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The Transition of Panhellenic Socialist Movement (PASOK) from a Euroscepticist Party into European Social- Democratic Party between 1974 and 1987

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Abstract

Eurosceptic rhetoric that PASOK had been expressing for years and had been constantly using for its confrontation with right-wing opponents (*Nea Dimokratia*). The fall of the junta and the return of Constantine Karamanlis is basically the starting point for PASOK's official expression of hard Euroscepticism. PASOK, as a genuine socialist party, rejected any form of participation in Western-style organizations and was therefore a major opponent against the European idea and European policy of Greece. Initially the party believed that European Integration could only harm the already fragile Greek economy and lead it to a further recession. PASOK took office for the first time in 1981 with the Greek economy presenting structural problems such as unemployment and stagnation. In addition to economic problems the government had to cope with the participation in the European institutions, which had emerged as a consequence of the proposed accession to the EEC by the previous government. Even before taking up duties, PASOK began to revise its political attitude towards the EEC, and it was not talking about leaving anymore. Yet, it opted for a special relationship. The prospect of taking power along with the tension that accompanied this prospect, transformed and evolved PASOK into a different party with genuine pro-European characteristics. The purpose of this paper is to indicate that as the probability for PASOK to take over the country's governance increased, a qualitative change of Euroscepticism from hard to moderate (1977-81) took place. In fact, friction with government power turned it into a pro-European party (1981-89). This analysis will examine specific events that played a role in shaping both governmental and party preferences during the period under consideration. Finally, an important point will be to draw critical conclusions about the reasons why PASOK revised its European ideas and transformed itself into a social-democratic party with a strong unifying factor up to date.

Keywords: Euroscepticism, PASOK, Euroscepticist Party, Greek Politics



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1. Introduction

Since its creation, PASOK had managed to have fanatic supporters and sworn enemies. Beyond the ideological differences that arose, the movement had for years included in its portfolio an issue that both divided and constituted that capable condition that eventually became necessary for the conversion of the classic left-right-wing dipole. That was the Eurosceptic rhetoric that PASOK had been expressing for years and had been constantly using in its confrontation with the right-wing “New Democracy”.

The fall of the junta and the return of Constantine Karamanlis was basically the starting point for PASOK's official expression of tough Euroscepticism. PASOK, as a genuine socialist party, rejected all forms of participation in western-type organizations and was therefore a major adversary of the European idea and policy of the country. Its stance was that European Integration could only harm the already fragile Greek economy and lead it to a further recession and lack of competitiveness.

PASOK took office for the first time in 1981. Greece was facing structural problems at that time, such as unemployment and stagnant inflation. In addition to the economy, the government had to cope with the involvement in the European institutions, which emerged as a result of the proposed accession to the EEC by the previous government. Even before taking up duties, the movement began to revise its political attitude towards the EEC, and did not speak for an exit anymore but rather, for a special relationship. The prospect of taking power along with the friction which came with it transformed and evolved PASOK into a different party with clear pro-European characteristics. The point of final transformation was set in 1987 with the vote on the Single European Act.

The purpose of this paper is to show that as the probability for PASOK to take over the country's governance increased, a qualitative change of Euroscepticism from hard to moderate (77-81) was observed. Friction with governmental power turned it into a pro-European party (81-89). This research will take place through the analysis of specific events that played a major role in shaping both governmental and party preferences during the period under consideration, as well as the reversal of the position of Andreas Papandreou. Finally, an important point will be to draw critical conclusions about the reasons for which PASOK revised its European ideas and transformed into a modern social-democratic party with a strong unifying factor.

2. The Period of Quest: From Centre Union to PAK.

It would be an oversight not to mention the head of the movement in relation to his choices both as a minister in the Centre Union as well as the president of PASOK. It is not a result of imaginative obsession. Yet, this is the only way to explain Papandreou's tactics towards European integration. Firstly, it should be understood that PASOK's political acts were directly connected to its leader. Andreas Papandreou was the man determining every political decision taken by the party, in the same way he could grip the audience until his last day.

In the beginning of 1960s Andreas Papandreou had a differentiated position towards European integration in relation to the European-friendly position of the Centre Union. Nevertheless, Papandreou seemed to be coming in terms with the accession and took a public stance without being firmly keen on European integration (Verney, 2006: 177).

In fact, the European Community was built on the principle of eliminating the possibilities for war. Born and raised as an American, Andreas Papandreou was not familiar with and could not embrace this principle. His hesitation towards Europe was strongly affected by his idea of the world. He believed that such an attempt would not prosper because of the USA which would relegate and eventually devour it.

