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**THE FOUNDING PROCLAMATION OF THE NATIONAL
RADICAL UNION IN THE CONTEXT OF
THE CHRISTIAN DEMOCRATIC CULTURE**

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Introduction

The dominance of Christian Democracy in Western Europe is a central feature of the contemporary European history. Considering the electoral success of the Christian democratic parties and their strong influence in postwar European politics, it is striking that in the bibliography, there still exist visible gaps in terms of their ideology, political identity or policy-making. This is perhaps more so in the case of post-war Greek politics: research has focused on the aftershocks of the 1946-49 civil war, anti-communism and various theories regarding the advent of the post 1967- dictatorship, leaving aside other important issues, such as the development of Greek political culture and its relationship with European developments.

Like the Christian Democratic parties in the 1950s and 1960s, the National Radical Union was a significant key player in the Greek political system between the years 1956 and 1967. The dynamics of both the Christian Democratic parties and the NRU in the postwar liberal democracies cannot be explained only in terms of changes in social structure and political economy. Instead we should also focus on their organizational patterns and their political identity to understand the principles governing their success and to explain their electoral success.

This paper aims to approach a poorly researched aspect of Greek political history, namely, the ideology of the NRU as this was reflected in its founding proclamation of 4 January 1956. The NRU's founding declaration was the first, and for some time the only, ideological proclamation of a party which dominated Greek political life for almost a decade. It remained the ideological cornerstone for Karamanlis's policies throughout 1956-63, including options of fundamental importance for the country, such as the strategies of economic growth, social priorities, Greece's international position, or even,

in later stages, the European option. The declaration reflected Karamanlis's perceptions for his party's position in the Greek political spectrum, and provided the main instrument for the political mobilization of the NRU's masses during the years of its electoral supremacy.

Moreover, it will be attempted to proceed to a comparison between the agendas of the NRU and the European Christian Democracy underlying the features that were common in their identity. Taking into account different historical traditions, constitutional conditions and national dilemmas, but also common challenges in European reconstruction and cold war priorities, the extent to which the Christian Democratic Parties influenced the NRU's priorities and political discourse is a question of crucial importance in evaluating post-civil war Greek politics.

Some questions I would like to pose are the following: What meaning does the notion of NRU policies have? What is the connecting link between the various Christian democratic parties in Europe and the NRU considering the different historical traditions, constitutional conditions and national dilemmas? In other words, are there any common features among the Christian Democratic parties and the NRU?

It must be noted that this paper is just a first attempt to interpret the political profile of the NRU in the scope of the wider European framework and the Christian Democratic culture. To prove the unity of ideas, we will co-examine the founding proclamation of the NRU on the one hand and the fundamental features of the Christian Democratic movement on the other. This comparison is based on the centre-right orientation that both the NRU and the Christian Democratic parties had. In addition, they were parties in government across national boundaries and they enjoyed a high cohesiveness which was much higher than that of the rival Social Democracy and the Greek centrist parties.

Christian Democracy in Europe

Christian Democratic parties descend from the family of political Catholicism. Although almost all of them were non-confessional parties in the postwar era, they were heavily dependent on their Christian roots. A lot of Christian Democratic features are identified

with the Christian social teaching such as the interventionist role of state and the principle of subsidiarity¹. The term “Christian Democracy” corresponds to the progressive wing of the Catholic political and social movements and implies the reaction of Catholic democrats to liberalism, to the industrial revolution and to socialism. However, the formation of confessional parties in Western Europe and the prewar origins of the Christian Democratic parties are beyond the scope of this presentation. Fogarty and Irving are the major scholars that have made a comparative analysis on the formation and the development of Christian Democratic parties². More recently, Kalyvas concentrated on how political identities and parties were formed studying the origins and shifting identity of confessional parties in the European continent during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries³.

On the other hand, there were never confessional parties in Greece⁴. To cut a long story short, contrary to what happened in Catholic Europe where the involvement of the Catholic Church was a fundamental part of political ethics, the Orthodox Church has not established political parties in order to face anticlericalism, which was never high in Greece. Besides, both conservative and liberal political elites avoided to build their political parties on religious lines for mass mobilization purposes. Needless to say, orthodox identity was always dominant and above political parties on the one hand and on the other religion kept its social and cultural character as it did not constitute a political identity, a legacy coming from the ottoman past. It is indicative that religious faith was not transformed into a politicized cleavage neither during the age of National Schism or during the Civil War

After 1945, the Christian Democratic parties had a spectacular growth given that these parties were in power in five major European countries such as Germany, Italy,

¹ Van Rompuy, Herman, “Formulating the Christian-Social Approach and Making it More Concrete”, in European People’s Party, *Efforts to Define a Christian Democratic “Doctrine”*, Occasional Papers, Brussels, 1989, pp. 13-15.

² Fogarty, M. P., *Christian Democracy in Western Europe, 1820-1953*, Routledge and Kegan Paul, London, 1957; Irving, R. E. M., *The Christian Democratic Parties of Western Europe*, George Allen and Unwin, London, 1979.

³ Kalyvas, Stathis N., *The Rise of Christian Democracy in Europe*, Cornell University Press, New York, 1996.

⁴ Definitions of confessional parties vary. Here we adopt Kalyvas’ definition: “I define as confessional those parties that use (or have used when formed) religion (or issues related to religion or the church) as a primary issue for political mobilization and the construction of political identities”, see Kalyvas, Stathis N., *The Rise of Christian Democracy in Europe*, Cornell University Press, New York, 1996, p. 19.

