penitentiaries drew public attention to these issues. It is possible that the publicly documented ambivalence of the Ministry concerning the replacement of the director, who was hated by the majority of the prisoners in Corfu, affected the operation of the prison. As Boin and Rattray mention, the uncertainty concerning the removal of the director could bring about favorable conditions for the administrative and institutional breakdown. In the case of Corfu prison that means the disturbance of the balance between the prisoners and the prisons' staff. A prolonged such period, together with the harsh living conditions in the penitentiary and the continuous grievances of the prisoners, shaped the ground for the uprising to erupt<sup>181</sup>.

The uprising started on Thursday morning, February fifth 1987 (**05.02**), when a group of prisoners violently took the keys from a prison guard and opened the cells. Among them were some of the most notorious convicts in Greece that served long sentences, such as Vaggelis Rochamis, Giannis Papadopoulos, Vlassis Psofakis, Charis Temperekidis and Kyriakos Papachronis, who had allegedly planned the uprising a few days before. According to the testimony of Vaggelis Rochamis:

*'The long physical and psychological torture, the natural deprivation, the continuous oppression, the inhuman living conditions, the degradation of the human personality, all of them contributed to a big injustice that cannot be tolerated by human nature, from now on the uprising is unavoidable. There were also the*

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<sup>179</sup> Giorgos Oikonomeas, 'Kollas-tirio', *Eleftherotypia*, 12.01.1987

<sup>180</sup> Nikos Gerakaris, 'Provlimatiki einai I exeuresi tou neou dieuthidi stis fylakes tis Kerkuras', *Kathimerini*, 03.01.1987, 'Peitharxiki dioxi duo fylakon gia ton Rochami', *Kathimerini*, 09.01.1987

<sup>181</sup> Boin and Rattray, "Understanding Prison Riots: Towards a Threshold Theory," 50–51.

*underprivileged inmates, who underwent torture many times, and waited, as we had agreed, for us to make the first move. After that, everyone knew what he had to do*<sup>182</sup>.

Most prisoners followed them and participated in the uprising, except from approximately ten prisoners, who refused to participate and were beaten up by their inmates. It can be observed from the testimony of a person, who was an active participant in the events, that the uprising was planned and agreed by a large number of inmates. It was not carried out by few prisoners, who acted autonomously. Initially it was planned by a smaller group of prisoners, but according to the testimony of Rochamis, the rest of the prisoners were willing to participate in the uprising, even though they were not involved in the planning. The reasons stated by the prisoners for their participation in the riot also had a moral dimension, as they stressed the humiliation they experienced, the degradation of their personality and their living conditions. It should be stressed that the prisoners did not just demand improvements in the living conditions in the prison, which, as in other penitentiaries, were egregious, but they questioned the existence of Corfu prison, because they believed that Corfu prison and the way it operated diminished their dignity as prisoners.

After the outburst of the uprising, the guards left the prison, but they managed to lock the outer gate, in order to avoid any possible escape attempts from the rioting prisoners. According to many newspapers, the prisoners took three guards as hostages, but they soon set them free unharmed. While according to other newspapers, the three guards, trying to escape with the rest of the prison's staff during the uprising, were trapped in the prison. The second report is probably more accurate since the main goal of the revolted prisoners was not to turn against the prison staff directly, and, according to the first report, they also did not negotiate the release of the hostages. This is also evident from the slogans the prisoners used, as newspaper Avgi reported: *'We do not have anything against the staff, we are going to burn the prison'*<sup>183</sup>. Between 10:00 and 17:30 hours, the prisoners had the whole prison under their control and destroyed a big part of it. *'Now nobody could stop us, we had all the time in the world, in order to destroy and burn everything, until everything would turn into*

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<sup>182</sup> Rochamis, *To hmerologio enos drapeth*, 194.

<sup>183</sup> Stratis Mageiras, Thodoros Varikos, 'Isovites ekapsan tis fylakes Kerkyras', *Avgi*, 06.02.1987

ash'<sup>184</sup>. They destroyed the central building of the administration of the prison, most of the cells, including the beds and blankets, the electricity system, the tubing, the kitchen, the bakery and the hospital, from which they took the psychiatric drugs. They also burned the archive of the prison, where the files of the prisoners who were held in Corfu prison during the period of Metaxas Dictatorship, the Greek Resistance in World War II and the Military Dictatorship of 1967 were kept, and the small church that was part of the prison complex. During the uprising the prisoners did not express any demands, but their only goal was to destroy most of the prisons' wings. *'When nothing else to burn or destroy remained, we all gathered in a wing, we did not have to do anything else, our goal, as far as we wanted to go, was accomplished, the bugaboo of Greek prisons was destroyed'*<sup>185</sup>.

The director of the prison, Iosif Kollas, remained outside the building, seen always holding a baton in his hands. He attempted to talk to the prisoners, but they responded with derision and denied any negotiation with him. The presence of the director attracted the interest of the journalists outside the prison. He revealed his attitude towards the prisoners by stating to the media that in order for the uprising to end: *'the police forces have to enter with their guns and kill thirty [prisoners]'*<sup>186</sup>. However, the prisoners wanted to negotiate with the regional governor and the Police director of Corfu. They also asked for protection from the prison guards after the end of the uprising. Even though the prisoners had control of the prison for hours and the police did not intervene in the prison, they decided to just burn the building. At night, they returned to the cells that were not destroyed in the fire and remained there. During the night, as the uprising was over, police forces entered the prison and put the prisoners in the two wings, which were not destroyed by the fire. The police forces did not attack the prisoners during their entrance in the penitentiary, but they did a body search, which did not produce any results, as the prisoners after the end of the uprising had already handed over their self-made weapons voluntarily<sup>187</sup>.

The next day, Friday February sixth (**06.02**), the transportation of thirty-seven prisoners from Corfu prison to other penitentiaries, for example the prisons in

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<sup>184</sup> Rochamis, 196.

<sup>185</sup> Rochamis, 196.

<sup>186</sup> Kostas Chardavelas, 'Isopedosan tis fulakes', *Ta Nea*, 06.02.1987

<sup>187</sup> Rochamis, 197.

Ioannina, Patras and Larissa commenced. During the transfer the prisoners while answering the questions of the journalists waiting outside the prison, stressed that nobody heard their demands prior to the uprising and asked once more to *'take down the Dachau'*. The prisoners that remained in Corfu, mainly the prisoners that initiated the uprising, were held in disciplinary cells, where they were beaten up by the prison guards. According to most newspaper reports, the screams of the prisoners that were getting beaten by the prison guards could be heard from inside the prison. Several newspaper articles that described the violence of the guards in the days following the uprising employed vivid titles such as 'Savage beating', 'Screams everywhere' or 'Screams cover the Dachau'. Such titles indicate that the newspapers considered the torturing that occurred the days following the riot as proof of the brutality of the so-called 'Kollas state'<sup>188</sup>. The director Kollas himself advocated for a more dynamic intervention of the police in the prison and at the same time insisted that Corfu prison *'will not close, because it has to keep functioning'*<sup>189</sup>. It is evident from the analysis of the sources that the majority of the press attributed the torturing exclusively to the prison director, he was called out as being the principal source of the issues concerning the prisoners' treatment and living conditions in Corfu prison, however the criticism of the press did not extend to the state and the authorities. At the same time, the prisoners in Korydallos prison abstained from their meal, as a symbolic expression of their solidarity with the prisoners in Corfu. The Committee for the Defense of Political and Social Rights in Greece issued a statement, asking, among other demands, the termination of the operation of Corfu prison. In Athens, a small scale protest to the Ministry of Justice was organized in order to express solidarity with the prisoners in Corfu prison.

After the riot ended, the director Iosif Kollas was removed from his position in Corfu by the new Minister of Justice, Lefteris Velyrakis, as a result of the uprising. He was demoted and appointed to Ioannina prison, to serve as a member of the prison administration<sup>190</sup>. The new director of Corfu prison was Vasilis Kostaras, the former director of the prison in Chalkida. After the uprising only seventy prisoners remained

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<sup>188</sup> Kostas Chardavelas, 'Agrio ksulo', *Eleftherotypia*, 07.02.1987

<sup>189</sup> Giorgos Oikonomeas, 'Ourliaxta "skepazoun" to Dachau', *Eleftherotypia*, 07.02.1987

<sup>190</sup> According to reports published in 1995, Iosif Kollas had returned to his position as the director of the prison in Corfu [213]



in Corfu. During the prosecutor's investigation, sixty-six prisoners were accused of arson and destruction of property, and most of them were transferred to other prisons. The government announced that the prison of Corfu would become a prison for 'worker prisoners', and, as a result, it would be a prison of voluntary stay, where only the prisoners who wanted to work would go. The prisoners, who did not want to work during their sentence, would be transferred to other prisons. However, according to the Minister of Justice, it was not possible to close down the Corfu prison. He deemed such a course of action 'absolutely impossible' at least until new prison facilities were created<sup>191</sup>. However, six months after the events, several prisoners that took part in the uprising and remained in Corfu prison, such as Rochamis, Papachronis and Temperekidis, published a letter, in which they mentioned that the situation in the penitentiary was still the same, if not worse. They stated that they could not talk and write letters freely, the water was still not drinkable, and the behavior of the prison staff remained disrespectful. Concerning the uprising in February, they characterize it as an eruption of their inhuman experiences in the prison, and at the same time they warned the authorities of potential actions in the future<sup>192</sup>. In the years that followed the uprising, new prisoners were afraid of a potential transfer to Corfu prison. However, according to testimonies, the treatment of prisoners by the administration improved in comparison to the decades prior. They attributed the change to the uprising in 1987<sup>193</sup>. A few months after the events most of the prisoners, who were considered the leaders of the riot, such as Rochamis, Temperekidis and Papadopoulos, were indicted on charges of destruction, arson, riot and weapon possession. Six years after the riot, the fourteen prisoners, who were considered to be the main participants, were taken to the court in Corfu. During the trial even though the court acknowledged the bad living conditions in Corfu and recognized the extenuation that the prisoners 'were pushed to the action [...] by the unbearable conditions of the prison'<sup>194</sup>. As Vaggelis Rochamis mentioned in his plea during the trial: 'On October fifth 1987, the modern Hell of Corfu like a monster ate itself and died'<sup>195</sup>. +

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<sup>191</sup> 'Ethelodikis paramonis I fylaki tis Kerkyras', *Kathimerini*, 06.05.1987

<sup>192</sup> 'Egkleistoi apeiloun me replay', *Ta Nea*, 10.08.1987, 'SOS Rochami-Papachroni apo to 'Dachau' tis Kerkyras', *Eleftherotypia*, 10.08.1987

<sup>193</sup> Samaras, *Kataziteitai*, 293.

<sup>194</sup> Rochamis, *To hmerologio enos drapeth*, 202.

<sup>195</sup> Rochamis, 203.

Concerning the reaction of the Greek press to the uprising in Corfu, a common approach can be observed. However, the ideological and political background of each newspaper was different. All the newspapers acknowledged and reported the bad living conditions in Corfu prison, and they were also highly critical of the role of the director, not only before but also during the uprising. They presented an image of destruction of the prison, according to titles, such as ‘They burned down the prisons’ or ‘They razed the prisons to the ground’. Additional topics which drew the attention of the press were the destruction of the prison facilities and the smoke that rose from the burning building during the uprising. Many journalists also mentioned the burning of the prison archive, which they presented as a significant loss of historical sources. Many journalists adopted the argument that the prisoners revolted without any intention to express any specific demands, but to burn down the prison. The metaphorical descriptions attributed to Corfu prison, such as ‘Dachau’, as well as the characterization of certain prisoners as ‘prisoners at the head’ of the uprising, mainly the prisoners Vaggelis Rochamis, Charis Temperekidis, Vlassis Psafakis, Kyriakos Papachronis and Giannis Papadopoulos were adopted in the coverage of the events. Another common element in the press coverage was the special mention to the reaction and the role of the director of the prison Iosif Kollas. Iosif Kollas was presented as a provocative director that lost control of the prison under his administration. As mentioned above, the press held him solely responsible for the conditions in the prison that led to the uprising and ignored other possible interpretations of the phenomenon. Most newspapers associated the director with the ‘scary image’ of Corfu prison and considered him as the main cause for the actions of the prisoners. Another interesting aspect of the press coverage is the presentation of the role of the prison guards in the events. Despite the fact that there were many complaints by the prisoners against the guards as well, in which they also named names, several newspapers dissociated them from the role and the actions of the director, or, in certain cases, they attempted to justify their actions by publishing statements from their union and by using titles such as ‘We are the main victims’.

Concerning the torturing of several prisoners, who were thought to have played a leading role in the uprising, the press employed titles such as ‘stage of terror’, ‘screams’ and ‘hard beating in disciplinary cells’ in its coverage, which stressed the ferocity of the punishment that followed the uprising. Prisoners’

testimonies during their transfer from Corfu to other prisons were considered by most newspapers as a 'scream of agony', especially because of the suffering that they had to endure inside the penitentiary. Another prominent topic in the newspapers' coverage of the uprising were the images from the prison and the events prior to the uprising, which were presented as warning signs for the riot that followed. The press attempted to interpret the uprising through these early signs and embed the events into a broader narrative context of destabilization in Greek penitentiaries. The mobilization of the authorities outside the prison, such as the fire department, the police department of Corfu, as well as the coast guard was also stated in the reports. Special mention was given to the head of the Orthodox Church in Corfu, who expressed sympathy to the revolted prisoners. The local population was also featured in the newspaper reports. They mainly expressed their concerns with the situation, especially because of the proximity of school buildings to the prison and demanded the closure of the prison. However, in contrast to the other case studies, the local population did not receive much attention in the coverage and their opinions were not used as an argument against the uprising. Finally, the issue of the restoration of the damage caused by the riot was also reported, albeit not extensively. The cost of the restoration of the prison was calculated at eighty million drachmas.

