

The Greek Left on national issues: 1946-1956

National & Kapodistrian University of Athens

Faculty of Law, Economics and Political Science

Department of Political Science and Public Administration

Master's Degree in Southeast European Studies

Master's Thesis in:

The Greek Left on national issues: 1946-1956

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Athens September 2006

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*"From its own nature, history
cannot be worshiper of the
past but judge of it"*

Nikos Psyrakis

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Introduction

The solution of the various national issues was one of the most interesting and complicated aspects of the post-war era. Like after most wars, there was an open catalogue with border and other national issues set by the countries. In the case of Greece the open national issues of her interest were involving all the other Balkan countries –including Turkey- and also Britain.

The end of the W.W.II found Europe separated into two big camps. The crucial point was that this time Europe was not simply separated in spheres of influence of some Great Powers but the borders between the two camps were at the same time, political, economic, social, ideological borders. In other words, the emergence of the Soviet Union, through the War, as a Great Power added a new slant, a new color in the division of the world. This gave a special importance to the position of the Left and particularly of the communist Left, especially since the Left and communist movement in all Europe but particularly in the Balkans was reborn through its leading role in the liberation struggle during the wartime.

As the Balkans were one of the most important regions of the world in the first post-war period, due to their division between the two blocs and their geopolitical importance, it is obvious that the stance of the Left on the national issues there, receives a special magnitude. Already, the history of the Balkans is connected with the fate of the national antagonisms between the local populations. Greece, that lived the first armed conflict after the end of the war, was a basic piece of the puzzle and the stance of the Greek Left was a basic parameter in the general scenery.

Apart from revealing the effect that the stance of the Greek Left had in the national developments in Greece and the Balkans, the aim of this work is to contribute in the clarification of the new relation between the communist movement, the Left and the national issue through the Greek example of the decade 1946-1956.

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Undoubtedly, such issues are of great depth and complexity. The research was based in the examination of archival sources, the Left press of the time and the usage of a bibliography that tried to cover various authors with different political and ideological backgrounds. Furthermore, the developments and the reality of Greece was attempted to be permanently linked with the international trends and influences.

Finally, a research involving national issues, the Left, the Balkans and a relatively recent historic period is difficult to be neutral and completely objective although this was one of the aims. As Engels once stated *"Even the most common-average historian who thinks and claims that he only presents the facts, that he only deals with the dates, is not passive in his thought. He has his own categories that with those he faces the facts"...*

Preface: A glance at the past

The international and local political environment (1946-1956)

It is not an overstatement to say that the developments in the post-war era, both in national and international level, were as rapid as in the wartime. In order to have a better understanding, a more spherical view of the facts concerning the national issues and the stance of the Left in Greece we must delve into the most important developments of the given decade.

The end of the war left Europe destroyed and miserable. States that used to be protagonists in a global level before the war, now could not even deal with the reconstruction of their own country. Despite its heavy losses during the war, the Soviet Union was no longer an isolated "socialist" experiment but one of the two superpowers of the new era whose army had liberated and therefore spread in half Europe. The "honey moon period" of the antifascist cooperation was slowly ending in favor of the political realism. The antagonism between the two social systems was regaining its "normal" dimensions. The mutual distrust and fear of each side's intentions was the dominant element of the arising Cold War epoch.

As all Europe was preparing for the Paris Peace Conference and the post-war settlement of the open issues, Greece was sliding towards the Civil War. The first post-war elections would be held on March 1946 but they would be marked by the abstention of the Left. Later on the same year, the plebiscite of August would result in the restoration of the monarchy. Unlike the national elections, the Left would take part in the plebiscite. The decisions of the Left about the elections of 1946 became later one of the permanent topics of debate concerning their results on the people's struggle, the developments in Greece and the future of the Left. In the meanwhile, the party coalition of EAM with a letter to the Peace Conference was determining its national policy demanding the unification of the Dodecanese and Cyprus with Greece, the adjudgement of Northern Epirus and Eastern Thrace under the argument that their population was in its majority Greek during the past before its forced recent displacement and the safeguard of the Greek-Bulgarian border. EAM was also

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claiming that the states which attacked Greece should be compelled to pay reparations and that the full independence and territorial integrity of Greece was non-negotiable¹.

On 12 March of 1947 a speech of the U.S. president Harold Truman mostly known as "the Truman doctrine" was putting the basis of the bipolar global system. Truman promised support for Turkey and Greece with military and economic aid to prevent their falling under Soviet influence. Moreover the major U.S. policy towards the Soviet Union was now characterized as "containment". The American dominant position in the new period would be affirmed by the announcement of the Marshall plan by which the U.S. was undertaking the mission for the reconstruction of Europe in order to repel communism.

The communist side would respond with the creation of Cominform, on September, an organization whose aim was the coordination of the Parties' actions.

In the Balkans, the Blend Agreement which was signed on August between Bulgaria and Yugoslavia was seen as an attempt for the creation of a Balkan federation and therefore caused anxiety to the Greek government.

The year of 1947 marked the pass of Greece under the American influence due to the British inability to cope with the intensified Greek civil war. After a short time of legal function the KKE would be proscribed and the Left press would be banned and closed. A little before the end of the year, the communist Democratic Army (DSE) announced the formation of a Temporary Democratic Government (government of the mountains) with the leader of DSE, Markos Vafiadis being its prime minister.

The polarization of the international scene, which became obvious with the Berlin crisis, caused the dissolution of the governments of national unity in Western Europe and of the Popular Fronts in Eastern Europe that were created in order to take the countries out of the war period. Derivatively, the communist parties would become unwanted and expelled from the governments in Western Europe and accordingly the non-communist elements would be gradually but systematically removed from the governments of Eastern Europe.

An important moment for the Balkans, the Eastern Bloc and therefore for everyone in Europe, was the break of Yugoslavia with Cominform, known also as the Tito-Stalin

¹ "Appeal of the Political Coalition of EAM and the Party of Left Wing Liberals", *Rizospastis*, 31/7/1946

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break, which was the first secession from the communist camp and resulted in various implications in the Balkans and the beginning of the autonomous road of Yugoslavia.

The latter development constituted a decisive factor for the future of the Greek civil war which was now passing to a new phase of open war. The other important fact of the year for Greece was the official integration of the Dodecanese, the only territory obtained after the second world war.

On March of 1949, the North Atlantic Treaty was signed and the creation of NATO the first post-war collective military organization was a fact. NATO was the conclusion of the anti-communist process of Western cooperation as it provided the Western states with the guarantee of a joint defense against a potential communist attack.

On August, the USSR announced that it possessed the Atomic bomb too after successful nuclear tests in Kazakhstan. This new meant the end of the U.S. Atomic monopoly and constituted the entrance in a world period of nuclear terror.

A month later, a second shock for the capitalist world would come as the news for the final predomination of the Chinese communists traveled around the world. The communists were now controlling the 1/3 of the earth. But despite the hopes that the Chinese victory created in the communists of all the world, this would be the last important change in the political map of the world that could affect the balance between the communist and the anti-communist camp.

As the Turkish poet Nazım Hikmet beautifully described, while the half heart of the international communism was going down the Yellow River with the field army of Mao Zedong, the other half was being shot in Greece. The final defeat of the DSE came on August of 1949 with its withdrawal in Albania. It is estimated that around 60.000 people, 28.000 kids fled to the Eastern bloc countries after the communist defeat in Greece. This was the tragic end of what some consider as the first post-war battlefield among the two world-systems. Until October 1949, 5.322 communists had been condemned to death from which 3.033 had been executed till then and 2.289 were being kept in prison waiting for their execution. Additionally, 16.738 communists had been condemned for a lifetime imprisonment or less and 5.425 were waiting for trial. Finally, 13.000 people were sent in exile, in some desert island of

the Aegean². This persecution of the communists and the Left generally would continue for all the period we are examining.

The beginning of the first post-civil war year in Greece was marked by the departure of the last British troops that continued to camp in Greece and the first national elections of the new era. In a scenery of proscription and chase of the Left, the Greek people elected in the first place the coalition of the parties of the Center (Plastiras, Venizelos, Papandreou). The KKE and its close allies did not manage to take part but the Left was represented by the Democratic Coalition which reached the remarkable for the period percentage of 9,7%³.

As for KKE, with its 7th Plenum on May it was considering that the situation in Greece was still revolutionary, putting the blame for its military defeat on the betrayal of Tito. As a consequent the communists in Greece had to be in a "red alert" situation which was described with the famous order of Zachariadis "ground arms!". The Party's strategy in the period 1945-1949 was generally approved and those mistakes admitted were interpreted as "product of the nationalistic EAMic heritage".

The theoretical framework of the post-civil war era was completed with the Party's 3rd Conference on October of the same year. According to the analysis of KKE, the Balkans were very likely to experience a new war, organized by the capitalist forces against the People's Republics and the basic duty of the Greek communists would be to stop it. Finally, the 3rd Conference was also a characterized by the purges against several Party members and officials mainly with the accusation of Titoism.

In the international field, the beginning of the Korean War was undoubtedly the most important development of the year. Not even a year after the communist predomination in China, a dramatic war would start in the Korean peninsula with the involvement of almost all the Western Camp (including Greece) under the UN decision from one side and the Korean communists with the support of China –but not USSR- from the other side. During the war, President Truman even warned for the usage of Atomic weapons against the North Korean communists but fortunately this threat was not realized.

² History of the Greek nation: Vol.16, Ekdotiki, Athens, pp. 173

³ For an analytical presentation of the post-civil war elections and the results of the Left, see Giannis Papadimitriou, *The gleam of the Left*, Filistor, Athens 2001

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In the Balkans, Yugoslavia accepted a U.S. loan, on November, in order to balance the economic damage caused because of its isolation from the Eastern Bloc. For the communists this would be one more proof of Tito's betrayal.

The first completed step towards the unification of Western Europe was made with the Treaty establishing the Coal and Steel Community between West Germany, France, Italy and the Benelux countries which came in force on July of 1951. Beyond its economic role, the ECSC was important for creating a basis of cooperation between France and two ex-Axis countries which proved to be an essential move for the stability in Europe.

In Greece the continuance of the witch-haunting resulted in the arrest of a famous official of KKE, Nikos Belogiannis, who had entered the country only some months ago, coming from the Eastern Bloc with a mission to reorganize the disrupted Party organizations. After being on trial he was condemned to death. Being a charismatic person and a rather sympathetic figure, his case attracted the attention of the world. Despite the pressure put on the Greek government, "the man with the carnation" and his team were executed on March of 1951.

Apart from the sad news, on August of the same year the creation of EDA (United Democratic Left) gave new courage to the Greek Left and opened the road for a new period in the political scene of the country. EDA was founded after the initiative of members of KKE and old EAMic parties but it embraced a larger number of personalities and organizations. The main motive of EDA was Peace-Democracy-Amnesty which reveals its priority to fight for a new democratic start for the country, with a peaceful, independent foreign policy and amnesty for the participants of the civil war. EDA took part in the new national elections held on September, reaching the 10,5% of the total votes and managing to elect in the parliament people who were in exile. Even if their election was later canceled this was a great achievement of the Left only two years after the end of the civil war. In other respects the parties of the Center won the elections for second time in a row.

Outside of the Greek borders, the 2nd Plenum of the C.C. of KKE which was held on November, was expressing the need for cooperation with the democratic forces but at the same time it was criticizing everyone so hard that in fact it was precluding any prospect of alliance.

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The truth was that no matter the governance of the Center, the situation in Greece was still reminding the civil war years at least as far as the treatment of the Left. In 19/1/1952 the state banned the circulation of the newspaper "Dimokratiki" that was the only medium of expression for EDA and KKE. This initiative of the state coexisted with thoughts and voices for proscription of EDA.

On February of 1952 Greece and Turkey entered NATO, integrating themselves more in the Western camp and including the Mediterranean officially in the contention of the two camps. This was also the beginning of the friendship with Greece's age-long enemy, Turkey, which would not last for long. Pasalidis, the president of EDA, commented on the latter developments: "From geographical point of view our country cannot be cut off from its mainland. We are a people who is able to contribute in the bridging of the gap which exists between the two systems. We are for a Greek policy and we mustn't listen to any foreign power. In the quarrels of the big ones, the little ones break their heads".

The third elections in three years were held on November. Having passed the first post-civil war period, the Americans favored the election of a clearly Right and pro-American government that would secure the Western and anti-communist orientation of Greece. These features were better represented by General Papagos and his "Greek Alert" party. Before the elections there was a pressure and discussions among the Left whether it should support the parties of the Center in order to avoid a hard-core government. The vacillation of EDA would be terminated by the speech of Zachariadis in the 19th Congress of the Soviet Party where he would comment that Papagos or Plastiras had no difference by adding that "all dogs (are of) one stock" and therefore the Left should have an autonomous presence in the elections. Papagos was elected as prime minister of Greece formatting the first Right government after the end of the civil war. EDA took 9,55% but due to the absurd electoral system it would have no representative in the new parliament.

On November after the 19th Congress of the Soviet Communist Party (the last of Stalin) followed the 3rd Plenum of the C.C. of KKE which prompted for a struggle for the national independence. For its realization, the Party was concerning as necessary the establishment of an alliance with the peasants, the petit bourgeois and even the national patriotic powers from the middle bourgeois of the cities.

At the same time, 5311 communists were still imprisoned, 2.000 of them being in the desert island of Ai Stratis and 200 women in the camp of Trikeri⁴.

⁴ Tasos Vournas, *History of modern Greece 1953-1967*, Tolidi, Athens, pp. 10

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In Egypt, 1952 was the year of the revolution against King Faruk which brought Nasser in power and marked the beginning of the end of the British presence in Suez. In Europe we had the signing of the Treaty establishing the European Defensive Community. The year would end with a fundamental declaration of the United Nations concerning the nations' right of self-determination.

The treaty signed between Greece, Yugoslavia and Turkey on February 1953 consisted a new page in the Balkan and general balance between the two camps. Even though this treaty was for the friendship and cooperation of the countries, it was obvious that it would not stop there. The worries in the communist camp were obvious and the uneasiness became bigger with the death of Stalin on March of the same year. Stalin's death did not bring any change in the global balance of power but it gradually brought internal changes in the Eastern Bloc and the policies followed by the communist parties which followed the 20th Congress of the Soviet Party. Nikita Khrushchev was elected as General Secretary. Later on this year, the Soviet Union would announce that shortly after the Americans, it created too an H-Bomb. But 1953 was also the year that the Korean war ended causing a sentiment of relief as the two conflicting sides had stuck in a deadlock since the first year of the war.

In the eve of the complementary elections in Greece, EDA proposed Papandreu for an election alignment only to take the answer that "EDA is not a democratic party". Besides, the elections, the event of the year was the Greco-American military agreement by which Greece was allowing the usage of its land, air and sea, was opening the road for the creation of American bases in its territory, recognizing even the exterritoriality for the American troops. After the entrance in NATO and the formation of the Balkan alliance, this new development would increase the worries of the Left. From then on, the rhetoric of the Left would concentrate much more in the need for neutrality, good relations with the neighboring countries and independence from the American yoke. More emphasis would be given to the anti-war, anti-military propaganda, the need for Balkans with no nuclear rockets and so forth.

The Balkan Pact that followed the alliance and cooperation treaty of the previous year, completed the scenery in the Balkans after the 1948 clash of Yugoslavia with

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Cominform. Through the Pact, Yugoslavia was under the wing of NATO creating a strong anti-communist triangle in the Mediterranean. However, this situation would not last long too.

After the creation of the Balkan Pact followed the arrangement of the Trieste problem in 5/10/1954 which had been bedeviling Yugoslavia-Italy and Europe in general since the end of the War.

In Greece, EDA called once again for cooperation with the Center in the municipal elections but Papandreou denied again calling the parties that cooperated "a new EAM". The same politician would applaud the execution of Ploumpidis, an important official of KKE whose case would be uproarious as the one of Belogiannis. Nobody could expect that under the future developments Papandreou and EDA would become allies two years later.

The captures of KKE officials had no end as Florakis and 60 more members of KKE were arrested on April of 1954. The island of Ai Stratis would still have 1000 communists in exile while in the public administration still the Lefts would be fired due to their political beliefs, five years after the end of the civil war⁵.

But the most important fact of this year for Greece was the internationalization of the Cyprus problem with the appeal to the UN in 29/8/1954. After that point, significant changes would come in Greece, Cyprus and the Balkans.

At the same time, the KKE was making a back-out from its Program that was putting as target the immediate socialist transformation of the country. It was the first step of the alterations in the Party's policy that followed and signaled a new phase in its history.

The year of 1955 for the Greek affairs is the year of the beginning of the armed struggle in Cyprus which shook up everybody in the country and in combination with the London Tripartite Meeting and the September incidents that followed in Turkey, put into question the position, the orientation and the general policy of Greece. Derivatively, the balances in the internal political scene changed dramatically.

Even in 1955 members and officials of KKE and EDA were arrested and sent to Ai Stratis, a fact that can be linked to the developments mentioned above and the fascinating presence of EDA in the municipal elections. Hence, on July the government would announce that it would reopen the old place of exile, Gyaros.

⁵ Spyros Linardatos, *From the civil war to the junta: Vol.B' 1952-1955*, Papazisi, Athens 1978, pp. 145, 175

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On October the prime minister of Greece, general Papagos, dies and after an episodic intervention of the palace, Konstantinos Karamanlis gets appointed as prime minister of the country although criticized from all the political spectrum. Certainly the election of Karamanlis proved crucial for the further developments in Cyprus.

As for KKE, on December, it would make one more step towards its new line, with the 5th Plenum that except from demanding Greece's disengagement from NATO, the prevention of the creation of bases it called the Greek political world to follow the policies of Yugoslavia and Egypt while it proceeded with the improvement of the relations between KKE and Yugoslavia. One more step away from the policy of the Stalinist period had been realized.

The general spirit of 1955 was of peace and cooperation in the world and alleviation of the tension between the two blocs. The departure of the Soviet troops from Austria which became neutral and the Geneva Conference which born hopes for the denuclearization and the control of the war apparatus resulted in a general optimism for the peaceful coexistence of the two social systems which by the way was becoming the new theory of the post-Stalin Soviet Union. In this context the ice between the USSR and Yugoslavia also breaks causing the Balkan Pact's inutility.

On the other hand the creation of the Warsaw Pact in 1/5/1955, aimed in counterbalancing the creation of NATO and consisted an answer to the decision for re-militarization of Western Germany and its entrance in NATO. The Eastern Bloc countries participating in the Pact, were pledging to defend each other in case of an external attack but also to respect the sovereignty of each other. Despite the re-militarization of Germany and the creation of the Warsaw Pact, the general sentiment was still that of abatement.

This improvement of the general situation combined with the tactic of the new Soviet leadership resulted in the dissolution of Cominform in 1956. Already, the significant 20th Congress of the Soviet Communist Party had initiated the process of de-Stalinization and approach with the capitalist world. All this process towards the decrease of tension and stabilization in both camps would be tested by two crucial incidents that also coincided. The first was the Suez crisis which resulted in the military attack of the joint British-French and Israel forces against Egypt of Naser who had decided to nationalize the canal. Some months after the joint Western army would withdraw without any result under the Soviet and US pressure. The other was

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the double challenge of the communist and Soviet rule in the Eastern Bloc, first in Poland and soon after in Hungary. If the workers' protests against the regime in Poland were easily suppressed by the local government and the crisis finished with the appointment of the reformist leader Gomulka as new prime minister, the Hungarian, anti-Soviet revolt was a much more difficult case. Demanding the liberalization of the system and an independent national policy the revolt first resulted in the change of government with the appointment of the reformist Imre Nagy. But when the new Hungarian prime minister declared that Hungary would follow a policy of neutrality, withdrawing also from the newly established Warsaw Pact, the Soviet troops invaded the country and big street battles began. The revolt was suppressed some days later but Hungary would enter a new period of greater autonomy. Overall, Suez marked the collapse of the British and French image of great powers and confirmed the dominant position of US and USSR while the revolts in Poland and mainly in Hungary damaged seriously the monolithic image of the Eastern Bloc.

In the shadow of the Cypriot struggle, the elections of 19 February in Greece had a special meaning. These were also the first official elections in Greece with the participation of women. On January, Karamanlis had dissolved the party of Papagos creating the ERE party. Such was the polarization caused by the Cyprus crisis that even Papandreou (whose opinion about the Left we saw above) participated in the common front (Democratic Union) between the Center and the Left. Speaking for the Left, the 6th Plenum of KKE, held on March, had been of great importance as it terminated the Zachariadis period with his disqualification from the Party and the total criticism of the Party's strategy over the previous years. KKE, would now aim in the creation of a national front in a minimum basis –this is how the collaboration with Papandreou and other anticommunist leaders is explained- for the national independence of Greece. Karamanlis statement that *"every vote that is not given to us, is given in favor of communism"* reveals the tension in the eve of the elections. What would follow would be something unique in the history of the elections since the Democratic Union obtained most votes totally but ERE of Karamanlis won most seats in the parliament and therefore became the new government of Greece. This electoral coup d'etat would only sharpen the debate among the traditional Right and the "democratic forces".

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The important turn of the Left that absolutely prioritized the national issue over the class interest was very well mirrored in the decision of the 1st Pan Hellenic Conference of EDA which took place on July of 1956. In the view of EDA the basic antithesis in Greece was between the national interests and the foreign imperialism. Consequently, EDA called for the cooperation with every healthy democratic-national force and even with "honest" parts of the Right camp for the creation of a government of national unity that would disengage Greece from the foreign rule and would promote the national interests of the country. A derivative from the analysis of EDA was that the Right camp was viewed primarily as a servant of foreign interests and only secondly as the voice of the interests of the local bourgeois/capitalist class.

In this fascinating scenery of permanent conflicts and reversals of the general situation we shall examine the stance of the Greek Left on the national issues between 1946 and 1956.

A. Macedonia-Thrace and the neighboring countries

Historically, the Macedonian and the Thracian issue did not only involve the governments of the Balkan states and the Great Powers but the Balkan communist movement as well.

The idea of a Balkan federation had always been attractive to the communists of the region and Macedonia (and Thrace secondly) was the “heartland” of the peninsula connecting the port of Thessalonica with Northern Europe.

But it was not until the 6th Plenum of the Balkan Communist Federation (BCF) in 1923 when the slogan for a united and autonomous Macedonia and Thrace into a Socialist Balkan Federation first appeared⁶. This slogan was approved in the 5th Congress of the Communist International in 1924. The Macedonian issue, still fresh after the Balkan wars and the W.W.I and despite the massive settlement of Greek refugees from Turkey that altered the balance of the population, was expected to play a helpful role in the forthcoming Bulgarian worker-peasant revolution⁷.

However, not only this did not happen but the position of the Communist International created a serious frustration and fights in the lines of the Parties in Greece and Yugoslavia. Finally, the Socialist Workers Party of Greece (later on KKE) accepted the position of the Comintern in 1924⁸ and even though there was a continuous internal struggle about it, it remained unchanged –except a short break in 1927- until 1935. Then the slogan for the minorities became “full national and political parity to all the national minorities that live in Greece”⁹.

This would remain the political line of KKE during all the second world war freeing it from the most important argument of the anticommunist bloc in Greece.

⁶ For a full presentation of the BCF rationale behind this decision, see Elisabeth Barker, *Macedonia in the Balkan relations and conflicts*, Paratiritis, Thessaloniki 1996

⁷ See Alekos Papanagiotou, *The Macedonian issue and the Balkan Communist movement: 1918-1939*, Themelio, Athens 1991. Also Elisabeth Barker, *ibid*, pp. 87-88

⁸ The Party’s manifesto after its Congress in 1924 stated: “Alike the Bulgarian and the Serbian, the Greek plutocracy domineers a part of the Macedonian people and Thracian people...we are struggling for the unification of the three parts of Macedonia and Thrace and for their united, independent, state being” in Alekos Papanagiotou, *ibid*, pp. 81

⁹ The Party in its 6th Congress in 1935, made clear that the slogan’s change did not mean a denial of the Marxist-Leninist principle for the self-determination of the national minorities. As basic reasons for the change appeared the change of the population synthesis in the Greek part of Macedonia, the change of the revolutionary conditions in the Balkans and the priority of the antifascist front. Alekos Papanagiotou, *ibid*, pp. 104

After the end of the W.W.II the territorial issues concerning Macedonia and Thrace developed around three columns.

