

Resolving Cyprus: New Approaches to Conflict Resolution

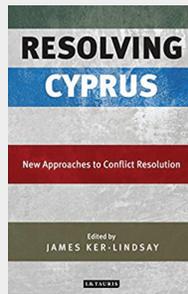
Edited by James Ker-Lindsay

London-New York: IB Tauris, 2014, 279 pages, \$28.00, ISBN: 9781784534783

Reviewed by Esra Dilek, Bilkent University

Despite four decades of multi-level and multi-actor efforts to find a solution, Cyprus remains an intractable conflict and a case of analysis for scholars of conflict resolution. *Resolving Cyprus: New Approaches to Conflict Resolution* edited by James Ker-Lindsay is part of the academic endeavour to understand the reasons behind this intractability. More specifically, as Ker-Lindsay notes in the Introduction, the book is based on a single, deceptively simple question: can Cyprus be solved? –a question that has brought together a great variety of answers based on a variety of approaches to the problem and the conflict itself. As simple as it is, exploring answers to this question from different angles is crucial for making sense of any possible pathways that might lead to the solution of the decades-long Cyprus Problem.

The book is composed of 30 short essays (8-10 pages each) organized alphabetically by author. The structure of the book offers one major advantage and one major disadvantage for the reader. The advantage is that short essays provide concise and to-the-point opinion pieces addressing the main question of the book, i.e. the question of whether Cyprus can be solved. Reading through the essays, the reader is able to capture the multidimensional nature of the conflict and accordingly, the complexity of a possible solution, without getting lost in details in each essay. However,



at the same time, this structuring brings together a major disadvantage. The absence of any thematic ordering or grouping of the essays forms one main practical difficulty for the reader who is confused in obtaining a thematic understanding of how the conflict can be solved. This limitation is partially

addressed in the last part of the Introduction, where Ker-Lindsay provides a thematic organization of the essays under the title ‘scope of the contributions.’ However, the reader is still left jumping from one issue area to another while reading the essays in alphabetical order. Based on this consideration, the rest of this review is based on a thematic organization of the essays.

The first theme emerging from the essays is that of history. As with every conflict, history matters; the essays by An, Asmussen, and Mohamad focus on the importance of historical legacies in shaping the division today, arguing that the way forward for a resolution lies in capturing these legacies and dealing with the divisiveness. According to these authors, the solution lies in “challenging the separate histories told by the two communities” (An, p. 29), “leaving behind the past and developing mutual trust through collaboration” (Asmussen, p. 38), and supporting moderate actors and unofficial diplomacy to get over the official divisive diplomacy emanating from different interpretations of history (Mohamad, p. 198).

A second theme emerging from the essays is the role of internal and external actors in solving the conflict. Essays dealing with the importance of internal actors focus on the role of civil society (Harris, Vogel and Richmond) and women (Hadjipavlou). The question of internal actors is closely tied to recent discussions on the importance of bottom-up approaches as a better alternative to top-down, elite-driven approaches in resolving intrastate conflicts. On the other hand, considering that the Cyprus conflict is on the agenda of international actors such as the UN and the EU, external actors are crucial for solution. The EU's role is discussed within the prospect of greater integration, which is regarded as a crucial potential driver for peace (Kyris, p. 176). On the other hand, the UN's role in the inconsequential negotiations is criticized, and there is a call for a piecemeal approach instead of the take-it-or-leave-it package that has been promoted by the UN for four decades (Kaymak).

