

The Cyprus Issue 1954-1974

[Το Κυπριακό 1954-1974: Στοχαστικές Προσαρμογές και Αιώνιος Δηλιγιαννισμός]

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Athens: Papazisi Publications, 2021

pp. 612

ISBN: 978-960-02-3810-5

As George Theotokas describes, and the author George Kalpadakis very eloquently explains in his book, by 1954 populism, just like the one that was expressed by the late premier of Greece in 1897 Theodoros Deligiannis, had mainly dominated the shaping of the political thinking, and consequently the foreign policy of Greece towards Cyprus. George Theotokas characterizes this current within Greek politics as the ‘eternal diligiannism’ (p. 487) and the author in order to describe the politics of the period under examination, chooses this phrase as a subtitle for his book. George Kalpadakis is an Assistant Researcher at the Modern Greek History Research Centre (KEINE) of the Academy of Athens, with particular research interest in foreign policy. His book is an excellent addition to the historiography of the Cyprus Problem throughout three decades, 1950s, 1960s and 1970s.

The main scope of this book is to present from a fresh point of view, the factors that affected Greece’s strategy towards the Cyprus Issue during the critical period of 1954-1974. More specifically, the author makes a thorough examination of the two schools of thought within the diplomatic service and of the Greek politicians in relation to the handling of the Cyprus issue and the pressing demand of the Greek-Cypriot leadership for imminent *Enosis*.

The starting point of the book is in 1954, explaining about the first recourse of the Papagos’ Government to the UN General Assembly for Cyprus’ demand of self-determination and consequently *Enosis*. The narrative of the book ends with the catastrophic Turkish invasion of 1974. Kalpadakis sheds light upon the pragmatic approach taken by several Greek diplomats, which was embodied with pure strategic thinking and shaped by taking into consideration the Greek national interests *in toto*. These diplomats, who held key posts in the diplomatic service, in relation to the Cyprus case –such as Aggelos Vlachos, General Consul in Nicosia 1956-1958 and later Secretary-General of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Vasileios Mostras,

Greek Ambassador in London 1953-1956– tried to convince the Greek leadership throughout the period under examination, to adopt this moderate approach. However, Kalpadakis points out that in most cases the Greek leadership had adopted short-sighted strategies led by the populist outbursts and emotional demands of the public opinion in Greece and Cyprus. More specifically, the author presents the voices within the Greek-Cypriot leadership and Greek political arena, who fiercely and constantly demanded in the 1950s from the Greek Government to support imminent *Enosis* and to proceed with internationalization of the issue within the UN. Contrary, however, to these voices several diplomats according to Kalpadakis, urged for the prevailing of moderation and diplomacy, as envisioned by Eleftherios Venizelos in the 1930s. This moderate strategy was shaped under the below considerations:

- a) Support Cyprus' struggle for liberation but not through internalization of the issue via UN recourses, or even through military means, because that would have mobilized Ankara into getting involved in the discussions for Cyprus' future status. Conversely, pragmatist approaches were arguing in favour of using purely diplomatic means, having always in mind the balance of the regional and Western powers, as well as the international context. A gradual solution should have been sought through the establishment of a purely Cypriot independent State at first, in which the two communities would have existed peacefully and closely. This would have been a 'second small Greek state' (p. 26)
- b) Use diplomatic channels through the Western alliance. In that way, Greece should have entered into bilateral discussions with London about the Cyprus Issue. This would have averted the danger of involving Turkey. Simultaneously, Greek diplomacy should have exploited the decolonization movement that was emerging in the United States and worldwide (solution as India's example).
- c) Keep always in mind that radicalization of the Cyprus Issue and the constant and strong demand for *Enosis* in Cyprus and in Greece, would have a negative impact on Greek population in Turkey and Greek interests in general.

Contrary to the above approach, Kalpadakis explains throughout the book how the Athenian Governments failed to grasp the importance of adopting a strategy on Cyprus that would not have been monolithic but it would have aimed to address all open Greco-Turkish affairs instead. Through his interesting citations and abstracts from various archives, the author explains that the Greek foreign policy was highly affected by the public opinion of the strong *Enotists* supporters in Greece and in Cyprus and by the press. The Greek Governments did not also have the ability to control

Makarios, neither before 1960 nor after 1963, while after 1964 Athens was operating under the illusion that it could have exerted some control over Makarios by giving an underlying support to Grivas' clandestine actions in Cyprus.

The book is split into three parts. The author adopts a chronological analysis in the first two parts, while in the third part, Kalpadakis summarizes what have affected the various strategies analyzed in the previous two sections and what it was eventually adopted by the various Greek Governments and certain Greek diplomats in key posts, throughout the whole period of 1954-1974.

The first part sets the context of the Greco-Turkish relations, the critical interests of Britain over Cyprus, the international dynamics within the UN and the demands of the Greek-Cypriot leadership about imminent *Enosis* mainly during the 1950s. More specifically, it explains how the first Greek UN recourse of 1954 on Cyprus' request for self-determination had mobilized Ankara into actively getting involved in the discussions for Cyprus' future status. Moreover, it elaborates on the 'side-effects' of the internationalization strategy of the Cyprus Issue, as well as the adverse impact of the crises in Cyprus in 1955-1959 and in 1963-1964, on the Greek population, the status of Patriarchate in Istanbul and the Greco-Turkish relations in general. On the other hand, Kalpadakis presents the 'rapprochement' of the Greco-Turkish affairs during the first three years of the fragile independence in Cyprus, and how during Karamanlis' implementation of the moderate and pragmatic approach on the Cyprus Issue, both the Greek community in Turkey and the Patriarchate had thrived.

