Communist Party of Greece

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The Communist Party of Greece (Greek: Κομμουνιστικό Κόμμα Ελλάδας, Kommounistikó Kómma Elládas, KKE) is a Marxist–Leninist political party in Greece. Founded in 1918 as the Socialist Labour Party of Greece, it is the oldest party in the Greek political scene. It is one of the most important communist parties in the Western world and at the same time one of the most hardline.

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History

Foundation

Communist Party of Greece

Κομμουνιστικό Κόμμα Ελλάδας Kommounistikó Kómma Elládas



General Secretary Dimitris Koutsoumpas

Founded 17 November [O.S. 4

November] 1918

Headquarters 145 Leof. Irakliou,

142 31 Athens (Nea Ionia),

Greece

Newspaper Rizospastis

Student wing Panspoudastiki

Youth wing Communist Youth of Greece

Trade Union Wing All-Workers Militant Front

Ideology Communism

Marxism–Leninism Euroscepticism^[1]

Political position Far-left^{[2][3]}

InternationalInternational Meeting ofaffiliationCommunist and Workers'

Parties

European Initiative of Communist and

affiliation Workers' Parties **European** Non-Inscrits^[4]

Parliament group

Colours Red

Parliament 15 / 300

European Parliament

Regions^[5] 31 / 725

Website

2/21

www.kke.gr (http://www.kke.gr/)



Plaque at the building of Piraeus where the 1st congress of the party was held.

The October Revolution of the Bolsheviks in Russia in 1917 gave impetus for the foundation of

Politics of Greece Political parties Elections

Communist parties in many countries all over the globe. KKE was founded on 4 November 1918 as the Socialist Labour Party of Greece (Greek: Σοσιαλιστικό Εργατικό Κόμμα Ελλάδας, Sosialistikó Ergatikó Kómma Elládas; acronym: ΣΕΚΕ, SΕΚΕ) by Avraam Benaroya, a Sephardic Jewish teacher and Socialist Workers' Federation leader in Thessaloniki. The party was run by a five-member central committee which consisted of Nikos Dimitratos, D. Ligdopoulos, M. Sideris, A. Arvanitis and S. Kokkinos.

The background of KKE has roots in more than 60 years of small socialist, anarchist and communist groups, mainly in industrialized areas. These groups, following the example of the Paris Commune and the 1892 Chicago workers' movement for the eight-hour working day, had as immediate political goals the unification of Greek workers into trade unions, the implementation of an eight-hour day in Greece, and better salaries for workers. Inspired by the Paris Commune and the Communist revolutionary

efforts in the United States, Germany and Russia at the beginning of the century, and the destruction that almost 20 years of wars had brought upon the Greek workers, a unified Social-Communist party was founded in Greece. [6]

At the Second Congress of the SEKE in April 1920, the party decided to affiliate with Comintern, an international Communist organisation founded in Moscow in 1919. It changed its name to the *Socialist Labour Party of Greece-Communist* (*SEKE-K*). A new central committee was elected, which included Nikos and Panaghis Dimitratos, Yannis Kordatos, G. Doumas and M. Sideris. At the Third Extraordinary Congress of the SEKE-K in November 1924, the party was renamed the *Communist Party of Greece* and adopted the principles of Marxism–Leninism. Pandelis Pouliopoulos was elected as general-secretary. Ever since, the party has functioned on the basis of democratic centralism.

KKE between the two World Wars

KKE strongly opposed Greece's involvement in the Greco-Turkish War of 1919–1922, which it considered an imperialistic scheme to control the market of Asia Minor given the new political situation after the Ottoman Empire's collapse. KKE members propagated this position both on the front – which provoked accusations of treason from the Greek government – as well as in the mainland. KKE collaborated with the Soviet ambassador to persuade Venizelos' administration to withdraw its troops from Asia Minor, and to persuade the Soviet Union to exert political pressure on Mustafa Kemal Atatürk to allow autonomy for Greek cities in Asia Minor.^[7]

KKE played a prominent role in strikes, anti-war demonstrations, foundation of trade unions and worker associations. KKE and other leftist political forces fostered the creation of labor unions in all sectors, including the General Greek Workers Confederation ($\Gamma\Sigma EE$), which shared common goals with KKE. [8][9]

These activities met by opposition from the Mid-War governments; in 1929 Georgios Papandreou, as minister of Education in the government of Eleftherios Venizelos, passed legislation against organised communist teachers, known as Idionymon. Such legislation was often used to prosecute KKE members and other leftist activists. [10] Under the Idionymon all members of the Communist Party of Greece, being considered dangers to

the state, were to be removed from public service or put in exile.

