BOOK REVIEWS

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Thomas Diez ed. *The European Union and the Cyprus Conflict: Modern Conflict, Postmodern Union (*Manchester University Press, Manchester and New York, 2002). Pp. 256, ISBN 0719060796, £45.00

The Cyprus question has been hotly debated within European Union (EU) circles in the last couple of years. Indeed, the accession of the "Republic of Cyprus" ("RoC") to the EU has led to many disagreements. There are many reasons for this. The ongoing conflict between the two communities is the first, and the geographical location of the island a second one. However, the December 2002 Summit in Copenhagen and the decision to sign the accession agreement with the "RoC" confirmed that there is no reason strong enough to prevent the "RoC" from becoming a full member of the EU. The biggest problem, however, remains unresolved. This question is what the accession of the "RoC" is going to mean in the long run for the Mediterranean sub-system in general and the island in particular.

In Thomas Diez's (ed.) The European Union and the Cyprus Conflict: Modern Conflict, Postmodern Union, the contributors specifically discuss this important question. The authors investigate whether "RoC"s accession to the Union will lead to the resolution of one of the world's most protracted social and political conflicts, or whether it will pave the way to further disengagement of the two communities on the island, leaving the EU to have to deal with a continuing conflict within its 'borders.' It certainly is a difficult question to answer.

In his opening chapter, Diez enumerates five issues in the EU-Cyprus conflict that need to be taken into account. These issues are territoriality, identity, role of borders, sovereignty and complexity of political organization (p. 7). According to the author, these issues are significant in showing how the Cyprus conflict represents a modern conflict, whereas the EU exemplifies the reification of what Diez calls postmodern ideas. These postmodern ideas include interdependence (as opposed to independence), the diminished role of territorial

borders (as opposed to territoriality), pluralism and civic governance (as opposed to exclusive self-identification and restricted political organization). The main issue, therefore, becomes how to disentangle the whole Cyprus knot and offer an alternative as to how the EU could act as a positive catalyst to the resolution of the conflict on the island. Thomas Diez suggests that the only way to have 'a sustainable conflict resolution…lies in its postmodernization, and the EU could provide a framework for such a transition." (p. 11).

The body of the book is divided into three parts. Part I basically attempts to draw a framework for the Cyprus problem and the EU-Cyprus relations. Lykke Friis looks at the case of Cyprus from the EU's perspective and argues (in chapter 2) that Cyprus is 'so different [from] yet so similar [to]' the EU's Central European candidates. Friis sees the case of Cyprus as being similar to the applications of the Central European candidates, with regard to how the EU institutions work in the enlargement process. In particular, he argues that the EU's past decisions prevent the Union to take change its position at present. However, Friis has no answer to the question of how it was possible for the EU to change its policy of 'first solution, then accession" in 1993-1994, to "accession with or without solution" starting in 1997. Instead of answering this question, Friis concludes that the best way the EU could contribute to the Cypriot problem would be to make the Cyprus issue a top priority and be very creative in legal-constitutional terms.

Yannis A. Stivachtis, in chapter three, investigates the issue from the Greek perspective. Stivachtis discusses what Cyprus represents and means for Greece by examining Greek-Turkish relations and discursive constructions. From this chapter we learn how the Greek discourse on security has been shaped by the perceived (not in a vacuum though, p. 42) Turkish threat. Stivachtis' chapter is complemented in the following chapter by Isil Kazan, who examines the role and importance of Cyprus as seen from Turkey. Kazan's is an descriptive account of Turkish perceptions of the Mediterranean sub-system after the end of the Cold War that has been shaped mainly by Turkey's 'geostrategic position'. How Turkish foreign policy has become more 'regionalist' during the course of the 1990s, having made Cyprus indispensable in any security calculation is the main postulate of this chapter. The overall conclusion of the chapters in this first section is that strategic discourses in the Eastern Mediterranean are dominated by classic security concerns (p. 204).

In Part II, the contributors "problematize modernity.' In the discussions, the authors refer to the above-mentioned five characteristics of modernity. In chapter five, Costas M.

