

Contribution of grigoris lambrakis to the development of greece

[Psychology](#), [Child Development](#)



Post-Civil War Greece was a very difficult time period for its people as “ Greek people still carrying the scars of the Civil War and still deeply dichotomized between Left and Right, Left and Center, and Left and Left” . However, the silver-lining of such a period was the birth of a legend that would start a peace movement and later shake the world by his abrupt murder. His death would reveal a political conspiracy of links between the high-up policemen and para-state groups. His murder would give way to a whole new generation that would continue with his movement. Although till today literature on such topics is very limited and usually specific for Greek use, there was a movie made about him. The legend of this discussion is Grigoris Lambraki, an athlete, physician and an elected deputy in the Greek opposition also known as the United Democratic Left Party (EDA). Lambraki a countryman, started his athletic career in 1936 to 1959 by participating in the Long jump competition in the Balkan Championships which he would win 10 times . After setting up the Union of Greek athletes in 1943, he organized competitions and would use the income collected to provide economic aid to the Greek people. Lambraki finished his medical degree in Gynecology and Obstetrics after the liberation in 1950 and from there “ he offered free consultation every Wednesday for indigent patients. Meanwhile, every month, he visited the clinic of his uncle K. Tsoukopoulos in Tripoli, where he examined countrymen without charging any fees” he would continue to work as a physician for 20 years but his work would never be evaluated until 25 years after his death. Lambraki would spend the rest of his life involved in politics until his assassination in May 1963.

Political Climate of Greece

The climate of Greece at the time of Lambraki's involvement was that of corruption and political unrest. The uprising of the left-wing was caused by a few events. As portrayed in the movie "Z" those that joined the right-wing were able to have a good job and wealthier lifestyle this is seen when one of the witnesses to Lambraki's murder was discouraged to testify by his sister who joined the right-wing and married a policeman both of whom were well dressed. The left-wing party increased as the poor became frustrated in comparison to their counterparts.

Another element that increased the left-wingers was the call for International Nuclear Disarmament which gave rise to many peace groups worldwide, "forty peace groups from eighteen countries met in Oxford in 1963 to found the International Confederation for Disarmament and Peace (ICDP)" and By 1967, fifty-six nonaligned peace groups had become members of the ICDP, including not only the three pacifist internationals but also direct action, unilateralist, multilateralist, student, and women's groups". Lambraki was indeed not the first to come up with the idea of a peace movement as Bayard Rustin carried out many nonviolent actions in the 1950's and 1960's as well advised Martin Luther King Jr. and helped organize the march in Washington; the ideology of nonviolence reaches as far back as Ghandi. The One other problem that angered the Greek people was that in October 1955 Konstantinos Karamanlis would be the successor of Papagos, but not by the vote of the people which was the usual routine instead King Paul appointed him in the government.

In May 1958 elections took place but were thought to be rigged as the EDA secured 24.4% of the vote, filled 78 parliamentary seats, and became the main political opposition which was a shocking change considering people were still on edge about communists as the civil war had just ended. These were the same elections that landed Lambraki a seat in the parliament by independent vote. Of course this scared the government and para-state especially since the foreign efforts in the case of Britain in 1944 and then the American Aid in 1947 both sought to eliminate communism in Greece. The interference in the decision-making in Greece from Britain and America angered the Greek people as it sunk as deep as having the Americans accompany the Greek armed forces and all civilian ministries including the ministry of national economy while the industries of American aid had American supervisors to avoid corruption.

During the civil war an underground committee formed “escaping the control of the of the Palace, the Parliament, the parties, and the press” this underground group sheltered under the Karmanlis government came up with the “Pericles Plan” with the help of paramilitary groups, police, and armed forces falsified the upcoming elections of October 1961 through “psychological and physical intimidation”. The intention of the October elections was to prevent the communists from further advancement. Lambraki in all of this continued alongside the EDA to fight for the democracy of Greece through his peace movements.

The Death of Grigoris Lambraki

May 22, 1963 would forever go down in history and change what would become the Greek politics. Grigoris Lambraki a pure pacifist despite having received death threats not just on the day of his murder but many times before decided to continue with his plans to give a talk on anti-war and nuclear disarmament. The talk was held in Salonika, Thessaloniki on May 22, 1963 where after having given the talk left the building and was struck by a club on the head. In the movie "Z" Lambraki was struck once before his talk but seemed well enough to continue on with the speech, after he left the building he was seen calling out to the chief of police who turned his back on him when a three-wheeler came by and knocked him over and struck him again; the police stood by and watched as the protestors began attacking Lambraki and his colleagues. After being struck he was driven to the hospital by Georgios Fournarakos who was discovered to be a member of the Third police department who purposely tried to stall their arrival at the hospital by crashing into another car. Lambraki later died of head injuries on the 27th of May and the two assassins had been caught when a passerby jumped onto the vehicle in pursuit of the culprits; his funeral turned into a massive demonstration of 500, 000 people against the government and royal court, Karamanlis would resign shortly after his death. Behind Lambrakis deaths was a big conspiracy of having the para-state groups, Karamanlis and the police work in cahoots and assassinate Lambraki. It was obvious the police had neglected their job as Lambraki had told them of plots to kill him on several occasions including on the loud speaker during his speech and as a result the government and police did try and create a cover-up story by

pretending like his death was accident. Christos Sartzetakis the lawyer who exposed the exposed Lambraki's murderers, despite being pressured by higher authorities he continued with the investigation and indicted those in involved.