The first prison camps for left wing citizens and communists were founded in that era. KKE and its organisations, although small in numbers, continue operating in all Greek major cities, especially industrial areas such as Athens, Piraeus, Patra, Thessaly and Volos, Thessaloniki, Kavala and elsewhere.^[11]

KKE collaborated with other newly founded Communist Parties to oppose the rise of the Fascist movement in Europe. In 1932, the Committern decreed that anti-Fascist fronts be formed internationally. KKE responded by creating the *People's Front*, which was the largest Marxist anti-Fascist organisation in Greece prior to the dictatorship of Ioannis Metaxas.

The party was banned in 1936 by the dictatorial 4th of August Regime of Metaxas, and brutally persecuted by his security chief, Konstantinos Maniadakis. Many KKE members were imprisoned or exiled on isolated Aegean islands.

KKE members volunteered to fight on the side of the republican government of Spain during the Spanish Civil War of 1936–1939; about 440 Greeks joined the ranks of the International Brigade, many of whom were high-ranking KKE members.

KKE and the Macedonian issue

After the Balkan Wars of 1912–1913, World War I in 1916-1918, and the disastrous Greco–Turkish War of 1919–1922, there were diplomatic approaches from the superpowers of that era regarding the re-drawing of Greek borders, based on Turkey and Bulgaria pressing for more territory to improve trade routes with the British Empire. The ruling parties were simultaneously trying to move parts of Northern Greece (Macedonia and Thrace) to Turkey and Bulgaria, and to win the return of islands in the Aegean and parts of Macedonian territory to the Kingdom of Yugoslavia. This policy was reiterated several times throughout the pre-war era. [12][13]

The main impetus for their demand was the ethnic and religious minorities then living inside Greek borders in Northern Greece. KKE opposed any geo-strategic game in the area which would use minorities to start a new imperialistic war in the region. At its Third Party Congress in 1924, KKE announced its policy for the self-determination of minorities, pointing out the minorities in Macedonia. [14] Its policy was dictated by each Marxist–Leninist theory, that stated any minorities should be self-determined under a common Socialist State, and it had its roots in the example of the newly founded Soviet Union. [15]

In 1924, KKE expressed the official position of the Third International for "independent Macedonia and Thrace". Some members disagreed with this, but it remained the official position of the party and caused expulsions of communists by the Greek state. [16] KKE was seen by many as a party whose policy was "the detachment of large areas of northern Greece". According to Richard Clogg "this was dictated by Comintern and hurt the popularity of Communism at the time". [17]

In 1934, KKE changed its view and expressed its intent to "fight for the national self-determination, under a People's Republic where all nations will found their self-determination and will build the common state of the workers ...". [18]

Nikos Zachariadis, General Secretary of the party, officially renounced KKE's policy of secession in 1945.^[19] Anti-KKE propaganda up-to-day, added on this

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EAM-ELAS
Democratic Army of Greece
United Democratic Left
United Left
Synaspismos

quote the will to collaborate for this goal with the Bulgarian organizations of the Internal Macedonian Revolutionary Organization and the Thracian Revolutionary Organisation. This is not mentioned on any of KKE official documents. The quote is referenced as KKE's policy for "giving Greek soil to the northern enemies of the country", a fact that can't be crossed referenced with any of KKE referenced literature of that era.

During the civil war (1946–49), an article written by Nikos Zachariadis expressed the KKE's strategy after the envisioned victory of the Democratic Army of Greece regarding what was then known as the "Macedonian Issue": "The Macedonian people will acquire an independent, united state with a coequal position within the family of free peoples' republics within the Balkans, within the family of Peoples' Republics to which the Greek people will belong. The Macedonian people are today

Rizospastis Komounistiki Epitheorisi

> Greece Elections in Greece

Communism
Marxism–Leninism
Communist Movement

Communism Portal

fighting for this independent united state with a coequal position and is helping the DSE with all its soul ..."^[20] The policy of self-determination for Macedonia within a People's Republic was reiterated during the 5th KKE Central Committee meeting held in January 1949, which declared that the "Macedonian people participating in the liberation struggle would find their full national re-establishment as they want giving their blood for this acquisition ... Macedonian Communists should pay great attentions to foreign chauvinist and counteractive elements that want to break the unity between the Greek and Macedonian people. This will only serve the monarcho-fascists and British imperialism ...".^[21] These statements can be explained due to the large number of Slavomacedonian fighters (30–50%) amongst the DSE fighters and prompted the government in Athens to begin a campaign against KKE and the party's military wing, the Democratic Army of Greece (DSE), blaming them for secession plans in northern Greece.

In order for KKE to clear up its position on the "Macedonian subject", the 6th Congress of its Central Committee was called a few months later, during which was clearly stated that KKE was fighting for a free Greece and for a common future for Greeks and Macedonians under the same state. [22]

The issue was ended by Central Committee in 1954 with the withdrawal of the position of self-determination of minorities. In 1988, the General Secretary of KKE, Charilaos Florakis, once again presented KKE's political position on the matter in a speech to the Greek Parliament.

