

# Greek Socialist Labour Party from 1918-1924: *A Historical Study*

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The current study deals with the first socialist party in Greece, called the Greek Socialist Labour Party (1918-1924). Before entering the study, an overview is given of the roots of socialist thought in Greece. The research deals with the circumstances of the founding of the party in 1918 and highlights the issues raised during the establishment, the relationship between the Communist Party and the Communist International during 1919-1920. The research has explained the Greek government's policy toward the party during 1919-1921, and it became clear that the government was strictly monitoring the activities of the party and narrowing it down with the aim of eliminating it politically. For its part, the party issued several statements in the form of complaints to the government on the annexes. The study focused on the party's position on the Greek military intervention in southern Russia in 1919-20, as well as in Asia Minor. The party used all its resources against these interventions, and succeeded in spreading leftist ideas among the ranks of the fighters so that these interventions failed miserably. In contrast, the government succeeded in arresting party leaders in 1922. The research continued the general policy of the Greek Socialist Labour Party and its internal problems between 1922 - 1924. The problem is the brotherly love on the ideological policy of the party at that stage, and ultimately the party of opportunism filters elements, and make its principles conform to the principles of Marxism-Leninism, and changed its name to the Communist Party of Greece.

**Key words:** *Greece, Socialism, Socialist Labour Party, Workers, Communist International.*



## **Introduction**

The influence of European socialist thought on Greece began in the nineteenth century. In the sense that Greece is not the source of socialist thought, but imported from other European experiences, socialist thought did not spread in large areas in the country, but remained confined between some regions and intellectual groups that remained closed to themselves, one of the main reasons that made the situation worse was the spread of socialist thought on Greece: the personal aspirations of most local socialist leaders whose primary concern was leadership, not the maintenance of socialist principles. Therefore, there was no broad public base that believed in socialist ideology, and as a result, the emergence of a socialist party with real political representation was delayed in Greece compared to most other European countries. My choice for the subject of the Greek Socialist Labour Party (1918-1924) is to know the obstacles that stood in the way of the party to achieve its political ambitions: how did the Greek government deal with them, and were there political efforts of the party at the national or regional level? These questions and others, the researchers try to answer in the sections of research; some research may answer them and others, the future will reveal.

The study includes an introduction, eight sections and a conclusion. The first section reviews the roots of socialist thought in Greece, and finds that it did not have a significant impact in Greek society. The second section highlights the circumstances of the founding of the party in 1918, and the most prominent issues discussed by the party at its founding conference, including: the fight against international capitalism, the advocacy of international socialism, the establishment of a democratic union among the Balkan states, and the qualification of the working class, both politically and economically, to reach the reins of power. The third section continues the relationship of the Communist International Party (Committer), and the difficulties encountered by the party from building that relationship, the Greek government was unwilling to join the Communist International in 1920.

The fourth section discusses the Greek government's policy towards the party during 1919-1921, and it became clear that the government strictly monitored the party's activities, and tightened the noose in order to eliminate it politically, beside it, the party issued several statements in the form of complaints to the government regarding the ongoing prosecution against its members and the press. The fifth section examined the General National Congress of Party members in 1922, which came up with a general conclusion that the party's general policy should be reviewed and prudent in keeping with the political reality. The sixth section focused on the party's position on the Greek military intervention in southern Russia 1919 – 1920; he succeeded in spreading leftist ideas among the ranks of the fighters so that the intervention failed miserably.

The seventh section studied the party's policy towards the Greek military campaign in Asia Minor and the position of the Greek government on them 1920 - 1922, the party launched a

fierce media campaign against the war in Asia Minor through newspapers and pamphlets reaching out to the fighters through some of its soldiers, on the other hand, the government invested all its efforts to eliminate the party leaders and succeeded in arresting those leaders in 1922. The last section showed the general policy of the Greek Socialist Labour Party and its internal problems 1922-1924, the most prominent of these problems is the ideological difference over the party's public policy at that stage, eventually the party was eliminated from opportunist elements, its principles conformed to Marxist-Leninist principles, and its name changed to the Greek Communist Party.

