

Nikos Vavoudis: the activity of a transnational communist in Greece, Spain and the USSR

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Abstract Nikos Vavoudis is a very important figure in the international communist movement, for two reasons. The first is that he is one of the few Greek communists who participated in two civil wars (the Spanish and the Greek). The second relates to his fate after the defeat of the Communist Party of Greece (KKE) in the Greek civil war. Although Vavoudis was a key figure in the functioning of the illegal party organisation in Athens, his death at the hands of Greek police was called into question by the KKE, who even accused him of working as a spy for the police. Several years on, Vavoudis's memory was partially rehabilitated, but not in an effort to restore the truth but rather to legitimise the new leadership of the KKE. This paper draws on archival material from the Russian State Archive of Socio-Political History (RGASPI), the ASKI (Archives of Contemporary Social History) and the KKE archive, which includes newspapers of the period, KKE publications, and personal testimonies (printed and oral).

Key words: Vavoudis, KKE, Greek civil war, Spanish civil war, Zachariadis

Introduction

On 15 and 16 November 1951, the front page headlines of Greek newspapers informed readers about the discovery of two 'secret communist

radios' operating in areas of Athens, one in Glyfada and the other in the district of Kallithea.¹ In the second case, the radio operator had been trapped in his secret hideout, and, according to the official police version, had committed suicide to avoid falling into the hands of the prosecuting authorities.²

The secret radios case was directly linked to fears of Soviet espionage against the 'free' Western world in the conditions of heightened confrontation arising from the Cold War. At the same time, it was used by the state authorities to link the outlawed Communist Party of Greece (KKE) with spying for the Iron Curtain countries. The sole intention of the story, given the timing and the manner in which it was reported, was to occasion the retrial of KKE cadre Nikos Belogiannis and his comrades, who had already been convicted of communist activities earlier in the autumn.

The very next day the newspapers had acquired the photograph and full biographical details of the 'suicidal' communist radio operator who had been trapped in the hideout in Kallithea. It was Nikos Vavoudis, who, according to the information given to the press by the Security Service, was Greek-Russian, a fanatical communist, and a Soviet army officer who had been 'trained by the KGB at the Communist University of KUTV specifically for espionage, radio, intelligence gathering, and terrorism'.³ His suicide was seen as further proof of his Soviet military affiliations: according to the pertinent article, 'in cases of espionage, only spies directly connected with the military services of the country for which they are spying usually commit suicide'.⁴

This paper, through its focus on the trajectory of Nikos Vavoudis, sheds important insights into the actions and responses of the KKE from its 'high' period in the mid-1920s through to the aftermath of its defeat in the civil war. It highlights the devotion and self-sacrifice of the communists – at a time when people thought 'everything was possible' – to the contradictions and antinomies of the communist movement, even in the event of political defeat.

In this context, the case of Vavoudis as a communist can be seen through a double prism.

On the one hand, he is perhaps the only communist to have participated in three different communist parties (Greek, Spanish, Soviet),

and taken part in three wars: the Spanish Civil War, World War Two, and the Greek Civil War. The period from 1937, when Vavoudis left for Spain, to 1951, when he died, was one of concentrated historical developments: the struggle against fascism in Spain was followed by the struggle against fascism on a global scale, and thence the class conflict which in Greece was reflected in the civil war. The final years of this period for the KKE consisted of defeat in the civil war, outlaw status in Greece, and, for the leadership, cadres as well as many members, party reconstruction in conditions of political exile in the eastern bloc countries. The whole period was marked to a considerable extent by the internationalist activity of the communist movement – which is the reason for the development of the International Brigades in which Vavoudis participated. At the same time, it was a period, a few short decades after the October Revolution, when it seemed that the gamble of attempting to overthrow capitalism was within the realms of possibility; this idea inspired millions of people all over the world, and reached its peak in the 1940s.

On the other hand, the defeat of the KKE in the Greek civil war created new conditions to which Vavoudis responded with continued activism underground until his death in 1951.

The response to his demise, and the evaluation of his political life, were subsequently determined and revised by the shifting power dynamics within the KKE, as this paper will demonstrate.

The life and activism of Vavoudis before 1947

Nikos Vavoudis was born in 1905 in Odessa, Russia, to a Greek father, Stratis, and a Russian mother. The pseudonyms he used during his long years of illegal activity were Gerasimos, Raiko, Koufos, Kostas. His father was a tannery worker who later acquired his own workshop. Vavoudis attended four years of primary school in Russia. In 1919 he returned to Mantamados, Lesvos, which was his father's home town, and attended Greek primary school for two more years (1919-1921). In 1921-1922 he worked in his father's workshop.⁵ In 1923 he volunteered for the gendarmerie for two years (until 1925), in a detachment of the

Greek army. When he had completed his service he resumed (1925-1926) work in his father's tannery. It was on the Greek island of Mytilene that he encountered his first persecutions, after it became known that he and other comrades had opened warehouses and distributed food and cereals to refugees from Asia Minor.⁶ In 1927 he became a member of the Communist Youth and then of the KKE.

Vavoudis came to Piraeus around 1927 and worked in a tannery until 1931, at the same time embarking on trade union and political activity. He was elected general secretary of the Piraeus Labor Centre in 1929. In the period 1930-1932 he was a member of the executive committee of the administration of the Unitary General Confederation, a grouping of left and communist-dominated trade unions created in 1928 after their violent expulsion from the congress of the state-controlled and employer-controlled General Confederation.⁷

By 1932 he was a professional party official, and in the same year he was arrested in Samos (probably in April), under a law enacted in 1929 (*Idionymo*) which criminalised subversive ideas, mostly targeting communists and anarchists. He was charged with communist activity and imprisoned in Aegina. On 8 May 1934, together with seven other comrades, he managed to escape. The escapees went to Piraeus and from there proceeded to Odessa by gas tanker, where Vavoudis became an officer in the Red Army, in the same year acquiring Soviet citizenship.⁸ After that, according to the Comintern archives, in 1934-1935 he worked in a factory in Moscow as an apprentice turner, and in 1935-1936 he studied at KUNMZ (Communist University of National Minorities of the West) and at the MLS (International Leninist School).⁹

