

## **A Decade of Crises and the Future** **[Η Δεκαετία των Κρίσεων και το Αύριο:** **Οι Προκλήσεις της Κυπριακής Δημοκρατίας** **και η Αναζήτηση Προοπτικής]**

**ANDREAS THEOPHANOUS**

**Athens: I. Sideris Publications, 2021**

**pp. 473**

**ISBN: 978-960-08-0899-5**

The soft cover of Professor Andreas Theophanous' latest book is of a good design. Painted in variations of olive green, it features the title *A Decade of Crises and the Future* [my translation] and hides an excellent anthology of short texts. They represent a selected part of the author's contributions to Greek language newspapers in the period 2011-2021. In terms of content, the papers constitute a series of insightful accounts of political and economic developments in Cyprus during this period. Taking into consideration the quality of this array of contributions to the local press, as well as the broad range of themes that they address, it would not be an exaggeration to describe the book as a treasure chest of the history of crises that befell Cyprus in the past decade.

The book, introduced by Paschalis M. Kitromilides, appears divided into five broad thematic areas or sections. They cover the Cyprus dispute and Turkish policy, the regional, European and international context, the economic crisis and the pandemic, public policy and social issues and, finally, the author's 'philosophical positions.' With the exception of the latter, a rather unusual definitional rubric, the remaining headings correspond fully to the content of the articles. The organization of papers made by the Professor resembles a Herculean task especially in view of the fact that he attempted it long after their publication in the press. As for the last section, it represents a challenging effort to put together articles of a diverse content. The author could have rendered the content of the last section under the slightly more conventional heading 'General Political Views'. For the product of Theophanous' work is a quintessentially *political book* and one should assess it as such.

The purpose for which Theophanous originally wrote these articles determined the length, the style and the emotional substratum of his texts as they now appear in the book. These very short articles, usually two pages long, make the book an ex-

tremely pleasant reading. Initial constraints compelled the author to employ precision in his writing without sacrificing the eloquence of his analysis. In short, the texts are dry without the author appearing inarticulate. Long narrative excursions, unnecessary verbosity and pretensions to literary skill are completely absent from the book. A critical calmness imbued in the texts marks the combination of the author's academic detachment with his pervasive critique of the country's political establishment. In short, Theophanous remains calm without becoming indifferent. The Doric nature of the texts and the Stoic predisposition of the author make the book a refuge in a maze of meaningless talks and arguments about public issues in Cyprus.

Precisely because the book is so good in what *it says*, one could quibble a bit about what *it does not say*. Despite the impressively wide range of themes it addresses, there is very little on the military aspect of the Cyprus standoff. To be fair, Theophanous is not a military expert and his silence on the matter is in discreet conformity to a tendency in Greek Cypriot politics to approach the Cyprus dispute from a legal standpoint while ignoring hard power issues. In contrast to neighboring Israel, where military expertise plays a vital role in the formulation of policy, this matter remains a taboo issue in the public sphere of the blissful islanders. This public syndrome of political naiveté is largely the result of the crushing military defeat that Greek Cypriots suffered in 1974 and their almost traumatic denial to confront the fact that the imbalances of military power in the Eastern Mediterranean are rather depressing for the Greek side. When it comes to the precarious nature of a political settlement in Cyprus, however, the devil is not in the legal terms of the federal constitution but in the details of military arrangements on and around Cyprus.

**Marios Sarris**