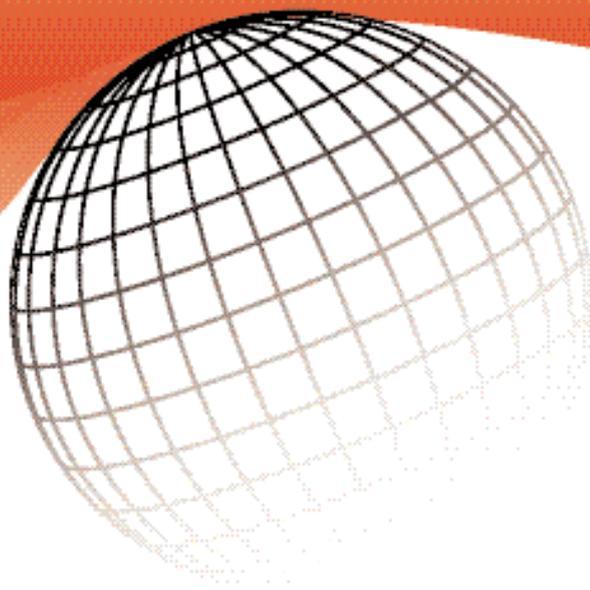


THE CYPRUS REVIEW

A Journal of Social, Economic
and Political Issues



Fall 2011 • Volume 23 • Number 2

Published by the University of Nicosia

VOLUME 23
NUMBER 2

THE CYPRUS REVIEW

A Journal of Social, Economic and Political Issues

*The Cyprus Review, a Journal of Social,
Economic and Political Issues,*
PO. Box 24005

1700 Nicosia, Cyprus.

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E-mail: cy_review@unic.ac.cy

Telefax: 22-353682, 22-357481,

www.unic.ac.cy

To access site:

> Research/Publications

> The Cyprus Review

Subscription Office:

The Cyprus Review

University of Nicosia

46 Makedonitissas Avenue

1700 Nicosia, Cyprus

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ISSN 1015-2881.

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INTRODUCTION

VOLUME 23
NUMBER 2



Introduction

REBECCA BRYANT

The papers in this special issue were part of a conference, held in the Nicosia buffer zone in November 2008, which aimed at turning a historiographical lens onto the divisions of Cyprus' history. The conference was entitled, 'One Island, Many Histories: Rethinking the Politics of the Past in Cyprus,' and it was sponsored by the Peace Research Institute Oslo Cyprus Centre with the financial support of the Chrest Foundation. As the title suggests, the conference was based on the premise that the dominance of two main narratives of Cyprus – narratives that have been labelled Greek and Turkish – has itself been divisive. We know that those differing narrative strands have often come into conflict, fuel prejudice and nationalist sentiments, and have constituted one of the major impediments to reconciliation. Indeed, many Cypriots consider history to be an important part of the ongoing struggle, and as a result, it remains resistant to examination and debate. This includes not only the history narrated in textbooks, but even the language that academic historians and social scientists are able to use in order to make their work acceptable to local audiences. At the same time, the dominance of these nationalist narratives has led to the exclusion of other groups, of other histories, and of other narrative possibilities.

The conference aimed to investigate how divisive historical narratives have emerged in Cyprus, how they are reproduced, and what questions we might ask about the production of those narratives that would help us reorient history writing from a form of division to a form of dialogue. With this aim in mind, the conference was organised around a set of methodological and historiographical questions that probed the context and workings of the historian's craft in Cyprus. Participants were asked to respond to a set of questions concerning the construction of 'official' histories; the relation between 'official' and 'unofficial' histories; and the relations between history and memory and history and trauma, among other themes. Because the questions that historians ask construct the results that they find, the conference proposed that new questions are important for a new orientation. Through this historiographical approach, the conference sought to investigate the ways in which history is and has been written in the island, as well as what new ways of thinking about the past may be productive for the future.

The conference assumed, then, that history is not only, or perhaps not even, about what may or may not have happened in the past but is moulded by and in turn influences the political present. Historians and social scientists working on Cyprus are not and cannot be neutral actors, because whatever subject they choose, whatever method they use, there are always political implications of their work that affect both its writing and its reception. While this raises important methodological questions, it does not necessarily constitute a hindrance to producing 'objective'

history but rather may be seen as an intrinsic part of the historian's craft. Indeed, as many philosophers of the subject have noted, subjectivity is unavoidable in the writing of history, because the historian picks and chooses events and interprets their meaning.

The historian, in other words, writes an *istoria*, a history that is also a story – though this does not mean that every story is as good as any other. In an older essay on objectivity and subjectivity in history, Paul Ricoeur observes that 'we have a feeling that there is good and bad subjectivity and we expect the very exercise of the historian's craft to decide between them' (Ricoeur, 1965, p. 22). Ricoeur continues by noting, 'we must say that the historian's craft *educates* his subjectivity. History makes the historian as much as the historian makes history' (*ibid.*, p. 31). What Ricoeur wishes to say is that not only does the historian give shape to history; in the process of learning, investigating, and interpreting, the historian's capacities for empathy, understanding, and reflection are themselves changed. Or at least they should be. It is this changed and constantly changing subjectivity that constitutes what we recognise as a 'good subjectivity', the subjectivity that is part and parcel of the historian's craft.

This seems an important methodological point to consider in thinking about history in Cyprus. Clearly, the writing of Cyprus' history has been stymied by what Ricoeur would call a 'bad subjectivity', or the kind that is not constantly influenced by learning and reflection but which has been moulded instead by popular perceptions, by political leanings, and in many cases by what we already claim to know. But there are other aspects of the writing of Cyprus' history that are equally stifling but less explicitly acknowledged. For instance, the language of history in Cyprus is inhibited by the necessity of using particular formulations that may not express what the researcher actually understands or believes but which place his/her work in the framework of the politically acceptable. There is a compartmentalisation of history in Cyprus, between Ottoman and British, pre-modern and modern, colonial and postcolonial, histories in the Greek language and those in Turkish. These are only some of the many other divides of Cyprus' history, divides that in turn etch the parameters and limits of the discipline, indeed of the permissible, or even the possible.

The 2008 conference, then, aimed at something more radical than a simple discussion of 'the facts'. It aimed at something more radical than attempting to unite scholars over a common history that in the end still would include some and exclude others. Rather, we aimed to investigate the conditions under which histories have been written and received in Cyprus in order to understand the conditions under which the 'good subjectivity' that is an intrinsic part of the historian's craft may flourish or be subverted. This is why all the themes that were the focus of the conference, such as the relationship between history and memory, were at the intersection of objectivity and subjectivity, asking us constantly to investigate our own methods of interpretation and to understand history not as something that happened in the past but as something that is in a constant process of becoming in the present.

The papers that constitute this special issue all investigate the discourses that framed the encounter between British colonial administrators and their Cypriot subjects during the British colonial period in the island, as well as the lingering effects of such discourses in the postcolonial period. While Roger Heacock examines the ways in which a racialised framing of Cypriot subjects fashioned policies towards the peoples that colonial officers administered, Alexis Rappas finds inconsistencies in those same discourses as ‘natives’ were incorporated into the colonial service. Both Eleni Bouleti and Altay Nevzat show the effects of a discursive framing of ‘Turks’ on policies with regard to Cypriot Muslim subjects, Nevzat also demonstrating the inability of colonial administrators fully to account for those ‘Turks’ who resisted this mould. The final two papers by Demetris Assos and Jan Asmussen both address the role of conspiracy theories in framing the ways that Cypriots have interpreted the decolonisation period and its postcolonial consequences. They investigate the ways that such theories have seeped into public consciousness and discursively frame how Cypriots themselves perceive the ‘truth’ about history. Both conclude that conspiracy theories are ‘comfortable’ ways of deflecting blame and interrogate the resistance, on the part of both local historians and the public, to evidence that would erode these theories.

All of these papers, then, ask us to consider new ‘frames’ for thinking about a period of Cyprus’ history about which much has been written but about which much remains contested. They show us, then, how historiography may be used to think beyond entrenched historical divisions in order to pose new questions for the future.

Ricoeur, P. (1965) *History and Truth*. Translated, with an Introduction, by Charles A. Kelbley. Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press.

ARTICLES

VOLUME 23

NUMBER 2



The Framing of Empire: Cyprus and Cypriots through British Eyes, 1878-1960

ROGER HEACOCK*

Abstract

Perceptions of people and events in Cyprus on the part of some of the formal and informal agents of the metropolis during the eighty-two years of British rule are the object of this paper, based on a close reading of a mix of historical records, official documents, newspaper reporting, literary accounts and autobiographies. A composite image of the country and its various linguistic groups emerges, as drawn by the scions of empire during their stay. Through the texts of officials and authors like Ronald Storrs and Lawrence Durrell, as well as articles in the Times of London and the framing and interpretation of census data, by way of examples, it will be seen to what degree a racialised discourse was present (as in the cases of colonial Algeria or mandatory Palestine), the ways in which it distinguished between Greeks and Turks, and how it evolved and declined over time, most notably with the approach of the island's independence. A historicised colonial-discursive model is proposed.

Keywords: Colonialism, imperial discourse, racialism, Cyprus, decolonisation.

Source and Discourse

The classic template of Western historiography concerning Ottoman rule in Cyprus still manages to soldier on, albeit with dwindling credibility, thirty years after *Orientalism* (Said, 1978). True, Ottoman history as a whole has evolved considerably, and nowadays, the dominant narrative questions the longstanding 'decline' thesis as well as its motivations. In Dana Sadji's words (2007, p. 4), the

'rather comprehensively damning view of the Ottoman sixteenth to nineteenth centuries, resembling the attitude to the premodern histories of many regions that came under colonial rule, served the purposes of, or perhaps was propelled by, a Western hegemonic agenda. This view fitted neatly into Enlightenment progress discourse, coalesced in Orientalist scholarship, and acquired further academic rigour in formulations such as the Marxian "Asiatic mode of production" and "oriental despotism", and the Weberian-inspired modernizationist and developmentist theories.'

* Acknowledgment: I wish here to thank my life's companion, Laura Wick, for her invaluable and essential research, which forms the empirical basis for this study.

Where Cyprus is concerned paradigmatic shifts, although somewhat slower, are also present. Notable contributions by specialists over the past two decades have served to help in deconstructing both colonial discourse and the actions of the indigenous elites in relation to Ottoman and post-Ottoman life. Rolandos Katsiaounis (1996) draws a lively picture of persistent class cleavages amongst the Greeks of the island with regard to the British overlords, who clearly did not understand the majority poor among them. Andrekos Varnava describes the puzzlement of the colonisers, faced upon their takeover by a rather integrated bi-ethnic society, something they could not grasp and proceeded to dismantle because such integration, in the context of their notions of '[m]odernity, which identified races, had no explanation'. It was thus British preconceptions which to a great extent, he opines, 'divided Cyprus' (Varnava, 2009, p. 33). They thought of getting rid of this 'useless' colony, but they could not imagine returning it to the Porte, because this was seen by them as 'contrary to political modernity' (Varnava, 2009, p. 37). Rebecca Bryant, in her study of the emergence of Greek and Turkish nationalism under British rule, notes with irony that

[w]hen the new British colonists came ashore in 1878 ... their moral mission was to prove the fertilizing, fecund influence of British reason ... Snatched from the spiral of Ottoman collapse Cyprus would be set aright under British rule, its inhabitants taught the proper husbandry of its resources and the sensible economy of time necessary for its prosperity' (Bryant, 2004, p. 24).