Except from asking \$700 million war reparations, the Greek government claimed that its borders with Bulgaria should be redefined in favor of Greece due to the three invasions that it had suffered from Bulgaria during the last three decades. Therefore, the long and narrow borders in East Macedonia and West Thrace (in some parts the border line is only 30km from the sea) should move northwards incorporating a territory of 2.000km² from Bulgaria where approximately 40.000 Pomaks were living¹⁰. This would make the defense of the borders more easy decreasing the border line from 480km to 350km¹¹. A similar claim for the Greek-Yugoslavian borders had been discussed among government circles but never became official¹².

On the other hand, Bulgaria raised its own claims, this time on Western Thrace, demanding an exit in the Aegean by referring to the Bucharest Peace Treaty and the Bulgarian possession of Western Thrace until 1918¹³. The third and most important column had to do with the Slav-Macedonian minority in Greece living in its majority near the Greek-Yugoslav borders.

¹⁰ Some even supported that the Pomaks of Bulgaria were Greeks, an argument that KKE faced with contempt and irony, see Rizospastis, 11/9/1946

¹¹ Dimitri Constantopoulos, *The Paris Peace Conference of 1946 and the Greek-Bulgarian relations*, EMS-IMXA, Thessaloniki 1956, pp. 17-18

¹² Actually since 1941 the "Government in exile" had notified the Foreign Office about its national claims. At that times it was speaking for realignment of the northern borders including the Greek-Yugoslav too. Then again in 1944 Papandreou notified the Yugoslav minister of foreign affairs about the Greek will for a realignment of the border only to withdraw from it soon after, under American and British pressure. See Basil Kondis, "Greek national claims at the Paris Peace Conference of 1946", *Balkan Studies*, Vol. 32.2 (1991), pp. 309. Also see Iakovos Michailidis, *The faces of Ianos: The Greek-Yugoslav relations in the eve of the Civil War*, Patakis, Athens 2004, pp. 35-36, 87, 112-114

¹³ For a detailed presentation of the Greek and Bulgarian arguments and statistics for Thrace, see Dimitri Constantopoulos, op.cit, pp. 24

A.1 The period until the end of the Civil War

A.1.1 The issues connected with the Paris Peace Conference (Greek-Bulgarian borders, Western and Eastern Thrace)

The KKE faced the Greek claims towards Bulgaria in an absolutely negative way. In its view, Greece had nothing to be afraid from the People's Republics and should solve all the problems with them through peaceful and friendly means. Moreover, KKE attacked the Greek government for putting out fires in the Balkans, being the blind soldier of the British interests and so on. A basic argument of KKE was that in the case of Bulgaria, Greece was asking for a region with no Greek inhabitants.

Besides these logical arguments there were also unfortunate attempts to support some statements of Bulgarian officials as that Bulgaria had not attacked Greece during the W.W.II but only took control of Eastern Macedonia and Thrace after a German demand. But in contradiction to the above, KKE signed the official letter of EAM to the Paris Peace Conference where the readjustment of the Greek-Bulgarian borders was included!

EAM's attitude can be judged as more nationalistic. As it claimed it represented "the healthy and truly nationalist (ethnikofron) incarnation of democracy and of the Left". Through its newspaper "Eleftheri Ellada" (Free Greece), it permanently supported the resetting of the Greek-Bulgarian borders¹⁴ as it recognized a logic behind it without of course adopting the hysteria of the nationalist circles¹⁵. EAM also demanded the war reparations from Bulgaria to be paid. As a consequence, "Eleftheri Ellada" judged very hard the Greek government when it failed to accomplish these national interests in the Paris Peace Conference¹⁶ something that was not the case with the communist "Rizospastis".

If in the case of the Greek claims towards Bulgaria things were easy for KKE, the situation was much more complex in the opposite case. The official claims of the

¹⁴ See the Declaration of the C.C. of EAM about the national claims. *Rizospastis*, 5/5/1946

¹⁵ For a more detailed analysis on EAM's foreign policy, see Hagen Fleischer, "The National Liberation Front (EAM) 1941-1947: A reassessment", in Iatrides, Wrigley, eds., *Greece at the crossroads: The civil war and its legacy*, Pennsylvania State University Press, Pennsylvania 1995, pp. 48-89

¹⁶ See, *Eleftheri Ellada*, 2/10 until 14/10/1946. It is indicant of the Greek government's failure that no one supported the Greek claims on Bulgaria during the Conference. During the voting process, France, USSR and USA voted against while Britain abstained.

For more details see: Basil Kondis, op.cit, pp. 322

Patriotic Front of Bulgaria for an exit in the Aegean through Western Thrace brought KKE in an uneasy position¹⁷.

It was indicant of the unpleasant nature of this issue that Rizospastis mentioned very few about it and only when it was discussed at the Paris Peace Conference, high officials of KKE published some central articles explaining the Bulgarian policy and the support of Yugoslavia and the Soviet Union¹⁸ to it. According to KKE, the claims of Bulgaria on Greek territory were more or less a reaction to the Greek aggression in the Balkans and the imperialist demands of the "monarcho-fascist" government which by acting as a pawn of the British interests in the region, was responsible for causing the hostility of the People's Republics. The outcome of this argumentation was that only a true democratic government could secure the Greek borders and bring Greece in an era of peaceful coexistence with its neighbors¹⁹. In all cases the KKE never missed to mention that it was against any territorial loss and that it would use all its forces to prevent it in case of an external attack²⁰.

A second –more aggressive- line of argumentation which was used by the high officials of KKE was the reversion of the question to the Greek government by asking how come the "monarcho-fascists" were so generous towards the Turks and the British (Cyprus and Eastern Thrace). This would be a permanent tactic when KKE was pressured by the Right propaganda.

A third line, finally, was a historical one reminding that it was the traditional Greek Right which had repeatedly betrayed Macedonia in the recent past.

¹⁷ The leadership of KKE in 1945 and until the Paris Peace Conference supported that there were no Bulgarian territorial claims over Greece. Grigoris Farakos, "The KKE facing the Balkan antagonisms", in Hagen Fleischer, ed., *Greece '36-'49: From the dictatorship to the Civil War*, Kastanioti, Athens 2003, pp. 63. For example in an article called "The Bulgarian claims on the Aegean", Zachariadis artfully misses to take a clear position as he avoids to denounce or support Bulgaria and presenting the whole issue as misleading under the rationale that the "hot" issues are those of Cyprus and the Dodecanese. On the other hand he doesn't lose the chance to remind that during the past "other forces" agreed and signed for the Bulgarian exit in the Aegean. See Nikos Zachariadis, "The Bulgarian claims on the Aegean", *Rizospastis*, 30/4/1946, pp.1

¹⁸ Stalin to Dimitrov (7/6/1946): "In relation to the Greek-Bulgarian borders we stated in Paris "We and the Americans did not take part in this lining of the borders [in 1919] and we don't recognize them as fair". You should aim at a territorial exit in the Aegean and if this won't happen then you will aim at an economic exit. You have the right to ask for a territorial exit. But today, it is difficult to expect the accomplishment of this exit. Such claims can only be realized through violence. In any case you should prepare for the future". See, Kondis, Kendrotis, Sfetas, Stefanidis, eds., *The expansionary policy of Skopje: Collection of documents 1934-1992*, Institute for Balkan Studies, Thessaloniki 1993, pp. 53, Document No.28

¹⁹ *Rizospastis*, 10/9/1946, for a detailed article of Zachariadis

²⁰ In the Decision of the 2nd Plenum of the C.C. of KKE (February 1946), the Party denounced the "calumniation" of the KKE for the Macedonian issue and demanded a policy of peace and cooperation with Albania, Bulgaria and Yugoslavia stating that the borders of Greece are "holy and inviolable". See Giorgi D. Katsouli, *History of the KKE: Volume 6 - 1946-1949*, Nea Synora-Livanis, Athens, pg. 101

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EAM and its newspaper followed a similar tactic not giving a great attention on the Bulgarian claims but rejecting them without a second thought when mentioning them. Generally, one can find few articles in "Eleftheri Ellada" analyzing that issue.

The case of KKE and EAM's claim over Eastern Thrace is of special interest as it seems impossible to explain it in ideological terms. EAM had raised this issue since 1944 but in contrary with Northern Epirus that was rejected later as a "nationalist deviation" by KKE, the inclusion of Eastern Thrace in the "national agenda" of KKE (and EAM) continued at least until the end of 1947. The majority of the historians agree that it was only a tool of pressure towards the Western Allies and against the Greek government's emphasis on the northern border issues, connected as well with the international debate around the status of the Straits. Nevertheless, it remains a clear contradiction with the communist logic-ideology.

The explanation of KKE and EAM was that Eastern Thrace was violently de-hellenized in the past by the Turks and therefore it was a matter of correction of a historic grievance. But what shocks one more, are such comments in "Rizospastis" and "Eleftheri Ellada" as that Turkey should be sent out of the Balkans being a reactionary state, stuck in backwardness which had betrayed its Balkan neighbors by not entering the fight during the W.W.II. Despite the attempt of KKE to put the matter carefully by explaining that the demand was against the Turkish state and not against the Turks in general, it is very difficult to "accept" that such a position fits a communist line²¹. Furthermore, in many articles this position was expressed in a way that one could hardly tell from a nationalist expression.

After all, in Eastern Thrace there were no Greeks as well (with the exception of Istanbul) as in the case of Bulgaria. So by following the argumentation of KKE and EAM at those times, one could logically ask, then why not the islands of Imvros and Tenedos and even Smyrni..?

Looking at the newspapers of the time one can easily notice that the newspaper of EAM, "Eleftheri Ellada" includes much more articles about the oppression of the Greek minority of Constantinople, the Turkish pressure against the Patriarch, the suspicious role of the Turkish consulate in Thrace and so on. Of course all these are complementary to the national claim over Eastern Thrace which is also complementary to the broader issue of the Straits' control²².

²¹ *Rizospastis*, 3/5/1946, 7/5/1946

²² See *Eleftheri Ellada*, 27/2/1946, 11/4/1946, 24/4/1946, 11/6/1946, 25/6/1946

In a demonstrative article, in "Eleftheri Ellada" the author argues that, "Eastern Thrace is a rightful Greek claim". Then after an epiclesis to the Sevres Treaty and the drama of the Greeks of Constantinople and Thrace the author states: "Greece is crucially interested for the Dardanelles to be secured from the European inland. The Straits' security is of great importance for Greece and the other countries of the Black Sea and especially for the Soviet Union ... the Turkish domination on any part of Europe must be terminated"²³.

It is obvious that those demands cannot be explained in ideological terms, or "logical" terms as they consisted no more than a part of an internal and external political game of pressure. It was a pressure towards the Greek government and her northern aspirations and a pressure towards the Western bloc in the eve of the Paris Peace Conference.

Therefore, the opinion that sees the KKE dragged behind EAM's nationalist policy, not willing to break the coalition can only be a partial argument when trying to explain some nationalist elements in KKE's policy at that time.

By the end of the Paris Peace Conference both the Greek and the Bulgarian claims were rejected and Eastern Thrace was never included in the agenda of the discussions. Soon after, the above subjects took only a secondary place in the internal Left-Right debate. With the Paris Peace Treaty the Bulgarian state had to decrease its army soldiers to 55.000, its navy to 3.500 and its air force to 5.200²⁴. However, Bulgaria kept the "exit on the Aegean" in its political agenda although it made clear that this would be a matter of peaceful discussions through the UN only²⁵.

A second phase of interest around Thrace appeared in 1947 when the KKE through "Rizospastis" started a campaign to disclose the U.S. intentions to promote a joint Greek-Turkish military action in Western Thrace. Based on sources and articles of foreign and local magazines and newspapers, "Rizospastis" supported that there was a plan that would lead Western Thrace under Turkish rule. According to the writers of the articles, the U.S. being unable or unwilling to send military troops to Greece had proposed that Turkey should take over Thrace's security with the alibi of the protection of the minority from the civil conflict. In that way, the Greek army could

²³ *Eleftheri Ellada*, 30/1/1946

²⁴ Alexis Kyrou, *Our Balkan neighbors*, Athens 1962, pp. 121

²⁵ A relevant interview of Dimitrov in *Rizospastis*, 9/7/1947

concentrate in the Yugoslav and Albanian borders and more importantly Thrace and the Straits would be safer from the communist threat. Taking advantage of their position, the Turks demanded to annex three islands in the Dodecanese as well as to get a free-zone in Rodos. On the other hand the Americans presented themselves as ready to put pressure on Britain to give Cyprus to Greece and in that way diminish the reactions of the Greek public opinion²⁶. "Rizospastis" denounced the Greek government for having approved secretly this plan and the loss of Western Thrace. The KKE searched the roots of this plan in the past as it connected the Greek desire for adjustment of the Greek-Bulgarian borders to the "turkification of Western Thrace". This would happen through the inclusion of a basically Pomak population in Greece. The ethnological map of Thrace then would be characterized by a Muslim majority and this would open the road for Turkish claims...

Except warning the Greek people for the national dangers, the KKE did not miss to challenge the Greek government which "instead of demanding Eastern Thrace is ready to hand over Western Thrace as well"²⁷.

It is not known where the real fears of KKE for a joint Greek-Turkish headquarters and common Greek-Turkish anticommunist operations stop and where the exaggerated utilization of it for reasons of propaganda begins. Most possibly both things coexisted in KKE's analysis but as the realization of this scenario was growing away, the occupation of all sides with Thrace decreased to an unimportant level.

A.1.2 Macedonia and the Slav-Macedonian minority

Unlike Thrace, the problems developing around the Slav-Macedonian minority consisted one of the main "hot points" at least until the early '50s.

After Tempo's visit in Greece in 1943, the Slav-Macedonians of Greece formed their own armed units under the name of SNOF. The SNOF cooperated with ELAS in the struggle for the liberation of Greece from fascism but when the leadership of SNOF suddenly proclaimed the formation of an independent state in Western Macedonia, ELAS responded dynamically forcing around 800 of them to flee out of the Greek borders.

²⁶ "Thrace is in danger", *Rizospastis*, 22/7/1947. "Our age-long friends, the Turks", *Rizospastis*, 22/8/1947. Also all the first half of October 1947 *Rizospastis* is full of articles about Western Thrace and the Turks.

²⁷ "Who sells off Greece", *Rizospastis*, 4/10/1947

After the December '44 events in Athens and during all the year of 1945, the white terror of Right extremists in Western Macedonia forced a big number of Slav-Macedonians to leave for the People's Republic of Macedonia²⁸.

The relations between the Greek and the Yugoslav government started well in 1945 but after that summer they began gradually to become worse. Yugoslavia started pointing out, mainly through its Press, the chase and the discriminations against the Slav-Macedonian population. Greece from its side spoke for Greek hostages who were kept in the People's Republic of Macedonia since December '44. The Party's answer was that there were 4 to 4,5 thousand refugees-members of EAM-ELAS in Bulkes after December '44 and called the Greek government to permit their comeback²⁹.

At the same period "autonomist" Slav-Macedonian guerilla bands took action and the situation seemed quite worrying. The two governments, although not pulling the rope till the end, were steadily blaming each other for subversive activities and support/cooperation with anti-governmental armed bands. The peak of the Yugoslav criticism and intervention against Greece was the speech of the Yugoslav delegation in the Paris Peace Conference in which the status of the "Aegean Macedonia" was questioned³⁰. The C.C. of EAM responded immediately by stating that they remain devoted to the line of the territorial integrity of Greece based on real freedom and the real will of the people³¹.

During the summer of 1946 the Greek government was speaking for an "undeclared war" from Tito and argued that the armed "bandits" in north Greece had their basis in Yugoslav Macedonia where they were trained. For Athens there were no civil conflicts but only Slavic groups that were acting under Bulgarian-Yugoslavian orders³². Consequently the oppression of the Slav-Macedonian minority became even harder since it was considered as the most suspicious and dangerous group of

²⁸ For an extensive article on the Slav-Macedonians see *Rizospastis*, 13 January 1946, pp. 1,4

²⁹ Petros Rousos, in *Rizospastis*, 3/3/1946, pp. 3

³⁰ Iakovos Michailidis, op.cit, pp. 97-98. Mosha Pijade speaking on behalf of the Yugoslav government said "...on the basis of the same right for the self-determination of people we reserve to put the issue of the Aegean Macedonia...It is time for this sad issue to be solved in a way that will allow these people to unite and enjoy nationally united the freedom and independence, that they only enjoy today in the Macedonian Republic of the Yugoslav Federation", in Alexis Kyrrou, op.cit, pp. 205

³¹ Iakovos Michailidis, op.cit, pp. 164

³² Later on, after the end of the civil war, the KKE will adopt a thesis which will "flirt" with the state propaganda of 1945-1946 that NOF was nothing else but an organization set up from Tito to promote his aims in the Aegean Macedonia. For example in an article of January 1952 to the Slav-Macedonians the authors write: "Now it has become clear to the great majority of the Slav-Macedonians that NOF, AFZ, NOMS, were not founded to set free the Macedonians of the Aegean but to enslave them to the fascist gang of Tito. *Neos Kosmos*, January 1952, pp. 26

population. The most extremist voices from Athens demanded the total persecution of the Slav-Macedonian minority. These governmental practices were heavily criticized from the Communist Party while compared with the gentle treatment towards the "other minority which is in close contact with one other country"³³.

Belgrade's response argued that it was the Greek government that violated the borders and gave shelter to the "reactionaries" of Michailovich³⁴. These intriguer activities of the Greek government will be continuously denounced from the columns of "Rizospastis" and "Eleftheri Ellada"³⁵.

Since 1945 the KKE steadily denounced the "autonomists", supporting that there were certain reactionary circles behind them, that they were ex-collaborators of the occupying German and Bulgarian forces and that they had no connection with the progressive majority of the Slav-Macedonians of Northwestern Greece³⁶. Moreover, "Rizospastis" explained the activity of those armed groups as part of a plan of British inspiration in order to create a new trouble spot for the Balkans and calumniate KKE³⁷. The party coalition of EAM supported this argumentation putting the blame for the "autonomists" on the British and the Greek reactionaries³⁸. Moreover "Rizospastis" and "Eleftheri Ellada" often published articles uncovering the cooperation between the government and groups of Yugoslavian-Bulgarian and Albanian fascists and also the existence of training camps in some parts of Greece. This was one more proof for KKE that the Greek government was trying to destabilize the Balkans even preparing for a war.

³³ *Rizospastis*, 24/4/1946. Also *Rizospastis*, 26/6/1946

³⁴ For a more detailed reference to the Greek-Yugoslav problems in 1945-1946 see Iakovos Michailidis, op.cit, pp. 50, 58, 67, 73, 90-92, 105-107, 111

³⁵ *Rizospastis*, 9/6/1946, pp.1. Also a central article of Karagiorgis accusing the government for having created a camp for the Balkan "fascists" in the island of Kythnos with 2000 "guests", *Rizospastis*, 23/6/1946, pp.1. Then see "*Eleftheri Ellada*", 11/4/1946 where it is argued that "The Slavic danger keeps our borders closed-The fascist solidarity opens them". There is also a comparison with Turkey which while oppressing the Greek minority is considered as "friend and ally".

³⁶ Zachariadis in his big speech in Thessaloniki, published in *Rizospastis* in 1/1/1946, criticized the Slav-Macedonian "autonomists" and blamed the British for cooperating with them. See also *Rizospastis*, 30/1/1946 and 18/6/1946

See Peter J. Stavrakis, *Moscow and the Greek Communism 1944-1949*, Cornell University Press, London 1989,

pp. 89-90

³⁷ See *Rizospastis*, 26/1/1947.

The KKE also uncovered British attempts to approach the Bulgarians during the W.W.II through British agents who were promising that after the War, Macedonia will pass in Bulgarian hands. See Grigoris Farakos, op.cit, pp. 55

³⁸ *Eleftheri Ellada*, 11/5/1946

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After KKE's 2nd Plenum (February 1946) when it chose the method of the organized self-defense as the answer to the increasing, since 1945, "white terror" and the abstention from the March elections, a rapprochement with the organization NOF of the Slav-Macedonians took place. By the end of 1946 an agreement was realized and NOF would from then on act only through the lines of the Democratic Army desisting from any irredentist activities³⁹.

During 1946 the KKE often criticized the state's brutality against the Slav-Macedonian population never missing to remind the patriotic role of the majority of the Slav-Macedonians during the W.W.II and the unwillingness of them in the present to follow the "autonomists". At the same time it was repeated that the Slav-Macedonian minority could only find its freedom in a free-democratic Greece.

The KKE kept the slogan for full national and political equality for the minorities in Greece until the last year of the civil war. Nevertheless, the Party had to answer often to the anti-communist propaganda which supported that there was a secret agreement between KKE and Yugoslavia or/and Bulgaria to cede a part of Greek Macedonia. It is important here to keep in mind that until the break between Yugoslavia and the Cominform, there were serious discussions between Tito and Dimitrov for the creation of a Federation where the separated parts of Macedonia would unite⁴⁰. The peak of these negotiations was the Bled Agreement between Yugoslavia and Bulgaria on August (and November) 1947, a short time after Zachariadis had explained his view to Vafiadis and Tito that Macedonia and Thrace were the weakest parts for the monarch fascism. For the anti-communist bloc the KKE could not have been outside of this agreement and consequently the Greek part of Macedonia was in danger. In the Greek government's perceptions of the period 1944-1947 there was a Bulgarian-Yugoslav conspiracy for Macedonia which was activating the civil conflicts in Greece⁴¹. The suspicions grew more when the "Temporary Government of the Mountains" was declared in 1947. However, this case proved wrong as it was more a method to avoid tracing the root of the civil conflict in the internal matters or the Western intervention as well.

³⁹ Evangelos Kofos, *The impact of the Macedonian question on the civil conflict in Greece 1943-1949*, ELIAMEP, Athens 1989, pp. 20

⁴⁰ See Elisabeth Barker, op.cit, pp. 170-179, for details about the negotiations and the agreements between Yugoslavia and Bulgaria concerning the creation of a Federation and the unification of the Macedonian parts.

⁴¹ Evanthis Hatzivasiliou, "Continuities and discontinuities in the targets of the Greek policy in the Balkans before and after the W.W.II, in Hagen Fleischer, op.cit, pp. 51

The Yugoslavia-Cominform clash in June 1948 buried the plans for a federation between Yugoslavia and Bulgaria but also made the position of the Democratic Army more difficult and what is more important, the question around the Slav-Macedonians of Greece much more complicated. After that point, a race for the influence of the Slav-Macedonians would begin between the Yugoslavians and the Soviet bloc⁴². In its 4th Plenum (July 1948) the KKE recognized the major contribution of the Slav-Macedonians to the Democratic Army (DSE) stating that *"With this struggle, the Slav-Macedonian people build steadily their free and equal life, cement and secure their democratic future"*⁴³. But the break between Yugoslavia and Cominform caused serious disadvantages in the fight of DSE and a clash inside it that led to the removal of Vafiadis from DSE's leadership with the accusation of "Titoism" among others. Suddenly the KKE had lost its most important foreign ally – the Yugoslavs- at a time that the national army had become more powerful and better equipped due to the American aid. In that period it was a matter of life or death to ensure the continuity of the common struggle with the minority especially at that point when the Democratic Army had become highly dependent on the Slav-Macedonian human reserves.

The change of the KKE's position after its 5th Plenum (February 1949) when it returned to the slogan of self-determination including the right of cession for the Slav-Macedonians⁴⁴ must be seen in this context. It was a double attempt from KKE to maintain its bonds with the minority and put pressure on Tito⁴⁵. At the same time, NOF was going even further deciding in its 2nd Plenum in 2/2/1949 that Macedonia should unite in an independent and equal national unit in the terms of a "Democratic Federation of the Balkan People"⁴⁶.