Apart from the common elements, which can be observed in the press coverage of the uprising in Corfu prison, there are also noticeable differences, which should be attributed to the political orientation and the special characteristics of each newspaper. The newspapers *Ta Nea* and *Eleftherotypia* adopted a more sympathetic stance and tone towards the prisoners' cause and actions. On the other hand, *Kathimerini* newspaper covered the uprising the least compared to the other newspapers. Even before the uprising in February, the newspaper criticized the government of PASOK for its stance towards the prisoners' actions in the previous month. It adopted the arguments of the opposition that the government was to blame for the riot because it was too soft and gave in the prisoners' demands. Instead of the uprising in Corfu, *Kathimerini* considered the case in *Eptapyrgio* prison in Thessaloniki of greater importance. Even though similar complaints were made in other penitentiaries, the events in *Eptapyrgio* prison turned into a political debate and, in the confrontation between the two major parties, *Kathimerini* expressed the position of New Democracy. *Eleftheros Typos*, which was a tabloid newspaper

directed at a right-wing audience, approached the uprising very differently. In its coverage of the events the newspaper used many photographs and big, eye-catching titles, and also presented Vaggelis Rochamis as a 'famous gangster' and 'coordinator of the uprising'. The newspaper frequently portrayed the protagonists of the uprising negatively. It characterized them as the 'most dangerous' long-term convicts of the country', and downgraded their actions.

In the case of the uprising in Corfu prison, the elements of the creation of a moral panic by the press cannot be observed, with the exception of Eleftheros Typos. Eleftheros Typos presented the events as a 'warning' for similar riots of far greater scale in the future. It stressed the several escape attempts in the period 1985-1987 and presented a general image of destruction. Furthermore, the newspaper published several unverified information as 'revealing' reports, which is a practice in accordance with the 'rumors' of the model of moral panics. Such an example is an article titled: 'Who wants Papadopoulos out [of prison]?', referring to the prisoner Giannis Papadopoulos, without providing any evidence to support such a hypothesis.

Concerning the particular characteristics of the uprising in Corfu, it should be mentioned that in 1987 Corfu prison was a disciplinary prison, where conditions were harsh. Decisive factors for the outburst of the uprising and the way the prisoners reacted were the rough treatment by the prison staff, namely the regular occurrences of torture and humiliation, and the role of the prison director, Iosif Kollas. Reports concerning the potential removal of the director published in several newspapers further disorganized the conditions in the prison. Another factor that should be taken into account as an explanation of the way the uprising developed, was the profile of the inmates. There was a significant number of 'undisciplined' prisoners, who served long sentences and were willing to revolt. The uprising was an organized effort from a small number of prisoners that was then followed by the majority. The uprising in February, which lacked any demands other than the termination of the operation of Corfu prison, can be considered as a symbolic action. The main goal of the prisoners was the destruction of the prison. They only wanted to question the way the prison operated, as can be deduced from their pattern of action, namely the fact that they returned to their cells after they burned down a big part of the prison. During the transfer of many prisoners from Corfu prison to other prisons they talked to the

Imprisonment and Collective Claims:  
Uprisings in the Greek Penitentiaries, 1975-1999

journalists waiting outside the penitentiary and stated that for months they tried to express their demands and negotiate not only with the Ministry of Justice, but also with society at large. However, they had not received any response. The destruction of the prison could be viewed as an extreme action in order to draw attention to their demands, as they run out of any other possible means of protest. The fire did not burn just the prison facilities, but also destroyed the correctional policies, as implemented in Corfu prison. As the rioting prisoners stated: *'Progress won. The Corfu prison does not exist anymore'*.

## **Case Study no2: Uprising in Alikarnassos Prison, 1990**

The second uprising, which was the uprising with the longest duration in the history of Greek prisons at the time, occurred three years after the uprising in Corfu. It started from the prison in Alikarnassos, on the island of Crete and soon spread to many other prisons.

In 1990, the right-wing party of New Democracy won the elections. The elections took place after the Greek parliament failed to elect the new President of the Hellenic Republic. The new prime minister was the new leader of the New Democracy party, Konstantinos Mitsotakis. The New Democracy government did not manage to complete its four-year parliamentary term, as an executive of the party and minister in the government, Antonis Samaras disagreed with the certain governmental policies and resigned. He also persuaded other high-ranking party officials, who were under his influence, to resign and, as a result, the government was disbanded and an early election took place in October 1993. The Minister of Justice and vice president of the government in the period was Athanasios Kanellopoulos. Kanellopoulos was member of the pre-Dictatorial party of 'Enosi Kentrou' (Union of the Center) and he took part in the first post-Dictatorial government in 1974 as minister. During the 1980s he was an executive of the New Democracy party and in the government formed in 1990 he became Minister of Justice. He served as minister from 1990 until 1992.

Concerning the operation of the prisons, the former socialist government of PASOK instituted the new "Code for the basic rules for prisoners' treatment" in 1989. The new Correctional Code gave the opportunity to the prisoners to take a short leave for a few days, which happened for the first time in the Greek correctional system. Articles in the period referred to the successful implementation of this measure, as all the prisoners that took a leave, returned to the prisons<sup>196</sup>. Despite the fact that a new Correctional Code had recently been voted through by the Greek parliament and came into effect, the government of Konstantinos Mitsotakis, spearheaded by the Minister of Justice Athanasios Kanellopoulos, planned to once again reform the penal and the correctional system of the country. Those changes, that the Ministry intended to make

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<sup>196</sup> Takis Vounatsos, '5 meres eleftherias gia tous fylakismenous', *Ta Nea*, 19.04.1990

which were part of the counterpoint of the Greek penal and correctional system with those of the other countries of the European Economic Community, were characterized positively by the right-wing and pro-government press<sup>197</sup>. They were considered as a 'modernization' of the correctional system through 'revolutionary measures', which were attributed personally to the Minister of Justice. Some of the new measures the government wanted to take were the permanent presence of prosecutors in the prisons, the possibility to work in the prisons for public benefit, or the possibility to convert small sentences to monetary penalties<sup>198</sup>. The main target of these measures was the decongestion of the prisons, which faced the problem of overpopulation. On the other hand, all these measures did not affect the prisoners with longer sentences and, as a result, ignored a big part of the prison population. Several scientific researches at the time emphasized the increase of serious crimes in the country in recent years, and especially the increase in felonies. The researches did not focus on the social or economic causes of the observed increase in criminality, but the press focuses on the difficult situation in Greek prisons and the need to build new ones<sup>199</sup>.

Despite the implementation of the new Correctional Code in 1989, many prisons in Greece in 1990 still faced many serious issues, such as poor condition of the facilities, harsh living conditions of the prisoners and overpopulation. According to a research that was published in *Kathimerini* newspaper, the conditions in Greek prisons were bad. The newspaper spoke with the Director of Korydallos prison, who talked about the biggest prison in Greece. The main problem was overpopulation. The hospital and the psychiatric hospital of Korydallos were not in operation at that time. The prisoners had free access to newspapers and magazines. There were radio devices in every cell, however there was one TV in each wing of the prison. In the prison complex there was also no gym or hall for special events. There was a library, but the prisoners did not have access to education. Another important issue concerned the access of the prisoners to work in prison. The opportunity for the prisoners to work in prison was a new measure in the correctional code of 1989, but it could not be

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<sup>197</sup> Athina Karali, Foteini Kalliri, 'Eksychronizetai to soforinistiko', *Kathimerini*, 10.11.1990

<sup>198</sup> Nikos Gerakaris, 'Eisaggeleis epoptes gia tis fylakes', *Kathimerini*, 07.08.1990, Th. G. Christakis, 'Metra gia aposumforisi fylakwn', *Kathimerini*, 14.09.1990, Foteini Kalliri, 'Koinofelis ergasia kratoumenon', *Kathimerini*, 04.10.1990

<sup>199</sup> Th. Christakis, 'To egklhma anthei', *Kathimerini*, 13.05.1990

implemented in many prisons due to the lack of proper facilities. This specific article had already been suspended in the first years of the implementation of the new code<sup>200</sup>. Furthermore, already in 1990 there was an increase in the number of drug addicts in prison, especially persons addicted to injectable drugs like heroin. This was also the case in Greek prisons, as an increase in the number of imprisoned drug addicts and people, who suffered from serious deceases associated with drug use, such as hepatitis and HIV. In Korydallos prison alone approximately one hundred forty imprisoned drug addicts were held in the section of the psychiatric hospital and did not receive any specialized treatment in prison<sup>201</sup>. The imprisoned female drug users in the female section of Korydallos prison revolted, demanding that the Minister of Justice visit them. Their main demand concerned their worry of the potential equalization of the drug users with the drug dealers, which would result in drug addicts serving longer sentences<sup>202</sup>. The families of incarcerated drug addicts, as well as therapeutic groups had expressed several times their disagreement with the imprisonment of the drug users and had asked for special treatment by the state<sup>203</sup>. The assassination of the psychiatrist of the hospital in Korydallos prison complex, Marios Maratos, in 1990 was the occasion that led to complaints about the drug dealing in prison and the favorable treatment of drug dealers in prisons in contrast to drug users to surface and become public. According to the articles in the period, a possible reason for his assassination was his involvement in unofficial groups, which consisted of doctors and lawyers that not only brought drugs illegally in the penitentiaries, and especially in Korydallos prison, but also provided fake medical documents to imprisoned drug dealers. In the complaints, a network, which provided such documents to drug dealers and classified them as drug users, in order to get shorter sentences in court and receive better treatment during their imprisonment, was described<sup>204</sup>. These complaints lead to a prosecutor's investigation that did not produce any results, as the complaints were considered vague<sup>205</sup>.

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<sup>200</sup> Th. Christakis, 'To egklhma anthei', *Kathimerini*, 13.05.1990

<sup>201</sup> Nana Ntaountaki, 'Afhste tous fylakismenous sti monaxia tous!', *Ta Nea*, 12.02.1990

<sup>202</sup> Giannis Politis, 'Exegersi ston Korydallos', *Ta Nea*, 16.05.1990, Giannis Politis, "Sto podi' en opsei tou neou nomou", *Ta Nea*, 17.05.1990

<sup>203</sup> Ntina Vagena, 'Poreia stis fylakes', *Eleftherotypia*, 06-07.01.1990

<sup>204</sup> 'Kykloma dikigorwn-psychiatrwn: Narkotika stis fylakes', *Ta Nea*, 23.02.1990, Dimitris Tzathas, Giannis Politis, 'Pws leitourgoun ta kyklomata', *Ta Nea*, 23.02.1990, Dimitris



There were many instances, in which prisoners stated their claims to prison authorities or to the Ministry of Justice. The prison of Agios Stefanos outside the city of Patras exemplified the problems many penitentiaries faced. The prison had a maximum capacity of only three hundred sixty prisoners, while in 1990 five hundred eighty-five prisoners were accommodated. Due to the overpopulation, in autumn 1990, a month before the outburst of the uprising, the prison could not accept any new prisoners. The prisoners in Agios Stefanos prison gave a statement to the director of the prison, asking for the decrease of the sentences, the release of drug addicts from the prison and their transfer in special rehab centers, as well as the decriminalization of drug abuse. Furthermore, a few days before the outburst of the uprising, one hundred thirty prisoners in Alikarnassos prison handed a similar statement to the Ministry of Justice. The Ministry of Justice announced certain measures for the issues in the prisons, however most of them only concerned prisoners, who served shorter sentences.

Alikarnassos prison was located in the city of Heraklion, on the island of Crete and it was characterized as a 'closed type' prison, in which convicts who served longer sentences were detained. The prison had no history of previous uprisings. The director of the prison was Giorgos Psaradakis, who, according to the newspapers in the period, was accused of torturing a prisoner, but was later acquitted. In 1990, some of the prisoners in Alikarnassos prison awaited trial after the uprising in Corfu prison, in which they had participated, and as a result they could not work or take advantage of several benefits during their imprisonment there.

The uprising started in Alikarnassos prison on Monday October ninth 1990 (09.10). The participation of the prisoners was small. Only eighteen prisoners participated, most of who were serving longer sentences. Among the participants were Giannis Petropoulos, who could be considered the informal leader of the uprising, Nikos Spyropoulos, Pentarakis, Maridis, the two brothers Tasos and Nikos Bellos, Papaioannou, Nikos Sakas and Paris Petmezas. The prisoners Giannis Petropoulos, Nikos Spyropoulos and Nikos Bellos also took part in the big uprising in Corfu prison

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Tzathas, Giannis Politis, 'Dikastiki ereuna gia ta kyklomata', *Ta Nea*, 24.02.1990, Ioanna Sotirchou, "Eleftheras' stis fylakes gia ta narkotika", *Eleftherotypia*, 27.02.1990

<sup>205</sup> Giannis Politis, 'Korydallos: 'Aprosopes' oi kataggelies gia diakinisi narkotikon', *Ta Nea*, 30.05.1990

in 1987. According to newspaper reports, around 12:30 hours, these eighteen prisoners occupied the third floor of the prison, in which ten elderly prisoners, who refused to leave, were accommodated. They hanged two banners on the windows with the slogans: 'no more injustice' and 'Cretan people we ask for your Cretan humanity'. Their main demands were the removal of the director of the prison, Manolis Psaradakis, the improvement of the living conditions in prison and better behavior by certain prison guards. Despite the presence of the prosecutor of the Heraklion region Markogiannakis and the inspector of the Ministry of Justice Evangelos Krinis at the site, the prisoners refused to negotiate with them, and demanded to talk directly to the General Secretary of the Ministry of Justice. Police forces gathered outside Alikarnassos prison, but they did not intervene.

Two days later, on October eleventh (**11.10**), while the uprising in Alikarnassos prison continued, three hundred of the five hundred seventy-five prisoners in the prison of Agios Stefanos revolted and destroyed part of the facilities, such as the heating and the windows. In the uprising participated not only the Greek prisoners, but also migrant prisoners. They hanged two banners with the words 'Justice' and 'Humanity'. They refused to negotiate with the prosecutor and demanded that the Minister of Justice visit the prison. At the same time, the revolted prisoners in Alikarnassos remained on the third floor of the prison and constructed barricades. They also hanged two additional banners on the windows that wrote: 'We revolted against the scalpers of our dreams' and 'Our beloved mother, we send you the crumbs of our heart'. The prisoners in other Greek prisons, such as Diavata (outside the city of Thessaloniki), Kassandra (in the region of Halkidiki near Thessaloniki) and Kassaveteia (in the city of Volos), threatened to revolt and demanded better living conditions, better behavior by the prison guards and specific measures about the problem of overpopulation.