Michael Given (2004, ch. 5) explains the centrality of fiscal extraction and exclusionary enclosure in the battle between (by way of example) the British and their struggling Cypriot subjects, and the consequent framing of mutual perceptions in particular, and discourses in general.

But by and large traditional discourse still dominates. Ottoman history in the late nineteenth century, we are told (Richter, 2006, pp. 11-17), continued to be fixed in the dark immobility of the centuries, wrought as it was with 'merciless tax farmers', with 'Turks' (Katsiaounis, 1996, p. 1 calls them 'Mohammedan Turks') crushing revolts, lording it over 'the enslaved peoples of the Ottoman empire' and their 'freedom dreams', so that when Britain occupied Cyprus, she put to an end to 'the 300 gloomy years of *Tourkokratiá*', during which only 'Oriental inefficiency' had prior to 1878 left a little of the island's treasure to its own peoples, by mistake as it were. Indeed, Ottoman rule had been the worst ever, bar none, 'Cyprus [having] been run down as never before in its history', keeping in mind that we are speaking of thousands, not hundreds of years. Not all accounts are as patently discriminating as the one quoted here, between Greek 'civilisation' (embedded in linguistic choices and imagery) and Turkish savagery, for the simple reason that Orientalist writing places both of these peoples in the same backward category. Interestingly, the original version of the account rendered above, is less vehement precisely because it is more detailed (it is difficult to believe that it could have to do with the language – German – in which it is written, less directly linked to the Orientalist cause; on the other hand, we do find the bizarre formulation whereby the Serbian-Turkish war of 1876 'entwickelte sich rasch zu einer wilden Auseinandersetzung über

Rasse und Religion' – quickly became a wild struggle over race and religion – Richter, 2004, p. 11) but the imbedded message is the same. On the other hand, not all accounts, going back to the pre-colonial era, are as damning of Ottoman rule. According to R. Hamilton Lang, the British Consul resident during the 1870s, Cyprus was 'perhaps the best administered' of the Ottoman provinces (quoted in Orr, 1918, p. 46). This stands in contrast to Katsiaounis' standard view of the endemic 'maladministration and corruption' of Ottoman rule (Katsiaounis, 1996, p. 65).

If one tends to marvel at the vehemence of the selected vocabulary (it pervades the literature and is by no means peculiar to only one learned scholar) one should perhaps wonder from where, in the particular case of Cyprus, it descends. Certainly from Machiavelli, from Hegel, and others who form the Orientalist pedigree (Hentsch, 1988). But more recently, it most certainly finds its roots in the period of British occupation, in the commentaries of those who ran the affairs of the island, alongside journalists, literati and adventurers coming from the metropolis, and finally, those who somewhat later took it upon themselves to synthesise and draw conclusions from the first two categories.

These are the people who dispensed what Ranajit Guha labels primary, secondary and tertiary discourse (Guha, 1988), corresponding in part, but by no means neatly, with what conventional historiography labels primary or secondary sources, in terms of the conditions, the means and the ends of their production, in other words, the discourse of the source. In the Cypriot case, as shall be seen, they did not simply carry forward a long Orientalist discursive tradition: they contributed mightily to modernising it, by tempering the religious trope and strengthening the racial one, in keeping with the evolution of the social sciences in the nineteenth century, from de Gobineau to the Social Darwinists. Following the principles espoused in the establishment of the Mandate system after the 1919 Paris Peace Conference, some colonial administrators believed that the non-European child-wards of Empire, the colonies and mandates, while not deserving of the trappings of sovereignty in the present, might eventually grow up to where they could earn them. The Secretary of State for the Colonies in 1930, Lord Passfield, seems to have been one of them, when he stated that

'[t]he time has not yet come when it would be [to] the general advantage of the people of Cyprus to make a trial of a constitutional experiment in this direction. Those institutions which are already established in the island which are subject in varying degrees to popular control cannot be said to have attained that reasonable measure of efficiency which should be looked for before any extension of the principle is approved' (*The Times*, 1930, p. 13).

In other words, it is not time yet, the time may sometime yet come.

Nature or Nurture?

What was maintained was the notion of the islanders' innate and/or cultural underdevelopment, the childlike need for supervision. While it is not our purpose here to question traditional

categories, it is apparent that one of the important anchors of contemporary historical discourse regarding the Eastern Mediterranean, that is to say the former Ottoman Empire as a whole, is the Weberian concept of patrimonialism, directly influenced by and partly derived from the Young Turks' revolution of 1908 and projections onto political life in the period which preceded and followed it. This is made explicit by Max Weber himself (Weber, 2005, pp. 285-286 and p. 286, n. 2). The paradigm is maintained through the generations, as in Lawrence Durrell's evocation of

'the darkness which Turkey brought on the world she inherited. Darkness? These things are relative. What does amaze one however is that the Turks, perhaps through lack of a definite cultural pattern of their own [left the Greeks] freedom of religion, language and even local government ... a recognition perhaps of the enviable qualities of restlessness and imagination which they themselves lacked (Durrell, 1957, p. 123).

This is an interesting and, to say the least, innovative interpretation of the so-called *Millet* policy of the Ottoman Empire seen, to the extent that it may question the 'darkness' paradigm, as a result of a deeply ingrained sense of cultural inferiority and a testimony to the fact that sometimes, as in mathematics, two negatives can make a positive. In other words, and if one is to follow Durrell's reasoning, even those policies which in the West would redound to the credit of governance must, because of the nature of the imperium at hand, have been due to some deeply ingrained cultural-religious imperfection, doubled by the Turks' consciousness of this inferiority of theirs.

The same paradoxical reasoning is found elsewhere. Although the Ottomans, after they captured the island in 1571, freed the serfs, restored Orthodoxy, and granted autonomy to the Christians under their *Millet* policy, the history of Turkish presence is marked by decline and 'barren stagnation', which lasted three long centuries, with heavy taxation and light administration. According to Captain C.W.J. Orr, an official in the Colonial Office, there was 'no incentive to thrift, industry, originality of character, energy, or, in short, any of those qualities which go to make a virile race' (Orr, 1918, pp. 33-34). The author, a very insightful observer, highly critical of British administration in Cyprus, could not possibly elude the paradigm, nor did he have any incentive to do so.

Michel Foucault (1976, ch. 2) introduced the notion of 'incitement to discourse' as the means whereby loci of power, through a constant stream of whispered, proclaimed and printed versions of social reality, succeeded in filtering these down to the citizenry, and thus help to ensure order in a modern society, where the methods of control proper to pre-enlightenment regimes, and presumably, to the post-enlightenment *Terrible Turk*, who had always 'crushed' revolts 'easily' (Richter, 2006a, p. 11) were no longer available. In his remarkable study *Desiring Arabs*, Joseph Massad carries the concept of 'incitement to discourse' over the Mediterranean, adding a significant pillar to the structure of Orientalism. Faced with a constant stream of European supremacist discourse, Easterners absorbed, accepted and reproduced the conceptions tailored for them by the West. These conceptions impregnated their self-image and the roads through which they proposed to achieve modernity.

We are not here interested in the reception of Western paradigms by the people concerned, that is to say the Cypriots. Of interest in our presentation is the quality of the primary, secondary and tertiary discourse projected and thus incited, on the part of the scions of empire, and in the interplay between them. In other words, this is not a teleological exercise, intended to cast a direct light upon contemporary or present-day history. Much rather, it is an effort to portray the generality of imperial discourse formal and informal, both for its own sake and in the quest for its various subtexts. Even and particularly today, albeit in different parts of the world, the dialectics of empire are still operative, and it is important to seize them in their constituent parts. That moving structure of social relations, history, is carried by the people, but the images transmitted by their rulers helps to frame the speed and sometimes the direction taken.

Who are the Newly-won Subjects?

British views of the type of people they were going to be dealing with are evident from the day the occupation of the island began, 1 July 1878. Prudently seeking intelligence before coming ashore at Larnaca, the British naval commander, wondering what kind of resistance, if any, his forces would encounter, was informed by a Consul Watkins that the Kaimmakam of Larnaca 'was a man of mild and indolent temper, who seldom came out of his *konak*, where he lived with his wives', and from whom, presumably, the occupying force needed fear nothing, all the more so since (according to one Captain Rawson reporting to the Admiral) 'the people were a tame and feeble folk, unlikely to offer any resistance'. It therefore seemed that all was fine, and to pave the way even more smoothly Vice-Admiral Lord John Hay, when he moved up to Nicosia ten days later, 'was accompanied by two mules laden with sacks of new sixpences' intended to pay back salaries (Hill, 1952, pp. 294-295). Thus did the eighty-two year occupation, and the discourse which accompanied it, begin. Meantime, Gladstone did take exception to the occupation, on the basis that it had been agreed *à deux* and without consulting the other Powers. He might have been, he maintained, inclined to hand Cyprus over to Greece, but once the island in British hands, he had to defer to the Queen and to (British) 'popular feeling' and hold on to it (Hill, 1952, pp. 278-279). Besides, Cyprus was needed, if for no other purpose, as a 'sanatorium' for those British officials who had become ill in tropical climes. Unfortunately, this meant that dynamic young colonial officials were wanting (Orr, 1918, p. 179; see also Storrs, 1937, p. 556).

The perceptions of the good they were dispensing abounded, an immodest view shared by historians down to present times, who contrast the benefits of civilisation brought by the new regime, to the maladministration of all of their predecessors going back to the mists of time:

'The British occupation in 1878 was the first return to real freedom after some 1500 years of increasing servitude. Although taxation was still necessary, as in every other country, the taxes were gradually arranged to produce the revenue required with the least amount of hardship to the people. Then for the first time for centuries a man could, by energy and intelligence, rise to a higher position and could retain for himself and his heirs what he had gained' (Newman, 1953, p. 221).

Unfortunately for the consistency of the narrative, the trope of laziness still attached to the Cypriots as good Orientals, and this must have made it difficult for the excellent opportunities afforded by enlightened British administration to be seized upon by slothful populations. Back in 1862, Vice Consul Mr. H.P. White had reported that:

The Cypriots are of a quiet and inoffensive disposition; they are social and hospitable, and remarkably fond of pleasure. But they are naturally lazy and given to idleness; they waste much of their time in their cafes and are great frequenters of the fairs which are held at short intervals in different parts of the island ... political agitation or opposition on the part of the people to the constituted authority is equally unknown. The Christians are less false than Greeks are usually reputed to be – yet they have a reputation in the Levant for cunning and keenness in business which is perhaps not altogether undeserved. The Moslems have little of the fanatical spirit and bigotry which characterizes the Arab Moslem' (Newman, 1953, pp. 194-195).