Austria, Belgium and the Netherlands. These parties were formed simultaneously but rather independently in each country. This is evident if we take into account the exceptional case of Italy and that of Germany. Christian Democracy was founded in Italy in 1943, when the country was liberated by the Allies. Its origins were going back to the Italian Popular Party (Partito Popolare Italiano) and soon became the main leading force in the postwar Italy under De Gasperi. Parallely, the Christian Democratic Union (CDU) was established in West Germany in 1945 playing a pivotal role in the government after 1949. In general, from 1945 till the end of 1980s Christian Democracy emerged as a major political force either in government or in opposition. Besides, the European federation of Christian Democratic parties was a dominating power in the European parliament⁵.

Christian Democratic Cooperation

We should take into account that Christian Democratic cooperation was ideologically weak and not very unified⁶. Contrary to proletarian internationalism, the Christian Democratic parties generally lacked an international calling. They had not formed a common strategy and they lacked any solid social policy even though they shared common values and the social teaching of the Christian tradition. Besides, the Christian Democratic parties never adopted a common manifest or a sort of common electoral platform. It must be noted that there was not a Christian Democratic transnational party in the 1950s and 1960s as political parties, by definition, become transnational only when they develop supranational organizations that cooperate across national boundaries. National parties of that period are neither members of a wider transnational party nor have individual party members in supranational executives. The Council of Europe, the United Nations, or the EEC could not be interpreted yet as supranational governments. In this sense, Christian Democratic parties paid more attention to national identity and not to transnational one.

⁵ Jansen, Thomas, *The European People's Party: Origins and Development*, Macmillan Press, London and New York, 1998, pp. 31-70.

⁶ Papini, Robert, *The Christian Democrat International*, Rowman and Littlefield Publishers, New York and London, 1997, pp. 267-268.

However, the incorporation of certain normative values such as liberal democracy against Marxist or market economy against the socialist form of development allowed the consciousness of a transnational Christian Democratic culture. Up to a certain degree, the common origin and values between the Christian Democratic parties cannot be denied. This was obvious for instance in the “Christmas Program” of the Belgium PSC-CVP in 1945: “The party is Christian since it wishes to take as its basis those human values that are the foundation of our Western culture and civilization. Historically speaking, these have been brought to us by Christianity; today, however, they provide a common heritage for believers and non-believers alike”. What is more, the formulation of a European identity and the idea of European integration that was adopted and promoted by the Christian Democrats allowed to a certain degree the cooperation between the Christian Democratic parties⁷. Thus, a decentralized and soft cooperation gradually developed. Furthermore, transnational policies were undertaken on several aspects of policy-making giving the opportunity to the political parties to share information and to form a communication network⁸.

The ongoing consolidation of transnational political initiatives in the early cold war era could not but affect Greece. The Greek statesmen turned towards institutions of multilateral cooperation which defined a common framework of security and economic policy. After 1945, Greece did not evolve independently of such international influence in promoting its reconstruction plan and economic development. On the contrary, it tried to integrate itself to the western institutions of economic cooperation and development – see for example the drachma’s participation in the Bretton Woods system. Greece was also a founding member of the Committee of European Economic Cooperation that led to the establishment of OECD. It also joined the Council of Europe and was admitted into GATT.

Like Jean Monnet, Robert Schuman, Konrad Adenauer and Alcide de Gasperi, Constantine Karamanlis supported European integration and started negotiations in the late 1950s in order to associate Greece with the Community. European federation was

⁷ Irving, R. E. M., *The Christian Democratic Parties of Western Europe*, George Allen and Unwin, London, 1979, pp. 235-252.

⁸ Papini, Robert, *The Christian Democrat International*, Rowman and Littlefield Publishers, New York and London, 1997, pp. 49-158

seen as a western cultural group or entity, of which Greece was almost axiomatically a member. In this sense, Karamanlis was fully aware that European integration based on the common values of democracy, economic cooperation and supranational institutions would safeguard the orientation of Greece to Western Europe. In essence, Karamanlis had the opportunity to collaborate with the European leaders during the negotiation process and to develop ideas more about European integration and less about general political and social issues. Needless to say, these contacts were mostly personal and did not lead to any permanent link or inter-party cooperation between the NRU and other Christian Democratic parties.

Founding Proclamation of the NRU

The announcement of the establishment of the new party took place in Karamanlis' house in the presence of Greek and foreign journalists. Apart from George Rallis, politician of the right-wing camp and minister of the Prime Minister's Office, no one else were there. Karamanlis explained that it was his choice to be alone at that moment and that there was no kind of communication or consultation between him and his political friends implying that he was the only one responsible for the decision to create a new party.

Moreover, Karamanlis' fundamental goal was to form a new party that would be a breaking point to the Greek political culture as well as the party formation. He justified the three words making up the title of his party with the following way: the word "National" indicated the contradiction to the Left while the term "Radical" referred to the progressive character of the new movement. The third word, "Union", meant to bring together the Center and the Right, the progressives and the conservatives⁹. The NRU was not a mere clone of its political predecessor, Papagos' Greek Rally. In what follows, I shall try to prove that NRU tried to upgrade the political discourse and image of the right-wing movement in Greece.