⁴² Stavrakis supports that after 1948, Stalin tried to use the Macedonian issue against Tito in order to "rival the Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia". Therefore he tried to turn NOF against Yugoslavia and make the organization pro-Bulgarian. Evangelos Kofos adopts a similar approach saying that after 1948 the Slav-Macedonians were used as "a potential weapon against Tito" and as a potential tool to cut off the P.R.Macedonia from Yugoslavia. On the other hand he supports that the decision of the 5th Plenum was not dictated by the Soviets but it was more an attempt of the leadership of KKE to catch the spirit of the time concerning the Cominform-Yugoslav relations. See, Evangelos Kofos, op.cit, pp. 28-29 and 32-33
See Peter J. Stavrakis, op.cit, pp. 179-181

⁴³ Giorgis D. Katsoulis, op.cit, pg.229

⁴⁴ "...there must be no doubt that as a result of DSE's victory and of the people's revolution the Macedonian people will find their full national satisfaction/instauration in the way they, themselves want it, by giving their blood today to gain it". Giorgi D. Katsouli, op.cit, pg. 278

⁴⁵ The Foreign Office and the State Department evaluated the decision of KKE's 5th Plenum similarly that it aimed in pressuring Tito and the Yugoslav Macedonians and less the Greek state. See Sotiris Rizas, *The Macedonian issue (foreign intervention and Greek policy)*, Grigori, Athens 1996, pp. 50. Also Jordan Baev, *The civil war in Greece: International dimensions*, Filistor, Athens 1997, pp. 209

⁴⁶ Elisabeth Barker, op.cit, pp. 198

Even though this decision of the 5th Plenum soon changed once again during the 6th Plenum of October 1949⁴⁷, the bad impression that was created for the KKE was difficult to change. Neither the public statements of Soviet officials that the Soviet Union supported no plans for a Macedonian state helped⁴⁸. Today, there is a number of documents proving that the Eastern Bloc countries had no involvement in this decision of the KKE and that they moreover regarded it as dangerous⁴⁹. The government's propaganda had found a real basis to prove the "treacherous", "anti-national" role of the communists. Moreover, a debate was created in the lines of KKE for the years that followed the end of the Civil War⁵⁰.

The following part of a speech of Zachariadis in 1950 was an answer to the voices that questioned the decision of the 5th Plenum and it is demonstrative of the logic behind it: *"...with that change we were trying to mobilize the Slav-Macedonian masses fighting off the subversive attempt of Tito"*.

Then he adds. *"Now according to the situation each time and the interests of the proletariat's struggle, of the revolution, the one or the other side of the national issues is promoted because the national issue as a reserve of the proletariat or popular-democratic revolution is submitted to it...the change each time in the slogan, separation or autonomy, is dictated from the specific each time interest of the revolution however it is not imposed spontaneously from the above but it is realized through understanding with the revolutionary organizations of the suppressed ethnicity"*⁵¹.

Under this argumentation, Zachariadis considered the decisions of both the 5th Plenum that supported the right for self-determination till secession and the 6th Plenum that turned to equality and autonomy as correct⁵². It can be said that under Zachariadis, the KKE did not try to examine critically its position of the 5th Plenum on

⁴⁷ "The struggle against the oppression of the Slav-Macedonians, the struggle for their equality, the recognition of the right to live free in their fatherland, ties the Macedonians with the Greeks and blocks the invasive plans of Tito against the Greek Macedonia", in *KKE: Official documents*, Vol.7 1949-1955, Synhroni Epohi, Athens 1955

⁴⁸ For instance Gromyko's statement in 5/5/1949. Sotiris Rizas, op.cit, pp. 51

⁴⁹ See Jordan Baev, op.cit, pp. 209-210

⁵⁰ See the debate of Partsalidis with Zahariadis before and during the 7th Plenum of the C.C. of KKE in 1950, *Neos Kosmos*, August and September 1950

⁵¹ *Neos Kosmos*, September 1950, pp. 518-519

⁵² However, Zachariadis in his work "New situation – New duties" characterized the decision of 1949 on the Macedonian issue as a product of Titoic pressure that did not meet the particular conditions and the interests of the movement.

the Macedonian issue most possibly because this could even question the Party's leadership⁵³.

In contrary to the KKE, the biggest non-EAMist Left party, the social-democratic SKELD had a different approach for the Slav-Macedonian minority and the Macedonian issue. The SKELD undervalued the importance of the Slav-Macedonians and did not accept them as the second ethnicity of Macedonia. According to their approach, the character of the national unity and the "Greekness" had changed after the national resistance deriving now not from the bourgeois but from the lower classes. As a consequence, the SKELD denied to accept the Slav-Macedonians as a minority getting in line with the Greek government on that issue. The criticism towards KKE was mostly based on that issue and to its "awkward policy" in relation with the territorial claims of the northern countries. Especially after the 5th Plenum of KKE, the SKELD characterizes its decisions as "extremist" that threaten the territorial integrity of Greece and the gap between the two Left parties became impossible to close⁵⁴. The disagreement on the national issues played such an important role that led later the leader of SKELD, Svolos, to congratulate the victory of the national army in the Civil War as an answer to any plot against the Greek territory⁵⁵.

After the end of the Civil War, the state propaganda against KKE continued, bringing always on the surface the decision of the 5th Plenum. This was one of the main arguments justifying the punishment of the communists in the post cold war era.

⁵³ Even in 1952 there were signs from KKE's tactic that the decision of the 5th Plenum on Macedonia was not considered as wrong. Therefore, the KKE seemed to agree with the "Positions on the Macedonian issue" expressed by the Bulgarian Communists that among others mentioned: "After the overthrow of the imperialist yoke and the fascist tyranny in Greece and Yugoslavia...free self-determination of the Macedonian people for their national and state union", in Grigoris Farakos, op.cit, pp. 70

⁵⁴ Anna Koumantaraki, "The relations of the socialists with the KKE", in Koutsoukis, Sakkas, eds., *Folds of the Civil War*, Filistor, Athens 2000, pp. 124-126 and Hagen Fleischer, "The third factor", in Boerentzen, Iatrides, Smith, eds. *Studies on the Civil War 1945-1949*, Olkos, Athens 1992, pp. 214, 229

⁵⁵ Hagen Fleischer, *ibid*, pp. 230

A.2 From the end of the Civil War until 1956

In the first years after the Civil War KKE's policy towards the northern neighbors of Greece had two sides. On one side there was a full support of Bulgaria (and Albania) and a continuous promotion through "Rizospastis" of their achievements in the political, economic and social life which was usually contrasted to the Greek backwardness. On the other side it was characterized by a strong and merciless attack against Yugoslavia (and then Turkey) and more importantly against the creation of an axis between Yugoslavia-Greece-Turkey and Italy⁵⁶.

For KKE, this trigger-happy alliance would turn against Albania, Bulgaria and the Soviet Union but also against the Greek territorial integrity⁵⁷ so the fight against it was highly prioritized. In these terms, Tito's role in KKE's defeat in 1949 was exaggerated with Tito shown as a fascist agent of the British Intelligence Service⁵⁸. Especially during 1950 and 1951 the KKE kept warning that the imperialists together with Tito are planning a new war adventure in the Balkans after Korea⁵⁹.

Equally interesting is the attempt of KKE's leadership to prove that there was a secret agreement between Tito, the British and the Greeks according to which Tito

⁵⁶ P.Rodakis,B.Grammenos, *The 3rd Conference of KKE: 10-14/10/1950*, Glaros, Athens 1988, pg. 334. The 3rd Conference of KKE was the basis for the post-Civil War Balkan policy of KKE. In the 5th point of the Decision of the Conference it is mentioned that: "...the systematic work for the creation of the square Greece-Yugoslavia-Italy-Turkey. The accelerated militarization of Greece where the army rises to 500.000 under the American dictate. The forging of the Athens-Belgrade axis and the Greco-Turkish alliance. The climactic provocations against the P.R.Albania and the P.R.Bulgaria. The war propaganda and psychosis that is cultivated systematically. All these and a series of similar incidents stabilize the certainty that the American imperialism chooses the Balkans as the field of his next war beat".

⁵⁷ A. Psiloritis in *Neos Kosmos*, January 1952, pp. 42. Miltiadis Porfyrogenis, "Athens center of conspiracies against peace", *Neos Kosmos*, June 1952, pp. 13. See also the extended article "The Balkan War Alliance" in *Neos Kosmos*, August 1954, where it is argued that there are frictions between Greece and Turkey about Cyprus, the Dodecanese and W.Thrace as well as between Greece and Yugoslavia about Macedonia and the partition of Albania. A similar analysis can be found in *Avgi*, 16/12/1952.

⁵⁸ After Tito closed the borders with Greece in 1949, Zachariadis announced that there was an Anglo-Yugoslav communication, even before 1944, for the Yugoslavs to take over Thessaloniki. In Elisabeth Barker, op.cit, pp. 189

⁵⁹ See *Neos Kosmos*, 1950 July, pp. 345-346 where the author expects a Greek attack against Bulgaria or Albania.

Also *Neos Kosmos* 1951, January, pp.4, "The year of 1950 was a year of war preparation for Greece. The American imperialism chooses the Balkans for one of his following adventuristic war actions".

Neos Kosmos 1951, March, pg. 4, where the slogan "The guns conversely" is introduced for the occasion of a war in the Balkans and the duty of the communists.

would be given a part of Macedonia and Epirus in order for the alliance to be established⁶⁰.

The steady efforts of KKE in the early '50s to maintain its bonds with the Slav-Macedonian minority⁶¹ cannot be separated as well from the fear of a Balkan war and the anti-Tito campaign. Thereby, after ousting and denouncing the "Titoic agents" and the dissolution of NOF and its brother organizations, the leadership of KKE promoted the creation of a new Slav-Macedonian organization, called Iliden⁶². Finally, there were also other initiatives concerning the education and the ideological work in the Slav-Macedonian political refugees who lived in the Eastern Bloc states.

On the other hand, the KKE did not abandon the views for a new round on the civil war and examined the prospects of setting bases in Bulgaria and Albania which would train teams of the refugees of DSE in order to perform new operations if necessary. These ideas of the leadership of KKE were rejected by the Soviets and the Balkan countries as not appropriate⁶³. What is sure, is that the war-psychosis remained in the Balkans at least until the end of 1950.

From the side of the Greek government, the relations with Yugoslavia in the '50s faced the following two problems. The first was connected with the broaching from the Yugoslav side of the Slav-Macedonian minority subject. There the Greek side responded in a tepid way not taking into serious consideration the Yugoslav propaganda. The other problem was about the luck of the displaced children of the

⁶⁰ "The Americans are ready to surrender Thessaloniki...and Preveza to Tito in order to complete their imperialist bridgehead in the Balkans". Decision of the Politburo of KKE "For the present situation in Greece", *Neos Kosmos*, April 1950, pp. 175

⁶¹ "We must strengthen even more stable our brotherly bonds with the Slav-Macedonian minority, bonds that were forged into our common struggle and were consecrated with the blood that we drew together for the same aim. And to fight together even further for our common cause" in P.Rodakis, B.Grammenos, op.cit., pg. 337

⁶² In the declaration of the Congress of Iliden it was mentioned that in the present the Slav-Macedonian people will fight side by side with the Greek people for national parity which means "political home-Rule" namely "territorial, administrative, economic, social, educational, cultural religious home-Rule". But the long-term aim of Iliden as it seems in the following extract did not differ much from the aims of the communist movements back in the '20s: "The Macedonian People in their long history has evolved into the big family of the brotherly Slavic people to a separate nation. The Slav-Macedonian people preserve the inalienable right of their full national restoration, of the unification with their brothers when the People's Democracy/Republic will win in Greece and Yugoslavia, in a united, independent Macedonia, in the family of the free Balkans and Slavic people having as foremost the heroic, liberator Russian people". *Neos Kosmos*, May 1952, pp. 21-23

⁶³ Jordan Baev, op.cit, pp. 220-222

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Greek civil war, a great number of which were in Yugoslavia. The Greek government claimed that these children were kidnapped by the communists while Yugoslavia and the KKE responded that they were brought there for protection from the war and the queen Frederica's "fascist kid-towns" and moreover that the great majority of them was living there with their parents (or with the full agreement of their families). Consequently there was little progress in this issue and until 1956 only a few children returned in Greece⁶⁴ despite the fears of KKE that Tito was planning to surrender "their" kids to the monarch-fascism.

As it was proved, these problems were not enough to prevent the desired rapprochement between Greece and Yugoslavia in the '50s especially since it was not just a matter of bilateral relations but a very important link in the chain of the Cold War balance game. Except a short period of "ice" in the Greek-Yugoslav relations, for some months in 1950 the relations between the two countries steadily improved⁶⁵. Hence, after long negotiations during 1952, Greece-Turkey and Yugoslavia signed a cooperation and a defense pact in 1953 and 1954 respectively which became known as Balkan Pact⁶⁶. Greece had already exchanged diplomatic missions with Yugoslavia since 1950 and at least until 1953 Yugoslavia was the only Balkan state that had commercial connection with Greece. Moreover, in 1954 Greece granted Yugoslavia a free trade zone in the port of Thessalonica and Yugoslav tourism started appearing in northern Greece⁶⁷.

All these years, the KKE (and EDA as well) dedicated a serious part of their propaganda in order to fight this Balkan Alliance with their basic argument being that it was an aggressive pact targeting the People's Republics and the Soviet Union⁶⁸.

⁶⁴ The activities of the Red Cross stopped in 1952 having brought back in Greece 538 children until then. Lars Boerentzen, "The "pedomazoma" and the kid-towns of the queen", in Boerentzen, Iatrides, Smith, op.cit, pp. 162-163

⁶⁵ See S. Linardatos, *From the civil war to the Junta*, Papazisis, Athens 1977, pp. 184-185

⁶⁶ According to Haralambos Tsardanidis the reasons that led Greece to sign the Balkan Pact were: 1. The safety of her borders with Bulgaria as with Yugoslavia and Turkey they were creating a circle around her, 2. Increase of the importance of Greece in the eyes of the West, 3. The British-American prompt for rapprochement and cooperation with Belgrade. The author also believes that Greece did not enter the Pact in a time of weakness but in a period when its prestige had risen (entrance in NATO etc). Haralambos Tsardanidis, "Greece in the Balkan Pact", in *The Greek society during the first post-war period 1945-1967*, Sakis Karagiorgas foundation, Athens 1994, pp. 212-214

⁶⁷ Sotiris Wallden, *Greece and the Eastern countries 1950-1967: Economic relations and politics*, Volume A, Odysseas Institute of Mediterranean Studies, Athens 1991, pp. 207

⁶⁸ See for instance the Decision of the 2nd Plenum of the C.C. of KKE (10-12/10/1951), in *KKE: Official documents*, op.cit, pp. 196-199. In the same spirit of alarming about the U.S.-Greek-Yugoslav-Turkish war preparations in the Balkans are also the Announcements of KKE and AKE, in 5/8/1952 and 23/1/53, *KKE: Official documents*, *ibid*, pp. 291-292 and 329 respectively. Also see Avgi, 19/10/1952,

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Ensuant to the latter there was an attitude aiming at the moral depreciation of the Allies (Yugoslavia and Turkey) and an indication of the unholy nature of the cooperation of these states. After the death of Stalin and the weakening of Zachariadis position in KKE's leadership this tension gradually fades. Already soon after the Balkan Pact, a new rapprochement between Yugoslavia and the Soviet Union begins giving hope to the Greek Left⁶⁹.

As for Bulgaria, the main troubles were related with the arrangement of the Bulgarian war-reparation payments, the Greek children that were living there after the civil war and the Bulgarian army's number and position. Little or no process was made in the latter issues. Needless to mention is that the KKE supported the Bulgarian claims, highlighted the Bulgarian good will to establish diplomatic and economic cooperation with Greece and often blamed the Greek government for being dubious, as well as for searching for excuses to postpone the improvement of the bilateral relations under the American pressure.

The last "hot episode" between the two states happened in 25/7/1952 in the river Evros for the possession of a small river-island on the river borders.

The Greek relations with Bulgaria were fully (as fully as possible in the context of the Cold War) normalized after 1955 when the Varna Agreement on the prevention and settling of frontier incidents was signed giving an end to the territorial claims of each part⁷⁰. A commercial agreement between the two countries in 1953 (renewed in 1956) had prepared the ground⁷¹. The Greek-Yugoslav relations kept the good balance of the previous years and in a few words it can be said that the "Slavic danger" clearly withered away. The improvement in the relations with the Slavic neighbors is reflected in the optimism of EDA's decisions for peace in the Balkans, and the open prospect of cooperation with the other states with Greece having an intermediate position⁷². It is also the time of improvement of the relations between the two coalitions so the Greek Left concentrates more in the need for a new, neutral

⁶⁹ See *Avgi*, 3/3/1955. Also during February 1955 there are many articles in *Avgi* for the new approach between Yugoslavia and the Soviets.

⁷⁰ Evanthis Hatzivasilou, "Greek-Bulgarian and Greek-Soviet relations 1953-1959: A view from the British archives", *Modern Greek Studies Yearbook*, Vol.8 (1992), pp. 124-125

⁷¹ It is not by chance that Bulgaria responded negatively in a request of Zachariadis to transfer to Bulgaria some officials of KKE from other Eastern countries. See, Jordan Baev, in Koutsoukis, Sakas, eds., op.cit, pp. 209

⁷² *Decisions and declarations of the General Council and the Managing Committee of EDA on the crucial problems of the people and the country*, Athens, 1955, pp. 35-37 and 42-43. See also *A' Panhellenic Conference of EDA., 15-18 July 1956*, Press Office of EDA., Athens-August 1956, pp. 42

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orientation of the Greek foreign policy, for close and peaceful cooperation with its northern neighbors. The KKE would completely clear up its past clash with Yugoslavia when in its 6th Plenum in 1956 it would accuse Beria and Zachariadis for the interruption of the KKE-Yugoslav relations⁷³.

But while KKE underlines both the need for political and economic cooperation with Bulgaria and Yugoslavia, EDA's speech focuses more in the field of economics where during that time there is a strong debate -even between scientists- for the orientation of the Greek economy and trade⁷⁴. For the Left, Greece was traditionally and naturally linked to the Balkans and the one-sided development towards the Mediterranean and the West harms the Greek interests especially the agricultural sector. Industrialization becomes a very important terminus for the Left⁷⁵. The Greek governments and the U.S. patronage are often criticized for the non-industrialized, dependent, non-productive Greek economy and its deadlocks.

At the same time several initiatives emerge from the Soviet Union and the Eastern Bloc aiming to strengthen their economic and political bonds with Greece. Those initiatives became more systematic especially in the time of the big crisis in Cyprus and the worsening of the Greco-Turkish relations⁷⁶. After 1955, Greece attempted to approach more Yugoslavia in order to keep a balance in the Balkans after the crisis with Turkey.

Although the trade between Greece and its northern borders rose steadily in the period till 1956⁷⁷, this process was not easy at all due to internal fears and doubts and foreign, mainly U.S., pressure and control over the Greek economy. The last crisis between the Greek Left and Yugoslavia, although not so important like the previous, appeared after the incidents of 1956 in Hungary when Tito justified the Hungarian revolt and criticized the Soviets.

In general, the calls of the Greek Left for improvement of Greece's relations with Bulgaria and Yugoslavia were included in the general propaganda for an intermediate position between the two poles, for political neutrality and the need for an independent economic policy. The alternative way of economic development was connected with the need for a revision of the Greek foreign policy.

⁷³ *The three-year epopee of DSE 1946-1949*, Rizospastis-Synhroni Epohi, Athens 1998, pp. 422-423

⁷⁴ See Sotiris Walden, *op.cit*, pp. 86-89. Also *Avgi*, 22/2/1953

⁷⁵ Sotiris Walden, *ibid*, pp. 75-76

⁷⁶ "Greece in front of specific proposals by Bulgaria, Albania, Romania", *Avgi*, 5/7/1955

⁷⁷ The trade between Greece and the Eastern Bloc rose 73% in 1956. Sotiris Walden, *ibid*, pp.137

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If after 1953 the "Slavic fear" was elapsing, the danger for Macedonia and Thrace was withering away and the relations between Greece and its northern neighbors were improving, this was not the case with Turkey. And the Greek left on its whole grasped the opportunity to attack the "fake" Greco-Turkish "friendship" and point out the "real friends" of the Greek people. In many cases the Left newspapers and "Rizospastis" particularly spoke for Turkish claims over Western Thrace, a scenario that had first appeared during the Greek civil war⁷⁸. Periodically, the rumors about Turkey's aspirations on Thrace would appear until 1956 and especially since the beginning of the big crisis on Cyprus since 1955. Then Turkey used Thrace and the Turkish minority to warn Greece about its demand for Enosis with Cyprus⁷⁹. But this was not the issue that could cause a shift in the Greek foreign policy and its stance regarding the two blocs. It is beyond any doubt that the hot national issue for Greece during the '50 was Cyprus...

⁷⁸ With a statement in mid-1952 the General Montgomery supported that "Thrace must be protected". However his views were not accepted by the British Army Staff. Haralambos Tsardanidis, *op.cit*, pp. 215

⁷⁹ *Avgi*, 19/10/1956

B. Northern Epirus

B.1 The historical background

The annexation of Northern Epirus had been a continuous target for the Greek state during the first half of the previous century. In that period, the Greek army occupied this region three times (Balkan Wars, W.W.I, W.W.II) but each of these times it was forced to withdraw due to pressures from the Great Powers.

The recognition of the new Albanian state after the Balkan Wars and the decision that Northern Epirus should be a part of it was never really accepted neither by Greece nor by the Greek population of Northern Epirus. This led to the uprising of 1914 when the Greeks of Northern Epirus proclaimed and finally won their autonomy within the Albanian state. However, this would not last for much cause soon after the humanity would live the first world war.

Until 1921 the status of Northern Epirus would be a matter of continuous negotiations and agreements between Greece, Albania and the Great Powers. Even though at some points its unification with Greece seemed rather possible, the post-war Peace Conference finally decided that it should remain in Albania and the Greek army had to withdraw once again. Nevertheless, the Greek state kept emphasizing the Greek identity of the region based on the major Greek population living there. The third and last military "entrance" in Northern Epirus came after the Greco-Italian war in 1940 when, while chasing back the attacking Italian troops, the Greek army was once again conquering Northern Epirus. This third attempt was terminated after the German invasion in Greece, in the spring of 1941. Still, the Greek government in the summer of the same year would inform the British that it insisted on its rights on those lands⁸⁰.

During the W.W.II all Greek sides ("government in exile", guerillas, parties) included the issue of Northern Epirus in their national agendas, all demanding its return to Greece. The creation of a liberation movement in N.Epirus in 1942 called "MAVI" did not result in a common destiny between the region and Greece. "MAVI" aimed at the liberation of N.Epirus and its unification with Greece. As a result of its inability to find a formula of cooperation with the left-wing or right-wing guerillas of Albania and its involvement in the rising controversies between the left-wing and right-wing guerilla

⁸⁰ *History of the Greek nation: Vol.16, Ekdotiki, pp. 91*

forces in Greece it was soon disbanded. Finally in 1943 the ELAS of Epirus formed the "Antifascist Minority Group" which cooperated with the "National Front" of Hoxha.

B.2 All for N.Epirus (from the end of the War till the Peace Conference)

The Greek Left, namely EAM, followed the rhetoric of the conservative, right and nationalist parties defending the "inalienable right" of Greece in Northern Epirus and demanding that the historical grievance against Greece should be redressed⁸¹. But the traditional political parties and powers had a rather aggressive-dynamic approach on the issue not excluding the possibility of a military occupation of the region. This fact would create serious troubles among the Lefts.

The SK-ELD that was the biggest non-EAMic socialist Party was completely identified with the position of the Greek state about the Hellenic character of N.Epirus⁸².

As for the KKE in particular, a careful examination of its stance proves a deep confusion regarding to the tactic and the political line it should follow.

An important development in the end of W.W.II was the predominance of the communist guerillas of Enver Hoxha in Albania and their alignment with the Soviet Union. It is very possible that the KKE felt trapped between its rhetoric during the war, the views of its EAMic allies and its new duties related to the new situation that had emerged in Albania. If KKE would choose to support the annexation of Northern Epirus then it would become hostile against a People's Republic regime and the Soviet interests. In the opposite case it could cause disorder in the EAMic camp and it could be heavily criticized from the nationalist circles in Greece. This uneasy position of KKE was reflected in a series of controversial moves during 1945 and 1946.