KKE during the Second World War

1940

By 1940, KKE had almost collapsed after Metaxas' dictatorship had imprisoned many of its leadership and members. By October half of the party's two thousand members were in prison or in exile. The Security Police proved successful in dismantling the party structure; not only had it imprisoned the leadership, but it created a fake series of *Rizospastis*, the Central Committee newspaper. This generated confusion among the remaining scattered underground members.^{[23][24]}

A small group of old party officials formed the "Old Central Committee". Two of them were elected by the 6th Conference. ^[25] In his memoirs for the Greek Civil war, C. M. Woodhouse (the British liaison with Greek resistance groups during World War II) wrote: "The 'Old Central Committee' interpreted a directive issued by Comintern as indicating collaboration with the German and Italian dictatorships, given the Hitler-Stalin alliance.". ^[26] On the other hand, Woodhouse argues, Georgios Siantos, who had escaped from prison, and Nikos Zachariadis, who was still incarcerated, took the opposite view that KKE must support Metaxas in his fight against Mussolini. ^[26] The archives of KKE^[27] also address the confusion between different KKE cadres;

the "Old Committee" interpreted the politics of Nazi Germany and Fascist Italy as part of the "imperialistic game between the Axis forces and the British." This faction of KKE felt that the Metaxas regime was a "pawn of British imperialism in the region," [28] and, therefore, the "Old Committee" viewed any war between the Axis forces and the British as an "...imperialistic war that the people of any of the countries involved should not participate in...". According to KKE's account, this position was criticised by Comintern in 1939 (a few months after the Soviet-German Non-Aggression Pact), which had instructed KKE to fight against Italy in the event of an invasion of Greece. [29][30]

Nikos Zachariadis, KKE General Secretary, wrote from prison on 2 November 1940: "Today the Greek people are waging a war of national liberation against Mussolini's fascism. In this war we must follow the Metaxas government and turn every city, every village and every house of Greece into a stronghold of the National Liberation Fight... On this war conducted by Metaxas government all of us should give all our forces without reservation. The working people's and the crowning achievement for today's fight should be and shall be a new Greece based on work, freedom, and liberated from any foreign imperialist dependence, with a truly pan-popular culture." [31][32]

Several party members, including Nikos Ploumpidis of the "Old Central Committee", denounced this letter as a forgery produced by the Metaxas regime. [33][34] Zachariadis was even accused of writing it to win the favour of Konstantinos Maniadakis, the Minister for Public Order, to win his release from prison. [7] According to one source when drafting this letter Zachariadis was unaware of the Soviet-German Non-Aggression Pact, and was castigated by the Comintern for an anti-Soviet stance. [35]

According to KKE's archives, the "Old Central Committee" had been denounced for its stance on the war issue; today KKE claims that the majority of the party membership had not followed the decision of being neutral in case of an invasion. [36][37] On 16 November 1940, Zachariadis repudiated the line of his first letter in a second letter where he accused the Greek Army of waging a "fascist" and "imperialistic war" and appealed to the USSR for peaceful intervention, [38][39] thus aligning his position with that of the "Old Central Committee". [33]

On 7 December 1940, the "Old Central Committee" issued a manifesto addressed "to all the workers and public servants, to all soldiers, sailors and airmen, to patriot officers, to the mothers, fathers, wives and children of the fighters and the workers of all neighboring countries", in which it describes the war as a game of the imperialist powers, headed by the British. According to KKE, the "Old Central Committee" based this opinion on the belief that Mussolini's Italy would not dare to attack a country that had a cooperation agreement with the Soviet Union. The main political line of this manifesto was the call to the soldiers on the front not to go beyond Greek borders, but after securing them to try seek a peace agreement with the enemy. [40]

Zachariadis may have issued a third letter on 17 January 1941, in which he explained the motives for his first letter and wrote: "Metaxas remains the principal enemy of the people and the country. His overthrowing is in the most immediate and vital interest of our people ... the peoples and soldiers of Greece and Italy are not enemies but brothers, and their solidarity will stop the war waged by capitalist exploiters." [35]

According to KKE archives, Zachariadis had issued no further letters, and the third letter may have been in fact the statement of the "Old Central Committee" on 18 March 1941. [41] In any case, Zachariadis himself referred in his public statements after liberation almost exclusively to his first letter as proof of the patriotic character of KKE and its role as an inspiration to the Greek resistance movement during the war.