On October twelfth (**12.10**), relatives of the revolted prisoners arrived outside Alikarnassos prison in order to ask them to end the uprising. However, their effort was not successful. The prisoners had a meeting with a deputation of the bar association of Heraclion, though they insisted on negotiating with the General Secretary of the Ministry. They also hanged two new banners that wrote: 'Alas to those who accepted imprisonment as a way of life' and 'from the bright light of the

sun, the slimmest ray'. Three days later, a new banner 'We are all guilty' was hanged. In Agios Stefanos prison, the prisoners in the second wing continued the uprising, even though electricity and water supply were cut off. They issued a statement demanding the decrease of the sentences by half of the primary sentence charged, release of the incarcerated drug addicts, the ability to work in prison, suspension of the imprisonment after the prisoner completes two thirds of the sentence, abolition of the death penalty and for the President of the Hellenic Republic to sign every pardon. After a meeting with the Director of the prison, Nikos Ntatsios, who assured them that he had passed their demands on to the Ministry of Justice, the prisoners in the first wing ended their uprising.

According to press reports, on October sixteenth (**16.10**), there was disagreement amongst the prisoners in Alikarnassos prison about the continuation of the uprising and, on the same day at noon, a fire was started at one of the barricades on the third floor. Other prisoners blamed the eighteen prisoners who had revolted for the fire, while the revolted prisoners blamed another group of five prisoners, who they thought cooperated with the prison guards in order to sabotage the uprising. Many prisoners, the eighteen revolted prisoners among them, ran to the yard during the fire. The fire brigade managed to put the fire under control before it could spread to other parts of the prison. This group of eighteen revolted prisoners controlled forty cells on the third floor and continued to construct barricades. In Agios Stefanos prison one hundred Greek and eighty-five migrant prisoners in the second wing of the prison continued the occupation, despite their diminishing supplies and no electricity. In the prison in the city of Komotini in northern Greece, one hundred fifty prisoners abstained from their meal as a symbolic expression of solidarity with the revolted prisoners in Alikarnassos and Agios Stefanos, and they also demanded better living conditions. In the center of Athens, an event in order to express solidarity with the revolted prisoners took place. The participants asked that the Ministry of Justice fulfill the demands of the prisoners and for the riot police not to intervene. On the following day, October seventeenth (**17.10**), the Minister of Justice, Athanasios Kanellopoulos, announced certain measures for the improvement of the living conditions in Greek Prisons, such as the decongestion of the prisons. Despite the uprisings in many Greek prisons, the Minister postulated that these measures were planned and that they should not be associated with the prisoners' claims. On the same day, October seventeenth,

thirty-five prisoners in Komotini prison abstained from their meal and from any activity or work in the prison. Furthermore, approximately one hundred fifty people, mainly anarchists, demonstrated from Thessaloniki to Diavata prison in solidarity with the revolted prisoners.

An important development was the uprising of the prisoners in the third and fourth wing of Korydallos prison, in the night on October seventeenth. According to newspaper reports, during the time of the closing of the cells for the night, approximately one hundred twenty of the total three hundred prisoners of the third wing of Korydallos prison drove the guards out. They blocked the main entrance of the wing with beds and tables they took from their cells and they also burned their mattresses and blankets. They asked for the Minister of Justice or the General Secretary of the Ministry to visit the prison in order to express their demands. Among their demands were the removal of the prison's Director, Nikos Papadogoulas, equal treatment for all prisoners, release under certain conditions after a prisoner completes two thirds of the sentence, separation of incarcerated drug addicts from prisoners accused or convicted for other crimes, and the improvement of living conditions in prison. They handed their demands to the prosecutor of the municipality of Piraeus, but they insisted on addressing the minister. During the night, there was no turmoil in the prison, but, on the following day, the prisoners shouted slogans and hanged banners from the windows. Two of the banners wrote: 'These prisons are the mirror of our society' and 'These prisons are part of our civilization'. The prisoners also talked to the journalists, who were stationed outside the prison yard. They described their living conditions and articulated their problems, such as the size of the cells or the treatment by the guards. They stated that even though the cells were so small that they were suitable for only one person, three people could live in a single cell, and that the guards behaved disrespectfully and violently. They also threatened to go on hunger strike. According to the prisoners, the prison authorities had cut off the electricity in the facilities and they were afraid that the water supply would be cut off as well. On the other hand, the director of the prison and the prison guards responded to the prisoners' complaints through the press by saying that 'in every uprising they [the prisoners] say the same thing. It is not possible that we torture the prisoners!'. In Korydallos prison there were also three German prisoners who hanged a banner asking to communicate with the German embassy.

Concerning the uprising in Alikarnassos prison, a delegation by the Workers' Union Center of Heraklion tried to meet with the prisoners and give them supplies, but the prosecutor of Heraklion did not permit the meeting. The announcement of the aforementioned measures by the Ministry of Justice did not resolve the situation in Agios Stefanos prison, where the revolted prisoners, despite lack of provisions and electricity, decided to continue the uprising, especially after the simultaneous uprising in Korydallos prison. In Komotini prison the aforementioned thirty-five prisoners continued to abstain from the prison meal. On October nineteenth (**19.10**), around three hundred forty prisoners managed to reach the roof of the third wing of Korydallos prison and occupy it, despite the efforts of the prison staff. According to the newspapers, the prisoners Vaggelis Rochamis and Giannis Papadopoulos were not among the initial participants, but joined the uprising later. Rochamis, who participated actively in the uprising in Corfu prison and had gained notoriety due to his multiple escape attempts from different prisons, in this case, even though he participated, he was not considered as the leader of the uprising. The prisoners remained on the rooftop of the prison, while their relatives and friends were gathered outside Korydallos prison. According to press reports, the Prison Guards' Union stated their fear of the increased risk of mass escape attempts, while, on the other hand, the mayor of the district of Korydallos, Nikos Themelis, argued that the consequences of any violent action in order to suppress the uprising might be uncontrollable. In the afternoon on October nineteenth, the prisoners in the female section of Korydallos prison joined the uprising. The imprisoned female drug addicts occupied the second wing and they immediately went on hunger strike. The juvenile prisoners also hanged a banner in their section, but after a while they removed it. In Alikarnassos prison, the revolted prisoners decided to allow for the eight, mostly elderly prisoners, who remained in the occupied wing, to get transferred to another wing. At the same time in Agios Stefanos prison the prisoners, who did not participate in the uprising, were also transferred to other wings. As the uprisings spread, eighty prisoners in the prison of Chania, on the island of Crete abstained from their meal as a symbolic expression of solidarity with the revolted prisoners in other prisons.

On October twentieth and twenty first (**20.10-21.10**), the mayor of the district of Korydallos planned an event in order to support the prisoners, and the 'Committee for Solidarity to the Prisoners' called for solidarity action outside the prison. In these

Imprisonment and Collective Claims:  
Uprisings in the Greek Penitentiaries, 1975-1999

two days, the uprising in Korydallos prison expanded. Sixty prisoners in the second wing, three hundred prisoners in the psychiatric section and the hospital of the prison, and one hundred twenty juvenile prisoners joined the uprising. The only wing that did not participate in the uprising in Korydallos prison was the first wing, in which the former dictators of the Military Dictatorship in Greece (1967-1974) were held. On Saturday, October twentieth, at noon, the juvenile prisoners began destroying their section of the prison by setting mattresses, beds and blankets on fire. The fire was contained in a short amount of time and did not spread to other parts of the prison. On the following day, the female prisoners occupied the roof of the female section. The negotiations between the prisoners and the representatives of the Ministry of Justice continued throughout the weekend, though they produced no result. In Alikarnassos prison, the revolted prisoners remained in their position, asking for the General Secretary of the Ministry to visit them, while outside the prison a solidarity event organized by students took place. In Komotini prison, the aforementioned thirty-five prisoners continued to abstain from the prison meal. On October twentieth, one hundred thirteen prisoners in Larisa prison also started an uprising and their demands were the same as those of the revolted prisoners in other prisons. They handed their demands to the prosecutor in an official statement. The prisoners in Agios Stefanos prison received some food supplies, while another elderly prisoner left the wing of the uprising and two more prisoners decided to stop the uprising.

On October twenty second (**22.10**), a meeting concerning the uprisings between the Prime Minister, Konstantinos Mitsotakis, the Minister of Justice, Athanasios Kanellopoulos and the Minister of Public Order I. Vasileiadis took place. During the press conference, the spokesperson of the government, Vyron Polydoros, characterized the uprisings in the Greek prisons as ‘intentional’, ‘with no substantial justification’, and, therefore the government should and would enforce order. The Minister of Justice, Kanellopoulos spoke to the press and made particular mention of the ‘serious’ damage in Korydallos prison’s facilities. He also addressed allegations concerning rapes of juvenile prisoners. A meeting between the Minister of Justice and a prisoners’ committee consisting of five members from Korydallos prison was planned, in order to discuss their demands. The members of the committee were the prisoners Giannis Papadopoulos, Michalis Soulos, Alexandros Drivas, Katsaris and the juvenile prisoner, Papazois. The representatives of the state in the meeting were

the General Secretary of the Ministry of Justice, Phillipos Spyropoulos, the Director of the Department of Correctional Treatment, Eleni Riga, the Director of the Department of Execution of Sentences, Panagiotou, and the mayor of the district of Korydallos, Nikos Themelis. The Minister of Justice would eventually not participate in the meeting. However, the prisoners' committee refused to take part in the meeting, because the Solidarity Committee, which the prisoners wanted to be in the meeting, was not invited. The members of this committee were the professors at the School of Law of Athens, Manitakis and Manoledakis, the President of the Bar Association of Athens S. Polydoros, and the lawyers Roupakiotis, Chr. Argyropoulos, and Katerina Iatropoulou. According to the prisoners, this Solidarity Committee was of great importance to them during the negotiations, because of their knowledge of the law. After the failure of this initial attempt to commence negotiations, Giannis Papadopoulos, from the rooftop of the fourth wing of Korydallos, stated to the journalists, who were gathered outside the prison, that the Ministry of Justice had a deadline until the night of the twenty-second of October to arrange a new meeting, in which the professors and lawyers that the prisoners asked for would be present. During the day, turmoil in Korydallos prison had subsided as the prisoners waited for the prisoners' committee to inform them about the meeting.

In Agios Stefanos prison, the situation remained stagnant after seven prisoners decided to withdraw from the uprising and the food shortages continued, as one hundred seventy-three revolted prisoners received just eighty portions of food. In Chalkida prison, on the island of Euboea, where one hundred forty-five prisoners were detained, thirty-five prisoners protested on the rooftop of the prison and twenty-five abstained from their meal. Among the prisoners were Kurdish prisoners, who demanded their recognition as political prisoners. In Trikala prison in northern Greece the prisoners also abstained from the prison meal, in Volos prison in central Greece, seventy prisoners abstained from their meal and handed a statement with their demands. In Volos prison, prisoners who served shorter sentences were held, and, as a result, they did not participate more actively in the protests. In Larisa prison, fifty more prisoners revolted. The number of prisoners who took part in the uprising rose to two hundred prisoners from the six hundred prisoners in total. In other prisons, such as Diavata in Thessaloniki, in Komotini or Kassandra many prisoners abstained

from the prison meals as well. In Alikarnassos the revolted prisoners did not proceed to further actions as well.

Late at night on October twenty third (23.10) the negotiations between the prisoners and the Ministry of Justice commenced once again. Giannis Papadopoulos once more spearheaded the negotiations, with his inmates Katsaris, Papazois, Soulos and Drivas. The meeting lasted two hours, and the Minister of Justice, as well as the Solidarity Committee, for which the prisoners asked, also participated. Both sides agreed to the participation of this committee of professors and lawyers in the Legislative Committee, which, according to the Minister Kanellopoulos, would compile the plan for the decongestion of the prisons and the improvement of the living conditions in the institutions until November tenth, 1990. According to press reports, the prisoner Papadopoulos said that he would urge the other prisoners in Korydallos to exercise self-restraint, but he would not propose the end of the uprising and the return of the prison to its regular operation. He also stated to the press, that the prisoners knew from the CB radios that the special police forces intended to storm the prison, and that the claims of the Minister of Justice about rapes in the prison during the uprising were false. An important change that the Ministry of Justice considered implementing was the official definitive abolition of the death penalty. Even though, the death penalty was never applied in Greece for many years, it had not been legally abolished, and the practical consequence of this situation was the difference in the years convicts with longer sentences had to serve. At the same time, the former dictators were transferred to the administrative building, after they asked the prison's director for protection, causing the reaction of the revolted prisoners. In Chalkida prison, the prisoners returned to their cells, after negotiation with the prison's director. He assured them that the prisoners who revolted would not be treated harshly, while the damage to the facility was less extensive than was initially reported. In Alikarnassos prison seven prisoners withdrew from the uprising. In Agios Stefanos prison the one hundred fifty-six prisoners continued the occupation, but they stopped the abstention from their meal. In Larisa prison, twenty-seven prisoners in the first wing decided to stop the uprising after negotiations with the prosecutor of Larisa, while forty of their inmates in the first wing and one hundred fifty in the second and third wings decided to continue.



On the following day, October twenty fourth (**24.10**), the turmoil in many prisons had subsided, as most of the prisoners' demands had been satisfied. The Alikarnassos prison was an exception and the riot police planned to intervene. However, no police intervention occurred. In Korydallos prison, the prisoners did not protest further, but the prison guards addressed the Ministry of Justice and threatened to go on strike if the situation in the penitentiary did not deescalate. The prisoners in Korydallos decided to continue the uprising without further escalation until November tenth, when the Legislative Committee would present their suggestions. Some prisoners disagreed with this decision and small-scale clashes between them occurred, which resulted in three prisoners getting injured and hospitalized. The tension did not last long, and it did not spread further. The General Secretary of the Ministry of Justice visited Korydallos and had a meeting only with the prison guards. The President of the Union of the Prison Workers, Antonis Aravantinos, mentioned that the prisoners were digging tunnels in order to escape, and explained the measures that the guards took in order to avoid such incidents. The Bar Association of Athens stated to the press that some of the prisoners' claims are 'unrealistic', while the Minister of Justice Kanellopoulos planned to submit a request for four hundred million drachmas from the state budget for the improvement of the living condition and the prison facilities.