One of the most important sources and references adopted in the study is the official texts published by the Greek Communist Party in the first volume of those texts Συλλογικό, Το ΚΚΕ – Επίσημα κείμενα (1918 - 1924), τόμ. 1. It provided the study with very important information in addition to them. It was published by the party in its history Συλλογικό, Σύντομη ιστορία του, ΚΚΕ - Σχέδιο (Μέρος Α' 1918-1949). This does not mean the omission of the rest of the sources and references, but what was mentioned was close to the significance of the search and God conciliator.

### ***An overview of the roots of socialist thought in Greece***

Before the details of the evolution and development of the Greek Socialist Labour Party (ΣΕΚΕ), the basic sources of socialist thought in Greece must be highlighted so that the reader can be motivated to the emergence of the mentioned party. The sources of socialist thought can be divided into three stages. The first begins from 1833 until the middle of 1870. During this stage, a group of European immigrants came to Greece for fear of prosecutions in their countries. They carried with them their socialist ideas and wanted to implement them socially and politically, this represents the ideological spectrum between the ideal of French socialism raised by the proponents of (Saint Simon)(1) and the socialist anarchism in which Italian immigrants and political refugees believed in Greece, especially supporters of the (Garibaldi movement)(2); but these ideas remained limited in Greece at that stage. The second stage began in the mid-1870s, until the beginning of 1911. During this stage some clubs and socialist societies were formed in Greece (3) like the Democratic Society (ΔΣ) in the city of Patras. Founded in 1870, its cultural influence remained until 1893. It was founded on the ruins of the Socialist Brothers Club ((ηΣΑ)). In the same year, the club issued a newspaper dubbed the socialist group, (Σοσιαλιστικός Σύλλογος), it conveyed the activities of the club and the ideas of its members, the club was a gathering where socialists and progressives meet, which is incoherent because of the incompatibility of the intellectual trends of its members with each other. The establishment of this club coincided with the establishment of another club, the Socialist Supporters (ησσ), its headquarters in Athens included some intellectuals, traders and workers.(4)



The first trade union was founded in Patras at the initiative of the Socialist Brothers Club in 1893, they also contributed to the founding of the First Labour Union (πεσ) in 1894. Later this year the Socialist Brotherhood issued a newspaper named after the light (Το Φως) in the Peloponnese region; a daily newspaper whose purpose is to spread some socialist ideas. Despite the continuity of socialist activities, their supporters were oppressed, arrested and stalked, and some continued until 1910. There are several reasons why socialist ideology was not widely spread at that stage. Socialist ideology did not acquire totalitarianism in its spread at the national level, as it was at the local level, the philosophy of intellectual currents was not uniform to the management of power among the adherents of socialist thoughts which is a heterogeneous mixture (5), so, this has become a strong obstacle in uniting the dispersed socialist clubs in order to form a political party that carries with it socialist ideas and has a mass base.(6) This prompted one of the leaders of socialist thought in Greece who is Platon Dercules (7 (letter to the Secretary of the International Socialist Office Camille Hansen (8) on July 7, 1911. He told him about the failure of his political efforts to establish an integrated socialist party and he had said "I would like to inform you that our Socialist Party is still an imperfect organisation, especially there are a number of insurmountable obstacles Through conspiracies, personal jealousy, bad faith and inefficiency in general, our work is still in the embryonic stage"(9).

It can be deduced from the foregoing that the socialist movement in Greece was not of a broad mass base, and there are quite a few of its members are utilitarian and accessory whose personal aspirations dominate the general interest of the socialist movement in Greece, Therefore, the efforts of the socialist political currents in building a political party were not united. The third stage began in 1911, and lasted until 1918, and was characterised by more efforts by Greek socialist organisations in order to unite its efforts and its political discourse. The first initiative of those efforts was when the Socialist Centre in Athens tried in 1911, uniting the political efforts of Greek socialist organisations; but those efforts failed (10). It was followed by some other attempts that were not better than the first. In 1915, there was a second attempt by the Socialist Union of Saloniki (ΣΕΘ(with the Socialist Union of Athens, )ΣΕΑ). This attempt was unsuccessful followed by a third failed attempt by socialist organisations in Piraeus and Athens in 1917, there are several reasons that led to the failure of these attempts, to unite the socialist efforts, the most important of which is that the leaders of the socialist organisations were not serious dialogues on the subject of socialist unity among themselves, each of them tries to obtain the greatest privileges, in addition to the mistrust of each other, in resolving their intellectual disputes, the state's repression of their organisations, leaders, and press increased until 1918, in November of the same year, most leftist political forces succeeded in forming the Greek Socialist Labour Party.



