

ΑΡΧΕΙΑ  
ΣΥΓΧΡΟΝΗΣ  
ΚΟΙΝΩΝΙΚΗΣ  
ΝΥΣΤΟΡΙΑΣ



**A Great work of civic  
readaptation in Greece**



ΑΡΧΕΙΑ  
ΣΥΓΧΡΟΝΗΣ  
ΚΟΙΝΩΝΙΚΗΣ  
ΙΣΤΟΡΙΑΣ

C. P. RODOCANACHI

A3/5  
A3/8

# A GREAT WORK OF CIVIC READAPTATION IN GREECE

*The King and Queen visited Greece in 1949 and lived there for some time. Their statements and personal observations were widely disseminated through the royal visitors and the Minister of War.*

"...THIS WONDERFUL EXPERIMENT WHICH, IN MY OPINION, COULD BE REPEATED IN MANY COUNTRIES,"

**Lord TEIGNHAM**

ATHENS 1949

Α.Σ.Κ.Ι. αριθ. εισερχομ. 4665



ΑΡΧΕΙΑ  
ΣΥΓΧΡΟΝΗΣ  
ΚΟΙΝΩΝΙΚΗΣ  
ΙΣΤΟΡΙΑΣ

Κ. Ρ. ΡΟΔΟΚΑΝΑΧΗ

A GREAT WORK OF CIVIC  
READAPTATION IN GREECE

"THE WONDERFUL EXPERIMENT  
WHICH IN MY OPINION, COULD BE  
REPEATED IN MANY COUNTRIES."  
LORD TRENCHARD

ATHENS 1949

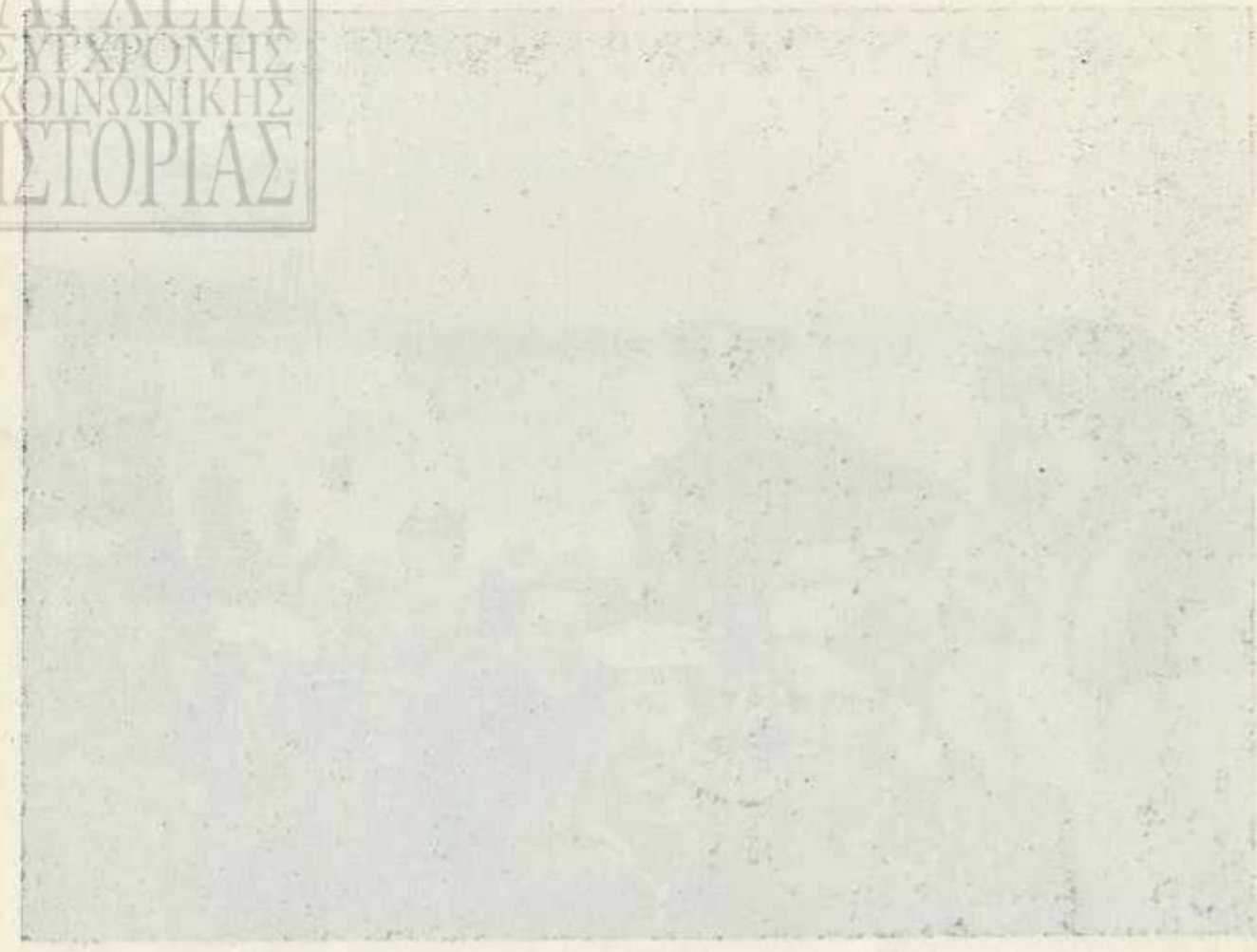
ΑΤΤΙΚΗ ΚΑΙ ΕΠΙΣΤΗΜΟΝΙΚΗ ΕΡΕΥΝΑ



*The King and Queen visited Macronissos in March 1949 and lived there an unforgettable day. To show their sentiments and patriotic redemption, these once active communists actually chaired their royal visitors and the Minister of War.*



ΑΡΧΕΙΑ  
ΣΥΓΧΡΟΝΗΣ  
ΚΟΙΝΩΝΙΚΗΣ  
ΙΣΤΟΡΙΑΣ



The King and Queen visited Makronissos in March 1952 and lived there an unforgettable day. To show their sentiments and patriotic feelings, they gave active communists actually killed their royal visitors and the Minister of War.

Greece believes that it is her duty to inform international public opinion of the results of an experiment recently carried out, and of which the bearing seems to transcend the Greek case.

This experiment might indeed be regarded as a useful suggestion of what could be done, on similar lines, in other democratic countries to «decontaminate» the younger generation. They need only to be shown in healthy moral and physical surroundings that communism in its present totalitarian form is merely a cloak to cover Russian imperialist expansionism, this international disease, now at its highest fever point, but already a few centuries old.

At some two miles S.E. of Laurium, known in ancient times for its silver mines, there is an island called Makronissos. Less than a year ago, an officer of the Greek General Staff, Colonel Baraiktaris, thought of making of this island a seminary for the civic readaptation of communist young men, already deeply involved in the Greek Communist Party's subversive activities. Most of these young men were, in one form or another, under close police supervision. Others, considered particularly dangerous, were stagnating in islands whither they had been deported by the Government to sever their connection with communist cells, where they were used to help in many devious manners



