

on a new moral direction and a healthy economy. But the economy seems now worse off: investment incentives proved uninspiring, the inflation rate barely changed from 25 percent and the 1982 unemployment of 8 percent doubled last year's figure. Planning for the "socialist future" of an impatient nation had produced effects seen as symbolic or peripheral. Moreover, the promise of a meritocratic society was contradicted by the suspicion that Pasok had politicized the state apparatus, precluding non-Pasokers from influence and power. Papandreou was seen as ruling with a centralized fist, intolerant of internal opposition in a party defined by conflicting ideological elements, from mild liberalism to old-fashioned Marxism. Also, a sense of amateurist improvisation has often characterized the socialist administration.

Pasok and opposition

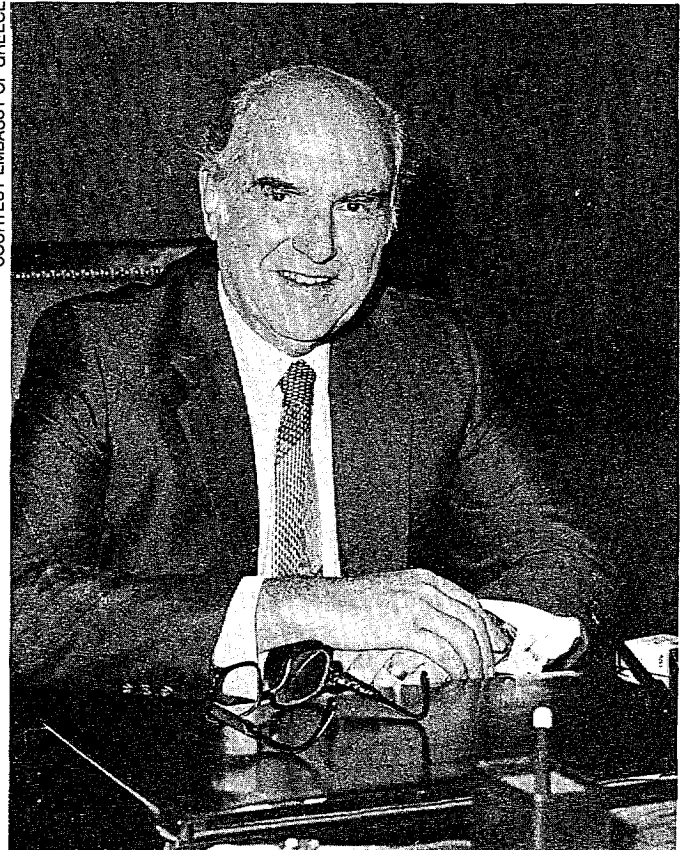
"New Democracy" held to its 1981 strength despite its own internal problems, such as the insecure leadership of Evangelos Averoff (Karamanlis' successor), and prospects of dissension. Pasok's loss was the KKE's gain. It also seems as if Pasok could not count on the new electors who emerged after lowering the voting age to eighteen. Amounting to 450,000 in an electorate of 7,000,000, these voters might facilitate the Communist Party's drive to hold the balance of power in the future, if the election pattern in Greek universities is any guide and if the career prospects of high school graduates remain what they now are. In any event, Papandreou's policies did not make any electoral inroads in the right and caused problems with his left. Thus while no grand failure can reasonably be ascribed to his first year in power — especially in view of international circumstances and the length of his rule — the voters' response may amount to a call for Pasok to show its real colors: reformist or radical? Socialist or social-democratic? Pro-West or not?

To be sure, while the youths' leftist political inclinations may be emphasized, the Communists' strength need not be exaggerated. Similar performances are not atypical for the Communist Party of Greece in most local elections. But Papandreou's first dilemma has already emerged: should he attempt to appease the left, including the radicalized youth, or could he afford to see them under the Communist aegis? Put another way, should Papandreou attempt to enforce his presumed vision of "change" in an environment of productive hesitation (tantamount to stagnation), or should he follow his present moderate course?

It would seem obvious that a lot depends on the precise nature of Papandreou's vision and on his capacity to resist the temptations of short-run political expediency. His 1981 electoral success must be attributed to his ability to avoid the specification of concrete policy, which entailed the attraction of the Centrist vote beyond that of the moderate left. It now seems that, in a framework of political volatility, any serious deterioration of the economy, to be placed at Pasok's doorstep, will inflate the support for both the Right and the Communist Left. In such a case, it will follow that neither major party (Pasok or New Democracy) could produce an independent majority, hence the Communists will hold the balance of power. Had general elections been held at the time of the recent municipal results, the Right would have received around 125 seats, Pasok would have dropped to around 125, and the KKE could have reached 50 seats in a 300-seat parliament. (This would compare with 115, 172 and 13 respectively in the present

chamber.) In the local voting Papandreou had collaborated widely with the KKE to gain 173 of the 276 cities and towns. A similar collaboration in the national elections has been resisted in the past: by him on ideological grounds, and by the Communist Party of Greece, because of their distrust of him personally and his role in undermining Communist support. (Hence a Communist folk story has it that Papandreou is "an American [perhaps CIA] agent.") And yet, as the recent local elections demonstrate, the Communist left can orchestrate "democratic alliances" with Pasok,

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Prime Minister Andreas Papandreou

whenever threatened by the Right. Under future economic failure or pressure from his party's rank and file (clearly more anti-Right than anti-Left), Papandreou might be forced to form a popular front, introducing adventurous polarization in the country.

Papandreou's options

And yet, if only from the standpoint of strategic prudence, it seems wiser for Papandreou to "sacrifice" his left, in order to solidify his centrist and moderate socialist supporters. On the assumption that the core of the 1981 "undecided" did not belong to Pasok ideologically but were attracted to it by its newly-found realism and moderation, any other course would certainly entail sending these voters to the arms of the Right. This likelihood is increased by the fact that a new Centrist party seems in the offing, as indicated by widespread discussions in Athens last summer. Such a formation would draw on the disaffected Pasok parliamentarians and the "left" of "New Democracy." It could also collaborate with the party of Democratic Socialism (Kodeso), whose popular support seems to hover around 4 percent. In an inconclusive general election (which must be held in the next three years), this new party could well emerge the largest party, ahead of the old "New