And of course, reflecting on the ironies of history,

'[i]t is a curious reflection that the descendants of rude savages who inhabited Britain when Cyprus stood in the forefront of civilization should, after the lapse of time of so many centuries, have come from across the seas to aid Cyprus to rise from its long sleep ... (Orr, 1918, p. 18).

More than sleep, they apparently rescued them from rampant crime that was abroad (because the few policemen there were busied themselves with tax collection), as well as the wanton destruction of crops by wandering shepherds, uncontrolled by any authority. Justice was totally neglected, and was anyway in the hands of ignoramuses, easily corrupted to boot. Education was 'primitive', with intellectual attainment barely surpassing a faint knowledge of the basics. The picture was completed by a total absence of hospitals, and rampant disease. Farmers were ignorant of the basics of their profession 'as it is now understood', forests were 'left exposed to the depredation of men and animals', land registration was without system. The people were as apathetic as the government was indifferent. Even olive and carob trees 'were wantonly mutilated or destroyed by their owners[!]'. Britain, it would appear, arrived as a Providential saviour, as shown by her enormous achievements, which the authors proceed to quantify, to the extent that, in comparison with the picture of doom and devastation provided in 1878, '[i]n 1928 the spectacle is such as to suggest ... the ... emotion of Hope' (Storrs and O'Brien, 1930, pp. 31-38). This self-congratulatory rhetoric is characteristic of colonial masters, who usually picture themselves as white knights having intervened to save the much violated colonial object. The benefits as described by the colonising benefactors themselves, for example of French civilisation brought to primitive Algeria and the providential arrival of the Zionists, a people without a land landing in a land without people, to a Palestine devastated by wandering Bedouin primitives to cause the deserts to bloom, come to mind. But in the discourse of the British concerning Cyprus, there is an additional poignancy that

brings to mind Guha's catalogue of primary discourse relating to the Raj, and demanding a classic philological analysis in the quest for what appear to be a distinctly millenarian mentality, whose underpinnings one might wish to explore. The baroque extremities to which the vocabulary tends, go beyond even what the overtly millenarian Lord Shaftesbury, Palmerston's adviser, had produced in the 1840s regarding Palestine, and which prompted Barbara Tuchman to exclaim that '[t]he matter was neo-Puritanism, and once again England was to choke on an overdose of holiness' (Tuchman, 1984, p. 180). The reason may be that in the post-Victorian era the ends had once again been clouded in a more secular language, in which the Unspoken is revealed only allusively, through nominal, verbal and adjectival expostulation. This on the part of a worldly and enlightened servant of the imperial thing, Sir Ronald Storrs, whom one finds conjuring up pictures of masochistic peasants destroying their own means of not only commercial, but nutritional livelihood! An early article in the journal *Science* reports on the paper read by one G. Gordon Hake and supports this line of interpretation, referring to the ways in which under Ottoman administration the island deteriorated, 'as most countries do under Turkish rule'. The example of Famagusta's desolation is cited, as compared with its glory during Venetian times, when it was 'renowned for its brave defence against the infidels'. One of the problems cited by the scientific journal was the refusal of the Turks to fight plagues and diseases, notably locusts, because of the 'Mussulman theory of resignation' which sees such calamities as 'sent by the Almighty' (*Science*, 1886, pp. 576-577). This, in the face of the fact noted in the very same account, that at one point the actions of the Ottoman administration had managed practically to eradicate them, around 1870, and that they reappeared in 1885 during British rule. Worse, the very existence of the locusts, in addition to their increase, is found to be the fault of the Turks, because of their inadequate demographic programmes, which did not permit the population to multiply sufficiently – one notes here the relevance of Foucault's writings on governmentality and biopolitics (Foucault, 2007).

Unfortunately, and if one is to believe Lawrence Durrell speaking in the mid-twentieth century, two or three generations of British rule had done nothing to awaken the islanders to the benefits of civilised rule, since a 'vague and spiritless lethargy reigned', which once made him want to 'kick' his taxi driver, because it was combined with an air of superiority (Durrell, 1957, pp. 22-24). Yet he recognises the unattractive aspects of British colonial morae, wondering however, 'are these choking suburbanisms with which we seem infused when we are abroad any worse than the tireless dissimulation and insincerity of the Mediterranean way of life? I doubt it' (Durrell, 1957, p. 35). Here we have the characteristic Guhan secondary discourse, which places the colonial 'Us' and the colonised 'Other' on the same plane, in typical Orientalist fashion failing to recognise the asymmetry of power.

In the early days however, religion still looms large in the interpretive scheme. During Ottoman times, we are told by the British Vice Consul writing in 1867, Christians are subject to discrimination. However, if they are wealthy, they might win legal cases against poor Moslems. This is taken to prove that in addition to the religious discrimination, there is a sometimes countervailing heavy dose of bribery at hand (Newman, 1953, p. 195). And of course, even though

Cyprus lost its strategic importance as a Mediterranean base when Britain occupied Egypt in 1882, it was impossible to consider returning a majority Christian country to the Muslim Turks (Orr, 1918, p. 43). Later on, around 1953 – the Cold War also impinging – and thanks to the benefits of Empire, it is possible to imagine that religious differences are less important than

'the difference between those who base their actions on a belief in God and those who put their trust in the material power of the state. In this new grouping of mankind in the sphere of religion the inhabitants of Cyprus, whether Christian or Moslem, are unanimously on the side of those who believe in freedom, truth and justice as the true basis of civilization. There is therefore, the beginning of a unity in the island, in this aspect of world forces, which is strengthened by the fact that Cyprus is now part of a commonwealth of nations based on similar ideals ... [and that in future it] will be united in defence of those principles which all Cypriots hold in common with the empire of which they form a part' (Newman, 1953, p. 224).

Religion, Christian or Moslem (it no longer makes any difference, in principle) has now put itself at the service of a worldly cause, a social religion, the British Commonwealth.

Characteristically, the administrators quickly discovered ways in which the British template could simply (and rather simplistically) be applied to Cypriot society: Moslems are conservative, parsimonious, but rather organised, the Greeks liberal but disorderly and fiscally irresponsible. Of course these projected paradigms do not posit equality, just a kind of Platonic reflection, because these pupils are not studying in English, and are therefore standing before a closed door, that of 'every species of modern learning and advancement' (report on Cypriot schools, submitted to Parliament in 1902 and cited in Orr, 1918, pp. 121-122). On other occasions, British ideological predispositions clearly contributed to policy blunders, as when after the October 1931 events, two bishops and two communists were deported, even though the latter had not until then supported *enosis* (Mallinson, 2005, p. 110).

Indeed, the benefits of the British period were there for all to see, according to some looking back in 1982, to the extent that Cypriots were content with their station, or at least 'their prosperity until the second half of the 1950s' (Hunt *et al.*, 1982, p. 255). True, one finds a much more mitigated evaluation of the virtues of British rule in other sources, particularly regarding the long period up until the end of World War Two (Reddaway, 1986, p. 30). But it is difficult to detect the kind of overall structural (as opposed to dualistic – sometimes tripartite – civilisational) analysis which might yield a more convincing picture of the passage of time in Cyprus.

Philhellenism and Cyprus

A perusal of the literature shows that what is considered Britain's (and France's) traditional admiration of Greeks and Greece, based on the rapprochement between what was considered its classical culture (limited in fact to portions of the fifth century BC, especially in Athens) was seriously diluted in discourse regarding Cyprus, probably because of its hybrid nature, and 'infection' by Turkism and similar Oriental viruses. On the one hand, we are told that '[t]he

archeologist is often faced with the problem of relating the objects and conditions he discovers on an ancient site with similar manifestations of present-day life ... [I]n a land such as Greece or Cyprus where there is an unbroken cultural tradition from antiquity to the present day, the problem becomes much more important' (Daniel, 1943, p. 78). On the other hand, Greeks in general, and not only Cypriots, were found by nineteenth century Englishmen to be drunk, violent duplicitous, slothful 'savages', quick to resort to slander and to pull out the knife (Gallant, 2002, pp. 30-31). It was thought, as late as 1926, that philhellenism would help in administering the island: Storrs 'took pride in his classical learning and ... was a sincere admirer of the Hellenic literary and cultural heritage' (Georghallides, 1985, p. 11). Of course, as a modern proconsul, he had hopes that British-style modernisation would finally come the way of those he administers: 'by all means admire Euripides, [he told them] but simultaneously organize Boy Scout troops' (Georghallides, p. 13). Perhaps standing in the way of the Greek Cypriots' accession to true Hellenism was the fact that, according to Storrs, their spoken Greek was 'corrupt'. This compared poorly with the form of Osmanli Turkish spoken by 'Moslems' in Cyprus, which was rather 'pure' and more free from foreign (Arabic and Persian) words than that spoken in Constantinople (Storrs and O'Brien, 1930, p. 1). Storrs was clearly open to concepts of racial contamination circulating at the time (was that why he disliked his postings to sub-Saharan Africa so much?).

Lord Curzon, British Foreign Secretary in the aftermath of World War One, did not have such a nuanced vision of the Greek-Turkish, Christian-Moslem divide. He thought that the Hellenes needed to be protected from further racial/cultural contamination, and thus, that Greece needed to stay out of an Asia that was foreign to it, while Turkey should at all costs be kept out of Europe. Cyprus was Asia, and therefore not essentially Greek (Markides, 2006, p. 31).

The Race Factor

The notions discussed above lead logically to the issue of race, which for the British, distinguished them radically from their Cypriot subjects. At the end of the nineteenth century some thought was given to raising local militias.

'Whitehall's military advisers saw the proposal in imperial terms and restricted it to Muslims after applying the martial races theory, because the British considered the "Turks" a martial race but not the "Greeks"' (Varnava, 2009, p. 36).

Sir Ronald Storrs notes himself that Cypriots, until his arrival in 1926, were invariably referred to as 'natives'. Storrs orders that the word be replaced by 'Cypriot' in official business, since, according to his memoirs, '[a]lien rule is not easy to bear, save by the lowest savages', (a formulation which locates him on the continuum of racial classifying as well) in relation to whom apparently his subjects found themselves placed quite a bit higher (Georghallides, 1985, p. 11). And of course

'it would be absurd to suppose that material comfort is the sole ambition of even the most backward and ignorant people, and the higher a people progress in the scale of civilization, the wider become its desires' (Orr, 1918, p. 166).