the communist bands fighting the regular Army, with the support of Greece's Northern neighbours.

The idea behind the foundation of this seminary is that there exists a radical antinomy between the Greek racial psychology, essentially individualistic, and communism, essentially gregarious. This idea has as its corollary that every Greek communist is a self-exile from the spirit of the Greek race.

Indeed, it is only with the last world-war, its display of unexpected alliances, made and betrayed according to circumstances, its trail of bewildering economic upheavals and other peculiarities, all causing a general confusion of material and spiritual values, that for the first time a small minority of Greeks turned their back on the old traditions of their country. Some may have believed that they served Greece by blending her traditions with the teachings of Karl Marx's historic materialism, disfigured to make of it a useful tool in international politics; others, the youngest, were carried away by the spell of novelty; but by far the greatest number was made up of those who believed in the impending triumph of communism and wished to be on the good side. For all, once caught in the meshes of the all-pervading and pitiless communist organisation, it was practically impossible to disentangle themselves without enlightened moral assistance and strong physical protection.

It was of these considerations that was born the Makronissos Seminary.

It was no small endeavour. To succeed, it had to combine many elements. It had to be installed on a lonely site, for the young men who would go there to be protected against undesirable connections. This site had to be near Athens under the immediate supervision of the Greek General Staff for special military training—the test of readaptation being willingness to fight the previous communist associates—and also for the inmates to be offered what only the capital could provide: tuition by University professors, the best preachers, writers, journalists, lecturers, etc., to give them the impression that they were not exiles or prisoners, but members of a cultural colony.

