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Book Reviews

Kofas, Jon V.

Under the Eagle's Claw: Exceptionalism in Postwar U.S.—Greek Relations.
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Jon Kofas's *Under the Eagle's Claw: Exceptionalism in Postwar U.S.—Greek Relations* corrects the standard view of the U.S. as benevolent guarantor of Western European security in the post-World War II era. Kofas focuses on the intricacies of U.S. foreign policy in Greece to argue that by reducing Greece to a post-war U.S. protectorate, American interventionism deprived the Greek people "of their way of life, the freedom of an independent path, the freedom to explore and experiment, the freedom to forge an identity based on self-determined destiny"(1). Kofas presents conclusive evidence to show that U.S. hegemony in post-World War II Greece was supported by CIA operations, the presence of U.S. military bases, as well as the establishment of "right-wing regimes that promoted U.S. ideology and political interests"(11). A buffer zone meant to "deter the Soviet bloc from jeopardizing the Middle East oil reserves, and of strategic value in the eastern Mediterranean and Persian Gulf"(3), Greece, more so than any other Western European country, was subjected to U.S. directives concerning defence expenditures and the need to maintain right-wing, pro-American political regimes. As Kofas points out, the result of U.S. interventionism in Greece saw significant delays in the country's economic modernization and social progress, which resulted in widespread anti-Americanism within the Greek society: "The long-standing and profound resentment of U.S. foreign policy stemmed from the general demeanor of the doctrine of American exceptionalism, which to many Greeks—and people throughout the world—has long meant that Washington has license to treat other nations and people without any regard for their sovereign rights"(9)

It is clear that in his meticulously researched *Under the Eagle's Claw*, Kofas intends not only to present the story of U.S. political and economic interventionism in modern Greece, but also to argue the Greek-American relationship as "a microcosm of Washington's mode of operation in the global arena"(10). Kofas's archival research yields a view of the U.S. which many who adhere to the notion of U.S. exceptionalism will experience as troubling, to say the least: "having sacrificed values based on human compassion for the culture of individualism, materialism, and militarism, the U.S. government's ultimate goal is to safeguard power in all its forms, and that necessarily entails global conformity to the law of empire"(245). Still, *Under the Eagle's Claw* is so fastidiously researched that it cannot fail to make a convincing case of U.S. foreign policy as being dictated by a hegemonic will to power.

Where Jon Kofas's study is less successful is in capturing the psychological, social, and economic climate in Greece in the aftermath of the Nazi occupation and of the civil war which ensued. The complex factors that contributed to the eruption of the Greek civil war, as well as the war's socio-economic repercussions are not given the balanced treatment they deserve;

moreover, while emphasizing the imperialist ideology that motivated U.S. presence in post-war Greece, Kofas does not account for the Soviet Union's role as a major player in the Balkan region. Kofas's rather schematic sense of the internal political and social dynamics in a Greece devastated by war also colours his assessment of leading political figures (such as Konstantine Karamanlis and George Papandreou) whom Kofas alternately depicts as either mechanical puppets or self-serving manipulators. Finally, Kofas's interest in demonstrating U.S. imperialist involvement compromises his final evaluation of Greek domestic policy: while on the one hand he emphasizes that being "under the eagle's claw" Greek governments had "no credible alternative to full integration and policy cooperation"(11), on the other he promotes a neutralist stance as not only desirable but also feasible: "the best solution...in a bipolar world would have been a regime pursuing a more independent path...when necessary, cooperating with either or both Washington and Moscow"(246).

Overall, Jon Kofas's *Under the Eagle's Claw* provides the reader with a well-researched record of U.S. interventionist policies in post-World War II Greece and in the broader Balkan and Middle-Eastern region. Despite occasional oversimplification in its treatment of Greek society and politics, it is a good read for anyone who possesses some knowledge of modern Greek history and is interested in acquiring a new perspective on U.S. foreign policy in the Cold War era.