First in 1945 the KKE uncovered some secret plans of the Greek government to invade Albania and occupy Northern Epirus and denounced such practices⁸³. For this move, Zachariadis was later condemned by a Greek court for libelous imputation⁸⁴.

⁸¹ Hagen Fleischer, "The National Liberation Front (EAM) 1941-1947: A reassessment", in John Iatrides, Linda Wrigley, eds., *Greece at the crossroads: The civil war and its legacy*, Pennsylvania State University Press, Pennsylvania 1995, pp. 48-89

⁸² Anna Koumantaraki, "The relations of the socialist with the KKE", in Koutsoukis, Sakkas, eds., *Folds of the Civil War*, Filistor, Athens 2000, pp. 117-120. See also *Rizospastis*, 11/5/1947 where the position of the Panhellenic Plenum of SK-ELD is criticized for demanding the annexation of N.Epirus.

This initiative of KKE obviously fit its ideology and its internationalist duties but one month after, Zachariadis would comment in a newspaper that KKE did not oppose the annexation of Northern Epirus but its only precondition was that this should not take place at once with the use of the arms' force⁸⁵. Already, the Program of People's Republic adopted by the Party at the same year stated that: "*The government of the People's Republic....will insist that the people of Northern Epirus will be able to decide freely and alone where they will go and what will they do*". Of course one could argue that this was something hypothetical as this would be an issue between two governments of People's Republics if the KKE would form a government but the fact that also the local committee of the Party in Epirus was in favor of the annexation of the northern part⁸⁶ proves that the Party's view on the issue was not yet clear enough.

Indisputably, the most awkward movement of KKE on the issue was the official statement of its Political Bureau, on June 1945, that in case of a Greek military campaign for Northern Epirus, decided by the democratic majority, the Party would not participate but despite its disagreement it would not oppose it either⁸⁷. This statement would later cause major discussions and debates in the lines of the Party. The truth is that later, it was forsaken by Zachariadis himself as a product of the EAMic, nationalistic heritage. However this serious mistake of KKE would consist a matter of discussion even during the Party's 3rd Conference in 1950⁸⁸.

From 1946 and on, KKE's stance on the issue would be more clear, led by the need to protect the young and vulnerable People's Republic of Albania and the Soviet interests in the region as well. It should be mentioned here that according to some authors, Albania, in terms of geopolitics, was one of the most important countries for the Soviet Union because its existence offered USSR an important exit on the

⁸³ The conservative newspaper "Vradyni" in 13/11/1945 commented that the revelation of the government's plans from "Rizospastis" called off the invasion in N.Epirus.

⁸⁴ *Rizospastis*, 12/11/1946

⁸⁵ Peter J. Stavrakis, *Moscow and the Greek communism 1944-1949*, Cornell University Press, London 1989, pp. 83

⁸⁶ Peter J. Stavrakis, *ibid*, pp. 102

⁸⁷ See *Rizospastis*, 2/6/1945

⁸⁸ "*In 1945...trying to preserve the unity into the EAMic camp we made a serious, basic, primal mistake. The Political Bureau of the C.C. of KKE in 1/6/1945 stated that if the democratic majority decided invasion of the Greek army in Northern Epirus the KKE would express its objections but obey. This is a monstrous mistake. It consisted a continuance and extension of the nationalistic heritage from the first occupation (c.c. the German occupation)*", in Nikos Zachariadis, "10 years of struggle", *Neos Kosmos*, August 1950, pp. 405

Adriatic sea⁸⁹. Thereby, a few months before the Paris Peace Conference, the 2nd Plenum of KKE (February 1946) would not mention anything about cession of Northern Epirus. On the contrary it emphasized on the need for a policy of peace and cooperation with Albania and the rest Balkan countries⁹⁰. Carrying out the new political line of protecting the P.R. of Albania the KKE would use its press to uncover all the secret plans and movements of the Greek side, like the cooperation with Albanian Balists (nationalists), the dispatch of secret agents in Albania, aiming to overthrow Enver Hoxha and his government and so forth⁹¹. To antagonize the nationalist propaganda about N.Epirus and the anti-Albanian public statements of officials the KKE would put its emphasis on the English occupation of the Dodecanese and the exclusion of Cyprus from the national agenda for the Paris Peace Conference⁹². It is clear that in the eve of the Peace Conference, the KKE had regretted its previous policy on N.Epirus and under the new situation did not wish a territorial loss of Albania since the latter was an ally of the Soviet Union and Greece was in the opposite camp⁹³. But at the same time the KKE had to keep a balance with its EAMic allies and between its past and present stance. The following part of an article of Petros Roussos in "*Rizospastis*" reflects that attempt from KKE:

*"We want our brothers that live around Greece, free. We want them to be integrated in Greece. But first of all we want Greece herself free and independent"*⁹⁴.

Unlike KKE, EAM would follow its wartime policy steadily demanding that Northern Epirus should be adjudged to Greece. This claim was included in EAM's letter to the Paris Peace Conference also signed by the representative of KKE⁹⁵.

This was a similar case with the realignment of the Greek-Bulgarian borders with KKE "stepping on two boats", objecting and accepting at the same time a claim.

Apart from the Dodecanese, the claim on Northern Epirus was the only serious territorial claim of the Greek state during the Paris Peace Conference. The post-war era seemed as the last chance for the Greek state to achieve the incorporation of the

⁸⁹ See for instance: Peter J. Stavrakis, op.cit., pp. 83, 143

⁹⁰ Giorgis D. Katsoulis, *History of the KKE: Volume 6 - 1946-1949*, Nea Synora-Livanis, Athens, pp. 101

⁹¹ See for instance: *Rizospastis*, 1/1/1946, 30/1/1946, 9/6/1946, 23/6/1946, 17/1/1947, 29/1/1947 and *Eleftheri Ellada*, 11/4/1946

⁹² See for instance: *Rizospastis*, 23/4/1946 where those voices demanding the division of Albania are denounced as agents of the Intelligence Service. Also *Rizospastis* 4/5/1946

⁹³ For instance see the comments in the statement of Dragoumis that the issue of N.Epirus is basically the issue of who controls the Adriatic sea. *Rizospastis*, 22/6/1946

⁹⁴ Petros Roussos, *Rizospastis*, 8/5/1946, pp.1

⁹⁵ "Appeal of the Political Coalition of EAM and the Party of Left Wing Liberals", *Eleftheri Ellada* and *Rizospastis*, 31 July 1946

region, otherwise it was very unlikely that this would be achieved through the exercise of the self-determination right by the minority⁹⁶. Given the fact that Cyprus was excluded from the Greek agenda, the weight for the government would fall on this issue. Moreover, there were other internal reasons related to the case of Northern Epirus. The armed conflicts with the left guerilla bands had already started in Greece and many of the incidents were taking place near the Greek-Albanian border causing worries and frustration to the government circles⁹⁷. Equally important was the fact that Greece was preparing for the plebiscite which would decide upon the return or not of the King. For some, putting emphasis on national issues like Northern Epirus was a way of diverting the attention from the "hot" internal developments⁹⁸. Maybe that is why the Greek government chose to maximize its claims adding the small but strategic island of Sason, located in the gulf of the Albanian city Avlona⁹⁹.

Albania answered by broaching the subject of the Chams¹⁰⁰, demanding compensations, resettlement of the violently removed populations and punishment of those responsible for their amotion¹⁰¹.

The beginning of the Conference coincided with the decision of the U.S. senate that Northern Epirus should be granted to Greece¹⁰². But in Paris the situation would be different. Facing the hostility of the Soviet and Yugoslav delegations¹⁰³ as well as the indifference of the Western, the discussion about Northern Epirus would be repeatedly postponed. Finally, it was decided that the issue would be discussed only after the German and the Austrian issues would be solved while the claim for the island of Sason was rejected. Typically this development did not consist a definitive loss for Greece but in reality it was regarded with pessimism and disappointment.

⁹⁶ Evanthis Hatzivasiliou, "Continuities and discontinuities in the targets of the Greek policy in the Balkans", in Hagen Fleischer, ed, op.cit., pp. 50

⁹⁷ Stephen Xydis, *Greece and the Great Powers 1944-1947*, Institute for Balkan studies, Thessaloniki 1963, pp. 230

⁹⁸ Stephen Xydis, *ibid*, pp. 295

⁹⁹ The KKE criticized this choice as imperialist. See *Rizospastis*, 1/6/1946

¹⁰⁰ The Chams were a Muslim, Albanian-speaking population living in South Epirus who were all chased out of Greece during the W.W.II as collaborators of the occupying forces

¹⁰¹ *Rizospastis*, 6/6/1946 and 16/6/1946

¹⁰² Elias Antonopoulos, *Albanian and Greco-Albanian relations: 1912-1994*, Okeanida, Athens 1995, pp. 28

¹⁰³ For a detailed presentation on the stance of USSR and Yugoslavia see: Stephen Xydis, op.cit., pp. 294-296

The reaction of the Left presented some differentiations within it. Reading the newspapers of the time it is obvious that the EAMic Parties through *"Eleftheri Ellada"* criticize heavily the government for not being able to fulfill the national desires while the communist *"Rizospastis"* is basically ironic towards the government's incapability and the indifference of its allies avoiding to emphasize the loss of Northern Epirus. This is probably another proof that in 1946 the KKE was rather tolerating the EAMic claims to the north than really supporting them. It is indicant that when *"Eleftheri Ellada"* was for two weeks continuously publishing articles concerning the loss of N.Epirus¹⁰⁴ with titles as: *"There is no N.Epirus issue anymore! The monarchic delegation withdrew it from the daily agenda"*, *"The fiasco of the national claims is full"*, *"Rizospastis"* was just sticking to the facts of the Conference...

B.3 Protection of the young Republic (after the Peace Conference)

The period after the Paris Peace Conference and until 1949 was of continuous tension between Greece and Albania. In the context of the civil war, Greece blamed Albania for giving shelter and supporting the communist guerillas and even cooperating in the battlefield with them. These accusations often turned to warns that if that situation would continue the Greek army could pass the Albanian borders to establish a secure environment for the country. On the other hand, Albania rejected the theories of Greece and accused the latter for violating their borders. The KKE through *"Rizospastis"* often supported the accusations of Albania warning about the dangers emerging from the Greek government's tactic¹⁰⁵. The most serious episode of this series was the bombardment of Albanian villages by the Greek air force which resulted in two dead and seven injured people¹⁰⁶.

An interesting fact which took place in that period was the visit of the delegation of the C.C. of the N. Epirus Struggle to the C.C. of EAM in order to discuss the implications emerging in the case of N.Epirus after the declaration of the Truman doctrine. The conversations during the meeting and the public statements afterwards demonstrate until a certain point the different approach of KKE with the other EAMic parties on the issue. EAM's representative expressed his sadness for the non-solution

¹⁰⁴ See *Eleftheri Ellada*, 27-28/9/1946, and 2-14/10/1946

¹⁰⁵ *Rizospastis*, 8/9/1946, 11/12/1946, 3/1/1947, 18/4/1947

¹⁰⁶ *Rizospastis*, 24-25/5/1947

of the issue during the Peace Conference and his worries for the present situation while the representative of the KKE put his emphasis in the need for Greece to be independent commenting that only after that, *"the road for the realization of our national rights will be open"*¹⁰⁷.

As the last battles of the civil war took place near the Greek-Albanian borders and given the fact that Tito had already closed the Yugoslavian borders, the possibility of a Greek invasion in Albania became bigger. Either this was a game of pressure against the communist camp or not it is sure that it affected the Soviet bloc's decisions. When the Democratic Army was finally defeated on summer of 1949, the majority of its fighters withdrew in Albania making the situation quite complicated as Greece demanded their surrender and threatened with an invasion into Albania.

The solution was given with the almost immediate departure of the DSE fighters for other countries of the Eastern Bloc and the public announcement that it would stop the armed struggle. Some opinions from KKE for the creation of training bases of DSE in Albania were immediately rejected by the Soviet and Albanian Parties¹⁰⁸. According to some, Stalin was seriously worried for the security of Albania¹⁰⁹. Especially after Cominform's clash with Yugoslavia there were serious worries in the Eastern bloc that the little Albania could become a bite between Greece and Yugoslavia cutting off the only corridor of the Soviets to the Adriatic. Therefore, Stalin could not support the continuance of the DSE struggle and the return of its force to Greece through Albania.

But no matter that the civil war had ended, the threat against Albania remained.

The official Greek state never abandoned its aspirations on Northern Epirus although in the '50s it would officially adopt the peaceful settlement of the N.Epirus issue¹¹⁰.

The Greek state did not only adopt an aggressive attitude against Albania but it refused to recognize their borders keeping them closed while being in a state of war with the neighboring country¹¹¹. Hence, many decades would pass until Greece and Albania would reestablish diplomatic relations. It is significant of the Greek stance

¹⁰⁷ See *Eleftheri Ellada*, 1/4/1947

¹⁰⁸ There was even a meeting of the three parties in Albania for the solution of the issue, Jordan Baev, *The civil war in Greece: International dimensions*, Filistor, Athens 1997, pp. 220-221

¹⁰⁹ There are also proofs that the CIA organized in 1949 three operations that aimed in overthrowing Hoxha. See Jordan Baev, *op.cit.*, pp. 30

¹¹⁰ See for instance *Avgi*, 23/1/1953

¹¹¹ *History of the Greek Nation*: Vol.16, *op.cit.*, pp. 238, 246

that even in the times of improvement of its inter-Balkan relations, all Albanian initiatives aiming at the normalization and reestablishment of diplomatic and trade relations between the two states were rejected¹¹².

It is also widely supported that even in the early '50s the Greek state favored and encouraged Western plans of overthrowing Hoxha and invading Albania¹¹³. This scenario was examined after the end of the Greek civil war and during the Korean War too.

At the same time, the KKE and the Soviet bloc considered the threat against Albania as the major threat in the Balkans which was very possible to be realized also as a diversion from the Korean front¹¹⁴. Consequently the press of KKE and its public statements often warned about the dangers deriving from the "monarchofascist"-imperialist plans which could cause a new Balkan odyssey. Yet, the KKE decisively declared that in case of an invasion attempt against Albania the "monarchofascist" army would face the "arms in the reverse direction" implying an internal riot¹¹⁵.

This motive would appear again and again in the Party's documents during all the post-civil war period. The following parts taken from decisions of the KKE are illustrative of how seriously the Greek Party counted the prospect of an anti-communist campaign in the Balkans in 1950 and 1951: *"the axis Athens-Belgrade-Rome turns against the People's Republic of Albania for its division. The Greek communists won't go to war, they will stop every attempt of war against Albania or other People's Republic"*¹¹⁶, *"The year of 1950 was a year of war preparations for Greece. The American imperialism chooses the Balkans for one of its following adventurist war actions. [...] Like maniacs they crow for Northern Epirus while they betrayed again Cyprus in the U.N."*¹¹⁷, *"The Americans that are being defeated today*

¹¹² *Avgi*, 25/5/1954 and 5/6/1954

¹¹³ Sotiris Wallden, *Greece and the Eastern countries 1950-1967: Economic relations and politics*, Volume A, Odysseas Institute of Mediterranean Studies, Athens 1991, pp. 51, 122. Also Grigoris Farakos, "The KKE facing the Balkan antagonisms", in Hagen Fleischer, ed., op.cit., pp. 71

¹¹⁴ See *Neos Kosmos*, July 1950, pp. 345-346

¹¹⁵ *"We will knock the stuffing out of the army which they are creating to use it today against Bulgaria and Albania... We will turn the war to their grave"*-Preposition of Zachariadis in P.Rodakis, B.Grammenos, *The 3rd Conference of KKE: 10-14/10/1950*, Glaros, Athens 1988, pp. 71

¹¹⁶ "Decision of the Political Bureau of the C.C. of KKE: For the present situation in Greece (26/4/1950)", in *KKE: Official documents*, Vol.7 1949-1955, Synhroni Epohi, Athens 1955, pp. 24-26

¹¹⁷ "Towards new struggles", *Neos Kosmos*, January 1951, pp.4

in Korea are getting prepared to transfer the war in the Balkans¹¹⁸”, “The elections’ results upset the project “Lightning” for an attack against the P.R. of Albania and Bulgaria¹¹⁹”, “we will never fight Albania, Bulgaria or USSR¹²⁰”, “no participation-sabotage of any attempt for war with the People’s Republics¹²¹”.

Similarly, the newly formed coalition of EDA, stated in its declaration for the elections of September 1951: *“the Greek People, and all of us with them, will give our blood without thrift and count to defend even the last stone of our Greek homeland. But we won’t sacrifice neither we will ever concur for even one drop of Greek blood to be dropped out of our homeland and for aims which are strange to the sole national interests of our People...¹²²”.*

Apart from the above, the USSR brought the issue of Northern Epirus in the Political Committee of the U.N., in 21/11/1951, when in a speech of the representative of the Soviet Union, Charapkin, the latter referred to public statements of Sofoklis Venizelos and General Georgoulis that spoke of “liberation” of Northern Epirus. Additionally, Charapkin quoted evidence about agents sent and sabotages organized from Greece in South Albania¹²³. In the same period the Left press in Greece was condemning the leader of the Right, General Papagos for his aspirations in N.Epirus and the “Lightning” plan, calling him “arsonist of the war”¹²⁴.

The years of 1952 and most of 1953 were relatively less “hot”, as some claim that the Americans examined the possibility of enlisting Albania for the future Greek-Turkish-Yugoslav coalition and therefore they convinced Greece to abandon its plans for N. Epirus¹²⁵.

The old theories and fears would appear once more fed by the military agreement between U.S.A. and Greece¹²⁶ and the creation of the Balkan Pact¹²⁷. The KKE in 1954 saw a possible future attack against P.R. Albania and Bulgaria due to “an

¹¹⁸ “The guns in the reverse direction”, *Neos Kosmos*, May 1951, pp.4. In the same article it is mentioned that the Greek state has developed a subversive activity in Northern Epirus while statements of Greek officials on the issue are quoted.

¹¹⁹ *Neos Kosmos*, May 1951, pp. 1-4

¹²⁰ “Elections’ Program of KKE-AKE (7/7/1951)”, in *KKE:Official Documents*, op.cit, pp. 162

¹²¹ “Decision of the 2nd Plenum of KKE (10-12/10/1951)”, in *KKE: Official Documents*, *ibid*, pp. 196-199

¹²² *Dimokratiki*, 28/8/1951

¹²³ *Neos Kosmos*, December 1951, pp. 19

¹²⁴ *Dimokratiki*, 9/11/1951

¹²⁵ Grigoris Farakos, op.cit., pp. 71

¹²⁶ See *Neos Kosmos*, February 1954

¹²⁷ The KKE in 1953 would see a possible future attack against P.R. Albania and Bulgaria due to “an escalation of the American war-preparations in the Balkans with the expected Greco-Turkish-Yugoslav Pact”. See, *KKE: Official Documents*, *ibid*

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escalation of the American war-preparations in the Balkans with the expected Greco-Turkish-Yugoslav Pact". Among others, it was supported that Greece and Yugoslavia were planning to divide Albania between them¹²⁸. Certainly these theories were not just ghosts chasing the communist camp neither only weapons in its anti-western propaganda. There is a number of indications for coup-plans against Hoxha and even a military intervention in Albania, in the first half of the '50s which are shared by a number of authors¹²⁹.

The following years of 1955 and 1956 were not years of serious developments, plans and worries around N.Epirus. As it happened with the rest national issues, the interest about N.Epirus was deteriorated due to the improvement of the Soviet-Yugoslav relations, the consequent inactivation of the Balkan Pact and the explosive developments in Cyprus that covered all other issues in Greece.

After the change in the population's balance in South Albania, the Greek state would replace its claim for annexation with a demand for the implementation of the international rules for the protection of the Greek minority¹³⁰. However, the state of war with the neighboring country would not be removed before the late '80s...

¹²⁸ See, "Coup against Albania?", *Avgi*, 8-20/3/1953. Also "The Balkan war coalition", *Neos Kosmos*, August 1954

¹²⁹ For instance, Spyros Linardatos, *From the civil war to the dictatorship: Volume B' 1952-1955*, Papazisi, Athens 1978, pp. 44-45

¹³⁰ Konstantinos Svolopoulos, "Decisive parameters in the formation of the Greek foreign policy 1936-1949", in Hagen Fleischer, ed., *op.cit.*, pp. 40-41

C. The Dodecanese Islands

*"In the last analysis, God put his hand
and Turkey did not come out to help us.
If this had happened, the Dodecanese
would now be Turkish"*

George Seferis-Script Sept. '41

The Dodecanese islands, which passed from the Ottomans to the Italians in 1912, experienced the beginning of the W.W.II under Italian occupation. In that sense, they were the only part of modern Greece that was under the Axis rule before its attacks against Greece in 1940 and 1941. But this disadvantage in the beginning of the war would prove an advantage when the war would end.

The claim over a territory previously belonging to the Axis camp was a much easier case, especially that in the case of the Dodecanese this territory was not even bordering to Italy but far away from it. Moreover, the population of those twelve islands was in its vast majority Greek, desiring to unite with the "motherland"¹³¹. Consequently, it can be said that the Dodecanese was the most "sure card" in the national agenda of the Greek state. However, the road until the union would be longer and more complicated than expected.

Already since 1939 France, Britain and Turkey had conducted a Treaty of reciprocal help according to which in a potential operation to take over the Dodecanese there would be used mainly Turkish forces¹³².

During the war both Britain and the Soviet Union examined the case of offering the islands to Turkey in order to convince her to break her neutrality and join the antifascist struggle¹³³. First, in 1941, Stalin proposed Eden to promise Turkey that in case of entering the war she would be granted the Dodecanese but this plan stubbed in Greece's reaction¹³⁴. On winter of 1943 during Churchill's visit in Turkey, the latter tried to entice the Turkish side to change its neutral stance by "offering" some of the

¹³¹ In 1940, Greeks made up the 80% of the population, followed by a 10% of Catholics (basically Italians), and only a 6% of Turks which could be found only in Kos and Rodos.

See Giannis Giannopoulos, *Short history of the Dodecanese*, Greek Parliament, pp. 58

¹³² Ministry of Foreign Affairs-University of Athens, *Dodecanese: The long way to the integration*, Kastanioti, Athens 1996, pp. 21

¹³³ History of the Greek Nation: Vol. 16, Edkotiki Athinon, pp. 92-93

¹³⁴ Ministry of Foreign Affairs-University of Athens, op.cit., pp. 22

islands¹³⁵. A similar thought once again, this time discussed between Churchill and his minister of Foreign Affairs, dating 4 April 1943, talked about giving Rhodes to the Turks as an exchange for their help in the battlefield¹³⁶. Additional plans concerning the small island of Castellorizo were too a part of the game of "sweetening" Turkey. Bevin himself had accepted that he had promised to the Turks that Castellorizo would be ceded to them¹³⁷. But while Britain was continuously examining these possibilities, the stance of the Soviet Union had changed and since 1944 it opposed every other solution than the integration of the islands in Greece.

After the Italian defeat and capitulation followed a short period of fights over the islands between British and German troops during which many of the islands were heavily bombarded. The German commander of the Dodecanese finally signed their surrender to Britain (8 May 1945) which from then on would rule the islands for almost two more years. Despite the hopes of the local population, the British period proved to have few differences from the Italian era as the Italian administrative and taxation systems remained unchanged. What is more, the Italian civil servants and bureaucrats continued to live and work in the islands while the repatriation of the Dodecanesians from the rest of Greece to their homeland was forbidden¹³⁸!

The anxiety deriving from the British moves and their dilatoriness in handing out the power to the Greeks, led, in 1945, to the formation of the National Front of Pan-Dodecanesian Liberation (EMPA) which can be shortly described as an attempt for the creation of a local EAM.

EMPA came after the initiative of some communist and pro-communist Dodecanesians. Its basic aim was to put pressure on Britain for the "enosis" of the islands with Greece and the immediate departure of the British troops. In that line it also struggled for the improvement of the living standards of the population, the reconstruction of the bombarded villages and towns and the functioning of democratic institutions-against the Italian fascist law, still active after the end of the War. Moreover, EMPA demanded peace and justice in Greece, the punishment of the Axis collaborators and the expulsion of the remaining Italians. Its activities included

¹³⁵ Ministry of Foreign Affairs-University of Athens, *ibid*, pp. 23

¹³⁶ Ministry of Foreign Affairs-University of Athens, *ibid*, pp. 24

¹³⁷ Ministry of Foreign Affairs-University of Athens, *ibid*, pp. 29, 31

¹³⁸ Ministry of Foreign Affairs-University of Athens, *ibid*, pp. 27

the publication of the newspaper "Enosis", the organization of workers' unions, the release of anti-British fly-bills and so forth¹³⁹...