Furthermore, Papandreou thought that Communism was not a systemic danger. However, the right-wing parties and their mechanisms - which had afflicted democracy – were a crucial danger. Andreas Papandreou did not consider Europe as an institution of political substance but as a financial solution and tool for economic growth resulting to social justice, benefiting at the same time the standards of living. These were of equal importance as he later realized. In this way, he viewed EEC as a challenging issue in terms of revitalization of the Greek economy and public institutions (Verney, 2006:178). However, he declared that the accession could lead the economy of Greece to a sectoral orientation towards agriculture and tourism, making it vulnerable and potentially underdeveloped.

The starting point of Andreas Papandreou harsh anti- European turn was the “*Iouliana*”¹. It was believed that the fall of George Papandreou government was an act of foreign interference. Consequently, from that time on, Papandreou decided to change his views towards the position of Greece in the world, adopting a view revolving around national independence with simultaneous national sovereignty. Papandreou visualized a journey towards independence away from foreign authority which – he believed- would only lead to subjugation. In his eyes, Greece as an independent state should not be trapped into any Union or bloc. It should take advantage of any strings of cultural and financial conciliation with any country that would benefit it. He even believed in the autonomous management of fundamental economic fields. The above two perspectives did not come in terms with the contract with EEC. Still, in this specific period Papandreou was not against the connection, but rather, against its terms and deadlines.

The Coup of 21st April 1967 was the starting point of Andreas Papandreou’s aversion to the West. He claimed that it was an outcome of American interference to another sovereign country, as the history had repeatedly shown, in order to indirectly take control over a strategically and geographically important area. On the contrary, he did not hold Europe co-responsible of this attitude something which was proved later on. He therefore founded the Panhellenic Liberation Movement (PAK). According to its founding declaration, Panhellenic Liberation Movement was founded in order “to be the center of democratic resistance in Greece”. Its duty was defined as “the coordination of resistance in Greece” and its aim was “the abolition of junta and the establishment of genuine democratic mechanisms capable to restore complete and unconditional sovereignty of the people to a more permanent and stable basis” (PAK, 1968). PAK early warned the European governments that they had to separate themselves from American hegemony. Otherwise, there would be a danger for all free European institutions to bend to totalitarianism (Verney, 2006:181). PAK requested that if America truly wished to help Greece lead a democratic ‘life’ it should prevent the country from entering NATO, something that never happened.

During that period, Papandreou could not be characterized as a social-democrat, not even a radical, something which had as a result his conflict with the socialist international. Papandreou at the same time seemed to be closely adjacent to theories similar to dependence. He identified the EEC –the small capitalistic metropolis- as the hub of the grand capitalistic metropolis, namely the USA (Verney, 1989:61-67). It turns out that 1972 was the year when Andreas Papandreou was defined as a rigid Eurosceptic. According to him, dictatorships around the world were a capstone to capitalism, and the struggle against it was global. Dependence theory was his basis. According to this theory, the outflow resources of a

¹ The terms Apostasia (Greek: Αποστασία, "Apostasy") or Iouliana (Greek: Ιουλιανά, "July events") or the Royal Coup (Greek: Το Βασιλικό Πραξικόπημα Το Vasiliko Praxikopima) are used to describe the political crisis in Greece that centred on the resignation, on 15 July 1965, of Prime Minister Georgios Papandreou and the appointment, by King Constantine II, of successive prime ministers from Papandreou's own party, the Center Union, to replace him. Those defectors from the Center Union were branded, by Papandreou's sympathisers, as the Apostates ("renegades"). The Apostasia heralded a prolonged period of political instability, which weakened the fragile post-Civil War order and ultimately led to the establishment of a military regime in 1967.

periphery of impoverished and underdeveloped countries help enrich a selected few group of wealthy ones (Martinussen, 1997). Therefore the construction of the class struggle takes place in a worldwide scale and the hegemonic prevalence of the central-wealthy-countries derives from the exploitable periphery. In order for the exploitation to be fruitful it is fundamental to manipulate democracy. Papandreou, having embraced this view, realized that dictatorship was both a strategic and military act, directed though, to financial exploitation of the country (Verney, 2006:183). Thus, the relationship with the Metropolitan EEC evolved into a game of negative sum for the country, making it the crown of foreign capital. In conclusion, he believed that after the Junta's fall and the restoration of democracy, Greece would have to reconsider its relationship with the EEC and their connection.