The situation in Korydallos, Agios Stefanos, Alikarnassos and Larisa prisons did not escalate further on October twenty fifth (**25.10**). The prison guards of Korydallos prison also demanded a peaceful resolution of the situation from the Ministry. Meanwhile, the prisoner Giannis Papadopoulos denied the allegations of Antonis Aravantinos concerning the existence of tunnels in the prison. Around one hundred sixty prisoners decided to withdraw from the uprising and they were transferred to facilities in the building of the administration, while the underage prisoners, who did not participate in the uprising, were transferred to the prison in Kassaveteia, in the city of Volos. Concerning the female section of Korydallos, the prisoners complained about the behavior and practices of the director Athanasopoulos. According to the female prisoners, under his administration the incarcerated drug addicts had no access to food or medical supplies. Moreover, members of the staff humiliated and threatened the prisoners. A small-scale demonstration, in which members of various left wing parties and organizations

Imprisonment and Collective Claims:  
Uprisings in the Greek Penitentiaries, 1975-1999

participated, took place in the center of Athens in order to express solidarity to the revolted prisoners. On the following day, October twenty sixth (**26.10**), the prisoners in Korydallos prison stated to the press that they would end the uprising before the designated date (November tenth), if the Ministry of Justice provided assurances that most of their demands would be included in the new correctional bill.

On October twenty eighth (**28.10**), the prisoners in Korydallos prison celebrated the national holiday. They held Greek and white flags on the rooftop, listened to the church service on the radio and sang the Greek National Anthem. Giannis Papadopoulos, spoke to the journalists and compared their struggle with the Greek struggle in World War II, which was celebrated that day. He stated that the eighty underage prisoners that remained in Korydallos prison were transferred to the fourth wing together with protection groups, which were formed by other inmates for their safety after the allegations about rapes. Since the uprising had lasted for many days, the medical and food supplies in Korydallos did not suffice anymore. According to Papadopoulos, the prison officials did not transfer the prisoners in need of medical assistance to the hospitals. In the female section of Korydallos the director had left the prisoners with no medical and food supplies. After their complaints became public, the prisoners in Korydallos prison received food supplies, medicine and cigarettes. Concerning the damage to the facility during the uprising, according to newspaper Kathimerini the damage in Korydallos prison was estimated at approximately one hundred thirty million drachmas, one hundred million was the estimation for the juvenile prisoners' section and thirty million the rest of the prison.

On November first (**01.11**), the Legislative Committee decided to accept some of the prisoners' demands. The legislative changes concerned the prisoners who served life sentences and had already spent fifteen years in prison. These prisoners would have the right to submit an application for release under certain conditions. Furthermore, the underage offenders that have not committed a serious crime, such as homicide, would not be imprisoned. On November ninth (**09.11**), the Ministry of Justice announced the changes in the Correctional and Penal Code, and certain measures satisfied the prisoners' demands. The prisoners in Korydallos set three conditions in order to stop the uprising, namely that no prisoner would face prosecution for participation in the uprising, that no vindictive transfers from

Korydallos to other prisons would take place, and that the police forces would not enter the prison. They also asked to participate in the repair work for the damage, which occurred in the uprising. In Agios Stefanos prison the prisoners of the second wing ended the uprising, as they considered the announcements of the Ministry satisfactory, while the other prisoners continued.

After the announcement of the changes in the Codes the tension in the prisons appeared to have subsided. However, on Saturday, November tenth (**10.11**), Giannis Papadopoulos from the rooftop of Korydallos stated to the press that the Ministry mocked the prisoners and that they were willing to continue the uprising. After the statement by Papadopoulos, tension among the prisoners reportedly ensued, as some prisoners wanted to end the uprising and disagreed with the continuation. One of the prisoners was injured and hospitalized. In light of the tension, the Ministry announced that certain improvements could be considered, but also warned that only marginal changes to the proposals could be made. On the following day, November eleventh (**11.11**), the General Secretary of the Ministry met with a prisoners' committee from Korydallos prison, in order to clarify the changes in the Codes. After the meeting, the committee returned to the prison and informed all prisoners. According to newspaper reports, late into the night, six prisoners attempted to escape from Korydallos prison, by jumping from the exterior fence of the prison. Two managed to escape, while the other four were immediately arrested.

On the morning of November twelfth (**12.11**) the male prisoners in Korydallos decided to stop the uprising and sent a letter to the Ministry in order to express their gratification for the handling of the situation. It was the first time that a tension or an uprising in the Greek penitentiaries ended without the entrance of the police forces in the prison and its violent suppression. The prisoners denied the proposal by the prison staff to allow the entrance of the police 'in order to help them with the headcount'. Some of the prisoners also expressed their disagreement with their inmates who tried to escape. On the other hand, the female prisoners in Korydallos disagreed with the termination of the uprising and remained on the rooftop of the prison.

In contrast to the situation in Korydallos, the eleven remaining revolted prisoners in Alikarnassos prison, as well as the revolted prisoners in Agios Stefanos prison disagreed with the decision of the committee of Korydallos and continued the

uprising. On the following day, November thirteenth (**13.11**), the riot police and the police special forces entered Alikarnassos prison and ended the uprising of the eleven prisoners, who were transferred to the disciplinary cells of the prison. Even though, according to the Ministry of Justice, the operation of the police in the prison, which lasted two and half hours, was bloodless, the newspapers reported that the police used excessive violence against the prisoners (not only against the eleven prisoners who continued the uprising). The journalists who were covering the operation and were stationed outside the penitentiary reported that they could hear the screams of the prisoners. In Agios Stefanos prison, the one hundred forty-nine revolted prisoners continued the uprising, despite the visit of the Ministry's representative. In Larissa prison, the prisoners who revolted referred to the measures of the government as 'mockery', but one day later they returned to their cells shortly before the police forces entered the prison. According to press reports, when the prisoners in the third and the fourth wings in Korydallos learned about the police operation in Alikarnassos prison, they revolted, shouting: 'the Ministry mocked us', and small conflicts between prisoners occurred. On November fourteenth (**14.11**), the administration of Korydallos prison could ascertain the number of escapees. A thorough search for hidden self-made weapons also took place and the damage in the facility was recorded. The prisoners had already handed their weapons the previous day, while the special committee of the Ministry and the Regional Government of the region of Attica did not report great damage in the Korydallos prison complex, with the exception of the third wing, and especially the section of the juvenile prisoners, the repair of which was estimated to take more than six months. The escape attempts from Korydallos prison continued in the days that followed and, as a result, the director of the prison, Nikos Papadogoulas, and the director of the juvenile section, Vasilis Zervas, were removed from their positions. After the numerous escape attempts an additional search in Korydallos prison took place. Meanwhile, the prisoners sent a letter to the newspapers and mentioned the torture that they were subjected to in the disciplinary cells.

On Tuesday, November twentieth (**20.11**), the prosecutors of the city of Patras asked the prisoners to surrender and to end the uprising, but the prisoners refused. According to the press, a few minutes later, the riot police using ladders and cutting the bars, entered the occupied part of the Agios Stefanos prison. The prisoners reacted

by setting up barricades and setting mattresses and other objects on fire. The riot police used teargas and resorted to violence against the prisoners and, as a result, three prisoners were injured and transferred to the hospital. The rest of the revolted prisoners were placed in a special section of the prison, until they were transferred to other prisons. The second wing and parts of the common spaces in Agios Stefanos prison were mainly damaged.

After the end of the uprisings, escape attempts from several prisons, such as Korydallos or Kassaveteia, continued until the end of the year. The administrations of the prisons, in order to restore their regular operation and avoid such occurrences, transferred the prisoners who participated more actively in the uprisings to other penitentiaries.

The revolted prisoners in Korydallos prison communicated directly with the press from the rooftop of the prison. Most newspapers did not adopt a negative stance towards the revolted prisoners and published their claims. However, the prisoners participated in the public dialogue on the issue mainly by validating the discourse of the state. The dialogue between the prisoners and the state that was considered as a successful action, did not reject the operation of the existing correctional system. The criticism that some newspapers expressed did not question the correctional system too. The only newspaper that had a different approach was *Eleftheros Typos*, which was openly against the uprisings and published rumors and speculation. In its reports it used graphic titles such as ‘Ruthless criminals the leaders of the uprising’, and ‘What if they had killed your child?’<sup>206</sup>. *Eleftheros Typos* addressed a more conservative (mainly right-wing) audience and attempted to induce a negative reaction towards the uprisings. It also criticized the ‘hesitation of the people in charge’<sup>207</sup>. However, in general most newspapers did not question the reaction of the state, and more precisely the Minister of Justice.

The main characteristics of these uprisings were their duration and the way they spread. It started initially from a small group of eighteen prisoners in Alikarnassos prison and the uprising soon spread in several Greek penitentiaries, in

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<sup>206</sup> Tonia Maniatea, Christina Pitoura, ‘Anendotoi oi stasiastes’, *Eleftheros Typos*, 23.10.1990, Dimitris Rizos, ‘An eixan dolofonisei to paidi sas?’, *Eleftheros Typos*, 22.10.1990

<sup>207</sup> Vasilis Mitropulos, ‘Mia koinonia sapia ws to kokkalo!’, *Eleftheros Typos*, 23.10.1990

which numerous of prisoners participated. For almost a month, many Greek prisons, including the largest prison in Athens, remained under the control of the prisoners. The great number of participants in prisons such as Korydallos proved that a more organized suppression by the state was difficult. Smaller uprisings, like the one in Alikarnassos prison, were also taken into consideration. The uprising in Alikarnassos created a domino effect in several prisons in the country that affected not only male prisons, but also the female section of Korydallos prison and the detention center for minors. Uprisings in the female section of Korydallos had also occurred in the past, as for example in 1981. However, this was the first time that female prisoners as subjects, as revolted prisoners, participated actively alongside male prisoners in the uprising. The female prisoners did not draw the attention and the interest of the press as the male prisoners did, but they surely participated and claimed their position, their own stance and voice in the uprising.

In most cases, both the uprisings and their suppression were not violent, except in Alikarnassos and Agios Stefanos prisons, where the police forces violently suppressed the uprisings as the prisoners refused to end them. The prisoners in Alikarnassos and in Agios Stefanos not only demanded a 'better prison', but decided to remain in their positions, while ignoring the promises by the Ministry. These actions can be considered as a direct challenge to the correctional system in general. The prisoners stated their claims, and, in the case of Korydallos prison, the committee that the prisoners formed, as well as the scientific committee they proposed, not only participated in the negotiations with the state, but also contributed to the reform process of the prison system. This was the first time that a Minister of Justice accepted representatives of the prisoners in the Ministry and discussed their demands. Furthermore, prisoners' claims were expressed in contemporary press. Despite some rumors and inaccurate events they presented, as for example the replacement of the Director in Alikarnassos prison, their demands were published in the newspapers, together with the results of the legislative committee and the declaration of the willingness of the Ministry to proceed with the changes. Regarding the prisoners' claims, it can be observed that the demands that concerned the improvement of the living conditions in prisons were more prominently displayed in the press, while those that concerned radical reforms in the correctional policies did not receive such exposure. The state had interest in more 'humane prisons'. The demands concerning

the improvement of the living conditions in prisons were presented as positive in the press, though they did not specify the exact measures for a substantial change in the penitentiaries. However, the reduction of the sentences of prisoners, who were convicted to longer sentences was of particular importance. This measure could be considered as the most important and substantial achievement of the uprisings. On the other hand, the death penalty was not abolished, even though the Ministry considered it. It was abolished a few years later by the government of PASOK. The Minister of Justice Athanasopoulos was also a key figure in these incidents. In contrast to other executive members of the New Democracy party, as well as the conservative, right-wing press, he was not in support of an instant suppression of the uprisings and was willing to speak and negotiate with the 'deviants'. However, it should be mentioned that he agreed to speak only with prisoners from Korydallos prison. The fact that in other uprisings no prisoners' committees were formed was an issue, which the prisoners themselves contemplated. The prisoner Giannis Petropoulos had, since the beginning of the uprising, expressed his discontent with the issue to the journalists outside Alikarnassos prison. The Ministry's willingness to speak with certain prisoners who formed committees also indicated that the state wanted to confine the dialogue within the parameters of the dominant discourse, in which it set the terms. The fact that only prisoners from Korydallos were granted a meeting, without any other prisoners from other penitentiaries being addressed, reinforced the important status of Korydallos in the Greek prison system. The rumors about the digging of tunnels, which circulated through the certain media, were mainly a consequence of the unease of the prison guards and the goal of the media to present an image of disorganization and breakdown in the prison. As was made clear later, the prisoners had no need for tunnels in order to escape. The rumors about conflicts in the penitentiaries were partially true, though they took place in the context of disagreements concerning the continuation or the ending of the uprising. They were not violent clashes between different groups, as was the case during the uprising in Korydallos prison a few years later. The rumors about the rapes of minors in Korydallos were neither confirmed nor proven definitively false. The prisoners in most penitentiaries, and mainly in Korydallos, despite their differences, functioned as a collective subject, as revolted prisoners, who stated their demands. Even the eighteen (and later eleven) revolted prisoners in Alikarnassos functioned as a

collective subject. However, this image was partly stained by the escapes from Korydallos after the end of the events. A group of prisoners decided to deviate from the collective effort and attempted to escape. This caused the reaction of several prisoners and showed the differences in their approaches. The view of former prisoners, Samaras, who at the time was held in Larisa prison, in which an uprising also occurred, is characteristic of the different approaches among the prisoners: 'I was not that much interested in fighting for 'unionist' demands in prison, so I remained uninvolved. However, later I regretted that I did not use this opportunity of general disorganization and the struggle of the revolted prisoners in order to organize a group escape from the rooftop of the prison'<sup>208</sup>. However, the escapes did not question the status of the prisoners as a collective subject. Rather, they constituted proof of the flawed organization of the prisons and of the inability of the state and the prison officials to prevent them.