The organization of EMPA was treated with hostility not only by the British but also by the Greek state. The civil war that had started in Greece since 1946 determined the state's stance against the Dodecanesian organization too. In the context of the civil war, EMPA was seen as a new possible danger in a newly obtained territory. Therefore, after the unity of the islands with Greece, it was immediately annulled and many of its members were sent to exile as pro-communists¹⁴⁰.

A history of the Dodecanese published by the Greek parliament mentions the existence of EMPA too, however adding that its influence, as well as the influence of KKE, was minor because of the absence of party-culture on the locals¹⁴¹.

The stance of the Left in the post-war era on the Dodecanesian issue can be seen into two periods. The first period can be set from 1945 until the official "enosis" of the twelve islands with Greece. This period can be divided in two sub-periods: One was from 1945 until the Paris Peace Conference when the Dodecanese passed typically to Greece. In that period the main aim of the Greek Left was to secure the integration of the islands in Greece and uncover all plans opposing this development. Additionally, the presence of British troops in the islands made the rhetoric of the Left concentrate on the demand for their departure as this was a basic terminus for the mainland of Greece as well.

In the second sub-period starting after the Paris Peace Conference and ending with the official declaration of the integration of the region by the Greek state, in the first months of 1948, the priorities of the Left were to secure a possible better future for the Lefts of EMPA, away from the civil conflicts of the rest of Greece, support their struggle for improvement of the living conditions in their region and cancel any American plans for cession of territory to Turkey.

The second major period beginning from 1952 until the end of 1954 is a product of the suspicions, the signs and the proofs of KKE and EDA that during the developments concerning the Balkan Alliance and Pact the fate of some of the Dodecanese islands was put to question once more by the Turks.

¹³⁹ Eleftherios Diakogiannis, *The rebellious of Symi*, Proskinio, Athens 2005, pp. 110-113

¹⁴⁰ Eleftherios Diakogiannis, *ibid*, pp. 104-105. Also, Giannis Giannopoulos, *op.cit*, pp. 68

¹⁴¹ Giannis Giannopoulos, *op.cit.*, pp. 68

During the year of 1946 "Rizospastis" and "Eleftheri Ellada" often published articles which were denouncing the British stay and their "fascist", "anti-hellenic" behavior in the Dodecanese¹⁴². The KKE kept demanding the immediate departure of the British troops while ringing the alarm for the future of the islands. More particularly, the KKE spoke for British attempts to create an autonomist movement in the Dodecanese using especially the Turkish minority of Rodos and Kos¹⁴³. The EAMic coalition warned for the danger caused by the British plans and "Eleftheri Ellada" heavily criticized the statement of the well-known Greek diplomat A. Kyrou, who also represented Greece in the Paris Peace Conference, about the possibility for an autonomous status for the Dodecanese¹⁴⁴. EMPA and many Dodecanesians shared also those fears and worries concerning the British intentions¹⁴⁵.

Generally, the illogical continuance of the British occupation consisted a weapon for KKE as it often used the fact to put to question the pro-Greek policy of Great Britain. Reminding of the situation in the Dodecanese (and Cyprus) was also a way of avoiding the pressure put on KKE about the Bulgarian claims in Western Thrace in the eve of the Paris Peace Conference¹⁴⁶.

Another rumor concerning the fate of the Dodecanese was related with the new Soviet plans for the region. According to some, the Soviets through their ambassador in Greece, Rodionov, tried to convince the Greek P.M. to approve the construction of a Soviet military base in the Dodecanese. In exchange, the Soviets would supply Greece with coal, food and other goods¹⁴⁷. The official history of the Dodecanese, published by the Greek Ministry of Foreign Affairs, supports also that in a first phase the Soviets were thinking of trying to exchange their approval of the islands' cession to Greece with two Soviet bases in the Dardanelle and Bosphorus¹⁴⁸.

The KKE belied these theories by supporting that it was nothing else but a British game aiming to disorientate the public attention from the continuous occupation of

¹⁴² See *Rizospastis*, 6/2/1946, 8/2/1946, 23/4/1946, 25/4/1946, 23/5/1946 and *Eleftheri Ellada*, 2/3/1946, 13/3/1946, 24/4/1946

¹⁴³ See *Rizospastis*, 7/5/1946

¹⁴⁴ *Eleftheri Ellada*, 27/5/1946

¹⁴⁵ Eleftherios Diakogiannis, op.cit, pp. 116

¹⁴⁶ Nikos Zachariadis, "The Bulgarian claims over the Aegean", *Rizospastis*, 30/4/1946, pp. 1

¹⁴⁷ See Peter J. Stavrakis, *Moscow and the Greek communism: 1944-1949*, Cornell University Press, London 1989, pp. 83

¹⁴⁸ Ministry of Foreign Affairs-University of Athens, op.cit., pp. 67

both the Dodecanese and Cyprus¹⁴⁹. Hence, the KKE felt completely vindicated after Molotov's initiative to propose that the Dodecanese should be granted to Greece¹⁵⁰.

The fate of the Dodecanese was decided during the Second Session of the Council of Foreign Ministers (27/06/1946) when after Molotov's proposal and the full agreement of everyone it was agreed that the territory should pass from Italy to Greece. The concession to Greece was reaffirmed in Paris, in 21 September 1946, followed by the Greco-Italian peace treaty in 10 February 1947. Shortly after, the British occupation of the island was finally terminated in 31 March of the same year.

After the control of the Dodecanese passed in Greek hands in 1947, the KKE through "Rizospastis" emphasized more on the poor economic conditions there, the suffering of the population, the lack of reconstruction and the outrageous prohibition for the repatriation of the Dodecanesians that used to live in Greece¹⁵¹. For the KKE, this prohibition was connected with the (undeclared yet) civil war in Greece and the preparations from the state to put the Dodecanese in this climate too by organizing the chase of the local democrats namely the members of EMPA¹⁵². Additionally some articles commented on the hostility of the local Turkish minority towards the unity with Greece¹⁵³. Another series of articles aimed in presenting EMPA and its work for the freedom, the "enosis" of the Dodecanese and the improvement of the living conditions of the local population¹⁵⁴. Moreover, both KKE and EAM tried to use the general optimism from the "enosis" of the Dodecanese to put more pressure on the Greek government and the British for the Cyprus issue.

As the civil conflicts became more total in the late 1947, the interest around the Dodecanese increased. "Rizospastis" openly claimed the existence of American plans and proposals to the Turkish side in which the Turkish entrance in the Greek anti-communist struggle would be achieved through the concession of some Dodecanese islands and a free-zone in Rodos¹⁵⁵.

¹⁴⁹ *Rizospastis*, 2/3/1946

¹⁵⁰ *Rizospastis*, 14/3/1946 and 28/6/1946

¹⁵¹ "State paradoxical in the Dodecanese", *Rizospastis*, 15/4/1947. Also *Rizospastis*, 23-24/4/1947

¹⁵² See *Rizospastis*, 24/5/1947, 5/6/1947

¹⁵³ "Hostile manifestations of the Turkish minority", *Rizospastis*, 2/4/1947

¹⁵⁴ *Rizospastis*, 5/4/1947, 12/4/1947

¹⁵⁵ "The Americans promise Greek islands to the Turks", *Rizospastis*, 3/10/1947. "Who sells Greece?", *Rizospastis*, 4/10/1947

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The special interest around that issue became more limited and almost disappeared when the Dodecanese was officially integrated in Greece in the first half of 1948, only to appear again in the early '50s this time related to the Balkan Pact preparations and negotiations. The KKE and EDA through their press steadily supported that during the negotiations between Yugoslavia, Turkey and Greece in 1952 there were Turkish claims on some islands of the Dodecanese¹⁵⁶. Articles in the same motive were repeatedly published during 1953 and 1954¹⁵⁷. The involvement of Turkey in the Dodecanese issue was one more tool for the Greek Left in its fight against the Greek-Turkish-Yugoslav axis. Zachariadis often criticized the Greek state and the nationalists: "...they praise and hymn Turkey [...] that not only betrayed and left us during the war but that also had claims over the Greek Dodecanese and even more on the archipelago islands"¹⁵⁸.

But from 1955, as the Balkan Pact gradually passed to inactivity and the general interest was almost absolutely concentrated on Cyprus, the rumors, the anxiety and the debate around the national status and dangers of the Dodecanese stopped. The youngest region of the modern Greek state, and the only one obtained after the W.W.II, would no more live under special conditions and uncertainty comparing to the rest of Greece.

¹⁵⁶ See *Avgi*, 16/12/1952. *Neos Kosmos*, June 1952, pp. 13

¹⁵⁷ See for instance, *Neos Kosmos*, August 1954, pp. 12-25

¹⁵⁸ Grigoris Farakos "The KKE facing the Balkan antagonisms", in Hagen Fleischer, ed, *Greece '36-'49: From the dictatorship to the Civil War*, Kastanioti, Athens 2003, pp. 58

D. Cyprus

"Greece breathes with two lungs, one American and one British and therefore she cannot have asphyxia because of the Cyprus problem"

George Papandreou-1950

Among the national issues that concerned Greece in the post-war era, there is no doubt that Cyprus was the most important and complicated of all. The central position and the dynamic nature of the issue gave more importance to the way that each political camp stood against it. The Cyprus problem played an essential role in the formation of the political concepts of the Left in the '50s and especially in the balance between the national and the class speech and orientation. Derivatively, the policy of alliances of the Left would change causing a redefinition of values and of the Greek political reality in general. Therefore, the Cyprus problem can be considered as the catalyst of several developments in the Greek political scene in the given period and particularly after the civil war.

D.1 The recent history of Cyprus

Geographically, the position of Cyprus in the East Mediterranean, (near Turkey, Middle East, North Africa and Greece) turned the island into one of the most strategic parts of the world at least since the end of the 19th century.

Soon after the opening of the Suez canal in 1869, Cyprus passed from Ottoman to British control first in 1878 under an annual rent paid to the Sultan and then completely after the Lausanne Treaty in 1923 when Turkey renounced all its rights on the island. In 1925 Cyprus was officially declared as colony of Great Britain.

Its population during the 20th century had always been in its majority Greek (around 80%) but also including a big and important community of Turks (around 20%). A crucial aspect is that even though the two communities coexisted peacefully until 1955, there was a clear segregation between them with different organizations, syndicates and so forth. Moreover, both communities desired their unification with

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their motherland (Greece or Turkey) with the Turkish-Cypriots (T/C) also favoring the idea of a dichotomy of the island due to their smaller number¹⁵⁹.

The most important moment of the pre-war period was beyond any doubt the incidents of 1931 when the Greek Cypriots (G/C) revolted against the British rule and demanded for their island to be united with Greece ("Enosis"). During the riots, there were gunshots from the police and the first deaths of people for the purpose of the "Enosis". Also the residence of the British high Commissioner was set in fire. However, the Greek government did not share the enthusiasm of the crowd in Cyprus¹⁶⁰. As for the local Communist Party of Cyprus (KKK), it denounced the revolt as "activities of the church and the bourgeois" and did not participate¹⁶¹. Despite its hostile stance, two of its leaders were sent to exile. Later, the KKK would be seriously criticized by the Comintern, a fact that would cause its total reorganization and the passing to a new phase.

Meanwhile, the incidents of 1931 caused a great hardening of the British rule. The measures of governor Palmer suspended most civil rights and liberties of the local population for one decade, a period known as "Palmerocracy".

This situation would only change after the beginning of the W.W.II. for profound reasons. The G/C faced this new era as a great opportunity to achieve the "Enosis" with Greece, this time through their participation in the war on the side of the Allied powers. This initiative which resulted in 800 Cypriot volunteers joining the Allied forces in 1943 was mainly coming from the newly formed party of AKEL (Progressive Party of the Working People).

AKEL was founded in 1941 after an initiative of the underground KKK and would soon become the most popular and numerous party in Cyprus. For a small period of time the KKK and AKEL coexisted but after long discussions in its internal, the KKK decided to stop its function as a distinct party, in 1944. Since then AKEL would be the voice of the Left in the island with the communists of KKK being its backbone.

¹⁵⁹ See Nikos Psyroukis, *History of Modern Greece: 1940-1967*, Athens 1976, Volume 2, pp. 190

¹⁶⁰ El. Venizelos stated about Cyprus and the Dodecanese in 1931: "No matter how deep is the impact of the national desires of the inhabitants of these islands in the Greek soul, it is impossible for the Greek state to take over the support of their realization or to tolerate for its land to be used for the organization of a systematic reaction against the peace of these islands [...] critical interests demand for the friendship with England and Italy to be preserved", in Ploutis Servas, *The Cyprus issue: Responsibilities*, Grammi, Athens 1980, pp. 98

¹⁶¹ See Fifis Ioannou, *This is how the Cyprus issue started: In the traces of a decade (1940-1950). Relations of AKEL-KKE in the civil war years*, Filistor, Athens 2005, pp.15. Also, Ploutis Servas, *ibid*, pp. 117

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AKEL took immediately advantage of two important facts: the civil liberties were partially restored in the island during the W.W.II and Cyprus did not experience a German occupation. Its political activity resulted in very encouraging results, mirrored in the municipal elections of 1943. Generally the '40s were the decade of the absolute predomination of AKEL in the political life of Cyprus.

Some miles more south, in Egypt, the Greek "government-in-exile" was informing in 1941 the Foreign Office that Cyprus was included in its national claims for the post-war period. But the developments in Greece and the world during the wartime period caused an alteration in the official Greek national agenda. In 1944, the "Enosis" with Cyprus was no more an official Greek claim. The uncertainty for the political future of Greece, namely the growing power of EAM and KKE in the political life of the country, combined with the general uncertainty for the post-war world political balance between the communist and the non-communist camp and affected the approach of the traditional political circles of Greece on the issue. The anti-communist side in Greece relied more and more in the British intervention to secure its political predomination which was achieved in first place after the bloody December of 1944. Since the British denied to discuss the prospect of ceding Cyprus to Greece especially in a period that its future political position was not yet sure, whoever raised claims over Cyprus was coming in direct conflict with Britain and without the British aid in 1944 the Greek Right could not prevail over EAM. Not surprisingly, George Papandreou, the head of the temporary government of national unity in his famous speech after his return in Athens did not find a word to say about Cyprus while at the same time he raised claims over N.Epirus, the Dodecanese and the northern borders of Greece¹⁶².

On the contrary the Greek Left steadily demanded the "Enosis" of Cyprus with Greece during all the war period being rather enthusiastic about it. Especially after the December incidents and the clash with Britain, KKE and EAM put more emphasis on the issue. The Left would continuously criticize the Right and "nationalist-minded" camp for the exclusion of Cyprus from the official Greek national claims¹⁶³. Together

¹⁶² Basil Kondis, "Greek national claims at the Paris Peace Conference of 1946", *Balkan Studies*, Vol. 32.2 (1991), pp. 314

¹⁶³ There are however historians who claim that the inclusion of Cyprus in the national agenda with the other claims was an evident of nationalistic, counter-revolutionary logic as the case of Cyprus was very different.

with the tolerance of the English military presence in Greece this would be the greatest argument in proving that in fact it was the Right political parties that were betraying the national causes.

D.2 The civil war period (Self-government or Enosis?)

D.2.1 Cyprus and the situation until the Paris Peace Conference

In the eve of the Paris Peace Conference the divergence of views on the Cyprus issue between the Left and the Right camp was complete. The situation in Greece had already become very complex since the first organized civil conflicts had begun in early '46. In a world level the first signs of the Cold War were obvious making it rather impossible for Britain to quit from such an important colony as Cyprus. Hence, the Greek prime minister, Konstantinos Tsaldaris, stated in 17/5/1946 that Cyprus was not a national claim but it could just be a subject of discussion between Greece and her friend Britain¹⁶⁴. This motive would be repeated very often by official lips during all the following period.

In Cyprus, after the temporary relaxation due to the W.W.II, all sides were demanding the "Enosis" and AKEL in particular had adopted the slogan "Enosis and only Enosis" in order to emphasize that any other solution would not be accepted. The influence of AKEL on the Cypriots and the support it experienced had reached its peak during 1946 when the candidates supported by AKEL for the local elections were elected as mayors in the biggest cities, including the capital of the island.

At the same time that the Greek Left was adopting the armed struggle to respond to the "monarchofascist" violence, the Left in Cyprus was enjoying the trust of the majority of the island's population. Nothing could be more worrying for the British and their local allies as the Cyprus issue had extended influence among the Greek population, no matter the political orientation of each.

Before the Paris Peace Conference, the Left press in Greece published numerous articles denouncing the government's betrayal while giving full support to the cause of "Enosis" and the related struggle that developed in Cyprus under the leadership of AKEL. The AKELists organized frequent demonstrations, strikes and other political

¹⁶⁴ Ploutis Servas, *The Cyprus issue: Responsibilities*, Grammi, Athens 1980, pp. 105

activities, demanding the immediate departure of the British from the island and the unification with Greece. Similarly, the Greek communists and Lefts would demand the departure of the British from both Greece and Cyprus and would support the need for a new independent government that would realize the "Enosis"¹⁶⁵. Additionally, the Left press would warn for the British plans which aimed in turning Cyprus to an endless military base¹⁶⁶. In this way the situation in Greece was linked to the solution of the Cyprus issue, a concept that characterized the Left in all the given period. As expected, the coalition of EAM included and highlighted Cyprus in its catalogue of national claims, officially disclosed with its letter to the Peace Conference. It is important here to mention that the "pure Greek" character of the island was beyond dispute for both KKE and EAM and there were many articles aiming to prove this unchangeable historic bond¹⁶⁷. But what is probably more important and attracts one's attention, is the absence of any comment or reference to the Turkish minority of the island. Reading the Left press of the time one gets the impression that only the Greek population existed in Cyprus or at least that the G/C voice, was the only voice of the island. Some later developments would result to a new, more careful approach of the Left.

As the Paris Peace Conference ended with poor results for Greece and the issue of Cyprus was not included in the official Greek claims, the public opinion in Cyprus became more negative towards the Greek government and the British while the "Enosis" struggle became more intensive. In Greece, as the civil war was becoming more obvious the Left intensified its pro-Enosis and anti-British, anti-governmental propaganda. In the late 1946, a Cypriot delegation visited Greece in order to meet with the government. The Greek government, apparently disturbed by this visit, banned all demonstrations and discouraged the Cypriots, informing them that their priority was to preserve the good relations with Britain. On this occasion the Left expressed once more its solidarity to the "Enosis" cause, and demonstrated its opposition to the official Greek stance which was compared to the denial of Venizelos, back in 1915, in the British offer of Cyprus¹⁶⁸.

¹⁶⁵ See *Rizospastis*, 6/1/1946, 7/2/1946, 14/4/1946, 23/4/1946, 19/5/1946, 4/6/1946, 7/7/1946, 13/7/1946.

Also, *Eleftheri Ellada*, 24/4/1946, 10/5/1946, 4/6/1946, 28/6/1946

¹⁶⁶ *Rizospastis*, 22/5/1946, 11/6/1946, 14/6/1946. Also, *Eleftheri Ellada*, 11/6/1946

¹⁶⁷ *Rizospastis*, 13/7/1946, 3/8/1946

¹⁶⁸ *Rizospastis*, 16-17/11/1946, 24/11/1946. *Eleftheri Ellada*, 16/11/1946

The Greek Cypriots who faced the disappointment again, answered with big "Enosis" demonstrations during December. Their next move would be to send a new delegation to Britain and Greece in early 1947 which would face the British incomppliance and the Greek indifference once more¹⁶⁹. A new proposal to the Greek government to express a national claim over Cyprus was not even discussed in the parliament causing the frustration of the Cypriots and the reaction of the Left that named the betrayal of Cyprus as the biggest national crime of the Right¹⁷⁰. After the permanent denial of the Greek and British governments, AKEL and KKE-EAM chose to harden their position stopping every cooperation with the British and commenting that the "Enosis" issue will be judged by the struggle in Greece and Cyprus¹⁷¹. "Eleftheri Ellada" published a series of articles with titles as "*Cyprus: the greatest and most precious national claim. The Cypriot people are consciously Greek people*", "*National crusade for the "Enosis" of Cyprus*" and so forth¹⁷². "Rizospastis" on 25 March, the anniversary of the Greek Revolution of 1821, included an article about Cyprus with the title "*Enosis or Death*" paraphrasing the slogan of the Greek Revolution "*Freedom or Death*". Until the first half of 1947, the speech of EAM, KKE and AKEL about the "Enosis" would sound more decisive than ever¹⁷³. Only that soon after, the tactic of AKEL would change seriously.

The next important development in Cyprus was the election of Leontios as archbishop in the mid-1947. Leontios was supported by AKEL and its allies and his clear election was another sign of the political power of the Left. The Greek Left welcomed with enthusiasm the election of the new archbishop¹⁷⁴. This continuous glow of AKEL in the political life of the island would be a major reason for the change of the British stance in 1947. The other complementary reasons were the intensification of the civil war, the change of guard in Greece -that since 1947 passed under the American influence- and also the withdrawal of Britain from important colonies as India which became independent in 1947.

¹⁶⁹ *Rizospastis*, 13/2/1947. *Eleftheri Ellada*, 15-17/2/1947

¹⁷⁰ *Rizospastis*, 27/2/1947

¹⁷¹ *Rizospastis*, 13/3/1947

¹⁷² See *Eleftheri Ellada*, 20/2/1947, 22/2/1947

¹⁷³ "Enosis or death", *Rizospastis*, 26/3/1947. "Only Enosis", *Rizospastis*, 8/4/1947. "Without reservations, without deviations – Enosis of Cyprus with Greece", *Rizospastis*, 13/5/1947. "Cyprus wants Greece cause Cyprus is Greece", *Eleftheri Ellada*, 26/2/1947. "EAM first in the struggle for the Enosis of Cyprus...most essential and most precious national claim", *Eleftheri Ellada*, 1/3/1947

¹⁷⁴ See *Rizospastis*, 6/5/1947, 10/6/1947, 21/6/1947, 22/6/1947. Also *Eleftheri Ellada*, 21/6/1947

The Greek Left on national issues: 1946-1956

In that period Britain chose to propose a constitutional reform that would allow the self-government of Cyprus with the promise to reexamine the self-determination issue after ten years. Britain covenanted to discuss the new constitution with the local bodies from a zero-point on some "logical" basis. It is obvious that the main intention of Britain was to escape from the pressure created by the "Enosis" demand and that was clear enough to all sides. The terminus was the reactions in Cyprus and Greece. The decisions in front of that challenge produced a rather interesting result. The G/C Right organizations rejected the British proposal with the slogan "*Away from the confederal assembly!*" which was later completed and became "*Away from the confederal assembly! Away from the ballot-box!*" and demanded the "Enosis". AKEL and its allies began by rejecting the Constitution and demanding the "Enosis" as the only real solution to the island's problems¹⁷⁵ but they gradually reached to the conclusion that they should participate in the confederal assembly without quitting from the "Enosis" struggle. To understand this decision of AKEL we should first take into account its analysis for the situation at the time.

In 1947, AKEL believed that the prospect of the island's liberation was far enough basically due to the world developments. Consequently, since "Enosis" could not be realized immediately AKEL chose to participate in the confederal assembly. The logic behind that decision was that until better days for the purpose of "Enosis" would come, the Left of Cyprus should utilize every concession of rights from the British that would improve the living conditions of the local population. Along with the above, the AKELic camp did not trust the intentions of the Right in Cyprus that immediately rejected the British proposals. It must be mentioned here that AKEL called for the formation of a national co-ordination and a cohesive denial of the British plans. But AKEL was also claiming that the rejection of the constitutional reforms should go hand in hand with the demand for the removal of the appointed, by Britain, public administrators from their positions (the majority of those people belonged to the Right camp). All the above were concentrated in the slogan "Entrenched abstention". These preconditions of AKEL were rejected by the G/C Right causing suspicions for its real aims.