***The circumstances for the establishment of the Greek Socialist Labour Party in 1918***

Some members of Greek society were influenced by the revolutionary ideas that came to them, after the Bolshevik revolution that took place in Russia in October 1917, (12) and faced Marxist-Leninist ideas (13) that were popular among those of Greek society (14). This resulted in the establishment of the first revolutionary socialist party in Greece, the Greek Socialist Labour Party, on November 4, 1918. The supporters list of the party establishment was organised (15), and on November 17 in the same year, the founding congress of the party was held in the city of Piraeus when they met its members (16) in the Society of Ship Engineers (Σ Μ Α). In order to find ways to pool the efforts of socialist organisations and groups through this party according to common principles, programs and policies, the conference lasted seven days and ended on the 23rd of November of the same year. During the conference there were political discussions concerning leftist ideas, especially the unified position taken by the socialist groups regarding Greece's participation in the First World War, and its attitude towards the Greek political system during the post-war period (17).

There are some obstacles, difficulties and problems faced by those gathered at the conference, including: What concerns the work of the party is within the framework of the parliamentary bourgeoisie at the time or follow a revolutionary strategy of its own? Will the membership of the party be broadly open or limited to the conscious socialist elites that maintain its principles? What does the party seek for is the absolute rule of the working class or the establishment of the People's Republic as the transition towards socialism, the acceptance or rejection of the League of Nations was discussed as a bourgeois construction, and the choice of a new formula to deal with the Greek political reality oscillates between the call for the abolition of the Greek monarchy or the exploitation of internal contradictions that would lead to the desired revolution. On the question of the war that was then taking place in Asia Minor, (18) they put themselves in favour of advocating national defence. They condemned all wars in the name of bourgeois wars, and the discussion of these issues resulted in the emergence of two trends in the first party that theoretically followed the European model of social democracy, as reflected in the Erfurt Program of German Social Democracy. The second called for adherence to the Communist International, and this trend eventually became a left-wing opposition within the party (20). There are some individuals who withdrew (21) from the conference; their attitudes calculated on the reformist milieu without affecting the formation of the new party. In addition, there is another problem that a number of secret agents infiltrated under the direction of the Greek government to the conference and then left the conference. As a result, the conference voted to issue a complaint to the government in order to prevent the press from covering the proceedings of the conference, and inform her to welcome her participation in an official and honourable manner through her officials, not through the secret police. (22)



It seems that the conference is no longer a good organisational preparation, as evidenced by the breach of the atmosphere by the government secret police, looking at the discussions within the conference may have sent a message to the Greek government that most of the discussions in the conference are chaotic and some are unrealistic, For example: the discussion of acceptance or rejection of the United Nations, as well as the condemnation of all wars in the name of bourgeois wars if the members of the conference reject it, will their refusal have an impact on reality or are they ideal ideas that did not come to reality at that stage, on the other hand, even some of those attending the conference withdrew because they were not convinced of the ideas put forward at the conference. Leftist political forces dominated the issuance of some resolutions, such as sending a message of solidarity to the Soviet Republic, condemnation of what the accord countries wanted to intervene in the Russian civil war at the time, where they demanded the withdrawal of Greece from all secret treaties and alliances and the abolition of secret diplomacy. They strongly supported the concept of national self-determination and the commencement of general negotiations for the establishment of a general peace that guarantees the stability of all States, large and small.