On 22 June 1941, the very same day that Hitler attacked the Soviet Union, KKE ordered its militants to organize "the struggle to defend the Soviet Union and the overthrow of the foreign fascist yoke". [33][38]

1941: Invasion

On April 6, 1941 the German invasion was launched, and Athens was occupied on 27 April, following an unconditional surrender of the Greek forces by General Georgios Tsolakoglou, who was later appointed Prime Minister by the Nazis. Confusion remained among many Greek Communists as to what the Moscow-sanctioned position was. In his memoirs, KKE leader Ioannis Ioannidis wrote about a regional Communist cadre who proclaimed the following as Greece was being bombed by the Axis: "The Germans will not bomb us. The mustached-one [Stalin] will not let them." [42]

A large number of KKE members were already in prison before the Nazi invasion. The pro-Nazi occupation government handed some of them over to the Nazis fearing that they—following the pro-Soviet party line—would resort to sabotage in Greece following Hitler's attack on the Soviet Union on June 22, 1941. [43][44][45][46] There were many occasions that police officers released communist prisoners, especially the ones that they were in exile in Aegean islands. In 1941, several KKE members managed to escape prison. One of the many stories includes the 20 Communists held as political prisoners in Heraklion, Crete. They demanded to be released to fight against the invading Germans. The Greek

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government, which had left mainland Greece by then and was en route to Egypt, had no power to release them. They eventually escaped after their jail was damaged by German bombs and joined the British and Greek forces defending the Heraklion harbor. After the fall of Crete, many officers of the Greek Army joined forces with ELAS and became commanders in ELAS's corps of partisan units^{[47][48]}

It became German policy – especially after it became obvious to them that they were losing the war – to execute civilians in retaliation for attacks against them by communist or non-communist partisans. Approximately 200 communists, delivered to the Germans on 1941, were executed at the Kaisariani Shooting Range on May 1, 1944. [49]

Although KKE was suffering from a lack of central political leadership, since its leader Nikos Zachariades had been taken by the Germans to the Dachau concentration camp, its members succeeded in maintaining communication with each other. The 6th Meeting of KKE Central Committee was held in Athens from 1–3 July 1941, which decided on strategy for an armed liberation struggle against the Nazi invaders. At the same time, the "Old Central Committee" submitted to the authority of the new Central Committee. [50] The first united resistance organization was founded in the regions of Macedonia and Thrace on 15 May 1941. [29] In Thessaloniki, the Macedonian Bureau of KKE established the *Eleftheri* (Liberty) Organization, along with the Socialist Party, the Agrarian Party, the Democratic Union and Colonel Dimitrios Psarros (who later founded the EKKA).

The Macedonian Bureau of KKE organised the first two partisan units at the end of June 1941. The first was based in Kilkis and was named "Athanasios Diakos", the second was based in Nigrita and was named "Odysseas Androutsos". These small partisan units blew up bridges, attacked police stations, and eventually organized into larger combat units of more than 300 men each.^[51] In several other places and in major cities, small armed groups of KKE members and non-communists began to emerge, protecting people from looters, the Germans, or collaborators.^[52] On 27 September 1941, Greek communists together with five other leftist

parties formed the National Liberation Front (EAM), in Kallithea, Athens, and began forming partisan militia units.

1942 to liberation

On 16 February 1942, the Greek People's Liberation Army (ELAS) was founded in a small kiosk in Fthiotida and by 1943 it consisted of 50,000 members, both men and women, with 30,000 as reserve units in major cities. The KKE played a prominent role in the organisation. By the end of the war, some 200,000 Greek citizens, both workers and peasants, had joined the ranks of KKE. KKE maintained its alliances with the EAM. Its main stated aim at this time was to form a united government with all parties that wanted to see Greece liberated from foreign powers.^[53]

ELAS conflicted finally with the rest of the resistance organizations and armies (especially EDES and EKKA), accusing most of them of being traitors and collaborators of the Nazis. These were the first conflicts of the coming civil war.

Nikos Zachariadis was imprisoned in Dachau; he was released in 1945 and returned to Greece as the elected general secretary of the KKE. During his imprisonment Andreas Tsipas and Georgios Siantos served as party general secretaries.



A monument for Greek People's Liberation Army, Galatsi, Athens.