Vavoudis left the MLS for a 'special mission' in Spain on 5 April 1937.¹⁰ He stayed for a considerable time in the city of Albacete, which was a centre for the recruitment and training of volunteers, serving under the name of Nikolaos Petros, in the 'Georgi Dimitrov' Balkan Battalion, which also included the 'Nikos Zachariadis' Greek company.¹¹ A letter written by D. Petrou, a volunteer in the Spanish Civil War, mentions that Vavoudis was the organiser of Brigade 113.¹² In 1938 Vavoudis became a member of the Spanish Communist Party, where his service received positive reviews. In particular, a report signed by Andre Marty and Luigi Gallo, based on earlier evaluations by Finkelstein and

Burca, states that immediately after his enlistment in the International Brigades, he was sent for eleven months to lead the Spanish units of the southern zone and of the centre, and was then put back at the disposal of the International Brigades.¹³

After the withdrawal of the International Brigades, Vavoudis spent a period in a concentration camp in France, and then, after the acceptance of KKE Central Committee proposals, and the corresponding agreement of the CPSU, he returned to the USSR.¹⁴ This followed a letter sent by Dimitrov to Stalin in February 1939 asking him to allow the return to the USSR of volunteers, members of foreign communist parties whose families were there, or those who were Soviet citizens sent by the Comintern to Spain.¹⁵ On 14 February 1939 the Political Bureau of the Bolshevik Party had replied positively to this letter.¹⁶ However, Vavoudis was delayed in returning because in March 1939 he was in a clinic in France, suffering from tuberculosis.¹⁷ He finally returned to the USSR in July 1939, and was then trained in radio operation.¹⁸ In 1940, when he was a driver for a state transport company in Moscow, he distinguished himself as a worker while actively participating in the party and the social life of the company. In 1941 he was at the disposal of the Executive Committee of the Comintern, and by April 1942 he was attending its party school. Since 1941 three Comintern schools had been operating (one outside Moscow and two in Ufa) for the preparation of foreign party cadres as well as for reserve action groups of members of fraternal communist parties. The teaching programme included radio propaganda, intelligence gathering, conducting sabotage, organising guerrilla movements, and underground activities.¹⁹ Vavoudis's training at the party school thus prepared him for illegal work in occupied areas. Foreign communists trained in this way were kept in reserve, and, whenever required, were sent illegally to their countries of origin. So it is of little surprise that in 1944 it was decided that Vavoudis would be sent on a Soviet mission to Greece via Yugoslavia (along with eight Soviet citizens and two Yugoslavs). A Soviet plane carrying them took off from Bari, Italy and landed on the night of 25-26 July 1944 at the guerrilla airfield of Neraida, in Western Thessaly.

In September 1944 Vavoudis was sent to Bulgaria, then occupied by the Red Army, where he was entrusted with the task of overseeing

general radio communication, which included acting as liaison between the KKE and the international communist centre (1944-45).²⁰ He returned to Greece shortly afterwards, but – according to the account of Lefteris Matsoukas (Barbalexis), the then-secretary of the prefectural organisation of the KKE in Serres – his presence created ‘concern’, both for V. Bartziotas, a member of the KKE’s General Secretariat, and for others, who were unaware of his identity. Vavoudis then appealed to Moscow, prompting the arrival of an urgent note stating that there was absolute confidence in N. Vavoudis.²¹ He later returned to Athens, and in the autumn of 1946 resumed his activities as a radio operator. He was based in two safe houses, in Kallithea and Glyfada, and brought the radios with him, which installed in two hidden caches. From there he sent encrypted messages abroad, to a considerable extent coordinating the activities of the illegal KKE apparatus in Athens.

In recognition of Vavoudis’s extensive activity, the eighth plenary session of the Central Committee of the KKE in October 1950 put forward the possibility of his appointment as an alternate member of the Central Committee, to be considered at the next plenary session.²²

The party’s evaluation of Vavoudis before 1947

Before moving on to the presentation of Vavoudis’ actions in the period 1947-1951, it is important to mention the evaluations he had received for his activity as a communist up until that time, with a view to understanding more clearly why he came to emerge in such a key position after the end of World War Two.

According to a document of the Comintern archives in connection with his activities in the KKE:

1. ... Vavoudis was disciplined by the party
2. He was dismissed from the post of secretary of the trade union workers’ centre because in 1932, during the tobacco workers’ strike, he failed to expose the reformists’ positions, with the result that the latter controlled the strike mobilisation.
3. He was reprimanded for

having interfered in the affairs of the organisation during his imprisonment.

The document goes on to say regarding his disciplining by the party, 'these were a response to his mistakes in action, though the Party considers him a party member in good standing'.²³

As far as his studies were concerned, according to the official evaluation by the three-member committee of the KUNMZ (the party school), his performance was outstanding, and 'as a team leader he showed great zeal for the progress of his comrades. In the section "Greek communists", he made a significant party and social contribution'.²⁴

Sakarellos (Zographos),²⁵ a communist who had lived with Vavoudis on the Greek island of Aegina as a fellow prisoner, as well as in Spain, recalls in his Comintern file:

Raiko (Vavoudis, Gerasimos, Petros Nikolos) was a correct, faithful, active, disciplined companion. A quick-witted person, during his imprisonment, his good side emerged. He escaped from prison at the decision and with the help of the Party. With the help, again, of the Party he arrived in the USSR where he was sent to the Party school (KUNMZ). After the abolition of the KUNMZ, he was sent to the International Leninist School, where his performance was satisfactory. He was then sent to Spain where, according to the evaluations of his comrades, he did well. When he returned to the USSR he learned to drive. As a driver he has worked until now. He is capable of either conspiratorial activity as a middle-ranking chief or as an executor (of Party decisions).

In the country [meaning Greece] he is known to the police authorities. He was sentenced for 1.5-3 years. In fact, he served his sentence in 1.5-2 years. He had received a Party sentence for disciplinary misconduct.²⁶

Similarly, the report made by Marty and Gallo based on previous assessments by Finkelstein and Burca states that the information available on his conduct in Spain is particularly favourable and that according to the Soviets' testimony he worked well to elevate the technical-military

preparation of the 48th brigade, making him a good comrade and party official.²⁷

Similarly, Comintern School reports of 1941-1942 assessed Vavoudis thus: 'Raiko remained at the school for one year. His performance was satisfactory. He matured politically. In political matters he oriented himself correctly. A militant comrade, sociable and modest. He is capable of organisational, combative work'.²⁸

Overall, various documentation of Vavoudis's activity up to 1942 show a consistent fighter who had been tested through various tasks, and had attracted favourable notice and a few party reprimands. From this point of view, the favourable view of him in the USSR is very likely to have exerted a positive influence, as reflected in the upgraded assignments he was given a few years later; it certainly does not foreshadow the posthumous backlash against him.

