

# Greek Communism, 1968–2001

Stathus N. Kalyvas and Niko Marantzidis

An enduring, central, and most distinctive feature of the Greek communist movement is its dual character: since the party's split in 1968, a pro-Soviet "orthodox" Communist Party has coexisted and competed with a "reformist" one (which officially shed its communist identity in 1986). The roots of this dualism, however, go deeper and can be traced back to the military defeat of the communist movement in the Greek Civil War. Two years after the communist defeat in 1949, and despite the restrictions imposed by the post-civil war regime, a vibrant leftist (though Communist-controlled) party emerged *within* Greece. This party coexisted with the exiled Communist leadership and a vast network of party-affiliated organizations that developed *outside* Greece, among the tens of thousands of Greeks who found themselves in Central and Eastern Europe after the end of the civil war. Indeed, the 1968 split reflected to a considerable extent a cleavage between the Communist cadres who operated inside Greece and those who remained outside. The distinctive dualism of Greek communism provides a unique analytical lens for the evaluation of the effects of competing strategies, namely rigidity and reformism. And surprisingly, the strategy of ideological and organizational rigidity has *consistently* outperformed the strategy of ideological and organizational modernization since 1968.

## Division and Consolidation: 1968–1985

Until 1974, Greek communism was perhaps unique in the European context in that it was hegemonic within the left. Greece lacked a strong socialist or social democratic tradition up to 1974—and indeed the term "left" in Greece was (and to some extent remains) exclusively associated with communism.<sup>1</sup> Moreover, the thin in-

1. Vassilis Kapetanyannis, "The Communists," in Kevin Featherstone and Dimitrios K. Katsoudas, eds., *Political Change in Greece; Before and After the Colonels* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1987), 145.

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dustrial basis of the country accounted for a weak labor movement reflecting a small industrial working class. In this context, it is not surprising that Greek communism derived an important part of its strength from history, especially its role during the resistance and civil war in the 1940s.

The 21 April 1967 coup found Greek Communists in a rather peculiar situation. On the one hand, the Communist Party of Greece (Kommounistiko Komma Elladas [KKE]) had been outlawed since the outbreak of the Greek Civil War, in 1947.<sup>2</sup> Its leadership, as well as thousands of cadres and members were scattered in various countries of the Soviet bloc. Yet, in 1951, with the wounds of the Civil War still open, a new party was formed. Named the United Democratic Left (Eniaia Dimokratiki Aristera [EDA]), it was in reality the legal political expression of the outlawed KKE.<sup>3</sup> EDA was able to win a substantial degree of political and electoral influence and for a short period (1958–1961) it even became the main opposition party.<sup>4</sup> Not openly communist, EDA promoted a more generic brand of leftism that helped attract many moderate voters. Moreover, the party managed to build a considerable organizational infrastructure, with about 70,000 members in the early 1960s, including a very active youth wing.<sup>5</sup>

Yet, as Papatathanasiou observes, “EDA was not a substitute for KKE, neither did it function as an autonomous and different Communist Party.”<sup>6</sup> The two parties operated along parallel paths, in a way that generated significant friction. As a result, the KKE found itself with two effective authority poles, a situation that reflected the party’s geographic dualism. Although it may be argued that geographic location made the exiled KKE leadership more vulnerable to Soviet pressures forcing it to tow Moscow’s line more

2. The Civil War really began in 1943, under the Axis occupation of Greece. However, the conventional time line limits the Civil War to the 1947–49 period.

3. EDA was formed in 1951 as a coalition of parties; it became a single party in 1956.

4. The electoral performance of EDA is as follows: 1951: 10.57%; 1952: 9.55%; 1958: 24.42%; 1961: 14.62%; 1963: 14.34%; 1964: 11.80%.

5. Kapetanyannis, “The Communists,” 149. EDA’s youth wing evolved into the “Lambrakis Youth Organization,” which was founded in 1964 and chaired by the composer Mikis Theodorakis; it was named after the EDA MP Grigoris Lambrakis, who was assassinated in Thessaloniki in 1963 (an assassination that became the subject of the movie “Z”).

6. Ioanna Papatathanasiou, *Eniaia Dimokratiki Aristera, Archeio 1951–1967 (Unified democratic left, archive 1951–1967)* (Athens: Themelio, 2001), 27.

closely than EDA, it is by no means the case that these two poles adopted different ideological outlooks regarding their degree of independence vis-à-vis the Soviet Union.<sup>7</sup>

The 1968 split had its roots in an intense intraparty conflict among party elites, which was facilitated by the Party's peculiar geographical dualism.<sup>8</sup> A cleavage arose between the KKE leadership, located outside Greece, and the Interior Bureau, the group of Communist leaders placed within EDA, in charge of the KKE policy implementation in Greece. Presumably, the KKE leadership felt that EDA's success would reduce their power or even make them redundant.<sup>9</sup>

This cleavage was contained for some time both because of EDA's electoral performance and the influence of the Soviet leadership under Nikita Khrushchev. However, Khrushchev's fall from power in October 1964 and the 1967 Colonels' coup in Greece, both contributed to the split of the KKE, the origins of which was the dissolution of its Politburo. The crisis escalated beyond control during the Party's Twelfth Plenum of the Central Committee, whose legality was openly questioned. Having to choose between submission and expulsion, the dissident Interior faction announced the formation of the Communist Party of Greece of the Interior (KKE Esoterikou), in February 1968. This label carried an important symbolic charge insofar as it implied that the KKE, often mockingly referred to as KKE Exoterikou (KKE Exterior), in contradistinction to the KKE Interior (a label

7. In fact the KKE Interior later constructed a legitimizing myth that explained and justified the split as a result of the presumed divergence of KKE and EDA with respect to their attitude vis-à-vis the Soviet Union. According to this myth, a significant part of the KKE and EDA leadership in Greece resisted Soviet control. An illustration of this myth can be found in Panos Dimitriou, *I Diaspasi tou KKE (The Split of KKE)* (Athens: Themelio, 1978).

8. Soviet documents recently made available to researchers suggest that contrary to a widespread assumption, the split was initially non-ideological; it resulted, instead, from turf disputes. V. G. Afniani et. al., *Oi scheseis KKE kai KK Sovietikis Enosis sto diastima 1953–1977 (Symfona me ta egrafa tou Archeiou tis KE tou KKSE) [The relations between KKE and the Soviet Union (According to documents in the Archive of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union)]*, (Thessaloniki: Paratiritis, 1999), 250. Although no documents are currently available, senior KKE Interior cadres have informally suggested to one of this paper's co-authors (Nikos Marantzidis) that the KKE Interior denounced the Soviet model only *after* having requested and failed to obtain a Soviet endorsement.