The case of the reaction of the press of the period, it can be observed that they participated actively to the formal reformist discourse. During the first days of the uprising in Alikarnasos and Agios Stefanos, most newspapers did not cover them in detail, or used graphic titles to describe them. *Kathimerini* referred to the prisoners as 'long-term prisoners' or 'Prisoners sentenced to life revolted', in an attempt to not further induce negative reactions and to contribute to the de-escalation of the uprisings<sup>209</sup>. As the tension spread to other penitentiaries, newspapers used more intense titles such as 'Fierce Hours' or 'Outburst'<sup>210</sup>. The turning point was the participation of the prisoners in Korydallos prison in the uprising. From that point on the press dedicated more pages almost every day to the uprisings. After the first unsuccessful meeting of the prisoners' committee in the Ministry of Justice, the newspapers expressed concern for a possible re-ignition of the uprisings<sup>211</sup>. The second meeting was presented more positively. The newspapers focused on the flower

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<sup>208</sup> Samaras, *Kataziteitai*, 541.

<sup>209</sup> 'Katastrofes apo tous varipoinites', *Kathimerini*, 13.10.1990, 'Sugkentrwsi gia tous stasiastes-isovites', *Kathimerini*, 17.10.1990

<sup>210</sup> 'Agries Ores', *Ta Nea*, 11.10.1990, P. Georgoudi, M. Grapsa, 'Xesasma', *Ta Nea*, 12.10.1990

<sup>211</sup> Georgia Kontrarou, Giannis Politis, Prokopis Giogiakas, 'Nauagio kai fovoi', *Ta Nea*, 23.10.1990, 'Korydallos: Murizei tora mparouti', *Eleftherotypia*, 23.10.1990, Gianna Papadakou, Thanos Labropoulos, 'Murizei... mparouti', *Eleftherotypia*, 23.10.1990



bouquet that the prisoners offered when they entered the Ministry, or on the fact that during the meeting pizzas were ordered<sup>212</sup>. Concern was also expressed in the newspapers after the rumors about the tunnels that the prisoners supposedly dug in order to escape surfaced. The newspapers focused on the danger posed by potential escapes and referred to the divisions between the prisoners<sup>213</sup>. Another topic was the damage in several facilities, which was estimated at more than one hundred thirty million drachmas<sup>214</sup>. Furthermore, newspapers also published researches, which investigated the deeper causes of the uprisings. The majority of such articles focused on the overpopulation and the incarceration of drug addicts, the bad living conditions and the inability of the prisoners to work in prison. The newspaper 'Eleftherotypia' focused on the preferential treatment of some famous prisoners by the justice system in contrast to more vulnerable social groups, the class distinction in the penalties handed out and the inapplicable five-year projects for the construction of new facilities<sup>215</sup>. Kathimerini on the other hand insisted that, in order for the living conditions of the prisoners to improve substantially, expenditures for new facilities and for the staffing of prisons with specialized personnel, like sociologists and academics, were necessary<sup>216</sup>. In each case, most newspapers' remarks have to deal with real issues in the prisons. However, all suggestions remained in the context of the main discourse, namely the way, in which the state should improve the imprisonment conditions within the existing correctional system. The outcome of most uprisings was considered as positive, as a nonviolent win for the prisoners, who managed to remain calm and not get overtly violent, as well as for the Minister of Justice Kanellopoulos, who handled the case properly and negotiated with the revolted prisoners. Concerning this compromise between the prisoners and the state, some newspapers focused on the fact that 'the dialogue provided solutions', while others mentioned that 'for the first time the outcasts were taken into consideration'<sup>217</sup>. In this

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<sup>212</sup> 'Ektonosi me anthi kai pitses', *Elefthrotypia*, 24.10.1990, Gianna Papadaku, 'Ektonosi me eilikrini dialogo', *Elefthrotypia*, 24.10.1990

<sup>213</sup> Giannis Politis, 'Me vardies stin taratsa', *Ta Nea*, 26.10.1990, 'Varipoinites skavoun 'Iagoumia': Kindunos omadikon apodraseon', *Kathimerini*, 25.10.1990

<sup>214</sup> Spiros Panou, '130 ek. drh. Oi zhmies stis fylakes Korydallou', *Kathimerini*, 30.10.1990

<sup>215</sup> G.B., 'H exegersi ton kolasmenon', *Eleftherotypia*, 11.10.1990

<sup>216</sup> Athina Karali, 'Oi exegerseis stis fylakes', *Kathimerini*, 26.10.1990

<sup>217</sup> Foteini Kalliri, 'Fylakes: Pws fthasame stin exegersi', *Kathimerini*, 28.10.1990, G. B., 'Telos kalo, ola kala', *Eleftherotypia*, 13.11.1990

Imprisonment and Collective Claims:  
Uprisings in the Greek Penitentiaries, 1975-1999

context of sympathy to the revolted prisoners, the police invasions in the prisons in Alikarnassos and Agios Stefanos were criticized for the excessive use of violence in the suppression. The escapes were described as another negative consequence, which contrasted with the promising solution that was achieved after the end of the uprisings. They were proof of the long lasting problems that the prisons faced and also contributed to an image of destabilization and lack of control.

### **Case Study no3: Uprising in Korydallos Prison, 1995**

The last example concerns the uprising in Korydallos prison in Piraeus in November 1995, which is the biggest prison in Greece. At the time PASOK was the governing party, as it won the elections in 1993, and remained in power until 1996. The Prime Minister was once more Andreas Papandreou and Minister of Justice during the period of the uprising was Ioannis Pottakis. The organization of the prison was based on the Correctional Code of 1989.

Initial efforts for the construction of Korydallos prison were undertaken at the end of the nineteenth century, however construction finally began in 1958. Korydallos prison was built and began operating in the 1960s, more precisely the inauguration ceremony was held in November fifth 1966 by the then minister Konstaninos Stefanakis. Initially four wings for adult prisoners and one wing for minors were planned, in total, four hundred cells plus some cells for minors. According to the original plan the cells were supposed to be one-person cells. However, in 1990 two more wings were added. Wealthy benefactors such as Andreas Syggros and Georgios Averof donated money for the construction of the prison<sup>218</sup>.

In 1995, the prison in Korydallos was the biggest prison in Greece housing almost 1,400 prisoners. It was described in the Correctional Code as a prison, in which only prisoners with short-term sentences (up to eighteen months) or prisoners awaiting trial could be held. However, in reality many of the prisoners in Korydallos were serving longer sentences as they were convicted of significant crimes, such as homicides or participation in the 'organized crime'. The director of the prison at that time was Spyros Athanasopoulos.

Korydallos prison in 1995 was divided in four wings: in the first wing prisoners for economic crimes were held, in the second wing prisoners with longer sentences were accommodated, in the third wing, from which the uprising in 1995 started, prisoners who committed thefts were confined, and in the fourth wing prisoners convicted of drug associated crimes were held. Most of the prisoners convicted of drug associated crimes were serving long-term or life sentences, and half of them were migrants.

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<sup>218</sup> Athina Karali, '24 xronia apomonosis...', *Kathimerini*, 10.11.1990

In a report by the Hellenic Parliament, the conditions in Greek prisons at the time were described as poor and the main issues were listed. These were overpopulation, lack of specialized prison staff and inappropriate facilities. Furthermore, there were no educational programs or enough posts for the prisoners to work during their imprisonment, despite the provision in the Penal Code, which granted prisoners this opportunity. At the time only two hundred of the total 6,500 prisoners in Greek prisons in general were working. Furthermore, according to a report by the European Council, Greek prisons were the most crowded prisons in Europe in 1995, even though Greece was not the country with the highest number of prisoners. The number of prisoners per one hundred seats was 159.6. This can be partially explained by the great number of individuals, who had been remanded in custody. The report also stressed the inappropriate treatment and inadequate care for special categories of prisoners such as drug addicts or migrant prisoners and warned of possible uprisings<sup>219</sup>.

The uprising in 1995 was not the first time Korydallos prison was a topic in the Greek press. In 1994 a scandal concerning the prison broke, in which higher prison officials including the chief warden of the prison, Konstantinos Aravantinos, and prisoners, members of criminal gangs, were involved. The scandal soon became political because the prison officials involved were unionists, members of the PASOK and New Democracy party unions. The officials were accused of having personal relations and dealings with convicted drug dealers and that they were bribed in order to enable them not only to bring and sell drugs (mainly heroin) in the prison, but also to bring other forbidden items and substances such as alcohol, and to arrange for the transportation of certain prisoners to other facilities<sup>220</sup>. This scandal was described as a 'scandal worth millions' due to the widespread corruption in Korydallos prison<sup>221</sup>. The scandal was mainly reported by *Eleftherotypia* at the end of 1994. The reporting of the scandal led to an investigation in the prison by the state prosecutor and the

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<sup>219</sup> 'Stis ellhnikes fylakes uparxei o megalyteros synostismos', *Ta Nea*, 06.02.1995

<sup>220</sup> Gianna Papadakou, Vana Fotopoulou, 'Sta ixni tis mafias tou Korydallou', *Eleftherotypia*, 18.12.1994

<sup>221</sup> Gianna Papadakou, Vana Fotopoulou, 'Korydallos: Mpravoi, vasanistiria, ekviasmoi', *Eleftherotypia*, 19.12.1994

prosecution of prison officials for felonies<sup>222</sup>. The minister of Justice at the time was Georgios Kouvelakis, who had written the bill for the abolition of the death penalty in Greece in 1993, and planned a series of prison reforms, as well as an investigation of the complaints about corruption in Korydallos prison. Due to the involvement of certain PASOK unionists in the scandal, who the press at the time labeled as 'Korydallos prison mafia', Kouvelakis was forced to resign. Eleftherotypia characterized him as a 'rebel Minister of Justice', who attempted to tackle the increasingly pressing issue of the incarcerated drug addicts. However, after pressure from the party for his removal, his work was described as unfinished and incomplete. Finally, Georgios Kouvelakis was replaced by Anastasion Peponis, who held the position until September 1995, when Giannis Pottakis became minister until January 1996. Eleftherotypia did extensive reporting in multipage articles on the issue of 'Korydallos prison mafia' and revealed information on the scandal and published recorded conversations of the persons involved. This scandal is not only important due to its political implications, but also because it revealed the shift in the balance of power in prisons, and particularly in Korydallos.

One of the significant issues in the prison was the great number of imprisoned drug addicts, who continued to use drugs in prison. Illegal drug use, especially heroin, increased significantly in Korydallos in the early 1990s, concerning not only the male section, but also the female section of the prison<sup>223</sup>. The increase in drug use in society led to the increase in drug dealing in the prisons, especially in Korydallos, which resulted in the expanded activity of organized crime inside the prison, which, together with corrupted officials, were the main beneficiaries of this trend. The problem of imprisoned drug addicts was also intensified by the inadequate response of the state, the Ministry of Justice, as well as the healthcare institutions. There was no special care for these prisoners. They were held in the same cells as prisoners, who were convicted of other crimes. They had no specialized medical care and the methadone-based treatment programs, which at the time were considered as an experimental treatment, were not implemented. The adoption of methadone-based programs had been announced by the Ministry of Justice and the Ministry of Health

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<sup>222</sup> 'Martyries gia irwini kai remoules', *Eleftherotypia*, 21.12.1994, Nikos Mpardounias, 'Nees diwxeis kata sofronistikwn', *Kathimerini*, 17.01.1995

<sup>223</sup> 'Vrikan narkotika sti gynaikeia pteryga', *Ta Nea*, 22.07.1995

shortly before Kouvelakis' resignation, but it was not implemented. Nevertheless, the number of incarcerated drug addicts increased continuously, and drug addicts constituted at the time two thirds of the total prison population<sup>224</sup>. Attempts were also made by relatives of drug addicts, as well as organizations, to campaign against drug addicts being held on remand. At the time about sixty percent (60%) of drug addicts, who were remanded in custody once, returned to prison to serve sentences<sup>225</sup>.

In 1995 there was also an increasing number of migrant prisoners in Korydallos prison, an increase that had started already from the beginning of the decade. The majority of the migrant prisoners came from Albania, others from Romania, Poland or other Balkan countries. The prisoners were organized in informal groups according to their nationality, and, together with the Greek prisoners, were constantly antagonizing one another for supremacy in the prison. This often created tensions in the prison, which culminated in the uprising in November 1995. In January 1995 an uprising took place in the detention center for minors (SKA) after clashes between Greek and Romanian inmates. According to the press in the period, Greek prisoners had control of the facility until the arrival of Albanian and Romanian prisoners. This changed the power relations in the facility. Greek prisoners even petitioned for the removal of the other prisoners<sup>226</sup>. Similar incidents also occurred in April and May 1995. In the first instance there was a clash between Albanian minors, and in the second, a clash between Greek and Albanian minors in SKA after a failed escape attempt of Albanian prisoners in the third wing of Korydallos prison<sup>227</sup>.

Apart from the tensions between the different national groups in Korydallos prison, the press also mentioned the harsh living conditions in the detention center for minors. In the period, research on the prison system documented the significant issues in the detention centers for minors, namely the lack of healthcare and proper nutrition, the bad living conditions, and the strict behavior of the prison officials towards the underage inmates. The juvenile prisoners mentioned that the wardens beat them for

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<sup>224</sup> 'Mplegmenoi sta narkotika 2 stous 3 kratoumenous', *Eleftherotypia*, 17.12.1994

<sup>225</sup> 'I fylaki den einai lusi', *Ta Nea*, 27.06.1995

<sup>226</sup> Prokopis Giogiakas, Kostas Chatzidis, 'Exegersi anilikon', *Ta Nea*, 07.01.1995, Th. Labropoulos, 'Valkanikos polemos anilikon', *Eleftherotypia*, 07.01.1995

<sup>227</sup> 'Epaixan xulo ston Korydallos', *Ta Nea*, 25.04.1995, Prokopis Giogiakas, 'Exegersi Alvanon anilikon', *Ta Nea*, 11.05.1995, G. Fytras, Th. Labropoulos, 'Methoriakos polemos ston Korydallos', *Eleftherotypia*, 11.05.1995

even minor offenses and sent them to disciplinary cells. Others described the difficulties and problems, which arose with so many juvenile prisoners living together. Certain instances of humiliation and beating of prisoners by other ‘stronger’ inmates, who had spent more time in jail were also mentioned. According to a juvenile prisoner “the biggest issue in prison are the other inmates. The ‘strong’, those with more years in jail...”<sup>228</sup>. Tensions in SKA occurred even over trivial issues, such as dessert in the daily meal, and they were covered extensively by the press in the period<sup>229</sup>. The complaints of the psychiatrist, who worked in the detention center for minors in Korydallos had great significance concerning the living conditions of the minors. The complaints were officially submitted to the Ministry of Justice and caused a response by the minister, Anastasios Peponis, who accused the psychiatrist of wanting to attract publicity. However, the complaints were very serious as they concerned mistreatment, incidents of rape, use of sleeping pills and drugs, or the abuse of weaker prisoners by stronger inmates under surveillance of the guards, who knew about this situation, but did nothing. These complaints verified to a certain degree the image of the detention center for minors, which was presented in the press as a ‘hellish place’, in which the situation was out of the authorities’ or the prison staff’s control and in which the living conditions were intolerable for the minors detained there. The articles in the press stressed the age of the prisoners, which intensified the significance of the complaints, as well as the general wretchedness of the prison and used expressions such as ‘terror’ or ‘shocking descriptions’<sup>230</sup>. The complaints were also significant because in SKA, in contrast to other sections of Korydallos prison, in which adult prisoners were held, the number of prisoners was much smaller, which proves that overpopulation did not constitute the sole reason for tensions in a penitentiary.

