

**Michalis Stavrou Michael, *Resolving the Cyprus Conflict: Negotiating History* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009, pp.292)**

**Reviewed by İlhan Sağsen**

The Cyprus issue is one of the few ever-lasting international disagreements inherited from the Cold War era. For many analysts the Cyprus dispute constitutes the central point of the Turco-Greek disagreements. Despite the numerous proposals for settlement of the issue in the last five decades, the Cyprus issue remains unresolved and still constitutes the most crucial aspect of Turkey-Greece relations.

This book addresses a number of proposals dedicated to the settlement of the Cyprus issue in the post-1974 period that constitutes the latest manifestation of the Cyprus problem. The author seeks answers for the critical questions related to the failure of the settlement proposals: Why has the resolution of the Cyprus problem eluded the various parties and mediators involved since 1974?, Why is the small island-state still physically divided, despite decades of persistent efforts to bring about a negotiated settlement? Additionally he seeks lessons from the issue: What can Cyprus teach us about the nature of protracted conflicts and ways of resolving them?

While addressing these critical questions, the author classifies the actors that have an influential role in the Cyprus conflict into four categories: **the primary parties** -that is, the Greek and Turkish Cypriot communities-; **the principal external powers**, namely, Greece and Turkey; **the secondary external powers** -the United States, Britain and the Soviet Union/Russia-; and **the multilateral institutions** (primarily the UN, NATO and the European Union). He argues that the answer for the failure of the numerous initiatives that aimed at solution of the issue lies in the complex web of interacting factors –internal and external Cyprus- that have affected the overall negotiating process. In his analysis of the settlement proposals, Michael divides the post-1974 period into four distinct phases: “1974-1981”, “1982-1989”, “1989-1994”, “1995-2008”.

The book is composed of five chapters except for an introductory chapter. In the introductory chapter, the author mentions about the structural logic and methodology of his study. Michael concomitantly focuses on three interrelated themes: the role of key protagonists and third parties; the dialectic of continuity and change; and the nexus/tension between the domestic and external environments. Within this context, the main focus of this book is the dialectical relationship between the two parties that have developed throughout the inter-communal negotiations.

The first chapter of the book is dedicated to identifying historical sources of the conflict. Michael argues that the Cyprus conflict cannot be evaluated without considering its historical origins. Within this framework, the author examines the developments starting with the British rule over the island until the Turkish military intervention in 1974, with a particular focus on domestic and external dynamics. The subjects that were addressed in the historical setting included the British Rule, the Ottoman Rule, 'Enosis,' the 1878 Cyprus Convention between the United Kingdom and the Ottoman Empire, the Zurich and London Agreement of 1959, and independence in 1960, the collapse of the first Republic in 1963-1964, and partition of the island in 1974. At the end of the chapter, Michael discusses the process that resulted in the '1974 Peace Operation' of Turkey.

The author addresses the 1974-1981 period from both the Greek and the Turkish Cypriot perspectives in the second chapter. While doing so, he puts forward the inter-communal talks such as the Vienna talks in 1975, United Nations (UN) resolutions such as UN Security Council Resolutions 353, 359, 360, 367 and General Assembly resolution 3212 and the UN role in this process, proposal presented by both sides. In addition to the inter-communal talks for the settlement of the Cyprus issue, Michael elaborates on the United States intervention in the problem along with the two principal external powers, Turkey and Greece. However, negotiations and attempts for resolution of the Cyprus issue were failed because of uncertainty, interruptions, and a lack of cohesion as underlined by Michael. Consequently, there was no progress during this period except the substantive issues that continued to divide the two sides.

The third chapter of this book aims to show the need for synchronization between the two sets of variables: internal progress at the negotiations and its external context. In this regard, while Michael focuses on the domestic developments in the both sides and impacts of political conjuncture in Greece and Turkey on the Cyprus issue in the 1980s. At the same time, he mentions the UN-sponsored inter-communal talks on resolving the Cyprus issue. Apart from this, Michael associates the Cyprus issue with inter-state relations between Turkey and Greece. In this respect, the meeting between the Greek Prime Minister Andreas Papandreu and the Turkish Prime Minister Turgut Ozal in the World Economic Forum in Davos dated January 1988, when the two leaders discussed about the Cyprus issue, was presented as an example to highlight the importance of the issue in the Turco-Greek relations. A negotiated settlement of the issue was failed in the 1980s as well. Michael attributes the failure of the inter-communal talks and the UN-sponsored efforts to the political dynamics of the internal and external powers concerning the Cyprus problem.

The fourth chapter of this book covers the period from 1989 to 1994. There were three UN initiatives in this period: While Perez de Cuellar, then

the UN Secretary General put forward Ideas of 1989; his successor Boutros B. Ghali proposed two sets of settlement proposal for the Cyprus issue; 1992 Set of Ideas, and 1993 Confidence Building Measures. Accordingly, the UN played a considerably proactive role in overcoming the impasse impeding the inter-communal talks. Despite strenuous and persistent UN efforts, these attempts did not achieve to reach an ultimate settlement. According to Michael, there are some reasons for the failure of all UN initiatives. First, a basis for trust and understanding is lacking. Second, the disagreement between two ethnic groups is heightened. Third, both sides of this problem have a nearby metropolitan power, Greece and Turkey. Fourth, the success of the UN in keeping the peace has also made it less necessary to find a lasting solution.

In the last chapter, Michael focuses on the Annan's plan concerning the Cyprus issue, the European Union (EU) impact on this issue and the Europeanization of the conflict. Michael argues that the introduction of the European factor into the Cyprus balance provided the impulse necessary. According to him, the process of the integration of the Greek part of Cyprus with the EU and Turkey's EU accession process rendered this moment as a turning point equal to momentous developments in 1959 and 1974. He also argues that Europeanization of the conflict would have a beneficial and transformative effect on the principal parties of the conflict so long as participation and interaction with the EU instrumentalities, forums, and institutions were sustained.

In conclusion, throughout this study, Michael has sought to find the answer to this question: Why has there been no resolution to the Cyprus conflict? And, in this book, to find an answer this question, he focuses on the internal or external attempts, the UN-sponsored negotiations, and the European Union contribution. However, contrary to the anticipation of Michael, these all attempts and Europeanization of the issue failed to bring a lasting solution to the Cyprus conflict. Furthermore, it turned into an influential factor that adversely affects Turkey-EU relations. Nevertheless, it is a decidedly very significant and leading effort in the relevant literature. Through its comprehensive, detailed and well-documented content, the book might be very useful for the researchers studying on the Cyprus issue, the European Union, Greece-Turkey relations, and Turkey's EU membership process. Finally, the book provides an opportunity to revisit the subject from the different points of view throughout the long history of the Cyprus conflict.

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