

## FOTIS APOSTOLOPOULOS IN MEMORIAM

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© Translated from the Greek (Παναγιώτης Κονδύλης, «Στή μνήμη Φώτη Αποστολόπουλου», στο: Αποστολόπουλος Φώτης, *Ἐπισκόπηση τῆς ἱστορίας τῆς γλωσσικῆς σκέψης Δομικῆ Γλωσσολογία (Ferdinand de Saussure)*, Στιγμή, Αθήνα, 2001) by C.F.. The three footnotes are by the translator.

The publication of a commemorative volume in respect of Fotis Apostolopoulos is an act for which he himself would give his acquiescence with difficulty, since, as he was in the habit of saying, the *λάθε βιώσας*<sup>1</sup> belonged to the fundamental rules of his life. In his eyes, this moral command did not have, of course, the Epicurean meaning of unperturbed marginal existence, but rather meant the ethically self-evident abstention from every act of direct or indirect self-promotion. And yet, at least one common point with the ancient philosopher's ideal as regards life practice existed: the conviction that the presupposition of genuine indifference vis-à-vis the lure of, staged or not, publicity, is inner self-sufficiency. In Fotis Apostolopoulos, self-sufficiency was the outcome of the harmonic balancing of flourishing psycho-spiritual forces.

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<sup>1</sup> Epicurean phrase meaning: “live hidden” or “live in obscurity” or “live unobserved by others than those close to you, without seeking (broader) fame” or “get through life without drawing attention to yourself, i.e., live without pursuing glory, fame, wealth, or power, but anonymously, enjoying little things like food and wine in moderation, the company of friends, quiet meditation and reflection, etc.” (c.f. <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Epicurus>).

His character crystallised in contours of Doric austerity; however, austerity was not only stringency, but also grace; and grace did not stop at affability, but became, accordingly, merriment, cordiality, warm friendship and faith. His spirituality and intellectuality imbued his human manifestations, just as his humanity inspired and vibrated his spiritual and intellectual accomplishments. He was, in this way, multipartite, and at the same time, integral and whole. Because under the multiformity of his activities, of his political, paedagogical and scientific activities, behind the alternation of his life's phases, stood, immovable and unmistakable, a vision and a humanitarian concern, like an intersection point of the mind and the heart's pursuits.

Fotis Apostolopoulos was a Hellene, both in the racial and historical, as well as in the ethical sense of the word. If the elements which constituted him were bound together as between one another so fortunately, that was due to the fact that all of them sprouted from their manly and rural root<sup>2</sup>. He himself knew how deeply his origins were to be found in Greek soil, and in no mirror did he see himself so clearly as in the landscape of his particular homeland. However, in this landscape, the colours and the myrrh mixed paradoxically with the toil and the hardships of the people, and the plexus of the natural and social factors were imprinted, again, in a

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<sup>2</sup> Fotis Apostolopoulos was born and grew up in the village of Pilalitra, Messinia, Peloponnese, Greece.

multi-layered language, woven with ancient words, ecclesiastical, Frankish and demotic. No matter how profoundly he was initiated into contemporary linguistics, Fotis Apostolopoulos primarily approached the Greek language as an expression of the historical fortune of the Hellenic people. His scientific occupation, just like his political or paedagogical occupation too, was a conscious act of identification of his personal fate with the historical fate of Hellenism. He had, like few people, the sense that he himself constitutes a part of Greek history and consequently is obliged to bear its responsibilities. And his identification with the history of his people was at the same time identification with the collective soul of the people. Thus, the turns of Greek history, its frequent transitions from revival to calamity, and from feast to lament, settled in his soul too, as in the soul of some personae of demotic song, in the form of that characteristic neo-Hellenic ambivalence, where joy for the good in life alternates with the bitter ascertainment of the finite character of human affairs. For him, nonetheless, the tragic contemplation of the world was neither the beginning of inertia nor an excuse to flee, but remained an element of his dignity, that is, his refusal to accept easy prefabrications of solutions and his decision to go into battle, knowing his true powers. With that dignity, he fought, for many months, death too.