3. From Foundation to Government 1974-1981

Panhellenic Socialistic Movement (PASOK) was founded in 3rd September 1974 and immediately made clear –yet from discussions prior to its founding declaration- that it attempted to create something new, willing to surpass any obstacle of the past, creating a new plan for Greece that would be emancipated from its woeful past taking the place it deserved in the world.

In its founding declaration, it provides a clear picture of the policy to be followed. Its main objective was the four-fold National Independence, Popular Sovereignty, Social Liberation and Democratic Process (PASOK, 1974). PASOK screamed out loudly that the undemocratic past of the country was responsible for the tragedy of Cyprus in 1974². Therefore, the participation in any Western organization should be abandoned, because, as PASOK argued, Greece would become part of the World Capitalist system, and this relationship would be transformed for Greece as a game of negative sum. On the contrary, PASOK supported its potential political power in an autonomous and independent foreign policy that would make the country's visibility more global.

The relationship with EC in turn, was a matter of paramount importance for the country. The grassroots foundation of PASOK forced it to take such positions over time in order to support its interests. PASOK aimed to untie the country from foreign dependence and redistribute wealth and social justice. For these reasons, it refused both the prospect of membership and a conditional integration as such an act would have been the linkage with International Capitalism and there would come in effect the negative outcomes for the country that were mentioned above. PASOK's membership at that time was the process that would transform the country into a province of the EEC and a "NATO satellite", which contradicted the beloved theories of dependence of that era.

It is therefore obvious that there was a consistency in the founder's theoretical background and in the creation of the party in these standards. Papandreou had put forward an alternative proposal from what had been heard so far in the country. He did not believe in Europeanism, or in Communism. He accepted the Marxist analysis of events, as he asserted, but without being dogmatic. He asked for a truly independent Greece that would seek its fate with the neighboring countries of the region as well as with others who perceived the world with a similar worldview.

In the 1977 elections PASOK gained a satisfactory percentage and filled it with optimism for the future. Prior to election, however, PASOK maintained the stance that it had since its foundation (Smaragdis, 1977) The new version of Greece that Papandreou visualized was not that of monopoly, capital or of mediators, but a country that could stand on its own.

² Following the attempt of a coup in Cyprus in 1974 by the Greek dictators, there was a Turkish invasion and illegal occupation of the North part of the island in order to protect the Turkish-Cypriot minority.

In addition, in 1980, a significant congress of the socialist parties of Southern Europe took place in Corfu, suggesting much about Papandreou's philosophy. This is where Mario Soares (Portugal), Felipe Gonzalez (Spain), Bettino Craxi (Italy) and Henri (France on behalf of Mitterrand) met. Several important issues were discussed and this was a satisfying confirmatory move on how Andreas Papandreou viewed the future of Greece. Greece's prospects lied in a regional alliance and, if possible, socialist, an alliance having a common destiny with countries such as Greece.

PASOK, therefore, was liberated from hesitations and perhaps sometimes ignoring economic elements (such as trade), believed in a third way for the country. A way that entailed a hard stance towards the EEC. This logic went down in the pre-election period of 1981 and in that period the rhetoric against the EEC was used as the main opposition weapon against Constantine Karamanlis who considered membership in the EEC as the "New Great Idea". However, this election period was the turning point for Andreas Papandreou's steady European turn. His electoral positions were directed against the EEC but in a more gentle way. They were structured in such a way, so that he could later use the announcements to justify his political changes.

Papandreou was trying to rally around PASOK all unprivileged classes. Farmers, students and others had a leading role. He managed to persuade the people that the relationship with the European Community would be a detrimental relationship for Greece and that Constantine Karamanlis attempted to westernize the country not in terms of structures, but in relation to its orientation. Through heavily charged and populist speeches, Papandreou managed to seduce the hearts of voters and win their vote even if many of the things he said were not always at their best interest. The EEC became the "scapegoat" for all the suffering of the Greek peasantry, the Greek economy and, in general, all the anti-social policy implementation of the previous governments. Papandreou's speech was full of symbolisms about weak Greece and the powerful Europe that should be support the weak countries of the periphery. He was also strongly rebellious, as the electoral struggle with "New Democracy" (ND) demanded, and often acquired a character of introversion for the country, reaching the limits of nationalism.

