

The Government and Politics of Cyprus

Edited by JAMES KER-LINDSAY AND HUBERT FAUSTMANN

Peter Lang (Bern, 2008), 293 pp.

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I recommend this book, especially to undergraduate students requiring an introduction to the government and politics of Cyprus; however I do so with certain reservations.

The editors, James Ker-Lindsay and Hubert Faustmann, state that the book's scope is the government and politics of Cyprus. To them 'Cyprus' means the Republic of Cyprus, although in recognising a second entity on the island they include a chapter on it – Turkish Cypriot politics. They give no clear explanation for this discrepancy, although imply that this is because "the Greek-Cypriot-dominated Republic of Cyprus is ... a member of the United Nations and the European Union" and the internationally unrecognised Turkish Republic of North Cyprus (TRNC)¹ is not. They make no case for this discrepancy on the grounds of space or lack of qualified experts, in what seems a political rather than a scholastic decision. Thus, the scope of the book is problematical because it largely excludes the Turkish Cypriot community, which, according to the 1960 constitution, is an equal community with the Greek Cypriot community and which, like them, implemented the 'law of necessity' in order to govern themselves and their people in 1964. Whether this is recognised internationally or not is irrelevant to a scholarly book that claims in its title to deal with Cyprus. Erol Kaymak's brilliant chapter on Turkish Cypriot politics somewhat rectifies the omission.

The book attempts to fill a void in the historiography of the government and politics of Cyprus and, aside from the above, it mostly succeeds. It enlightens on various facets of the government and politics of Cyprus, but falls short of providing the analytical dimension. Taken as a whole, the book is informative, sometimes illuminating, but lacks an argument. It does not ask: why the government and politics of the island developed this way?

About half of the book, which has eleven chapters and an introduction, is primarily researched and written by Ker-Lindsay and Faustmann: five of the chapters have their imprint. The fact that much of the book was researched and written by them is a good thing, but by no means does it make their contributions immune from critique. Indeed the two best chapters are those by Yiouli Taki and David Officer (co-authors) and Erol Kaymak. The two weakest are by Altana Filos and Diana Markides. The book suffers from the lack of a conclusion, which would have tied up the loose ends, encapsulated the themes and given an insight into the future.

1 Although the northern part of the island is referred to as TRNC in this review, it is acknowledged that the TRNC is not recognised by the international community except Turkey.

Chapter 1 is a timely and fine chapter on political culture. Faustmann's examination of clientelism and *rousfeti* is admirable. My criticism relates to his discussion of identity and specifically when he states that polls on identity should be taken with a grain of salt, yet he spends about two pages on such surveys. Also, he does not pursue what 'Cypriot' identity means for DIKO, when he argues that it has a "strong predominance of Cypriot identity". In my view, DIKO champions independent Cypriot Hellenism, that is, an independent Cypriot state dominated by Greek Cypriots, therefore, Cypriot identity means social and cultural sameness with the Greek nation, but political independence from Greece. This nationalist ideology rejects the island's historical multiculturalism from the Frankish period, with Cypriots of Maronite, Latin, Turkish, and Armenian heritage, and their influence on the Cypriot Eastern Orthodox Christian identity.

The second chapter, also by Faustmann, on the British colonial legacy of division, is also good, particularly the discussion of the 1931 uprising and the EOKA campaign and their consequences. I agree that after the 1882 constitution, a Liberal *laissez faire* policy prevailed, but this was because Cyprus' Christian-Muslim society was integrated and unthreatening, and the island was a backwater, not because of some colonial plan. However, I disagree that "the Orthodox community had gradually developed a Greek national identity based on ethnic and cultural roots shared with the newly founded Greek state since the first half of the 19th century", that "originally this identity was embraced by the small educated elite and the Church but it was soon passed on to the wider population" so that by the second half of the nineteenth century, Greek nationalism was "engulfing the lower strata". Much has been published showing that the educated Greek Cypriot elite and Church were divided on the question of identity: a small – almost insignificant number – of Greeks (with no Cypriot heritage) and even fewer Hellenised Cypriots identified the Cypriot Orthodox Christians as Greeks and due to British Colonial Office sympathy indoctrinated the new educated generations; while a larger faction of educated Cypriots, which included Archbishop Sophronios III, resisted and did not.² It is true that in this battle the Hellenists won, but this

