

Theodore A. Couloumbis, *Greek Political Reaction to American and NATO Influences*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1966. Pp. x + 250.

One of the most lamentable victims of the Cold War mentality which prevailed during the late 1940's and 1950's has been the scholarly study of foreign policy developments in the countries of Eastern and South-eastern Europe. In a world so obviously and dangerously bipolar there seemed to be little need for a detailed examination of policies which appeared to be no more than mere echoes of commands issued by the giants of the two blocs. This attractively simple picture has been the main cause for an almost total neglect on the part of the English-speaking academic community of developments in the Balkans. The only important exception has been Yugoslavia, whose tightrope performance since 1948 has fascinated students of Communism. Only in the past few years, as polycentrism has developed, has attention been drawn to the politics, domestic and international, of the Balkan countries.

Professor Theodore A. Couloumbis' book is a welcome addition to this trend toward detailed study of the mood of a small and troubled Balkan nation facing the harsh realities of the post-war years. While focusing on Greek foreign policy, it throws light on the broader question of inter-bloc politics at different phases of the East-West conflict. It tends to suggest that, in the case of Greece and on many occasions, the Cold War seriously restricted but never entirely silenced the national debate on foreign policy alternatives. This is clearly a subject of great interest not simply for the Balkan specialist but for the student of international power patterns as well.

Dr. Couloumbis has managed to remain an impartial observer while dealing with a highly involved and controversial subject. His value judgements — such as that Papandreou's Center Union "clearly committed a great error of judgement" in supporting the ratification of the Cyprus agreements (p. 145) — are few and hardly radical. His style is clear and readable.

The book's stated purpose is to analyse the "political reaction in Greece precipitated by membership in NATO and close relations with the United States" (p. 2). The period covered is roughly the years 1950 - 1962. The reader is warned that no "direct cause and effect relationship" between external influence and domestic reaction is being documented, instead, the author hopes "to illustrate and elucidate certain political trends, to attempt to capture the spirit of the times, to test for indications, to judge from impressions, to take the pulse of the politically arti-

culate regarding Greek political reaction to its NATO and Western associations" (p. 2). Because of the contemporary and fluid nature of the subject, conclusions are held to be tentative and cautious.

The book centers around a set of hypotheses stated at the outset and serving as the guide for the investigation that follows. Although the author believes that "to a large extent" his work has validated these hypotheses, he prudently invites the reader to make his own assessment. There is little doubt, however, that the propositions being tested represent in fact Dr. Couloumbis' conclusions.

As far as the reader can discern, Greek political reaction is assessed from a careful analysis of editorials, campaign speeches, parliamentary debates, and official statements, as published in the Greek press. This is in itself a valuable contribution to research, particularly for those interested in Balkan affairs who are not able to make direct use of press material in Greek. Mention is also made of an interview (a text of the questionnaire is appended) with "representative political figures in Greece," but this is said to have been of no significant value because the interviewees, "being in the midst of vigorous pre-election activity, could not devote any appreciable length of time to a full and searching discussion of matters included in the interview agenda" (p. 3). The only interviewee mentioned in the text is an Officer in the NATO, but whatever weight his opinion might otherwise have carried is destroyed by a footnoted warning that the Colonel's "actual views are not necessarily reflected in this account, since he may have been misinterpreted or the author may have surmised where there was no such intention on the part of the interviewee" (p. 163). On the other hand, many important published sources dealing with the period under investigation appear to have been ignored.

This is particularly true of Part I, which seeks to establish the historical background. Although a good part of it is based on Stephen G. Xydis' monumental *Greece and the Great Powers, 1944-1947*, it is altogether too brief to be useful to the general reader while the specialist will be disturbed by a number of sweeping statements and interpretations for which Xydis' minutely researched and carefully worded volume could not have been the source.