9. Indeed, the KKE leadership set-up clandestine communist cells within EDA in 1965. Kεpetanyannis, "The Communists," 164–5.

that the KKE always angrily rejected) was not really an independent party but a Soviet puppet. This split has defined the communist movement ever since, not only as an event of fundamental significance but also as a metaphor that framed and gave meaning and content to the division between reformers and hard liners (“renovators” and “orthodox” in KKE Interior terminology), particularly during key junctures, such as 1974 and 1989.

Until the collapse of the dictatorship, in 1974, the split in the communist party remained an abstract issue for the great majority of the EDA electorate. Most people were unaware of the depth and significance of this development, living as they did in an authoritarian environment of limited information and no party politics. The transition to democracy and the legalization of the Communist Party gave the Communists their first opportunity since 1936 to openly compete in the Greek electoral arena.<sup>10</sup> In fact, the transition to democracy contributed two important new elements to the leftist political scene. First, the emergence of PASOK (Panhellenic Socialist Movement) challenged the Communists’ domination of the left. Second, the Communists had to compete against each other.<sup>11</sup>

The two parties formed a half-hearted coalition (the United Left).<sup>12</sup> Immediately after the elections, this coalition was dissolved. In 1977, the electorate faced for the first time a choice between two Communist Parties claiming the same heritage. Initially, the ideological gap between the two parties was rather small; quickly, however, it grew wider. The KKE Interior adopted a eurocommunist ideological profile, while the KKE clung to the traditional Leninist posture.<sup>13</sup> A primarily ideological reading of the preferences of the EDA electorate led many observers to expect an easy triumph of the KKE Interior over the KKE. This expectation was reinforced by the fact that the most prominent leaders of EDA

10. The KKE was legal in 1946 but chose to boycott these elections.

11. During the dictatorship, the competition between KKE and KKE Interior could only take place within clandestine organizations, mainly student ones.

12. The United Left coalition won 9.47 percent of the votes in the 1974 elections. This coalition also included EDA, which was reorganized in 1974, this time as a leftist alternative to the two Communist parties; EDA failed to attract any significant share of votes.

13. Nevertheless, the KKE Interior forged and maintained close bonds with some Communist regimes, particularly those of Yugoslavia, Romania, North Korea, and China.

(such as Leonidas Kyrkos and Antonis Brillakis), as well as many of its cadres, had joined the KKE Interior. Confounding these expectations, however, the KKE's strategy of ideological and organizational orthodoxy outperformed KKE Interior's strategy of ideological and organizational modernization, and has been doing so consistently since 1977.

On the one hand, the KKE Interior adopted a reformist stance and political discourse, modeled on the Italian Communist Party. On a symbolic level, the party adopted a logo that associated the traditional hammer and sickle with the Greek flag. It gradually moved away from strict Leninist precepts and subscribed, instead, to most prescriptions of western political liberalism: a parliamentary regime, a representative democracy, and a mixed economy. It also supported the accession of Greece to EEC (European Economic Community) membership, which was at the time strongly rejected by both the KKE and PASOK.

On the other hand, the KKE pursued a rigid orthodoxy strictly adhering to the precepts of Leninist ideological dogma (down to the precept of the dictatorship of the proletariat), publicly and openly supporting the Soviet Union (including its intervention in Afghanistan, in 1979, and the Jaruzelski coup in Poland, in 1981), and aggressively fighting membership in the EEC and NATO (North Atlantic Treaty Organization). As Ole Smith puts it: "It is something of a commonplace that the Greek Communist Party (KKE), together with perhaps the Portuguese Party, has been the most unquestioningly loyal ally of Moscow among the West European Communist Parties."<sup>14</sup>

The two parties faced each other for the first time in the 1977 elections. The KKE succeeded to dominate the communist space and has marginalized the KKE Interior ever since. Whereas the KKE obtained electoral scores ranging between 9 and 11 percent in 1977–1985, the KKE Interior hovered on the edge of relevance with less than 3 percent (table 1).

The KKE's dominance was also reflected in the organizational field. Its estimated membership in 1987 was 1000,000 to 120,000

14. Ole Smith, "The Greek Communist Party in the Post-Gorbachev Era," in David S. Bell, ed., *Western European Communism and the Collapse of Communism* (Oxford: Berg, 1993), 87.

**Table 1.** *Electoral Performance and Proportion of Seats in the Parliament (1974–1985)*

| Elections | KKE        | KKE Interior |
|-----------|------------|--------------|
| 1974      | 9.5* (2.0) | —(.6)        |
| 1977      | 9.4 (3.6)  | 2.7 (.6)     |
| 1981      | 10.9 (4.3) | 1.3 (0)      |
| 1985      | 9.8 (4.0)  | 1.7 (.3)     |

\*In 1974, the two parties participated in the elections in the context of the United Left (Enomeni Aristera) electoral coalition.

compared to the KKE Interior's meager 12,000 to 14,000.<sup>15</sup> Its supremacy was due to the endorsement of the Soviet Union, which many Greek Communists considered the incarnation of "real socialism."<sup>16</sup> It probably helped that this endorsement included a considerable financial component.<sup>17</sup> Moreover, the KKE was in control of a valuable brand name with considerable resonance among Communist voters.<sup>18</sup> The KKE Interior's only redeeming factor was its broad influence in the intellectual and artistic world.

In 1981, PASOK won a resounding electoral victory and formed the first socialist government of Greece. Its victory was a double-edged sword for the Communists.<sup>19</sup> On the one hand, PASOK's victory was based on an electoral platform that granted the communist left many of its wishes: it was against EEC membership, against NATO, and against allowing the U.S. military bases to stay in Greece. On the other hand, as it turned out, PASOK was not serious about implementing its radical program; yet, between 1974 and 1985, PASOK developed a strategy that has correctly been described as "populist."<sup>20</sup> This strategy combined a moderate set of policies (pro-EEC and pro-NATO—even with some reserva-

15. Kapetanyannis, "The Communists," 166.

16. As Smith puts it: "For the Greek Communists, the old saying that loyalty and solidarity with the Soviet Union is the sine qua non for a true Communist was still valid" (Smith, "The Greek Communist Party," 89).

17. Afinian et al., *Oi scheseis KKE kai KK Sovietikis Enosis sto diastima*, 260.

18. Many Greeks became Communists through their experience during the resistance and civil war and, thus, invested tremendous value in the party.

19. Nikos Marantzidis, "Partis et élections dans la Grèce des années 1974–2000: la domination socialiste," *Méditerranée/Mésogeios* 8 (2000): 7–25.