Political developments in Greece from 1940 to 1951

The capitulation of Greece after the German attack in April 1941 led to the triple occupation of the country, by German, Italian and Bulgarian forces. After the collapse of the pre-war state, some political elites collaborated with the occupying forces; others fled to Egypt, where a Greek government-in-exile was formed under the auspices of Great Britain; while a third group remained in Greece and retreated into private life, passively awaiting a change in circumstances. Some – very few – were in contact with British spy networks operating in occupied Greece. The initiative to organise resistance against the occupiers, and practical support for the Greek people, who were suffering from hunger and hardship, was taken by the members of the illegal Communist Party who managed to escape from their prisons and places of exile during this period. At the end of September, with the participation of the KKE and three other smaller parties, the National Liberation Front (EAM) was created.²⁹ In early 1942 the armed part of EAM, the Greek People's Liberation Army (ELAS), was created.

The terrifying brutality of the occupation, combined with the unprecedented food shortages, enabled the EAM to increase its

influence within a very short period of time, and this led to a rapid radicalisation of a wide cross-section of Greek society, resulting in the political domination of the KKE throughout occupied Greece. This reality was perceived by both the Greek bourgeoisie and by the British and the US, who attempted, at the end of the occupation, to reinstate the prewar status quo.

Taking advantage of the conciliatory attitude of the EAM leadership and the KKE, the British and the political representatives of the Greek ruling class imposed on the EAM resistance movement a series of unfavourable political and military conditions aimed at removing it from its claim to power in the country.³⁰ The Varkiza Peace agreement was signed at Varkiza (outside Athens) in February 1945, that is, a month after the ceasefire. It was an agreement that institutionally terminated the political and military fighting of December 1944, and aimed to reconcile the opposing blocs of the country, crucially including the condition of the decommissioning of weapons by ELAS, in return for a general amnesty which the Plastiras government would grant for political crimes. Arrests, imprisonment and executions of EAM members soon followed. In this context, the second plenary of the Central Committee of the KKE, in February 1946, decided the gradual shift of the party towards armed struggle, 'as a response to the regime of one-sided civil war ... against the people';³¹ while the third plenary, held in September 1947, decided to declare 'free regions', with the establishment of an independent government. The civil war that then began would last until August 1949, when the communist forces were defeated. This led to the establishment of a state of emergency, featuring the customary tools of political repression, manifested in executions, exile, imprisonment and persecution.³² The KKE was outlawed, trade union activity stifled, and the civil rights of left-wing citizens restricted. The result was a climate of terror that forced the compliance of citizens, which continued for many years.

For its part, the KKE, through a decision of the sixth plenary session of the Central Committee, in October 1949, decided to shift the focus of its political work towards the organisation of the economic and political struggles of the popular classes. This was to be achieved through the combination of legal and illegal action. The decimated illegal party organisations were to be reconstituted, and for this purpose the ill-fated

Nikos Belogiannis, an alternate member of the Central Committee of the KKE, arrived in Greece in June 1950. Belogiannis was soon arrested; he was tried, along with 92 other people, in the autumn of 1951 on charges of communist activity. He and eleven others were sentenced to death, a sentence that was then commuted to life imprisonment. It was shortly after the end of this trial that the discovery was made of the radios handled by Vavoudis, and this resulted in a retrial of Belogiannis and 28 other persons, which in turn led to eight death sentences and four executions (Belogiannis, Argyriadis, Kaloumenos, Batsis).³³

The activity of Vavoudis from 1947 to 1951

Throughout the years he worked in conditions of illegality, the role of Vavoudis was quite crucial. As we will show, he was no mere radio operator; though nor, indeed, was he the organisational head of the illegal apparatus. In fact, he alternated with Nicos Ploumpidis in the position of political leader of the KKE's activity in Athens. Ploumpidis, a member of the Central Committee, was the party-appointed leader of the illegal Athens party organisation, but his fragile health, and some doubts about his activities, provided space for Vavoudis to develop initiatives. The nerve-racking nature of Vavoudis's role is indicated both by the testimony of his associates at his trial in 1951, and by the content of the radio signals he sent out.³⁴ According to Ilias Argyriadis's deposition at the trial: 'One night Zachariadis came with Vavoudis and Zachariadis told me that it was essential for me to listen to Kostas and do whatever he told me to do. Kostas had started to tell me what was going to happen in the house and then he came too'.³⁵

It should be noted that Zachariadis trusted Argyriadis implicitly. The latter had had exclusive responsibility for guarding the KKE offices in Piraeus Street during the period when the party was legal. The office keys were held only by Zachariadis and Argyriadis.³⁶ Consequently, given that Argyriadis was a key figure in the KKE, one can assume that Vavoudis was a figure of some importance. Similarly, Vavoudis's tendency to display an unusual degree of political self-confidence is evident in the telegrams he sent. Belogiannis was an alternate member

of the Central Committee of the KKE and Vavoudis was not, but the latter, in a telegram of 14 October 1950, had ventured to declare that Belogiannis was showing a cavalier attitude to the instructions given to him by the KKE, saying: 'this attitude of independence I find very harmful'.³⁷ Similarly, in an earlier communication of 16 July 1950 he writes:

When he [Belogiannis] came, I told him about the situation. But he made a sign of the cross like the Christians and plunged ahead. He stirred up a lot of people. You told him to be careful and I told him you are right and that he wasn't starting well ... Now he is establishing a reputation but the foundations are in sand.³⁸

In a telegram of 24 January 1951, as well as the remark on Belogiannis, a critical reference is made to Ploumpidis: '[Ploumpidis] had written after the first big arrests that he was solving the isolation and so on. When in fact he did nothing with us ...'.³⁹ Vavoudis's self-willed political behaviour is evident not only in relation to Ploumpidis and Belogiannis but also in comments touching on the way the exiled leadership of the KKE issued its guidance. The manner in which Vavoudis addressed Zachariadis is indicative. In a telegram sent to Zachariadis on 10 February 1950 Vavoudis says: 'To judge from what you write, it seems you have not understood what my working conditions are here. And how work has been secured for so many years'.⁴⁰

We believe that there are two reasons for Vavoudis being able to behave more officiously than is normally accepted. The first has to do with his international presence. We recall the telegram, relied upon by Barbalexis, that Vavoudis enjoyed the Soviets' confidence. Moreover, on at least two occasions Dimitrov turned to Vavoudis for advice on Greek matters.⁴¹ Vavoudis's direct contact with the Soviets is also revealed by Lazaridi's testimony.⁴² The second reason is the trust shown in Vavoudis by the KKE leadership. He was not a mere executive performing a managerial-technical party job. He expressed his personal views and preferences to the party, took political initiatives, was responsible for the functioning of the illegal apparatus, and criticised his party superiors openly and harshly. These two reasons, combined with the state

of disintegration of the KKE organisations at the time, and the absence of the party leadership abroad, provided Vavoudis with greater room for manoeuvre, which explains the quasi-leadership role he assumed.