Karamanlis' starting point was to overcome the political incongruities of the past between republicans and royalists – venizelists and antivenizelists – who were

⁹ Founding Proclamation of the NRU, 4 January 1956, in Svolopoulos, Constantinos (general editing), *Constantinos Karamanlis: Archive, Facts and Texts*, vols. 1-12, Athens, 1992-1997, (in Greek), vol. 1, p. 337.

represented by the Liberal Party and the People's Party respectively. This was the dominant cleavage in the Greek politics of the interwar era. The origins of the conflict go back to the World War I when Venizelos, prime minister and leader of the Liberal Party, openly disagreed with King Constantine about country's orientation to the war. The polarization in the domestic politics led to the civil war of 1915-1917. The "National Schism", as it is well known, was reproduced by both the Liberal Party and the People's Party during the turbulent interwar era and left its own mark on the individual and collective memory.

The new party almost immediately not only superseded the People's Party and the minor right-wing parties but also dominated in the central political scene. It managed to win an electoral majority on three successive elections: 1956, 1958, and 1961. This was unique for the postwar Greece, since not even a political party had succeeded in this till then. In what follows, I shall underpin the main points of the ideology and the programmatic principles that NRU promoted. Given that all political parties work out the ethics and the politics of their age, the NRU cannot be an exception in the above rule.

Its founding proclamation was built entirely on the terms of "peaceful revolution" and "reform". Both of these terms sound socialistic in their sense, but the conception of "revolution" given by the NRU was apparently much different. It seems clear that Karamanlis has not hesitated to incorporate the term "revolution" that was so much connected with the socialist dialectic. Furthermore, "revolution" attached to class divisions and included armed activity. It may sound paradoxical that Karamanlis used this term as the cornerstone of his party ideology although the Greek bourgeois parties had met not only the utter disclamation of the postwar regime but also the violent operations of the Communist Party during the Civil War in the late 1940s.

Besides, Karamanlis himself was a strong opponent of communism and he never tried to cooperate with the left political camp. Nevertheless, he incorporated the above term making it part of the NRU's political vocabulary. He attributed to it a new concept that was far away from socialist thought. Karamanlis' "peaceful revolution" was attached to the rejection of nineteenth century *laissez-faire* liberalism and to the reforming character of conservatism implying the new role a modern party ought to play. He constantly underlined the necessity to go beyond the limited framework of the interwar

ideologies. Moreover, he was fully convinced that the state should guide the economic activity and that economic development along with welfare state should be the best guarantee for democracy.

It must be noted that the term “revolution” did not correlated, apparently, to the Bolshevik Revolution or to the French Revolution but to the American Revolution of 1776. In this context, the revolutionary movement of 1776 had a “positive” sense as the establishment of the American constitution defended the human rights. This “good” context of “revolution” was addressed by Luigi Sturzo, the internationally prominent theorist and Catholic priest, when he referred to the new role of the Christian Democratic parties in 1944: “Catholics in political life will no longer represent the old clericalism, the systematic opponent of modern parliamentary and democratic forces; they will not be afraid of the social conquests of the proletariat; they are responsible for a progressive and gradually “revolutionary” movement (in the good sense, as the American movement of 1776 was “revolutionary”)”¹⁰. The catholic meaning that lies beneath was that Christian Democracy was seen as the response to the alleviation of economic and social misery that industrialization and urbanization entailed. In addition, Christian Democracy was in favor of political action only in promotion of human and social rights rejecting the idea of military means.

Like most non-communist Greek parties of the postwar era, the NRU lacked a structured mechanism to promote its discourse. The political identity and the assessment of governmental priorities of the NRU were defined by its founder in general. The NRU’s political ideology was first stated in the party’s founding declaration of January 1956. Karamanlis announced the establishment of his party in the public presenting a whole set of ideological principles. However, we should take into consideration that Karamanlis, just like European Christian Democrats who did not often speak of their doctrine, was reluctant to make extensive references to theory or to wider philosophical issues. As a matter of fact, we cannot justify and explain the values and principles of these parties unless we turn to their political action.

¹⁰ Papini, Robert, *The Christian Democrat International*, Rowman and Littlefield Publishers, New York and London, 1997, footnote 20, p.118.

Besides, Thomas Jansen, ex general secretary of the European Union of Christian Democrats People's Party (EPP) and of the European Union of Christian Democrats (EUCD), points out that Christian Democracy might not be an intellectual and political movement but it offers an alternative to ideologies in actual politics¹¹. Like Christian Democratic parties in Western Europe, the NRU inspired by the conservative tradition and developed as a counter-position to communism and to superficial yet tense quarrels of the National Schism.

It must be noted that the NRU was a party in government between the years 1956-1963 and like the Christian Democratic parties in Western Europe put emphasis more on problems and policy-making than on ideology. Insofar as Karamanlis' party was strongly identified with the government, it is too difficult to make a distinction between the party and the government during these years. His goal was to create a "new" party that would operate in the centre of the politico-ideological spectrum offering a new perspective and a new dynamics to the electorate. The maneuvering between 19th century liberalism and socialism displays the most convergent feature between the NRU and Christian Democracy. Like the Christian Democratic leaders, Karamanlis was convinced that a middle ground could be found between laissez-faire capitalism and socialism. As it will be shown more analytically below, his idea was indicated in the second adjective composing the NRU's name, "Radical".