By its proximity to the capital, Makronissos answered all these requirements, as also another of great psychological bearing. In this work of rebirth to a useful and honourable life, everything had to be new, nothing could be there that would be

a reminder of the urban environments where these young men had been submitted in the slums, in the dullness of workshops and at dusk in blind alleys to the poisonous whispers of «instructors», preaching their doctrine of hatred and revolt.

The few photographs illustrating this brief survey of a great achievement show what goodwill at the service of a rich idea can produce in a few months: sunny barracks, playgrounds, theatres, lecture halls, chapels, dispensaries, etc. Nothing is missing that could give to the residents of Makronissos the impression that the State has done everything in its power for their moral and physical health, the prerequisite of the return to the right path of those who had lost their way. Such is the environment in which thousands of young men again learn to live according to the traditions of their country, because the voice of those who want to denationalise them cannot reach this island. The silence of Makronissos is broken only by the distant echo of voices dear to them in their childhood. At Makronissos, care for their physical needs reminds them of their mother, good advice reminds them of their father, and the chapel evokes the old curate of their parish, celebrating the rites of Christianity that came at its hour to hallow by divine authority the primary Greek idea of the dignity of man founded on the liberty of the individual.

At Makronissos, these forlorn young men again find Greece. Under the ashes of errors, of which the incendiary flame had dazzled them, they find still smouldering the divine spark of man—made in the image of God, image that bad shepherds may dim but can never obliterate.

**The programme of Civic Readaptation is founded on the following Principles:**

#### **I. METHODS:**

- 1) Cordial welcome to newcomers.
- 2) Friendly treatment to inspire confidence.
- 3) Residents are informed of the work done to influence public opinion in their favour and to induce everybody to receive them with open arms, when they will return to their town or village.





*Private theatricals*

- 4) Convincing them that they will be granted a friendly reception wherever they may have to go.
- 5) Creating the impression that it is in the nature of man to make mistakes, and that nothing is more honourable than acknowledging one's errors. This work is done principally in the form of lectures on national, social and religious subjects. Most of these lectures are made by inmates who have already reached a stage of readaptation qualifying them to become the guides of their comrades. Here are some extracts of lectures made by Makronissos inmates to their comrades:

**Lecture by Private Dimitri Melaxionotou (3rd Bat. R. Engineers)**

**«Bend your head full of pride, but empty of a clear brain. Our soul is noble, but let us own that we have done nothing to heal the wounds made by others, or by ourselves. Do not be callous to the tragedy of our country. The most sincere among us are also the most easily misled, and they should be the hardest against those who misled them. In taking no heed of the disasters inflicted by them on our**



*The bell is here, the chapel is somewhere nearby. The belfry may be built some day*

**country we betray not only Greece, but also the people of Serbia, our old ally. Rise! Hear the mothers crying over their sons and rush to their help. Greece looks forward to-day to Greek solutions. Take the first place in the struggle to be worthy to-morrow to live with honour».**

**Lecture by Private Basil Maniali:**

**«Two worlds are facing one another: The one is fighting for the democratic tradition, the other for communism which in its present form differs from Tsarism only by worse enslavement of the people and inflicting more misery on them. Our country has been compelled to fight certain of its children who, either by foolishness or greed of power, have accepted to serve the Slavs and their designs. A voice rises from the depth of our soul: «Enough, of your frauds! They have been exposed!»**

**Lecture by Pte. Kyriakos Kourkoulis (24.8.48)**

**«Luckily for me, although I have been led to do harm to my country, the communists have not succeeded in rot-**





*Sea bathing to the accompaniment of guitars*

ting my soul. Here, I have redeemed myself; I feel as if I were a new man. Here, my eyes have been opened to the true ideals of my country».