The activities of Vavoudis in the period 1947-1951 included communications via telegram to the KKE on the activities of the illegal apparatus and developments on the Greek political scene, and, as Lazaridi states, communication with the Soviets. Vavoudis managed money sent to him by the KKE so that hideouts could be rented, members and associates of the KKE could earn a living, and illegal material could be published and distributed.⁴³ He was responsible for the establishment of an intelligence network comprising about thirty people, whose mission was to update and elaborate the messages he sent abroad.⁴⁴ These messages contained a wealth of information, ranging from the political situation in the country;⁴⁵ negotiations for the creation of a political entity of the Left;⁴⁶ issues concerning the political activity of members of the KKE;⁴⁷ to minor military intelligence.⁴⁸ Finally, telegrams indicate that from the end of December 1950 until the beginning of August 1951, Vavoudis was also in charge of the Ploumpidis apparatus, i.e. he was responsible for the formation of political alliances in Greece, even in the light of the forthcoming elections. A letter from Ploumpidis to E. Ioannidou on 4 April 1952 includes the passage: 'Since the time of your arrest I have been ordered to lock myself up. I saw only Koufos (Vavoudis) and helped him in his job. On 9/8/51 I received orders to take over the election campaign'.⁴⁹ And, in turn, Stavros Kasimatis aptly asks: 'What job? Certainly not the job of operating radios and other illegal technical apparatus. Vavoudis ... is now engaged, by order of the Politburo ... of course, in directing the legitimate political work of the KKE that was being done by the Athens political apparatus, and also in working with the remnants of the illegal groups of the apparatus that are still free'.⁵⁰

This multifaceted activity of Vavoudis was to end on 15 November 1951, when the police discovered the hideout in Kallithea where the radio was located, and he preferred to commit suicide in the hideout rather than to surrender. It was announced to the press by the security forces that telegrams he had sent in the past were found in the hideout, but this was probably a fabrication, given that, for precautionary reasons, the practice was for old signals to be destroyed.⁵¹

The accusations

The suicide of Vavoudis could have closed the chapter on this member of the communist movement. But this was not to be. Initial acceptance of his death by the KKE as a dramatic act of self-sacrifice by a heroic communist was to be followed by a questioning of his death, and his denunciation as a 'security agent'. This slander was to last for a number of years and would only end with a change of leadership in the KKE.

Initially there was no questioning by the KKE of either the identity of Vavoudis or of the circumstances of his death. This is shown by the fact that immediately after his death, KKE Politburo member V. Bartziotas, in an article broadcast by the Radio Station of Free Greece (RSFG) on 17 November 1951 asserted: 'The murderer Rentis today cynically confesses that he took the lead in execution of the worker Nikos Vavoudis'.⁵²

But a few months later (25 July 1952) a decision on Ploumpidis by the Politburo of the KKE, which characterised him as a 'spy', 'provocateur' and 'traitor', led a different evaluation of Vavoudis: 'Ploumpidis betrayed and handed over N. Vavoudis to the Security and took the lead in getting [Vavoudis] to its side and also to the side of the General Staff of the Army'.⁵³ Here, for the first time, Vavoudis is being constructed as an agent of the Greek state.

The next report on the Vavoudis case came at the completion of the Ploumpidis trial. Specifically, on 18 August 1953, the RSFG reported that Vavoudis had been a security agent since 1929, recruited by Ploumpidis. After the civil war he had organised a provocation against the KKE with his alleged spy network and radios. His suicide was not real and he was now living in the USA with his reward money.⁵⁴

Three observations can be made here: (a) the accusations against Vavoudis had escalated during Ploumpidis's trial; (b) the very fact of his death was being questioned directly for the first time; and (c) the installation of the radios was presented as an initiative of Vavoudis, not a choice of the KKE *implemented* by Vavoudis. In the spirit of the times, no concrete evidence to support these accusations was presented.

It is clear that Ploumpidis's trial and conviction occasioned an intensification of efforts to instil the conviction that Ploumpidis, and by

extension Vavoudis, was a hostile operative. It is interesting to note that, despite the insistence of Zachariadis and the RSFG that both Vavoudis and Ploumpidis were police operatives, the Communist Party of the Soviet Union was not prepared to accept such an interpretation. A document in the Soviet archives dated 28 October 1953 states:

Recently, the Central Committee of the KKE presented material to the Central Committee of the CPSU that characterises Ploumpidis and Vavoudis as provocateurs. The Central Committee of the KKE maintains that treacherous activity by Ploumpidis and Vavoudis was exposed following the arrest and execution by the monarcho-fascists of the hero of the Greek people and member of the CC of the KKE, N. Belogiannis. Although the Central Committee of the KKE represents Ploumpidis and Vavoudis as provocateurs, it does not present any authoritative evidence to support this accusation.⁵⁵

Here, in a party-political manner, the CPSU is rejecting the charges – which pertain to cadres with many years of activity in the communist movement, and are submitted on the basis of no real incriminating evidence. Of course, this attitude of the CPSU did not automatically signal a change of policy by the KKE; there had been many fluctuations in the relationship between the KKE and the Soviet Communist Party.⁵⁶

Rehabilitation

It would take ‘destalinisation’, and the ‘de-Zachariadisisation’ of the KKE, for Vavoudis to be evaluated in a new light. The destalinisation period was a difficult and contradictory period for the KKE. The fact of the defeat in the civil war was stigmatising for its cadres and members, while the justifications for the defeat, such as Tito’s lack of assistance, were not persuasive. These circumstances, combined with the ‘destalinisation’ drive in the CPSU, were to intensify the controversies within the KKE. It was not long before a faction within KKE led by K. Koligiannis would contact the new Soviet leadership and demand the

removal of Zachariadis, blaming him for the defeat in the civil war as well as for undemocratic practices. The Soviets, who by now considered Zachariadis a relic of the Stalinist period, agreed. Thus, an International Committee of six communist parties (Soviet, Romanian, Bulgarian, Czechoslovak, Hungarian, Polish) was formed, and convened the sixth plenary session of the KKE in March 1956. Zachariadis was promptly removed from the post of Secretary, and expelled from the party at the seventh plenum a year later. One of the decisions taken at the seventh plenum was to set up a committee to revise the findings of the Vavoudis case.