These circumstances and the tensions described above, coupled with the reluctance of state authorities to reform the penitentiaries, led to a series of riots and escapes in Korydallos prison. In 1995 a series of tensions between prisoners, riots and escape attempts was recorded. In January 1995 complaints were made concerning

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<sup>228</sup> Georgia Kontrarou, ‘Tromos sti fylaki, peitharxeio kai ‘dunatoi’’, *Ta Nea*, 10.01.1995

<sup>229</sup> ‘Spitha ston Korydallos ta glyka tou sissitiou’, *Eleftherotypia*, 15.06.1995

<sup>230</sup> Athina Karali, Spyros Goutzanis, ‘Korydallos: To kolasthrio ton anilikon’, *Kathimerini*, 26.02.1995, ‘I ekthesi gia to anamorfotirio’, *Eleftherotypia*, 01.03.1995

beatings of prisoners in Korydallos by order of the ‘prison mafia’<sup>231</sup>. In February the prisoners sent a letter to the prosecutor in Piraeus, in which they stated that the hygiene in the prison was unacceptable, as many prisoners were carriers of hepatitis C, tuberculosis and other infectious diseases. They also mentioned that drug dealing and the activity of drug dealers in prison was widespread, as they collaborated with the prison personnel. They demanded the immediate intervention of the state and threatened with general uprising<sup>232</sup>. In April 1995, two hundred prisoners in the psychiatric hospital of the prison revolted and caused damages to the hospital. They climbed on the roof of the prison and demanded the separation of drug addicts from other prisoners. They also accused the wardens, who were involved in the scandal of drug dealing in the prison, of being drug dealers. One of the protagonists of this incident was Giannis Papadopoulos. *Eleftherotypia* was sympathetic towards this riot and used titles such as ‘the uprising was validated’, while other newspapers such as *Kathimerini* were skeptical about the motives of the revolted prisoners. Giannis Papadopoulos was transferred to Korydallos from the prison in Trikala few days prior to this incident, and *Kathimerini* was suspicious of the timing of the uprising and his transportation to the penitentiary. Independent of the initial cause of the uprising, the prisoners formed a committee, which consisted of five members and stated their demands. However, after the incident fifteen prisoners, who were thought to be in the forefront of the uprising, were transported to other penitentiaries<sup>233</sup>. The Minister of Justice Peponis accused the prisoners of dishonesty and stated that the reason for the uprising was not their collective demands, but their ‘desire for publicity’<sup>234</sup>. In September 1995 three hundred and thirty inmates in the third wing of the prison denied receiving their meal and demanded a meeting with the prison director, Spyros Athanasopoulos. During the meeting, the prisoners submitted their demands, which concerned better healthcare, abolition of remand for minor crimes and better living conditions in the prison. The report of this incident in the newspaper ‘*ta Nea*’ is

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<sup>231</sup> ‘Dioxi gia xylofarmous kratoumenon’, *Kathimerini*, 18.01.1995

<sup>232</sup> Nikos Mpardounias, ‘Apeili stasis ston Korydallos’, *Kathimerini*, 15.02.1995

<sup>233</sup> Giannis Fytras, ‘I exegersi vrike to dikio tis’, *Eleftherotypia*, 02.05.1995, Nikos Mpardounias, ‘Megales zhemies ston Korydallos’, *Kathimerini*, 03.05.1995

<sup>234</sup> ‘Peponis: Gia ti dimosiothta xesikothikan ston Korydallos’, *Eleftherotypia*, 05.05.1995



particularly important as it was described as a ‘general rehearsal’ for future uprisings in case at least some of the prisoners’ demands were not satisfied<sup>235</sup>.

However, tensions did not only result in riots with specific demands, they also concerned escape attempts, and even successful escapes from Korydallos prison. In September 1995, even though a failed escape attempt was also recorded, six prisoners managed to escape from the prison and the press questioned whether all security measures were followed by the prison staff. Several issues, like the malfunction of the alarm or the fact that the weapon of the guard was jammed, were considered ‘suspect’ by the press and made the escape possible. It seemed as these were organized attempts by the prisoners and that the guards also collaborated<sup>236</sup>. These events led to an investigation by the state prosecutor. The findings of the investigation showed that the wardens and the director of the prison were also to blame for the escape. The director was accused of covering up the sabotage. The alarm cables were cut either with scissors or with a knife, which indicated that the prison officials collaborated in the escape, and, even though the director knew of the sabotage, he did not report it, therefore he was also accused by the prosecutor<sup>237</sup>. The prisoners who escaped were members of the organized crime and drug dealers<sup>238</sup>. The image presented in the press concerning the escapes is one of total breakdown and lack of organization and order in the facility, which was presented as being under the control of gang members. Korydallos was described as a prison, in which the collaboration between the organized crime, mainly drug dealers, and the prison officials was the norm. In many opinion articles in the press, Korydallos prison was characterized as ‘prison for... escapees’ or ‘unguarded... prison’. These articles argued for the reinforcement of the security of the facility.

It is evident that the presentation of the events in the press constructed an image of disorganization, lawlessness and destruction. This image enhanced the view that the prison was in a ‘state of emergency’, under control of the organized crime and

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<sup>235</sup> Prokopis Giogiakas, ‘Entasi ston Korydallos’, *Ta Nea*, 12.09.1995, Thanos Labropoulos, ‘Mono oi drapetes doulepsan...’, *Eleftherotypia*, 02.10.1995

<sup>236</sup> Prokopis Giogiakas, ‘Erotimatika gia tin apopeira’, 20.09.1995,

<sup>237</sup> Gianna Papadaku, Vana Fotopoulou, ‘Korydallos: O dieuthintis ekryψε tin dioliofthora’, *Eleftherotypia*, 31.10.1995

<sup>238</sup> Gianna Papadaku, ‘Fylakes esthsan tin apodrasi’, *Eleftherotypia*, 08.11.1995, Nikos Mpardounias, ‘Ereuna gia apodrasi me doliofthora’, *Kathimerini*, 20.10.1995

that the prison officials were corrupted and collaborated with the so called ‘prison mafia’. This image is largely based on the events that took place in the prison. However, it should be called into question whether this image was representative of the conditions in the prison or whether this view of disorganization was the result of the loss of control by the authorities. According to William Aloskofis in his book *O Atypos Kwdikas Symperiforas twn Kratoumenwn: Stratigikes Epiviwsis sti Sygxroni Fylaki*, the prison administration has knowledge of the events such as those described above, which do not constitute a form of deviation, but networks of relations, which are realized in different ways<sup>239</sup>. Aloskofis studied the shift in the ‘unwritten code of conduct of the prisoners’, which is thought to exist in a prison, and made a series of interesting observations about modern prisons. First, the code of conduct is formed by the interaction of inside and outside factors<sup>240</sup>, and, especially in modern prisons, it does not constitute an absolute governing rule of the life of the inmates. The animosity between the prisoners and the prison staff is reduced and the communication between them is increased. There is a functional mutual agreement for a state of temporary truce<sup>241</sup>. The shift of this relation is caused by a series of changes in the living conditions in prisons, like the greater contact with the outside world, the use of television or the drug dealing in prisons. Parallel to the shift in the relation between prisoners and prison staff, a shift in the organization of prisoners can also be observed, which is based on the splintering in smaller groups according to friendship, descent or religion<sup>242</sup>. The national and cultural diversity, the mass incarceration of drug addicts and the dominance of a ‘lumpen’ culture of masculinity play a crucial role in the weakening of solidarity in prisons<sup>243</sup>. These observations are particularly important because they contribute to the deciphering of the changes in Greek prisons according to the examples mentioned above. It is this new reality in the organization of the prisoners and their relation to the prison staff that constituted the context of the uprising in Korydallos in November 1995, which occurred in a different manner and was spontaneous and more violent than previous uprisings. However, as the examples from the previous year and throughout 1995 showed, the uprising was not an isolated

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<sup>239</sup> William Aloskofis, *O Atypos Kwdikas Symperiforas twn Kratoumenwn: Stratigikes Epiviwsis sti Sygxroni Fylaki* (Sakkoulas, 2010), 13–14.

<sup>240</sup> Aloskofis, 37.

<sup>241</sup> Aloskofis, 40–41.

<sup>242</sup> Aloskofis, 47.

<sup>243</sup> Aloskofis, 50.

incident, but the result of the way Korydallos prison operated for a significant time period before the uprising. Aloskofis' observations constitute an interesting approach to the reality in the prison in 1995, because they differ from the journalists' reports in the press. Throughout 1995, and particularly during the uprising in November, the press promoted the image of disorganization and breakdown and did not attempt to further investigate the background of the reality and the operation of the prison in the period.

The uprising started in the fourteenth of November 1995 (14.11) from the third wing of the prison. According to newspaper reports, around 20:00 hours, during the distribution of drugs to prisoners with mental health problems and drug addicts, the prisoners attacked six prison guards, the psychiatrist of the prison and a nursing assistant. The prisoners took them as hostages and placed them in the disciplinary cells of the second wing. After the attack, the prisoners ran to the yard of the prison and more than fifty prisoners, most of them migrants, tried to escape through the main entrance of the prison. The attempt was unsuccessful and then they occupied the security section of the prison. One hundred fifty prisoners from the third wing remained in the prison yard holding self-made weapons. A few minutes later, the prisoners from the second wing joined the uprising and ran to the yard and to the security section. Police forces surrounded the prison, while the uprising spread to other wings. Only in the first wing, where prisoners for economic crimes and the imprisoned former colonels that participated in the Dictatorship were held, the inmates did not participate in the uprising. In total, more than one thousand prisoners of Korydallos prison took part in the uprising. The prison staff was restricted in the security building and in the administration building. Based on reports, around 21:00 hours the Police Director of Piraeus and the prosecutors arrived in Korydallos in order to commence negotiations with the prisoners. Special Police Forces (EKAM) entered the prison yard using teargas, and attempted to take the security building back from the prisoners. However, there was no plan in place for a large-scale intervention of the Police in the penitentiary in the first hours of the uprising. The General Secretary of the Ministry of Justice, Giorgos Pauleas, tried to convince the prisoners to set the hostages free, but they refused. In his statement to the media, Pauleas attempted to deescalate the situation, by telling to the journalists that 'the situation is not tragic', and stated that the prisoners did not express any claims. The uprising gradually spread

in an increasing number of prison sections, and the juvenile prisoners of Korydallos also took part. The prisoners entered the pharmacy of the prison and took the psychiatric drugs, which, according to the estimation of the newspapers, amounted to more than three million pills. Around 23:00 hours, two prisoners were transferred to the hospital. The first prisoner, named Andreas Oikonomou, was attacked with a sharp object, and the second prisoner was a drug addict, who was in coma from drug overdose. In the first day of the uprising the prisoners were not organized and they did not express any claims. Violent conflicts among the prisoners took place during the night, especially between groups of Greek and migrant prisoners.

According to reports, in the time between 01:00 and 03:00 hours on November fifteenth (**15.11**), police forces used teargas and shot in the air in order to intimidate the prisoners and prevent them from escaping, while an initial attempt for negotiation between the General Secretary of the Ministry of Justice, Giorgos Pauleas, and the prisoners took place. The prisoners appeared unorganized. The prisoners that participated in the negotiation claimed that they were not part of a committee and that they negotiated in order to avoid further bloodshed in the prison. In reports on November sixteenth (**16.11**), it was estimated that the situation had deescalated, and it was insinuated that the uprising would soon be over. At the same time, the prisoners set two of the hostages, the psychiatrist and one prison guard free.

According to the newspapers, around midnight on November fifteenth, the prisoners asked the journalists that were outside the prison, to come inside in order to inform them about their claims. Three prisoners, who served life sentences, the General Secretary Pauleas, two Members of Parliament of the PASOK party and the director of the prison Spyros Athanasopoulos, talked to the journalists at the main entrance of the prison. The prisoners, named Pantazis, Seremetis and Perrakis, who claimed to represent the majority of the prisoners, informed the journalists that they had set all hostages free and that the uprising had ended. When asked how the uprising began, the prisoners blamed the migrant inmates. Among the demands they presented to the press were the improvement of the living conditions in the prison and the medical care for the prisoners. They also demanded immediate release from prison after serving one fourth of the sentence and conformity to the law concerning temporary imprisonment. The Ministry of Justice, according to the General Secretary,

accepted the claims of the prisoners and pledged to uphold them the claims of the prisoners [434, 435]. Even though the uprising appeared to come to an end, violence and conflicts between the prisoners, as well as escape attempts continued through the night. Moreover, the kitchen and the pharmacy of the prison were set on fire. Most of the prisoners, who were transferred to the hospital, returned to Korydallos, except from Andreas Oikonomou. The majority of the prisoners that were transferred to the hospitals suffered from drug and psychiatric drug overdose, others sustained injuries in violent conflicts between prisoners and one was injured with a plastic bullet by a police officer.

Demonstrations took place in several prisons as an expression of solidarity with Korydallos prisoners. Six hundred fifty-two inmates in the prison of Agios Stefanos, outside the city of Patras, abstained from their meal for the whole day, one hundred sixty inmates from Tiryntha prison remained in the prison yard until late at night, and eleven prisoners in Corfu prison issued a statement demanding human rights for the prisoners. The female drug addict prisoners from the female section of Korydallos prison abstained from their meal, demanding a program of methadone treatment for the drug addicts in prisons. Similar solidarity acts took place in other Greek prisons as well, such as Alikarnassos, Diavata and Chalkida.

