

The position of the Centre Union Party on the issue of the revision of the Constitution was unequivocally laid down by its leader, Mr George Papandreu, in his statement of the 16th March 1968. It is, therefore, well enough known, and does not need repetition.

Mr G. Papandreu has been under strict house arrest for the last three months, a fact which we deeply deplore, and he is consequently in no position at present to express his opinion. Furthermore, none of the political parties, including of course the Centre Union, is permitted to function freely.

In view of this, and the course of our sense of responsibility after long years of service in the public life of this country, we feel it incumbent upon us to state the following:

The new Draft Constitution 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.

Furthermore, it in effect nullifies the principle of the sovereignty of the people, and the system of representative government. It creates an omnipotent Government, which is virtually free from any control or censure. It further sets up the Armed Forces as an autonomous authority, who owe loyalty to the "Fatherland and the National Ideals", but not to the Constitution of the country.

From all the above, it becomes quite evident that this Draft Constitution is neither liberal nor Democratic.

There is also the question of the procedure adopted. Under martial law - i.e. when the basic liberties of the individual have been suspended, when the press is under censorship, when the leaders of the political parties are in strict isolation, when a multitude of eminent personalities of the political world of the nation have been deprived of their liberty without trial, and when all aspects of political life are under strict State control - there is in effect no possibility of conducting a free discussion or a free plebiscite.

The Constitution that may eventually materialise under such circumstances can clearly not be regarded as an expression of the free and unbound will of the Greek people. Thus, instead of being the instrument for a return to normality, it will inevitably lead to a new period of trial for the country.

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Athens, 16th July 1968