Of course, races are not necessarily fixed and immutable quantities. Storrs, for example, thought that in the twentieth century it was too late 'to attempt to absorb races', and so he opposed the outright annexation of Cyprus in 1914 (Orr, 1918, p. 137). Presumably and by implication, one of the characteristics, or rather the duties, of modernity, in his view, is to arrest the process of miscegenation, and, on the other hand, to mitigate the extent of rule by one 'race' over another.

The question of race is ever-present, in the minds and words of the British, of all stripes and in their various functions. The blackness of Cypriots is, however, lessened by the fact that they have been somehow mongrelised. Storrs, reminiscing among other things over his days as Governor, quotes a 'high legal luminary', 'horrified to learn that he would be expected to shake hands with "the natives"', because of his experience in East Africa, where presumably this would never happen. The man added, 'I understand a white gentleman ... and a black gentlemen, I don't let him touch me; but these betwixts and between I don't want to understand' (Storrs, 1937, pp. 557-558). Cyprus was not unique in the British mind, from this point of view. The Sudanese had previously been described by Winston Churchill as a 'mongrel (...) mixture of the Arab and Negro types [which] produce[s] a debased and cruel breed, more shocking because they are more intelligent than the primitive savages' (Churchill, 2000, p. 7).¹

Later on, during World War Two, according to Jan Asmussen (2006, p. 168) the Colonial Office had a policy of separating 'British European troops from ... "dark-skinned Cypriots, whom the normal person could class as coloured"'. In fact, the policy was starker: 'dark-skinned Cypriots, whom the normal person could class as coloured, will not be accepted' is what is stated in the quoted official document (Asmussen, 2006, p. 168, n. 5). It is indeed a dilemma for the British authorities, who needed bodies to kill and die, and so the decision was made to permit this deviation from standard, homogenising discourse, since 'I think we can risk [the possibility that the news that we discriminate among volunteers] may spread to Cyprus' (Asmussen, 2006, p. 168, n. 5). In other words, those whose skin was not so dark might after all be accepted, in recognition of the fact that Cypriots are a hybrid and mongrelised race. The air force, during the war, would only accept Cypriots 'of European appearance and habits' (Asmussen, 2006, p. 169). The longer quotation, found in the footnote, in fact fleshes out the British conundrum: 'the air force will not consider anyone who has, for example, long curly black hair, is of dark complexion, or is of Asiatic or African appearance' (Asmussen, 2006, p. 169, n. 7). This is a time of exacerbated racial perceptions in Europe, in which the fundamentals eugenics and racial theory, and the biopolitical conundrums they posed were widely accepted in the West where they had been developed. Interestingly enough, it was not necessary to have long curly black hair or a particular pigmentation in order to become 'black' for the British colonisers, as can be seen in the case of the particularly reviled Irish (Gallant, 2002, p. 28).

1 I am grateful to Dahlia Gubara and Alexis Wick for having pointed out this text and its patent discursive analogies to our case.

It would seem that the racial characteristics and ascendants of the Cypriots are at least partially responsible for the fact (the rest being due to cultural traits that are found outlined by other British commentators, from Storrs to Durrell) that they cannot be trusted in sensitive positions within the armed forces, since they are incapable of keeping military secrets (Asmussen, 2006, p. 168).

Facing New Realities

As we noted above, C.W.J. Orr pays tribute to the trope of historians through the present, and notably to the idea of disastrous Turkish rule. Then he goes on, *de facto*, to deconstruct the entire interpretation. One, Sir Samuel Baker, thought very highly of the work done during only twelve months by British occupation officials (all drawn from the army at first), especially given that they did not, as military men, understand the technical nature of work they had to carry out in the agricultural, the legal, the commercial and the engineering fields, and given the fact that they did not speak a word of the island's languages, so that they had to work through interpreters (cited in Orr, 1918, p. 68). And yet, it would appear that large numbers of Cypriots were dissatisfied with the change of regime early on. By 1887, things had deteriorated greatly (the drought is blamed). A delegation of members of the Greek community went to England in 1889 to complain about the markedly increased taxation and subsequent 'exhaustion of the resources of the island'. The British government proved that the impression of the islanders was mistaken, and that yields of various crops had increased in the eleven years of British occupation, by 50% to 100%. Nonetheless, instructions were given to answer the petitioners kindly, and try to convince them that their views 'had received very full and careful consideration ...'. The actual results, we are told (a slight reduction in the cost of a passport for those wishing to travel from the island) constituted 'a very exiguous mouse to result from the labour of mountains'. In fact, according to the same source, village and municipal administration 'has undergone little change since the British occupation ...' (Orr, 1918, pp. 70-74).

Persistent Tropes

Although for some personalities of Empire, there are sophisticated differences to be drawn between the available categories of people residing in the Eastern Mediterranean, such as 'Bedouins', 'Arabs', and 'Levantines', (Picaudou, 2008), there is by and large a finite series of recurring images that they may all be classified with a single comprehensive category, for example the 'Oriental'. Ronald Storrs liked Kitchener the best of his successive masters in Cairo, because 'both men understood, as few others have done, the devious methods and mentality no less than the cynical humor of oriental politicians' (Georghallides, 1985, p. 1: note that it is the late-twentieth century historian who is passing judgment, not the early twentieth century civil servant).

Both Greek and Turkish Cypriots are widely viewed in Britain as belonging to a large family of Near Eastern (i.e. Levantine) peoples, who behave according to common norms (article in *The Observer* upon the 1926 appointment of Storrs as governor: Georghallides, 1985, p. 7). Orientals

are debauched, from Istanbul to Delhi, as noted by a *New York Times* correspondent commenting on 30 July 1878 (quoted in Hill, 1952, p. 280), on the agreement to hand Cyprus over to Britain. It may well be, he writes, that the great effects of British rule in India may be obtained in this instance, with Britain extending 'to the worn-out debauche who is Caliph and Sultan the same kind of protection which it gave to the last descendant of the Great Mogul'.

In this view, people get in the way of what counts most: the ancient history and archaeology of Cyprus. As one High Commissioner prepared to take up his duties in Cyprus, the Secretary of State for the Colonies told him:

'there are in Cyprus I believe ... a number of interesting and valuable antiquities. I trust that you will see that they are adequately preserved and cared for. I wish you a successful tour of office. Good-bye' (Orr, 1918, p. 7).

One important characteristic of Orientals in the British mind following decades of frustrating rule is the unfortunate fact of their heavy politicisation. The British consul in Port Said, speculating in 1935 on where a British university in Cyprus might be placed, preferred to see it

'not situated in or near a large town. Oriental and Mediterranean students are inclined to take an active part in political movements, which is contrary to British ideals, and it will be wise to eliminate temptation as far as possible' (Strohmeier, 2006, p. 153).

It is interesting to note the essentialisation of characteristics, in this case not 'racial' or 'cultural', but rather socio-political. Thus it is Mediterraneans who are by nature political, and not those who, because they are under occupation or otherwise subaltern, are likely to turn to political means to achieve change.

Turning-point 1931?

Even before the violent events of 21 October 1931, the British were concerned about the excessive leniency of Sir Ronald Storrs' administration. After all, A.J. Dawes of the Colonial Office argued, Cypriots, with their Oriental mentality, interpret friendly gestures by their rules as 'signs of weakness'. Those Governors had been the most popular who had treated them in the harshest manner (Richter, 2004, p. 221). Furthermore, according to Lord Passfield, Secretary of State for the Colonies (in 1930), there was no great attraction felt by Greek Cypriots for *enosis*.

'Union is not wanted at all by the rural population and only half-heartedly by the towns. Such agitation as there is is largely for the purposes of the forthcoming triennial elections, and has been in large part financed by the Church. The rapid increase in rural prosperity through the help of cooperative credit societies is displeasing the local usurer-political class, which is thereby losing its influence' (*The Times*, 1930a, p. 11).

A palpable change in administrative style did occur after the total surprise of 21st October, which had, on the part of Greek Cypriots, been an uprising *en bonne et due forme*. It resulted in the

transfer of the governor, and the adoption of harsher measures. It also meant a sea change in relations between the British and the majority community, the end of any socialising between them and the institution of emergency rule, not lifted until independence (Holland, 1998, p. 5). One of Storrs' successors, Governor Sir Richard Palmer, a military man, described the change, which involved a far greater use of force as 'the substitution of a British for a Greek atmosphere' in Cyprus. The question arises, given the sudden and significant transformation in the style of imperial rule, whether a transformation of discourse followed, as theoretically it should have, relations having become tenser, no longer being conducted along Storrs' preferred 'oriental method of administrative tactics', whereby he would 'flit from a Greek social gathering, where he liked to display his considerable classical learning, to some Turkish reception where a sprig of green would be worn in his white lapel' (Holland, 1998, p. 9).

In fact, and despite increasingly tense and sometimes violent relations between Britain and (usually Greek) Cypriots, views did not really change. During World War Two, the Governor, Sir Charles Woolley 'expressed what became a common expatriate view' when he noted that Cypriots only wanted to contribute to the war if it seemed like a paying proposition (Holland, 1998, p. 13). After the war the tension grew again, and Governor Sir Andrew Wright, appointed in 1949, viewed Cypriots, according to the Colonial Office, 'as children who needed a firm hand [and] ... an occasional spanking' (Holland, 1998, p. 16). He further opined that 'if you wave sticks at Cypriots you do not have to call out the garrison', and a well-known Labour MP, Richard Crossman, noted (during the rising revolt against British rule in 1955!) that 'nothing is very serious, since no one on either side means what he says or does what he means ... Cyprus is the only amiable police state I have ever visited' (Holland, 1998, p. 23).

Instead of the expected transformation of the discourse, one finds an ever stronger conviction that 1931 proved the necessity for further integration into the Empire of these backward people.

'Since 1931, however, a marked change has taken place in Cyprus. It is now widely realized that inclusion in the British Empire provides security and freedom in a world where these benefits are by no means universal, that no security is possible except under the protection of a dominant navy and air force, and that liberty to achieve a representative government [which in the wake of the 1931 riots had been shelved for the duration of the colonial period] is one of the main principles on which the British Empire is based' (Newman, 1953, p. 210).

It may well be that the continuing propinquity for considering Cypriots as weak-willed, corrupt(able) children contributed to Britain's failure to foresee and then to deal intelligently with the revolt of 1955. At any rate, when the Colonial Office despatched a new Governor to the island in 1954, it felt satisfied not to provide him with any firm instructions before leaving for the assignment, since there was not 'seething discontent, chronically threatening internal order' ... – a version of the argument much used amongst expatriate officials in Cyprus that the very absence of violence was testimony to the 'natural passiveness of Cypriots ...'. As late as 1956, the governor 'seemed to be completely and obstinately isolated from popular feeling and in some measure this

was due to the colonial civil servants who surrounded him – mostly leftovers from previous regimes who had always assured everyone that nothing would ever happen' (Foley, 1964, p. 51).

