

Cyprus 1900 – 2000 Footprints on the Sands of Time

**Edited by John A. Koumoulides
Pella (New York, 2002) 259 pp.**

Professor Koumoulides' association with Cyprus goes a long way back. As he states in his book "Cyprus 1900 – 2000 Footprints on the Sands of Time" his "introduction to the rich history of Cyprus has its genesis in 1961 when he started his doctoral studies". In 1965 he came to the island to visit the Phaneromeni Library and the "archives" of the Archdiocese of Cyprus in Nicosia; since then he has continued his interest in Cyprus and has written and edited a number of books on various aspects of Cyprus history ("Cyprus and the War of Greek Independence"; "Greece and Cyprus in History"; "Cyprus in Transition 1960-1985" and "Cyprus: The Legacy, Historic Landmarks that influenced the Art of Cyprus, Late Bronze Age to A.D. 1600"). In 2002 he published his book under review, "Cyprus 1900-2000 Footprints on the Sands of Time".

Cyprus has a long, rich and tumultuous history dating back to Neolithic times but since the 1950s this history has become even more complex with the onset of the development of the 'Cyprus Problem'. The decade from 1950 to 1960 experienced some of the most significant, and in some cases tragic, events in the history of the island. The 1950 Referendum for "enosis" organised by the Greek Orthodox Church, the attempts at a constitutional settlement of the future of Cyprus, as well as the EOKA liberation struggle are important landmarks that shaped future events.

Professor Koumoulides' book is invaluable in that it imparts vital information that will prove useful to any students or scholars who are concerned with Cyprus history. The author himself states on page 12 that, "The purpose of this volume is to bring to the attention of students of Cyprus certain events in the history of the island during the twentieth century". The book evidently does far more than this; it embraces a wealth of material which is certain to become an indispensable source for the historian interested in modern Cyprus history.

Chapter I of the book provides detailed information on the British offer of Cyprus to Greece in 1915 as recorded by Sir John Stavridi in his diary. Professor Koumoulides had secured access to the papers of Sir John Stavridi deposited in the library of St. Antony's College, Oxford. A careful study of this material provides a fair amount of information on the attitude of the British Foreign Office in relation to

the First World War, the Balkans and the possible involvement of Greece in the War. It also covers interesting material relating to the internal politics in Greece and on Eleftherios Venizelos. Venizelos stands out as a dominant figure in Greek politics and someone who had a vision for Greece that was much greater than the king's and the politicians attached to the palace. The letters and extracts from the diary of Sir John Stavridi give the reader a clear picture of how the fate of Cyprus was being deliberated and manipulated in the context of the more pressing issues of the First World War. The fact that "the offer of 1915" is regarded by many as an important landmark in the series of "missed opportunities" relates to the ultimate fate of Cyprus and gives particular importance to the information provided in the book. Future scholars studying the history of Cyprus will find a lot of raw material on which to base a critique of the period. What would have happened if Greece had accepted the offer and entered the war as requested by the British? Would Britain have honoured its promise and given Cyprus to Greece? These and many other questions cannot be answered in any definitive way.

In Chapter II "Πέμπτος Τροχός", Professor Koumoulides presents the "notes" of Ambassador Demetris S. Petrounakos. The notes provide us with some first-hand accounts on the period leading to the independence of Cyprus in 1960. The period 1959-1960, covering the events culminating in the Zurich-London Agreements and the establishment of the Republic of Cyprus, still provides rich ground for further examination by historians, and the notes of Demetris Petrounakos can be effectively utilised.

Sir David Hunt's "Farewell to Cyprus" provides a tempered British view on various personalities in Cyprus as well as an analysis of the situation prevailing on the island at the time of his departure as British High Commissioner. Sir David Hunt makes incisive comments on Archbishop Makarios, whom he seems to admire and respect, as well as on General Grivas and the Turkish-Cypriot leader Kutchuk. Despatch No. 17 was written in 1966, two years after the inter-communal conflict of 1963-1964 and one year before the coup in Greece that marked the beginning of a new relationship between the two governments, culminating in the coup by the Greek military junta against President Makarios in July 1974. Cyprus, as described by the British High Commissioner was not going to be the same after August 1974. The new status quo created after the Turkish invasion, and which is still in existence 32 years later, makes the reader of Despatch No. 17 look back with nostalgia to a period when a solution to the Cyprus problem seemed more feasible.

The controlled and carefully worded despatch of Sir David Hunt in Chapter III comes into contrast with the content of Chapter IV, which explores Henry Kissinger and Cyprus, 1973-1977. This basically is an actual record of the conversation that took place between Henry Kissinger and other US officials with the Vice Foreign

Minister of the People's Republic of China on the occasion of a dinner held by the Secretary of State. The cynical approach of Kissinger towards Cyprus and his support for the Turkish positions explain much of what happened in the area in those critical years before, during and after the invasion of the island by Turkey. The information given in the particular document is brief but it is helpful in understanding the attitude of the Secretary of State of the United States who played such an important part in the politics of Cyprus and the Middle East in general. Once further official documents become available historians should be able to create a clearer picture as to the role of the United States, and of Henry Kissinger in particular, in those tragic days of July and August 1974.

The material in the last chapter of the book really constitutes an invaluable primary source on an important period in Cyprus history when the 'Cyprus problem' was experiencing very significant and complex developments. The correspondence of Evangelos Averof Tositsas and Andreas G. Papandreou on Cyprus throughout the period 1983-1984 presents the views of two leading politicians who played determining roles in Greek and Cypriot politics. Evangelos Averof Tositsas played a principal role in the pre-independence days as Greek Foreign Minister and was instrumental in the formulation of the Zurich – London Agreements that led to the establishment of the Republic of Cyprus. Andreas Papandreou was an outstanding and charismatic personality, with very strong views on the Cyprus problem and its solution. As party leader and Prime Minister he was a key player in the attempts to solve the Cyprus problem.

The Chronology of events, which appears at the end of the book, is a useful tool for anyone who wishes to examine an overview of Cyprus history, and the Bibliography brings together the basic books covering all major aspects of the history of Cyprus.

With this book Professor Koumoulides makes a significant contribution to Cypriot history. He has brought together important primary material that should enable future researchers to unravel the complex issues that led to the creation of the 'Cyprus Problem' as well as to the subsequent attempts at a solution. This is an authoritative contribution which, due to its nature, will stand the test of time.

Emilios Solomou