

Attic Chronicle by Phocion

KGB-inspired purges

Papandreou hits law-enforcement agencies, preparing for an early revival of civil war.

On May 6, pompous ceremonies were held in Athens and all provincial capitals, in which some 10 million dossiers of the Greek Central Intelligence Service (KYP) were ostentatiously burned before a cheering public. The dossiers contained national-security-grade information accumulated over the past 40 years, since the Greek Civil War.

Prime Minister Andreas Papandreou proclaimed that the final elimination of all file information on subversive elements now inaugurates a new era of democratic freedoms in his country. He neglected to say that before the burnings, all standard, non-security-related data in the KYP files which might be used for plain political blackmail were copied and preserved for the personal use of the prime minister, who is, as of last February, also the chief of the KYP.

Nor did Mr. Papandreou mention that under his personal supervision, a brand-new computerized filing system was set up at KYP headquarters, this time designed to accumulate data against conservative, moderate, and other opponents of his regime.

What has in effect occurred is that, at a single stroke, in April and early May, every last trace of KGB and KGB-controlled assets and operations in Greece and the Balkans was erased from the institutional memory of the Greek state's intelligence and national security organization, and replaced by an intelligence filing system designed to track the enemies of the Soviet KGB in the area.

The spectacular dossier-burning ceremonies were preceded by a series of incendiary actions by Papandreou and his ministers, meant to fan the flames of a renewed civil war. These measures included a massive purge in the officer corps of the National Gendarmerie and other law-enforcement agencies. The trigger was an April 7 incident which had been designed as a pre-election political provocation by Andreas Papandreou's Marxist Minister of Public Order, G. Skoularikis.

On April 7, the sleepy provincial town of Agrinion in western Greece was stirred to animation, when the head of the conservative opposition New Democracy Party, Evangelos Averoff-Tositsas, held a rally in its main square. An enthusiastic crowd of over 20,000 gathered to hear Papandreou's main national opponent. In his speech, Averoff made a special appeal to the Socialist prime minister to help preserve a climate of political tranquility in the period before the June 17 European Parliament elections.

At the end of Mr. Averoff's rally and after the crowds dispersed, 800 thugs armed with clubs, spiked steel belts, and screwdrivers, launched into a rampage of violence, attacking cars, burning posters, and damaging property. Mr. Averoff protested the violence and asked for the assistance of Mr. Papandreou's government. The Papandreou government denied that any violence had taken place and characterized the thugs as "peaceful citizens" expressing their sentiments

about Mr. Averoff's speech.

The following morning, however, the chief law-enforcement officer in that region, Brigadier Gen. M. Niaros, commandant of the gendarmerie for western Greece, sent a confidential report to the Minister of Public Order identifying the 800 violent thugs as organized teams of the Communist Party (KKE) and of Papandreou's own party, the PASOK. Minister of Public Order G. Skoularikis moved to suppress the brigadier general's report. The parliament in Athens somehow obtained a copy and had it published in the daily press. In retaliation, the Minister of Public Order removed the gendarmerie commandant from his post, and put out a public communiqué accusing the New Democracy Party of harboring "right-wing fascist" elements which pose the threat of dictatorship.

Large-scale sacking and transfers of law-enforcement personnel ensued throughout western and northern Greece. These purges are reportedly continuing after the May 6 "burning of the dossiers." Papandreou and his ministers are de-fanging Greece's law-enforcement agencies to prepare for a revival of civil war in coordination with the Soviet KGB and its special spetsnaz deployments into Greece.

On April 17, Prime Minister Papandreou had a lengthy meeting with the head of the KKE, Charilaos Florakis, a civil-war butcher who spent 25 years of exile in the East bloc, to coordinate the two parties' "strategy of tension." This meeting signaled Papandreou's final rejection of President Caramanlis' agonized pleas for a climate of "tranquility" for the coming election period. Within a week, Florakis was on an Aeroflot plane to Moscow for consultations with the Soviet KGB. As of last report he had not returned to Athens.