As noted by Robert Holland, these imperial perceptions were an inseparable part of the 'ingrained dialectic in the island', (Holland, 1998, pp. 33-34) and thus, one is justified in assuming, played a significant part in creating and perpetuating the impasse and provoking the apparently insoluble dilemmas of contemporary Cypriot history. It can certainly be seen to what extent the sense of knowing the reified Mediterranean personality must be linked to the obvious ignorance of specific conditions which had accumulated by December 1954, when all evidence from the previous years to the contrary, British representatives could speak of 'the recent *unpredictable* swing of the rural population to the *Enosis* idea' (Holland, 1998, p. 45 – emphasis mine on *unpredictable*).

By Way of Conclusion: Discourse and/in Defeat

Certainly the literature suggests a sharp diminution in 'categorised' generalisations once the fighting had begun in earnest in 1955 (Richter, 2006a, pp. 143-580; Choisi, 1991, pp. 204-225) with British thoughts concentrating perforce on how to deal with the complex emergency and its implications for the future of Empire, relations with NATO allies (Turkey, Greece and of course the United States of America) and, despite what we have seen to be deep layers of prejudice, the future of the island and its people. Nonetheless, it must have been difficult even then to go beyond the immediately previous view of Cyprus as mainly an 'unsinkable aircraft carrier' (Newman, 1953, p. 216).

This case illustrates the extent to which there is, in imperial discourse, a type of inelasticity which prevents it from bending or breaking until it is by definition too late to change course in political and social relations with the colonised. Discourse reflects power relations, and colonial masters by definition think in terms of permanence. Once the breaking point has been reached, and the power relations are undergoing a clear and irreversible transformation (which, as we noticed, was not yet perceived by the British to be the case after October 1931), then the discourse, as a clear signifier, is bound to follow rather quickly.

According to Jeannette Choisi (1991), nearly a century of British rule was unable to break into, much less break, the structure of hierarchical relations within Cypriot society, which she describes as clientelistically and rather hermetically organised until well after the end of the colonial period. For a time, especially in the wake of World War One, Britain tried to do what late-colonial powers often tend to do, namely to foster a type of weak and dependent 'Cypriot patriotism' which would suit the metropolis, especially through the teaching of an Anglophile, Anglophone curriculum in the schools, possibly going so far as to launch a Cypriot flag (Georghallides, 1985, p. 6). The gambit having failed, Britain did, however, contribute to furthering the breakdown of the society into two discrete, bordered and increasingly antagonistic populations (which continued nonetheless to be largely impermeable to British social engineering). This was intended to serve the

traditional policy of *divide et impera*. Discourse, on the other hand, became increasingly unitary, as the initial philhellenic, religiously supported trope gave way to an undifferentiated projection based on race. This development both supported and confounded the perpetuation of control; supported it by strengthening the rulers' sense of the justice of their mission; confounded it, since it was inevitably, to a greater or lesser extent, externalised in behaviour. It remains an open question whether the clear pattern found in the Cypriot case would be matched elsewhere. Guha and his colleagues have shown that this is the case with regard to the Raj; there is every reason to suppose that Palestine presents an analogous picture. And further afield, it would be important to compare the evolution of discourse in French-ruled Algeria and the American-ruled Philippines, for example, in the quest for underlying differences and similarities in these and other colonial dyads.

The following discursive model can now be advanced, based on this case as well as comparable ones:

1. In colonial empires, discourse introduces, modifies and strengthens stratification;
2. In particular, modern and contemporary colonial-imperial projects are characterised by the centrality of racial discourse;
3. Hybridity threatens to undermine the stratification, so it is designated as mongrelisation;
4. The famous colonial gaze exists, and results in the coloniser's incapacity to see;
5. There finally comes a wake-up call, when it is too late, at the beginning of the end for the coloniser;
6. Discourse then collapses and is slowly, painfully reconstituted, then passed on to the post-colonial elites in a new form.

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The Muslim Community on Cyprus and British Colonial Policy, 1878-1915: The Significance of the Cyprus Evkaf in the Colonisation Process

ELENI BOULETI

Abstract

Certain key factors interacted for the forming of the early years of British administration in Cyprus. A significant element that affected the new regime was the form that the Cyprus Convention assumed, mainly due to the conditions under which it was signed. As far as the Muslim community was concerned, the Ottoman government made an effort through special articles in the Convention to safeguard its position in the new regime and maintain its role as the ruling community of the island. However that effort was made by the Ottoman government in haste, thus the British administration was given the opportunity to actually intervene more easily in the community's affairs and to gradually control and 'colonialise' it, from within. The community's reaction, although not unanimous, was manifested early, initially by the Cypriot Muslim elite of the Ottoman administration. The initial anti-colonial sentiments of the Muslim community were triggered by the infiltration of the British into its social, economic and religious core. In that general context, an effort is made to follow and depict that process in its initial steps until the outbreak of World War One.

Keywords: Cyprus, Great Britain, Muslim Community, Evkaf, Vakif, Colonialism, Cypriot Muslims, Islam

The Effect of the Cyprus Convention on the Administration Established in the Island: The Muslim Community and its Incorporation in a Colonial State

Since the Cyprus Convention and the occupation by the British in 1878, and until the outbreak of World War One and the one-sided abrogation of the Convention by the British, Cyprus was being administered by a regime with unique characteristics. Specific Convention articles predetermined not only the suzerainty of the Sultan over the island, but also the sustainment of Ottoman legislature, foundations and institutions especially in the case of the Muslim community of the island. Through those articles the Ottoman government attempted to safeguard the rights of the Cypriot Muslim community as well as the Ottoman interests over the island. An analysis of the nature of the Muslim institutions will be attempted along with an assessment of their validity for the community. Then, a first aim is to see if, and to what extent that goal of the Ottoman government was achieved. That is, how were those articles of the Convention utilised by

the British administration of Cyprus and to what degree the Muslim community was allowed to maintain its communal institutions intact?

During the negotiations for the Berlin Pact (12 July 1878) that ended the Russo-Turkish war, the Cyprus Convention was signed, between the Ottoman Empire and Great Britain. The island was transferred to the administrative authority of the British, under the suzerainty of the Sultan, along with the obligation of the British government to pay a fixed tax per year [tribute], thus verifying the suzerainty of the Ottoman Porte.¹ Until then, the British had supported the Ottoman Empire and allied with the Sultan in an effort to control the advance of the Russians south towards the Straits and the Mediterranean Sea. However, the encroachment of Russia southwards through the Berlin Pact caused an immediate reaction by the British.

Consequently, the Convention was the outcome of an effort by the British to hinder the advance of the Russians in former Ottoman terrain. Originally the British cabinet hurriedly sought a 'place of arms', a naval base in the Mediterranean.² But as the eventuality of a war diminished, the acquisition of the island switched purpose; it now became the first step of an effort to secure in a pacific way the land route to India. In that general context, the Ottoman Empire could still be protected from collapsing, and in return the Sultan would allow the British to set foot in Asia Minor, while the Russians would hold on to their gains in Kars, Ardahan and Batum without any wish for expansion. Hence, a war could be prevented and the British government hoped to be able to gradually infiltrate Western Asia without ever openly doubting the suzerainty of the Sultan. In that way, a new, subtle, peaceful and economic way of colonial expansion would be possible through which the imperial interests would be served, and at the same time Britain could be presented as the imperial power that offered the peoples of Western Asia 'civilising reform' and protection from Ottoman arbitrary policies.³

Those were the intentions behind the Cyprus Convention that were agreed in Constantinople on 4 June 1878 between the British Ambassador to the Porte, Layard and the Sultan. After immense pressure by the British, and because of the difficult state they were in after their defeat in the Russo-Turkish war, the Ottoman government gave in to the Convention. In return for the occupation of Cyprus the British made a vague commitment to assist the Ottoman Empire in case of another threat by Russia.⁴ The British were neither clear nor unanimous over

1 G. Hill (1952) *A History of Cyprus: The Ottoman Province, The British Colony, 1571-1948*, Vol. 4, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, pp. 300-303; and in United Kingdom, Parliament, Correspondence respecting the convention between Great Britain and Turkey of 4 June 1878, C. 2057, London: Harrison.

2 G. Georghallides (1979) *A Political and Administrative History of Cyprus 1918-1926*, Nicosia: Cyprus Research Centre, p. 6.

3 D. Markides (2006) 'Cyprus 1878-1925. Ambiguities and Uncertainties', in Faustmann, H. and Peristianis, N. (eds), *Britain in Cyprus. Colonialism and Post-Colonialism, 1878-2006*, Manheim und Möhnesee: Bibliopolis, p. 23.

4 Φ. Ζαννέτος [F. Zannetos] (1911) *Ιστορία της Νήσου Κύπρου από της Αγγλικής Κατοχής μέχρι Σήμερον, τομ. Β* [History of the Island of Cyprus from the English Occupation until Today, Vol. B], Λάρνακα [Larnaca]: Filokalias, p. 8.

the reasons for the acquisition of the island. The subject caused extensive controversy between the Conservative government that affirmed the Convention and the Liberals that were strongly opposed to it. The Conservative government of Prime Minister Lord Beaconsfield and his Foreign Secretary, Lord Salisbury followed an expansionist, imperialistic policy, which among others, aimed to occupy Cyprus as a 'place of arms'.

Their approach on the issue was controversial and somehow opportunistic, because although they seemed to have high expectations regarding the value of Cyprus as a naval base and strategic asset, at the same time there was no assessment on the suitability of the island as a 'place of arms'. Accordingly, after the Convention it became apparent that the harbours of the island were unfit to accommodate large vessels.⁵ Furthermore, the Liberals opposed strongly the general Conservative's policy along with the acquisition of Cyprus to the extent that on 21 July Gladstone called the Cyprus Convention an 'insane covenant' and an 'act of duplicity of which every Englishman should be ashamed ...'.⁶ Even the conservatives were not thoroughly convinced about the value or the occupation of Cyprus, especially after reports arrived from Cyprus regarding the deteriorating health of the British soldiers who had been stationed there, as well as the desolate condition of the island itself.⁷

It is clear that the British government was not properly informed on the actual state of affairs in Cyprus and likewise the hastiness with which the Convention was agreed, added to the lack of preparation and planning on the administration that was going to be established in the island. Thus the transition from one regime to the other was difficult and full of ambiguities and contradictions. From the side of the Ottoman government, an effort was made so that the change in administration would have the least possible effect on the administrative and legal structures that applied to the Muslims of Cyprus. Until the arrival of the British, the Cypriot Muslims were a minority in respect of population (approximately 24.98% of the total) but formed the ruling class of the island.⁸

The Ottoman government pressed for the Cypriot Muslims to retain this status under the new regime, and for that reason special articles were added to the Convention. Because of this the Porte reserved the right to appoint the mufti [müftü: chief religious figure] as well as the chief kadı

5 The only functional harbour of the island, the harbour of Famagusta, needed a significant amount of money in order to make it suitable for large vessels, but in spite of this experts were not certain whether it would be able to provide sufficient refuge to British warships. See S. Papageorgiou (1997) 'The Genesis of the Greek and Turkish Nationalism in Cyprus, 1878-1914', *The Cyprus Review*, Vol. 9, No. 1 (Spring), pp. 56-65.