The investigation into Nikos Vavoudis, which was compiled on 30 November 1957 by this committee, submitted that:

... following the broadcasts by the RSFG ... as might be expected, the impression was (and still is) created in the KKE and the people of Greece that N. Vavoudis betrayed his party and the movement of his people. This made it necessary for the case of N. Vavoudis to be re-examined, given that in the 6th and 7th plenary session it had been established and revealed that in the abnormal regime created by the then leadership of the Party, injustices were committed against members and cadres of the Party.⁵⁷

After examining the relevant documentation – the Greek mainstream press and the statements by the RSFG and N. Zachariadis – the committee found that the then leadership of the KKE had wrongfully condemned Vavoudis. Its concluding statement condemned both the party and Zachariadis:

The ‘reports’ from Athens and the ‘opinions of the Party Organisation in Athens’ were bogus fabrications devised in the mechanism of the RSFG on the orders of N. Zachariadis and V. Bartziotas ... Not only was there no evidence capable of proving such a serious accusation but there was not even anything to raise even the slightest suspicion against N. Vavoudis ... What is involved is an arbitrary slander completely outrageous and deliberately concocted ... What N. Zachariadis said and what the RSFG

on his orders broadcast against the memory of N. Vavoudis is not based on any party decision.⁵⁸

Accordingly, the Committee reached the following conclusions:

1. N. Zachariadis and his associates deceived the Party and the people by accusing N. Vavoudis of being a traitor who, in collaboration with the authorities of the Athens state, staged his suicide, etc.
2. ... It is an arbitrary slander and insult for a fighter who for years devoted all his abilities to serving the aims of the KKE and the interests of the people of Greece, and who gave his life in the performance his party duty ...
5. Responsibility for the slander of N. Vavoudis and the smearing of his memory through arbitrary accusations of treachery is borne by the entire Politburo because it tolerated such a grave characterisation without a party decision. But N. Zachariadis bears particular responsibility. It is he, along with the direct collaborators of his who were part of his anti-party clique: Bartziotas, Vontisios (Gousias) and D. Vlantas who conceived the idea and first put into action this dishonourable act of defiling the memory of a respected and deceased colleague.⁵⁹

The proposals for rehabilitation included the 'restoration of the Party and rehabilitation of the reputation of the fighter N. Vavoudis in the memory of the people, who was viciously slandered and smeared by the people who abused party power'. The rehabilitation should be conducted: (a) through publication in the magazine *Neos Kosmos* of the relevant decision of the Central Committee of the KKE, (b) through publication in the party magazine *Neos Kosmos* of a special article on the biographical data and the party activity of N. Vavoudis as well as the sacrifice of his life in fulfilment of his party duty ...⁶⁰

On the basis of this committee's decision, the Politburo of the KKE formulated a draft recommendation to the 8th plenary session of the KKE, held between 5 and 10 January 1958, in which it stated: 'The

whole history of Nikos Vavoudis and all the evidence confirms that Vavoudis was one of the most dedicated and the most daring, fearless fighters ... The 8th Plenum of the KKE restores the party honour of Nikos Vavoudis, which the enemies of the KKE attempted to slander.⁶¹

According to the minutes of the eighth and the ninth plenary sessions, however (5-8 August 1958), there was no discussion of the Vavoudis case, although *Neos Kosmos* published a statement by KKE Politburo member P. Demetriou claiming that: 'the Central Committee [has] rehabilitated the memory of comrades G. Siantos, N. Ploumbidis, K. Karagiorgis, N. Vavoudis, Aris Velouhiotis, G. N. Georgiadis, and others, against whom Zachariadis and his group had made serious and totally unfounded accusations'.⁶²

Finally, after the passage of almost fifty years since the publication of Demetriou's article, the KKE reinstated N. Vavoudis. The KKE paper *Rizospastis* published a statement on 2 November 2011, inter alia stating:

Following the 6th Plenum of the KKE and the removal of N. Zachariadis, the Politburo's erroneous judgement of N. Vavoudis was attributed to what was called the 'abnormal internal party regime' and to the 'unbalanced politics' of the KKE leadership. But the reality is that the erroneous assessment of Nikos Vavoudis emerged in a climate where:

- Confrontation with the class enemy, above all in the prevailing conditions of deep illegality where attempts were being made by the class enemy to penetrate the links of the KKE's organisational structure, demanded increased vigilance and protection from the Party's cadres.
- The struggle in the international communist movement with opportunist tendencies was also linked to attempts to develop counter-revolutionary activity by imperialist forces, a phenomenon reinforced by the role and attitude of Tito and the Yugoslav leadership.
- Political suspicion was also fuelled by provocative rumours spread by the security forces and fabricated scenarios aimed at sowing confusion and doubt among party members. This

climate was exacerbated by the fact that these forces did not release the body of Nikos Vavoudis, nor was the place of his burial made known.

The KKE confirmed that, despite a number of party efforts towards rehabilitation, ‘... there was no official rehabilitation of N. Vavoudis and the unacceptable irresolution remained pending for decades. The Panhellenic Conference of July 2011 recognised the heroic history of N. Vavoudis in the KKE and the international communist movement and resolved to rehabilitate him fully’.

One wonders why it took fifty years to complete this process. In our opinion, among the inhibiting factors were the continuing conditions of illegality in which the KKE had been operating for many years after 1947, when the civil war began in Greece: the mechanisms of systemic repression and the arrests that embedded a climate of suspicion; the search for informers within the party; ongoing internal party disagreements and conflicts; and the additional problems brought about by the imposition of the military dictatorship in 1967. Last but not least, the party split in 1968 into the pro-Soviet KKE and the Eurocommunist KKE (interior), and there was a conscious avoidance by the party leadership, long after its legalisation in 1974, of revisiting problems in the party’s history that might cause confrontations between members who were still alive, and had taken part in the whole difficult course of the party’s existence; these remained important obstacles to a revision of party history.