#### SUBJECTS OF LECTURES

By 2d/ **Lieut. Dimitri Papanastassiou** :

*«The Economic and Social Meaning of International and Greek realities».*

By **Pte. Paraskeva Boudouris** (1st Bat. R. Engineers) :

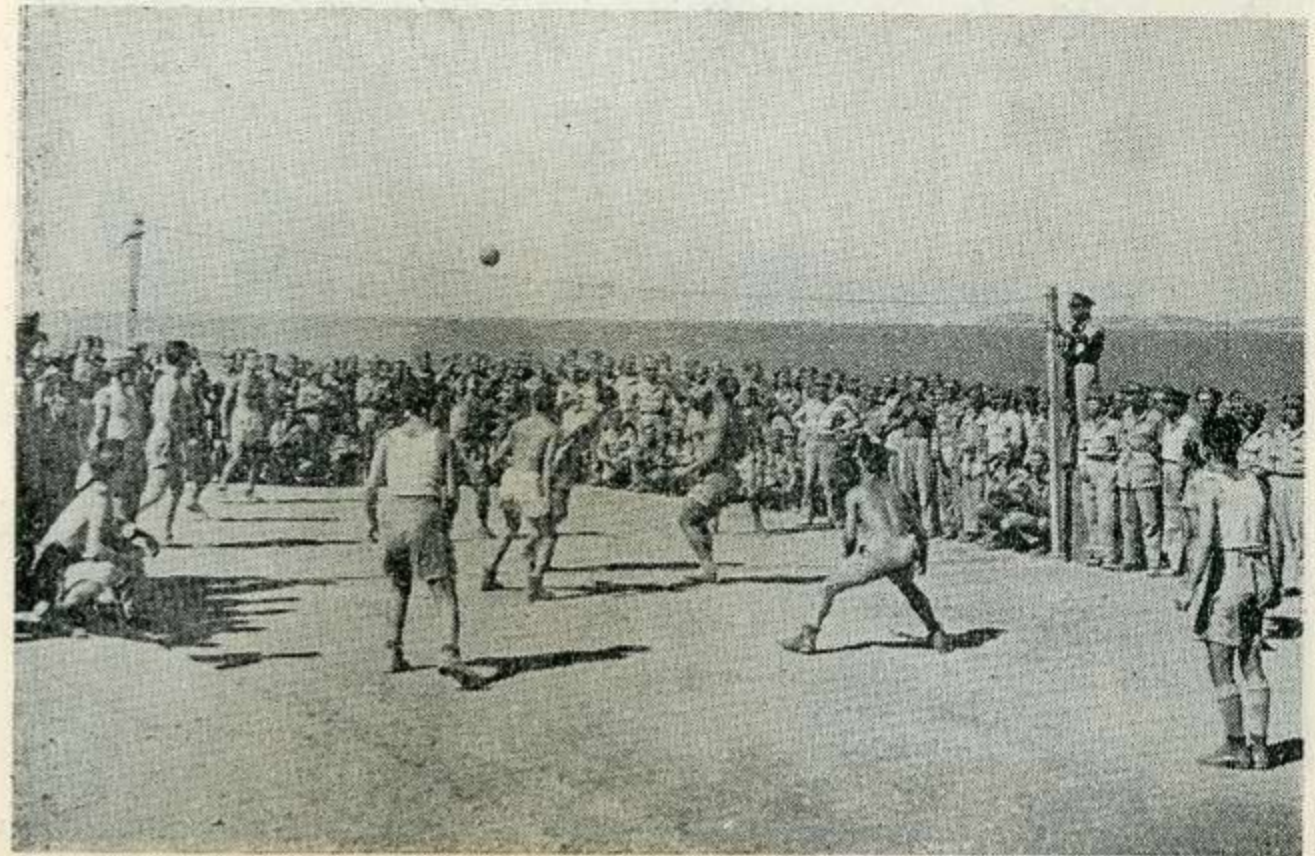
*«Communism from the Economic Standpoint».*

By **Pte. Gerasimos Michalotou** :

*«The Soldiers from Makronissos at the Battle of Grammos».*

By **Pte. Léonidas Garoufalakis** (2nd Bat. R. Engineers) :

*«Religion and Communism».*



*Volley ball match*

By **Pte. John Constantinides** (2nd Bat. R. Engineers) :

*«Our Race and the Slav Attack».*

By **Pte. Anastasios Frangou** (2nd Bat. R. Engineers) :

*«Greece, Outpost of Liberty».*

By **Pte. Nicolas Papadaki** :

*«The Marxist Error».*

By **Private Athanasios Papavassiliou** (3rd Bat. R. Engineers) :

*«What I saw in Russia».*

The Programme of Civic Readaptation also includes :

- a) The Makronissos Journal.
- b) The Artistic Association (theatre, choirs, orchestra).
- c) Athletics.