6 A. Varnava (2009) *British Imperialism in Cyprus, 1878-1915: The Inconsequential Possession*, Manchester: Manchester University Press, p. 98.

7 *Ibid.*, pp. 105, 113.

8 Σ.Π. Παπαγεωργίου [S.P. Papageorgiou] (1996) *Η πρώτη Περίοδος της «Αγγλοκρατίας» στην Κύπρο, 1878-1914. Πολιτικός εκσυγχρονισμός και κοινωνικές αδράνειες* [The first period of 'Anglokratia' in Cyprus, 1878-1914. Political modernisation and social idleness], Εκδόσεις Παπαζήση [Athens: Papazisis], p. 103.

[baş kadı: chief religious judge] and the inspector of the community's education. As asserted by the initial agreements, the retention of the Mahkeme-i Şeri tribunals [courts administering justice according to the Sheriat or saria – the religious laws which had jurisdiction to decide upon matters of family law too, i.e. divorces, dowry and inheritance matters] was decided. Finally, the Ottoman central government retained the right to appoint a Muslim Cypriot, which the British administration would also approve as one of two delegates of the department; the other would be an English officer appointed solely by the British. The department, known as *the Evkaf* [plural, for vakıf or wakf, the religious property], managed the religious properties and foundations of the island. It is important to stress here that the suzerainty of the Sultan over the island materialised in the Convention through the articles which provided that the Ottoman government maintained the right to sell or lease lands and properties that belonged to the Sultan or the Ottoman state. Also the British Crown had the right to buy land and property necessary for public works.⁹

After an initial unwilling consent to the signing of the Convention (24 July 1878), the Ottoman government attempted to extract as much financial profit as possible from a province that they were soon to lose. During the first months of the presence of the British on the island, Ottoman officers began to inquire after tax revenues, in addition to the yearly tribute decided by the Convention, arguing that the right derived from the Sultan's suzerainty over the Muslim religious properties and lands [vakıf, from which the whole Evkaf department assumed its name] of the island.¹⁰ More specifically, the presence of the British and their assumption of the island's administration interrupted the proper role of government departments that were also institutions that managed religious properties on the island.

The dispute began on four of the largest religious properties of Cyprus (the Evkaf of Sultan Selim II, the Sinan Pasha vakıf, Lala Mustafa Pasha vakıf and Horlulu Pasha vakıf) the excessive revenues of which were, until the occupation, sent to the Ministry of Evkaf in Istanbul. The British officials attempted to rebuff the Ottoman allegations, but their arguments were feeble, since the articles of the Convention left many important details open for subjective interpretation. The British official, Malcolm Seager, who undertook the task of interpreting the Evkaf registers and religious legislature that accompanied them, stressed this fact. He proposed that central government should come up with a final settlement and deal with the Ottoman demands on the lands and properties of Cyprus. The main reason for his proposal was not financial. The British official thought it best to weaken the influence of the Sultan on the local Muslim population –

9 Also by an additional article to the Convention on 3 February 1879 the Ottoman government and the Sultan were compensated for lost revenues by sales or leasing of specific lands of the island with £5000, Zavvetos (1911), *op. cit.*, pp. 15-16.

10 English National Archives, FO 78/5116, Evkaf Report by Malcolm Seager to Robert Biddulph, p. 71. Also in the same file, see Part V, Chapter I, 'Of the Control of the Authorities in Stamboul', p. 3.

which, according to him, was still significant – and to deprive him of an excuse to interfere in the administration of the island in the future.¹¹

He also proposed – as early as 1881 – that the religious legislature that managed the affairs of the religious institutions and properties of the island – especially those that referred to the Muslim community of the island – should be ‘gradually abolished’ due to the fact that they were ‘difficult to manage, obsolete and controversial’.¹² From the above it can be deduced that the British aimed to establish a secular colonial administrative mechanism, upon their arrival to Cyprus. However, owing to the fact that they needed to ensure the natives’ consent in order to rule the island and partly because the Cyprus Convention determined so, they did not attempt to modify the basis of the administrative pyramid, which remained in community terms, and religious parameters, for both communities, Christian and Muslim. The new administrative mechanism was secular, but the basis of the island’s society continued to deal with their affairs as they had done prior to the arrival of the British.

Muslim Community Institutions Assimilated by the Colonial Administrative Structure: The Vakıf Properties of Cyprus

The Cypriot Muslim community was traditionally administered by institutions that were co-dependent, and combined financial, administrative and religious characteristics. The basis of this administrative system was religious properties and lands, which were administered and supervised by the local Evkaf that was being audited by the Ministry of Evkaf in Istanbul. The affairs of the properties were regulated by Ottoman religious (şeriat) and secular (kanun, decrees [fermans], and orders by the central government) laws that were applied by the religious courts [şeri courts] of the community. A complex administrative mechanism evolved around the Evkaf which was centralised to a local Evkaf department.

The British administration approached these institutions more directly than those of the orthodox community, due to the terms of the Convention that allowed them to do so. The colonial administration infiltrated and secularised those institutions which they found to be more accessible and useful for their purposes, and gradually degraded the rest to mere religious relics of the Ottoman era.

One of the first priorities of the new administration was to decipher the Muslim communal, economic and religious organisational pattern. In order to achieve that, they attempted to organise the community records and check financial affairs, and at the same time detect the potential flaws of the system. Due to the aforementioned demands for tax refunds that the Ottoman government had raised immediately after the arrival of the British to the island, the officers were obliged to

11 *Ibid.*, pp. 12, 64.

12 *Ibid.*, ‘conclusion’, p. 24.

study thoroughly the affairs of the Cyprus Evkaf. A vakıf was characterised as any kind of property bequeathed either partially or in total to a charity cause or public work.¹³

The vakıf practice emerged out of the centralised military system of the Ottoman Empire, which had no provision for public welfare. The wealthy of the empire were therefore urged by the Sultan to adopt the practice of forming a special deed [vakfiye] and bequeath a part of the fortune that the Sultan had only temporarily entrusted to them, to the benefit of people in need. Many public works were financed in this manner, and the creation of Evkaf remained a common practice for parts of the empire that had been conquered recently and were in need of financial aid in order to instigate economic development.¹⁴

Gradually the practice became common for the subjects in the lower classes as well, but for different reasons. Wealth and property were dispersed only by the Sultan, and traditionally after the death of the beneficiary, the property or income had to be returned to the state. The only exceptions were those properties dedicated to religious or charity purposes, which belonged to the Evkaf. Every estate or income that became *vakıf* was accompanied by a dedication deed, the *vakfiye*, which determined the terms of its function and its purpose. The dedicator of a vakfiye had the right to predetermine a percentage of the property's income for the purpose of his choice, and a further percentage to be given to the trustees he appointed for supervising the property and its function according to *vakfiye* terms.

Subsequently, all dedicators named their heirs as *mütevelli* [trustees] of the vakıf they created, to enable them to bequeath at least a percentage of their estate to their next of kin. And since a *vakfiye* lasted indefinitely, the dedicator bound his property from state intervention, sale or confiscation and at the same time secured a standard income for his heirs for generations to come. As the years passed, the increasing tendency of establishing vakıf properties, substituted the lack of private property on the Empire.

The number of such institutions made it necessary for the establishment of the Ministry of Evkaf in Istanbul, which supervised them and received any surplus revenues. Furthermore, a local department of Evkaf was founded in Cyprus in 1863, as part of the Hatt-ı Hümayun (18 February 1856) reforms, in order to oversee the vakıf affairs locally. Its head official, known as *Muhasebeci*, was appointed by the central government.¹⁵

At the time of the arrival of the British, several vakıf categories were available throughout the Empire, but on the island of Cyprus two main categories were to be found:

13 A.C. Gazioğlu (1990) *The Turks in Cyprus: A Province of the Ottoman Empire, 1571-1878*, with a foreword by Geoffrey Lewis. London: K. Rustem and Bro., p. 191.

14 The first vakıf property in Cyprus, according to tradition, was established immediately after the conquest of the island in 1571 by Sultan Selim II, and Lala Mustapha Pasha, the Ottoman general that conquered the island. See A.C. Gazioğlu (1990) *ibid.*

15 After the Hatt-ı Hümayun reforms the control of the central ministry on the local Evkaf departments became stronger and more frequent in order to avoid managerial discrepancies by local officials.

- *Mazbuta*, were vakıf properties administered directly by the Evkaf. They were the oldest and rarest types, which permitted the surplus revenue of the property to be deposited to the Evkaf treasury and used for the property's maintenance once its charity purpose had been fulfilled.
- *Mülhaka*, were those properties that were administered by trustees [*mütevellis*].¹⁶

Mülhaka vakıf which were more common since they served the aforementioned purpose of inheritance, evolved into two different categories:

- *Meşrutiyet* were characterised as vakıf properties that by terms of dedication provided their entire surplus income to their mütevellis after the charity or welfare service for which they were established, was fulfilled.
- *Non Meşrutiyet Mülhaka* or *Vakfouna*, were vakıf properties that paid a fixed salary to their mütevellis, and any surplus income had to be deposited to the Evkaf treasury for the maintenance of those properties.¹⁷

From the data mentioned above it can be concluded that, whereas the few but significant *Mazbuta* Evkaf that were established by the Ottoman rulers of the island had an aim to promote public welfare and generally boost the economy of the island, the *Mülhaka* Evkaf, especially the *Vakfouna Mülhaka*, were mainly an invention triggered by social need to secure private property and provide a will of inheritance.

Furthermore, most of the inhabitants had eventually become joint mütevellis, each owning a small percentage due to inheritance to more than one vakıf. For generations to come the security of a standard income or incomes, regardless of how small it or they would become, secured a tie between members of a small community like the Muslim Cypriots. Moreover, it strengthened the bond with the far and detached administrative centre of Istanbul and verified the overall power and care of the Sultan for his subjects. Finally, it underlined the role of the community as the ruling, Ottoman class of the island.