A regional settlement in the Balkans and the Near East was proposed, and a number of autonomous Greek provinces were proposed, waiver of Greek territorial claims as (Opirus North )βορείου Ηπείρου), Dodecanese (Δωδεκάνησα) ,Smyrna (Σμύρνη(Izmir later), under the auspices of the League of Nations, and the formation of a political office with the purpose of diluting the class struggle at the national level. The participants agreed on the need to follow a revolutionary approach in order to gain strength in political action, coordinate efforts with the world's central labour movement. (23) It can be said that the members of the conference exaggerated the views they put forward, especially the Greek Government's cession of some of its territory under the pretext of this self-determination. On the other hand, to give a message of reassurance to the Soviet Republic, which means that the ideological principle of the members of the conference is superior to the national principle, emphasised the revolutionary approach in their political work and this is far from reality because the party does not have a mass base that can achieve the revolution.

The participants agreed on the need to confront international capitalism and support international socialism. One of the most fundamental principles advocated by the party is to qualify the working class from the political and economic standpoint in order to reach the reins of power and adopt an active international policy to activate the role of workers in production, the separation of state and church policy, the liberalisation of trade union freedoms, the abolition of indirect taxes, and the progressive imposition of other taxes, gender equality and the democracy of education at all levels, the participants proposed the establishment of a democratic union from all Balkan countries (24).



The conference did not overlook the media because of its impact on the social reality in order to win as many people as possible to the party, therefore, the party published the struggle of workers (Εργατικός Αγών). It was the first newspaper to speak for the party, was published weekly and managed by Demosthenes Ilnaplio (25)(Δημοσθένης Λιγδόπουλο), In addition, party members held meetings and activities at the open-air theater in Athens, known as Denisia (ΔΙΟΝΥΣΙΑ). These meetings have wide resonance in attracting many supporters to him, and expanded the party base of this party in several Greek cities such as: Volos, Kavala and Thessaloniki. Besides that, there is a daily newsletter called Repasts (Ριζοσπάστη). These are daily announcements documenting the activities of party members belonging to the General Union of Greek Workers (GFET)(26). Convergent intellectual propositions in what was issued by the struggle of the workers with the ideas were presented in the daily newspaper Rezbasts came by the said Union, since then, the promotion began to join the Communist International (27) (Comintern)(28).

### ***The relationship of the Greek Socialist Labour Party to the Communist International 1919-1920***

The issue of the party's accession to the Communist International was raised at the aforementioned conference. By sending a person representing the Hellenic Socialist Labour Party to put forward and it was agreed to send Demosthenes Ilnaplio as the party's delegate. At the meeting of the Communist International to be held in Moscow in May 1919, during his trip to that meeting, he was killed by pirates in the Black Sea and his body was found near the Bulgarian shores. There are some accusations that point the finger of accusation against the countries of reconciliation, but without evidence. The first attempt to reach out to the Communist International failed, at the next meeting of the Communist International during the period from July 19th to August 7th, 1920, Nikos Dimitros (29)(Νίκος Δημητράτος) was appointed to head a Greek delegation representing the Greek Socialist Labour Party at that meeting. The Greek delegation succeeded in winning the votes of all those present for the membership of the Greek Socialist Labour Party in the Communist International. (30)

It can be concluded from the above that the party wanted to rely on the support of the Communist International, because its ideological structure was still fragile at that stage. The Greek government, on the other hand, did not want to have contact between the party and the Communist International. It may have failed the first attempt to contact the Communist International by employing its intelligence to that end.

### ***Greek Government Policy towards the Greek Socialist Labour Party 1919-1921***

The party suffered from strict Greek government monitoring of its political activities, and nevertheless did not freeze its political activities, having cooperated with trade unions and socialist unions, in particular the Thessaloniki Union, on a general strike of the working class. In July 1919, the purpose of the party's participation in that strike was to form a mass base for

the working-class party, and wake it from its slumber to take the lead in its class struggle with the bourgeois political class. A large number of members of the Greek Socialist Labour Party participated in the strike in order to activate the participation of the working class, in the face of these developments. The Greek government reacted very harshly against the participants in the strike by, and tightening control over freedom of association. A series of arrests have taken place against a large number of workers and party members; they were tortured, imprisoned, and exiled. The government described the strike participants as conspirators against the state and its enemies, on the other hand, reports of the Greek secret police after the elimination of the strike confirmed the active role of the Socialist Labour Party in fuelling that strike. Taking advantage of the widespread unemployment among the workers, the economic recession, censorship must therefore be tightened, since he has set himself up as a lawyer for workers' rights and has employed his press politically to advocate for workers' rights and thus become workers victims of this party's policy (31).