One of the main themes that has dominated the Cyprus problem for decades is the question of constitutional designs, referring mainly to the establishment of a Bizonal Bicomunal Federation (BBF) as the best alternative to unification or separation. Discussions on constitutional solutions are closely tied to the legal aspects of the conflict (Kyriakidis, Skoutaris) and also to the question of security (MacDonald) that remains unresolved due to the physical presence of foreign troops. Analysts of the constitutional solution to the conflict are aware that the BBF model itself cannot solve the problem and argue for the need for reconsidering alternative models of federation, taking into account the asymmetries between the two communities (Bachelis and Noel) and the prospects for a 'loose federation' (Ker-Lindsay). The separation of the island into two parts, maintaining the de facto division that has split the island since

1974, and the recognition of the TRNC as a de jure state is also promoted as a strong alternative. Separation is considered within the need to understand borders as creative delineations and the means for "good neighborliness" (Akcali, p. 21), and as part of the need to move beyond the federation model proposed by the UN that apparently has not solved the problem (Olgun).

The last theme is related to politics. The political aspect of the issue refers to the impact of party politics on the problem (Charalambous) and the question of leadership along with the role of intellectuals and the re-education of public opinion towards a new political culture leaving behind ideological divisions (Kitromilides). Undeniably, party politics are crucial in driving both public opinion and the external dimension of the conflict through foreign policy and relations with the motherlands, Greece and Turkey. But most crucially, the political dimension is responsible for what has been termed "comfortable conflict" (Adamides, p. 8), where risks for a potential settlement are higher than those of maintaining the existing status quo. This is the case both at the elite-level, i.e. obscuring politicians from taking a step for settlement, but also at the level of the society at large. A new window of opportunity has emerged with the developments on natural gas extraction from the southern shores of the island (Faustmann, Gurel and Tzimitras), the results of which remain uncertain.

Ker-Lindsay did not include a concluding chapter in the book, possibly in order to leave the conclusion to the readers. Considering all 30 essays in the book, what seems to be the most obvious conclusion is that Cyprus can be solved in a variety of ways. In my opinion, what matters at the end is whether the solution will come from above or from below. It

seems that any solution should include both efforts from the political level (above) and from society (below). As a coincidence, the last essay of the book by Vogel and Richmond seems to provide the way forward based also on the recently emerging discussions on peacebuilding: a hybridization that

would enable local infrastructures for peace, moving beyond the ‘elite transcript’ (p. 274). This would help transcend old dysfunctional divisions and enable Cyprus to move forward to peaceful coexistence between the two communities, either as part of the same society or as ‘good neighbors.’

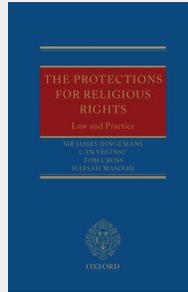
The Protections for Religious Rights: Law and Practice

By Sir James Dingemans, Can Yeginsu, Tom Cross *and* Hafsah Masood
Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013, 555 pages, £132.50, ISBN: 9780199660964

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In the last decade, discussions around religious rights, particularly the rights of Muslim migrant populations in the West, have occupied considerable space in the media, academia and political life. These discussions often revolve around the notion of ‘Islamophobia’ and only very recently has the matter been approached from a rights and human rights angle. This volume represents an important example in this direction. It presents a fairly comprehensive assessment of the legal protection of religious rights and has an international perspective, although it is mainly written with England and Wales in mind.

One can analytically divide the volume into three parts. The first part provides an overview of international and European standards and protections available for religious rights. The second part, which is not written by the book’s authors themselves, looks at the protection of religious rights in Australia, Canada, India, New Zealand, Northern Ireland, the Republic of Ireland, South Af-



rica, Turkey, and the United States. The third part deals with ‘domestic protections’ for religious rights in the United Kingdom. As such, the book brings together in a single volume a monograph dealing with the protection of religious rights at the domestic and international levels and an edited book dealing with different legal systems from around the world.

Readers should not expect to find much argumentative material in the volume. The topics are considered in a quite matter-of-fact style. While this improves the authoritative status of the book it may make it somewhat unattractive for those who are looking to understand the broader European and global tendencies that give rise to the enhanced significance of religious rights. The authors point out that the problem of religious rights is due to two main developments, both of which are legal: “new laws promoting self-determination,” and “new equality laws” (p. 2). As they put it, as the laws become more