

A/synechia

A Short Outline of the Life of Comrade Yannis Hotzeas

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Yannis Hotzeas was born in Koroni (southern Peloponnese) in 1930.

At the age of 11, he establishes the first contacts with the resistance against the nazi occupation. In 1943 he goes to Athens and becomes member of EPON, the youth organization of the EAM (National Liberation Front). The next year he becomes member of the KKE (Communist Party), following an exceptional decision of the Party leadership, because of his young age. Since this moment, he participates at special actions, reserved for the most consolidated members of the Party. He plays an important role at all the confrontations with the nazis and their collaborators in the eastern neighbourhoods of Athens, giving great courage to the people. Those who are still alive today, always remember the courage and the enthusiasm of "Aristides", as they knew him then.

During December 1944, he actively participates at the heroic struggle of the people of Athens against the collaborators and the new occupation forces, the english imperialists. After the defeat of the movement in Athens, he retreats with the guerrilla forces, but soon the Party sends him back to Athens. During the period of white terror (1945-1946) he is repeatedly arrested and tortured by the gendarmerie and the english army. During the 1st Congress of the EPON (1946), his action is mentioned in the report of the Central Council as an example of successful struggle against terror.

He is arrested once more in 1947, and there starts a ten years long period of confinement in concentration camps and in exile. Among other places, he is sent also to Makronissos (Syrma), the most cruel concentration camp, where scientific methods of torture and psychological war had been applied for the first time on massive scale against communist and progressive militants. He belonged to a small minority of Party militants who never gave up at Makronissos, despite the unimaginable tortures they endured; as the communists said at that times, "in this minority were included the dead, the crazy, the mutilated, and some who were in a little better health". Yannis Hotzeas will, indeed, suffer during his whole life by the tortures of Makronissos.

During those ten years, he was one of the few who formulated a strong dissent with the erroneous line followed by the movement up to 1947. He expressed to the leadership his criticism, always following the Party rules.

Because of this dissent, the revisionists expected that he will support their coup against the leadership and the principles of the Party. But he, exiled at Ai-Stratis, actively participates to the resistance of the exiled communists against the first steps of the revisionist turn of KKE (1955). He openly opposes the decisions of the so-called “6th Plenum of KKE”, during which the CPSU revisionists arbitrarily impose their line on the greek communist movement. He is released in 1958 and he meets with a continuous attempt of marginalization by EDA, the legal left-wing party, because of his political opinions. The same “reception” is reserved to all the communist militants who struggle against the revisionist turn. The revisionists are trying to calumniate him and to make hard his living conditions. But all these who collaborate with him within EDA during those years are won over by his courage and principled attitude. His interventions at Party conferences are enthusiastically welcomed by the militants. He plays a leading role in the confrontation with the revisionists in the interior of EDA.

The period 1960-1965 is marked by the development of the people’s struggles. During those years, the period of submission of the greek left-wing movement to the aims of the liberal bourgeoisie starts. On the international level, the CPSU revisionists have secured their positions and start their attack against the CP of China and the other Parties who do not follow their line. Under those conditions, the promotion of a different policy is imposed. Yannis Hotzeas plays a decisive role in the formation and regroupment of the forces which tried to meet with the duties of that period.

Since 1960, he translates and publishes important texts of the Big Debate, as well as the “History of the CP of China”. He is expelled from EDA. In 1964 the formation of an independent marxist-leninist organization is decided, and the publication of the review “Anagennisi” (Revival) starts. In early 1967, the publication of the journal “Laikos Dromos” (The People’s Road) starts, and the organization SPAK (Consistent Political Left Organization) is constituted. Yannis Hotzeas participates in a decisive way at the elaboration of the general line which constituted the political and ideological base of the marxist-leninist movement in our country. He is also writing articles for the review and the journal and he is active in the everyday political work.

The US-led military fascist coup of 21.4.1967 comes in a moment that the organization was in a critical phase of its course, with controversial aspects, but also with a defined political line. Now its activity continues under more difficult conditions. Yannis Hotzeas stays in Greece, goes underground and guides the organization, which got the name OMLE (Organization of Marxists Leninists of Greece). In 1967-1968 the organization publishes an illegal fortnightly bulletin, containing political analysis and ideological interventions. Since November 1968, the publication of the illegal journal “Proletariaki Simea” (Proletarian Flag) starts. The years 1967-1969 the foundations of the ideological, political and organizational construction of OMLE are set. Yannis Hotzeas works for the ideological - political orientation of the

organization and for the consolidation of its organizational construction. But in September 1969 he is arrested by the fascist regime and he is confined in the exile camp of Leros. From his exile, he sends texts with political recommendation and theoretical, political and ideological positions to the Politburo of the organization, which is based outside Greece.

The period 1967-1969 was the only one during which Yannis Hotzeas was the sole responsible for the guidance of the organization. During that period: the foundations for the essential construction of the marxist-leninist organization were set; an underground mechanism was quickly formed and the difficult situation immediately after the imposition of the dictatorship was overcome; clear and concrete recommendations have been given on what must be done in case of arrest of the direction; the foundations of the development of the movement of greek communists living in Western Europe were set and contacts have been made with the greek marxist-leninists living in Eastern Europe and in the USSR; all these constitute one of the most important contributions of Yannis Hotzeas to the greek marxist-leninist movement. During the same period, he also writes several basic texts. He is released in 1972 and he returns to Athens. Despite his efforts, he cannot establish contact with the organization. He is arrested once more after the revolt of November 1973. He was imprisoned at the Police School of Boyati, and then exiled at the island of Youra. He is liberated after the political change of 1974.