It seems that the party was aiming to win the workers' base through its political program, which aimed at qualifying the working class from the political and economic points of view, taking advantage of the economic recession and widespread unemployment among workers. But even if that exploitation was in good faith it wasn't practically thoughtful. Will the party look for alternative plans in case the strike fails? Is it at the level of confrontation with the government? Especially that the leadership of the party was fully aware of the government's wait for it, so it can be said that the strike has harmed the party and the working class more than achieved a mass base.

As a result, it reconsidered his political behaviour, especially when he held elections in Athens from 16 to 19 September 1920, in order to check the biographies of its members, the party did not hesitate to participate in the Greek parliamentary elections held in November of the same year, And raise the logo of the hammer and sickle and the purpose of this slogan to gain and support the toiling class, the hammer was intended to work, while the sickle refers to the farmer, during their campaign, they demanded that the peasant be granted a piece of land to be invested away from the domination of the owners and not to allow the owners to reap huge profits by exploiting the simple peasants, Twenty-three candidates were nominated for the party, however, the candidates did not win the elections despite having obtained 13 percent of the total of 100,000 votes because of the nature of the electoral system.(32)

The Greek government continued to clamp down on the political activity of this party in order to eliminate it politically, especially since the party has a good relationship with the Communist International and the proof is that the party was attending its meetings. In June 1921, a Greek delegation attended by a representative of the party led by Nikos Dimitros confirmed at that meeting the harassment of the party by the Greek government, in saying "The bourgeoisie in our country is fighting in every possible way to destroy our party,

because it is its enemy that exposes to all people the crimes committed by the Greek bourgeoisie in cooperation with the European bourgeoisie and imperialism." (33) On the other hand, those in charge of the party's policy did not stand idly by against the Greek government's domination of them, so they issued several statements (34) in the form of complaints to the government regarding the ongoing prosecution of party members and the press. These statements affirmed the party's unprepared peaceful policy and social democratic character, throughout 1921. (35) Perhaps at this stage the party realised that it was not at the level of confrontation with the government, and its statements were messages to the government that it abandoned the revolutionary approach to dealing with political reality.

### ***The General National Conference of the Greek Socialist Labour Party in 1922***

The party held its conference at the national level on the nineteenth of February 1922, and one of the most important issues to talk about is the general political situation in the country, the tasks of the party at that stage and its relationship with the Communist International and the radicals and dealing with the bourgeois regime in Greece. In general, three conflicting intellectual trends emerged within the first party led by Nikos Sarkoloku (36) (Νίκος Σαργολόγος), raising revolutionary slogans in order to achieve what the party wants, while the second most prominent adopted by Nikos Dimitros, called for abandoning the revolutionary style and cooperation with the bourgeois parties in the country, the third most prominent was called by Yannis Cordatouch (37) (Γιάννης Κορδάτος), to a general review of party politics (38).

These political debates resulted in the election of a new Party Central Committee (39) the conference made a statement in which it confirmed that "The party is still in the stage of organisation and propaganda, and it takes a long time to prove its legal existence, it cannot be at the level of confrontation during this stage because of its limited political power, bearing in mind that Greece is a petty bourgeois country, it is necessary to confront and expose this bourgeoisie, adherence to democratic and parliamentary principles and sincerity to the people, but not through sterile propaganda, but through the broad participation of the party in all areas, especially the struggle in parliament and international organisations.(40)

It seems that the party was suffering at the internal organisational level due to the intolerance of some of its leaders in their political views. No central committee has been able to satisfy all parties. What was presented at this conference is the right thing, the party did not achieve political gains only through the incursion of its members in the Greek Parliament and international organisations.