Conclusion

Nikos Vavoudis was a cadre of the international communist movement who was a member of three communist parties (Greek, Soviet, Spanish) and was active in all of these countries. This fact alone reflects the character of an era when practical internationalism guided the activity of communist parties. Vavoudis’s rise in the communist hierarchy came gradually: he started as a worker, became an officer in the International Brigades and the Red Army, and at the end of his life served as the

organisational and political leader of the illegal KKE apparatus in Greece. These role changes were linked not only to his maturation as a political cadre but also to the vicissitudes of the class struggle internationally. The needs of the legal KKE in the late 1920s and early 1930s were not the same as those of the Soviet CP in the mid-1930s. The needs of the Communist Party of Spain during the civil war were not the same as those of the Soviet CP during the Second World War; and these in turn were completely different from those of the KKE during the Greek civil war and the initial post-civil war period. Vavoudis responded to all these needs in accordance with his ideological convictions.

The second interesting element in the case of Vavoudis is his virtual presence in the internal developments of the KKE even posthumously. This is because Vavoudis, while a product of his time, was at the same time a protagonist and a victim of it. In fact, the devastating accusation of being an informer, which was levelled not only at Vavoudis, but also at Ploumpidis, is nothing more than the tragic finale of a long series of charges and counter-charges that began under the Metaxas dictatorship of 1936 to 1940, and continued up to the 6th Plenum of 1956. If we add to this the general political context of the defeat of the KKE in the Greek civil war, and the deflection of political responsibility for it, as well as the very real fact of infiltration by state security forces into the remnants of the KKE in Greece, we can better understand that, in a climate of defeat, insecurity and 'agent mania', a number of KKE cadres and ordinary members were targeted as 'agents' by their former comrades. All those involved were responsible to varying degrees for the emergence of this climate.

In our opinion, there were three reasons for this facile resort to grave accusations. One had to do with the strategic defeat of the KKE and the need for an easy redress that was found in the effort to uncover 'agents' on whom this defeat could be blamed. Operating under great pressure, KKE cadres often engaged in actions against the party's constitution, or acts of non-compliance with the rules of conspiracy, and these were misinterpreted as collaboration with the opponent.⁶³ The second had to do with the actual fact of infiltration by security police into the heart of the KKE. The climate of which Vavoudis was a casualty was defined by circumstances and events such as the circulation of the 'fake' *Rizospastis* produced

by Maniatakis, Deputy Minister of National Security under Metaxas; the cases of Tyrimos, who went from being a KKE deputy to becoming a collaborator with the Metaxas regime, and of Stavridis, former Secretary of the KKE, who became an adviser to S. Gikas, leader for a time of the far-right IDEA;⁶⁴ and even the case of the communist Moutsogiannis, who may have killed the Minister of Justice Christos Ladas in 1948 during the civil war. The turmoil that engulfed the international communist movement at that time also framed Greek developments: the party purges that were under way in various communist parties, and the division caused by 'Titoism' (typical examples of this being the Yugoslavian CP, the Bulgarian CP, the Romanian CP and the Czechoslovakian CP).

In this historical (Greek and international) conjuncture, the rehabilitation of Vavoudis by the KKE traversed many phases and encountered many difficulties. The first phase was the one immediately following the victory over the Zachariadis era, when, in an attempt to legitimise the new leadership, the Vavoudis case was revived alongside other issues. This prompted the establishment of a committee of inquiry after the seventh plenary session which exonerated Vavoudis. Its findings assigned heavy responsibilities to Zachariadis, Gousias, Vlantas and Bartzokas, that is to say, precisely to those condemned by the seventh plenary for their activities within the KKE.⁶⁵ It could even be argued that there was a *resolve* to come up with a conclusion that would further burden the record of these four. Vavoudis and the injustices done to him, *justified and legitimated* the removal of the previous leadership. A general lack of consensus helps to explain why there was only limited publication of the committee's findings. Although a report was written by the Politburo on the decision taken in the eighth plenary session, it was not made available to the general public; it would take the publication of Demetriou's article four years later to show that, in a peculiar way, Vavoudis had finally been rehabilitated. The delay in formal restoration may be attributed to the emergence of other pressures and priorities in the post-civil war period (for example, the decision of the KKE to abolish illegal party organisations in Greece, the emergence of the frontist left-wing party EDA as an opposition party), and the imposition of the seven-year dictatorship in Greece from 1967 to 1974. Other factors included the split of the KKE in 1968 after the Prague Spring, the crisis of actually existing socialism

in the late 1980s, the new split of the KKE in 1991 into KKE and the Coalition of the Left (Synaspismos), and, last but not least, the echo of distrust of various cadres who had previously been condemned by the party. Although the unfairness of the accusations against communists in the post-civil war era became apparent over time, time did not allow for their full restoration. And in the particular case of Vavoudis an important role was played by the failure of the security police to announce the location of his grave, probably for fear of incidents.

Consequently, both the habit of accusing cadres of being ‘agents’ or ‘traitors’ and the complications inherent in the ‘rehabilitation’ of persons stigmatised in this way can be seen as part of a ‘culture’ of managing and settling issues that was necessary during this critical period for the communist movement, of which Vavoudis, and not only Vavoudis, was the tragic victim.

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Notes

- 1 *Acropolis*, 15.11.1951; and *Acropolis*, 16.11.1951.
- 2 *Eleftheria*, 17.11.1951.
- 3 *Eleftheria*, 17.11.1951.
- 4 *Eleftheria*, 17.11.1951.
- 5 COMINTERN, RGADPI, Moscow, Fond 495, opis 207, delo 89 (1), p17.

