

Προδομένη Εξέγερση [A Rebellion Betrayed]

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This book can be considered as a contribution to Cypriot studies in terms of history and of the dynamics of the Cyprus problem but it is also a significant contribution to the study of social movements. In terms of Cypriot studies this is an effort at analysing [in a historical and geopolitical context] the Turkish Cypriot [T/C] uprising/rebellion of the period 2002-2004. In terms of research and studies on social movements this is an interesting and pioneering effort at interpreting what might be termed a postmodern Cypriot uprising, through the lens of Marxist historical systemic analysis. The greatest contribution of the book is indeed this: the linking of the specific events in the T/C community with broader developments – in the Greek Cypriot [G/C] community and in the interaction of local history with broader international actors.

Methodologically this work belongs to the local leftist tradition of historiography and analysis which stretches all the way back to the emergence of the communist current in Cypriot culture and politics. This tradition is rooted in Marxist analysis but it is not often considered [with the deserved weight] in academic circles due to the fact that this analysis is part of a methodology emphasising the interaction of theory and practice [in *praxis*] as revealing of social reality. Thus the authors, for example, proclaim openly their sympathy, and their data include experiences and texts derived from their engagement in solidarity with the movement they describe/analyse. In effect one of the valuable methodological dimensions of the book is that it provides a G/C “insider’s” view of the T/C movement. But beneath the surface of the popularising narrative and political advocacy, there is a theoretically informed analysis which links structural dynamics with historical trends. We have here the effort to interpret the T/C uprising in the framework of Trotsky’s model on the dynamics of revolutions [“dual power”] and the internal causes of the failure of uprisings to implement their ideals. On the latter Trotsky’s position is close to the Weberian position [to compare it with the characteristic sociological position advocating a “value free” analysis] with one significant difference – while Weberians would claim that modern revolutionary uprisings [and especially those that come to administer power] lead [as an “unexpected consequence”] to a rise in bureaucratisation, Trotskyite-influenced-Marxism, claims that the failure of revolutions to implement their goals can be sought in internal subjective factors – e.g. leaders and policy choices – which allow the restructuring of power. The Trotskyite position has been influential on a whole set of theories pointing to the emergence of a new managerial class in the ex-socialist societies in Eastern Europe which led the overthrow of the structures of “existing socialism”. But in the Trotskyite interpretation there is also the Marxist emphasis on historical

continuity – thus despite their seeming defeat, revolutions create “frozen realities” which help shape the dynamics of the future. And theoretical frameworks are significant in the analysis of the subject/data under discussion precisely because the issues raised are [politically and sociologically] open to interpretation: the T/C uprising managed to bring its leaders to power – is this rebellion or revolution? Can one call it victory? The authors claim that the seeming “victory” was actually a “betrayal” of the historical consciousness which emerged in the days of the uprising and thus of its historical potential for the people of Cyprus and for the lower classes in particular.

The basic argument is the following: the T/C uprising was the result of dynamics in the T/C community leading to the formation of a “working class”/“popular” front [in the late 1990s-early 2000s] which challenged the status quo and produced a situation of dual power [2002-2003]. The uprising, according to the authors, emanated from issues of “everydayness” but when the international context allowed [the EU integration process], it acquired a dynamic which can be compared with the great class/social modern uprisings/rebellions of the twentieth century – with its chief characteristic being the “self organization of the masses”. Documentation for this thesis is satisfactory [texts from leaflets, data from interviews, and newspaper reports] but if the argument stayed at this, it would have been on examination a deductively derived hypothesis. In an incisive analysis of the dynamics and the discourse of the uprising the authors point out that the historical consciousness born of the uprising “revealed” that the key hegemonic structure limiting the prospects of lower class social movements in Cyprus has been, historically, the ideology of national unity in front of “life or death” national danger. Thus the most successful achievement of the uprising was actually cultural-political: it overthrew the hegemonic ideological structures and consequently its impact spread to the G/C community. The “overflow” of people at the crossing points which opened in the spring of 2003 is interpreted, in a fascinating way, as the “G/C response”. But the uprising, the wave of social revolt, was contained, according to the argument, due, largely, to the failure of the leadership of the T/C Left to lead the masses to “a total overthrow”/revolution which would have implied a radical questioning [from both sides of the dividing line] of the reality of division. And the “fateful decision” by the CTP [Turkish Republican Party] to take part in the elections was accompanied by the organised campaign from the G/C political elite to demonise the Annan plan. Thus if the 2003 scenes at the crossing points were the revolution, the referendum was in effect the counter revolution.