### ***The party's position on Greek military intervention in southern Russia 1919-1920***

The Greek Socialist Labour Party opposed the participation of Greek troops (41) besides the countries of concord in the military intervention in southern Russia (later Ukraine) against the

Bolshevik forces informally. Because of the strict control imposed by the Greek government, he launched a fierce campaign against that intervention. That campaign succeeded in winning the support of quite a few soldiers who advised their officers not to fight a fierce war in the interests of bloodthirsty under the pretext of liberating the Russian people, these ideas were popular among Greek fighters and ultimately that military intervention failed miserably, this was reflected on the Greek government, Greek Prime Minister Eleftherios Venizelos expressed (42) concern about the impact of revolutionary ideas on the minds of a large number of Greek troops. This would strengthen and exaggerate government actions in the face of communist menace even if few soldiers embrace communist ideas. Evidence of the strong influence of these ideas Volunteers from Asia Minor refused to participate in the Southern Russia War (43).

There was a widespread feeling that the Greek Socialist Labour Party and the Greek Communist soldiers largely succeeded in spreading revolutionary slogans and ideas that greatly influenced the morale of Greek troops, especially in Smyrna (Izmir), during the meeting of the members of the Greek Socialist Labour Party from 18 to 24 May 1919. The participants stressed that the League of Nations is “a trick directed against the world revolution”, because they stood silent about the “brutal and imperialism nature of the war against Russia”.(44)

It can be concluded from the above that the party's policy towards the Greek military intervention in southern Russia was successful because that war was imposed on the Greek military forces by the countries of the accord. Greece had no interest other than sacrificing its military forces, so the party's ideas were popular among some soldiers and officers, and these ideas affected the final outcome of that intervention.

***The party's policy towards the Greek military campaign in Asia Minor and the position of the Greek government on them 1920-1922***

The second meeting of the party members was held in Athens from 18th to 25th of April 1920. During this meeting, the party formally declared its opposition to the Asia Minor Campaign, the party intends to cooperate with other communist parties in the Balkans to establish the Balkan Democratic Union, the Party's opposition to the Asia Minor campaign remained theoretical and was not implemented in practice.

This can be explained by the party's inability to direct its poor masses, which included very few working class to oppose the campaign, as well as the legitimate concerns of the party leadership of the dire consequences of an active anti-war policy that angered the government and made it subject to severe persecution of party members (45).

Propaganda and anti-war activities in Asia Minor were initiated by the Greek Socialist Labour Party, which it wanted to use as a political card that could be used to win electoral votes on the occasion of the Greek legislative elections that were to be held on November 1, 1920. The party had campaigned for workers, peasants and soldiers to vote against the bourgeois parties that were sending them to war, the party deployed communist activists in Greek areas, especially urban centres. These activists played an active role in the political organisation of the poor masses and benefited from public discontent resulting from the high cost of living and dissatisfaction with the continuation of the war. Gradually, they managed to turn demonstrations and strikes of an economic nature into public anti-war manifestations. (46) The role of the Communist activists in the army divisions in spreading intensive anti-war propaganda among their colleagues and leaders was in order to provoke their indignation. The party's activity in Thessaloniki was marked by the Voice of Workers newspaper (Φωνή του "Εργάτη). They wrote a series of articles opposing the war, and some copies of that newspaper were distributed to members of the armed forces in Smyrna (Izmir), Nidal al-Ommal journal published on September 20 and November 29, 1920. Statements confirming the formation of the Central Committee of the Communist Soldiers' Bloc, and of course it was the Greek Socialist Labour Party which supervised the activities of that Committee. Its task was to coordinate the activities of communist soldiers that were present in almost every division of the army, the stated aim of the commission was to enlighten the soldiers culturally about the nature of the real war and its damage, the most prominent statements of the Committee. (47) We can say that the party benefited greatly from its experience in opposing military intervention in southern Russia, and wanted to repeat it in Asia Minor, this time, however, it increased the opposition dramatically without observing the government's control, nevertheless, it achieved great success in reducing the resolve of soldiers and officers through his press and some of his Greek soldiers.

The Greek government waged a vicious campaign against party followers by intimidating and imprisoning or exiling its leading members, as well as with trade union militants, and often looting party offices, the Greek government succeeded in eliminating most of the party's leaders. As a result, a number of accusations have been levelled against the Hellenic Socialist Labour Party that conducting the anti-war campaign without the party's knowledge against its will. The accusations were brought by Agis Stina (48) (Άγις Στίνας); one member of the party has greatly exaggerated it, especially since the Greek government has employed all its intelligence services to eliminate any political activity of the party (49). The claim of Agis Stina was refuted during the Third International Meeting on September 1920, by providing twenty-one evidence confirming the leadership of the Greek Socialist Labour Party anti-war campaign. What Agis Stina put forward is personal, and this is evidence of the party's organisational deficiencies and the strength of internal differences, and the weak ideological basis of his leadership.