- 6 D. Paleologopoulos, *Greek antifascist volunteers in the Spanish Civil War (1936-1939)*, Athens: Philippotis, 1986, p48 (in Greek). After the defeat of the Greek army in Asia Minor in 1922, hundreds of thousands of Greeks living in these regions left, and settled on the Aegean islands and mainland Greece. Until a concerted effort was made by the state sector, these refugees were desperate for food and shelter.
- 7 COMINTERN, RGADPI, Moscow, Fond 495, opis 207, delo 89 (1), p16. However, in the *Rizospastis* article of 9.2.1929, which refers to those elected at the congress of the 'Unitary' GSEE, the name of Vavoudis is not included either in the members of the 11-member Executive Committee or in the 25 members of the Central Committee. Similarly, in the same Comintern document it is stated that in 1932 Vavoudis was a member of the Central Committee of the KKE, which is also not correct. These clear inaccuracies lead to the conclusion that even information drawn from the Comintern archives should be cross-checked, since sometimes it is the result of misleading information based solely on oral testimonies of party cadres, or of deliberate misinformation due to the 'special duties' assigned to various members of the communist movement.
- 8 KKE, 2011. *Essay on the history of the KKE 1949-1968*, Volume 2, Athens: Synchroni Epochi (in Greek), p272.
- 9 COMINTERN, RGADPI, Moscow, Fond 495, opis 207, delo 89 (1), p17. File Hellas 1931-1944; A.A. Livani, *The archives of the secret Soviet services*, New Frontier Publications, Athens: 1993, p31 (in Greek).
- 10 File Hellas op cit, p31 (in Greek).
- 11 Palaeologopoulos, op cit, p123; N. Papadatos, 'Greek volunteers in Spain and Nikos Vavoudis', *Imerodromos*, 23.4.2023: <https://www.imerodromos.gr/oi-ellhnes-ethelontes-sthn-ispania-kai-o-nikos-vavoudhs/>, accessed 14.12.2024 (in Greek).
- 12 S. Tsermegas and L. Tsirmirakis, *No Pasaran. Greek antifascist volunteers in Spain*, Athens: Synchroni Epochi, 1987 (in Greek), p26.
- 13 Nikos Papadatos, 2024, *Nikos Vavoudis (Nikos Petros) Extract from the biography written on 17 May 1938*, RGASPI 545/06/418, f. 26: <https://www.imerodromos.gr/oi-ellhnes-ethelontes-sthn-ispania-kai-o-nikos-vavoudhs/>, accessed 2.12.24 (in Greek)
- 14 Papadatos, 'Greek volunteers', op cit.
- 15 RGASPI, F. 495, op. 74, D. 541, l. 56 The document is quoted in Fridrih Firsov, *The Secret Codes of Comintern History 1919-1943*, Kraft+, Moscow 2007, p238 (in Russian).
- 16 See *The Political Bureau of the Central Committee of the Bolsheviks*

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- Communist Party and the Comintern 1919-1943. Documents*, ROSSPEN, Moscow 2004, p772 (in Russian).
- 17 See File Hellas, op cit, p59.
 - 18 RGASPI, F. 495, op. 207, D. 89, I. 13 in N. Papadatos, *Top secret. The USSR-KKE relations/1944-1952*, Athens: Kapsimi 2019, p466.
 - 19 See G.M. Adibekov, E.N. Shahnazarova, K.K. Shirinja, *The Organizational Structure of the Comintern 1919-1943*, ROSSPEN, Moscow 1997, p224 (in Russian). Also see *The Diary of Georgi Dimitrov (1941-1945)*, Kuchkovo Pole, Moscow 2020, p147 (in Russian).
 - 20 G. Farakos, 2004, *World War II. Relations between the KKE and the international communist centre*, Athens: Hellenic Literature, pp110 & 411 (in Greek).
 - 21 C. Kokkinos, C. Labatos and A. Athanasopoulou, *The Bloody Utopia*, Athens: Taxideftis, 2008, p219 (in Greek).
 - 22 KKE Archive, document 489412; Extract from the minutes of the Central Committee during the 3rd Conference of the KKE. The reason why the recruitment of Vavoudis to the Central Committee was not completed is that it was not possible for him to leave Greece and attend a plenary session of the body and assuming his duties, as required by the party's practice at the time
 - 23 COMINTERN, RGASPI, Moscow, Fond 495, op. 207, d. 89 (1), pp16-17
 - 24 COMINTERN, RGASPI, Moscow, Fond 495, op. 207, d. 89 (1), pp17-18.
 - 25 Dimitris Sakarellos was a very important member of the communist movement. He took part in the Spanish Civil War as political commissar of the Greek delegation. Since the end of 1938 he was appointed Comintern representative in France with the main responsibilities of liaison between the KKE and the Communist International and worked among Greek immigrants. After the occupation of France by the Germans he went to Moscow and joined the Comintern apparatus there. He was killed in January 1944 when the Soviet plane carrying him, along with other Balkan fighters, to occupied Yugoslavia, crashed under unclear circumstances.
 - 26 RGASPI, Moscow, Fond 495, opis 207, delo 89 (1), p8. In fact, Vavoudis escaped from prison and did not serve his entire sentence.
 - 27 Nikos Papadatos, *Nikos Vavoudis (Nikos Petros) Extract ...*, op cit.
 - 28 Cited by N. Papadatos, *Top secret*, op cit, p466 (in Greek).
 - 29 These are the Socialist Party of Greece, the Union of People's Democracy and the Agrarian Party of Greece.
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- 30 These are the Lebanon (May 1944) and Caserta (September 1944) agreements.
- 31 *The KKE, Official Texts*, Volume 6, Synchroni Epochi: Athens 1987, p178 (in Greek).
- 32 According to a statement by the KKE in early 1951 there were 40,000 prisoners and exiles. By October 1949 there had been 3,033 executions and 2,289 people had been sentenced to death. See *History Essay on the KKE 1949-1968*, Vol c.1, Athens: Synchroni Epochi, p116 (in Greek).
- 33 For more information see Spyros Sakellariopoulos (ed.), *So we love Greece. Complete Minutes and history of the Belogiannis trials*, Athens: Topos, 2022 (in Greek).
- 34 This was the trial that followed the discovery of the illegal radios that Vavoudis was operating, resulting in his suicide and leading to the execution of N. Belogiannis, D. Batsis, the person who received the money sent by the KKE from abroad for the maintenance of the illegal mechanism, which he handed over to N. Vavoudis, and I. Argyriadis and N. Kaloumenos, in whose houses the illegal radios were found.
- 35 Sakellariopoulos and Sakellariopoulos, op cit, p357. Nicos Zachariadis was General Secretary of the KKE from 1931 to 1956; Kostas was one of the names used by Vavoudis in the underground.
- 36 Personal testimony of I. Argyriadis' daughter, Efi, to Spyros Sakellariopoulos.
- 37 Sakellariopoulos and Sakellariopoulos, op cit, p501.
- 38 Ibid, p493.
- 39 Ibid, p505.
- 40 Cited in N. Kousidou and S. Stavropoulos, *The case of Nikos Ploumpidis and N. Zachariadis. Conflict between two policies. History – Archives – Testaments*, Athens: Diogenes, 1991, p283 (in Greek).
- 41 The first occasion is when, on 9.10.44, Dimitrov sends a letter to Vavoudis asking him whether it is true that the KKE sent a message to the Greek Prime Minister G. Papandreou about the presence of a Bulgarian military force in Drama (Kousidou and Stavropoulos, op cit, p259). The second occasion is when, in a telegram of 18.11.1944, Dimitrov asks Vavoudis about the identity of S. Anastasiades, a member of the KKE's Politburo and secretary of the Athens party's organisation: 'Raikos, inform me urgently who Anastasiades is. He came to Sofia to the Central Committee as a member of the Politburo of the KKE' (cited in File Hellas, op cit, p199).
- 42 Lazaridi, who was Vavoudis's closest collaborator in sending telegrams, in an interview with S. Kasimatis, states that '... he sent telegrams both

