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Obituary

Eleni Varikas: the years with the FI in Greece

- Features - In Memoriam - Obituaries and appreciations -

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Eleni Varikas was the daughter of Vassos Varikas, a distinguished Greek literary critic who became a Trotskyist in the 1930s. His political evolution was catalyzed by his involvement with the journal *Politika Fylla* (Political Pages), a publication established by Greek Trotskyist circles. Vassos Varikas maintained his Trotskyist ideas until his death in Athens in 1971.

In 1971, Eleni moved to Paris to pursue a Master's thesis under the supervision of Georges Haupt, focusing on the genesis of the Greek communist movement. She returned to Athens in September 1974, following the collapse of the military junta (1967–1974). Upon her return, she joined the Group "Kommounismos" a Trotskyist organization which was largely comprised of former students returning to Greece from abroad (primarily France and Belgium), where they had joined the sections of the Fourth International and of youth members of the Communist Internationalist Party of Greece (KDKE), the Greek section of the Fourth International.

It has to be noted that the organizational apparatus of the KDKE, led by the veteran Trotskyist Christos Anastasiadis, had remained intact throughout the military dictatorship and that *Ergatiki Pali* (Workers Struggle) was the first leftwing newspaper to be published in Greece after the fall of the dictatorship.

In the year 1974, the inflow of militants to Greece from abroad was constant. Another group of militants returning to Greece from exile in Europe founded the Socialist Revolutionary Union (SEE). By 1975, the Group "Kommounismos" fused with the majority of SEE to form the Revolutionary Communist Front (RCF), with *Odofragma* (the Barricade) as its main organ.

In the meantime, in December 1974, a unification conference was held between the KDKE and a faction of the organization "Ergatiki Dimokratia" (Workers Democracy).

For historical reasons, the new organization adopted the name OKDE (Organization of Internationalist Communists of Greece) with *Ergatiki Pali* as its newspaper.

In April - May 1977, the RCF merged with OKDE (the Greek section of the Fourth International) at a unification congress. The unified organization retained the name OKDE, while the masthead of its official organ shifted from "Ergatiki Pali" to "Odofragma". The new organization relaunched "Marxistiko Deltio" (Marxist Bulletin) as its theoretical journal. The organization grew to over 120 members, characterized by a strong participation of youth and a presence in several Greek cities. Eleni served as a prominent member of *Odofragma*'s editorial board.

Following the unification, internal differences emerged regarding the strategic orientation of OKDE. The majority advocated for an orientation toward the new social movements while the minority favored a traditional focus on the industrial working class.

These internal disputes largely mirrored broader theoretical debates occurring within the Fourth International at the time. By 1979, these pressures led the majority leadership to begin implementing its political line independently of the formal OKDE framework.

Throughout this period, Eleni was a vanguard figure in the feminist movement, collaborating with women comrades across various feminist activist collectives.

In 1981, partly disillusioned with the collapse of the section of the FI in Greece that took many years to recover, she returned to Paris on a scholarship to undertake doctoral research on the historical origins of modern Greek feminism.

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OKDE Spartakos bids farewell with sadness to Eleni Varika

Eleni Varika, daughter of the historic leader of the Trotskyist movement Vassos Varika, was born in Athens in 1949 and studied at the Philosophical School of the University of Athens, the Ecole des Hautes Etudes en Sciences Sociales and the University of Paris 7.

She participated in the Trotskyist Communist Revolutionary Front in the Metropolitan and since 1977 in the OKDE after the unification of the two organizations. She was a key member of the newspaper Roadblock and was active in the first feminist groups of the time.

Throughout her life she remained in the lines of the 4th International.

She was a peer professor of Political Science and Gender Studies at the University of Paris 8 and a member of the Centre des Recherches Sociologiques et Politiques de Paris (CNRS). She has been a research fellow at the European University Institute in Florence and Harvard, and has taught at various European and American universities, including PARIS7, EHESS, Portland State, New School for Social Research, the Universities of Wisconsin, Columbia, Cornell, UNAM (Mexico), USP and UNICAMP (Brazil), as well as the National and Kapodistrian University of Athens and the University of Crete.

Eleni Varika's writing work refers to the history of feminism, political and social thought, critical theory, gender and race.

Member of the Women's Publishing Group, in 1981 she edited the publication "The uprising starts long ago." Pages from the First Steps of the Women's Movement," highlighting a number of women who have pioneered the struggle for women's liberation.

Indicative of her later important work is the book "The Uprising of Ladies." "The Genesis of Feminist Consciousness in Greece, 1833-1907", an important study that raises the issue of gender consciousness and the material terms that define it. The very political dimension of the gender difference was highlighted through her work "For a Gender Political Grammar," addressing the realization of experiences as a political landscape.

Finally, her work "The Waste of the World. Forms of paria" talks about the world's waste in whatever form they were historically presented (slaves, Jews, women, proletarians), and their rebellious struggles against their exclusion.

For Varika, the history of the struggles of the oppressed is part of human history and not a secondary aspect of it. Her work highlights precisely the need to turn the study of oppression and rebellion into a new critical theory of human relations, aimed at understanding the past and intervening in the present to address all kinds of exclusions.

And this proposal is what leaves us a legacy.

OKDE Spartakos expresses its condolences to Elena Varika's partner, Michael Lowy.

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[DeepL translation from [OKDE-Spartakos](#).

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