20. George Th. Mavrogordatos, "Civil Society under Populism," in Richard Clogg, ed., *Greece 1981–89: The Populist Decade* (London: MacMillan, 1993), 47–64; Christos

tions) and a highly radical discourse directed against the right. PASOK's ability to sustain this contradictory strategy was contingent on the combination of the charismatic personality of its leader, Andreas Papandreou and the well-greased operation of a very extensive clientelistic machine.<sup>21</sup> A key implication of the populist strategy, greatly enhanced by the electoral system of "reinforced proportional representation" that penalized small parties, was PASOK's consistent ability to "plunder" the electoral reservoir of the two Communist parties by raising the specter of a return of the right to power, which was painted with the appropriate references to the civil war and the dictatorship.

### **High Hopes: 1985–1989**

As a result, PASOK was able to reap the benefits of its central location in Greek politics, winning votes from both its left (by using an alarmist discourse full of civil war symbols) and its right (by pointing to its actual moderate policy).<sup>22</sup> The two Communist parties reacted in slightly different ways.

The KKE Interior was effectively co-opted by PASOK during the 1981–85 period, although it made strenuous efforts to retain a distinct identity. The party was traditionally strong among those with a higher education, and many of its members and cadres were selected by PASOK to staff the higher echelons of the PASOK-run state bureaucracy.<sup>23</sup> In 1986, the Party took a critical symbolic and political turn and dropped its Communist name. This decision was the outcome of the realization that the Party could not possibly hope to win the traditional communist voters and had, instead, to compete with PASOK for moderate leftist voters. This

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Lyrintzis, "The Power of Populism: The Greek Case." *European Journal of Political Research* 15 (1987): 667–86.

21. George Th. Mavrogordatos, "From Traditional Clientelism to Machine Politics: The Impact of PASOK Populism on Greece," *South European Society and Politics* 2:3 (1997):1–26; Christos Lyrintzis, "Political Parties in Post-Junta Greece: A Case of 'Bureaucratic Clientelism'?" *West European Politics* 7:2 (1984): 99–118.
22. Stathis N. Kalyvas, "Polarization in Greek Politics: PASOK's First Four Years, 1981–1985," *Journal of the Hellenic Diaspora* 23:1 (1997): 83–104.
23. Dimitri A. Sotiropoulos, *Populism and Bureaucracy: The Case of Greece under PASOK, 1981–1989* (Notre Dame, Md.: Notre Dame University Press, 1996).

gamble was informed by the fact that the Party leader, Leonidas Kyrkos, enjoyed a popularity that far surpassed the Party's electoral performance.<sup>24</sup>

Dropping the Communist name was thought to remove the central obstacle in the Party's quest for electoral viability. Hence, at the Party's Fourth Congress, in 1986, Party delegates decided, with a small margin (54 percent), to shut down the Party and replace it with a brand-new one, the Greek Left (Elliniki Aristera [EAR] officially founded in 1987). The new party renounced key communist concepts such as Marxism-Leninism, proletarian internationalism, and democratic centralism. It is important to note here, that the Party's divorce from communism preceded the collapse of the Soviet bloc. However, this was not a cost-free move. A significant number of members left the new party to found a splinter party that retained the Communist name.<sup>25</sup> The losses were substantial because the Party youth organization (EKON Rigas Feraios) voted not to join EAR and, instead, to join *en bloc* the splinter party.<sup>26</sup>

Likewise, the KKE refrained from adopting a position of unbending opposition to PASOK. The two parties cooperated tacitly, particularly in the context of the trade-union movement and municipal elections and politics. This tacit cooperation reached its high point in 1985, when the KKE fully and openly supported PASOK's constitutional reform and endorsed PASOK's candidate for the presidency of the Republic (who could be elected only with the KKE's support). Prior to this point, the KKE had refrained from really challenging PASOK's rightward turn in foreign policy, especially regarding NATO and the U.S. bases in Greece. A few demonstrations notwithstanding, the Party did not really mobilize against the government. Furthermore, the KKE shifted its

24. Leonidas Kyrkos (1924–) was a leader of the Interior Bureau and an EDA parliamentarian 1961–64. He participated in the formation of the KKE Interior in 1968 and was elected to the parliament in 1974, 1977, and 1989 and to the European parliament in 1981 and 1985. He was secretary general of Synaspismos until his resignation, in March 1991.

25. Although unsuccessful, this party (KKE Esoterikou—Ananeotiki Aristera [KKE interior—reformist left]) further contributed to the EAR's organizational weakness.

26. EKON Rigas Feraios constituted the organizational foundation of KKE Interior. It is estimated that it had as many members as the party, and these members were more dynamic and active.



strategy following the 1985 elections (and PASOK's electoral victory), when it failed to make any inroads among disgruntled PASOK voters. After PASOK implemented an austerity and stabilization program, it faced sustained and unrelenting opposition from the KKE-controlled trade unions. In 1986, the Party refrained from supporting PASOK's mayoral candidate in Athens, thus making it possible for the opposition New Democracy Party (Nea Dimokratia) to carry the city for the first time since 1974. Still, the 1986 municipal elections demonstrated the party's inability to gain significant ground despite its shift in strategy.

### **From High Hopes to Protracted Crisis: 1989 and Beyond**

In 1989, just before the fall of the Berlin Wall, the KKE and the EAR decided to form a grand coalition of the communist and post-communist left. This coalition was to have as broad a profile as possible and, indeed, included some disgruntled but high-profile PASOK politicians. This move was spurred by two factors. First, the liberal winds unleashed by the *perestroika* reforms in the Soviet Union helped the KKE to decide to move toward its erstwhile rival. In fact, it appeared at the time that the KKE would enter into a phase of liberalization, following Moscow's lead.<sup>27</sup> For the first time, some young up-and-coming Party cadres began criticizing past Soviet policies. In July 1989, just after the elections, the KKE replaced its long time Party secretary Harilaos Florakis with Grigoris Farakos, who immediately proceeded to shed his orthodox reputation and reinvented himself as a modernizer.<sup>28</sup> Second, a series of financial and personal scandals, in 1988, had considerably weakened the prime minister and PASOK leader Andreas Papandreou and undermined his government, thus generating high hopes of a major defection among the left-leaning segment of

27. Smith, "The Greek Communist Party," 87.

28. Grigoris Farakos (1923– ) took part in the civil war and left Greece after the KKE was defeated, in 1949. He was elected a member of the party's Central Committee in 1961 and a member of the Politburo in 1968. He returned clandestinely to Greece during the dictatorship, was arrested, and condemned to prison for life. He was repeatedly elected to the parliament on the KKE ticket from 1974 to 1989 and on the Synaspismos ticket from 1989 to 1993. He resigned from the KKE Central Committee in May 1991.