On November sixteenth (16.11), even though the tension in the prison appeared to subside, the prison staff remained concerned for their safety and demanded the presence of a prosecutor and journalists in order to reenter the prison. The guards said that the prisoners were still armed and possessed most cell keys. They decided to enter only the security building in order to accomplish specific tasks, such as prisoners' transfer or provisioning. According to the newspapers, groups of Greek prisoners under control of members of the organized crime, such as Danalatos, Panagiotopoulos and Venieris, attempted to restore order in the prison, but other prisoner groups, many of them groups of migrant prisoners, wanted to continue the attempts to escape. As a result, the conflicts between different prisoner groups continued for a third day. Three prisoners were announced dead from overdose of psychiatric drugs stolen from the prison pharmacy in the first day of the uprising. These were Greek prisoners from the second wing, named Christos Monemvasitis, Athanasios Thiakoulis and Charalambos Christopoulos, and their death was estimated

to have occurred the night before. Apart from these three prisoners that were found dead, many prisoners were hospitalized in comatose state from drug overdose and injuries sustained in the violent conflicts. Despite assurances to the journalists by General Secretary Pauleas that the uprising had ended and the prison had returned to its regular state, around 21:00 hours another escape attempt through the main entrance of the prison took place. Some prisoners took advantage of the absence of the police, due to misinformation about an attempted escape through another gate, and attempted to reach the main entrance of Korydallos. This escape attempt occurred during a live broadcast by several TV channels, and the panic situation that ensued was transmitted live to the audience. The employees that were inside the administration building and the prison guards ran to the main entrance in an attempt to flee from the situation, while simultaneously the riot police (MAT) entered the prison and took control of the security room, using teargas and shooting in the air as an intimidation tactic. The prisoners returned to the wings, while some juvenile prisoners gathered in a storage building near the building of the administration, and asked for protection and their separation from their Albanian inmates. In the following morning the juvenile prisoners were transferred to the prison in Kassaveteia, in the city of Volos.

The next day (17.11), the situation in Korydallos was still out of control. Executives of the opposition party, as well as of the governing PASOK party, accused the Minister of Justice of mishandling the situation, of not being present at the site and blamed him for the failure of the negotiation the General Secretary of the Ministry had executed. The government backed the minister up. The Prime Minister, Andreas Papandreou, stated that the prison would be moved from the area of Korydallos, to a new place in the district of Attica. The clashes and the escape attempts continued during the night, while later in the same night, seven prisoners appeared at the main entrance of the prison, left a rolled-up blanket and ran back to the prison. In the blanket the burned dead body of a prisoner was found. Shortly after this incident the media referred to the fourth dead prisoner as a 'migrant, colored' prisoner, but it was the body of the twenty-seven-year-old Greek prisoner Dimitris Karamoutis, who was serving an eighteenth-month imprisonment sentence for theft. He was tortured, killed by a sharp object and then his inmates hanged the body and set it on fire. The number of dead prisoners had risen to four and the number of injured prisoners to forty-five.

The prisoners retained control of the prison in the eighteenth and nineteenth of November (**18.11-19.11**). The relatives of the prisoners decided to form a committee and gather outside Korydallos, but for safety reasons the Ministry of Justice did not allow them to enter the prison. Ioannis Pottakis visited Korydallos in the Weekend and declared that the uprising would soon come to an end. However, the turmoil did not subside, as prisoners attempted to escape once more and the police entered the prison. Members of the parties of the opposition still criticized the Minister of Justice for his handling of the uprising and blamed him for the ongoing violence in Korydallos prison. Furthermore, the director and the head warden of Korydallos prison submitted their resignations to the Ministry of Justice. The prisoners attempted, once more, to escape, but were confronted by the forces of the police. According to newspaper reports, around 12:30 hours in the nineteenth of November a committee, which included the Minister of Justice, the General Secretary, the prosecutor, the vice presidents of the Bar Associations of Athens and Piraeus and representatives of the prison guards negotiated with the prisoners and persuaded them to return to their cells. Even though there was disagreement mainly from some prisoners from the third wing, the uprising ended. On November nineteenth, the prisoners were counted in order to be ascertained if any prisoners had escaped during the uprising. The official investigation for the death of the four prisoners commenced immediately. The four wings of the prison were not significantly damaged. On the other hand, common spaces, such as the kitchen, the pharmacy or the boiler room required repair. In the juvenile prisoners' section, more extensive damage was reported, and, in order for the juvenile prisoner section to be repaired, the one hundred eighty-four juvenile prisoners were transferred on November twentieth to other penitentiaries. Some of the prisoners participated voluntarily in repair work.

On November twentieth (**20.11**), the prison resumed its regular operation and the prisoners, who were on leave before the uprising returned to the prison. According to the Ministry of Justice, eighty-one prisoners in total were transferred to hospitals, while fifty-six of them had already returned to the prison by that time. In the following days, reports about conflicts between the prisoners continued to come out<sup>244</sup>. The Ministry announced certain measures for the improvement of the living

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<sup>244</sup> 'To xekatharisma logariasmon sunexizetai ston Korydallos', *Ta Nea*, 22.11.1995, Nikos Mpardounias, 'Dipli ereuna sto kolastirio tou Korydallou', *Kathimerini*, 21.11.1995

conditions in prisons, such as reduction of the population in overpopulated prisons, increase in expenses for food supply and, provision of a health card for the prisoners<sup>245</sup>.

Concerning the case of the murder of Dimitris Karamoutis, the five prisoners who were responsible for his assassination were found by the prosecutor. The names of the accused prisoners for the murder of Karamoutis were later leaked to the press. Two of them, Nikolaos Pantazis and Konstantinos Fotiou, took a regular leave for five days after the end of the uprising. The prisoners Konstantinos Chirvandidis or Chirvantzidis and the brothers Panagiotis and Christos Stantzos, who brought the petrol from the kitchen and burned the body of Karamoutis, were considered accomplices. Konstantinos Fotiou was released from prison in December 1995, after the end of the second degree trial of the case of his initial conviction, in spite of the prosecutor's report about the murder in the prison, which would have put him again under trial. Two possible explanations for the murder of Karamoutis by his inmates were provided by the press. He was either killed by accident, or he was considered an informant to the administration ('snitch'), as some of the prisoners, among them Karamoutis, had a good relationship with the prison administration, and as a result they were targeted by other inmates<sup>246</sup>. The prisoners, who were considered key figures of the uprising and those who murdered Karamoutis were transferred to other prisons already in December 1995. According to the prosecutor's findings, ten prisoners were designated as instigators of the uprising and they faced serious accusations, such as homicide, riot, destruction of property, theft and taking hostages<sup>247</sup>.

The reporting on the uprising by the press should also be noted. For all case studies the same newspapers were examined. However, a significant increase in the number of articles and in press coverage in general can be observed in the case of the

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<sup>245</sup> 'Fylakes: Metra gia kalyteri diaviosi', *Kathimerini*, 23.11.1995, 'Adeiazoun tora ton Korydallo', *Eleftherotypia*, 23.11.1995

<sup>246</sup> 'Dolofonithike anti allou', *Kathimerini*, 28.11.1995, Th. Labropoulos, 'I geneiada ton esteile ston tafo', *Eleftherotypia*, 28.11.1995

<sup>247</sup> Gianna Papadakou, Vana Fotopoulou, 'Oi 4 dolofonoι tou Korydallou', *Eleftherotypia*, 03.12.1995, Th. Labropoulos, 'Sto skamni 13 kratoumenoi', *Eleftherotypia*, 06.12.1995, Prokopis Giogiakas, 'Skotosan lathos anthropo', *Ta Nea*, 28.11.1995, Prokopis Giogiakas, 'Fos sti dolofonia', *Ta Nea*, 05.12.1995



uprising in Korydallos compared to the previous cases. The basic common directions, according to which all coverage to a lesser or greater extent conformed, were: 1. The violent outbreak of the uprising, in which many got injured and some also died, 2. The parallel coverage of the incident in Korydallos prison with the violent demonstrations on November sixteenth and seventeenth during the commemoration of the uprising in the Polytechnic University in 1973, 3. The criminal networks inside the prison, 4. The inadequate response of the government, the state and the institutions to the incident, which was seen as a sign of weakness, 5. The damages to the facility, and finally 6. The reactions of the residents in the area and the local authorities. Apart from few exceptions, in the coverage of this uprising the speech of the prisoners/revolted subjects was absent.

This uprising was considered as “the biggest uprising in the history of Korydallos”, according to the newspapers’ front pages at the time. In the press coverage, the focus was placed on the clashes between Greek and migrant prisoners, the hostages the prisoners took and the infighting between different national groups<sup>248</sup>. In some cases, the journalists differentiated between Greek and migrant prisoners, who they labeled as more violent and more unrelenting than the Greek prisoners<sup>249</sup>. The longer the uprising continued and the more it intensified, especially since several deaths were confirmed, the titles in the newspapers became more graphic such as ‘Jungle’, ‘Hell’, ‘Erupting volcano’ or ‘Mammoth-Uprising’ in Korydallos<sup>250</sup>. This tension was also augmented by continuous references to criminal networks in the prison. The prisoners were not presented as a collective subject, but they were categorized in groups, which were characterized as ‘mafia’ groups, and not as revolted prisoners. The absence of collective demands contributed to this presentation of the prisoners by the media. In general, all newspapers adopted a negative stance towards the revolted prisoners.

The reaction of the state to the uprising in Korydallos was also a major topic in the press. The reaction of the Minister of Justice, the General Secretary of the

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<sup>248</sup> Prokopis Giogiakas, ‘Omiroi kai maxairomata’, *Ta Nea*, 15.11.1995

<sup>249</sup> Georgia Kontrarou, Prokopis Giogiakas, Dionysis Nasopoulos, Kostas Chatzidis, Spyros Dimitrelis, Evi Eleftheriadou, ‘Zougla o Korydallos’, *Ta Nea*, 17.11.1995

<sup>250</sup> ‘Zougla me nekrous o Korydallos’, *Ta Nea*, 17.11.1995, Gianna Papadaku, Thanos Labropoulos, ‘Exegersi-mamouth ston Korydallos’, *Eleftherotypia*, 15.11.1995

Ministry and the prison officials was considered inadequate and ineffective by the press. According to the newspapers, the intervention of the special forces in the prison was not assertive or forceful enough. The willingness of the General Secretary of the Ministry Pauleas to accept the demands of the prisoners and his comments that the situation had subsided, while it intensified, were, according to the press, clear indications that the state had become a mere passive observed of the actions and ‘chaos’ caused by several prison groups. The absence of the Minister of Justice Pottakis from the scene was regarded as proof of the breakdown of state institutions, which were unable to take back control from the criminals in the facility. This image of a general state breakdown was intensified through the parallel presentation of the incidents in Korydallos and the events in the Polytechnic University<sup>251</sup>. Most newspapers on November seventeenth and eighteenth juxtaposed the events and presented them together on their front pages. Furthermore, the students’ slogan ‘Εδώ Πολυτεχνείο’ (‘here is the Polytechnic University’) from 1973, was paraphrased to ‘Εδώ Πολυτεχνείο, Εδώ Κορυδαλλός’ (‘here is the Polytechnic University, here is Korydallos prison’)<sup>252</sup>. According to Aristotelis Nikolaidis, the two events were presented as ‘inextricably linked and ideologically mutually enhancing’, as their combination provided an ideal ground for hegemonic interpretations, mainly the existence of a powerful and effective state, which went beyond the issue of the correctional system<sup>253</sup>. The parallel presentation of these theoretically unconnected events through images of crisis and state ineffectiveness focused on their violent aspects and stressed the danger posed by minority groups in instances, in which the state remained passive. So, the state was impelled to adopt a stricter stance<sup>254</sup>.

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<sup>251</sup> The mention of the events in the main building of the Polytechnic University in the center of Athens was associated with the annual commemoration of the students’ occupation of the building in November 1973 as an act of demonstration against the Military Dictatorship (1967-1974). Often in the anniversary of the occupation clashes erupt between riot police and demonstrators, mainly anarchist groups. On November sixteenth and seventeenth 1995 students and demonstrators occupied the building of the Polytechnic University, in which the commemoration took place, and clashes with the police occurred. Police then stormed the building and arrested hundreds of demonstrators.

<sup>252</sup> Gianna Papadaku, Vana Fotopoulou, ‘Korydallos: Ores agwnias kai avevaiotitas’, *Eleftherotypia*, 18.11.1995

<sup>253</sup> Nikolaidis, “Mesa Mazikis Epikoinwnias kai Fylaki: H periptwsh ths exegersis stis fylakes Korydallou ton Noemvrio tou 1995,” 297.

<sup>254</sup> Nikolaidis, 296–97.

The mention of the damages in the facility was also a common element in the newspaper reports. Estimations of damages ranging between five hundred million and one billion drachmas were mentioned in reports. However, there was no reference to the source of these estimations. Another common theme was the presentation of the reaction of the residents in the area. The contrast between those inside and outside the prison was exemplified by the presentation of the people, who watched the events from the rooftops of their houses, the children, who were exposed to these images, or the contrasting image of the prison building to the school on the other side of the road. The residents were presented as a population under threat by a minority of prisoners, who should not be in the same neighborhood. Therefore, the demand by the residents for the relocation of the prison facility, as something outside the norm or out of place in the neighborhood, seemed logical. The parents and relatives of the deceased prisoners, who were considered ‘tragic figures’, provided a more relatable perspective of the prisoners, not only through the photographs in the newspapers, but also through the narration of their personal stories to the press<sup>255</sup>.

The violence in the uprising, as well as its unpredictability, contributed to the circulation of rumors and speculation in the press. A characteristic example was the rumor that the inmates had access to the heating petroleum and could blow up the prison. Rumors of alleged rapes during the uprising also surfaced but were never confirmed<sup>256</sup>. Finally, as mentioned above, it was initially speculated that one of the deceased prisoners was a migrant, but he was then revealed to be Greek (Dimitrios Karamoutis).