As a result and after long discussions in its internal, AKEL decided to participate in the confederal assembly as it presumed that it was the best way to serve the needs of the local population while on the other hand the intention of the Right was

¹⁷⁵ Rizospastis, 19/07/1947

considered to be the preservation of the situation of the time, because of the fear that under the new constitution the self-government would pass in the hands of AKEL. Accordingly, it is likely that AKEL formulated its position having in mind its previous victories in the municipal elections of 1943 and especially of 1946. Henceforth, the slogan of AKEL would change from "Enosis and only Enosis" to "Self-government – Enosis". The Cypriot Right-nationalist side would accuse AKEL of betraying the "Enosis" goal and for collaborating with the British, a propaganda that would harm AKEL's popularity¹⁷⁶.

This sudden change of AKEL that postponed the decisive fight for the casting off of the British yoke was viewed critically by the Greek communist party. Zachariadis would later comment that while the KKE was fighting on the mountains against the British, AKEL was negotiating constitutional reforms with them¹⁷⁷. However, this disagreement did not become obvious immediately as the Left press in Greece supported the decision of AKEL and criticized the G/C and Greek Right for breaking the unity of the anti-British struggle¹⁷⁸. "Eleftheri Ellada" would come out in print in the end of July with the cover "*Abstinence or Constitution? The Right asks for abstinence and means the inactivity. The people prefer to use the pseudo-parliament for the Enosis purpose*"¹⁷⁹. And it is true that AKEL seemed to control the situation. But things in Cyprus would change dramatically very soon.

The death of Leontios two months after his election would motivate the G/C Right that would finally manage to elect their favorite Makarios as archbishop. During the new election process there was a big tension between the Left and the Right and accusations for illegal manipulations of the latter as well as fears for an attempt to transfer the Greek civil war in Cyprus too¹⁸⁰. No matter the change of the basic slogan of AKEL, after the death of Leontios and the election of Makarios, the Left Press in Greece would often publish articles about Cyprus with titles as "*Enosis and only Enosis*"¹⁸¹. At the same time, the 5th Congress of AKEL would support its

¹⁷⁶ In the municipal elections of 1949 in Cyprus, the Right would win 101 seats (from 33 in 1946) and the Left 29 seats (from 68 in 1946). ASKI, Archive of KKE, box 371, Φ=20/21/20

¹⁷⁷ Nikos Psyroukis, op.cit, pp. 246

¹⁷⁸ Rizospastis, 23/7/1947. *Eleftheri Ellada*, 23-25/7/1947

¹⁷⁹ *Eleftheri Ellada*, 27/8/1947

¹⁸⁰ See Rizospastis, 18-19/9/1947, *Eleftheri Ellada*, 19/9/1947

¹⁸¹ Rizospastis, 4/9/1947. *Eleftheri Ellada*, 3/9/1947, 23/9/1947, 11/10/1947

decision to participate in the Conferential Assembly¹⁸². The struggle for Enosis was expected to be long and arduous and the desires of the Cypriots were not to be realized in the near future. The solution of the Cyprus problem was connected with the need of a progressive turnabout of the British foreign policy, the need of a democratic change in the Greek government -namely the predomination of the DSE- so there would be a state-based support for Enosis and last but not least with the struggle in Cyprus herself. Derivatively, AKEL would premise the slogan "*Enosis and always Enosis*" meaning that until the goal of Enosis would be achieved, AKEL would fight for better living conditions and more liberties, including a more progressive constitution¹⁸³. This would be the line of the party for the rest of 1947 and all 1948.

Consequently, AKEL took part in the Conferential Assembly for the Constitution in 1948 but it soon came undone (August 1948) when suddenly the British side presented a ready Constitution-text against the promises for discussions from a zero-point. AKEL rejected the new Constitution, however without unanimity of votes in its C.C., and started a new struggle, this time for a "real self-government Constitution"¹⁸⁴. Britain returned to its previous stance stating that the "Enosis" problem was never and would be never taken under consideration and also that it was premature to discuss about the island's self-government.

The most important development of 1948 was the visit of a delegation of AKEL to the DSE camp on the mountains of northern Greece. The main purposes of this trip were, the new scenery in Cyprus after the end of the Conferential Assembly, the election of the "Right-wing" Makarios Kitiou as archbishop and the British plans for the creation of military base in Cyprus. The party of AKEL was also worried as rumors coming from Greece wanted the leadership of KKE to disagree with the change in AKEL's policy since 1947. All the previous issues as well as the establishment of communication between the two parties and the information of AKEL about the prospects of the communist struggle in Greece would be realized by

¹⁸² "*Our slogans for full, entrenched national abstinence, on the basis of the cohesive organization and action, or –in the case of the rejection of that line- for popular participation in the political liberties, did not correspond with any imperialist intentions, like they correspond with their (G/C Right) slogans. On the contrary, our slogans, had as their only subject and aim the people's defense from the imperialist maneuvers and the transformation of the imperialist weapons to our, popular weapons of national liberating and economic assertion*", in Fifi Ioannou, op.cit, pp. 290

¹⁸³ Fifi Ioannou, *ibid*, pp. 286-289, 376

¹⁸⁴ See "A short report on the situation in Cyprus and AKEL" in Fifi Ioannou, *ibid*, pp. 379

that trip. Last but not least, the two parties would examine the prospects of physical reinforcement of DSE with Cypriot fighters¹⁸⁵.

The General Secretary of AKEL describes in his book that when he asked the opinion of Zachariadis on AKEL's political line for "Self-government – Enosis" the General Secretary of the Greek Party replied: *"The line for constitutional reforms in Cyprus is a kind of liberalism. We, here, will be, either way, in Athens in two months. Therefore, you, there in Cyprus, cannot speak anymore for an intermediate phase of Self-government, with the Enosis being the final target. The Enosis with Greece must become your immediate object! [...] Your slogan must be "Immediate Enosis"- "Enosis and only Enosis".* According to the author when he asked Zachariadis whether their line for "Self-government – Enosis" was considered as liberalism only due to the expected victory of DSE or generally, Zachariadis replied with what would cause a surprise to the delegation of AKEL: *"It is liberalism, it is! You should get in an immediate slogan about Enosis and escalate accordingly your strategy and tactic. Don't you have mountains in Cyprus? Don't you have guns?"¹⁸⁶*. Finally, the KKE suggested AKEL to come in contact with the Cominform in order to make clear their doubts and the strategy they should follow.

The answer from Cominform never arrived but in the meaning while the Party in Cyprus had adopted the "hard line" of Zachariadis and reverted to support for "Enosis and only Enosis". This new turn to its wartime slogans was completed with the 6th Congress of 1949 when the negotiations for self-government were criticized as a serious error and the previous leadership of AKEL was removed¹⁸⁷.

The KKE, from its side, would adopt the slogan *"Free Cyprus in a Free Greece"* connecting in this way the Enosis future with the future of the Greek civil war (and later on with the overthrow of the "monarchofascist" regime). For this slogan, the KKE was criticized for subordinating the Cyprus issue to the outcome of the Civil War¹⁸⁸ (mostly Left criticism) or even for betraying the national interests for the class interests (criticism from the Right camp)¹⁸⁹. Some months later, the Democratic Army instead of entering Athens, as Zachariadis assured the Cypriots,

¹⁸⁵ AKEL would find 350 to 500 volunteers for the DSE but due to economic and transportation problems, only 40 Cypriots would arrive in the Greek mountains to fight along with the Democratic Army. See, ASKI, Archive of KKE, box 371, Φ=20/21/15 and Φ=20/21/59

¹⁸⁶ Fifis Ioannou, op.cit., pp. 336-337

¹⁸⁷ Ioannis Stefanidis, *Isle of discord: nationalism, imperialism and the making of the Cyprus problem*, Hurst&Co, London 1999, pp. 5

¹⁸⁸ For more details, Nikos Psyroukis, op.cit, 246-248

¹⁸⁹ Ploutis Servas, *The Cyprus problem: Responsibilities*, Grammi, Athens 1980, pp. 137, 144

was withdrawing in Albania and thus AKEL had to find a new way to support its line for immediate Enosis with Greece.

D.3 The Cyprus problem on the road to the UN

This new tactic of AKEL would be the internationalization of the Cyprus problem and the appeal to the United Nations in order for a plebiscite to be held. Additionally, the lack of support from Greece after the defeat of the DSE should be substituted by the creation of bonds with the rising anti-colonial struggle in the Middle East¹⁹⁰.

At the same period, the prime minister of Greece was stating that *"...under the present circumstances, the further continuance of the public opinion's excitement around the Cyprus issue does not advance this issue but on the contrary it is dangerous for causing damage to the international position of our country"*¹⁹¹.

Despite the activities of AKEL, the plebiscite of 15 January 1950 would be organized by the Ethnarchy of Cyprus which did not accept to cooperate with AKEL. No matter the division between the political powers in Cyprus, the plebiscite proved to be very successful, with very big participation from the G/C population and an almost unanimous result in favor of the unification with Greece (96%).

The Left in Greece praised the result and urged the government to recognize it and accept the will of the Cypriots. Big pro-Enosis demonstrations broke out in Athens once again but what followed was a new denial of the government, this time to use the result of the plebiscite in order to demand the self-determination of the island. Only that from this period and on, the pressure from Cyprus would be much more systematic and decisive both from the Ethnarchy and AKEL. On August of 1950 Makarios the 3rd was elected as archbishop. He was a dynamic personality whose actions would mark the Cyprus issue for a long period. Under his leadership the Ethnarchy managed to surpass AKEL –an obvious tension since 1948- in the race for the leadership of the anti-colonial movement. As for AKEL, its General Secretary was now describing as priorities, the fight for the liberation and Enosis with Greece - although clarifying that this did not mean the acceptance of the "monarchofascist"

¹⁹⁰ Ioannis Stefanidis, op.cit, pp. 7

¹⁹¹ Spyros Linardatos, *From the civil war to the dictatorship*, Papazisi, Athens 1977, Volume A':1949-1952, pp. 50-51

regime¹⁹²- and also the struggle against the intentions of the British to turn Cyprus to an anti-Soviet, anti-Middle East military base¹⁹³. Similarly, the KKE was supporting that “*The struggle for the Enosis of Cyprus with Greece cannot be but in the frame of the struggle for the overthrow of the “monarchofascism” and the foreign rule, for the liberation of Greece and the release of Cyprus from the colonial yoke*”¹⁹⁴.

On the other side of the Aegean, “Hurriyet” was warning, after the plebiscite, that “*Cyprus is a very big mouthful for the small Greece*”. But still nobody really counted Turkey and the Turkish minority as a decisive factor.

Makarios from his side launched his own international campaign, on behalf of the Ethnarchy, bringing the plebiscite’s results to the United Nations and coming in contact with several countries to secure a backup for Cyprus. At the same time Makarios and the Ethnarchy were steadily rejecting the frequent proposals of AKEL for common struggle. As for the Greek government, it opposed the new initiatives of the Ethnarchy.

Generally, the period from 1950 to 1953 can be described as one of a continuous contention between the Ethnarchy and the Greek government for the issue of the UN¹⁹⁵. The clash between them would force Makarios to state in 1953 that he would stretch out “both right and left hands to accept help offered from both East and West”¹⁹⁶. But the entrance of Greece and Turkey in NATO and the preparation of the Balkan Pact made the preservation of the Greco-Turkish friendship necessary for the Western Bloc and thus the Americans steadily discouraged Greece to lead the case in the United Nations¹⁹⁷.

¹⁹² Probably for not to come in contrast with the central slogan of KKE that remained “*Free Cyprus in a free Greece*”. See *Neos Kosmos*, August 1950 and August 1951

¹⁹³ Papaioannou, “The people of Cyprus are struggling for peace and national independence”, *Neos Kosmos*, February 1950, pp. 91-92

¹⁹⁴ “Cyprus and the struggle for Enosis”, *Neos Kosmos*, August 1950, pp. 435, 440

¹⁹⁵ Nikos Psyroukis, op.cit, pp. 265-266

¹⁹⁶ Ioannis Stefanidis, op.cit, pp. 44

¹⁹⁷ According to a statement of Fuat Köprülü (Turkish minister of For.Affairs) in 29/1/1953 an agreement existed between Greece and Turkey for not to bring the Cyprus problem before the UN in favor of the Balkan Pact, *Avgi*, 30/1/1953. Also as Sofoklis Venizelos (Minister of For.Affairs at the time) stated later in 12/12/1958 “America was preventing us from appealing to the U.N...”. See Nikos Psyroukis, op.cit, pp. 269, 272

The Greek Left on national issues: 1946-1956

The Left in Greece and Cyprus favored and pressed for the internationalization of the Cyprus problem. The appeal to the United Nations was a basic slogan of the Left¹⁹⁸ as it also created a fertile ground for their general political arguments.

The internationalization of the issue was connected with the orientation of the Greek foreign policy and the anti-colonial movement, as it required a policy of alliances and bonds with states or groups of states which would support Cyprus. Since the allies could not be found in Britain and the U.S., Cyprus was a great chance for the Left to promote its beliefs for an approach with the Eastern Bloc countries which were ready and willing to defend Cyprus' rights. The more hostile the British and Americans would be towards the Cypriot appeal to the U.N., the more urgent the entreaties of the Left would become asking for the formulation of a new national, foreign policy based on neutrality, friendship with the Eastern Bloc and cooperation with the anti-colonial powers, especially those of the Middle East¹⁹⁹. This connection of Cyprus with the Middle East problem and from there directly with the Cold War was a decisive factor for the behavior of each side.

The KKE in an extensive article in "Neos Kosmos" (November 1951) signed by many of its officials would present its new, more complete policy on Cyprus. Through this article, the KKE was presenting what should become the basic duties of AKEL. These were the struggle for peace and prevention of the plans that wanted Cyprus a military base, the struggle for immediate economic and political demands, a wide, democratic, national front for the Enosis which should isolate the "imperialist agents" and finally the connection with the struggle of the Greek people for free-popular Greece as *"the national issue of Cyprus is part of the struggle of the Greek people for the throwing off of the Anglo-American yoke"* and *"the struggle for Enosis means also struggle against the monarch-fascism"*. Already AKEL had officially adopted the slogan *"Free Cyprus in a free Greece"* in its 7th Congress in 1951. Ensuant to the above, it was noted that the national issue should not be severed by the revolutionary fight and should be examined in the framework of the end of W.W.II, the development of socialism and the global preparations for the W.W.III!! Therefore, the national issue was *"inseparate from the issue of the struggle for the liberation from the imperialist repression and exploitation"*. It is also interesting that

¹⁹⁸ See for instance *Dimokratiki*, 14-15/11/1951, *Avgi*, 28/12/1952

¹⁹⁹ See Note of the Managing Committee of EDA "For the necessity of reexamination of the foreign policy of our country", end of 1953, pp. 3

the Ethnarchy was characterized as the “*representative of monarchofascism*”, the “*biggest squire (landowner)*” and the “*enemy*” on the island.

One other aspect of the specific article was that for the first time the Turkish minority of Cyprus -namely its position and relation to the Greeks and the anti-colonial struggle was so carefully and analytically examined. AKEL was urged to discover the “*connective joints*” between the two communities of the island since “*the struggle for Enosis must answer correctly to the problem of the serious Turkish minority so that it will pull it off of the imperialists*”. Furthermore, the KKE recognized the basic weakness of the “Enosis” slogan in the way it had been expressed until that time and this was the fact that it only reflected the desires of the G/C community. Therefore, it would be AKEL’s duty to add the slogan for “self-government” for the T/C and guarantee full political autonomy and national-cultural development after the liberation of the island. Finally, the authors were also prompting for the foundation of common syndicates (both G/C and T/C) and a common Party that would embrace both communities²⁰⁰. The latter positions were reflecting clearly the Leninist position on such subjects²⁰¹.

Overall, it can be said that this was a very serious and mature attempt by the KKE to understand and interpret the complex nature of the Cyprus problem and guide AKEL in the new era after the civil war and the plebiscite.

A decisive factor for the developments in Cyprus was the anti-colonial, national liberating movement led by General Naser that broke out in Egypt, in 1952. The success of the Egyptian revolutionaries forced the British to transfer the Middle East Headquarters in Cyprus. This caused the worries of the Left for the construction of military bases in Cyprus²⁰². It is characteristic that AKEL since 1951 through its communications with the KKE was examining the prospect of an armed response in case Cyprus was used as a military base for anti-Middle East operations²⁰³. When this would happen in 1956 AKEL would stay inactive. But generally the fact of the British

²⁰⁰ “The struggle of the Cypriot people for freedom and peace”, *Neos Kosmos*, November 1951, pp.23-41

²⁰¹ “The conscious workers make all efforts to repel every nationalism, the raw one, the violent one [...] as much as the sophisticated one, which preaches the equality of the nations together with...the fragmentation of the working class, the workers’ organizations, the worker movement according to nationalities”, in Lenin, *Collected works*, Synhroni Epohi, Athens 1987, Vol. 25, pp. 144

²⁰² *Avgi*, 10/12/1952

²⁰³ ASKI, Archive of KKE, box 371, Φ=20/21/33. There the internationalist duties of AKEL in case of a military operation against Middle East from its land are defined as the organization of sabotage and possibly the guerilla fight of a few men. It is noteworthy that AKEL presents its military material and asks from the KKE to arrange economic aid from the Eastern Bloc.

withdrawal from the Middle East was mainly seen as a new slap in Britain's prestige and yet another proof that the British imperialism was vulnerable. Hence, the G/C side would intensify its preparations for the appeal to the United Nations and the pressure to the Greek government. An important step towards this development was the initiative of the Ethnarchy to apply to the General Secretary of the UN for the examination of the Cyprus case according to the UN decision for the self-determination of nations even though the Greek government had denied to adopt the case. Already, the line that the Greek governments followed until that period was the denial of the case's internationalization and the support for two-partite negotiations with Britain. As we mentioned before, the Americans were also favoring this approach for reasons connected with the Balkan Pact and their Balkan policy in general.

The Greek Left would welcome with enthusiasm this initiative of the Ethnarchy and would accuse once more the prime minister for abandoning the struggle for Enosis while challenging the government to bring the issue to the United Nations²⁰⁴. This consisted the basic tactic of the Left in 1953 with numerous articles supporting it.

D.4 The internationalization of the issue

After long efforts and pressure from Cyprus, the Greek government of General Papagos would be finally convinced to bring the issue to the United Nations, on August of 1954. The Cyprus problem was cited in the order of the day with the positive votes of the Eastern Bloc and despite the negative votes of France and Britain and the abstention of the U.S.²⁰⁵. The British tried to answer to the challenge with the offer of the "Hopkinson constitution" which however went hand by hand with Hopkinson's famous "Never" statement related to the self-determination of the island. As expected, since everyone was anticipating the developments in the UN, the constitutional offer was rejected. For many historians the change of the Greek foreign policy was not a product of the independent spirit of the government neither just the result of the permanent pressure from Cyprus but it was mostly a derivative of the partial clash between the American and the British policies/interests in the

²⁰⁴ "If the government wants the Enosis, she should place the issue herself in the UN", *Avgi*, 21-22/02/1953

²⁰⁵ "The citation of the Cyprus problem in the daily order of the General Assembly of the UN is saluted by all the Greek people in Greece and Cyprus as a fact that can open the road for the solution of this national problem. The voting procedure for the citation showed to the Greek people who their real friends are...", John Pasalides-President of EDA, *Avgi*, 25/9/1954

Mediterranean²⁰⁶ while it also served as a way to distract the attention from the internal problems of Greece.

The KKE reacted to this change by claiming that Papagos and the Right in general were trying to capitalize the Cyprus problem when their only intention was to turn Cyprus to an Anglo-American base similar with Greece after the 1953 Greco-American agreement. Truly, the newspaper "*Kathimerini*" that reflected the government's intentions was writing in 1954 that "*with the English we could communicate like brothers, like friends given that we propose –and our proposal is standing- to cover all the military needs of their Empire. Do the English want bases in Cyprus? They will have them! Do they want bases in Greece and the islands? They will have them!*"²⁰⁷. This approach remained dominant in the official Greek policy for the next years as a manoeuvre against the British constant negations in discussing about the island's status. At the same time this would be the new barrier between the Ethnarchy and AKEL. The first would accept the "bases for Enosis" policy while the latter would adopt the line for "Enosis without preconditions" along with the central slogan of its 8th congress in 1954 that was "Enosis-Peace-Survival".

The KKE denounced the government's exchange offer (bases for Enosis) as betrayal and slavish. It contrarily proposed the concurrent fight against the American-British imperialism and the Papagos government in Greece, with the Enosis struggle in Cyprus. It moreover warned that the British would work towards bringing to conflict the two national communities of the island²⁰⁸. In fact, after the Greek decision to internationalize the issue and give support to the G/C demand for Enosis, Turkey started involving more actively in Cyprus, supporting Britain and opposing the Enosis claims. Furthermore, the T/C side would found its radical organizations on summer of 1954 whose names "Turkish Cyprus" and "Volkan" mirrored their intentions²⁰⁹.

Generally the Greek appeal to the United Nations signaled the entrance to an era of continuous, dynamic developments in Cyprus and activated all interested sides.

Unluckily for the Greek Cypriots, the discussion of the issue in the UN was rejected on December of the same year. The fact that the "Western Allies" of Greece voted for

²⁰⁶ Evanthis Hatzivasiliou, *The geopolitical environment of the Cyprus problem and the Greek foreign policy in the decade of 1950*, Aipeia, Athens 1998, pp. 12

²⁰⁷ *Kathimerini*, 25/7/1954

²⁰⁸ See "Free Cyprus in a free Greece", *Neos Kosmos*, October 1954, pp. 35-41 and the "Announcement of KKE-AKE" of 14/8/1954

²⁰⁹ Ioannis Stefanidis, op.cit, pp. 77. Also Nikos Psyroukis, op.cit, pp.

the rejection while the Eastern Bloc countries voted against it created a serious advantage for the Left that now had a substantial example to support its thesis for reorientation of the foreign policy. The Left led the anti-American, anti-governmental protests that followed the negative developments in the UN. The protests were very dynamic and often violent and were suppressed by force from the police with numerous injured civilians²¹⁰. The dissatisfaction of the Greek public opinion and the development of the anti-Western feeling would become a real head ache for the Greek governments from then on. Moreover, when the government promised to make a new appeal to the UN, Makarios answered that this was not the only road to the Enosis²¹¹. Some months later, the armed struggle in Cyprus would break out.

D.4.1 The outbreak of the armed conflict

In the beginning of 1955, the British captured a ship near Pafos which was carrying weapons and men to the island. All sides in Greece tried to downplay the fact and particularly the Left spoke for a British provocation/lurk which aimed in justifying harder measures against the Cypriots and induce their movement to extremism²¹².

The armed activity would start in 1st April of 1955, the day that EOKA (National Organization of Cypriot Strugglers) initiated the armed struggle with several bomb explosions against British targets²¹³. The new condition in Cyprus was first regarded with worries and reservations by the Greek press.

The Greek Left was surprised from this development as it had not estimated that such an escalation in the anti-colonial struggle of Cyprus was possible. AKEL's reaction was similar. Both faced the situation with hostility and threw discredit on the intentions of EOKA. AKEL immediately denounced violence and cautioned the Cypriots as the British immediately forwarded plans for the militarization of the life on the island²¹⁴. The Turks reacted as well and the situation reminded a boiling cauldron. After the first shock, the Greek Left would start to formulate its controversial arguments against EOKA more carefully. EDA's newspaper "Avgi" in 14/4/1955 criticized a fly-bill of EOKA which was writing "*A free Cyprus will always*

²¹⁰ Spyros Linardatos, *From the civil war to the dictatorship*, Papazisi, Athens 1979, Vol.B, pp. 254-256

²¹¹ Spyros Linardatos, *ibid*, pp. 260

²¹² *Avgi*, 28/1/1955

²¹³ It is interesting however that the oath of EOKA spoke just for liberation from the British and not for Enosis with Greece

²¹⁴ *Avgi*, 2-7/4/1955

be with you, England". At the same time EDA was calling for the connection of Cyprus with the anti-colonial movement. It was the time that Makarios decided to attend the Asian-African Conference of Bandung which gathered all the anti-colonial powers. But Makarios would soon disappoint those hoping for participation of Cyprus in the anti-colonial movement as when still in Bandung he would again offer bases to the British in an exchange for the self-determination of Cyprus.