The speed with which the Cyprus Convention was agreed and the reluctance of the Ottoman government to offer any real consent, assistance and cooperation regarding the legal and, at the same time, religious frame of the Muslim institutions in Cyprus, together with the general stagnation of the Ottoman administrative mechanism for centuries before the arrival of the British, placed the new colonial administration in a difficult predicament. The first British delegate [*Muhasebeci*] of the Evkaf, Malcolm Seager, a barrister at law by profession, had to ask for information from the Sublime Porte regarding the administrative status and financial condition of

16 From a fiscal point of view, they were divided into *Icare-i Vahide* (single rent) and *Icareteyin* (double rent) A.C. Gazioglu (1990) *op. cit.*

17 English National Archives, FO 78/5116, official report of Malcolm Seager to High Commissioner Robert Biddulph, April 1880, p. 9.

the Cyprus Evkaf, after his commission to the post of administrative official.¹⁸

In addition, he had tried to translate the main religious laws that regulated the vakıf properties as well as categorise and assess the religious assets of the island.¹⁹ Also, he was asked by the High Commissioner to provide an analytical census of the vakıf properties of the island on April 1880, an effort that was started by Lord Gifford and continued by C. Wauchope.²⁰ Seager's predecessors had asked local mütevellis to furnish them with the necessary documents that verified their rights to the vakıf properties they attended, which were their *berat* deeds.

According to a report sent to them by the Ottoman government on 25 December 1878, in cases whereby a dedicator of a vakıf estate or his heir-mütevellî had died, the person(s) wishing to succeed them had to apply for a hearing by the Court of Religious Affairs [Mahkeme-i Şeri Tribunal] and present their case before the religious judge [kadı]. The judge, after examining the vakfiye terms and deciding that the claim was just, would issue his affirmative verdict [ilam].

The ilam was submitted to the local administrative council [Meclis-i İdare] of the province or village where the vakıf was located (the kadı was also a member of the *Meclis-i İdare* and if the vakıf was located in the province of Nicosia, the Evkaf *Muhasebeci* participated, too) and approval was thereby granted [mazbuta]. After the two documents were obtained, the *Muhasebeci* of Evkaf offered his personal paper of approval [called *inha* and later *Djihatchin*, (according to British transliteration)]. These documents were kept in the central Evkaf in Istanbul, and the trustee was furnished with an official document of appointment [Berat] by the Sultan's government which verified his lifelong prerogative of *mütevellî*-ship.

After the Cyprus Convention the Ottoman government decided that every appointment of trustee would result by acquiring a *ilam-ı şer-i* provided by the religious tribunal and a verifying *inha* provided by the British delegate [Muhasebeci] of the Cyprus Evkaf. In the new procedure, the Ottoman administration chose to exclude the municipal councils that had members elected by both communities. The Ottoman government aimed to exclude Christian members from the procedure in an attempt to safeguard the affairs of the Muslim community from their potential advances, now that the island was being administered by a Christian power.

This decision was indicative of a general tendency of the Ottoman government to protect the Muslim community by separating its 'communal' affairs and defining them by and large in a strict communal frame. However that tendency left the Cypriot Muslims susceptible to colonial intervention and manipulation. Instead of protecting the Muslim community's rights, it rather

18 The numerous obligations they were faced with, the lack of preparation and funding by central government, and the religious frame that blocked the initial efforts for the establishment of a colonial administrative mechanism, resulted in the reluctance of competent British officials, accepting posts in the early British administration in Cyprus. English National Archives, *ibid*.

19 English National Archives, *ibid*, p. 13.

20 *Ibid*.

deprived the community of its traditional prerogatives and this created a tendency for introversion. Moreover, the final verifying word was entrusted to the British and not to the Muslim delegate. This provision, which was also acknowledged by the Ottoman government, certified the predominance of the British delegate over his Muslim colleague.²¹

The Ottoman report included 131 vakıf properties, 82 of which were *Mülhaka* (administered by trustees) and 10 *Mazbuta* (administered directly by the Evkaf). In contrast, the local survey conducted by the British revealed 192 properties in total, 10 of which were *Mazbuta* and the rest, regardless of how small their value might have been, were *Mülhaka*. Malcolm Seager noticed that the Istanbul records were inconsistent to a large extent with the properties that were discovered after the local survey.²²

Nevertheless, a large number of *İcare-i Vahide Mülhaka* vakıf (single rent, to be delivered for the purpose of its creation) were discovered to have been transformed into *İcareteyin Mülhaka* (double rent, a small amount paid for the religious purpose of its creation and the rest of its income delivered to its *mütevelli*) by *mütevellis* who had access to the former Ottoman *Müdür* – later to be called *Muhasebeci* – of Cyprus. The Evkaf *Müdür who* – according to Seager – was prone to this kind of illegality was Mehmet Akil. He had handled the affairs of Evkaf approximately sixty-years prior to British occupation.²³

In accordance with the British delegate of Evkaf, money that could have been given to charity or public works, or even to the Evkaf treasury, was illegally collected by *mütevellis* who played an active role in the local administrative mechanism. Moreover the *İcareteyin* properties were liable to laws of inheritance, whereas the *İcare-i Vahide* were perpetually held in Evkaf ownership. ‘Transformed’ properties were leased and even conveyed from one trustee to another.

The delegate also reported that in most cases, the *mütevellis* that acquired properties in the way he described had sold them and left Cyprus shortly before the arrival of the British, hence no legal action could be taken against them by the current Evkaf administration. In his conclusive report in 1881, the British delegate blamed ‘the ... decline of the Ottoman administration system, even after the reforms of Hatt-ı Hümayun for the deprived and ruinous condition [he] found the majority of the estates to be in.’²⁴ The above mentioned arguments worked as both justification and

21 *Ibid.*, p. 20.

22 *Ibid.*, p. 71.

23 Along with the *Müdür*’s consent, two eye witnesses had to verify that the vakıf was indeed *icareteyin*, and if the *seri* judge or *kadi* did not object, the resolution was passed. English National Archives, p. II.

24 According to his findings, throughout the entire eighteenth century due to the urgent need for financial aid, the Ottoman central governments called provincial governors to Istanbul in order to assist the Empire by giving money, facing dismissal or even death in the opposing case. In order to satisfy the government every *Muhasebedji* of the Cyprus Evkaf sent as much money as he could to the central Evkaf in the hope of satisfying it and retaining his seat. In this manner, the repair work in the local vakıf properties was kept as low as possible to keep it operational. English National Archives, ‘As to Collection of Evkaf tithes by government’, p. 77.

excuse for the British delegate towards his decision not to furnish the Ottoman government with information on matters of the Cyprus Evkaf.

Likewise he expressed his unwillingness to discuss his decisions with the Ministry of Evkaf regarding the distribution of Evkaf funds on repairs and expansions to local Evkaf property. Thus, the detailed inquiry that the British delegate presented on Evkaf matters of Cyprus, not only gave him the necessary knowledge to manage the institution, but also provided the argument he needed to justify his opinion to the local and, most importantly, to the central British government to avoid cooperation with the Porte on Evkaf matters. That being said, Seager did not send a report to the Evkaf in Istanbul on the situation of the Cyprus department and by 1879 he had collected the income surplus by the local vakıf properties on behalf of the British administration. The colonial administration abolished the tithe farming (that is the subletting of the collection of rent or taxes that constituted the main income of vakıf properties in the island) by law in March 1879.

The delegate, however, wished for more government intervention since he was being pressured, first of all by the Ottoman government that 'sought ways to secure more income from the Cyprus Vakıf properties, based on the dubious articles of the convention'. And even though 'the ottoman intentions were clearly perceived' by him, he 'could not fight them', due to the complex and overlapping şeri laws that the delegate did not know in depth and could not handle effectively.²⁵ He again admitted that the Ottoman laws that were still in full power not only gave the Ottoman government a head start in the negotiations but proffered several strong points on which to stand and demand a significant portion of the island's cultivated, or in any other way profitable, lands. In the delegate's opinion, the total secularisation of the main laws that regulated the Evkaf affairs was imperative, if the British administration wished to rule the Muslim community and its institutions 'in any way'.²⁶

The main resistance to the delegate's intentions came from within the island and not from the Ottoman Empire. After the census he conducted in relation to the religious properties of the island, the British delegate concluded that many Cypriot Muslims acted as mütevellis without a *koçan* (the license that the local Evkaf furnished the mütevellî with, after receiving his *Berat* and keeping it for archival purposes), or claimed that they supervised an İcareteyin vakıf, whereas the Evkaf had the property listed as İcare-i Vahide. Seager and his Cypriot Muslim colleague, Şekerzade Esseid Ahmet Hulusi Efendi, dismissed all 'non-compliant' mütevellis and placed all the 'confiscated' properties under the supervision of two mere Evkaf clerks, Hacı Nuri Efendi and Samih Efendi.²⁷ The reaction to this by Cypriot Muslim religious officials was intense. This initiative was contrary to both şeri law and to an administrative practice that had been in use by the Ottomans for centuries.

25 English National Archives, 'conclusion', p. 25.

26 *Ibid.*, p. 77.

27 *Ibid.*, p. 5.

The ruling class of the community (called *softa*), consisted of religious officials, used to promote and succeed one another to the religious and at the same time administrative posts of the island. The appointment of Ahmet Hulusi Efendi as the Muslim colleague of Seager was proposed by the British administration and ratified by the Mufti Ahmet Reşit and the Chief Kadı Nuri of Cyprus.²⁸ The Ottoman administration had the right – according to the terms of the convention – to select the Muslim delegate of Evkaf, but did not exercise it.

After numerous appeals, the colonial administration proceeded to appoint a person they had selected, and applied to the local Muslim officials for their ratification.²⁹ Even though the two colleagues were supposed to be equal, and each charged to report to his own administration, only the local government was aware and authorised their actions, and the Muslim Muhasebeci received orders via his British peer from the very beginning of their appointment.³⁰

Although the colonial administration faced many challenges in Cyprus with an extremely tight budget, reformations regarding the Muslim community seemed imperative from the outset of their occupation of the island. The fact that all religious laws and institutions remained active but with neither a figure head nor supreme authority after the withdrawal of the Ottoman government, gave local officials the opportunity to interpret the law as they saw fit and to try and occupy the power vacuum that the British administration, due to its mere secular nature, was not in a position to occupy.

Because of Seager's unique role as both British official and head of an Ottoman institution he was aware of the gap between the transcending authorities and stood by point of authority over and sometimes above his government. The fact that he often gave orders instead of receiving them was not in accordance with the colonial government, especially the Chief Secretary.³¹ However, the problem did not seem to be recognised officially other than in the office of the British delegate itself. Within a very short period of time, at least three British officials had resigned from their posts following conflicts of authority with their fellow officials of the Cyprus government.³² The official justification for their resignation was 'excessive workload'.³³

28 The Mufti of Cyprus was the supreme religious authority on the island, and as all Muslim religious officials he had many administrative duties, mainly verifying Evkaf and Şeri tribunal decisions and ensuring that they abided by the şeriat laws. Cyprus had five kadı judges, one for every province. The kadı of Nicosia was called chief kadı. For details regarding the judicial and administrative system of Cyprus during the Ottoman era, see A. Gazioglu (1990) *op. cit.*

29 Cyprus National Archives, SAI/1520/1882.

30 Cyprus National Archives, SAI/1519/1882.

31 Cyprus National Archives, SAI/1014/1882.

32 Malcolm Seager most probably resigned in 1882. His post was temporarily covered by H. Kitchener, and R.E. Grant succeeded him shortly after. He left his post in 1886, and C.N. Hilgrove took over. Cyprus National Archives, SAI/1219/1886.