The changing media landscape in the period with the emergence of private TV channels also played a crucial role in the coverage of the incident, as many TV cameras were placed right outside the prison and transmitted images and information on live broadcast. This had never happened before in Greek television. These live broadcasts were greatly criticized in the newspapers, in which the private TV channels were reprimanded for the way they covered the events in Korydallos and in

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<sup>255</sup> ‘Treis nekroi, olonyxtio thriller kai chaos’, *Eleftherotypia*, 17.11.1995

<sup>256</sup> Giannis Fytras, Th. Labropoulos, ‘Ola se mia klosti’, *Eleftherotypia*, 16.11.1995

the Polytechnic University, because of the ‘unacceptable images they showed to their viewers’ treating the events as a ‘spectacle’<sup>257</sup>.

Most newspapers adopted a negative view of the uprising. They viewed the uprising in Korydallos as an incident, which proved the lack of control in the prison and the violence that this lack of control entailed. They criticized the correctional system as an antiquated system that needed reform without deviating from the dominant discourse. Even the leftist newspaper ‘Avgi, which attempted to rationalize the incident and to seek out its causes, distanced itself from the events’<sup>258</sup>. On the other hand, ‘Eleftheros Typos’, which opposed the government, used graphic titles like ‘Night of aberration’, ‘Long-term convicts in power’ and its reports contained many unverified details and speculation about a ‘staged uprising’<sup>259</sup>. As Nikolaidis stated, these demeaning reports, apart from a clear opposition to the government, also denoted a view, according to which the state should enforce order and not negotiate with those that attempt to dissolve it<sup>260</sup>.

Concerning the special characteristics of the uprising in Korydallos prison, it is important to mention its violent and unpredictable character. The prisoners attempted numerous times to escape through the main entrance. It is clear that the initial main goal of the prisoners was to escape, but, as they failed to accomplish it, they decided to exploit the existing tension and escalate it to a general uprising. A great number of prisoners took part in the uprising with more than one thousand prisoners participating. Apart from a statement about drug addict female prisoners, the female prisoner section of Korydallos prison did not participate in the uprising. This uprising was also the first incident, in which the prisoners took hostages during an uprising in a Greek prison. During the uprising, the prisoners were not organized and did not form any committee in order to negotiate with the Ministry of Justice or the prison authorities. The main, though informal, form of organization was the formation of groups based on the nationality of the prisoners. The principal groups were the

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<sup>257</sup> Giannis Pantelakis, ‘Zontanes sundeseis me ti friki’, *Eleftherotypia*, 18.11.1995, Paulos Tsima, ‘Shmeiwseis thletheatou’, *Ta Nea*, 20.11.1995, Pantelis Boukalas, ‘As milhsoun oi eikones...’, *Kathimerini*, 21.11.1995

<sup>258</sup> ‘Tyfli exegersi stin exathleiosi’, *Avgi*, 16.11.1995

<sup>259</sup> ‘Nyxta anomalias’, *Eleftheros Typos*, 15.11.1995, Th. Demeli, N. Koufakou, M. Tsintila, Th. Argyraki, N. Chatzitsakou, ‘Paradothike I kyvernisi’, *Eleftheros Typos*, 16.11.1995

<sup>260</sup> Nikolaidis, 278.

Imprisonment and Collective Claims:  
Uprisings in the Greek Penitentiaries, 1975-1999

Greek, the Albanian and, to a lesser extent, the Romanian prisoners. These groups clashed violently over control of the prison. This incident was the first time, when the national identity as a basis for organization in the prison became so prominent, and demonstrated that the reality in Korydallos had changed, with an increasing number of migrants being detained in Greek prisons. The increasing use of drugs in the prison constitutes another significant characteristic of this case study, as three of the four dead prisoners during the uprising died from drug overdose. The newspapers of the period referred to the organized (criminal) groups that operated in Greek prisons, especially in Korydallos prison. These organized groups, in which the prison staff also participated, were involved in the drug dealing in the prison. This can be associated with the increasing numbers of the drug addicts that entered the Greek prisons and the lack of any rehabilitation programs. A fundamental difference of the uprising in 1995 from the other two case studies is its live broadcasting by the Greek TV channels. It was the first time that the events were broadcasted live by private TV channels, while many journalists and camera operators were stationed right outside the main entrance of Korydallos prison. The live broadcast of the uprising in Korydallos prison, along with the occupation of the Polytechnic University of Athens as part of the annual commemoration of the students' uprising against the military dictatorship in November 1973, created the image of lawlessness and the inability of the state to enforce control.

## Conclusions

The three case studies, having as a starting point the post-Dictatorial Greek penitentiaries, prove the diversity and the complexity of the phenomenon of uprisings in prisons. It is also evident that the prison riots are not exclusively phenomena that concern the penitentiaries, but also affect the state and the society, by questioning its values, such as the correctional policies.

All three uprisings showed the multiple ways, in which an uprising can take place in a prison. However, there were some common elements, the starting point of which was the decision of a number of prisoners to react to the reality that they experienced. Despite the different conditions in the three prisons, the prisoners questioned the reality of the prison and revolted, either by burning the Corfu prison, or by trying to escape from Korydallos in 1995. It cannot be taken for granted that all the uprisings were absolutely organized attempts by the prisoners, especially the cases in 1990 and 1995. During the Corfu uprising, a smaller group of prisoners planned the uprising, however most prisoners participated later spontaneously. Furthermore, all three cases reflected the political and social context of their period, namely the changes in society, which affected the reality in the prisons. The Corfu case reflected an obsolete correctional system of a still transitional post-Dictatorial period. Many years after the fall of the Dictatorship, the example of prison uprisings showed how stagnant some institutions remained, in this case the correctional system. In 1990 the prisoners' treatment in the penitentiaries had improved, but not their overall living conditions. At the same time, through the increased incarceration of drug users, the increased use of drugs, especially heroin, in the country at the time can be observed. On the other hand, the case of Korydallos outlined the changes concerning the so-called organized crime, which increased in the period. The collaboration of parts of the administration or the prison staff, such as the prison guards, with the organized crime in prison was a main characteristic of the function of the penitentiaries, which now involved financial dealings of a greater importance than before. The increase in migrant population in Greece the five years from 1990 to 1995, is also reflected in the increase in the imprisonment rates of migrants in the Greek prisons, and especially in Korydallos prison. The increase in these rates should also be associated with the living conditions of migrants in the country and their treatment by the state.

Despite their common elements, there are also significant differences between the three case studies. All of them had set different goals, in the first case the prisoners wanted to burn and destroy their prison, in the second case the prisoners mainly promoted their claims, while in the third case the tension and the escape attempts led to an unorganized uprising. Secondly, all three cases had different duration, in Corfu prison the uprising lasted a few hours, in Korydallos prison in 1995 a few days, and in 1990 the uprisings lasted more than a month. Violence was also a differentiating characteristic. In Corfu violence was not directed at the staff of the prison, only at the prison facilities. In 1990 in most prisons the prisoners did not turn violent against each other, apart from some conflicts. Police did not intervene violently, with the exceptions of Alikarnassos and Agios Stefanos prison, where the police suppressed the uprisings using teargas, which resulted in prisoners getting injured. Finally, Korydallos prison was the most violent case of the three, concerning not only violence by the state, but mainly violent clashes between prisoners. The different groups were antagonizing each other for control of the prison and, as a result, the violent clashes increased dramatically. The reference point and main instance of inmate violence was the torture and the assassination of Dimitris Karamoutis.

Despite the fact that in all cases the state wanted to re-take the control of the penitentiaries, its reaction in each case was different. The reaction of the state in Corfu was more passive, due to the fact that the prisoners mainly wanted to protest against the operation of the prison. In this case it was clear that the authorities wanted the Corfu prison to continue its operation. In 1990, the state, mainly through the figure of the Minister Kanellopoulos, tried to be more active in handling the situation. The efforts to negotiate the prisoners' demands was evidence of their willingness to have a more 'humane reaction'. Concerning the case of Korydallos, despite the fact that there were opinions in the government and also criticism from the press for a more dynamic intervention in the prison, the Ministry showed its willingness to satisfy all demands by the prisoners. However, this seemed more like an inability to handle such an important uprising in the largest prison in the country. There was no specific plan or strategy by the government, which acted like it wanted to end the uprising as soon as possible and did not want to challenge the prisoners further. Another characteristic of this particular uprising was the fact that in the first days of

the uprising the General Secretary of the Ministry was in charge of negotiations and the Minister showed up later.

Concerning the short-term and long-term results of the uprisings, no radical changes in the correctional system can be observed. In Corfu, the prison did not stop its operation and the conditions did not radically improved, however the behavior of the administration and the guards through the years became more humane. Even the director Kollas, who was the main target of the newspapers during the uprising, did not stop working as a prison official, he was just transferred to other penitentiaries. In 1990 several legislative efforts were made, but they did not manage to tackle the core of the issues with the correctional system. In 1995 the conditions in Korydallos prison remained harsh. The percentage of imprisoned migrant population and the number of incarcerated drug addicts remained high, reflecting the general social conditions in the country at the time. However, a year later, in 1996, a new legislative committee was formed, the work of which resulted in the correctional code of 1999.

Under the circumstances, in which the uprisings took place, the theory of Useem and Kimball cannot be applied with accuracy, as the appropriate sources are not available. In all cases, there is a specific reality in the prison, which did not necessarily abide by the correctional codes, and concerned the collaboration of the prison guards with prisoners, namely the drug dealing and drug use inside the prison. This reality created a certain balance in the prisons. This balance was unsettled in all cases. However, the lack of source material, hinders an investigation of the extent of the disruption. Furthermore, the institutional and the administrative breakdowns should not be considered as the only factors that led to the uprising (however in the case of Korydallos, the loss of control by the authorities can be observed clearly). The agency of the prisoners should not be overlooked. Particularly the first two case studies showed the importance of the participation of the prisoners in the outburst and the duration of the uprisings.

Another important question is, whether the uprisings in the Greek prisons are typical examples of moral panics. Important elements of the model of Stanley Cohen can certainly be observed in the present research. The prisoners were presented as 'deviants', groups that were ascribed special characteristics and were thought to not belong in society in general. They were 'subcultures', with which the society did not



communicate and, as a result, could not identify itself. The prisoners were ascribed the characteristic of 'different' from the rest of society. Special emphasis was also given to the image of the 'vandals' that destroyed the penitentiaries. This was portrayed as an illogical action, with which the society could not or should not identify.

None of the three cases can be considered as a representative example of a moral panic, with all the typical characteristics. However, important elements of the model of Cohen can be observed. The case with the most similarities to a 'moral panic' was the case of the uprising in Korydallos in 1995. The violence of the uprising, as well as the presentation of the incident alongside the events in the Polytechnic School of Athens, contributed to a feeling of increased uncertainty in society. This coverage aimed at causing a reflexive negative reaction from the audience. It presented a more aggressive image of the 'dangerous other', the criminal or the destroyer, in the case of the participants in the events in the Polytechnic School.

In all cases though the efforts of members of the political system to take advantage of the possible creation of a moral panic were evident. Regional administrators, such as mayors, or even ordinary citizens, like the residents near the prisons tried to promote their own agenda, either the stop of the operation of the prisons in a neighborhood or any other political agenda. Not only the reaction of the state, but also the reaction of the press target to present themselves as 'society guardians' against the dissolution of the social values. This presentation is possible not only through aggressive articles and reports, which aim to maintain the social values in every way possible, but as well as with the search of the possible causes and solutions to the issues in the prisons. This kind of rhetoric exceeded the strict context of the prisons. The incidents were addressed as broader social issues, which concerned society as a whole. In the efforts of the authorities to present themselves as enforcers of control, the images of the special police forces carrying heavy weapons outside the penitentiaries, as well as those of the negotiations of the prosecutors with the prisoners were common in the press. Furthermore, the rumors, which were published in certain newspapers during the uprisings, even if they were not confirmed, contributed to the image of disorganization and breakdown in the prisons, and at the same time served to capture and retain the interest of the public.

Special reference should also be made to the attempts by the press in the period to give a certain meaning or perception to the uprisings. Most newspapers, even those that diverged from the dominant discourse, also contributed to a common perception of the uprisings. Despite the different approaches concerning the phenomenon, the press expressed the view for the need of a 'better prison'. It neither put forth ideas or demands for further radical changes, nor did it question the correctional system. Furthermore, the novel appearance of the 'tabloid' format in the period, provided the readers with a more vivid and impressive image of the events in the prisons, through graphic titles and colorful pictures. The only exception regarding the use of this format is *Kathimerini*, which maintained its traditional format.

In many instances, prisoners were presented in the press as a 'collective subject'. In some cases the media referred to specific 'famous' prisoners, such as Vaggelis Rochamis, in others they referred to the prisoners in general. The research showed that the prisoners could work as a group in an organized manner, either in terms of preparation and organization of an uprising, or in terms of sharing a common identity, and that they claimed their position in the prisons. The case of the domino-effect uprisings in 1990 demonstrated a more powerful image of the subject 'prisoner', with their active participation in public discourse. However, this image cannot be compared to the position of the state in the dominant discourse, or the power of the press and the media, which were the main transmitters of the official discourse. Furthermore, in several cases the prisoners' discourse is also used for the stabilization of the official dominant discourse. Concerning the prisoners' collective claims, these were evident in the first two case studies, while in the uprising in Korydallos prison this was not the case.

To sum up, the research demonstrated how complex and multidimensional the phenomenon of prison uprisings is through the three different examples of uprisings in Greek penitentiaries. This master thesis is a first attempt of a historical analysis of the topic of Greek prisons and the tensions that erupted in them during the contemporary, post-dictatorial history of the country. The cases studied here were not the only uprisings that took place in the last decades of the twentieth century, and, it should be noted, this was an initial approach to the subject. The recreation of the facts was done in detail through the press of the period, so this research could function as

Imprisonment and Collective Claims:  
Uprisings in the Greek Penitentiaries, 1975-1999

the basis for further investigation on the subject. The present study answered several questions, but also revealed new topics that could be examined in the future. It is certain that the subject of Greek prisons constitutes a fruitful research field, which could offer more interesting information in future research. Further investigation would expand our understanding of the correctional system and policies in general, and it could also contribute to their change.

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Uprisings in the Greek Penitentiaries, 1975-1999

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