The next step of EDA would be to attack with its press the Right and the Center for their fake interest and demagogy about Cyprus, reminding their previous stance on the issue²¹⁵. Additionally, KKE and EDA in Greece and AKEL in Cyprus appeared more decisive for the Enosis cause, excluding all constitutional proposals and all preconditions and terms as well²¹⁶. In the meanwhile, AKEL would adopt a more careful stance for EOKA, clearing that its objection was with the tactic and the inspirers of EOKA and not with its honest, pure fighters. AKEL placed as first priority the construction of a united patriotic front without however excluding any means of struggle²¹⁷.

Beyond any doubt, the most interesting reaction came from the KKE. The decision of the C.C. of KKE on April 1955 talked about the *"subservient of Athens"* who *"together with their instruments in Cyprus activate lately their Cyprus-exploitation"* in order to *"cover their real capitulation in front of the English imperialism"* and *"obtain the leadership of the national struggle from the communists"*. The Decision was closing by prompting for the isolation and uncovering of the fractionists of the national unity in Cyprus and Greece and insisting on the slogan *"Free Cyprus in a free Greece"*²¹⁸. Then followed an article written by Zachariadis that shocked many and caused various reactions. It is useful to copy some parts of it, that speak mainly about the armed struggle in Cyprus. According to Zachariadis, Papagos not being able to control the Cyprus problem *"betakes himself to adventurism with the familiar "Easter" cannon crackers, fire crackers and pops"* and *"all these in agreement with the imperialists ... Final target is to put aside the true patriotic forces in order to complete the betrayal"*. And Zachariadis would become more clear, *"It is about the leadership of the national struggle in Cyprus and Greece", "They want to eliminate AKEL"*. Then the general secretary would reveal the real name and the identity of the leader of EOKA, the so-called Digenis, *"the pseudo-Digenis of Grivas uncovered*

²¹⁵ *Avgi*, 20/4/1955

²¹⁶ *Avgi*, 21/4/1955

²¹⁷ *Avgi*, 26/4/1955

²¹⁸ *Neos Kosmos*, May 1955, pp. 9-11

himself with his offer of military bases to the English".. The ratiocination of Zachariadis went on by stating that "the English do not arrest Digenis because he plays their game and offers them bases. The guns that they let him gather are finally destined against AKEL". The article closed with the drawing of the tactic that should be followed in Cyprus, "avoidance of the English traps and exposure of the betrayers of the nation". But also being far-sighted, he emphasized that "The Enosis of Cyprus with Greece cannot mean preservation or worsening of the subjection of the Turks but liberation for the Turkish minority of the island as well, by its national autonomy. Common struggle of Greeks and Turks", "The liberation of Cyprus will be the result of the massive revolutionary fight of the people in Cyprus and Greece"²¹⁹.

As we mentioned before, this unprecedented polemic against the armed struggle in Cyprus and particularly the revelation of the real identity of its leader by Zachariadis was criticized by many, especially since the British put a price on Grivas' head. However, no logical mind could accept that the KKE was defending the British interests in Cyprus. The "Left/communist critics" of this line of KKE mostly interpret these reactions as lack of readiness and fear to accept such an escalation of the liberation fight especially when for so long KKE and AKEL insisted on the peaceful means of struggle. But beyond these arguments it must be highlighted that Digenis/Grivas in the manifesto of EMAK (EOKA's predecessor) of January 1955, called the communists to "stay away from the fight" excluding from the beginning any cooperation in the armed struggle. What is more, the leader of EOKA used to be the leader of the fascist group of "X" during the wartime in Greece, collaborated with the Nazis and was responsible for numerous assassinations of lefts in Greece²²⁰. Finally, it is true that while fighting for Enosis, EOKA would accept the establishment of foreign military bases in exchange with the self-determination right for the island. Additionally, the government of Papagos had proposed Britain the granting of some bases in Greece in an exchange with a liberal constitution for Cyprus and a plebiscite with horizon of two-three years.

The combination of these facts made the KKE very suspicious about the intentions and the origins of EOKA and its relation with the Greek and Western centers. EDA followed the suspicions of KKE but never reached to the levels of its polemic.

²¹⁹ *Neos Kosmos, ibid*, pp. 12-16

²²⁰ According to a statement of Zachariadis about EOKA, "This organization has as foremost a fake-dasher, officer of "X", Grivas, that after Varkiza was murdering patriots and that in front of the Democratic Army was showing a clean pair of heels", in Nikos Psyroukis, op.cit, pp. 320

Already, the tactic of the Left towards EOKA would change little by little as the developments concerning Cyprus would become more serious and complicated.

A basic turn to the Cyprus problem was the Tripartite Meeting of London between Britain, Greece and Turkey. The aim of this meeting of British inspiration would be a common solution on Cyprus. But two basic characteristics of this meeting were the absence of any Cypriot delegation and contrarily the presence of a Turkish one, equal with the other two.

Not surprisingly, all the Greek opposition and the G/C opposed the Greek participation and called the government to reject the British proposal²²¹. But the government of general Papagos, under the American encouragement would choose to participate even though that, due to the pressure from Cyprus and the opposition in Greece, it had made a new appeal to the United Nations.

As expected, the Greek Left criticized heavily the government for betraying the Cyprus fight and putting Turkey in the game and organized demonstrations that coincided with the ones led by the Ethnarchy and AKEL in Cyprus. For the communist party the Tripartite was an English trap to cancel the discussion in the United Nations and give time to England to suppress the liberation movement²²².

During the Tripartite Meeting of London (26/8-6/9) the British delegation proposed a self-government Constitution for Cyprus, the Greek delegation the self-determination of the island with full rights for the Turkish minority and bases for the British while the Turkish delegation objected to any change in the island's status alleging as reason safety issues of Turkey. The Tripartite Meeting ended with the Turks leaving due to the Greek insistence for the Enosis and therefore Britain achieved to present herself as the middle of the two edges²²³. But in the meaning while Istanbul and Smyrna would become the theatres of a pogrom against their Greek population.

²²¹ "Not even a thought for participation in the Tripartite", *Avgi*, 2/7/1955

²²² "Patriotic unity and struggle for Cyprus", *Neos Kosmos*, September 1955, pp. 33-40

²²³ Spyros Linardatos, *op.cit*, pp. 338

D.5 National Unity for Self-determination

A bomb placed by a Turkish agent in the Turkish consulate of Thessalonica (ex-house of Kemal Ataturk) gave the handle to organized Turkish masses to attack and destroy numerous Greek targets in Istanbul and Smyrna (shops, churches, houses). This situation of horror lasted a whole day and night. These incidents coincided with the end of the London Tripartite Meeting and it is a common ground that they were prepared from before and constituted a message for Greece in relation with Cyprus. At all events, these incidents were a great shock for Greece and its public opinion. It is not an exaggeration to say that they pushed the Greek political scene to a new phase. The anti-Turkish and anti-Western spirit rapidly boosted in Greece especially after the tepid reaction of the U.S. towards Turkey and the ridiculous reaction of the Turkish government that tried to pass the buck for the incidents to the Communist Party of Turkey!! Suddenly, the whole official ideological structure of the post-civil war era in Greece (NATO, Western allies, anti-communism) was put into question while the EDA's calls for an autonomous foreign policy with good relations with the Eastern Bloc seemed more logical than ever.

The Left grasped the chance to speak for the results of the absolute Western orientation of the Greek policy while it felt vindicated for its previous stance against NATO and the so called Greco-Turkish, Greco-British friendship. Additionally, EDA called for the rejection of the British proposals, the abandonment of the Tripartite which was characterized as "dangerous British manoeuvre", the pause of the Greco-Turkish alliance and the disengagement from NATO and any other commitments related to it. As an alternative, EDA was proposing that the fight for Cyprus should be transferred to the United Nations²²⁴.

The Greek government brought the Cyprus problem to be discussed in the United Nations once more in 21/9/1955 despite the American disagreement. The result was a double rejection of the Greek proposal both from the General Committee (7 against, 4 pro, 4 abstentions) and the General Assembly (28 against, 22 pro, 10 abstentions). The scenery of the 1954 attempt was repeated with the Eastern Bloc countries supporting the Greek claim and the Western Allies opposing it. Reacting to

²²⁴ See *Decisions and Announcements of the General Council and the Managing Committee of EDA on the vital problems of the people and the country*, Athens 1955, pp. 19-21

these developments Makarios called for new struggle and EOKA restarted its armed activities.

The conditions created after the fiasco of the Tripartite Meeting, the September incidents and the second fiasco in the UN caused an important alteration in the policy of the Left. From then on, the problem in Greece was considered as primarily national (Greco-American military agreement of '53, Cyprus) and not of class nature. In the general context of its analysis for improvement of the global juncture and promotion of the peace-friendship forces in a world scale, the Left considered that it was time for the creation of a government of national unity that would solve the national problem of the country. Therefore, the political-ideological differences should be put aside for the formation of a common, national foreign policy in favor of the neutrality²²⁵. The only enemy in Greece was considered to be the government of Papagos. As for the Cyprus problem KKE and AKEL denied any stipulations, any terms and preconditions, any deadlines and compromise and urged for the creation of a Pan-Cyprian National Front and friendship/cooperation with the T/C²²⁶.

More particularly, the 5th Plenum of the C.C. of KKE in its decision, among others stated the following which formulate KKE's policy at the time: *"We didn't let the slavish/unworthy Greeks to openly betray", "Greeks and Cypriots are fighting for free Cyprus in a free Greece", "The EOKA and Digenis were mainly made for Greece [...] to be transplanted and act in time in Greece", "Correctly AKEL premises the national unity and the struggle with the patriotic parts of EOKA", "the struggle for the freedom of Cyprus is fight also for the freedom of Greece"*²²⁷.

The Autumn of 1955 was marked by two more important developments. The first was the death of Papagos on October the 4th and his uproarious succession from Karamanlis who was irregularly appointed prime minister of Greece by the palace. This anti-democratic appointment of Karamanlis gave the Left more confidence and constituted a reason for the rapprochement with the Center in the elections of 1956. The second development was the double tactic of Britain in Cyprus. On one hand she was reverting to the subject with a new Constitutional proposal towards Makarios and the Ethnarchy. On October, the governor of Cyprus, Harding, invited Makarios in discussions for the solution of the problem. According to the provisions of the British

²²⁵ See *Neos Kosmos*, October 1955, pp. 1-3 also December 1955, pp. 4-10

²²⁶ See *Neos Kosmos*, November 1955, pp. 19

²²⁷ Nikos Zachariadis, *Neos Kosmos*, December 1955, pp. 10

plan, Cyprus would be self-governed while the self-determination prospect would be examined after some years and in relation with the British strategic needs of the time. On the other hand, Britain was launching new blows against the liberation fight in Cyprus. On 28 of October, the first conviction to death of a Cypriot guerilla was a fact with the case of Karaolis. One month later Cyprus was declared in an emergency state and on December of 1955 Britain declared martial law in Cyprus, suspending many of the existing political rights and freedoms and proscribing AKEL.

But against the negative general context, this time Makarios would decide to sit in the negotiating table with the British.

The negotiations between Makarios and Harding continued for five months. During this period Makarios was accused both by AKEL and the Greek Left and also from Digenis, EOKA and the most radical elements of the Ethnarchy. On the contrary, the new Greek prime minister would encourage the negotiations.

EDA through its newspaper "Avgi" published a series of articles judging Makarios very hard for his decision. Except for the participation in the negotiations and the acceptance of a different road than the immediate Enosis, Makarios was accused for being indifferent and betraying the Cypriots that were arrested and put in prison for the Enosis cause²²⁸. Until the last moment "Avgi" would be sure for the archbishop's approval of the British offer²²⁹.

Makarios insisted to negotiate but the British implacability and the exertion of pressure from all sides, finally forced the archbishop to stop the negotiations as his popularity among the masses had started to decrease.

In the meaning while the elections in Greece (19/2/1956) presented some noteworthy characteristics. The Left joined forces with the parties of the center and Papandreou himself creating the Democratic Unity (DE) against the newly found ERE of Karamanlis. The result was something unique in the Greek elections' history. The Democratic Unity gained the majority of votes but due to the election system, the party of ERE won most seats in the parliament! Despite the challenges of all the rest parties, Karamanlis would form a new government.

At the same time EOKA was spurting by placing a number of bombs against British targets. This activity of EOKA and its supposed coverage by Makarios caused an

²²⁸ See *Avgi*, 14/1/1956, 1-5/2/1956, 17/2/1956

²²⁹ *Avgi*, 29/2/1956

unexpected reaction by the British who kidnapped the archbishop sending him in exile, in the Seychelles islands (9/3/1956). The Greek government reacted rather abashedly but the opposition forged ahead by organizing demonstrations in all the country which resulted in tens of injured citizens.

The Left that in the near past had criticized Makarios for betraying Cyprus was now coming to his aid too, demanding his immediate release, the change of government and the breakaway from NATO²³⁰.

In 1956 many things would change for the general strategy of the Greek Left and its policy on Cyprus in particular. A careful look in the Left press of the time, shows a preference, existing since 1955, in the use of the term "self-determination" rather than "Enosis" or "self-determination – Enosis". These changes were linked with the internal developments in KKE and EDA.

The 6th Plenum of KKE which marked the end of the Zachariadis/Stalinist period of the Party among other changes, brought also a change in the party's view on the Cyprus problem. In the new era, the slogan "*free Cyprus in a free Greece*" was characterized sectarian as it was considered that it "*in reality it abandoned the present, intensive, anti-imperialist struggle of the people of Cyprus against their British dynast, in the name of the liberation of the Greek people from their American dynast*". Yet, Zachariadis was criticized for the characterization of the armed activities in Cyprus as "*fire crackers*". As for the general duties of KKE in 1956 these were described to be the: crouch of all the patriotic-progressive forces of the country in the struggle for an independent, democratic Greece, for the peace²³¹.

Similarly, the first Pan Hellenic Conference of EDA would decide that "*The change in our place will be national, democratic –not socialist. National independence, inviolable of the country's integrity. Possibility of alliances with the Center and the patriotic Right for the national-democratic change! [...] Inexorable struggle for the self-determination of Cyprus without terms, without bases*"²³². For the understanding of EDA's tactic in 1956 and especially after the exile of Makarios, it is enough to read the cover of its newspaper on 25 March, the celebration day for the Greek revolution of independence: "*For the unbending defense of the self-determination of the Cypriot*

²³⁰ *Avgi*, 10-13/3/1956

²³¹ See *Avgi*, 17/6/1956. Also *Neos Kosmos*, October 1956, pp. 18

²³² I. Pasalidis, *Avgi*, 22/7/1956

*brothers. EDA in favor of a common national policy and a government of patriotic cooperation. No party demand. Only guide is the nation's weal*²³³.

In the context of the general changes in the Greek Left, the stance towards EOKA changed decisively too. A sympathy for the struggle of EOKA and a quiet revision of the previous declinatory stance was visible after the September incidents in Turkey²³⁴. Especially in the case of "Avgi", it was often obvious that the armed activities of EOKA were regarded with impression and enthusiasm. In a few months, the actions of EOKA were no longer characterized as adventuristic or provocative but as patriotic and were seen as a part of the Cypriot resistance²³⁵. The "Easter fire-crackers" became suddenly "liberation fight" and actions of resistance against Britain. This tension of admiration for EOKA was more strong in EDA than in KKE which until the end of 1955 was considering EOKA as a part of a plan of American inspiration and was giving support to the tactic of AKEL²³⁶. So big was the enthusiasm of EDA sometimes that it also discovered an alliance of EOKA with AKEL and the participation of members of the latter in the armed struggle of EOKA, causing the angry intervention of the G.S. of AKEL who through a letter to "Avgi" was stating that *"AKEL persists in its tactic, it never wavered, it considers the tactic of "Digenis" out of place and time, harmful, dangerous for the people. "Avgi" causes damage to AKEL and the struggle in Cyprus"*. The letter was closing with the note that AKEL knows better the situation in Cyprus and with the request that there won't be such *"irresponsible"* articles in the future²³⁷.

Another aspect that its importance evolved qualitatively since 1956 was the tension and the violent confrontations between the two major communities of the island. We mentioned before the creation of T/C radical organizations since 1954. The activity of EOKA that often resulted in assassinations of T/C policemen and injuries of Turkish citizens was causing the violent response (creating the alibi for some) of the Turkish element which was attacking Greek targets and civilians.

²³³ *Avgi*, 25/3/1956

²³⁴ See *Avgi*, 16-20/11/1955

²³⁵ *"The massive and armed struggle in Cyprus should be continued by the people's forces united"*, Decision of EDA, *Avgi*, 23/9/1956

²³⁶ See the decision of the 5th Plenum of the C.C. of KKE about Cyprus, *The KKE: Official documents*, Synhroni Epohi, Athens 1955, pp. 438-439

²³⁷ "Letter from the C.C. of AKEL to "Avgi", ASKI, Archive of KKE, box 372, Φ=20/22/23, 3 July 1956

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The Greek Left was seriously concerned about this development as it had warned in the past for the possibility of frictions between Greeks and Turks in Cyprus. EDA and KKE denounced the British backdoor influence on the Turkish minority and the Turkish chauvinism but did not comment on the possible share of responsibility of EOKA and the G/C side²³⁸.

The next crisis related to Cyprus would come with the hanging of the two EOKA fighters, Karaolis and Dimitriou in the beginning of May. One day before their execution there were 6 deaths and around 200 injured protestors in Athens due to gunshots from the side of the police. EDA, together with the rest of the opposition, would escalate its anti-governmental propaganda. The government was accused for the deaths in Cyprus and Greece and also for attempting to restart the negotiations with the British or even bring the issue to be examined in NATO. EDA and KKE called for the formation of a patriotic government stating that *"we don't insist on leaving from NATO immediately. We insist in a non-aligned, Greek policy"*²³⁹.

The developments in Cyprus continued to be rapid in all 1956. In the beginning of June the Greek government rejected one more proposal of the Ethnarchy to bring the issue to the Security Council of the UN. At the same period, the prime minister of Britain, Eden, was stating that they would never leave Cyprus due to the oils of the Caspian and the Middle East and also that the Turkish interest about Cyprus was much more justifiable than the Greek²⁴⁰. In the middle of July, the Ethnarchy rejected one more constitutional proposal, this time from Eden, while the Democratic Party of Menderes in Turkey was announcing that in case of a change in the status of Cyprus the island should be granted to Turkey and if the right for self-determination would be given to Cyprus then Turkey would raise claims over the Dodecanese and Thrace.

Under this Turkish intervention and seeing that the tension between the G/C and T/C was rising dangerously, EDA and KKE added one more essential parameter in their Cyprus policy. This was the demilitarization of the island which stood as an answer to Turkey's "strategic worries" and Britain's argument that the self-determination of the Cyprus would certainly cause the hostility of Turkey and its minority. The demand for

²³⁸ *Avgi*, 21-22/3/1956, 24/4/1956, 25-26/5/1956, 30/5/1956

²³⁹ *Avgi*, 24/5/1956

²⁴⁰ *Avgi*, 2/6/1956, 6/6/1956

demilitarization of the future free Cyprus was also a way to allay the fears of the Arab world and gain its solidarity and support in the UN²⁴¹.

On August of the same year, the leader of Egypt announced the nationalization of Suez causing great frustration in the Western camp. Immediately EDA grabbed the chance and in an announcement with title *"National solution of the Cyprus problem"* would state that Greece should show her solidarity to Egypt and not permit the use of its land or ports for possible aggressive moves against that country. In addition EDA would ask for the arrest of all obligations of Greece towards Britain and Turkey with the concurrent promotion of the Cyprus problem. The new announcement of EDA was closing with the call for national crouch for immediate self-determination and demilitarization of Cyprus and performance of Greek policy into NATO²⁴².

At that time when the general juncture seemed quite pressing for Britain everybody was shocked by the sudden announcement of EOKA that it quits the armed activities in order to facilitate the discussions for the self-determination of the island with Britain. It is true that the British were often using the excuse of EOKA to escape from discussing the G/C claims but nobody expected such a move from EOKA especially under the circumstances it took place. The suspicious coincidence of EOKA's decision with the rising of the Suez issue made the Left lift its tolerance towards Digenis/Grivas. Immediately, the Left press spoke for a secret agreement inspired by the Americans in order for the armed struggle to be terminated, for a plan of betray against Cyprus. Covers with titles as *"Unacceptable compromise"*, *"The back-down of the weapons, donation of high importance to the British"*²⁴³, reflect the stance of the Left on the issue. In a few words, EDA and KKE were now presented to be against the termination of a fight that they opposed in its beginning. Contrarily to the Greek Left, AKEL in Cyprus saluted the cease fire by EOKA as it presumed that with this move Britain could use no more arguments to retain the emergency state on the island and therefore the suspension of rights and the proscription of AKEL could be terminated²⁴⁴. At any case, when the Suez crisis broke out on October with Britain, France and Israel attacking Egypt neither AKEL, nor the armed EOKA took any initiatives (sabotage etc) against the British and French imperialist armies that were

²⁴¹ "The policy of EDA: Official documents", Press and research office of EDA, December 1956, pp. 9

²⁴² *Avgi*, 12/8/1956

²⁴³ *Avgi*, 18-21/8/1956

²⁴⁴ *Avgi*, 23/8/1956

using Cyprus as a military base for their operations. Despite this stance of EOKA, the Greek Left would soon return to the sympathy for its struggle, facing it again as a patriotic organization and calling for the unity with AKEL²⁴⁵.

However, Britain would deny to give amnesty to the guerillas of EOKA and on the contrary, governor Harding demanded their surrender and their trial. EOKA rejected Harding's ultimatum and hence Cyprus would be threatened by a new crisis. In front of that situation EDA's reaction was to call the government to act for a real truce in Cyprus that would put the bases for a future settlement of the Cyprus problem since *"The Cyprus problem eventually will not be solved by military means inside Cyprus. It will find its solution, it will achieve it in the international field"*²⁴⁶.

Reaching towards the end of 1956, Britain returned for nth time with a constitutional proposal which was prepared by Lord Radcliff.

Almost one month before the Constitution came in publicity the KKE based on its previous experience and on the information around the British intentions, gave a new decision on Cyprus (20/11/1956). The Radcliff Constitution was characterized as *"colonial compromise for the entombment of the Cyprus problem"*. After commenting for one more time that the struggle for the liberation of Cyprus was connected with the national claim for the disengagement of Greece by the American "custody", the decision of the C.C. would continue with its thesis on Cyprus. These were described as following: Patriotic unity and struggle in Cyprus and Greece for self-determination without terms and bases. The usage of Cyprus as war base must stop. Reassurance of the Turkish minority. No form of fighting should be precluded in the struggle of the Cypriots but the massive struggle was necessary. The Greek government should be activated for the self-determination as well. Reliance of the Cyprus struggle on the anti-imperialist camp and the democratic forces. Struggle against the English and American imperialism.

These points formulated the policy of KKE in late 1956 but the Radcliff Constitution that was announced on 19/12/1956 would exceed the most pessimist views catching again the Left by surprise. According to its provisions, the Constitution was recognizing the right of "double self-determination"! In other words, the Radcliff Constitution was opening the road for a possible future bipartition of the island. Soon

²⁴⁵ In its salutation to the Cypriot people, the 7th Plenum of the C.C. of KKE would state: *"Keep on, steadfast your struggle that your patriotic organizations, AKEL, Ethnarchy and EOKA direct"*, ASKI, Archive of KKE, box 372, Φ=20/22/27, February 1957. See also Avgi, 23/9/1956, 18/10/1956

²⁴⁶ M. Glezos, "The time of Greece", Avgi, 26/8/1956

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after the U.S. approved Radcliff's proposals and Turkey via Demirel stated that *"Only the bipartition or the preservation of the status quo would be acceptable by Turkey"*²⁴⁷. The bipartition of the island was a development that both KKE and EDA did not expect at least at the time it appeared as a prospect. The question around the future of Cyprus was now becoming even more complex. The dilemma of the past "Self-determination or not" was now becoming "Self-determination, double self-determination and dichotomy or preservation of the colonial status?".