KKE and the Greek Civil War

After the liberation of Greece from the NAZI forces, the Government of National Unity, led by G. Papandreou, landed in Athens in October 1944. The government was formed after the Treaty of Cazerta and each main purpose was to form the new Greek State, trial accused political and military personnel for collaboration with the NAZIs and make a referendum for the government and the constitution. After the first weeks, it was obvious that British policy in the region was against these goals, as KKE and EAM were controlling 98% of Greece and they were afraid of the foundation of new Socialist State. Papandreou, demanded the disarmament of ELAS and the trials of the collaborators were stalled. Meanwhile, British troops together with the "refined" Greek arm divisions - after the prosecution of thousands of EAM members in the middle east -, loyal to the Papandreou secht were landing to all major Greek cities, and EAM was welcoming them as liberators. In mid-November 1944, the situation was escalating dramatically. KKE criticised the interference of the British General Scoby in Greek affairs, EAM refused to disarm ELAS and ELAN.^[54] Six ministers of the EAM, resigned from their positions in the government of Georgios Papandreou, in November 1944. Fighting broke out in Athens on 3 December 1944 during a demonstration, organised by EAM, involving more than 100,000 people. According to some accounts, the police, covered by British troops, [55][56] opened fire on the crowd. More than 28 people were killed and 148 injured. According to other accounts, it is uncertain if the first shots were fired by the police or the demonstrators.^[57] A member of the pro-Monarchist and collaborated with the NAZIs X-organization, Nikos Farmakis (later PM with Nea Dimokratia) in one of his interviews reveals that they had direct order to fire at will when the demonstrators reach the court of the Palace.^[58] This incident was the beginning of the 37-day Battle of Athens (Dekemvriana). Following a ceasefire agreement called the Treaty of Varkiza, ELAS laid down the majority of its weapons and dissolved all of its units. Right-wing groups, including elements which had collaborated with the Germans, seized this opportunity to persecute many KKE members.^[59]

According to EAM figures, in the few months after the Treaty of Varkiza, the anti-communist violence on the

Greek mainland had resulted in the imprisonment or exile of 100,000 ELAS partisans and EAM members, the deaths of 3,000 EAM officials and members, the rape of between 200 and 500 women, the burning of houses, and other acts of violence. [60] The KKE Central Committee issued a directive to all party forces not to engage in any armed conflict but to try to prevent attacks by other means. This caused confusion among the majority of its supporters, and served to weaken the party organisation across the country. [61]

Large groups had returned to their partisan hideouts in the mountains and gradually formed smaller partisan units. As most of the ELAS armoury had been surrendered under the terms of the Varkiza treaty, these units armed themselves with weapons seized from attacks on militia units that had been provided arms by the police, as well as attacking police stations. By mid-1946 these units forced the KKE leadership to change its neutral position and to plan the formation a partisan army with the officers and fighters that were still free. On 26 October 1946, KKE militia units attacked the police station in Litochoro, armed their forces and founded the Central Greece Command of the Democratic Army of Greece (DSE). After this successful operation, the remaining scattered groups reorganized the pre-Varkiza Treaty ELAS formations all over the country. KKE's political influence and organization structure helped form units in the Aegean Islands of as Mytilene, Chios, Ikaria, Samos, and Crete. [37][62]

The Civil War involved two sides. On the one side was the British and American backed Greek Government, led by Konstantinos Tsaldaris and, later, Themistoklis Sophoulis, which was elected in the 1946 elections which the KKE had boycotted. On the other side was the Democratic Army of Greece, of which the KKE was the only major political force, backed by the NOF, Bulgaria, Yugoslavia, and Albania.

In December 1947, KKE and its allies that participated in the Civil War formed the Provisional Democratic Government ("Mountain Government") under the premiership of Markos Vafiadis. After this, the KKE (still legal due to the Treaty of Varkiza) turned illegal.

Badge of the Democratic Army of Greece. The

Democratic Army of Greece. The letter Delta stands for *Demokratia*, meaning both "Democracy" and "Republic" (in Greek language these words are one and the same).

On 29 January 1949, the Greek National Army appointed General Alexander Papagos Commander-in-Chief. In August 1949, Papagos launched a major counter-offensive against DSE forces in northern Greece, code-named "Operation Torch". The plan was for the Greek National Army to gain control of the border with Albania in order to surround and defeat the DSE forces, numbering 8,500 fighters. The DSE suffered heavy losses from the operation, but managed to retreat its units to Albania.^[63]

Charilaos Florakis, whose *nom de guerre* was Kapetan Yiotis, was a DSE-appointed *Brigadier General* during this battle. Florakis was ordered by the DSE High Command to re-enter Greece with his battalion via the Gramos Mountains and try to establish connection with all the DSE forces that remained within Greece. The battalion indeed reached small DSE units south of Gramos down to Evritania, and retreated thereafter back to Albania. Floriakis later served as General Secretary of KKE from 1972 to 1989.

On 28 August 1949, the Civil War in Greece ended with the DSE forces defeated militarily and politically, and KKE entered a new phase in its history.^[64]

Post-War era

After the Civil War, the KKE was outlawed and most of its prominent members had to flee Greece, go underground, or provide a signed declaration that they renounced communism to avoid prosecution under Law 504, issued in 1948, a large number of KKE members were either prosecuted, jailed or exiled. Prominent members of the KKE were tried and executed, including Nikos Beloyannis in 1952 and Nikos Ploumpidis in

1954. The execution of Ploumpidis was the last such execution by the post-Civil War governments. The fear of widespread reaction from left-wing citizens curbed further executions and eventually led to the gradual release of most political prisoners. In 1955 there were 4,498 political prisoners and 898 exiles; in 1962 there were 1,359 prisoners and 296 exiles. But under the prevailing anti-communist rules, communists and KKE sympathizers were barred from the public sector and lived under a repressive anticommunist surveillance system. Such discrimination against communists was partially relieved with the legalization of KKE in 1974, and the discrimination ended in the 1980s. During this period of illegality, the KKE supported the United Democratic Left (EDA) Party.

