2019

H-Diplo

@HDiplo

Article Review
No. 890
16 October 2019

Article Review Editors: Diane Labrosse and Seth Offenbach
Web and Production Editor: George Fujii

Eirini Karamouzi and Dionysios Chourchoulis. "Troublemaker or Peacemaker? Andreas Papandreou, the Euromissile Crisis, and the Policy of Peace, 1981-86." *Cold War History* 19:1 (2019): 39-61. DOI: https://doi.org/10.1080/14682745.2018.1497014.

URL: https://hdiplo.org/to/AR890

Review by **Ruud van Dijk**, University of Amsterdam

Thanks in part to the opening of archival collections in the East and West, the past decade-and-a-half has seen a steady stream of new scholarship on the Euromissile Crisis (1977-1987) authored by both senior and emerging scholars. The subject has rarely been missing from the programmes of SHAFR's Annual Meeting in recent years, and many panels have seen strong representation from people either working on, or having just finished, a dissertation on an aspect of this episode from the late Cold War. Part of the interest stems from the role of the crisis in both the collapse of the détente of the 1970s and the coming of a new period of tension in East-West and West-West relations, and the beginning of the end of the conflict through the 1987 INF treaty. But the Euromissile Crisis was also an important episode in the history of the nuclear age. It produced the first nuclear arms reduction treaty. Furthermore, upheaval in Western countries over the 1979 NATO Dual-Track Decision envisioning the deployment of intermediate nuclear-armed missiles, allegedly in response to new Soviet SS-20 missiles, was evidence of a growing revulsion against nuclear weapons among the wider public. How various activists were able to mobilize large numbers of people against the NATO plans in particular, and the nuclear arms race more generally, has been the subject of much new scholarship. In addition to political or diplomatic history, therefore, Euromissile Crisis scholarship also is the history of social movements and their transnational networks.[1]

Rejection of the so-called nuclear dilemma (having one's security depend on weapons which, if used, would destroy everything they were designed to defend) was not limited to activists. In "Troublemaker or Peacemaker? Andreas Papandreou, the Euromissile Crisis, and the Policy of Peace, 1981-86," Eirini Karamouzi and Dionysios Chourchoulis show that politicians, too, questioned its logic and apparent

[1] Philip Gassert, Tim Geiger, Hermann Wentker (hrsg.), *Zweiter Kalter Krieg und Friedensbewegung: Der NATO-Doppelbesluss in deutsch-deutscher und internationaler Perspective* (Munich: Oldenbourg, 2011); Christoph Becker-Schaum, Philipp Gassert, Martin Klimke, Wilfried Mausback, Marianne Zepp, eds., *"Entrüstet Euch!": Nuklearkrise, NATO-Doppelbeschluss und Friedensbewegung* (Paderborn: Schöningh, 2012). Leopoldo Nuti, Frederic Bozo, Marie-Pierre Rey, Bernd Rother, eds., *The Euromissile Crisis and the End of the Cold War* (Stanford and Washington, D.C.: Stanford University Press and Woodrow Wilson Center Press, 2015).

permanence, and that they, too, looked for alternatives. In this objective, heads of government such as the Socialist Greek Prime Minister (1981-1989; 1993-1996), Andreas Papandreou, were driven by a multitude of motives, many of which had little direct connection to the battle over the Euromissiles. Euromissile Crisis scholarship covers many things--and sometimes it is not really about the Euromissile Crisis at all.

This is not to say that this article is not valuable; quite the contrary. Papandreou is just one example of a national leader who, driven at least in part by a discomfort with the prominence nuclear weapons had achieved in the course of the Cold War, came to pursue his own 'peace campaign.' Other examples include Canadian Prime Minister Pierre Trudeau and Swedish Prime Minister Olav Palme. [2] In his own way, Dutch Prime Minister Ruud Lubbers, who, contrary to Papandreou, was the leader of a country slated to deploy some of the new NATO missiles, belongs in this group too. Ultimately, of course, President Ronald Reagan and Soviet leader Michael Gorbachev also came to be called nuclear abolitionists.

Even though, as the authors point out, we still do not have many of the official Greek documents one would like to be able to use for a history such as this one (they rely on a variety of open sources, and archival materials from other countries instead), it is clear that much of what motivated Papandreou in his 'peace making' and/or his 'trouble making' only had a very tenuous connection to the Euromissiles. After his election in 1981, Papandreou was a difficult partner for his NATO allies, seeking the removal of U.S. nuclear weapons from Greek territory, renegotiating the terms under which the U.S. maintained bases in his country, questioning NATO Dual-Track policies, and promoting several cross-bloc, regional, and North-South peace initiatives. Key to understanding the prime minister's initiatives were Greece's hostile relationship with fellow NATO ally Turkey, and the significant extent to which many Greeks resented their country's integration with, and dependence on, the West. Anti-Americanism was especially strong on the left, Papandreou's natural power base.

