

Evangelos Averoff-Tossizza, *By Fire and Axe. The Communist Party and the Civil War in Greece, 1944-1949*. Translated by Sarah Arnold Rigos. New Rochelle, N. Y.: Caratzas Brothers, 1978. xiv, 438 pp.

First published in French in 1973, this work is pre-eminently a military analysis, emphasizing not only strategy and tactics but individual campaigns and particular battles as well.

As military history the work is well written (though both the English translation and the proof-reading leave something to be desired) as well as knowledgeable, fairminded and judicious. Its basic judgment is that Markos Vafiades was a military genius who could have won the war had he been able to raise 50,000 men in 1947, before American aid became available on any scale, whereas the maximum under his command at any one time was 30,000. Averoff is inclined to agree with Markos that Zachariades probably erred in establishing a provisional government and convert-in the guerilla force into a regular army. The attempt to fight pitched battles with the royal Greek army was doomed to failure while the government was never accorded recognition by any state, Socialist or otherwise. This was partly because the guerrillas proved unable to capture and hold any town sizeable enough to serve as the seat of the new government, as Averoff argues, but mainly, I would guess, because of the rising tension between Moscow and Belgrade over the prosecution of the war. In my view both the government on the mountain and the regularization of the army may also have been a successful effort on the part of Zachariades to discredit and downgrade his military commander, for fear that in victory Markos would replace him as the all-powerful *archigos* of a Greek Communist regime.

At the same time I agree with Stalin's judgment that, once the extent of American intervention became clear, the outlook for the insurgents was hopeless. Averoff suggests that in October, 1948, Washington considered withdrawal. I doubt this. I am inclined to think that under the leadership of Truman, Acheson and Marshall the Americans would have put in armed forces of their own, as they did in Korea, rather than withdraw. The stakes in Greece were high, being no less than control of the Eastern Mediterranean.

In addition to providing us with a military overview Averoff attempts to place the Greek struggle in its international context, something that should have come easy to a man who had served as foreign minister of his native land. On the free-world side of the firing line Averoff does well enough, pointing, for example, to the very useful role which UNSCOB played in convincing Western public opinion that the civil war was considerably more than a Greek affair. But on the Socialist side of the battle line his presentation borders on failure. Although he refers to a joint Yugoslav-Albanian-Greek command created at Bled in summer, 1947, he does not seem to understand that the third round (as indeed the second) were offshoots of a Partisan effort to create a federation of Balkan Communist states, a firmly held objective of the interwar Comintern. Albania, a Yugoslav satellite, was scheduled for early membership in this federation. The Bulgarians were divided on the issue but agreed to go along if the three parts of Macedonia could be joined together to form still another federal unit. In exchange for cooperating in this scheme, surrendering Greek Thrace to Bulgaria as well as Greek Macedonia to a united Macedonian republic and themselves joining the new Balkan union of Socialist soviet republics, the Kappa Kappa Epsilon was to be given every practicable assistance in the seizure of power.

And the Greek civil war was part and parcel of a larger offensive, perhaps led by one of Stalin's two crown princes, the redoubtable Andrei Zhdanov, and opposed by the other,

Georgi Melenkov. The foundation of the Cominform was part of this offensive as were indeed such widely scattered events as the Berlin blockade and the Korean war. Stalin was not enthusiastic about Tito's developing a second center of world Communism and when it became evident that the US would in fact provide the royal Greek government with massive assistance, he tried to bring the Yugoslav to account. The determination of the non-Communist Greek majority to preserve their freedom, which Averoff rightly emphasizes as the decisive element in the ultimate triumph of the royal government, thus combined with American aid to precipitate a split in the ranks of the Cominform and to father a dissident and deviationist Yugoslav Communism which, for more than thirty years, has proved a major Western asset. This broader element of democratic success largely escapes our author's attention.

Nor do the domestic sources of Communist strength receive extensive consideration. Averoff does suggest the existence of a correlation between Communist votes and the refugees from Asia Minor and he is unusual in giving due credit to the men on the mountain for their discipline and devotion. But in general, like most Greeks, he tends to understate the domestic strength of the Communist movement. The most notable case involves the Slavophone minority, whose villages were concentrated precisely in the region of Mounts Vitsi and Grammos. During the Axis occupation, Yugoslav Partisan agents organized a resistance movement among this population known as SNOF, which at one point clashed openly with ELAS. This force was placed at the disposition of the Democratic Army, providing it with a disproportionately high percentage of its personnel. At the beginning of 1948 a Communist source estimate the Slavophone component of the guerrilla army at 11,000 men, but the troops in the last action on Vitsi-Grammos were Slavic speakers to perhaps the extent of 80 per cent. Thus the promotion of three Slavophones to key positions in the provisional government in January, 1949, as well as the open allusion to an independent Macedonia, were probably not so much sell-outs to the new Bulgarian patron, as Averoff suggests, as efforts to retain the active loyalty of the Slavophones after Belgrade had ceased to support the Democratic Army.

Averoff was both an eyewitness and a participant in the Greek civil war. Even if his treatment of this epic struggle is somewhat lacking in contextual matters, as military history it is comprehensive, competent objective and, at times, moving.

Wayne State University

R. V. BURKS

Ritta Petrovna Grishina, *Vozniknovenie fashizma v Bolgarii, 1919-1925 g.*, with a foreword by Acad. Dimităr Kosev, Sofia: Izdatelstvo na BAN, 1976, 344 p.

After the intensive discussion on the phenomenon of Bulgarian fascism in the journal *Istoricheski pregled* during 1968, outstanding Bulgarian historians like Ilcho Dimitrov, Velichko Georgiev and Vladimir Migeve published a number of monographs on the period of monarcho-fascism after the coup d'état of May 1934 up to 1939. With few exceptions the initial period of Bulgarian fascism remained still unexplored. The reasons for this are to be sought in the problems of classifying the various governments after the fall of the Bulgarian Agrarian National Union's rule. Consensus was only reached in the fact, that the character of Prof. Aleksandăr Tsankov's government of 1923 to 1926 was "military-fascist". More