PASOK's electorate. The goal was to exploit PASOK's weakness and turn the left into a key player in Greek politics. Indeed, the decision to form a coalition was supported by a number of electoral surveys conducted in 1988, suggesting that whereas the KKE and EAR could not hope to dent PASOK's electoral base as separate parties, they stood a good chance of doing so as a combined party of the left. In short there was a lot of enthusiasm and anticipation. The KKE-EAR alliance adopted the name Coalition of Left and Progress (Synaspismos tis Aristeras kai tis Proodou—or simply Synaspismos). Its leaders even declared their intention to turn the coalition from a temporary electoral alliance into a permanent political party.

In the critical June 1989 elections, Synaspismos garnered 13.1 percent of the vote. Although this was only 1.6 percent more than the combined vote of the two parties in 1985, it was well below the expectations of its leaders who had based their hopes on surveys that credited the new party with 20 percent of the potential vote. The embattled PASOK had proved surprisingly resilient. Nevertheless, Synaspismos found itself at the center of the political maneuvering that followed the failure of either PASOK or New Democracy to win a parliamentary majority. As the third major party, the leaders of Synaspismos made the historic decision to form an alliance with the right-wing New Democracy.<sup>29</sup> The stated reason for this unusual decision was that the left could not possibly ally with a party (and a leader) that was involved in so many egregious scandals. The real reason, however, was the combination of the frustration that the Communists, both hard-line and reformist, felt vis-à-vis PASOK's consistent ability to plunder their electorate, as well as their perception that PASOK's weakness had finally opened up the opportunity for a major electoral realignment within the center-left.<sup>30</sup>

As it turned out, however, this move proved very costly, for the following elections of November 1989 showed that a substantial

29. Geoffrey Pridham and Susannah Verney, "The Coalitions of 1989–90 in Greece: Inter-Party Relations and Democratic Consolidation," *West European Politics* 14:4 (1991): 42–69.

30. The decision to ally with the right was greatly influenced by the younger modernizing cadres of both parties against the reservations of the older leaders who ostensibly had a better understanding of their electorate.

**Table 2.** *Electoral Performance and Proportion of Seats in the Parliament (1989–2000)*

| Elections       | KKE       | Synaspismos |
|-----------------|-----------|-------------|
| 1989 (June)     |           | 13.1 (9.3)* |
| 1989 (November) |           | 11.0 (7.0)* |
| 1990            |           | 10.2 (6.6)* |
| 1993            | 4.5 (3.0) | 2.9 (0)     |
| 1996            | 5.6 (3.6) | 5.1 (3.3)   |
| 2000            | 5.5 (3.6) | 3.2 (2.0)   |

\*In 1989 and 1990 the two parties were allied in the context of Synaspismos

proportion of the voters that had supported Synaspismos just four months before did not approve of the move and had defected from the party, casting their vote for PASOK. The Party's share of the vote fell by more than two percentage points (table 2).

This disapproval was due to the persistent polarization along the right-left axis and the concomitant intense emotional rejection of the right felt by many Communist voters (a feeling skillfully cultivated by PASOK strategists).

In November 1989, the Berlin wall fell. From this point on, the Communist left entered a protracted crisis from which it has yet to recover. Like everywhere else in Europe, the collapse of the Soviet bloc triggered a big crisis within the Greek Communist movement.<sup>31</sup> When the Berlin wall fell, the Greek Communist movement was already in the midst of a crisis caused by its costly decision to ally itself with the New Democracy and the subsequent defection of a substantial part of its electorate. This crisis broke into the open, in 1990, spurred by developments in Central and Eastern Europe. In January 1990, the KKE issued for the first time a very mild statement on the changes taking place in Eastern Europe. The budding reformist wing of the KKE requested that an open discussion take place, a demand that led to a bitter conflict within the Party, between hard-liners and reformists. Although the rank-and-file appear to have been divided into equal factions,

31. Martin J. Bull, "The West European Communist Movement: Past, Present, and Future," in Martin J. Bull and Paul Heywood, eds., *Western European Communist Parties after the Revolutions of 1989* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1994), 203–22.

middle cadres came in strongly in favor of reform. However, the old guard was clearly hard-line. Eventually, the hard-liners wrested a close victory, during the party's Thirteenth Congress, in February 1991. Of the 111 members elected to the new Central Committee, 60 belonged to the hard-line faction. The Central Committee proceeded to replace Farakos with a new Party general secretary, the hard-line Aleka Papariga who, as of 2002, remains at the Party's helm. Predictably, the KKE crisis spilled over to Synaspismos, causing its breakup in the summer of 1991. It is estimated that the KKE lost close to 40 percent of its cadres following this breakup, mainly the younger and most dynamic ones, including the most prominent up-and-coming cadres who had been groomed to succeed the old guard.<sup>32</sup>

In more than one way, this new breakup partly replicated the 1968 split: the reformist side, which kept the Synaspismos label, comprised the former EAR with the sizeable addition of the young KKE cadres; the hard-line side mostly comprised the elderly leadership of the KKE. Indeed, the split between hard-liners and reformers exhibited the kind of generational and social cleavages that undergirded the 1968 split: hard-liners were primarily older (and had typically spent much of their lives as political exiles in Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union), whereas reformers were younger, having joined the KKE in the wake of the dictatorship's demise in 1974. Hard-liners also tended to come from the ranks of the trade unions, whereas reformers tended to be intellectuals.<sup>33</sup> Finally, hard-liners tended to have an emotionally charged set of memories shaped by the civil war, whereas reformers tended to be motivated by more strategic concerns. Once more, many observers predicted that Synaspismos would have easily prevail over an increasingly irrelevant and marginal KKE, particularly since the

32. The most prominent young cadres who left the KKE include Maria Damanaki (1952–), known for her participation in the Polytechnic uprising of 1973, a KKE parliamentarian between 1977 and 1993 and the president of Synaspismos in 1991–93; Dimitris Karangoules (1952–), a member of the KKE Politburo; Yannis Dragasakis (1947–), an economics minister in the 1990 Grand Coalition government; Mimis Androulakis (1951–), a member of the KKE Politburo; Alekos Alavanos (1950–), a KKE European MP between 1981 and 1989; and Panayotis Lafazanis (1951–) a member of the KKE Politburo.

33. Smith, "The Greek Communist Party," 96–97.

**Table 3.** *Municipal Communism (1990 and 1998) Number of major municipalities controlled by KKE or Synaspismos (N=61 towns that are either capitals of prefectures or have a population over 70,000)*

| Elections | KKE | Synaspismos |
|-----------|-----|-------------|
| 1990      |     | 8           |
| 1998      | 2   | 3           |

KKE no longer relies on the ideological endorsement and financial backing of the Soviet Union.