2 Michalis N. Michael (2005) *The Church of Cyprus during the Ottoman Period (1571-1878)*, (in Greek), Nicosia; Andrekos Varnava, «Αρχιεπίσκοπος Σωφρόνιος Γ': «Πατρίδα μεν ἔσχουν τὴν Κύπρον, γονεῖς δὲ Χριστιανοὺς Ὀρθόδοξους τοῦ Ανατολικοῦ Δόγματος», *Περιπέτειες Ἰδεῶν* ["Archbishop Sophronios III: 'My Homeland is Cyprus and my Parents are Orthodox Christians of the Eastern Dogma'"] (*Politis* Newspaper), 27 May 2007, 72; «Ἡ Κυπριακὴ Ὀρθόδοξη Ταυτότητα κατὰ τὴς Περιόδου τῆς Ὀθωμανικῆς καὶ Βρετανικῆς Κυριαρχίας», *Χρονικό* ["The Cypriot Orthodox Identity during the Period of Ottoman and British Rule"], (*Chronicle*), free periodical with *Politis* (newspaper), 29 March 2009; Chapter 6 in Andrekos Varnava (April 2009) *British Imperialism in Cyprus, 1878-1915: The Inconsequential Possession*, Manchester: Manchester University Press. Obviously, Faustmann could not access the literature above because of the language barrier or because it was published after he had published this chapter, but he did witness this presentation. Andrekos Varnava, 'The British and the Cypriot Orthodox Christians: Imperialism, Modernity and the Imposition of National Identity, 1878-1900', Cyprus Academic Forum, *The Emergence of Greek and Turkish National Identity in Cyprus*, 25 May 2006, Nicosia, Cyprus.

victory was not complete until 1910. This does not mean that by this date the lower strata were engulfed by feelings of national sameness with Greeks.

The next chapter, co-authored by Faustmann and Ker-Lindsay, deals with the Cyprus 'Issue'. Nobody can deny that the Cyprus problem has dominated Cypriot political life since the 1950s, or that this chapter is well written. My issue is whether in a book on the government and politics of Cyprus a chapter on the impact of the Cyprus problem on the development of government and politics would have been more appropriate?

Chapter 4 by Christophoros Christophorou provides necessary information on Greek Cypriot political parties and has an excellent conclusion, but suffers from too many generalisations: examples include the first two lines; the statement that "foreign" rule left Cyprus socially and economically underdeveloped (compared to? Greece? Turkey? Syria? Lebanon? Egypt? Perhaps it would have been better to remain under Ottoman rule with only speculation as to how Cyprus would have fared during the bloody Ottoman collapse); and the comment "the rejection of the demands of the people" in relation to the British, implying a monolithic people versus the British oppressor.

The next two chapters, by Ker-Lindsay, cover the issues of presidential power and the National Council. The first contains a 'historical background' which seems an unnecessary 100+ pages into the book, and contains generalisations: for example, that the Greek Junta backed Grivas when there were two Junta Regimes, one under George Papadopoulos not supporting Grivas and another under Demetris Ioannides strongly supporting him. Ker-Lindsay mentions that there was one assassination attempt on Makarios, when there were several. He also states that in the 2003 election DISY switched its support to Clerides, but fails to mention who it initially supported, Yiannakis Omirou of EDEK, which is important given that EDEK is hardline regarding reunification and subsequently supported Papadopoulos. The constant referral to the president as a 'he', when not actually referring to a particular president, resulted in me questioning why the book never explores the role of women in Cypriot politics. In an otherwise enlightening chapter on the National Council, the conclusion lacks analytical insight, while his claim that Makarios had given up *enosis* contradicts Makarios' often repeated statements that it was desirable, but not feasible at present: giving something up for the time being is not the same as giving it up altogether.

Chapter 7 by Giorgos Charalambous provided a comprehensive survey of the functions of the House of Representatives and my only main criticism is that it did not provide enough on the composition of the first parliament. I remain to be convinced that the majoritarian system is a relic of the colonial period, as well as the use of Achilles Emillianides as a source for the 1960-1963 tensions, given the significant literature on this subject (James Ker-Lindsay, Richard Patrick and Makarios Droushiotis).

The next two chapters are the weakest because the authors approach Cyprus through Greek lenses. The chapter on the legal and judicial system, by Altana Filos, is riddled with generalisations and errors. Cyprus was not a British colony for 82 years since it became a crown colony only in