Former king Constantine II claims that in 1964 he proposed to George Papandreou (senior) that the KKE be legalized. According to the former monarch, Papandreou refused to comply so as not to lose his party's left-wing supporters. [67] This allegation cannot be verified, as it was expressed after Papandreou's death. Moreover, Constantine's public statements regarding communism during the 1960s renders the veracity of this allegation questionable.

During the Junta

On 21 April 1967, a group of right-wing Greek Army colonels led by Georgios Papadopoulos successfully carried out a coup d'état on the pretext of imminent "communist threat", establishing what became known as the Regime of the Colonels. All political parties, including EDA, were dissolved, and civil liberties were suppressed for all Greek citizens. KKE members were persecuted along with other opponents of the junta.

In 1968, a crisis escalated between KKE's two main factions. The crisis was already festering during the 12th plenum of the party's central committee held in Budapest between 5 and 15 February 1968 in which three members of the politbureau (M. Partsalidis, Z. Zografos & P. Dimitriu) were expelled for fractionist activity and was further triggered by the Soviet invasion of Czechoslovakia. This event led a number of Greek communists who were ideologically leaning with the so-called opportunist faction to break with KKE that was loyal to the Socialist Republic's policy and to follow the nascent Eurocommunist line, which favored a more pluralistic approach to socialism. A relatively large group split from KKE, forming what became the Communist Party of Greece (Interior). The spin-off party forged bonds with Eurocommunist parties such as the Italian Communist Party and with Nicolae Ceauşescu's Romanian Communist Party. Its supporters referred to KKE as the KKE (Exterior) ("KKE εξωτερικού"), inferring that KKE's policies were dictated by the Politburo of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union.

Despite the difficulties resulting from the split, KKE continued its opposition to the Greek Junta throughout the next 6 years. Its political fighting against the regime took the form of labour disruptions and strikes and small demonstrations all over the country. [68][69] Its power was rising inside the Universities where the newly founded Communist Youth of Greece (KNE) began working underground. KKE underground forces continued to work closely with other political groups of the center and left within Greece and abroad. In many European capitals anti-Junta committees were founded to support the struggle in Greece.

Legalisation

After the restoration of parliamentary democracy in 1974, Constantine Karamanlis legalised the KKE hoping to reclaim "a vital part of national memory".^[70] In the 1974 elections the KKE participated with the KKE Interior and the EDA under the name of the United Left, receiving 9.36 per cent of the vote. In the elections from 1977 to 1989, the KKE participated on its own (see results below).

In 1989, the political consequences of the Civil War were finally lifted: The war was named "Civil War" instead

of "War against the gangs" ("συμμοριτοπόλεμος"), that was the official state name for that era up until that point, and DSE fighters were named "DSE fighters" instead of "Communist Gangfighters" ("κουμουνιστοσυμμορίτες").

Participation in government

In 1944, KKE participated in the national unity government of George Papandreou, holding the positions of Minister of Finance, Minister of Agriculture, Minister of Labor, Minister of National Economy and Public Works, and Deputy Minister of Finance.

In 1988, KKE and Greek Left (Greek EAP; the former KKE Interior), along with other left-wing parties and organisations, formed the Coalition of the Left and Progress (Synaspismos). In the June 1989 elections Synaspismos gained 13.1 per cent of votes and joined a coalition with New Democracy to form a short-lived government amidst a political spectrum shaken by accusations of economic scandals against the previous administration of Andreas Papandreou's Panhellenic Socialist Movement. In November of the same year Synaspismos participated in the "Universal Government" with New Democracy and Panhellenic Socialist Movement which appointed Xenophon Zolotas as Prime Minister for three months. In 1991, KKE withdrew from Synaspismos. Some KKE members left the party and remained in Synaspismos, which evolved into a separate left-wing party that is now an alliance of Synaspismos with other leftist groups called the Coalition of the Radical Left.

21st century

KKE actively participated in the anti-austerity protests beginning in 2010.^[71]

Splits and alliances

There have been a series of splits throughout the party's history, the earliest one being the Trotskyist Organisation of Internationalist Communists of Greece.

In 1956, after the 20th Congress of the Communist Party of the USSR, at which Khrushchev denounced the excesses of Stalin, a faction created the Group of Marxist-Leninists of Greece (OMLE), which split from party in 1964, becoming the Organisation of Marxists-Leninists of Greece.