In the same part the author cites abstracts of the warnings from various diplomats in key posts and especially of the Greek Ambassador in London, Vasileios Mostras, who up until his recall in 1957, was constantly advising his Government about the British interests at stake in Cyprus, the actual possibilities that Athens could have used through a Greco-British dialogue, how the UN recourse was premature with limited chances of success and why it would have never been supported by London. Moreover, the warnings of the Greek General-Consul in Cyprus, Aggelos Vlachos are presented in detail. More specifically, Vlachos tried to convince the Greek Governments for the need to exert moderate influence on Makarios on terminating the armed struggle of EOKA and find ways to break the impasse with the British government through bilateral talks. Finally, the author presents why the Greek Governments were not able to take into account the above warnings for adopting a moderate strategy for Cyprus future, and sheds some light upon Makarios' manoeuvres when he was in Athens, after he was released from his exile in 1957.

The second part of the book presents the voices of key diplomats from the late 1958 and the discussions for the Zurich-London Agreements until the Turkish invasion of 1974. The main difference of the beginning of this period, was the prevailing of the moderate voices within the Greek Foreign Ministry led by Evangelos Averoff, and the Government led by Constatninos Karalamnlis. The Greek Government was aiming at settling the Greek-Turkish differences and the Cyprus Issue as well, through the establishment and consolidation of Independence. However, the realities on the island have disillusioned Athens, which was unable to convince Makarios for the need to make the Zurich-London agreements fully operational. Kalpadakis in this part makes a brief presentation of the realities on the island up until 1974, both in the Greek and Turkish-Cypriot community, and explains why the successive Greek Governments, the diplomats, and Papadopoulos regime from 1967 up until 1973 were unable to influence in any way the Greek-Cypriot leadership.

The author adopts the position of the pragmatist diplomats, which supported that even though Makarios had made grave mistakes and miscalculations in the handling of the Cyprus Issue, Athens needed to protect his position as the sole political leader of Greek-Cypriots and President of Cyprus. For this reason, during the first years of the dictatorship in Greece, the moderate diplomats managed to convince Papadopoulos regime that Makarios should not be marginalized in any discussions for Cyprus' fate, while Grivas was dangerous and needed to be contained. However, by the end of 1973 and the change of military leadership, led by Dimitrios Ioannidis, the already minimum dynamic of the pragmatist diplomats over junta had vanished. The diplomats were neither able to convince junta for the need to protect Makarios nor for the need to preserve a fruitful inter-communal dialogue over Cyprus, nor for the need for bilateral discussions with Turkey in order to settle the increase of tension in the Aegean due to Turkey's provocations. It was evident that Ioannides' regime consulted only the secret services and CIA instead of the official diplomatic sources either in Greece or elsewhere. Due to their failure, prominent diplomats have resigned from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, some days before the military coup in Cyprus in July 1974.

In the third part of the book, Kalpadakis presents in more detail the factors and persons that influenced the Greek policies towards Cyprus throughout the period under examination. In particular, he explains that due to the previous civil war, the Cold War political rivalries and their belief that communism could have prevailed in Cyprus due to AKEL's dynamic, the Greek Governments were not politically strong

enough either to disregard any public accusations led by populism or to undertake a strict and pragmatic strategy for Cyprus that would have taken under wider consideration Greece's national interests. Interestingly in this part, Kalpadakis also gives emphasis to several prominent diplomats who held different approaches on the Cyprus Issue and explains why each of them adopted a different approach on the Cyprus Issue. In spite of these voices, the Greek Governments were still highly affected by the public opinion rather than their diplomatic service.

Kalpadakis' book is certainly unique. Both the way that the chapters are being evolved and the subject itself have not been examined in this way before. Through the citation of various abstracts of primary sources, and the biographies and autobiographies of the diplomats, he creates a vivid narrative, which is very interesting to read. In certain occasions, the book needs particular attention, since the author cites many examples and arguments of various chronological periods and the reader has to be careful to grasp the different chronological context, despite the existence of the same realities on the ground. There is, however, one critical juncture that it is missing from Kalpadakis analysis, which it would have been very interesting addition to the narrative of the book. This is a summary of the mobilization Greek Foreign Ministry and of the Greek diplomats after the second inter-communal crisis in Cyprus in November 1967 and the shuttle diplomacy of Cyrus Vance between Athens, Ankara, and Nicosia. Nonetheless, Kalpadakis book contains a very rich analysis of the Greek strategies towards Cyprus in one of the most critical historical periods of the island. Most importantly, the book reflects upon a critical question about the Greek foreign policy; has the decision-making been shaped under pragmatic factors with a thorough calculation of the Greek national interests, or has it traditionally been affected by the 'eternal diligianssim' of Greek politics?

Marilena Varnava