PASOK, which, since its creation, had to compromise three mainstream trends - remaining center joints, EAM militants³, modernists - was now quite complex and attracted voters who had never voted for a party like this before. It rallied around everyone who seemed to be afraid of the competition involved in a free trade area. Papandreou, having fully endorsed the theories of dependence and the logic of "Third Road to Socialism," was deeply convinced that Greece should set its own national path of "self-sufficient economic and political development." However, he had already accepted the *fait accompli* of the accession in the European Community and that this battle would be given "within the institutions of the EEC". Thus, he recognized the reality of membership, and proposed that the people should decide by "referendum" on the country's remaining or not in the EEC. This act can be explained in two ways. On the one hand, he fulfilled his constitutional promises and promised real power to the people, but on the other hand, the resourceful Papandreou had already understood that membership was a non-return path and that it would be more beneficial both for him and his party to try to benefit from this relationship than to pursue its unsuccessful collapse.

PASOK's political speech focused mainly on the issue of national independence and autonomy of the country towards foreign decision-makers. PASOK's commitment to "self-sustaining economic and social development" and the slogan "Greece to the Greeks" had a particular impact on the average Greek voter, who had experienced the seven-year deviation from the democratic system as a foreign intervention

³ Was the military arm of the left-wing National Liberation Front (EAM) during the period of the Greek Resistance until February 1945, then during the Greek Civil War.

that decreased the economic and social cohesion of Greece. The theory of dependence was the centerpiece of PASOK's policy. According to this, Greece as a country of the region of capitalism would have to shake off the imperialist yoke and not to establish relations with the metropolitan centers of Western Europe. With its pre-election controversial charm, PASOK managed to win the elections.

4. People in Power. The Complete European-friendly Mutation of PASOK

PASOK achieved a significant victory in 1981's elections. This was very important for two reasons. Firstly, it clearly won "the Right" and its leader, Konstantinos Karamanlis, who, for many years was an exceptional leader for the average Greek. At the same time, it was the first time throughout Greek history when a socialist government was democratically elected.

In the declaration of intent of the government of 1981, PASOK declared that it was not going to pull out from EEC. People were going to decide through the process of a referendum. However, it was strongly and skillfully stressed that the President of the Republic of Greece would have the last word. PASOK chose to improve the integration terms and to simultaneously influence the political shaping of European Community itself (PASOK, 1974). Yet, it did not ask for a referendum in the fear of rift with the President of the Republic.

Earlier, during the first contact with the European Community's institutions, PASOK had decided that pulling out, would entail a huge cost for Greece, a modification of its terms though, would be favorable. Therefore, the government submitted a declaration to the General Affairs Council concerning the problems of the Greek economy. The declaration even went further to suggestions on politics for the European Community "in order to bridge the peripheral inequalities and reinforce the countries of the southern Europe" (Ioakeimides, 1988).

Moreover, at the London European Council, one month after the electoral victory in 1981, Prime Minister Andreas Papandreou spoke about the reorganization of the European Community and the future position of Greece. In this Council, in short, Greece's position in the European Community was first defined: seeking a special status within the wider context of a more radical restructuring of the relations between the European North and South (Ioakeimides, 1988:318-324).

The next important and perhaps decisive point for Papandreou's turn was the famous memorandum submitted by the Greek side to the EEC in March 1982. Through this PASOK sought (Ioakeimides, 1988:318 & Greek Government, 1982):

- i. Acknowledgment of the specific features of Greek economy.
- ii. Broadening and activation of the financial instruments for the reinforcement of the Greek economy.
- iii. Acknowledgement of a necessary and specified time of exclusion from the Competition Rules of the European Community.

The Integrated Mediterranean Programs are considered to be the response to MOU. Through them, the European Union accepted some of the demands of the Memorandum. It financed these regions and recognized the Mediterranean peculiarity. It also placed special emphasis on the Greek peculiarity. According to Ioakeimides, in the Greek case, European Community's action was intended to be more extensive and more intense than in the other Mediterranean regions (Ioakeimides, 320-327).

Negotiation of IMPs is considered a success for PASOK as it managed to win funding for the country. It was also the first fact that made PASOK realize that the relationship with the EEC could be beneficial and that it ultimately was not the "anthropomorphic capitalist monster" that it had been previously described.

Moreover, in 1983 Greece was the first to take over the presidency. This presidency was neither successful nor unsuccessful as the Greek side had managed to include the IMPs in its conclusions.

Another important event for PASOK was the Spinelli project, which was essentially the "Draft Treaty establishing the European Union", which was voted in 1984. In this vote, PASOK's MPs abstained. This attitude was the logical continuation of the debate that began in 1983 on the plan for European Political Cooperation (EPC) strengthening, to which PASOK strongly resisted, as it was in conflict with its constitutional philosophy, which proposed the idea of an independent and proud foreign policy. This idea was supported by Papandreou through controversial visits by foreign ambiguous leaders such as Muammar Gaddafi and Yasser Arafat. Nevertheless, some different approaches had emerged since then, such as that of Minister of Agriculture Kostas Simitis, who followed a more European policy based on the principles of modernization. A policy that was somewhat distant from the populism and anti-Europeanization stances of the rest of the government.