Thus one is surprised to read that Zervas' wartime EDES was "loosely the counterpart in Greece of General Draza Mihailović's Chetniks" (p. 15), and that "the British made a monumental effort" to hold Crete in 1940-41 (p. 113): Churchill called it instead a "half-scale effort," blaming the Middle East Command for taking action that was "far short

... of what was ordered and what we all desired" (*Their Finest Hour*, p. 549). Nor is it adequate to refer to the events of December 1944 as a "disagreement over the terms of disarming resistance groups" which "led the Communists to walk out" of Papandreou's Government (p. 17). Dimitrios G. Kousoulas' work on the Greek Communist movement and particularly his *Revolution and Defeat* leaves no doubt that the quarrel over the disbandment of partisan units was the pretext and not the cause for the "Second Round." Also, Dr. Couloumbis' explanation for the "Third Round" appears to be that behind the Greek Communist guerrillas the Soviet Union was engaged in a "direct bid to take over power in Greece" (p. 23). While this remains a commonly held position and a rather attractive theory in view of Soviet behavior elsewhere in Eastern Europe, it nevertheless is unsubstantiated and highly circumstantial. Kousoulas' account, based in part on KKE-ELAS sources, clearly suggests that the KKE was not simply the pliant agent of Moscow. Nor can one dismiss the testimony on this difficult question of Vladimir Dedijer (*Tito Speaks*, p. 331), and of Milovan Djilas (*Conversations with Stalin*, pp. 181-82).

The non-specialist could not be expected to comprehend the book's subject matter without some exposure to the realities of Greek political life. Accordingly Dr. Couloumbis undertakes the thankless task of providing his reader with a brief guide to the labyrinth of Greek parties. But the problem of classifying them along the Left-Center-Right spectrum remains insurmountable. Despite the author's careful warnings and the repeated explanation that Greek parties are essentially ephemeral personal followings, the uninitiated may easily become lost in the maze of comet-like personalities and ever-changing issues. Of course, for the student of the Greek political scene no such problem arises. On the other hand, the assertion that "The early postwar Greek governments... strove to achieve unity among the divided non-communist factions and at the same time to preserve a semblance of democracy to satisfy the apprehensive British and Americans" (p. 30, emphasis mine), shows little understanding of the drama of the postwar political situation. It is also hardly consistent with the observation (p. 31), that in his *Greece: American Dilemma and Opportunity*, Stavrianos is "perhaps indulging in some overcriticism of the Greek non-communist politicians."

But in the final analysis the evaluation of Dr. Couloumbis' work must center around the hypotheses that he sets out to validate. And it is here that the most serious questions need to be raised.

The reader has been warned against seeking proof in these pages

for a cause-and-effect relationship between external Western influence and Greek political reaction. He is thus being asked to concentrate on the reaction, as found in the Greek press, to a stimulus which remains throughout essentially assumed and is at no time carefully established and measured. However, as long as the stimulus itself has not been adequately investigated, analysis of public reaction to it is necessarily undertaken in something of a vacuum. Furthermore, Greek *political* reaction to Western influence, even when that influence is being taken for granted, cannot be adequately measured on the basis of press coverage alone and even less on campaign speeches and editorials. One needs to know much more than what was said in public before one can study true *political* reactions. Thus it would seem more accurate to say that the book analyses the *public* or *press* reaction in Greece to Western influences.

Consequently, although the debates recorded are fascinating, the reader keeps wishing that the author would get to the heart of the matter by seeking to verify his propositions, even on the basis of the inadequate information now available. Instead, propositions become premises and the scene assumes an aura of unreality.

Specifically, it may be significant to conclude that the Greek public saw membership in NATO as a "byproduct of Greek-American association" (p. 5). Yet the exact role of the American Government in the negotiations that led to the admission of Greece (and Turkey) to the Alliance remains to be ascertained. While Greek-American association became a fact with the Truman Doctrine, three years later and presumably with American acquiescence the NATO Council rejected Greece's application for membership. In this connection, British influence must not be overlooked. Also, while the Greek public may well have thought that the country's (and Turkey's) presence in the Alliance "contributed significantly to the strenght of the conventional armies of NATO" (p. 33), the impartial observer needs also to consider the possibility that this presence actually established for NATO an exposed flank whose key land problem — the defense of Thrace — was never solved to everyone's satisfaction.