Since the early seventies, Yannis Hotzeas is not playing any leading role in the organization. The crisis of 1971-74 on the level of the direction leads to the refutation of previous decisions and orientations of the organization. Those developments continue during and after the political change of 1974, and the situation of the organization does not correspond with the general conditions of the movement's development, nor with the militant disposition of the important forces influenced by the OMLE. When Yannis Hotzeas tries to put on the table the question of what happened after 1970, he meets the collective refusal of the new direction to discuss anything concerning this period, as well as the line which must be followed in the new conditions. Instead, what prevails is: the suivism; the efforts to be "recognized by the international centres of the m-l movement"; the mimicry and the copying of the attitude of the dominating political parties; the official ceremonies; the unconcern for the correspondence between the form and the content; the waste of forces in disorienting activities. Since 1975, Yannis Hotzeas is not member of any organ of direction.

During the factionist adventure of the years 1974-1976 (concluded with the withdrawal of the opportunist unprincipled fraction which created the "ML KKE"), he provides the organization with positions concerning the general orientation which must be followed and the actual ideological and political questions; he is trying, in this way, to preserve anything that can be saved from the unprincipled conflict.

After the constitution of the KKE (m-l) [Communist Party of Greece (marxist-leninist)], he declares his support to the "new birth" and he puts himself in the disposition of the Party. But in this new period as well, he is kept away from the direction. Secondary duties are given to him, and his opinion

is occasionally requested. Without any explanations, an “exclusion zone” has been created around him, and his positions are used only after being adjusted within the measures of the then responsible.

It is once more a complex period on international and national level. In Europe and in Greece there is a retreat of the communist ideas, while new currents (like the Italian “Autonomia”) are gaining influence. Yannis Hotzeas translates the unpublished, in Greece, texts of Marx (Grundrisse, etc.), and writes an important text on the Autonomia. Despite the exclusion regime imposed to him, the CC of the KKE (m-l) asks from him to help the preparation of the 2nd Congress of the Party. Yannis Hotzeas writes, indeed, the basic texts of the CC Positions, as well as the responsive texts of the CC during the preparatory works of the 2nd Congress. Unfortunately, once more his texts have being readjusted, modified, applauded, but not supported during the Congress. The lapse from the ideological and political positions formulated by Yannis Hotzeas during the whole period from 1965 up to 1980 was the cause -in our opinion- for the liquidating course of the first stage of the m-l movement in our country.

The critical “link” from which depended a new effort, was the ideological one, in the sense that a deep and wide work should be undertaken in order to give an answer to the basic problems. This was the unique road in order to overcome the liquidation and set the basements of a new start. And, as always, Yannis Hotzeas started working full blast. For over a decade, he studied, wrote and translated an enormous material concerning the capitalist crisis and the restructuration. He studied, wrote and translated a huge material on the communist movement and the transitional societies. He wrote and discussed the basic texts which have been published in the publications of A/synechia. He also wrote several programmatic texts that are still in use in the discussion of the organization. He always was disposed to explain his positions and texts and to advise; he supported and helped in all the ways the effort of A/synechia, in which he participated in a decisive way.

During the last months of his life, wounded by the cancer and under extremely difficult conditions, he dictated the text of the critical assessment of the m-l movement in Greece. His last complaint was that he was no more in position to help. He seemed not to forgive himself for getting out of the line. He passed away on 22 October 1994.

Yannis Hotzeas was one of the most important figures of the marxist-leninist movement. He participated with self-denial, as thousands of communists, in the struggles of our people during the critical period of 1940- 1950 and of the following years. He opposed, together with thousands of militants, the revisionist betrayal. Since the sixties, he played a leading role in the ideological and political formation of the marxist-leninist movement of our country. Because of his struggles, he suffered in the dungeons of the reaction, but he never yielded, he never lost his faith to the cause of communism.

Yannis Hotzeas was a great man, an authentic communist, who could associate the general historic experience and lessons with the needs of the communist movement. He managed, during all the difficult periods, to set up a correct orientation and to open perspectives. The adventure that led to

the liquidation of the m-l movement in our country during the early eighties was a result, in a great extent, of the abandonment of the basic principles and of the orientating lines formulated by Yannis Hotzeas when he played a leading role.

As an authentic communist, he always expressed his opinion following the principles and the rules. He never compromised in matters of principles, and he struggled against duplicity with all his forces. That is why he faced, besides the revisionist calumination, several attacks by the vehicles of duplicity within the m-l movement. But, despite the attacks perpetrated against him by the revisionists and others, he was much loved by the simple people and by his comrades.

The organization A/synechia owes a lot to him. Our political and ideological formation was defined by the enormous work he undertook during the eighties. We honour the memory of Comrade Yannis Hotzeas by continuing the struggle for the construction of the Communist Organization in Greece. His work and his life are inspiring our struggles. He lives for ever in our hearts, in the hearts of all the sincere progressive people of our country.