Karamanlis himself, although initially he seemed to intend to create a modern mass party, avoided to develop the party's own structures in the end. Instead, he worked heavily only on the accomplishment of his governmental duties laying aside the strengthening of the party organs. To a large extent, the party tended to rely on the state and the charisma of its leader for the reproduction of its power. By choosing to sacrifice the party development in favor of governmental tasks, the NRU was nothing more than a typical ruling party of its age. Besides Karamanlis' leading style was very much closed to the political behavior of the foremost Christian Democratic leaders as he addressed himself to be statesman more than party man.

¹¹ Jansen, Thomas, "The European People's Party Reflects on Its Intellectual Basis in order to Strengthen Its Sense of Direction", in European People's Party, *Efforts to Define a Christian Democratic "Doctrine"*, Occasional Papers, Brussels, 1989, pp. 7-10, here p. 8.

In the early postwar years, the foremost European statesmen, including Karamanlis, revealed themselves to embed liberal democracy and especially economic development. Seeing ideology as politics in action, we could focus on the governmental policy-making in a further research. It must be noted that political ideology is a systemized set of opinions that has been hierarchically ordered to a certain degree¹². The hierarchy of principles and objectives is defined considerably by the political and economic framework or dilemmas that a party in government has to cope with. As rational choice theory indicates political ideology is connected with objective factors and socio-economic structures. Political actors, therefore, have specified preferences and adopt such strategies that maximize their utility within given constraints¹³. The governmental priorities and the policies setting in motion reveal what problems are considered the most salient for the development of society. This might offer a clear vision of the party's political and ethical culture insofar as the governmental personnel is identified with the leading figures of the NRU.

In this sense, a closest consideration of the actors who formulate the decision-making might give enough evidence in the analysis of the above task. There has been no serious effort to look at the conservatives themselves in order to answer such questions as: who were they and what characteristics did they share. A future research should provide tentative answers to these questions.

“Union”

Insofar as the three words making up the NRU represent an ideological component we should analyze its founding proclamation under this scope. To begin with, the first part refers to the cleavage between royalists and republicans of the interwar era. To a certain degree, despite the turbulent decade of 1940s, the World War II, the country's occupation, and the Civil War, its influence was still powerful in the beginning of 1950s. This was apparent in the years 1950-1952, when all the party coalitions formed in the

¹² Dierickx, Guido, “Christian Democracy and Its Ideological Rivals: An Empirical Comparison in the Low Countries”, in Hanley, David (eds.), *Christian Democracy in Europe: A Comparative Perspective*, Pinter Publishers, London and New York, 1994, pp. 15-30, here p. 15-16.

¹³ Downs, Anthony, *An Economic Theory of Democracy*, Harper Collins, New York, 1957.

base of the afore-mentioned distinction. More specifically, the centrist governments of the years 1950-1952 were coalitions between the main leaders of the liberal camp, all coming from the Liberal Party of Eleutherios Venizelos: Nicolaos Plastiras, Sophocles Venizelos, and George Papandreou.

On the opposing side, there were the military and political winners of the Civil War. In order to face the communist threat and the guerilla bands the conservative and the liberal camp drew closer, at least in the short term. Both of these groups were labeled as “nationally-minded”, because they “saved” the country defending the nation’s traditions and, as a result, they set the rules for the postwar politics. The political lineage of the conservative camp went back to the royalists and the People’s Party, whilst the liberal one stemmed from the republicans and the Liberal Party.

Although their ideological origins were completely diverse, these two wide coalitions shared a consensus with regard to the postwar political and economic objectives. Above all, their common distaste for communist ideology worked as cement between them helping them to diminish the vast differences of the past. This was comprehensible when both of them opted for King George’s return to Greece in the plebiscite of September 1946 putting an end with this way to the long overdue question of the role of the monarchy in the domestic politics. The liberals tacitly accepted the monarchy in view of the new challenge coming from the Left Parliamentarianism. The democratic institutions and the value of liberal democracy were fundamental in their ideology too. Apart from this, they had common priority to retain the country in the West. Besides, they never doubted the free market economy and they agreed in the interventionist role of state and the model of the postwar reconstruction and development.

The argument here is that there were relatively minor disagreements between the conservatives and the liberals in the postwar era. The division between them was not clear-cut as they were not separated by definitive ideological differences and programmatic goals. In this context, we should interpret those attempts, sporadic and incomplete in most cases, aiming at superseding the National Schism. Kanellopoulos was the first to ask the breakdown of the division lines between royalists and republicans when he founded his first political party in December 1935 named “National United Party”. During the years of occupation, there was also a frequent communication and

exchange of ideas between politicians and economists coming from opposing camps such as Kanellopoulos, Tsatsos, Papandreou, Zolotas, Aggelopoulos, Mavros, Svolos, and Karamanlis¹⁴. In the election of 1946, the first elections after the country's liberation, G. Papandreou, S. Venizelos and P. Kanellopoulos joined their efforts as co-leaders of a new party labeled "National Political Union". To a certain degree, these highlights depict a tacit convergence between the two camps, on which Karamanlis was able to build at the moment of the NRU's creation.

When Marshall Papagos founded the Greek Rally on 6th of August 1951, his aim, mainly, was to reestablish the right-wing camp that had started to be fragmented. In November 1950, P. Kanellopoulos and S. Stefanopoulos founded the "Populist Uniting Party" and absorbed a lot of deputies from the People's Party, Karamanlis was among them. Spyros Markezinis' "New Party" was another party which detached deputies from the People's Party. After all these removals, the latter had lost the broadness of the past and it was represented only by its leader Constantine Tsaldares and his group. Both the Populist Uniting Party and the New Party were dissolved and their leaders, Kanellopoulos, Stefanopoulos, and Markezinis, joined Papagos' Greek Rally.

