

## ***Cyprus Before 1974: The Prelude to Crisis***

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Cyprus' turbulent post-independence period is marked by inter- and intra-communal violence, intense (para)military activity, assassinations and assassination attempts of prominent political figures. All of the above culminated in Greek Junta's coup d'état and the subsequent Turkish invasion of July 1974. Dr Marilena Varnava's book focuses on this crucial period of the Cyprus problem (1964-1974), examining mainly the diplomatic developments of an era marked by a series of events whose consequences are still well tangible in the public conscience of Cypriots.

As a starting point, the author concentrates on Galo Plaza's mediation after the Turkish Cypriot reaction (December 1963) towards president Makarios' proposal for constitutional amendment. The tumultuous events that followed between 1964 and 1974 turned the island into "a simmering cauldron", as Varnava vividly describes. In an effort to ensure regional stability, as well as the peaceful and proper function of the bicomunal state inaugurated in August 1960, UN Security Council adopted the Resolution 186 (4 March 1964), which consists "one of the most important diplomatic victories for Greek-Cypriots" (p. 18). Moreover, in order to safeguard the island's security, the Organization decided to establish the United Nations Force in Cyprus (UNFICYP). Following the aforementioned Resolution, Galo Plaza arrived in Cyprus as the second UN Mediator (September 1964-March 1965), undertaking the task to find a solution to the Cyprus problem. The author provides a detailed analysis of Plaza's attempt, of the subsequent Greco-Turkish dialogue (1965-1967), and concludes with an examination of the Cyprus-based inter-communal negotiations of 1968-1974 and the failure of the interlocutors to reach an agreement.

Putting the subject in a wider perspective, Varnava's introduction offers an outline of several factors that formed the context of the Cyprus issue; i.e. Cold War rivalries, the island's colonial legacy and the contemporary decolonization wave, political/governance inexperience and pre-existing intercommunal mistrust. A brief yet comprehensive historical background of the island and the national movement of Greek Cypriots in contemporary times is also provided.

The first part of the book (chapters 1-4) examines the period from 1964 until 1967, whereas the second part (chapters 5-7) presents the aftermath of the bicomunal dispute of the said era until the Turkish invasion of 1974.

The first chapter examines the mediation of Galo Plaza (1964-1965) on behalf of the UN. Plaza's report was submitted on 26 March 1965 as a guideline for a settlement of the Cyprus problem. Despite Plaza urging for immediate negotiation between Greek and Turkish Cypriots, the gap between the two communities deepened, causing "a 'comfortable' impasse for both leaderships" (p. 23) which enhanced their separate socio-political evolution. As Varnava illustrates in this chapter, Plaza's strategy was to shift the epicenter of the negotiating attempts, rendering the issue as primarily of Cypriot interest rather than a Greco-Turkish affair.

The second chapter deals with the aftermath of Plaza's failure and the consolidation of the then status quo in the island. The determination of president Makarios to implement constitutional reformation, exploiting the UN Security Council's Resolution 186 for this cause, provoked immediate Turkish reaction. Hence, the Turkish Cypriot leadership set up the infrastructure of a de facto separate administration, whereas the Turkish population of the island was withdrawn in enclaves. At the same time, the Greek Cypriots governed and reorganized the Republic of Cyprus, founding new institutions and extending their authority on the state mechanism on the basis of the Doctrine of Necessity. Varnava illustrates how the alienation of the Turkish community from their Greek counterparts enhanced their dependency on Turkey, forging the latter's role as their motherland and protector: "After 1963 Turkish-Cypriots were totally dependent, both politically and economically, on Ankara, which provided them with at least the minimum resources needed to prevent their capitulation to Greek-Cypriots. By the same token, the official Turkish-Cypriot leadership came progressively 'dance to the tune' of Ankara" (p. 49).