Constantinou and Yiannis Papadakis maintain that the principal issue in Cyprus conflict has been the 'highly problematic, contradictory and dangerous' discourse of recognition. This discourse not only oversimplifies and popularizes international principles but it also imposes "particular cognition and totalizing understanding of the 'Other'." In chapter six, Necati Polat, while reaffirming this point, further argues that an exclusivist self-identification results in violence. According to Polat, "violence is intrinsic" in modernity because people see it as the only legitimate way to get the recognition they want (p. 110). Having in mind this modern character of the Cyprus conflict, Oliver P. Richmond, in chapter seven reviews the efforts of the United Nations (UN) and the EU in the resolution of Cyprus problem. After describing what these efforts have been chronologically, Richmond suggests that the inability of the UN in finding a way to resolve this conflict rests with the fact that the UN itself is a modern, state-centric entity. According to Richmond, the EU, because of its postmodern features, represents a much better venue for negotiations on the future of the island. The main conclusion of this part is that "the politics of recognition and self-determination, as essential elements of the modern state system, restrain and inhibit the articulation of alternative and less exclusive identities. These elements 'often enable actors to legitimize violent practices'. (p. 204)

In Part III, contributors examine whether the Union can and should really be seen as a catalyst to postmodernization, and thus to the resolution of the conflict. In chapter eight, Thomas Diez argues that the EU impact as a catalyst on the Cyprus question is inevitable. However, Diez is quick to note that whether this effect will be positive or negative depends on several important yet mostly ambiguous factors. Diez suggests that the view that the EU is going to act as a positive catalyst in Cyprus depends on several false assumptions. These false assumptions are: the conceptualization of the EU as a neutral third party, giving more power to economic rationality rather than social security, seeing identities as fixed, having a selective memory when it comes to history, ongoing prominence given to statism, and inadequate integration of the international context. According to Diez, these false assumptions lead to wrong expectations. In conclusion, Diez suggests that "unless there is either a fundamental overall change in the international sub-system of the Eastern Mediterranean, or a change in EU policy" (p. 141), it is highly likely that the northern part of the island will be further integrated with Turkey; at the very least, the division on the island will be deepened if the "RoC" is integrated into the Union. In this sense, Diez suggests a policy reorientation by the EU. Fiona B. Adamson, in chapter nine, on the other hand, argues that the crucial task is to "alter the set of incentives facing political elites in Turkey vis-à-vis Cyprus and to provide

avenues for political elites to justify shifts in policy to their domestic constituencies" (p. 164). Although her suggestion deserves merit, how this should be done is not clarified any further. Fatma Guven-Lisaniler and Leopoldo Rodriguez's chapter on the economic and social impact of EU membership on Northern Cyprus examines these effects in three different sets of scenarios: 1) scenarios that essentially amount to the status quo, 2) scenarios equivalent to a loose federation, 3) scenarios closer to a strong federation or unitary state (p. 188). In the concluding chapter, Thomas Diez sums up the overall discussion of the book, once again stating that the resolution of the Cyprus problem depends on the 'postmodernization' of the conflict with the help of the EU, which itself is a postmodern construct.

The European Union and the Cyprus Conflict: Modern Conflict, Postmodern Union is an interesting and unusual account of EU-Cyprus relations. Given that EU-Cyprus relations have attracted much less attention than they deserve, the book appears as a welcome contribution to existing literature. Its major strength lies in the fact that it offers an alternative view of the resolution of the conflict on the island, and how the EU's impact could be channeled towards that end. Trying to offer this alternative, the chapters borrow ideas from many different fields making the book an eclectic enterprise. Although there is no overarching theoretical framework, the book is well integrated.

The book is modest in its overall aim of offering only an alternative solution to the Cyprus problem. However, one gathers that the overall implications of this alternative are quite radical, largely due to the expected identity transformation on the island. This volume suggests that the resolution of the Cyprus problem can be achieved if this 'modern conflict' can be postmodernized, and that the EU, as a postmodern construct itself, can help in this transformation. But which should come first? The postmodernization of the conflict or the resolution of it in order to pave the way for postmodern transformation on the island. This is a real dilemma. Secondly, how confident can we be to define the EU as a postmodern entity? Although the EU certainly has post-modern characteristics, such as de-territorialization, one can cogently argue that the statist elements within the Union are still very powerful. Even though the Union has a subversive/transformative character, in its current stage it should best be seen as an instrument for achieving the 'national interests' of member states, which is very modern in essence. In this sense, equating the EU with a postmodern entity is overly optimistic and, more importantly, a false presumption.

Although there are major questions challenging the major arguments of this volume, this should in no way be seen as underestimating the overall quality of the book. Above all, the book compels us to rethink how the state-centric world has exhausted many of the modern conflict resolution tools, and why we need alternative and creative ways of thinking when it comes to resolving conflicts in general, and EU-Cyprus matters in particular.

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