The first stage of such a unified initiative was the creation of Papagos's Greek Rally in 1951; by the next year, the Rally attracted most of the leading personalities of the Right, as well as some prominent centrists, for example former Governor of the Bank of Greece and former Prime Minister Emmanuel Tsouderos who became one of the leading figures of the Greek Rally¹⁵. Besides, George Papandreou joined the Greek Rally as an independent politician.

Later on, when Karamanlis founded his party, the consolidation of the right-wing camp and the incorporation of liberal politicians were continued. According to the proclamation of the NRU, the elections of 1956 should be the landmark of a new political phase characterized by new political parties and the supremacy of new leaders and politicians. The division between liberals and conservatives, as they came out after the National Schism of 1915, was considered anachronistic and responsible for the

¹⁴ For a further analysis, see Χατζηβασιλείου, Ευάνθης, *Ο Ελληνικός Φιλελευθερισμός στο Σταυροδρόμι: Η «Σοσιαλίζουσα» Φάση, 1934-1944*, Σιδέρης, Αθήνα, 2003.

¹⁵ The 69 out of the 300 candidates of the Greek Rally in the elections of 1952 had cooperated with the centrist parties in the past. See Νικολακόπουλος, Ηλίας, *Η Καχεκτική Δημοκρατία: Κόμματα και Εκλογές, 1946-1967*, Πατάκης, Αθήνα, 2001, footnote 121, p. 161.

shortcomings of the Greek political life. The outcome of the interwar division was unstable democratic institutions, political tensions, social unrest and ineffective governments¹⁶.

For all that, Karamanlis decided to create a new party in order to achieve coherence in ruling it on the one hand and on the other to safeguard his leadership and his party durability. Inevitably, almost all deputies of the Greek Rally adhered to the National Radical Union with the exception of the three leading figures who preferred to take some distance from Karamanlis' initiative. Thus, S. Stefanopoulos became a strong opponent of Karamanlis and he never cooperated with the NRU, whilst P. Kanellopoulos appeared on the NRU ticket as an independent candidate. Emmanuel Tsouderos, an old man by now, decided not to run for election again. Spyros Markezinis, the former leading figure of Papagos' party, had established a new party named "Progressives' Party" after his withdrawal from the Greek Rally in November 1954 and he was never invited to join the NRU.

After becoming Prime Minister in October 1955, Karamanlis constantly noted that he relied more on the new generation of politicians laying aside the leading figures of the Greek Rally who represented the political generation of the 1930s or the 1940s. In this context, the NRU continued the integration process of liberal politicians. Contrary to the Greek Rally before, that time the outcome of this policy was wider and attracted more eminent figures from the liberal camp, such as Constantinos Tsatsos, Evangelos Averoff, Grigorios Kasimatis, Dimitris Makris, Augoustos Theologitis, and S. Kotiades. A great difference, now, was that Karamanlis not only incorporated the liberal personnel but also he took advantage of their experience and ideas. It is evident that the leading group of the NRU composed, equally, of both conservatives and liberals, a fact that never happened under Papagos leadership. Furthermore, many of them, such as Tsatsos, Makris, Averoff, and Kassimatis, were very close to Karamanlis and played a major role in determining the policies and the ideology of the NRU.

Another observation that it could be made here is whether the term "Union" implies the idea of European integration or not. There was an increasing awareness

¹⁶ Founding Proclamation of the NRU, 4 January 1956, in Svolopoulos, Constantinos (general editing), *Constantinos Karamanlis: Archive, Facts and Texts*, vols. 1-12, Athens, 1992-1997, (in Greek), vol. 1, pp. 337-338.

among the Christian Democratic parties that certain problems could no longer be handled solely within the framework of national sovereignty. This is why these parties sought for international actors capable of asserting international views.

Karamanlis, like all the foremost Christian Democratic leaders – De Gasperi, Adenauer, Schuman, Monnet, Bidault – was fully aware that a common commitment to defense and democracy by the western European countries could give a new impulse to the country's attempts to follow successfully the way of capitalist development in the Cold War climate. However, it would be an “a posteriori” interpretation to argue that the idea of European integration was included in the term “Union”. For sure, Karamanlis had an Atlanticist orientation while he was in power but his belief in the Christian Democrats' idea of Europe was not visible yet in the beginning of 1956. Besides, the EEC was established one year after the establishment of the NRU and Karamanlis inaugurated negotiations with the Community in the late 1950s.

“Radical”

As was mentioned before, the aperture to the liberal camp cannot be isolated to the level of political personnel. It was also the issue of ideology and governmental principles that was lying beneath. Apparently, Karamanlis sought to engulf liberal values in the ideological construction of his party. This ideological shift from conservatism to liberalism or, even better, the combination of conservative and liberal values depicted to the term “radical”. Decoding this term is a sine qua non in the effort to understand the articulation of NRU's ideology especially in the political, economic, and social fields.