- to the Soviets and to the Central Committee ... I draw the conclusion that he exchanged telegrams with the Soviets because he did not deny in his conversations that he had relations with the Soviets ... I had noticed that sometimes he worked on his own telegrams and received them and the sound was different, of a different transmitter ... there was not only one receiver. Two or three were addressed ... But I only used one of them, and not the other two'. See S. Kasimatis, 1997, *The outlaws, People and documents*, Athens: Philistor, 1997, p509 (in Greek).
- 43 See Sakellaropoulos and Sakellaropoulos, op cit, pp498-499, 501, 502, 506, 507, 508-509, 510-511, 512, 524, 527, 530, 533, 537, 538.
- 44 As stated in the telegram of 19.4.51: 'The intelligence apparatus is thirty people, Party members and non-Party members. Beyond the circle which each of them has ...', Sakellaropoulos and Sakellaropoulos, op cit, p512.
- 45 See indicatively the telegrams of 1.9.50, 20.2.51, 18.4.51, Sakellaropoulos and Sakellaropoulos, op cit, pp497-498, 507, 511.
- 46 See indicatively the telegrams of 20.3.51, 5.4.51, 24.5.51, Sakellaropoulos and Sakellaropoulos, op cit, pp509, 510, 514.
- 47 See indicatively the telegrams of 21.7.50, 14.10.50, 5.6.51, Sakellaropoulos and Sakellaropoulos, op cit, pp494-495, 501, 515.
- 48 For example, in a telegram of 26 July 1950, the following is stated: 'It is confirmed that individual summonses to mobilisation are being sent out. They are mainly recruiting doctors, technicians and sailors. At the Ellinikon aerodrome the runways are being enlarged. Weapons are being distributed to individuals in Athens. They are establishing a kind of militia.' On 30.7.51: 'A couple of days ago airports distanced the aircraft from each other and put the anti-aircraft weapons in the open. Sirens were tested.' On 3 August 1951: 'Two barges loaded with troops left for Epirus. We have not ascertained the number. Large numbers of cars carrying war materials have passed through Drama', Sakellaropoulos and Sakellaropoulos, op cit, 2022, p233.
- 49 Cited in K. Zabathas, *N. Belogiannis-N. Ploumbidis*, Athens: Dorios, 1988, p112 (in Greek). Elli Ioannidou was a key member of the Athens Party's organization. She was sentenced to death in the radio trial but was not executed because she had just given birth to her son from her relationship with N. Belogiannis.
- 50 S. Kasimatis, *The outlaws...*, op cit, 1997, pp221-222 (in Greek). Stavros Kasimatis was a member of the communist youth during the German occupation. In 1949, together with other youth comrades, he set up a parallel KKE leadership centre in Athens, parallel to that of

- Ploumpidis-Vavoudis. In 1952 he fled abroad and was subsequently elected a regular member of the Central Committee and later a member of the Party's Political Bureau. In the 1990s he wrote a book on the illegal apparatus of the KKE.
- 51 The above was confirmed by Vavoudis himself in a message of 25.7.49 which he transmitted: '... I have burned the telegram for repetition ... We keep telegrams only for 24 hours. 25.7.49 K.'. Also, in another message, of 1.12.49, he transmits: 'I have written to you before and if there is a mistake, please write to me immediately the next day, otherwise everything will be destroyed'. In a subsequent telegram, he notes: '... From now on I shall keep my telegrams for 48 hours. 26/12. K.', Sakellaropoulos and Sakellaropoulos, op cit, p277).
- 52 ASKI, Athens, RSFG Archive, The Fighter's Tutorial 14, Φ3.
- 53 KKE, 1995, *Official Documents*, Vol 7: 1949-1955, Athens: Synchroni Epochi, p281 (in Greek).
- 54 *Avgi*, 19.8.1953. The KKE was completely unjust in these characterisations of Ploumpidis, who was arrested by the state on 25 November 1952. Indeed, not only was there no change of attitude when Ploumbidis, on 3 August 1953, was sentenced to death (he was executed a year later); it was also claimed that he had been helped to escape abroad (see below).
- 55 COMINTERN, RGASPI, Moskva, Fond 495, op 207, d. 89 (1), p1. Some of the difficult moments in the KKE/CPSU relationship occurred with the controversial Comintern campaign for an 'independent Macedonia'; the Comintern appointment of N. Zachariadis as Gen. Secretary of the KKE; Soviet reservations about the possibility of an armed struggle (civil war).
- 56 *Essay on the History of the KKE 1949-1967*, Volume C1, op cit, p163.
- 57 ASKI, Athens, KKE Archive Φ=28/2BN/6, p1.
- 58 ASKI, Athens, KKE Archive Φ=28/2BN/6, pp7-8.
- 59 ASKI, Athens, KKE Archive Φ=28/2BN/6, pp8-9.
- 60 ASKI, Athens, KKE Archive Φ=28/2BN/6, p9. *Neos Kosmos* was a KKE periodical which circulated in the eastern countries.
- 61 KKE, *History Essay*, 2011, op cit, p276.
- 62 P. Demetriou, 'On the cult of personality within the KKE and the struggle to eliminate its consequences, *Neos Kosmos* 3, 1962, p19 (in Greek).
- 63 *Essay on the History of the KKE 1949-1967*, Volume C1, op cit, pp244-245 (in Greek).
- 64 IDEA was an illegal far-right organisation that operated within the

Greek army. A faction of it established EENA (the National Union of Young Officers), which was to carry out the military coup of 1967.

- 65 For the condemnatory decisions of the seventh plenum of the KKE concerning the action of these cadres see KKE, *Official Documents*, Vol 8: 1956-1961, Athens: Synchroni Epochi, 1997, pp177-182 (in Greek).