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Greek constitution attacked

FROM OUR CORRESPONDENT—Athens, July 17

Three former deputies of the Centre Union, the party of Mr. George Papandreu, issued a joint statement today rejecting the Greek regime's draft constitution as "nullifying the principle of the sovereignty of the people".

Mr. John Zindis, Mr. Andreas Kokkevis, both former Ministers, and Mr. Gerassimos Vasilatos spoke up today because, they said, their leader, Mr. Papandreu, had been under strict house arrest for the past three months and was in no position at present to express his opinion.

"The new draft constitution," the joint statement added, "restricts in a totally unacceptable way the basic rights of man and the citizen, and is contrary to the European Convention on Human Rights, which Greece has signed and ratified."

The three constitutionalists objected to the omnipotence of the

executive as well as to the creation of the armed forces as an "autonomous authority". The procedure for the ratification of the constitution while the country was under martial law made a free discussion and a free plebiscite impossible, they said.

"Instead of being the instrument for a return to normality, the new constitution will inevitably lead to a new period of trial for the country."

This was the first public reaction from former politicians to the new draft. A Government spokesman today urged all Greek politicians to end their boycott and discuss the new constitution.

Mr. Veros Stamatopepos, the Director General for Press, told his weekly news conference today that only the "enemies of democracy"—the communists and the fascists—had no right to talk about the draft.

He was highly critical of the "superficial" comments published abroad on the constitution, which had clearly been influenced by those "whose interests are affected by the reforms".

Mr. Stamatopepos said the recent wave of arrests in fact involved senior Greek officers who were anti-communists. "But this is not enough politically," he added. "Their intentions and actions sought to impose fascist solutions which are unacceptable to the problems of Greece."

"The Greek Government has promised to protect the country equally from the threat of communism and that of politically obsolete reactionary elements. Only thus will we evolve into a western-style democracy which no one will be allowed to endanger."

Torture allegations

Questioned about allegations of police torture on Mr. Vasilatos Filias, a young sociologist recently arrested in connexion with the "democratic defence" organization, the spokesman said: "The person has daily visits from his mother and family. He is in fact currently writing a study on the draft constitution. In the first part he discusses the positive aspects of the charter."