The researcher believes that the party was subjected to strict control by the government which made its political behaviour very secret even from some of its members, as a result, its political reputation was jeopardised by the credibility of its political work, so the party had to provide evidence of its political efforts at the Communist International. The policy of the Greek Socialist Labour Party against the war in Asia Minor resulted in an increase in the membership of the party and its sympathisers, the Greek government reacted negatively to the anti-war campaign by punishing communist agitators against the campaign by forcibly recruiting them and sending them to the front. For example, 300 railway workers, most of whom were communist, were forced to join Asia Minor, in the spring of 1921. As a result, the Communists gained control of the main communications centres, railways and telegraph stations throughout the southern group of the Greek army. Since June 1921, the party's activities have centred on the dissemination of anti-war propaganda in the form of handwritten publications, booklets and newspapers. As well as the magazine of the Socialist Labour Party, which bore the name of the definition of Communist (Κομμουνιστική Έπιθεώρησις), that found its way to the front in a secret way, hiding it in the sidewalks or through the communist doctors and nurses working in the military hospital (51).

The party leadership was arrested by the Greek government in early July 1922, they were imprisoned for treason for opposing the war and inciting extremism in Asia Minor, detained in Singro prison (52) (Φυλακές Συγγρού), that was a tragic reality for party members. (53) As a result, the left wing of the party, which consisted of a group of communist soldiers, elected Pantelis Polnopoulos (54) (Παντελής Πουλιόπουλος). In September 1922, Pantelis Polnopoulos was able to liquidate the party from opportunists, whose ultimate goal was not to uphold the principles of the party, their personal ambitions dominated the party's general interests (55). It can be concluded from the above that the government succeeded in penetrating the ranks of the party, his political leadership justified the secrecy of his party's political activities and demonstrated how difficult it was for the Greek Socialist Labour Party to operate.

### ***The general policy and internal problems of the Greek Socialist Labour Party 1922-1924***

The Greek Socialist Labour Party held an extraordinary conference during the period from 2 to 13 November 1922. During that conference, the Central Committee discussed the causes of violations committed by the party, and the professional policies that the party was supposed to carry out, and a new administrative body of the party was elected (56) under the administration of Nikos Sarkoloko. On the other hand, the party initiated the Greek Communist Youth Union, (OKNE (by meeting in the ssaloniki on November 28, 1922). It took place with socialist youth organisations from different Greek cities and resulted in the birth of the Greek Communist Youth Union. Zack Ventura became responsible (57) (Ζα Βεντούρα) and this organisation published the youth newspaper (εφημερίδα Νεολαία). It was

the mouthpiece of the Greek socialist youth, through which expressed its political ambitions and philosophy (58).

The party suffered from internal divisions and questioned the integrity of some of its members. This was reflected on the political activities of the party, especially in early 1923, and this led to the emergence of an opposition movement within the party on the first of May of the same year; they called them Thinkyumalsides. (59) (Αρχειομαρξιστές) They published their ideas in the Journal of the Marxist Archive (Αρχείο Μαρξισμού), that started publishing their numbers since then (60). Some voices from the Greek Socialist Labour Party in the Thessaloniki branch began to rise in order to address the country's food crisis through a general strike, indeed, the party branch in Thessaloniki wanted to implement it on the ground, but the government confronted it with violence and cruelty. In August of the same year, at the end, the strike failed, and this caused a crisis in the party between the Athens branch and The Saloniki branch. Moreover, the Saloniki branch demanded the support of the republican system and the support of the communist parties of the revolutionaries in the colonial and semi-colonial countries. The establishment of a workers' and peasants' government as soon as possible in order to implement Soviet democracy (61).