The deep crisis of the communist movement was fully reflected in the 1993 elections. The two parties obtained their worst combined electoral score in these elections; however, once more the orthodox (some would say “neo-Stalinist”) KKE emerged well ahead of Synaspismos, winning 4.5 percent compared to Synaspismos’s paltry 2.9 percent. In fact, this was the worst electoral score for the KKE since 1936; as for Synaspismos, it failed to make the requisite 3 percent threshold and win parliamentary representation. The 1996 elections redressed the balance: they saw an improved performance for both parties, especially for Synaspismos which made a parliamentary comeback: now the two parties were on an even footing (KKE with 5.6 percent compared to Synaspismos’s 5.1 percent). However, the 2000 elections confirmed the KKE’s stability as opposed to Synaspismos’s inability to perform consistently (KKE with 5.5 percent and Synaspismos 3.2 percent) (table 2).

The Parties’ loss of electoral influence is obviously matched by their more general loss of social influence. First, “municipal communism,” an area of traditional strength, has all but collapsed. In the 1990 and 1998 municipal elections, the number of major cities controlled by the two parties declined radically (table 3).<sup>34</sup>

Second, communist influence in the trade unions and profes-

34. The collapse of municipal communism is even more pronounced than table 3 suggests. Leaving out the prefectural capitals which are often small cities, and counting only cities with a population over 70,000, we find that Synaspismos went from four mayors in 1990 to one in 1998. There is no KKE mayor in any major city. At the regional level, KKE and Synaspismos controlled two regions (out of 50) in 1994 and one in 1998.

**Table 4.** *Newspaper Readership*

*Nationwide circulation of Rizospastis (1980–2001)*

| Year | Number of copies sold |
|------|-----------------------|
| 1980 | 21,000                |
| 1986 | 53,000                |
| 2001 | 7–8,000               |

*Nationwide circulation of Avgi (1980–2001)*

| Year | Number of copies sold |
|------|-----------------------|
| 1980 | 7,000                 |
| 1986 | 7,000                 |
| 2001 | 2,500                 |

sional associations also declined. Newspaper readership, another indicator of social influence, confirms the steep decline of the two Parties. Both KKE's *Rizospastis* (Radical) and Synaspismos's *Avgi* (Dawn) have lost most of their readers (table 4).

### **Strategies**

The two parties that emerged from Synaspismos' 1991 split followed distinct strategies greatly reminiscent of their paths during the 1974–1989 period. Since 1991, the KKE has followed a strategy based on the deployment of two resources: ideology and social protest, a strategy that it calls “Anti-imperialist Anti-monopoly Democratic Front.”

The first resource of the KKE is ideology. Rather than communist ideology, however, which has been discredited in Greece as much as everywhere else, it is nationalism that has been emphasized. Indeed, a feature that had already made the Party notable in the 1970s and 1980s was its nationalist bent. Following their defeat in the Civil War, the Communists had been branded as unpatriotic because of their alliance with some of Greece's traditional enemies in the Balkans.<sup>35</sup> After 1974, however, they could

35. It was common, for instance, for the right to refer to Communists as “Slavocommunists” or “Bulgars.”

easily combine their ideologically motivated anti-Americanism with an implicit, though obvious, nationalism. For many Greeks, the Cyprus debacle in 1974 was seen as proof that the country had been wronged by the United States and NATO, and that Greek national interests were not served within the NATO alliance given its perceived preferential treatment of Turkey.

Following 1989 and 1991, the Party has redeployed nationalism, widely understood to fit feelings of hostility to globalization but also to appeal to traditional anti-Americanism. This move paid off after NATO's bombing campaign in Yugoslavia, following the Kosovo crisis. In contrast to other European publics, Greek public opinion was overwhelmingly opposed to the NATO campaign. The KKE emerged as the most vocal representative of this opposition, organizing demonstrations and all kinds of public agitation against the NATO campaign, effectively tapping into the widespread public feelings of indignation. The Party further capitalized on this event, by offering two safe positions on its ticket (leading to parliamentary seats) to two prominent non-Communist journalists who had vocally opposed the bombing. The U.S. bombing campaign in Afghanistan following the attacks in New York and Washington on 11 September, offered another opportunity for the organization of "antiwar" agitation. The KKE's nationalist turn is generally perceived as credible because of the Party's long history of anti-Americanism—and more generally "anti-westernism."

The second resource deployed by the KKE is its sponsorship of social protest. Even though its organization was severely weakened after 1991, the Party still has a national machine at its disposal coupled with considerable organizational know-how. It is a national actor with the ability to give shape and form to all kinds of otherwise local and amorphous forms of social protest. One might imagine that the KKE would be successful when it comes to workers, but in fact the Party's reach extends further. For example, it has been able to sponsor and help organize widespread (and extremely disruptive) protests by such disparate groups as farmers and high school students. The Party also sent a numerous contingent of members to Genoa for the 2001 antiglobalization demonstrations. Their sponsorship of social protest takes

place under a vague anticapitalist and antiglobalization ideological cover, which has replaced the tenets of orthodox Marxism. Although this activity does not translate into votes, it helps keep the Party in the news. Moreover it provides it with considerable blackmail potential, which could prove a substantial bargaining tool.

In more than one way, then, the KKE is trying to replicate PASOK's distinctive brand of (early) populism that was based on a combination of nationalism and social protest. However, this strategy has failed to bring in significant electoral returns. The Party lacks the charismatic leadership that is essential in making this brand of populism work.<sup>36</sup> Although this strategy has allowed the Party to carve out a niche and survive, it is very doubtful that it will provide it with the ability to expand over and above its present 5 percent reach.

Synaspismos's strategy since 1991 reflects problems and contradictions similar to those faced by its predecessor, the KKE Interior, during the 1974–1989 period. The Party vacillates between two courses of action: moving to the right and alliance with PASOK, or turning toward the left. Like the KKE Interior, Synaspismos began in 1991 to find ways to associate with PASOK; when this failed, it moved in the opposite direction. However, these swings have undermined both its unity and credibility. Following the 2000 elections, Synaspismos split yet again, when about 20 moderate members of its Central Committee left the Party and forged an alliance with PASOK. As a result of this last split, the Central Committee is now dominated by the members of a pro-Communist faction that favors repositioning the Party toward the left, including a possible electoral alliance with KKE. In addition, the Party has been trying hard for years to appeal to the “new-left/postmaterialist” segments of Greek society. It is creatively combining all kind of antiglobalization, ecological, anti-nationalist, pro-immigrant messages to attract young, professional, urban, and affluent voters. This move, however, has failed to produce

36. George Th. Mavrogordatos, *Rise of the Green Sun: The Greek Election of 1981* (London: Centre of Contemporary Greek Studies, Kings College, 1982).



significant electoral returns, either because this social group is too small to begin with, or because it is voting along a different dimension.