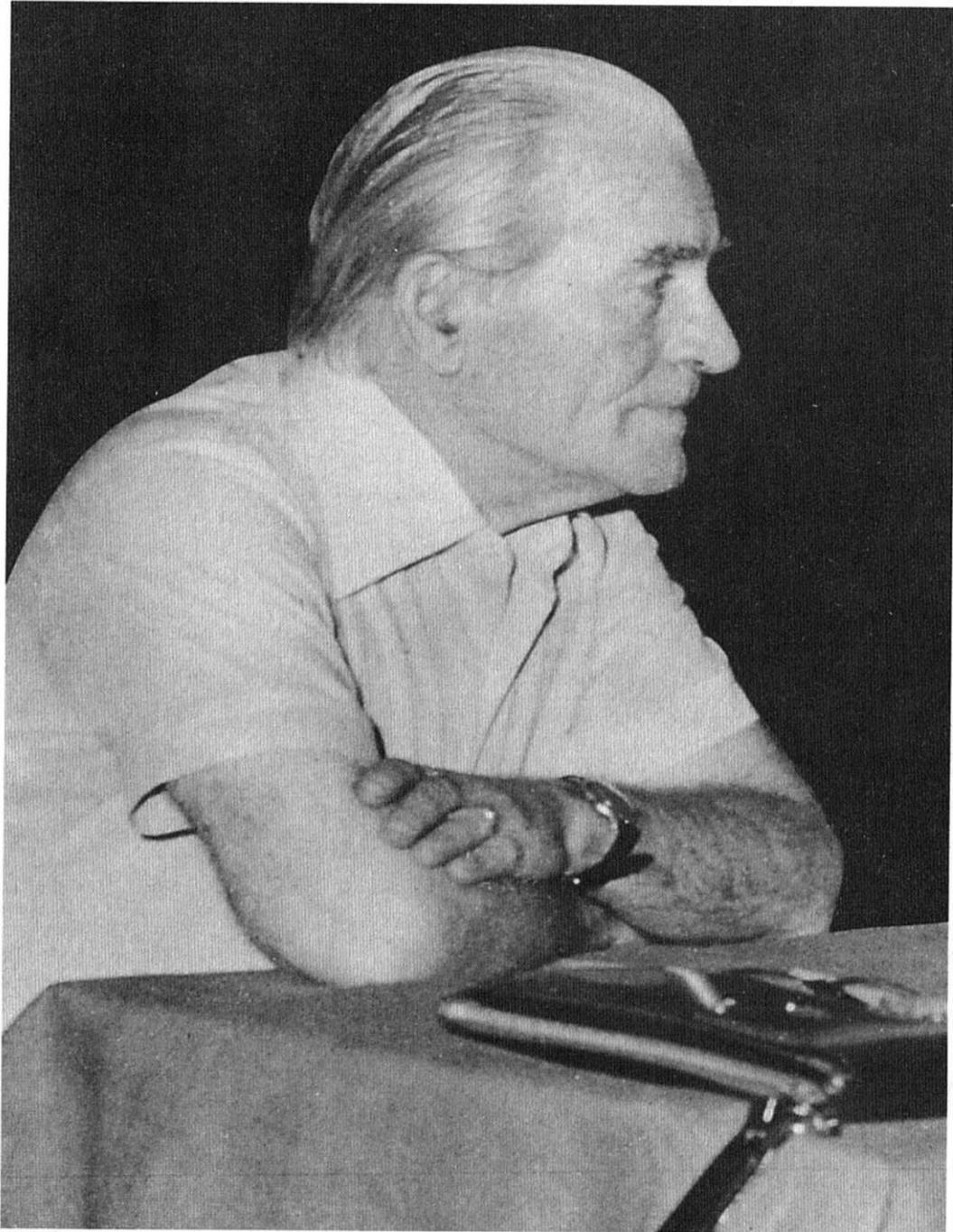
Fotis Apostolopoulos belonged to those who were hungry and thirsty for justice, without ever making the intensity of that primeval feeling of his dependent on the certainty felt in advance that the evangelical promise would be fulfilled and the hour of satiety would one day arrive. He championed the demand for justice –with gun, with pen and, whenever necessary, with bear chest– in Albania, during the Resistance, in prisons and in various places of Exile, in the hands of relentless enemies and in the face of ultimate danger<sup>3</sup>. Because from within the demand for justice, he approached politics as well. As he believed, the dilemma between politics and ethics should have been put aside with the fusion of the two of them. It is worth noting that this belief was held intact for decades, and in practice active in spaces plagued by the conformity of group, but also individual behaviour, with tactical expediencies, at whose altar sensitivities, reputations – even lives, were, casually and ruthlessly, frequently sacrificed. Precisely, his political perception’s crucial moral element permitted Fotis Apostolopoulos to feel as its natural extension paedagogical care: the ultimate common purpose of politics and paedagogy was, in his eyes, the moulding of complete social personalities. The sight of restless and gifted, but still unshaped people,

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<sup>3</sup> The Campaign in Albania, upon the invasion of Greece by Italy, and national Resistance to Italian and German Occupation took place from 28<sup>th</sup> October 1940 until 1944. From 1944 (or earlier) until 1949 Greece was in a state of (on and off) Civil War, and mass political persecution did not stop before 1974 – all in the context of the Cold War and the manoeuvres and machinations of the Great Powers.

who desire ripening and form, fascinated him deeply, but also prodded him intensively. In approaching youth, he always had in mind that which they could one day become, but he comported himself as if they had already become whatever he expected: he faced them, in other words, like equal comrades, making them automatically feel more mature and more dignified. So as not to abandon them, he was willing to accompany them, for a period of time at least, even on the path of their errors or of their delusions, until he found the most suitable and most discreet way to help them change course. And he always let them understand that the choice of aims or of ideals, as correct as it might be per se, in the end is recognised as valuable only through the labour and the passion which are invested in their realisation.

In this person's memory, the volume is dedicated.



Fotis Apostolopoulos (1914-1980)