Greece's modernization was the central aim of the NRU. Karamanlis constantly returned to this subject in the founding declaration. Thus he said that the main drawback of Greece was the sketchy state organization and operation¹⁷. Thus, the public administration should be reformed in order to promote the nation interest. Another important issue was the perception of state by the Greek people. Karamanlis stressed that the state had ceased to encourage the nation activities and initiatives because it had

¹⁷ Founding Proclamation of the NRU, 4 January 1956, in Svolopoulos, Constantinos (general editing), *Constantinos Karamanlis: Archive, Facts and Texts*, vols. 1-12, Athens, 1992-1997, (in Greek), vol. 1, p. 338.

become hostage of the political divisions of the past on the one hand and the client-type relationship between politicians and voters on the other. As a matter of fact, a kind of distrust had been formed by the citizens towards the role of state itself. Here, a fundamental liberal democratic belief about social progress may be identifiable. According to Karamanlis, the state, by definition, promotes the public interest which, as a consequence, guarantees social progress. All these are parts of the same chain and function as a premise for the other. If the state does not work properly, this has bad effects on public interest and progress of social entity.

For all that, Karamanlis went on, the main problem of Greece was the political one. Karamanlis insisted on the mutual relationship between the political problem and all the other problems. According to him, the starting point of his political party should be the settlement of the political problem, which was translated into political instability and ineffective governments. Then, all the efforts should be concentrating on the overriding of the survival problems that the country was still facing. The increase of the national income and the improvement of the standard of living of the lower classes were tasks of highest importance. This would be achieved through “social justice”¹⁸. What is significant here is that the term “social justice” stemming from the social democratic discourse has been espoused as pivotal element of the ideological axes of the NRU. As it will be shown below, the concept of “social justice” was a major concern in Christian Democratic culture and originated from the philosophy of personalism.

Karamanlis did not omit to express his strong belief about the nation’s abilities that could be boundless under one condition: the creation of a modern state characterized by decisiveness, promptness, and justice¹⁹. This was the crux of the meaning of the term “radical”, which mostly applied on the role of state in the economy. Radicalism referred to the need for state intervention in the economy as well as the need for social solidarity. By adopting the term “radical”, Karamanlis attempted to locate the NRU between conservatism and 19th century liberalism. At the same time, the word “radical”

¹⁸ Founding Proclamation of the NRU, 4 January 1956, in Svolopoulos, Constantinos (general editing), *Constantinos Karamanlis: Archive, Facts and Texts*, vols. 1-12, Athens, 1992-1997, (in Greek), vol. 1, p. 338.

¹⁹ Founding Proclamation of the NRU, 4 January 1956, in Svolopoulos, Constantinos (general editing), *Constantinos Karamanlis: Archive, Facts and Texts*, vols. 1-12, Athens, 1992-1997, (in Greek), vol. 1, p. 338.

emphasized the progressive and the social character of the NRU. Karamanlis' aspiration was to create "a new political movement, which will become the meeting point of all the progressive and sound elements of the period"²⁰.

Historically, radicalism relates to a variant of liberalism as expressed in France of 19th century. In Greece this term appeared in the political thought of Eleutherios Venizelos²¹. Its use by Karamanlis illustrates a non dogmatic and a practical attitude of this leader towards political and economic problems. To a certain degree, the state tries to overcome the weakness of the national market and in the long run assumes a role in economic development by encouraging investment and trade competition. The role played by the state in industrialization and economic development has been part of the political consensus emerging in Greece.

In Europe, the increased role of the state was not only the result of the two World Wars, but also of the political urge to greater social solidarity. Besides, the growing knowledge of the science of economics altered totally the attitude towards economic phenomena. Thus, politicians were encouraged to control economic activity and face drastically events such as boom or depression, which were previously accepted fatally as phenomena of nature. In the 1950s and 1960s, the economic policy of the most Christian Democratic governments was set by people whose ideas were inspired by economic liberalism as well as the need to create a "social market". Einaudi in Italy and Erhard in West Germany were exceptional figures of that economic thought. Panagiotis Papaligouras, a key-figure in economic policy in Karamanlis' governments, was also another utter supporter of economic liberalism in Greece.

"National"

It is now time to turn the spotlight on the term "national". The focal point in the NRU ideology was the quests for both "reform" and "peaceful revolution". The NRU hoped to be the centre of "all the progressive and sound elements of the period". "Progressive" and

²⁰ Founding Proclamation of the NRU, 4 January 1956, in Svolopoulos, Constantinos (general editing), *Constantinos Karamanlis: Archive, Facts and Texts*, vols. 1-12, Athens, 1992-1997, (in Greek), vol. 1, p. 338.

²¹ Σβολόπουλος, Κωνσταντίνος, *Ο Ελευθέριος Βενιζέλος και η πολιτική κρίσις εις την αυτόνομον Κρήτην, 1901-1906*, Ίκαρος, Αθήνα, 1974, pp. 118-162.

“sound” was considered to be whoever was against the «corruptive impact of communism»²². Communism was regarded as the opponent ideological and political regime.

Besides, anticommunism was a recognizable feature of NRU’s ideological identity too because this attitude was connected with the “framework of real democracy”. Having this perception in mind, according to which the NRU identified with “real democracy”, it should be pointed out that an opposite way of thinking also existed. According to the latter, “communism” and “democracy” were uncompromising values. In this frame of thought, the memories and the experiences of the Civil War could be identified. That is why communism was considered as “corruptive”. As everywhere in the western world by that period, the basic line of political and social division established itself in the antithesis between Communism and Democracy.