It could be said that the state of disintegration and divisions returned strongly to the party after the arrest of its political leadership, this is evidenced by the disagreements regarding the strike of the Saloniki branch in August 1923. Perhaps the main branch in Athens wanted not to repeat the 1919 strike experiment, which had negative consequences for the party, on the other hand, the Athens branch aimed to buy time to reorganise the party and alleviate the revolutionary style.

The party held an extraordinary congress in Athens on September 19, 1923, under which the party's central committee, led by Nikos Sarkoloko, was sacked, and a new central committee (62) was formed under the management of Thomas Dextolivis (63) (Θωμάς Αποστολίδης); this was due to the internal disputes of the party and the lack of political activity of many leading figures in the party. Moreover, the revision of the party's membership and its association with the International Communist, in addition to stimulating the party to prepare for the Greek parliamentary elections as a committee was formed to follow up the advertisements and the propaganda campaign; this was in order to gain as many electoral votes as possible (64). Indeed, the commission was formed under the chairmanship of Yannis Cordatoc on October 16, 1923. They wrote in their electoral propaganda: "The Socialist Labour Party came from your community of workers with in order to expose the betrayal of the bourgeois parties and their attempts to deceive the public again, they will have to come to the election with vigour" (65) The party descended in the elections held on December 16 of the same year, under the official slogan of the party. (Hammer and sickle), and won eighteen thousand votes, and because of the nature of the electoral system did not win any member of

the party in those elections (66). The dispersion of the electoral vote seems to indicate the fragmentation of the party's mass base, and the dispersion of the mass base means that the party needed redoubled efforts to strengthen that dispersed base.

The internal disagreements of the party did not end soon after the elections. Avram Benaroya, a leader of the Thessaloniki branch, issued a statement in January 1924, acknowledging that the political system in the Soviet Union was the only one that can fulfil all the demands of the working masses. This system cannot be in Greece, unless it gets public support for the establishment of the Republic, and members of the Thessaloniki branch strongly supported this statement. As a result, the party held a national conference to discuss the political crisis which was going through, in early February. In 1924 it was agreed that it is necessary to review the general policy of the party, and stay away from political adventures; due to the intensification of the discussions within the conference. As a result, two-directions are emerged first reformer-party, led by the Avraam Benaroya and members of the Thessaloniki branch and the second revolutionary party led by the members of the Athens branch, the latter demanded the removal of Avraam Benaroya party (68).

On the other hand, the political ideas of the members of the Thessaloniki branch were in harmony with the organisation of the Socialist Workers Union. They formed a bloc whose main objective was to strengthen the relationship with the International Communist, and the political crisis of the party continued. The most prominent decisions of the Congress were the elimination of opportunistic elements whose ideas were consistent with the bourgeois mentality. Thus, eliminating quite a few of the party's founding members, and changing the party's name to the Greek Communist Party as a revolutionary party and its new approach. Compliant with Marxist-Leninist principles (69). It can be concluded from this that the Greek Socialist Labour Party ended its political role with the Thessaloniki branch of the Alliance with the Socialist Workers' Union, who removed quite a few of the founding leaders of the party, and formed a party with new goals, principles and leadership, which received the blessing of the International Communist. Thus, the Greek Communist Party was born. On the ruins of the Greek Socialist Labour Party.

## **Conclusion**

The conclusions of the research were:

- To ensure the study of the research that the Greek Socialist Labour Party was not the birth of the moment in which it was founded. It was the result of the accumulation of efforts made by the Greek socialist associations and clubs to unify their political vision and come up with a socialist party that has a real representation at the national level.



- The research proved that the political leadership of the party was suffering from the state of intellectual chaos at the organisational level. In August 1923, the main branch in Athens did not want to participate.
- The research revealed the great success achieved by the party in confronting the Greek military intervention, whether in southern Russia or in Asia Minor. The publications, journal and booklets that distributed by members of the party, had an influential effect on changing their views in the interventions and contributed in thwarting it.
- The research showed the strict control of the Greek government on the political activities of the party, the Greek intelligence was able to penetrate the ranks of the party on more than one occasion. The party didn't ignore that, it made several statements to the government in order not to pursue its followers. After the party's successful campaign against military intervention in Asia Minor, the Greek government succeeded in arresting the party's political leadership in 1922.



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