Memorandum from I.V. Stalin to Comrades Malenkov, Beria, Bulganin and others, 16 September 1949

No 83/18 September 1949 (number and date handwritten)

This document contains an assessment of the situation in Greece and formulates the tasks for the Communist Party of Greece. I think it is correct. The “Eight”[[1]](#footnote-1) should approve it and inform Comrade Nikolaev of the approval.

I. Stalin

1. After the Democratic Army of Greece (DAG) was defeated at Vitsi-Grammos[[2]](#footnote-2), the situation in Greece changed, which calls for the Communist Party of Greece to change its policy, too.

The reasons for DAG defeat are as follows:

1. Inability of the CP of Greece to resolve the problem of DAG reserves, as well as supplies to the DAG units that were in the Central and Southern regions of the country;
2. Support rendered by the Americans and the British to the monarchic fascism;
3. Betrayal of Tito’s clique.

2. Under the new circumstances the leaders of the CP of Greece took the right step, discarding the adventurist “tactics of continued offensive whatever it takes”, that would have inevitably led to loss of cadres, and assuming the retreat tactics that allowed the cadres to be taken away from the blow and preserved for the future battles.

3. In spite of the military successes, the political and economic situation of the monarchic fascism remains strained. The people’s movement, which increased in 1949, will grow due to the economic crisis and political discords within the fascist camp, and will further aggravate the difficulties faced by the ruling classes and the monarchic fascism.

4. Greece is being sold to the Americans, who have turned the country into a military base against the Soviet Union and the countries of people’s democracies, increases anxiety of the people masses who do not want war.

5. In view of the above the CP of Greece must:

a) cease all armed operations, preserving small partisan detachments only as a means for exerting pressure on the monarchic fascism, so that the most democratic possible appeasement in the country be reached basing on the Soviet Government’s proposals, and also in those parts of the country where withdrawal of DAG detachments would cause serious difficulties (Peloponnese, the islands);

b) shift the focus of its work on organising and leading the economic and political struggle of all groups of the working people. Resting upon the strong illegal party organisation, the CP of Greece should use all legal means (co-operatives, trade unions, press, all kinds of ‘societies’, elected political organisations in the country) and create new ones to mobilise the masses, to organise the masses, and to direct their political and economic actions;

c) the CP of Greece, based on the programme of struggle for independence and democratisation of Greece, should set up a wide democratic bloc, where all those supporting this broad programme of Greece’s democratic development will be involved;

d) the CP of Greece should use the existing capacities to publish a legal, periodical and popular political newspaper in Athens;

e) the CP of Greece should train and send to larger cities a number of party cadres to strengthen and restore local party organisations and to ensure support for the new course;

f) the CP of Greece should deploy a broad ideological, political and organisational work within the DAG detachments that are withdrawn from the country. The CP of Greece should ensure further military training and development of officers and soldiers, as well as their party education and improving their political and ideological level.

6. Correctly mastering and implementing the change in the party’s policy under the circumstances characterised by the crisis of the monarchic fascism, growing problems within the imperialist camp, as well as strengthening of peace forces, democracy, and socialism all over the world, will give us the opportunity to quickly consolidate and deploy the people’s revolutionary movement in Greece in future.

[RSASPH, f. 17, inv. 166, file 807, pp. 18-19]

Keywords: Greece

1. The ruling group of senior Politburo members closest to Stalin which some historians call "de facto Politburo" (Yoram Gorlizki, Oleg Khlevniuk. Cold Peace. Stalin and the Soviet Ruling Circle, 1945-1953. Oxford University Press, 2004,p.49). In 1949 in addition to Stalin himself it included Beria, Bulganin, Kaganovich, Malenkov, Mikoyan, Molotov and Voznesensky. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. Fighting at Vitsi and Grammos (08-30.08.1949) – the critical battle in the concluding stage of the civil war in Greece in which government forces won a major strategic victory (Operation Pyrsos) that had threatened the lines of communication of the forces of DAG on the Greco-Albanian border. This necessitated the evacuation of the remaining partisan forces, and the Albanian Government stopped supplying materiel to the Greek communists. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)