ΑΡΧΕΙΑ  
ΕΥΧΡΟΝΗΣ  
ΚΟΙΝΩΝΙΚΗΣ  
ΣΤΟΡΙΑΣ



Open air mass-choir

d) Free individual discussions between inmates and their military instructors and visitors.

## II. RESULTS

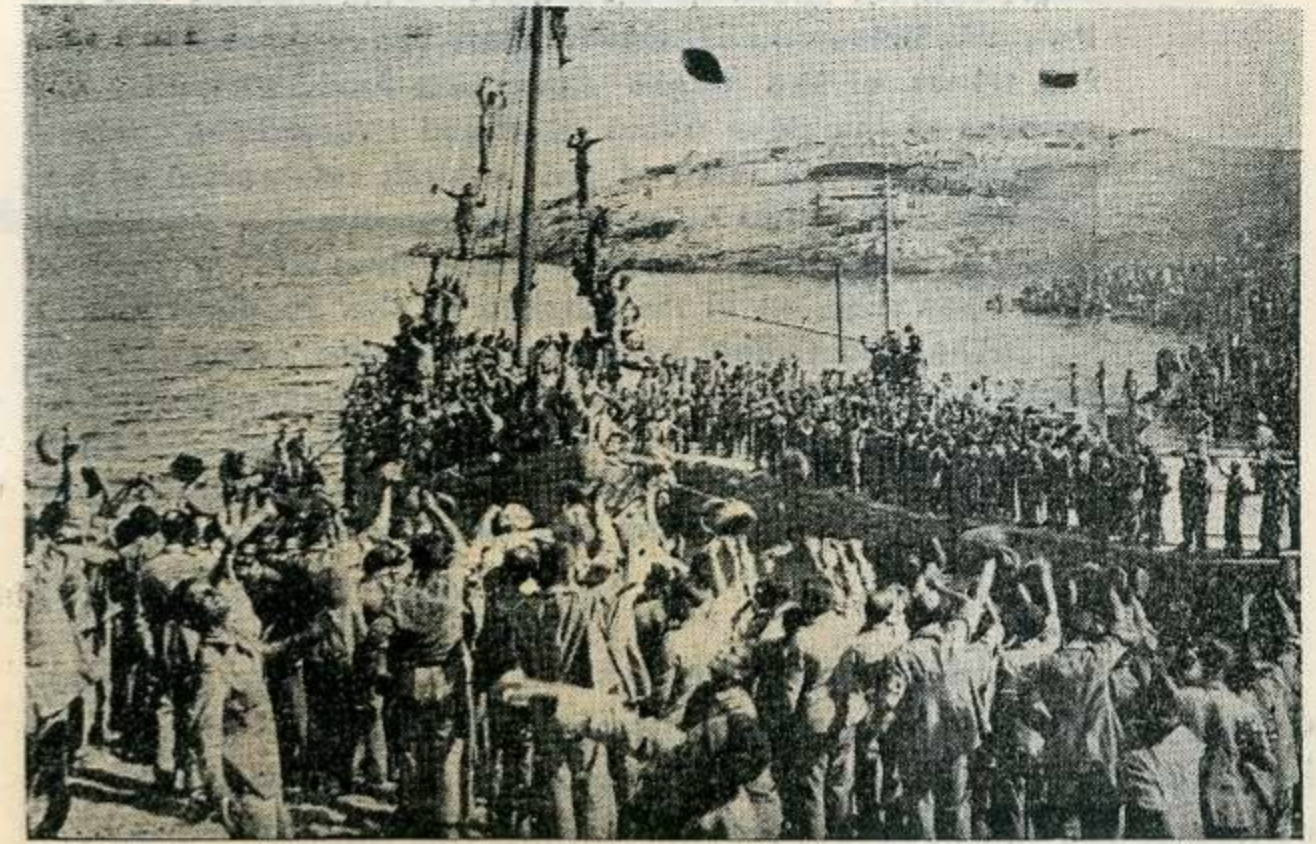
- 1) Splendid behaviour in battle of Makronissos men.
- 2) Many reports of Provost Marshals and Civil Police regarding the good behaviour of the Makronissos men in the rear, or in the villages near the front.
- 3) Perfect discipline and total absence of desertions to the enemy, or to the rear.