Misters Karamanlis, Tsatsos, Triandafyllakos, Makris and Gerokostopoulos were accused of masterminding and endorsing an "unlawful plan of action" against their political opponents, of which the crimes of 22 May 1963 were "an integral part." Gogousis, Georgalas, Stavridis, and Grammatikopoulos were accused of having issued directives for its execution. Equally indicted was Mr Paschalis Kontas because, in a letter written twenty-five days before the crimes, he ordered Cholevas to "summon a coordinated popular response against the Communist provocations." This letter had come straight from Giosmas' office, and the Premier's Political Office seemed to have been in direct contact with it to boot. The blame also fell on Manentis, Cholevas, Mitsou, Kamoutsis and Kostakos because "as subdivisions of the government, they were direct enforcers of the government's decisions and had prepared consistently the said criminal plan." As proof of their accusations, the complainants referred to the minutes of the Studies Council, which proved that this "malignant body financed and steered gangs of bullies.

Elections were set to take place after his death and it was almost certain the opposition would win but then a military coup happened and according to the movie "Z" many of Lambrakis colleagues and witnesses set to go on trial would "accidentally" die. In another text by Evi, Gkotzaridis "the

Colonels who seized power on 21 April 1967 requited all those who helped pave the way for the dictatorship and punished all those who, heedless of the countless pressures, showed integrity and doggedly pursued the truth in the Affair Lambrakis” Sartzetakis would be later released in 1971.

Lambraki before his death had been gaining popularity as amidst strict conservatives and the economic challenges of the left-wing he carried the beacon of hope that Greece would become a democratic country. Through his speeches he would address the democracy and peace as well as the release of political prisoners. In one such speech accused Queen Frederika that not meeting him on behalf of the Greek people would eventually lead to her demise from the throne; this infuriated her causing her to ask “ who will help me get rid of this man?” It is of no surprise the right-wing wanted to be rid of him in fear of the left-wing rising to leadership.

Generation Z

The death of Lambraki brought the opposition’s biggest fear to reality. The day he became a martyr was the day the conservatives crossed the red line, people were already frustrated by the repression and this was the turning point when they all united. Lambraki’s funeral became an overcrowded protest which the government did try and prevent but failed to do so. Many of those who attended the funeral were students and would become the new youth movement “ Lambrakis soon became the symbol of a pioneering movement that was created in early June 1963 and was named after him: the Democratic Youth Movement Grigoris Lambrakis, later renamed “ Lambrakis Youth,” or simply “ Lambrakides”. The generation itself or the

youth would be called generation Z which was the main symbol of their movement. The first letter Z or Zei in Greek stands for “ he is still alive” would be seen in Graffiti everywhere. A few books would be written about him especially one famous one also called Z however while researching for this paper was nowhere to be found. The topic of such an event could be otherwise limited to those that experienced the events themselves. The movie “ Z” released in 1969 is still available online and portrays detailed events of the day Lambraki was murdered.

Generation Z was mainly compromised of the people born between 1944 and 1949 during the civil war or post-civil war era who had only ever known terror as Triantafyllos Mitafidis stated “ The main feature of our childhood, was being terrified”. In 1963-1965 under the Ek government educational reforms took place allowing students to attend university without tuition fees causing the student population to grow from 35, 000 to 53, 300. The increase also caused a peak in student activism and with the constant invasions by police onto university campuses the students gained momentum to advocate for democracy and knowledge on campus and would often cause disturbances until 1967. Their ideas of democracy and peace would coincide with Lambraki’s movement; therefore the students would participate in Bertrand Russell Youth Committee for Nuclear Disarmament meetings, peace marches and talks. Of course their activism would come at a price and visiting jail would become a norm but their aim would not just be political but educational and cultural change, they would ask for more educational funds and carry out acts of kindness such as donating blood.

However it was not all linear especially when the Lambrakides would coexist with National Social Student Union (EKOF) an all-male extremist right-wing group which would continue to harass students and professors alike that were not seen as “ nationally minded” not only that but the generation that was to be born during the dictatorship without any relation to the civil war or post-civil war period some would not be as opposed to the junta as the generation before them. Unfortunately Lambraki’s peace movement would not last as things would intensify in the 1970’s and students that had attracted police attention would be expelled and those students would join resistance groups who would have more violent approaches. There is no denying that Grigoris Lambraki made big changes to the political scene and would continue to help the youth prosper in politics and democracy even after his death and till this day he remains a Greek hero to many, he is after all Zei!