### **The Social Basis of Communism: Continuity and Change**

In his innovative (if morally questionable) survey conducted in Greek prisons and camps in 1952, R. V. Burks found that “if we consider Communist activists in terms of family background, there is nothing—absolutely nothing—to distinguish activists from any other cross-section of the Greek population of Greece taken at random.”<sup>37</sup>

The social composition of communism in the immediate aftermath of the occupation (1941–44) reflected the giant strides that the Party had made as the spearhead of a broad resistance movement. Since their defeat in the civil war, however, the Communists have opted for a niche rather than a catch-all strategy. The KKE has traditionally catered to the lower socio-economic segments of Greek society—mainly people with low and mid-levels of education employed in both the private and public sectors. The Party was also able to develop and sustain over the years a number of rural strongholds.<sup>38</sup>

In addition, the KKE was traditionally quite strong among younger cohorts, a reflection of its considerable political and organizational investment in youth. In contrast, the KKE Interior, and later the EAR and Synaspismos, have appealed to the higher socio-economic segments of Greek society. “Liberal” communism has always attracted urban bourgeois intellectuals. It is perhaps indicative of the asymmetrical social profile of the two parties, that the KKE is stronger among primary school teachers, whereas Synaspismos is stronger among secondary school teach-

37. R. V. Burks, “Statistical Profile of the Greek Communist,” *Journal of Modern History* 28 (1955): 155.

38. Nikos Marantzidis, *Oi Mikres Mosches: politiki kai eklogiki analisi tou kommounismou ston elladiko agrotiko horo* (The little Moscovs: political and electoral analysis of Communism in the Greek countryside) (Athens: Papazisis, 1997).

ers.<sup>39</sup> These widely different socio-economic profiles continue to be visible today in the social profile of the two parties' voters for the last two elections (1996 and 2000) (table 5).

As the tables indicate, the KKE has become a party of retired people with limited education and resources. Synaspismos has, instead, a far more dynamic social profile, reaching its peak among people in their thirties and forties, with a higher degree of education. Whereas the KKE does well among retirees with low education (9.1 percent in 1996), private-sector employees with low education (6.9 percent in 1996), and the small businessmen and artisans (6.6 percent in 1996), Synaspismos peaks among the public- and private-sector employees with a higher education degree (10.5 percent and 10.2 percent respectively, in 1996), and professionals (9.8 percent, in 1996). Within these groups, it is especially strong among the so-called transition generation, the voters who came of age around 1974.<sup>40</sup> Looking at the voter profiles of the last elections (2000) allows us to track the evolution of the two Communist parties (table 6).

A striking feature is the resilience of the KKE, which remains strong among its core group: older voters with low levels of education. This fits with the general European pattern; for example, the Communist Party of France (PCF) displays a similar social base.<sup>41</sup> However, a very interesting development was the Party's ability to spread its influence more evenly across younger and better-educated cohorts. In particular, its ability to re-enter the 18 to 24 cohort (moving to 5.2 percent from about 3.2 percent) is remarkable (and reflected in its ability to rebuild its renowned Party Youth Organization, *Kommounistiki Neolaia Elladas*, (Communist Youth of Greece [KNE])).<sup>42</sup> Synaspismos remains strong in the higher educated voter segment, but suffered in 2000 because these voters

39. See table 8. Anecdotal observation strongly suggests that KKE's influence among the university professorate is very small while Synaspismos's presence is dominant.

40. The different socio-economic profile of the two parties is confirmed by trade union membership data (table 8). The KKE is stronger than Synaspismos among workers, municipal workers, and primary-school teachers, but the opposite is true among bank employees and secondary-school teachers.

41. Marc Lazar, "Fin-de-siècle Communism in Western Europe," *Dissent* 47:1 (2000): 62–65.

42. A playful explanation of this resurgence points out that communist grandparents raised their grandchildren back into the KKE after their (working) children had moved to Synaspismos!

**Table 5.** *Social Composition of KKE and Synaspismos Voters, 1996 (%)*

| 3.1 Sex, Age, Education |     |             |
|-------------------------|-----|-------------|
| Sex                     | KKE | Synaspismos |
| Men                     | 5.4 | 4.1         |
| Women                   | 4.3 | 4.9         |
| Age                     |     |             |
| 18–29                   | 3.2 | 5.0         |
| 30–44                   | 5.2 | 6.9         |
| 45–59                   | 5.2 | 3.6         |
| 60+                     | 5.9 | 2.3         |
| Education               |     |             |
| Up to Elementary School | 5.9 | 2.2         |
| Up to High School       | 4.7 | 4.0         |
| Higher Education        | 3.7 | 8.5         |

SOURCE: VPRC Institute, Exit Poll ERT, 22 September 1996 in Mavris 1997:188<sup>a</sup>

### 3.2 Professional

| Profession   | KKE | Synaspismos |
|--|-----|-------------|
| Active   |     |             |
| Farmers  | 5.1 | 1.4         |
| Independent Artisan and Small Business                             | 6.6 | 4.9         |
| Professionals  | 5.6 | 9.8         |
| Public Sector Employees<br>(Elementary and High School Education)  | 4.1 | 2.7         |
| Public Sector Employees (Higher Education)                         | 3.0 | 10.5        |
| Private Sector Employees (Elementary and<br>High School Education) | 6.9 | 5.3         |
| Private Sector Employees (Higher Education)                        | 5.6 | 10.2        |
| Non-Active   |     |             |
| Unemployed   | 5.6 | 3.0         |
| Students   | 4.3 | 7.4         |
| Retirees (Elementary Education)                                    | 9.1 | 2.5         |
| Retirees (Some High School and up)                                 | 5.0 | 3.5         |

SOURCE: Nikolakopoulos (1996)<sup>b</sup>

<sup>a</sup>Yannis Mavris, "Oi taseis apodomisis/metaschimatismou tou metapoliteutikou kommatikou sistimatos" (Trends toward the deconstruction/transformation of the post-dictatorship party system). *Greek Review of Political Science*, 9 (1997):179–96.

<sup>b</sup>Elias Nikolakopoulos, "Apofasismeni kai anapofasisto: I simvoli ton dimoskopiseon exo apo ta eklogika tmimata stin analisi tis psifour" (Decided and undecided: The contribution of exit polls for electoral analysis), *Greek Review of Political Science* 9 (1996): 197–207.

