

Article title: The dominant media system in Cyprus

I am not an AKEL supporter, nor a communist. I consider myself to belong politically to the broader left wing. Nor do I consider AKEL to be a communist party, but I classify it politically as part of the broad left or of social democracy, which is something that Vassilis Protopapas has mentioned in recent podcasts – a view with which I personally agree. I am forwarding these disclaimers to justify the post that will follow, as well as the brief - and perhaps simplistic - analysis I will do concerning the two interviews we have in front of us, and the need/gap I have identified when it comes to the media landscape. Both interviews were conducted by Tasos Tryphonos, in the context of his show called "Tet a Tet" which airs on Alpha Cyprus channel.

In the first case, we see Demetris Christofias after the end of his term of office, as a self-proclaimed communist leader – whether he was a communist leader or not can be judged by each person individually, as well as by the course of history – while on the other hand we have the interview of Nikos Anastasiades, as well after the end of his term of office, conducted by the same presenter (Tasos Tryphonos). What can be easily discerned by watching and comparing the two interviews is the different approaches and attitudes the presenter had in each case. In the first case, we see an aggressive and, in some cases, even hostile attitude towards Demetris Christofias, while in the second case, we see a mild attitude – a friendly stance one could say, as Makarios Drousiotis mentioned in an article – perhaps due to the interpersonal relations he maintains with some of Anastasiades' family members – towards Nikos Anastasiades. This may make one wonder where this "Media McCarthyism" comes from – or if I may use a term that probably does not exist, but you can get the meaning – this "leftistophobia", with the overriding question being why it still exists in 2023. Especially at a time when Cyprus' leftist party (abr. AKEL) is increasingly moving to the right – mainly, in my opinion, for political canvassing purposes, and to be honest not always unjustifiably. It is worth noting that the presenter was facing an outgoing president who, during his years of government, took over a state which was in the 31st place out of 177 countries ranked on the Corruption Perceptions Index, with a score of 63/100, and handed it over in the 51st place out of 180 ranked at the time, with a score of 52/100, and with 65% of the state's citizens believing that corruption indeed increased from 2013 to 2023 ("Anastasiades' decade"). We should also keep in mind that *Transparency International*, the organisation that conducts this annual survey, uses, for the most part, public data (I provide a link to an article explaining how the measurements are done) and does not use other kinds of data, such as money laundering, the citizens' honest perception of corruption, etc. Therefore, the most corrupt government leader (based on the aforementioned elements) is treated by the media establishment with a kind and friendly attitude, paying him compliments and making positive assessments and comments, such as "Crises call for a (competent) leader", while in the case of the interview with Demetris Christofias, the show presenter raised his tone of voice, interrupted him and engaged in a constant confrontation with his interviewee while maintaining an ironic attitude. I would like to point out here once again, just to be clear – Christodoulides approves of this – that I do not dispute the fact that mistakes were indeed made during 2008-2013 (Christofias' term of office). However, I chose to focus on the analysis of the presenter's use of discourse, his attitude, as well as his treatment of the two outgoing presidents during their interviews.

So, in conclusion, it is evident how a public figure is treated by the media system based on their own (political) views, even if their actions may differ – and I am speaking in general terms, just to stop some malicious comments in their tracks – and this was made especially evident in the periods of crisis characterising the two presidents' time in office when it comes to the coverage and treatment they received from the media respectively. My own assessment is that a new media platform like "ThePressProject" in Greece should be created in Cyprus, as well, and not so much a news platform like the Greek portal "Documento", due to reasons related to party identity (since someone might say that we do have "Dialogos" news portal). This said, I do not wish to underplay the efforts made by journalists, which, especially regarding the spying scandal [in which the Anastasiades' government was directly implicated], were of crucial importance. The new media platform I envision for Cyprus will consist of young journalists familiar with the latest technologies and methods used in their field (podcasting, data and visualisation journalism, mobile-first journalism, user-generated content etc) so that their messages and content reach wider audiences in a more interactive way. Finally, these journalists need not necessarily be left-wingers, to avoid "Media McCarthyism". What should characterise them is their objective stance towards everyone, as well as attempts at honest criticism and true independence, steering clear from personal interests and dependency relations with persons and situations.

Sources:

<https://www.transparency.org/en/news/how-cpi-scores-are-calculated>

Vassilis Protopapas - Legal Matters: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=39P43nnAyLk>

Vassilis Protopapas - Pints of Politics: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sd4KFWW65IQ>

Dimitris Christofias – "Tet a Tet": <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9EfUisFa5R8>

Nikos Anastasiades – "Tet a Tet": <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Qm-9jVKOAFQ>

"Tet a Tet" with Julius Caesar – Makarios Drushiotis: <http://www.makarios.eu/cgibin/hweb?-A=9844&-V=articles>

<https://akel.org.cy/omilia-gg-xristofias/>



Tasos Tryphonos at the party of Anastasiades' daughter.