From another perspective, Karamanlis’ reaction to the communist danger was not so much idealistic but rather pragmatic. His intention was not at all to face communism on a theoretical level in terms of a contest between the communist and the NRU doctrine. Instead, his focus was on the governmental level and his policy-making. The chronic inability of the previous governments should be replaced by a coherent and effective policy, able to visibly improve the country’s position and the standard of living of its people. The fight between “peaceful revolution” and communism was a fight against, political instability, the country’s poverty and, social injustice. According to Karamanlis’ syllogism, only when these problems would be solved, the communist threat would decrease.

Apart from the ideological battle between communism and liberal democracy, the interpretation of anti-communism also had another practical aspect, namely electoral success. Once Karamanlis decided to establish a new party and to enter into the electoral competition, he knew he should be effective in elections. No matter what the values and the goals are, a party must win votes. Seeking electoral support Karamanlis declared his revulsion to the socialist doctrine as the anti-communist syndrome was influential within the Greek society.

²² Founding Proclamation of the NRU, 4 January 1956, in Svolopoulos, Constantinos (general editing), *Constantinos Karamanlis: Archive, Facts and Texts*, vols. 1-12, Athens, 1992-1997, (in Greek), vol. 1, p. 338.

Hitherto the term “national” was analyzed on the grounds of anti-communism. Nevertheless, the above term employs a fundamental belief of liberal ideology which has to do with the perception of the nation and the concept of the people. The founding proclamation expressly noted that the NRU will embed the scope of real democracy and in this framework the nation, disciplined and optimistic, will undertake the difficult course of conquering a new type of life, which is the long-term objective of the people²³. It is evident that the term “people” is understood in the sense of the nation itself. In other words, the NRU identifies the nation with the people perceiving it as a holistic and indivisible entity that aims at the unification of the Greek people regardless of class boundaries. Thus, the national interest is strongly associated with the people as a whole and not only with a class. A necessary premise for the promotion of the national interest is the “disciplined” nation which is bound to act in the national framework and not outside of it. In the Greek case, the national framework was institutionalized by the constitution of 1952. On the other hand, the appeal to the “disciplined” nation reveals Karamanlis’ paternalistic way of governance and style of leadership. It is interesting that this kind of paternalistic or authoritarian behavior is also evident in most right-wing statesmen after the Second World War, such as Winston Churchill, Alcide De Gasperi, Konrad Adenauer and Charles de Gaulle.

Another concept of the human beings is related with the personalist vision which is also recognizable to all the Christian Democratic parties. Personalism taught by the Catholic intellectual Emmanuel Mounier emerged in the early 1930s and it was bound to be the basis for unity of thought among these parties²⁴. In Christian Democratic culture liberal individualism is incorporated under the scope of personalism²⁵. According to this philosophy, human beings are conceived as persons and society as a community of persons. Human beings and society are the two poles of the same system as they are tied up together and cannot be separated. Consequently, the self ought to behave with

²³ Founding Proclamation of the NRU, 4 January 1956, in Svolopoulos, Constantinos (general editing), *Constantinos Karamanlis: Archive, Facts and Texts*, vols. 1-12, Athens, 1992-1997, (in Greek), vol. 1, p. 338.

²⁴ Papini, Robert, *The Christian Democrat International*, Rowman and Littlefield Publishers, New York and London, 1997, pp. 3-7.

²⁵ Mounier, Emmanuel, *Personalism*, Routledge and Kegan Paul, London, 1952; Kelly, Michael, *The Cultural and Intellectual Rebuilding of France after the Second World War*, Palgrave, New York, 2004, pp. 127-154.

responsibility and dignity towards the community it belongs as it utterly depends on it for its prosperity. On the other hand, the development of freedom, creativity, and personal initiative are encouraged. This concept derives directly from the Christian social thought, which introduced the idea of the strong and dependent relationship between human beings and society.

The philosophy of personalism was bound to be a response to the expansion of totalitarianism in the 1930s and a defense against any new forms of totalitarianism after the end of the War. In the political field, personalism offers a whole set of principles which serve as a frame of reference for political action such as the principle of subsidiarity, the priority of the common good, the necessity of private property, and the primacy of social objectives over economic success²⁶. Solidarism appears not only in the Christian Democratic discourse but also in the founding proclamation of the NRU. This concept may emerge from social democratic collectivism but in the Christian Democratic context it perceives a new meaning. According to Christian Democracy, the human beings can fulfill their personality and realize themselves solely in the community²⁷. Although there is no evidence that Karamanlis had studied such ideas in the 1930s, it is possible to detect the influence of other leading intellectuals with whom he was associated since the 1940s, such as Constantine Tsatsos or Panayiotis Kanellopoulos.

The last point that should be clarified is the role of the party towards the national interest and, generally, the nation. Karamanlis made clear in the proclamation that his party served the country taking the initiative to form a new political power and, thus, he invites all those that share the idea of a political enlightenment and believe in the principles of social progress and social justice²⁸. The conception that lies beneath is the political parties, by definition, pursue the national interest and work against the class conflict. Karamanlis not being dogmatic was a moderate politician who was akin to borrow ideological references of his political opponents. He attributed a liberal sense in

²⁶ Dabin, Paul, "The Search for the Intellectual Basis of Christian Democracy", in European People's Party, *Efforts to Define a Christian Democratic "Doctrine"*, Occasional Papers, Brussels, 1989, pp. 18-26.