**Table 6.** *Social Composition of KKE and Synaspismos Voters, 2000 (%)*

| <i>6.1 Sex, Age, Education</i>                                     |            |             |
|--|------------|-------------|
| Sex  | KKE        | Synaspismos |
| Men  | <b>6.4</b> | 3.1         |
| Women  | 4.6        | <b>3.3</b>  |
| <i>Age</i>   |            |             |
| 18–24  | 5.2        | 2.0         |
| 25–34  | 4.1        | 3.7         |
| 35–44  | 6.0        | <b>5.5</b>  |
| 45–54  | <b>6.3</b> | 3.5         |
| 55–64  | 5.4        | 1.4         |
| 65+  | 6.1        | 1.1         |
| <i>Education</i>   |            |             |
| Less than Elementary School  | <b>6.5</b> | 0.8         |
| Elementary School  | 5.7        | 1.3         |
| High School  | 5.2        | 3.2         |
| Higher Education   | 5.4        | <b>5.1</b>  |
| <i>6.2 Professions</i>   |            |             |
| <i>Profession</i>  |            |             |
| Business persons   | 4.2        | 5.3         |
| Farmers  | 5.2        | 1.9         |
| Professionals, High School and below                               | 6.1        | 2.5         |
| Professionals, Higher Education                                    | 5.9        | <b>7.9</b>  |
| Small Business, artisans   | 5.4        | 2.0         |
| Public Sector Employees<br>(Elementary and High School Education)  | 5.0        | 1.7         |
| Public Sector Employees (Higher Education)                         | 4.7        | <b>6.4</b>  |
| Private Sector Employees<br>(Elementary and High School Education) | <b>7.6</b> | 3.9         |
| Private Sector Employees (Higher Education)                        | 6.1        | 5.1         |
| Unemployed   | <b>9.3</b> | 2.3         |
| Retirees, Public Sector, Elementary Education                      | 6.5        | 0.6         |
| Retirees, Public Sector, Higher Education                          | 1.8        | 1.3         |
| Retirees, Private Sector, Elementary Education                     | <b>8.1</b> | 1.5         |
| Retirees, Private Sector, Higher Education                         | <b>7.3</b> | 0.6         |
| Students   | 3.7        | 2.2         |

SOURCE: Mavris (2001)<sup>a</sup>

<sup>a</sup>Yannis Mavris, “‘Oi dyo Ellades’: Koinoniologia tis psifou stis ekloges tis 9 Apriliou 2000” (The Two Greeces: Sociology of voting in the elections of 9 April 2000), in Christophoros Vernardakis, ed., *I koini gnomi stin Ellada, erevnes-dimoskopiseis 2001*, VPRC (Public opinion in Greece, research, surveys 2001, VPRC) (Athens: Livanis, 2001), 17–36.

deserted the Party en masse and voted for PASOK, in response to Prime Minister Kostas Simitis's social democratic turn away from the populism of the Papandreou years.

## **Organization**

The KKE was the first, and until 1974, the only mass party in Greece. In the 1930s it built a robust organization, which was able to survive multiple waves of persecution and mobilize a broad cross-section of Greek society during the occupation in the Second World War.<sup>43</sup> The Civil War and the subsequent repression hardened the Party, as it had to operate clandestinely in Greece. A substantial number of its supporters (over 100,000) fled Greece for various Central and Eastern European countries in the wake of the Party's defeat, a feature that shaped most cadres and gave the Party its distinctive rigidity and resilience. After 1974 the KKE managed to rebuild its organization very quickly, dominate the communist left, and make significant inroads in the trade-union movement and among the youth. The KNE was particularly active and became an incubator for future cadres and leaders. Between the late seventies and the mid-eighties, the Communist Party-affiliated student organization consistently won the high-profile university student elections. The Party members, as is often the case, were a more educated and younger group compared to the Party's voters, even after 1989 (table 7).

After 1991, the KKE's organizational structure suffered immensely. On the one hand, the party lost its most dynamic segment, its youth organization: most of its cadres defected to Synaspismos or left politics altogether. On the other hand, the Party also lost the Soviet Union's support and was left to fend for itself. After an initial retrenchment, when the Party was trying to cut its losses, it has embarked on a phase of timid expansion. For the first time since the fall of the Soviet bloc, the Party is regaining a foothold among the young and, as noted above its youth organization, the KNE, has been rebuilt. Although far weaker than its previous incarnation, its reconstruction indicates the Party's surprising resil-

43. George Th. Mavrogordatos, *Stillborn Republic: Social Coalitions and Party Strategies in Greece, 1922–1936* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1983).

**Table 7.** *Party Delegates, Fifteenth KKE Congress (1996) (%)*

|  |       |
|--|-------|
| 7.1 Sex  |       |
| Men  | 79,25 |
| Women  | 20,75 |
| 7.2 Occupation   |       |
| Non-industrial Workers   | 11.19 |
| Industrial Workers   | 5.36  |
| Employees, Private Sector  | 22.2  |
| Employees, Public Sector   | 21.94 |
| Farmers  | 5     |
| Professionals  | 15.2  |
| Retirees   | 8.9   |
| “Intellectuals”  | 2.5   |
| Students   | .9    |
| “Homemakers”   | .9    |
| Unemployed   | 3     |
| 7.3 Education  |       |
| University Graduates   | 29.9  |
| “Technical” Institute Graduates<br>(Vocational Higher Education) | 8.8   |
| Some Post-high School Education                                  | 4.3   |
| High School  | 25.9  |
| Vocational High School   | 12.3  |
| 3 Years of High School   | 3.4   |
| Elementary School  | 15.4  |
| 7.4 Age  |       |
| 20–30  | 6.3   |
| 31–40  | 33.7  |
| 41–50  | 36.3  |
| 51–60  | 12.9  |
| 61+  | 10.5  |

SOURCE: KKE, Fifteenth Congress, Documents, Athens 1996: 187–88

**Table 8.** *Communist Influence in the Trade Unions (1999–2001)(%)*

|                                  | KKE  | Synaspismos |
|----------------------------------|------|-------------|
| GSEE (Workers)                   | 27   | 7           |
| OTOE (Bank employees)            | 5.1  | 7.8         |
| POE-OTA (Municipal workers)      | 27.2 | 10.3        |
| OLME (Secondary school teachers) | 10.3 | 19.1        |
| DOE (Primary school teachers)    | 11.3 | 6.6         |

NOTE: The percentages were calculated from the number of party representatives in the trade union congresses.

ience. At the same time, the party has been able to retain a measure of influence in trade unions (which, in Greece, have been associated very closely with political parties) (table 8).