In 1968, amidst the Greek military junta of 1967–1974 and the Soviet invasion of Czechoslovakia, a relatively big group split from KKE, forming KKE Interior, a Greek Nationalist Communist Party claiming to be directed from within Greece rather than from the Soviet Union.

In 1988 KKE and Greek Left (the former KKE Interior), along with other left parties and organisations, formed the Coalition of the Left and Progress.

Also in 1988, the vast majority of members and officials from Communist Youth of Greece (KNE), the KKE's youth wing, split to form the New Left Current (NAR), drawing mainly youth in major cities, especially in Thessaloniki.

In the early 2000s, a small group of major party officials such as Mitsos Kostopoulos left the party and formed the Movement for the United in Action Left (KEDA), which in the 2007 legislative election participated in the Coalition of the Radical Left, which was to win the 2015 national elections with a plurality.

Youth organisation

KKE's youth organization is the Communist Youth of Greece, KNE, which closely supports KKE's goals and strategic targets.

Current activities



KKE is a force in the Greek political scene, rallying a significant amount of support within the organized working-class movement. KKE is currently trying to mold a loose and rather disorganised international communist movement along a purely Marxist–Leninist line; since its 18th Congress (February 2009) KKE has opened up a discussion within the ranks and more broadly within the Greek left-leaning community on the future evolution of communism in the 21st century, with a particular emphasis on examining the causes of the collapse of the Socialist system in the former Soviet Union and in Eastern Europe.

The KKE stands in elections and has representatives in the Greek Parliament, local government, and the European Parliament, where its two MEPs sit with the Non-Inscrits. On 3 June 2014, following the 2014 European elections, the Central Committee of the KKE announced that it would no longer continue the party's affiliation to the European United Left–Nordic Green Left (GUE/NGL) group in the European parliament.^[72]

It publishes the daily newspaper *Rizospastis*. It also publishes the political and theoretical journal *Komounistiki Epitheorisi* (Communist Review) every two months and a journal covering educational issues, *Themata Paideias*. It also owns the 902 TV station.

The congresses of the Communist Party of Greece

- The 1st congress November 1918, Piraeus
- The 2nd congress April 1920, Athens
- Extraordinary pre-election congress September 1920, Athens
- Extraordinary congress October 1922, Athens
- Extraordinary pre-election congress September 1923, Athens
- The 3rd (extraordinary) congress From November 26 to December 3, 1924, Athens
- The 3rd (ordinary) congress March 1927, Athens
- The 4th congress December 1928, Athens
- The 5th congress March 1934, Athens
- The 6th congress December 1935, Athens
- The 7th congress October 1945, Athens
- The 8th congress August 1961 (illegally)
- The 9th congress December 1973 (illegally)
- The 10th congress May 1978
- The 11th congress December 1982, Athens
- The 12th congress May 1987
- The 13th congress February 19–24, 1991, Athens
- The 14th congress December 18–21, 1991, Athens
- The 15th congress May 22–26, 1996, Athens
- The 16th congress December 14–17, 2000, Athens
- The 17th congress Februar 9-12, 2005, Athens
- The 18th congress Februar 18-22, 2009, Athens

■ The 19th congress - April 11–14, 2013, Athens

KKE delegations participated in international conferences of Communist and working parties (1957, 1960, 1969, Moscow). KKE approved the documents accepted at the conferences.

List of First Secretaries and General Secretaries

- 1. Nikolaos Dimitratos (November 1918 February 1922), expelled from the party on charges of "suspect behavior"
- 2. Yannis Kordatos (February November 1922), expelled from the party on charges of "distorting Marxism"
- 3. Nikolaos Sargologos (November 1922 September 1923), expelled from the party on charges of "espionage"
- 4. Thomas Apostolidis (September 1923 December 1924), expelled from the party on charges of "opportunism"
- 5. Pandelis Pouliopoulos (December 1924 September 1925), expelled from the party on charges of being a "provocateur"
- 6. Eleftherios Stavridis (1925 1926), expelled from the party on charges of pro-bourgeoisies political position
- 7. Pastias Giatsopoulos (September 1926 March 1927), expelled from the party on charges of "liquidarism"
- 8. Andronikos Chaitas (March 1927 1931), expelled from the party and executed in the USSR in 1935
- 9. Nikolaos Zachariadis (1931 1936), expelled from the party but subsequently restored; later committed suicide after 16 years in exile in Siberia
- 10. Andreas Tsipas (July 1941 September 1941), expelled from the party on charges of "adventurism"
- 11. Georgios Siantos (January 1942 1945), expelled from the party on charges of being an "agent provocateur"
- 12. Nikolaos Zachariadis (1945 –1956), second term after having been restored to party membership
- 13. Apostolos Grozos (1956)
- 14. Konstantinos Koligiannis (1956–1972)
- 15. Charilaos Florakis (1972–1989)
- 16. Grigoris Farakos (1989–1991). Resigned from the party to join Synaspismos
- 17. Aleka Papariga (1991–2013)
- 18. Dimitris Koutsoumpas (2013–present)