Regional issues, and the way these influenced Papandreou's positions in election campaigns, especially the one that brought him to power in 1981, determined developments to a much larger extent that the larger Cold War, although Greek civil society's resistance to the nuclear arms race certainly fit the times. Greece was a small NATO country, located outside the alliance's core area, and most Greeks saw Turkey as a bigger threat than the Soviet Union. At the same time, once in power, Papandreou was careful not to push things too far. U.S. military aid, after all, was vital for the country's defense. Instead of a withdrawal from NATO or even a demand for U.S. nuclear warheads to be removed from the country, in 1983 there emerged a renegotiated bases agreement with the U.S. The authors show that it allowed Papandreou to claim newly-won independence for Greece, although the large amount of U.S. aid that was part of the deal indicates the conditionality of this freedom. In another case of moderation-with-another-name, in 1981 Papandreou's party, the Panhellenic Socialist Movement (PASOK), very much supported by Papandreou himself, engineered a reorganization of the Greek peace movement into an independent movement that was critical of both superpowers. But perhaps more important was the fact that the reorganization vastly reduced the influence of the Greek Communist party and the Soviet-sponsored World Peace Cuncil.

Papandreou's international initiatives, which included participation in a campaign for a nuclear weapons-free zone in South-Eastern Europe and later the "Six Nations Initiative for Peace and Disarmament," can in retrospect be seen as part of a larger 'anti-nuclear revolution' at the time, one that was eventually joined by

[2] Susan Colbourn, "'Cruising toward Nuclear Danger': Canadian Anti-Nuclear Activism, Pierre Trudeau's Peace mission, and the Transatlantic Partnership," *Cold War History* 18:1 (2018): 19-36.

Reagan and Gorbachev. In being internationally active this way, Papandreou also obeyed his primary imperative, namely making good on the promises he made during the campaign of 1981, particularly an international stance by Greece that was (largely) independent from the Cold War status quo.

The authors' British, French, and American sources show that Papandreou's Western partners understood the sources of the prime-minister's troublemaking and thus also its likely limits. While by no means always pleased, most of the time they managed to indulge his antics. Papandreou, in short, was rather skilled in striking a balance between the need for, one the one hand, an independent course, and on the other, Greek security needs. Reading his record in this way, one could support the authors' conclusion that the prime-minister was "his own brand of peacemaker" (61) (rather than a troublemaker). In the end his impact on international politics was rather limited. While pursuing his independent foreign policy, however, Papandreou succeeded in keeping the peace between Greece and its allies. He was always trouble, but never too much. (With NATO currently facing another dissenter on its southeastern flank, the case of Papandreou might give all parties involved some useful pointers).

One aspect the authors do not explore, but seems rather relevant, is the influence his twenty year-long exile in the United States (1943-1963) may have had on Papandreou's later policies. For most of this period, Papandreou even was a U.S. citizen, serving in the U.S. Navy and teaching at several U.S. universities. It appears that changes in Greece eventually caused him to give up his U.S. passport and return to his country of birth. One wonders what Papandreou's real views of the U.S. were, to what extent his professed anti-Americanism was a political stance, whether he was able to communicate in a sophisticated way with U.S. counterparts, and vice versa; and whether, beyond his network in the international socialist movement (among others), he also had a solid network in the United States.

As the authors imply, more research could be done, once currently inaccessible official Greek documents become available. As we await that development, however, this article is a valuable contribution to scholarship on the role of the smaller players in the Cold War, revealing the conditional and contingent impact of the East-West conflict on local and regional developments, and vice versa. It is true that the field of Cold War history has fragmented over the past decade or so, and that the relative significance of the East-West conflict in the wider international history of the twentieth century has changed. At the same time, fragmentation can also mean zooming in, taking a more precise look, to yield greater insight into the whole as well. It is yet another reason why we should welcome this contribution to the history of the late Cold War.

Ruud van Dijk (Ph.D. Ohio University, 1999) is Senior Lecturer in the History of Globalization and International Relations at the University of Amsterdam. He is the General Editor of the *Digital Encyclopedia of the Cold War* (under contract with Routledge) and author of "'After Atlanticism?' Defend the Institutions of the Post-1945 Era," *Atlantisch Perspectief* 43:1 (2019), 4-9.