Interestingly, this resilience has not been accompanied by an organizational opening. The Party continues to rely on the old Leninist rule of democratic centralism, a concept that translates the will of the majority (i.e., the leadership) into compulsory party policy to be unquestionably supported by all the Party members. Indeed, the Party recently expelled two leading members (a parliamentarian and a Euro-MP) who supported a rapprochement with Synaspismos.<sup>44</sup>

The KKE's ideological and organizational rigidity stands in striking contrast to Synaspismos's reformism. Like the KKE Interior in 1974–1981 and EAR in 1981–1991, Synaspismos relied less on its own organization and more on its strength in intellectual circles (journalists, academics, artists), as well as on its indirect, though close and informal, relationship with PASOK. After 1991, Synaspismos implemented a number of radical organizational reforms, chief among them the institutionalization of faction and the introduction of proportional representation in the Central Committee. In addition, the president of the Party is now elected by delegates in the Congress rather than by the Central Committee,

44. Mitsos Kostopoulos was a trade-union leader (a former secretary general of the General Confederation of Greek Workers), a member of the party's Central Committee, and a member of the parliament; Yannis Theonas was also former secretary general of the General Confederation of Greek Workers (1992–94), a former member of the party's Central Committee (1987–1996) and Politburo (1990–94) and a member of the European parliament (1994–99).

while party members participate directly in the selection of party candidates for all available positions.<sup>45</sup>

## Conclusion

With the notable exception of the German PDS (Party of Democratic Socialism) (and the Dutch and Swedish parties of the left, if classified as postcommunist), European Communist and postcommunist parties experienced a steep electoral decline during the 1990s.<sup>46</sup> In this respect, Greece is no exception.

The Greek case allows for a measure of control. First, it is often hard to disentangle the effect of the collapse of the Soviet Union and that of the “postmaterialist” evolution of social structures, which have reduced the social significance of the traditional industrial class. Insofar as Greek society has always had a small industrial basis, and the strength of the KKE was based more on the historical memories of the civil war rather than the working class per se, its decline is clearly the result of the events of 1989 rather than any deeper social changes.

Second, the 1991 division of the Communist movement into two parties with highly differentiated strategies and social clienteles, provides a privileged vantage point from which to address the potential costs and payoffs of two different strategies: ideological and organizational rigidity versus reformism. A few years ago, David S. Bell observed about European Communist parties, that “it is curious that the hard-line parties held out rather better than the modernisers.”<sup>47</sup> His insight is clearly confirmed by the Greek case. In Greece at least, optimistic views about the future of Communist parties as left alternatives to social democracy do not hold.<sup>48</sup> Since 1989, the KKE has generally proved more successful in weathering the effects of the collapse of the Soviet bloc than its

45. The party’s president is presently Nikos Konstantopoulos, a politician whose personal popularity far exceeds that of his party.

46. Lazar, “Fin-de-siècle Communism in Western Europe.”

47. David S. Bell, Introduction, in David S. Bell, ed., *Western European Communism and the Collapse of Communism* (Oxford: Berg, 1993), 7.

48. For example, Kate Hudson, *European Communism Since 1989: Towards a New European Left?* (New York: St. Martin’s Press, 2000).



reformist counterpart Synaspismos. By digging in, it was able to retain the allegiance of an aging, yet significant portion of its electorate. In a way, the KKE decided that it was worth trading its young but unreliable cadres and members for its older but unwavering counterparts. Why did it choose this course of action? Like all party decisions, this one is overdetermined. It may be that the KKE was an ideological actor, unconstrained by strategic imperatives. The argument that communism was a “secular religion” and that Communist parties practiced the “politics of belief” is well known.<sup>49</sup> It is also plausible that, given its history, the KKE was a party with a deeply ingrained sense of self-preservation and ideological purity. It finally also makes sense to point to the dual nature of the communist movement in Greece. Indeed, the very presence of a “reformist option” (the KKE Interior, EAR, and Synaspismos) may have shaped the trajectory of the KKE in two ways.

First, it acted as a selection mechanism that attracted away from the party reform-minded modernizing individuals, who may otherwise have turned the KKE around. According to Hirschman’s well-known insight, it is possible that the “exit” option provided by the liberal option undermined the “voice” option of fighting to change the Party from within. Second, by producing low electoral payoffs, the reformist option undermined potential modernizing strategies within the KKE. Time and again, it was clearly shown that reformist strategies simultaneously diluted the communist ideology *and* failed to produce electoral gains. In this sense, KKE leaders can be seen less as stubborn and blind ideologues and more as rational actors who make the best with what they have, preferring survival to expansion—satisfiers, as opposed to maximizers.

The reformist strategy has not been successful for the post-communist left. Synaspismos has fared badly and its survival is uncertain. Its dynamic social profile (urban, highly educated, and high-income) consistently fails to translate into electoral success. In the past decade the Party has swung away from and toward

49. For example, Peter Morris, “The French Communist Party and the End of Communism,” in Bull and Heywood, eds., *Western European Communist Parties after the Revolutions of 1989*, 31–55.

PASOK, sometimes attracted and sometimes repelled by it. The Party often seems to act more like an interest group for intellectuals (especially academics) than a real party.

At the same time, it is true that while the KKE has survived, it has failed to address the problem of its electoral and political marginalization. The very features that account for its resilience threaten its future: its membership and electorate are aging, despite the infusion of younger voters in 2000, and its sponsorship of social protest and nationalism keeps the party in the spotlight at the price of ideological inconsistency and political marginalization. It is true that the social cost of structural economic reforms, the demands of European integration, the rise in crime, and mass immigration promise rewards for political actors willing to capitalize on them. In this respect the KKE (unlike Synaspismos) is clearly differentiated from PASOK and can, therefore, hope to derive electoral gains from these issues. Still, competition has been among the social activists and political entrepreneurs who seek to express the frustrations of those segments of Greek society that are left behind by the economic reforms—chief among whom (and most successful so far) is the Orthodox Church of Greece.<sup>50</sup> The comparative record suggests that Communist parties are not among the political actors who have successfully capitalized on social discontent over the past 10 years; in Europe at least, far-right populism has proved far more successful than its far-left variant.<sup>51</sup> It is perhaps telling that in Greece, Orthodox Christians appear, for the moment, to be more successful in capitalizing on social discontent than orthodox Communists.

50. The Orthodox Church of Greece organized a mass campaign of demonstrations after the PASOK government decided to drop the entry specifying a person's religion from identity cards. Stathis N. Kalyvas, "Religion and Identity: ID Cards in Greece," *Correspondence* 7 (2000/2001):7–8.

51. It is interesting to note that as of 2002, no successful extreme-right party had emerged in Greece.