²⁷ Van Kersbergen, Kees, "The Distinctiveness of Christian Democracy", in Hanley, David (eds.), *Christian Democracy in Europe: A Comparative Perspective*, Pinter Publishers, London and New York, 1994, pp. 31-47, here pp. 32-34.

²⁸ Founding Proclamation of the NRU, 4 January 1956, in Svolopoulos, Constantinos (general editing), *Constantinos Karamanlis: Archive, Facts and Texts*, vols. 1-12, Athens, 1992-1997, (in Greek), vol. 1, p. 338.

the term “social progress” emphasizing the equality of opportunity that should be guaranteed by the state. The social progress is identified with the national interest and the NRU intends to be a political party that promotes these quests uniting the society. Karamanlis, therefore, never sought to be supported by one class exclusively. He aimed at mediating the interests of the various classes of society and the moderation of the antagonism between labor and capital. From a political point of view, this is a hint against the role of the Left during the Civil War, when the Communist Party of Greece did not respect the values of liberal democracy and attempted to divide the Greek society.

The originality of the afore-mentioned perception of community and public good lies in the Christian Democratic doctrine²⁹. There is a distinction between the concept of “one” and the notion of “we”: the former represents the impersonal world of totalitarianism while the latter sketches the world of dialogue and solidarity which identified with the main value of democracy. According to the dialectic of Christian Democracy, the human being is being placed in the center of political action and society, and has the task of promoting the good of all. In this basis, political parties as rulers of state community are identified with the promotion of common good that stabilizes democracy. Good for all or, in other words, national interest is reflected by policies such as the maintaining of defense and security, the establishment of economic and social rights, the promotion of social justice and solidarity. To sum up, the interlinking of national interest with the democratic institutions is among the principal concern of Christian Democratic parties. Apparently, Karamanlis and Christian Democratic leaders being strong supporters of democracy could never accept the argument that democratic institutions should be sacrificed for the attainment of economic and social objectives.

Conclusions

By the end of the World War II, an entire new set of issues came up in the European continent. The major challenges in Europe were the safe passage from totalitarian or authoritarian regimes to democratic institutions, the reconstruction, the promotion of

²⁹ Papini, Robert, “The Tradition and Present-Day Relevance of Christian Democratic Thought”, in European People’s Party, *Efforts to Define a Christian Democratic “Doctrine”*, Occasional Papers, Brussels, 1989, pp. 36-46.

modernization and the welfare state, and the European integration. It might be difficult to delineate Christian Democratic theory as it seems to be a mixture of conservative, liberal, and socialist thought. Christian Democratic dialectic lacks the clarity of other political ideologies, since it focused on practical politics. Christian Democratic parties have not invested on production of intellectual theories making the relation between theory and political practice to be based on rather weak bonds.

The NRU shows great resemblance to the Christian Democratic parties on the grounds that its political and economic program was not directed by an articulated political and social philosophy but by a set of practical concepts and loose ideological principles which bear a striking resemblance to the Christian Democratic agendas. Hardly has Karamanlis emphasized on social and economic theories apart from his profound attachment to the liberal democracy, to the right of private property, to the interventionist role of state, and to anti-communism. Conversely, his political program was free of theoretical limitations and ideological orders. Karamanlis' governmental tasks must be interpreted much more in political and managerial terms and less in ideological terms. He loathed dogma and this was reflected in the founding declaration of his party.

Once Karamanlis announced the establishment of the NRU, he presented a set of generalized ideological principles for the party. His major intention was to form a political party that would serve as a breaking point to domestic politics. Thus, NRU declared its commitment to parliamentary democracy and stood firmly against communism. What was different, it was the integration of eminent Liberal politicians on the one hand and liberal discourse on the other. Karamanlis' party shares features of the conservative and liberal tradition. According to the founding declaration, the NRU was a manifestation of a "reforming" political power that sought to possess the middle ground between communism and 19th century liberalism. From this point of view, the ideological affiliation with Christian Democracy is rather apparent as the "middle ground" was the principal task. The Christian Democratic parties sought to comprise liberalism and collectivism rejecting simultaneously the extreme doctrines of capitalism and Marxism³⁰.

³⁰ Irving, R. E. M., *The Christian Democratic Parties of Western Europe*, Allen and Unwin, London, 1979, p. xviii.

It needs to be emphasized that this was the first time in postwar Greece that a ruling conservative party was able to elaborate a coherent set of ideological principles that would serve as a pivotal guide for its governmental actions. Besides, another exceptional and unique feature of the conservative camp was the governmental stability and continuity for eleven successive years embedded by both the Greek Rally and the NRU. From this point of view, it is superficial to interpret the NRU merely as a variant of conservatism although the ideological background and the majority of its political personnel come from the People's Party and the Greek Rally. As mentioned before, the NRU's distinctiveness lies in the synthesis of both conservative and liberal values and in the reorientation of the Greek conservatism.

It can be said that the founding proclamation of the NRU delineated a matrix of ideas and values that constituted the ideological frame of the NRU's political action. In the context of the Greek mid 1950s, the NRU's distinctive name indicated a new set of ideological references emphasizing its "reforming" orientation. Although the NRU was not a Christian Democratic party itself, there are similarities with the European Christian Democracy in terms of ideology and political culture. The NRU shared not a few fundamental principles and values with the Christian Democratic parties. On the other hand, it adopted the political discourse of the broader Christian Democratic tradition adjusting it to the Greek postwar reality.