In the beginning of 1957, Turkey would accept the Radcliff plan as negotiation basis. The Greek government would reject it. Britain would come in touch with Makarios who would be released from its exile in 17/4/1957 after his appeal to EOKA to stop its armed struggle.

A decade of continuous developments of high importance in Cyprus was over but the decades that followed proved much more dramatic.

²⁴⁷ Ploutis Servas, op.cit, pp. 318-319

Epilogue

The policy of the Greek Left on the national issues in the first post-war decade is full of discrepancies and contradictions. The traditional Left and communist internationalism went side by side with nationalistic decisions. The seriate changes of policy on an issue was a recurrent phenomenon proving the lack of depth and the desultoriness in the analysis of the national policy from the Greek Left and also its theoretical weaknesses and vacillations. The flirt with nationalism in many cases was reflected through the written sources of the time and the evident alteration in the Left/communist language in comparison with the pre-war period. But before proceeding with the final conclusions, it would be useful to set the bases of our rationale.

When we examine the stance of the Left towards the national issues we must keep in mind that the Left in general never had a unique view on the question²⁴⁸. Since the time of the fathers of communism, Marx and Engels, there were different approaches and variations between the communists. Moreover, the Marxist theory evolved and found new theorists who added their beliefs in the theoretical basis of the Left. Another point is that we cannot judge the communist parties and the other Lefts under the same criteria as they don't share the same theory, they don't have the same objectives and they are not supposed to represent the same interests exactly. A third precondition is to keep in mind the different "weight" of the national issue in different historical periods and different geographical places. In that sense, the stance of the Left on the Macedonian issue in the beginning of the 20th century cannot be regarded in the same way as in the second half or the end of the same century.

²⁴⁸ For instance, the disagreement between Roza Luxembourg and Lenin about the right of self-determination as Lenin supported the right of the oppressed nations for self-determination according to their desires while Luxembourg opposed this position claiming that by giving support to the right of secession they supported the nationalism of the bourgeoisie of the oppressed nations. See Lenin, "For the right of self-determination of the nations", in Lenin, *Collected Works*, Synhroni Epohi, Athens 1984, Vol. 25, pp. 259-321. Another disagreements concerned Engel's thesis about the "non-historical nations", the position of the Austrian Marxists about the cultural autonomy and so forth.

However, there are some constant characteristics in the relation between the Left (especially the communist Left) and the national struggles. A main differentiating factor between the Marxist Left and the rest political trends is that the solution of the national issue is not seen as an end in itself but as a step towards the proletarian revolution which will liberate the humanity from the capitalist exploitation. Already the creation of the nation and the nation-state is seen as a result of the capitalist predomination over feudalism, hence it won't continue to exist (or at least not as before) after the predomination of socialism. In other words the nation and the nation-state is a phenomenon linked to the needs of the bourgeoisie with a beginning and an end and underlies changes.

Another basic characteristic is that the Marxist Left has only been supportive towards the oppressed nations, towards the "nationalism of the weak" and especially when this is advancing for the revolutionary fight namely when it helps the proletariat to discern its class interests beyond the "fog of nationalism"²⁴⁹. Moreover, the solution of the national issues is considered by most Marxist theorists as a precondition for the development of the internationalist solidarity between workers of different nations. That is why the Leninist theory paid such attention to the right of self-determination.

The development of the anti-fascist struggle and the creation of anti-fascist fronts since 1936, resulted in an alteration of the Left stance towards patriotism and nationalism. Through the anti-fascist struggle of the W.W.II, the Left approached and used elements of nationalism and patriotism which could motivate the masses and combined them with its social vision for a new socialist post-war society²⁵⁰.

Additionally, the stance of the Left in the given decade (1946-1956) cannot be viewed but in the context of the Cold War. The environment of the bipolar world system that started becoming obvious as soon as the War ended, affected significantly the stance of the several political camps on the national issues. Greece in particular was a state of western orientation (although under serious dispute by the communists until 1949) which was surrounded from its north by states of

²⁴⁹ According to Lenin, "*Like the humanity cannot reach the abolition of classes unless through a transition period, the dictatorship of the proletariat, like that the humanity cannot reach in the inevitable interfusion of the nations unless through a transition period of full liberation of all the oppressed nations that is freedom of divulsion*"

²⁵⁰ For more details see, Eric Hobsbawm, *Nations and nationalism from 1780 till today*, Institute of the book, Athens 1994, pp. 203-207

Eastern-socialist orientation. The big national issues concerning Greece in the immediate post-war era were related with states of both blocs so the satisfaction of each group of claims necessarily meant the satisfaction of one bloc and the hostility of the other. This was more or less the region's destiny where the *"national claims-conflicts between the Balkan states coinstantaneously with the satisfaction of the local bourgeoisie aimed at the satisfaction of the interests of at least one Great Power also"*²⁵¹. Consequently, the Greek Left would find it much easier to develop its arguments about the Dodecanese and Cyprus, which were pure matters of self-determination and were related with Britain and Turkey while in the issues involving the People's Republics it would be careful, tentative or negative without avoiding of course some nationalist deviations.

The Greek civil war, which lasted for three years until 1949, and the following post-civil war state of affairs which was characterized by persecutions against the Left and the consequent illegality of the communist party is also necessary for understanding the local reality and a number of decisions of national character. Therefore, the division of the world into two political camps (capitalist-socialist) was a crucial parameter in the national policy of all sides. Most of all it was fundamental for the orientation of the communist bloc towards new alliances.

As Europe was basically "frozen" because of the Cold War, these new allies were found in the face of the national liberating powers of Asia and Africa and less frequently of Europe. The new relation of the Left with the national affairs was developed and completed in the immediate post-war era, with the arising of the anti-colonial liberation movements. Except of an ideological matter, the support of the Left to these movements was also a derivative of the Stalinist theory that gave prime importance to the national struggles as the weak point of Western imperialism. This would lead the Left to become the standard bearer of the national independence and the national struggles which was also the key element for the alliances of the Left with patriotic elements of the political Center or Right. As the Soviet theorists would point out *"defense of the nation in the post-war era means struggle against the imperialism which will be made by the working class as the bourgeoisie has become completely a stranger to its nation and serves interests of others"*, or more racy, *"by*

²⁵¹ Nikos Psyroukis, *Historical space and Greece*, Epikairotitia, Athens 1975, pp. 118-119

shaking off the yoke of a particular imperialist power, the people are generally preparing the grave of capitalism²⁵²".

Both the internal and the global developments affected the policy of the Left and to a large extent they defined the contradictions of its national policy. It is necessary here to define some differences between the communist Left, namely the KKE, and the other Left parties in Greece that were expressed through EAM and EDA. The policy of KKE had to balance between the exertion of a national policy that would allow the preservation of its influence among larger masses and the realization of its internationalist duties towards the Soviet Union and the other People's Republics. This was not exactly the case of the other parties of EAM and EDA which were already more influenced by the national issues and did not have also the organic relation with the Soviet bloc that KKE had. A clear example of this differentiation were the northern claims of EAM which were in fact turning against Albania and Bulgaria. On the other hand, the coalitions of EAM and EDA were necessary for the KKE, the first in order to assert the power with more chances and the latter in order to be able to find a channel of expression and influence in the times of its illegality.

In front of that situation, the KKE chose to preserve its alliances, withdrawing very often from its ideological beliefs or even following a bizarre "double tactic" by supporting other things as KKE and putting its sign under other claims through EAM. This was of course the case with the claims over Northern Epirus, the Greco-Bulgarian border and the Bulgarian reparations too.

In a more general level, there was also a difference in the way that KKE and EDA viewed the change of the Greek foreign policy. EDA's objections to the governments' tactic was mostly related with the analysis that the Greek interests could be better served by a policy of neutrality, friendship and cooperation with both sides. Moreover, EDA's speech about the need for reorientation of the foreign policy concentrated more in economic and national issues. In other words EDA's arguments in favor of the neutrality and the trade relations with the Eastern Bloc were mostly based in what was considered as more rational for the interests of Greece. The KKE emphasized more in the political side of this change and desired a full unity of aims with the Eastern Bloc even though due to the situation in Greece it was also supporting a neutral foreign policy. For the communist party the matter was basically ideological and it was faced under a more total political thought. Without interpreting this sentence in a strict way, we could say that EDA was mostly linking the change of

²⁵² I. Smirnoff, "The nations and their future", *Neos Kosmos*, January 1950, pp. 35

foreign policy to the national interests while the KKE viewed this change in relation with the general interests meaning also those of the Soviet Bloc.

The new Soviet/Stalinist theory after the W.W.II that *"internationalist is the one who without discussion, without swings, without terms, is ready to protect the USSR because the USSR is the basis of world revolutionary movement"*²⁵³ constituted the background of a number of decisions taken by the KKE. Such were the cases of the denial of KKE to criticize the official Bulgarian aspirations over Thrace and the semi-official Yugoslav aspirations over Macedonia. Here again, there was a different approach between KKE and EAM for the reasons mentioned above. The other side of the coin was the case of the Greek aggression towards the People's Republics of the Balkans. There, the KKE adopted a decisive stance of internationalist solidarity and denunciation of any expansionary policy. Certainly, EAM and EDA did not favor such an expansionary tactic but it is doubtful if they would reach the point to state that they would turn "the guns reversely" as the leader of KKE warned the Greek government²⁵⁴. In its first years of existence, EDA concentrated on the demand for peace and equal friendship to all sides and it was the Cyprus problem that pushed EDA to demand a more total, political clash with the Western bloc. However, we must not forget that EDA was trying to work in the hostile environment of the Greek post-civil war state while the exiled leadership of KKE was free to express its full political statements from the Eastern Bloc without the fear of persecutions.

The claim over Eastern Thrace was maybe the clearest example of a nationalist policy from the Greek Left. In this case there were no differentiations between the KKE and EAM. Surely, this claim was connected with the post-war issue of the Straits and was mostly a tool of pressure towards the Western orientation of Turkey and the Greek government's dedication to the northern claims. At all events, there can be no satisfactory excuse for the Left. It is remarkable that the decisions of KKE and EAM for Eastern Thrace were never criticized by the Party and the Left in general in difference with the mistakes related to the northern borders of Greece.

The discrepancies on the Macedonian issue and more particularly, the decision of the 5th Plenum of KKE was a result of the Civil War and the clash between Yugoslavia and

²⁵³ *Neos Kosmos*, March 1952, pp. 25

²⁵⁴ In this case too, the KKE covered a big distance from the "passive stance" in case of an invasion of Albania during 1945 to a fully active anti-governmental stance in the '50s in the same case.

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the Cominform. This time the KKE subordinated a national issue to its deadlocks caused by the outcome of the civil war and its pro-Soviet/anti-Yugoslav stance. Yet, it was another example of a superficial policy of the KKE on a national issue with successive decisions changing its stance and its slogans with the basic difference that this time the Party and the Left in general would pay a big price. The stigma of the "betrayers of the nation" was basically based on that decision of KKE. It must be noted that the 5th Plenum of the KKE caused the frustration of the rest Left parties in Greece and of the Soviets also before it would be revised a few months later. Theoretically too, the position of the 5th Plenum for self-determination of the Slav-Macedonian minority has no precedent as neither Marx and Lenin nor Stalin ever supported the right of a minority for self-determination but indeed their right for autonomy (which was the position of KKE before and after the 5th Plenum). More precisely, the communist movement had been supportive and demanded the right for self-determination for the subjugated nations or those under a colonial regime.

In the case of the Dodecanese that was undoubtedly the easiest of all, the Left kept a clear stance in favor of the self-determination-Enosis with Greece.

As far as the Cyprus problem is concerned, the stance of the Left in favor of the self-determination was also something expected and accordant to its ideology. The communist party, EAM and EDA later, stood decisively by the side of the Cypriots in their fight for the casting off of the colonial yoke. What is under dispute, is the persistence of the Left on the slogan of "Enosis"²⁵⁵. There are many voices supporting that the Left should have counted better the implications that the "Enosis" slogan could cause between Greece, Turkey and the two communities of the island. From that point of view, the demand for "Enosis" was canceling the progressive nature of the demand for self-determination as it was excluding the Turkish Cypriot community, ignoring its objections and its reservations. In this way, it was weakening the anti-colonial struggle and it was pushing the Turkish minority in the hands of Britain and the nationalism of the Turkish state.

The fact that the Left had "forgotten" the Turkish minority in its analysis for the situation of Cyprus until the '50s is another example of nationalist influence in the examination of the national issues. As we saw, the KKE understood the importance of the common struggle of the two communities and since the early '50s started

²⁵⁵ It is worth mentioning that according to the general secretary of AKEL, Papaioannou, in a meeting with the Czechoslovakian communist party the latter could not understand why AKEL and KKE demand the Enosis with Greece. ASKI, box 371, Φ=20/21/29, 12 July 1950

including new demands, new slogans that would fit all nationalities of the island. The slogan for full autonomy of the Turkish minority in the free Cyprus was such an attempt. EDA did not follow the KKE and faced the Turkish Cypriot minority either with disregard or even with hostility when the first clashes between the two communities started in 1955.

When the Left realized after the incidents of September 1955 that the T/C and Turkey would not allow the integration of the island in Greece to pass easily and that the demand for Enosis was now standing as a serious barrier for the self-determination of the island, silently changed their stance and omitted the word "Enosis", replacing it with "self-determination".

Despite the decisive stance in the Cyprus problem and the constant negation to accept something fewer than the self-determination of the island without preconditions, bases and so forth, the Left always saw the solution of the Cyprus problem coming from Greece and not from Cyprus itself. This concept is reflected in the slogan "Free Cyprus in a Free Greece" which signifies, as some claim, the inverse conception of how the liberation of Cyprus would be achieved. The KKE in particular, saw the liberation of Cyprus coming through the predomination of the Left in Greece with the victory of DSE in a first phase and the change of government later even when the armed struggle had begun in Cyprus²⁵⁶. Whether this was realistic or not, the Greek Left did not seem to base its hopes for the liberation of the island in the struggle of the Cypriots. Even when in 1956 the KKE would change the slogan "Free Cyprus in a free Greece", EDA would state that the solution of the Cyprus problem "will be mainly judged in Greece" meaning through a governmental change²⁵⁷. Under this rationale, it is easier to explain the bewilderment of the Greek Left and AKEL too in front of the outbreak of the armed struggle in Cyprus.

The attitude of KKE and EDA towards the armed struggle in Cyprus was yet one more example of contradictions in the policy of the Left. What was "fire-crackers of the Easter" and "Anglo-American provocations" in the beginning later on became "guerilla fight", "freedom fight" and "brave patriotic actions". EDA's attraction by the brave but right-wing and nationalistic guerilla warfare of EOKA was becoming more

²⁵⁶ "In order to win the self-determination of Cyprus, there must be a patriotic government in Greece", *Neos Kosmos*, October 1956. Similarly in the eve of the 1956 elections AKEL was urging the Greek voters, "For the freedom of Cyprus vote for Democratic Unity. It will mean the end of the English occupation", in *Avgi*, 19/2/1956

²⁵⁷ *Avgi*, 23/9/1956

and more obvious until the point that the struggle of EOKA was treated with impression and compliments. This is not so surprising if we consider that the time of the outbreak of the armed struggle in Cyprus coincided with the completion of the policy change in the Greek Left with the total prioritization of the national over the class struggle.

The nationalist elements and influences in the Left policy of the time are also revealed through the stance towards Turkey. It was expected that the Left would keep a hostile stance against the Turkish state since the latter had placed itself in the Western, capitalist camp, adopting an obvious anti-Soviet stance. The important fact is not the criticism of Turkey by the Left due to its anti-Soviet, anti-communist orientation but the way this criticism was made. To cut a long story short, the Greek Left since 1946 adopted an anti-Turkish language and attitude that was based more on the nationalist stereotypes, the conservative and reactionary sentiments of a big part of the Greek population than in an ideological collision with the policy of the Turkish state²⁵⁸. For instance a relevant article in a left newspaper was stating *“As far as we know, all the modern Greek history, from the great fight for our national liberation till today is a mortal combat of all the Hellenic nation against the Turks²⁵⁹”*. Likewise, from the claim of Zachariadis that Turkey should withdraw from the Balkans since it was the carrier of the backwardness in the region until a number of head titles in the Left press²⁶⁰, the Left often constructed its anti-Turkish policy with the same characteristics that the Right did with its anti-Slavic policy. It is difficult even to imagine a Left newspaper arguing that Turkey *“historically does not have any place in the European continent anymore and it has enough land in Asia for its development²⁶¹”*!! The fact that there was rarely a distinction between the Turkish state and the Turks in general was a part of the tactic followed by the Left²⁶². The

²⁵⁸ A very interesting example is a tract that was distributed by guerillas of the Democratic Army in 1947 and was also published in “Eleftheri Ellada”. The tract which was written about the prospect of a Turkish military intervention in the Greek Thrace in order to help the Greek government in the civil war stated the following *“Honest Greek officers and soldiers. The sacred bones of your colleagues that lie unburied in the battlefields of Eski Sehir, Afyon Karahisar, Kale Kroto and Sakarya, creak in front of the new betrayal. Their honest blood that founded the Greatness of the Fatherland asks from you to make your duty!”*.
Eleftheri Ellada, 14/10/1947

²⁵⁹ *Eleftheri Ellada*, 29/6/1946

²⁶⁰ For instance, “The Turkish rule in any part of Europe must be terminated”, *Eleftheri Ellada*, 30/1/1946

²⁶¹ *Rizospastis*, 22/8/1947

²⁶² See the series of articles between 11 and 15 June of 1946 in “Eleftheri Ellada” under the title “The Turks without mask” where it is described that the Greeks of Turkey are under the humiliations, the oppression and the exterminative barbarity of our Turkish “allies”. See also *Avgi*, 24/3/1956, 25/5/1956

argument that the Left and mostly the KKE probably just used these nationalistic elements to achieve its final goals does not change much in our view. The education of the masses with such slogans and theories was coming in conflict with the previous stance of the Balkan Left that was very careful with the use of terms and its critics when it was coming to the national affairs and particularly in a region as the Balkans.

Generally, the decade 1946-1956 is full of examples of the importance that the national issue got for the Left. During all this period and without serious differentiations, the Left was trying to prove that it was the camp with the purest national policy which would better defend the patriotic rights and also to belie the image that the Right propaganda was creating about the "Left national betrayers". The Left speech became so patriotic and nationally-oriented as never before. The following part of an article of Zachariadis written in 1951 is evidential of this reality, *"The national unity movement must motivate and turn to advantage all these patriotic elements and peddle them to an invincible national uprising for the fatherly, for the holy and the blessed, "for God and country", for the real national interest against the sacrilege, the profanation and the snatch of the Americanocracy and the subdued ones. The Greek earnestness is a huge, popular, patriotic power that we must mobilize in the energetic, national, anti-American struggle²⁶³".* This bizarre mixture of anti-imperialist language with traditional nationalistic schemes and phrases would appear frequently in the texts of the Left. The post-war Stalinist theory was arguing that the working class had become the guard of the national interests which were betrayed by the capitalists²⁶⁴. The KKE would likewise state in the decision of its 3rd Plenum in 1952 that *"The new work of comrade Stalin ... gives a new inestimable help to our Party and its struggle against the americanocracy and the monarch-fascism, for the people's survival, for the national independence, the democracy, the peace and socialism. In Greece also the bourgeoisie, the plutocracy, threw the flag of the national honor and independence, the flag of the democratic freedoms in the bog. Now, more than before, the existence of the nation, of its independence, is dependent by its struggle for survival and its future, against the foreign impious occupiers and the internal national betrayal. The big bourgeoisie, the plutocracy, all the more, more and more openly goes off from the interests of the*

²⁶³ Nikos Zachariadis, *Neos Kosmos*, December 1951, pp.4

²⁶⁴ I. Smirnoff, op.cit, pp. 34, 35

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*nation, from the nation itself. It was converted and it is being converted to an anti-national, incited from abroad, cosmopolitan attachment of the American imperialism. Patriotism and nation from one side and plutocracy and national-betrayal from the other, are two opponent, hostile camps. The nation can stand and live only by fighting against the sell-out and the national extinction where the plutocratic national-betrayal is leading it, against the abrogation of the national interests by the worshipers of the Americanocracy*²⁶⁵.

The Left press of the time published numerous articles, covers and head lines that could hardly be distinguished by the traditional Right/nationalist writing.

A decisive factor as we mentioned before, was the gradual prioritization of the national issue and the basic concept that Greece was a nationally dependent country and therefore needed a governmental change that would result its national independence. As J. Meynaud successfully described, this concept that the basic antithesis in Greece was between the national and the foreign/imperialist interests led the Left and particularly EDA to decide for the need of collaboration with the "national powers" of all the political spectrum against the oligarchy first as servant of the foreign interests and only secondly under a class view²⁶⁶. Under that analysis, the Left was much more successful in defending the independence of the Greece state with its struggle against the creation of American bases in Greece and Cyprus. In fact, the emergence of the national issue as the first priority of the Left and the passing of the class struggle to a second level had also roots in the Soviet theory for the peaceful coexistence of the two systems. As Stalin first stated in the post-war era, *"Despite the difference of the economic systems and the ideologies, the coexistence of these systems and the peaceful settlement of the differences that exist between the USSR and the USA are not only possible but also absolutely necessary for the interests of global peace*²⁶⁷". Similarly, in the eve of the Geneva Conference Bulganin would state that the difference between the two social systems was no obstacle. As a consequent the newspaper of EDA, "Avgi", would be published in the New Year's Day with the title *"1955: The year that buried the Cold War"*...

Overall, the stance of the Greek Left on the national issues of the decade 1946-1956 is a complex combination of contradictory policies and cannot be judged

²⁶⁵ *The KKE: Official documents, Vol.7 1949-1955*, Synhroni Epohi, Athens 1955, pp. 327

²⁶⁶ J. Meynaud, *Political powers in Greece*, Byron, Athens 1965, pp. 201

²⁶⁷ *Neos Kosmos*, 15/4/1949

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univocally. The nationalist deviations in its policy were both demonstrated through an expansionary policy against other countries –even of the same ideological block till 1946- and then in an internal level with its rhetoric that often reminded the national revolutionaries of the 19th century. The results on the masses that were influenced by the Left by this nationalist language and the turn to the prioritization of the national issue in general, is another case worth studying.

The Cold War had a basic effect on the Greek Left. Its claims on the foreign policy and the differentiations in the background analysis between KKE and EDA were directly linked to the level of relations with the communist bloc and its interests. The effect of the general turn of the Left towards a more patriotic (or nationalist as one prefers) stance also entrained the Greek Left. Many of the discrepancies and the permanent revisions of the stance on national issues were deriving from the ideological conflict of the communist background with the new post-war national policy. That is why these oscillations were more often and extreme in the KKE which often swung from nationalism to internationalism. However, it would be inaccurate to remain there. The Greek Left kept a decisive stance in matters of self-determination, peaceful coexistence in the Balkans and independence of Greece. These were the elements that helped decisively in its new gleam only a few years after the end of the civil war despite the continuous persecutions against its members and supporters. After all, the ideological aspects of its mistakes did not concern the biggest part of the population as long as the national interests of the country were not obviously put in danger (e.g. case of Macedonia). Beyond its contradictions and its superficiality in many cases, beyond the numerous reversals of its decisions and the frequent policy revisions, the Left remained the most recognizable defender of the country's national interests and independence.

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Glossary

AKEL: Progressive Party of the Working People (the major left party in Cyprus)

Avgi: The newspaper of EDA

Dimokratiki: Newspaper of the Greek Left before Avgi

DSE: Democratic Army of Greece (the communist guerilla army in the Greek civil war)

EAM: National Liberation Front (the biggest resistance movement during the German occupation, founded by the Greek Left)

EDA: United Democratic Left (Left coalition of the post-civil war era till 1967)

ELAS: Greek People's Liberating Army (the armed section of EAM)

EOKA: National Organization of Cypriot Fighters (guerilla organization in Cyprus)

KKE: Communist Party of Greece

KKK: Communist Party of Cyprus (precedent of AKEL)

Rizospastis: The newspaper of KKE



Nikos
Zachariadis
(General Secretary of KKE)



Markos
Vafiadis
(Leader of DSE)



Ioannis
Pasalidis
(President of EDA)

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