Perhaps the book's most significant contention is that "the association with the United States and NATO has exerted direct and indirect pressures and influences on Greece" which benefited "Greek conservatism" (p. 5). Furthermore, "the effectiveness of American influence" is said to have "varied with the amount of aid which was extended at a given period" (p. 68). And in a somewhat different context the author

speculates that "Perhaps it is in the degree and nature of the reaction [to Western influences and directives] which is allowed to emerge and be heard in open Western societies that the major difference between 'Eastern satellites' and 'small Western allies' lies" (p. 10). These are potent statements and the student of Greek postwar diplomacy will need to take them seriously: they may well be correct. But again, there is little in the book to validate these claims: press analysis merely shows that in the opinion of certain campaigning politicians these assertions were true. The precise nature and magnitude of American involvement in Greek domestic affairs remains to be investigated. From the point of view of academic research it makes a great deal of difference whether the American Government confined itself to "recommending measures" (p. 192) and exercising "some guidance and review" (p. 87), or whether it actually obtained "measurable control over actions and decision-making of the Greek Government" (p. 192). If it were a case of "marked compatibility" between American aims and the policies of the freely-elected "Conservatives" (p. 194), who "acknowledged and welcomed American interference" (p. 192, in reference to the Peurifoy incident of 1952), then the situation was drastically different from early postwar events in Soviet-dominated Eastern Europe and the speculation quoted above loses significance.

Nor is it sound to argue that "The price for this [American] protection was that Greece would be committed to an anticommunist policy" (p. 87). Greek resistance to Communism clearly predates American involvement in that country's affairs. If it is true that Greek "coalition governments were automatically opposed by the United States because they contained the seeds of instability" (p. 61), the proof cannot possibly come from the Greek press alone. Similarly, although quite probably Washington's reaction to plans to reduce the strength of the Greek armed forces in 1952 was "quite negative," offering *To Vema* as the only source for such a statement is simply not good enough. To sum up, American interference in Greek affairs, though undoubtedly considerable until 1953, remains to be documented and analysed on more substantial evidence than Greek portage.

The book deals extensively with Greek-Turkish relations in the postwar years. One of the author's hypotheses is that through NATO Greece was "committed to a policy of cooperation and friendship with Turkey" despite "historical conflicts and political disputes" (p. 5). It would probably be more accurate to say that the pressures of the Cold

War brought the two nations together, and that the groundwork for their political cooperation had been laid in the late 1920's and 1930's. When international tensions subsided, membership in NATO was to prove insufficient a "commitment" to prevent the two from coming to the brink of war. That actual war was "prevented thanks primarily to the efforts of NATO" (p. 129), may be true but remains unsubstantiated, as is the role of NATO in bringing about a settlement for Cyprus in 1959 (p. 188).

Similarly, it is an exaggeration to call the tripartite Balkan Pact of 1954 "very vital" (p. 93) and "all-important" (p. 129). Thanks to the course of Yugoslavia's foreign policy almost immediately after Stalin's death, the Pact as a military alliance was practically stillborn. Nor was it the intention of the signatories to make it an "open invitation for other Balkan Communist nations to defect from the orbit of the Soviet Union and join this pact, thus indirectly creating ties with NATO and the United States" (p. 93). There is good reason to believe that in signing the 1954 alliance Belgrade hoped to strengthen its diplomatic position vis-à-vis Italy rather than the Soviet bloc. Thus the Balkan Pact suffered its "atrophy" less because of the flare-up over Cyprus (p. 129) than because of Belgrade's changing attitude toward tripartite cooperation.

Another of Dr. Couloumbis' hypotheses is that membership in NATO created in Greece no "supranationalist loyalties" (p. 5). This could not have been otherwise in view of NATO's less than supranational nature. Yet the force of the above contention is substantially weakened by the statements that, in abandoning the *Megali Idea*, Greeks "looked upon supranationalist systems as more feasible and appropriate to the needs of small nations" (p. 88), and that the "sights of Greek diplomacy" have been turned Westward, toward "modern systems of international cooperation leading to European federalism" (p. 165).

Professor Couloumbis has written an interesting and useful book. He has raised important questions on contemporary Greek foreign policy and on the power play within the Western bloc of the Cold War era. He has made Greek press coverage of many key issues available to the English-speaking academic audience. The questions he has raised now await carefully researched and fully substantiated answers.

Southern Connecticut State College
New Haven, Conn.

JOHN O. IATRIDES