Election results

Hellenic Parliament

				Hellenic Pa	arliame	nt		
Date	Votes			Seats		Position	Size	Notes
Date	#	%	± pp	#	±	Fosition	Size	140165
1926	41,982 ¹	4.4%		10 / 286		Opposition	5th	
1928	14,352 ²	1.4%	▼3.0	0 / 250	v 10		11th	
1932	58,223 ²	5.0%	▲3.6	13 / 254	▲13	Opposition	6th	
1933	52,958	4.6%	▼0.4	0 / 248	V 13		4th	
1935	98,699 ³	9.6%	▲5.0	0/300	±0		3rd	
1936	73,411 ³	5.8%	▼3.8	15 / 300	▲ 15	Opposition	4th	
1951	180,640 ⁴	10.6%		10 / 258		Opposition	4th	
1952	152,011 ⁴	9.5%	▼ 1.1	0/300	v 10		3rd	
1958	939,902 ⁴	24.4%	▲14.9	79 / 300	▲ 79	Opposition	2nd	
1961	675,867 ⁵	14.6%	₹9.8	24 / 300	▼ 55	Opposition	3rd	
1963	669,297 ⁴	14.3%	▼0.3	28 / 300	^ 4	Opposition	3rd	
1964	542,865 ⁴	11.8%	v 2.5	22 / 300	v 6	Opposition	3rd	
1974	464,787 6	9.5%		8 / 300		Opposition	4th	
1977	480,272	9.4%	v 0.1	11 / 300	▲3	Opposition	4th	
1981	620,302	10.9%	▲1.5	13 / 300	^ 2	Opposition	3rd	
1985	629,525	9.9%	v 1.0	12/300	v 1	Opposition	3rd	
06/1989	855,944 ⁷	13.1%	▲3.2	28 / 300	▲ 16	Government	3rd	
11/1989	734,611 ⁷	11.0%	v 2.1	21/300	▼ 7	Government	3rd	
1990	677,059 ⁷	10.3%	▼0.7	19 / 300	v 2	Opposition	3rd	
1993	313,001	4.5%	₹5.8	9/300	v 10	Opposition	4th	
1996	380,046	5.6%	▲1.1	11 / 300	^ 2	Opposition	3rd	
2000	379,454	5.5%	v 0.1	11 / 300	±0	Opposition	3rd	
2004	436,818	5.9%	▲0.4	12 / 300	1	Opposition	3rd	
2007	583,750	8.2%	▲2.3	22 / 300	▲10	Opposition	3rd	
2009	517,154	7.5%	▼0.7	21/300	V 1	Opposition	3rd	
05/2012	536,105	8.5%	▲1.0	26 / 300	^ 5	Opposition	5th	

06/2012	277,227	4.5%	▼ 4.0	12 / 300	▼ 14	Opposition	7th	
2015	338,138	5.5%	▲1.0	15 / 300	▲3	Opposition	5th	

¹ Within the United Electoral Front of Workers, Farmers and Refugees.

European Parliament

	European Parliament						
Date	V	otes		Seats	Size		
Date	#	%	± pp	#	±	Size	
1981	729,052	12.8%		3 / 24		3rd	
1984	693,304	11.6%	▼ 1.2	3 / 24	±0	3rd	
1989	936,175 ¹	14.3%	▲2.7	4 / 24	▲ 1	3rd	
1994	410,741	6.3%	₹8.0	2 / 25	v 2	4th	
1999	557,365	8.7%	▲2.4	3 / 25	1	3rd	
2004	580,396	9.5%	▲0.8	3 / 24	±0	3rd	
2009	428,283	8.4%	▼ 1.1	2 / 22	v 1	3rd	
2014	349,255	6.1%	v 2.3	2 / 21	±0	6th	

¹ Within the Left and Progress Coalition.

Party membership

² Within the United Front.

³ Within the All People Front.

⁴ Within United Democratic Left.

⁵ Within the All-Democratic Agricultural Front.

⁶ Within United Left.

⁷ Within the Left and Progress Coalition.

Membership 1918-1948 ^[73]					
Year	Number of members				
1918	1,000				
1920	1,320				
1924	2,200				
1926	2,500				
1928	2,000				
1930	1,500				
1933	4,416				
1934	6,000 (est.)				
1936 (start)	17,500				
1936 (mid)	<10,000 (est.)				
1941	200 (est.) free + 2,000 in prison				
1942 (December)	15,000				
1944 (June)	250,000				
1944 (October)	420,000–450,000				
1945 (October)	45,000				
1946 (February)	<100,000				
1948	<50,000				

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See also

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