The economic situation of the island between 1960-1967 is depicted in chapter three. Makarios used the economy as leverage in his pursuit of the Turkish Cypriot leadership capitulation. As already stated, Makarios' policy urged the self-isolated Turkish Cypriots to align themselves with Turkey. Varnava highlights the different financial status of the two communities, along with the divergent business paths they followed. As a result, an economic gap between Greek and Turkish Cypriots emerged throughout the 1960s (i.e. the era of Greek Cypriot community's rapid urbanization). It appears that the said economic inequality between the two main elements of the population induced Turkish Cypriots' mistrust and insecurity. Furthermore, financial

instability affected the island's economy on the whole, as the situation hindered international investments and the inhabitants were burdened by more taxes.

The first section of the book concludes with chapter four, which examines the diplomatic activity of 1965-1967. After Plaza's mediation failure, an intervention on behalf of the UN, UK, US and NATO attempted to secure that all interested parties would be engaged in a dialogue, in order to overcome the occurred diplomatic impasse. Varnava underlines the difficulties for such an initiative, due to the divergent perspectives of the two Cypriot communities' leadership. Subsequently, in May 1965, a direct negotiation between Greece and Turkey emerged as the proper way to surpass the stalemate, despite the apparent political dissidence between Makarios and the Greek government of the time. However, neither the Greco-Turkish process nor a new UN initiative resulted in deadlock resolution.

Because of this development (and after the November 1967 clash in the Kophinou/Ayios Theodoros area), a new process of inter-communal dialogue was launched. The fifth chapter regarding the November 1967 crisis and its immediate aftermath introduces the second part of the book. After the failure of the bilateral negotiations at Evros (September 1967) and the armed dispute of November, Greece opted to withdraw about 7.000 Greek troops, until then stationed in Cyprus, in order to avoid a direct clash with Turkey. This indicated the priorities of the military Government of Greece, namely the preservation of a peaceful relationship with its neighbour. The disengagement of the Greek regime from the Cyprus problem in the context of the aforementioned policy, facilitated the proceedings towards a direct dialogue between the two communities in Cyprus. The fifth chapter serves also as an introduction for the next two, as the author summarizes the objectives of the two sides in the then forthcoming process of inter-communal talks.

The last two chapters of the book, chapters six and seven, are dealing with the negotiations between Greek and Turkish Cypriot representatives, Glafkos Clerides and Rauf Denktash, during 1968-1971 and 1972-1974. In particular, the negotiation process commenced on 3 June 1968 and ended with the disastrous events of July 1974. After June 1972, an expanded round of negotiations began in the presence of the representatives of Greece and Turkey, as well as of the special representative of the UN Secretary General. In this part of the book Varnava presents in detail the proposals, objections and "red lines" of each side, and the internal situation in the concerned communities. What is worth to mention here is that Varnava presents a rather different image of Rauf Denktash than the one cultivated in the Greek Cypriots' con-

science. In spite of Denktash's reputation as intransigent and radical, in this section of the book the Turkish Cypriot interlocutor appears to be moderate and ready for concessions (at least during the first phase of the negotiations) but unable to proceed because of the reactions and disagreement of several hardliner politicians of his community. Finally, the author points to the impact of Panayiotis Pipinelis' intervention. The Greek Minister of Foreign Affairs exerted great influence over Clerides and had a vital role in the proceedings.

Besides the extensive use of secondary literature, the author utilizes a great number of archival sources to enrich her work and underpin her argumentation. British National Archives and State Archives in Nicosia, as well as US Department of States FRUS archival collection consist the backbone of her research, along with a thorough study of the Cypriot press.

The author proves to be a meticulous researcher, who does not merely track and connect the historical events, but also dares a direct interpretation in the context of domestic, regional, and international developments. Varnava's work sheds light in various aspects of the examined period. The book is insightful regarding the Cyprus' internal situation, the dominance of Makarios in the island's politics and his role in shaping the events, even emphasizing on his cabinet members' stance and influence. Furthermore, the relations between Athens and the Cyprus government, the several political crises in Greece, and the stance of the western world vis-à-vis the expectations and objectives of all the interested parties are in the epicenter of the research.

While the majority of Greek researchers tend to focus, for various reasons, on the developments and consequences of the Greek Cypriot side, Varnava offers sufficient analysis and sharp insight of the Turkish Cypriot attitude and viewpoint. As stated on the back cover of the book, the presented work is an "essential reading for all those who study the Cyprus problem and conflict resolution".

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