In 1985, PASOK took office for a second term, re-winning ND and renewing its contract with the people. Greece said the first "No" to the European Community, along with Britain and Denmark, in the convergence proposal for an Intergovernmental Conference to revise the treaty. The main controversy of the Greek side was raised in relation to the restriction of unanimity in the decision-making process. This would in fact be the ultimate act of Euroskepticism of PASOK government.

The next scene was celebrated in a festive by PASOK towards the EEC. The process of ratification by the Greek Parliament of the Treaty of Accession of Spain and Portugal turned into a glorification of the European Idea, an idea of integration and prosperity for PASOK. PASOK and ND under a context of euphoria and super-optimism were both in favor of joining the treaty with all their forces. As far as PASOK was concerned, it was officially recognized that there were negative consequences from EEC membership and, that in general, the balance of the relationship was negative, but the cost of a possible withdrawal would be untenable.

In January 1987 the Greek Parliament voted for the Single European Act (SEA). In Greece, unlike in other countries like Ireland, few issues were raised - both substantively and procedurally - during the parliamentary debate on the bill, since the majority of political parties, other than the Communist Party, were in favor of the ratification of the SEA (Passas and Loverdos, 1988).

In the same month, the Internal Market issue was discussed by the Greek Parliament. PASOK evolved into a warm supporter of this idea. There were cases of PASOK ministers who supported in their speeches that eventually the option for joining the EEC would justify Karamanlis. This attitude of PASOK is linked with the addition of the chapter on economic and social cohesion in the Single European Act as well as in the role of the Structural Funds (Tsoukalis, 2004)

PASOK had at this point shut off its anti-European beliefs and transformed into a firm European force. Up until that moment, PASOK had undergone changes as a party leaving behind radical approaches of older times, laying down a more European-friendly pathway. From 1988 and on Greece was one of those who strongly endorsed not only partial integration, but even the federalization of the EU.

4. Conclusions

If it is of any interest to analyze Andreas Papandreou's European course during the first years of the movement, there should be given an emphasis to the reasons that made him change his way of thinking. It is of great importance to mention whether his acts were coherent or a result of opportunism and vanity for

power and prominence. The answer to this question is crystal clear. There were specific reasons that made Andreas Papandreou change his way of acting.

i. The cost of a possible exit from the EEC would be much greater than staying within it. This argument was used too many times in the political speech of the party. It was the party that was “the guardian” of Greece, it was the party that was prepared to violate its constitutional principles for the country's interests. The party also included in its rhetoric the holding of a referendum, giving the sovereign people a choice, knowing at the same time that the President of the Republic would not approve such an action and that the party itself would not resort to it in fear of the conflict. Moreover, a possible withdrawal would negatively affect the social groups that constituted PASOK's main electoral reservoir, such as farmers.

ii. Andreas Papandreou quickly realized that the relationship with the EEC could be profitable for the country. This view was also transferred to the public opinion due to its inputs. The Mediterranean Integrated Programs offered the country a strong source of funding that temporarily relieved the unprivileged. Public opinion, of course, backed up PASOK, but its acceptance was crucial for the continuation of this political strategy. The public opinion also considered that the situation in the European Community had changed. Negotiations brought funds to the country and this was a crucial financial benefit.

iii. Papandreou was clearly showing a turn, but not on his own. The friction with the European mechanisms made him realize that there were democratic structures and processes, and that even the views of a small country like Greece could be heard, and affect policy making.

iv. Total change of stance can also be attributed to increasing interdependence. People increasingly tend to depend on each other, and the re-placement of Greece in the world could no longer be based on the logic of theories of dependence. So a redefinition had to be made to the modern facts and conditions that preceded the previous decade.

Finally, PASOK was a typical example of the Taggart & Szczerbiak assumption that a ruling party could not be Eurosceptic. The issue of the EEC was used by the opposition parties as a cohesive tool for attracting voters. This is also confirmed by the working hypothesis of the present study, which considers that PASOK initially exhibited Eurosceptic tendencies while in a non-governmental position, and during its governmental term, its pro-European dynamics rapidly increased, making it pro-European for the rest of its political history. PASOK is not a unique example of such a mutation, as similar parties in Western Europe have shown the same trend, such as the British Labor Party. It also turns out that the ideological positioning of a party is ultimately not entirely binding on the attitude towards the European Community. (Szczerbiak and Taggart, 2003).

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