### 4) Statement of various stages of readaptation :

Total of young communists who have passed by Makronissos . . . . . 21.800

Of these :

- a) On the front and in first line units . . . . . 7.800
- b) Gone back to free civil life . . . . . 3.800 11.600



Leaving for the front after a few months civic and military training

c) Having reached second stage of readaptation . . . . .	5.400
Having reached first stage of readaptation . . . . .	4.000
d) Considered as incorrigible. . . . .	800
Total . . . . .	<u>21.800</u>

### 5) Promotions and Decorations

Makronissos units have been in the front line for less than eight months. Promotions and decorations already reach a total of 57. The 596th Bat. has been mentioned in dispatches three times for its behaviour in battles in the region of Souli (Epirus), in Central Greece and Mt. Grammos (Epirus).

6) Telegraphic Report of the Prefect of Higoumenitsa (Macedonia) to the President of the Cabinet, the Deputy Prime Minister, the Ministers of the Interior, Press and Information and General Staff.

Date 7th September 1948

«Yesterday afternoon, the ex-communist Lambros Kokka spoke to thousands of listeners from our town and neigh-



APX  
ΣΥΓΧΡΟΝΟ  
ΕΛΛΗΝΙΚΟ  
ΕΤΟΣ

bourhood. He chose as his subject: «The traitors and the Patriotic University of Makronissos». The speaker dealt with the crimes of the Greek Communist Party misled by the enemies of the clear Greek mind and stressed the contrast presented by the work of civic rebirth carried out at Makronissos. He ended by calling all the misled to open their heart to that of their country, where they will be received with open arms, as in the parable of the Prodigal Son.

»The peroration of this once active communist was longly and loudly applauded by the audience headed by the undersigned, high civil officials, the Mayor, the Municipal Council, the Presidents of Labour Associations, school-boys, officers of the Army and Gendarmerie».

Sgd. **Gregory Sakkas**, Prefect

The work done and the results achieved are certainly due in a great measure to the whole-hearted efforts of all dealing with the Makronissos Seminary, as also to the judicious choice of the methods used. One cannot but believe, however, that the very small proportion of «incorrigibles» shows that the communist rebellion has no psychological or social foundation with the great majority of the Greek people. Otherwise, however praiseworthy the endeavours, this proportion would be much greater. It should also not be overlooked that this proportion, however small, proves that the inmates of Makronissos are submitted to no form of compulsion, physical or moral, and that each of the men is free to be persuaded or to persist in his attitude, and still be treated with sympathy.

Before ending, it should be stressed that Makronissos is open to all investigations. The Greek General Staff, which has shouldered the task of supervising what the speaker, already quoted in the telegramme of the Prefect of Higoumenitsa, rightly called «The Patriotic University of Makronissos», would be very happy to accept any request to visit the island.

In this matter, the following extracts from letters addressed by prominent foreign visitors to the Commandant of Makronissos may not be without particular interest:

**Col. Shortt** (British Military Attaché

Athens, 4th October 1948

«Dear Colonel,

.... I was very much impressed by what I saw there,

and I shall miss no opportunity of informing my people of the splendid work you and your officers are doing for Greece».....

**Mr. Stucki** (Swiss Minister)

Athens, 13th October 1948

.....«You have conceived this work in a deeply humanitarian spirit giving to this camp the character of a family, where authority and discipline are the natural outcome of respect and love.....».

**F. A. Voigt** (Editor «Time and Tide»)

9th March 1949

«....You have taught me that we had a lot to learn from Greece. As an old teacher myself, I was greatly impressed by the pedagogic methods applied by you.....».

**Lord Teignham** (Vice-Chancellor, House of Lords)

«..... I have been deeply interested in this wonderful experiment which, in my opinion could be repeated in many countries.

»The kindness and devotion of the officers to their men is of the highest degree.....».

All interested in present social problems, foreigners as well as Greeks, may visit Makronissos and form their own opinion on the spot.