1925. Although attributed to the invasion, no evidence is given as to why Greek administrative law was introduced to Cyprus. The claim that the introduction of laws allowing civil marriage and divorce by consent in 1989 followed Greece is speculation: civil marriage had been valid in Cyprus since 1923; while Vassiliou's government wanted to liberalise Cypriot society.³ The statements blaming the 1960 Constitution for creating problems for the legal system are unsubstantiated, and are aimed at contradicting Professor Ernst Forsthoff, who resigned as first President of the Supreme Constitutional Court in May 1963, because Makarios refused to implement key constitutional provisions. Filos claims that Forsthoff stated that the constitution was unworkable, but fails to mention that Forsthoff, a German scholar of constitutional law and a prominent theorist of administrative law, was one of the authors of the constitution, and meant that it was unworkable because there was a lack of will (on Makarios' part, something that was borne out). Markides' chapter is even more problematical. Her claim that the displaced Greek Cypriots in 1974 equated to one-third of the entire population is wrong. According to the information on the Press and Information Office map showing ethnic distribution in 1960, 142,000 Greek Cypriots were displaced in 1974, one-quarter of the entire population. In fact it is less than one-quarter, since, if the 142,000 is accepted, with a total population of 630,000 (according to the 1973 Census estimate), this means that displaced Greek Cypriots amounted to 22% of the entire population. The problem is not so much that her figures are misleading, but that she neglects to mention the displaced 50,000-60,000 Turkish Cypriots, which amounted to about half of the entire Turkish Cypriot population (estimated at 116,000 in the 1973 Census). Further, her claim that Ankara feared that London would withdraw from Cyprus after the Suez crisis and resisted Lord Radcliffe's constitutional proposals cannot be substantiated because Markides has not consulted Turkish archives, however, she misleads the reader by failing to mention that the Greeks and Greek Cypriots also opposed the Radcliffe proposals. Her assertion that in 1958 Turkish Cypriots "violently" established municipal councils implies, at least for the novice, that they did so across the island. To be sure, this occurred in Limassol and Nicosia – indeed there were very bloody murders of both Turkish and Greek Cypriots and ethnic cleansing – but there is no evidence or claim (at least in her monograph)⁴ that it took place elsewhere. More significantly, Markides' failure to fairly address the Turkish Cypriot position appears on page 188 in the paragraph starting with "Differences over municipal governance were at the heart of the struggle for Cyprus in the early 1960s". No doubt, the municipalities issue divided Greek and Turkish Cypriot leaderships during the 1960s and 1970s. No doubt too, the Greek Cypriot leadership wanted to secure a majority-ruled unitary state; but, despite what Markides implies, this was not the aim of the 1960

3 See George Vassiliou's book on his presidency, George Vassiliou (2008) *Pragmatism Vs Populism*, II, Athens: Ellinika Gramata.

4 Diana Weston Markides (2001) *Cyprus 1957-1963 from Colonial Conflict to Constitutional Crisis: The Key Role of the Municipal Issue*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, pp. 16-23.

consociational constitution, while the Turkish Cypriots insisted on the implementation of the constitution because it assured the administrative autonomy of each community and the protection of the minority against the tyranny of the majority. Markides' claim that Turkish Cypriot policies in the 1970s proves "creeping Turkish tactics" in favour of a federal element in the government implies that Turkish Cypriot policy was monolithic throughout the 1960s and early 1970s and that it was they who contravened the constitution. This is a fallacy: official Turkish Cypriot policy in the early 1960s aimed at the full implementation of the 1960 constitution; unofficially, Denktash pursued partition through TMT and suppressing, even murdering, Turkish Cypriots who believed in the consociational Republic; after the civil war of 1963-1964 Turkish Cypriot policy became pessimistic because a Turkish invasion did not come, and Rauf Denktash agreed to most of Makarios' 1963 thirteen points during negotiations with Glafkos Clerides after 1967; after 1974 it becomes more confident and extreme. Markides' implication that the implementation of separate municipalities was counter to the integrity of the unitary state is the official Greek Cypriot position, but contradicts the 1960 constitution and its authors, and reduces the Turkish Cypriots to the enemy. Moreover, she does not mention Greek Cypriot efforts to undermine the Republic and relations with Turkish Cypriots, namely through the Akritas Plan. What perhaps best reflects Markides' Greek Cypriot bias is the fact that on page 191 she quotes 'the Nicosia Mayor', but the reader is not told which mayor, and evidently she has unconsciously forgotten to mention that it was the Greek Cypriot.

By comparison, the final two chapters are first-rate. Taki and Officer's chapter on civil society and public sphere fills a gaping hole in the historiography. The discussion of the trade unions, but especially of civil society and the media are illuminating, although some hard questions are not asked, such as: why did Cyprus' civil society develop the way it did? My only criticism is the statement that "the island was valued (by the British) not for its natural resources or abundance of exploitable labour, but for its strategic location", a received wisdom I have 'debunked'.⁵ Kaymak's chapter on the development of Turkish Cypriot politics is excellent not simply because of the information, but because he is analytical. My only criticism is his failure to mention Ahmet Berberoglu, an important figure in Turkish Cypriot politics.

Despite inconsistencies and discrepancies, this book fills a void in the historiography and is indispensable to those wishing to be introduced to the politics and government of Cyprus.

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5 See footnote 2, my monograph, which focuses on this subject.