The historical perspective is refreshing – and so is the broadness of the conceptualisation. Too often, unfortunately, analysis of issues related to the Cyprus problem tends to be focused exclusively on events, texts, or personalities. There are, however, some theoretical issues which remain unresolved in the text. The key issue is the use of concepts – at times the authors refer to the “working class”, at times to the “masses”, while they attribute the causes to issues of “everydayness”. As a matter of fact one can see justification for the use of all three terms – but one should note also that they refer to different frameworks. The “working class” line of thought leads inevitably to classical Marxist analysis – and the trade unions were indeed the “organizational leaders” of the movement. But one should note also that the leading unions were of the cultural sector – the

teachers' union for example. This points towards the direction of the discussions on "the new working class" – but also to the direction of the emergence of "new social movements" from the cultural and everyday sphere. And here one feels that a more analytic focus on the economic structures of the T/C community would have helped. The transformation of the movement into one of "masses" is again a point on which a theoretically demanding reader would want some more analysis: what are the "masses" as an analytic category – the concept of the "people" or the new concept of the "multitude"? The fact that the issues originated from everydayness points to the latter possibility. Indeed one could claim that the T/C uprising had elements of the popular movements which started to emerge from the 1970s-1980s in the non-western world [Iran, Philippines], which were used by the West in order to destabilise the geopolitical space of the ex-socialist bloc, but which represent also a reality of our postmodern times.

The lack of theoretical elaboration on the link of causes [everydayness] to the initial building of the movement [trade union platform] to the mobilisation of the masses in the uprising/control of the street ["dual power"], is unfortunate but the text lays down a framework for future studies of the "moments of transition" [of the specific movement and of others to come] and the way different movement identities were shaped and transformed. It would have been interesting, for example, to elaborate on the multiple implications of the emphasis on the collectivity of the "T/C people" in the discourses/proclamations of the movement. It would have helped also if the book focused more on the relation of the movement and the parties of the T/C Left – indeed one of the novelties of the T/C political scene [in comparison with the G/C one] is the existence of a multiplicity of leftist parties which compete to express the broader subculture of the Left. In terms of political power it is also open to question [irrespective of whether one sees the movement as "modern" or "postmodern"] what "realistic" options were available to the T/C leftist leaders [or the G/C ones for that matter] – movements generate dynamics but political elites tend to focus inevitably on the administration of power.

On the level of the analysis/interpretation of the empirical data there are two significant elements in the book: a historical narrative weaving together four "fields" [T/C community, G/C community, EU, Turkey] into a sub-system, and a perceptive analysis of G/C media texts as part of a strategy of "manufacturing consent". A methodologically demanding reader may raise the issue of the representativeness of the selected sample. But the argument of the book is not really to document the strategy but to point to its existence. The discussion of the change in tone by *Fileleftheros* on the opening of the crossings [and their aftermath] in 2003 and on the construction of the climate leading to the referendum is superb, reminiscent of Chomskian analysis.

Where one feels that there is some incomplete discussion is the focus on the media of the G/C Left – and indeed the ambiguous position [no/yes] of this section of the broader Cypriot Left. The authors note that the party newspaper was leaning towards the "no" position, while the radio station of the party towards the "yes" position. One could extend here their argument that there was a spreading of the uprising in the G/C community by pointing to the G/C leftist subculture

as a first sensitive [due to historical-cultural reasons] recipient. But unfortunately the authors do not elaborate on this.

The narrative of the book is historical and its contents are organised into 11 chapters which may be subdivided into three sections [outlining the background, the rebellion and the process of containment]: there is first a historical framework and a geopolitical outline of the background to the T/C uprising in the late 1990s [chapters 1-4]. Chapters 5-7 outline the uprising in both communities – the process leading to the T/C rallies of 2002-2003 and the G/C “response” to the opening of the crossing points. Chapters 8-9 describe the process of “containing” the movement in both communities, while the last two chapters focus on the strategy to demonise the Annan plan among G/Cs and thus transform “containment” into counter-revolution.

This is a useful book – empirically as a report and as a source of data. Theoretically it is more significant: it raises the issue of historical-systemic analysis, which, as a level of analysis, would contribute significantly to the social scientific literature on Cyprus. In relation to social movements this work points to the need of studies on the process of the breakdown of power due to the crisis of the hegemonic ideology – not only because they reveal the dynamics of emerging social movements, but also because they reveal the functioning of the structures of control and their cleavages. In terms of current political debates the book claims obviously that the T/C uprising was not manufactured from the outside and its potential was not simply a modernisation [and rationalisation] of the political structures of the T/C community. Their argument claims that the uprising created a “new reality” by revealing the power structures holding the island divided. Their argument, for example, that the Papadopoulos regime was actually fragile [the book was published before the elections] points to a perceptive understanding of historical trends. On whether, however, the historical consciousness born of the uprising can manage to create a *praxis* of social transformation beyond the breaking down of the nationalist division, is an open question.

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