33 Cyprus National Archives, SAI/1014/1882.

In early 1885, a discussion began in the administration regarding the post of the delegate and the clarification of its duties. The Chief Secretary had requested the former (Seager, Grant) and the current (Hilgrove) delegates to present the problems they faced in their work and whether their post's aims were feasible.³⁴ Seager and his peers referred to the many and overlapping religious laws and the various contradictory-trying cases that served as a precedent and could literally overthrow any solid verdict the department might try to pass. They underlined the fact that two equal heads operated in a department with an Ottoman basis, and a secular, colonial overcoat. They requested full secularisation of the department and the laws that regulated its functions in order for the Evkaf to be in a position to coexist with the other new administrative services.

Seager also took the opportunity to underline the fact that even with the Ottoman 'overcoat' that came with his post, he could not relate and interact with the local population: Even as a facade for legitimating purposes in the eyes of the Muslim Cypriots, the old Evkaf could not serve the government's interests.³⁵ The early friction between the British officials that attempted to run the local Evkaf and the remainder of the British administration enabled the latter to realise the major significance that the specific institution held for the Muslim community. Furthermore, it was evident that the administration of the said institution could not continue in the same religious-secular basis as in the Ottoman regime.

Finally, the census that Seager conducted helped the administration to realise the significant financial role that Evkaf held, not only for the Muslim community but also for the British administration, who could save significant support funds if the Evkaf surpluses could be utilised in that direction. During the years that followed, almost until 1922, the British would follow an invasive colonial policy towards the Muslim religious institutions and the Evkaf, which they would try to infiltrate and '*colonialise*' from within. Along the route, the old *Ottoman* administrative elite of the community was set aside and a new one started to form with the Muslim delegate of Evkaf at its centre, and being compliant with the new administration.

Cyprus Evkaf and its Significance for the Muslim Community

Throughout the early years of its presence on the island the pressure of the new administration fell mainly on the Muslim community. The fact that the occupation of Cyprus was the outcome of negotiation and not of war, gave the British the negotiating advantage of appearing as the successors as well as the custodians of the Ottoman power in Cyprus. Moreover, through the Cyprus Pact the new government, though secular, had every right to infiltrate the main religious and legal norms that regulated the social, economic and religious life of the community. The most prominent paradigm of this intervention is the case of the Cyprus Evkaf.

34 Cyprus National Archives, SAI/1392/1885.

35 *Ibid.*

By its creators it was defined as: 'Department of land and property administered by the religious foundations of Cyprus'. Because of the way that the Muslim community was organised, the Evkaf regulated almost all of its financial, social and religious life. Via the *vakıf* properties, the Ottomans established a pattern through which the economic life of their communities evolved around religious foundations, sacred laws and state financing. When the British took over the administration of Cyprus, the majority of the Muslim Cypriots cultivated land and received various small wages acting as *mütevellıs* for numerous portions of vakıf properties they had received from family and relatives over the years. They were strongly connected to the Ottoman state in the belief that it was their main employer and provider of prosperity. Additionally, the right to inherit property and to manage it in the name of the state and Islam bestowed an identity on Muslim Cypriots as the ruling community of the island.

The new administration understood the importance of Evkaf for the Muslim community. The appointment of both the British and the Cypriot Muslim delegate placed the foundation under direct British control, which actually grew firmer over the years. In doing so, they appeared as the lawful successors of the *Imperial* Ottoman power. Gradually and drastically, the British began to secularise the Evkaf by diminishing the role of the religious [*şeriye*] tribunals and placing Evkaf matters under the jurisdiction of civil courts. Furthermore, to simplify its function and cut out unnecessary expenses, many small vakıf properties were abolished; their *mütevellıs* were compensated with a fixed sum and were dismissed from their posts.

After Ahmet Hulusi's death, the British appointed Musa İrfan Bey as the new Evkaf delegate on 1 May 1899³⁶ He was educated in Britain and had worked as a civil servant in the past for the British government. However, the religious officials that legalised their power in the Ottoman period – the *former* Ottoman administrative elite – were already reacting to British manipulation. Leading figures in those movements were two officials, the mufti and the chief kadı, who had the largest influence in the old regime, and were now afraid that they would be deprived of it.

In 1907 (6 March), Münir Munib Bey, supported by the new chief kadı Numan Efendi, sent a letter to the Grand Vizier Kamil Pasha in Istanbul, complaining about the way İrfan Bey administered the vakıf properties in Cyprus. According to Münir Munib and other *mütevellıs* that co-signed the letter, İrfan Bey administered the properties without taking into consideration the religious laws. Moreover, according to the petitioners he was not suitable for the post of the Muhasebeci of Evkaf. He was elected arbitrarily, without taking into consideration the proper line of succession of the existing religious officials, and he was not selected by the Grand Vizier, as Convention terms dictated.

36 M.H. Altan, R. Jennings and J. McHenry (1997) 'Kıbrıs'ta Evkaf' [The Cyprus Evkaf], 'Archival Materials and Research Facilities in the Cyprus Federated State: Ottoman Empire, British Empire, Cyprus Republic', *International Journal of Middle East Studies*, Vol. 8, p. 3.

From the above it can be concluded that the former Ottoman officials were not attacking İrfan Bey personally, but they were protesting against the practices of the new administration; the administration that controlled Muslim religious institutions without taking into consideration the religious laws, precedence and authorities.³⁷ They felt threatened by the new practices, but they could not attack the new regime directly since it was secular and beyond their reach. Moreover, Ottoman officials traditionally obeyed and never criticised state authority. To some extent it was being approved by the Ottoman government due to the Convention, so they could not oppose it openly. This being the case, they criticised the Muslim Muhasebeci because he was the only person of the new regime that also belonged to the old one, and they believed they had the right and the obligation to do so.³⁸

Oddly enough, Kamil Pasha was convinced by the letter and issued a ferva of dismissal from his post for İrfan Bey.³⁹ Yet the colonial administration did not follow the decision of the Grand Vizier, and the latter never attempted to enforce it.⁴⁰ Indicative of the non-existent relations of the two governments was the fact that the British ambassador in Istanbul had to act as an intermediary, since there was no defined path for any kind of communication or cooperation on the matters of the community.

Even though the old administrative elite had begun to realise that the situation had changed and that the Ottoman government could not, or would not, assist them against the British intervention in communal institutions, and sensing that the time of their banishment from any real authority was not far off, they kept trying to secure their rights and prerogatives. The leader in this effort had for a long period of time been the Chief Kadı Numan Efendi. His basic weapon in that struggle was the fact that the new administration was not familiar with the religious laws that regulated the community's judicial, administrative and financial institutions and foundations.

The aforementioned laws were still in use, and the British government was bound by the Convention terms to retain them as far as the Muslim community was concerned. In an effort to fortify his role and keep intact his rights, Numan Efendi dismissed several mütevellis from their posts. The mütevellis in question were appointed by the new Evkaf administration. But when they

37 Cyprus National Archives, SA1 3297/1892, SA1 434/1900.

38 In his defence, İrfan Efendi reported that the only reason Numan Efendi made all these allegations against him was because he was not appointed delegate of the Evkaf, even though he had been in the Ottoman administrative system for many years, and according to the traditional, Ottoman practices he was next in line to be made Muhasebedji. İrfan Bey, perfectly aligned with the new regime, not only did not try to relate in any way with the Ottoman government or the religious laws, but declared proudly that 'he had received different education and learned to operate in a different environment (than his rivals who were professionally educated in the ottoman environment) and to appreciate a different culture', referring to Great Britain. See Cyprus National Archives, SA1/907/1907.

39 *Ibid.*

40 *Ibid.*

protested to the Evkaf that their appointments were sanctioned by the kadıs residing in their provinces, and that the chief kadı had no jurisdiction to dismiss them, the chief kadı replied that he had appellate jurisdiction over the other kadıs of the island and, therefore, he could overthrow any decision made by 'the Evkaf side'.⁴¹

The Evkaf delegates searched the relevant laws in order to determine whether the chief kadı had indeed appellate jurisdiction over the other provinces of the island, while İrfan Bey was obliged to explain his actions to the government. The final findings of the British delegate regarding the law were, as always, inconclusive, but there was no solid proof that the kadı did have any jurisdiction over other provinces on the island other than Nicosia. The kadı had concluded that since the supreme ratifying authority in the Empire, that is the Şeyh-ül İslam, was not available and the authority pyramid was headless, he was the next in line with the right to administer religious justice, and to take over and make sure that the law was justly enforced.⁴²

The British delegate, perceiving the legal dead-end that faced this and many similar cases to this that were about to erupt, warned his administration peers to move the solving of these particular problems to civil rather than religious courts in order to halt turbulence and enable the reformation of the Evkaf foundation to continue without obstacles.⁴³ What he proposed was the secularisation not only of the Evkaf foundation but also of its legal infrastructure, which meant the neutralisation of the şeriye tribunals and their substitution by civil courts.⁴⁴ At first, the British administration chose to ignore the intervention of the kadı to the Evkaf cases. The decisions of the kadı were not carried out, and the delegates went on with their schedule. Gradually, the chief kadı was stripped of the essential duties of his post, which was nullified in the 1920s, while the post of the mufti was abolished. The şeriye courts suffered the same fate: They were gradually weakened, the majority of their cases being transferred to civil courts. Finally, they became a small fraction of the civil courts with very limited jurisdiction. The şeriye judges became part of the colonial administrative mechanism.

What must be underlined here is that the Muslim community of Cyprus did not cooperate willingly with the British colonial administration, even though there were administrative and ideological mechanisms that obliged the community to accept close British administrative control. Nonetheless, the reactions of the former influential and powerful religious officials that exercised power or property realised that this was being endangered sporadically by the new regime. It was not organised but fierce and constant, given the time it took to manifest itself.

On 5 November 1914, the same day that Anglo-Turkish relations were severed by Order in Council, the British abrogated the 1878 Cyprus Convention and related instruments and annexed

41 Cyprus National Archives, SAI 617/1894.

42 Cyprus National Archives, SAI 3297/1892 and SAI 434/1900.

43 Cyprus National Archives, SAI /907/1907.

44 *Ibid.*

Cyprus to Britain.⁴⁵ The abrogation of the Sultan's sovereignty over Cyprus certainly did nothing to improve the morale of the Muslim community, but even afterwards, several *mütevellis* that were deprived of their vakıfs still continued to protest. The traditional religious officials of the Ottoman past – the old administrative elite – were the first to demonstrate anti-colonial initiatives within the community, even if their motives were personal. Thus the impact of the British reforms to the Evkaf and the secularisation of the main institutions of the community had a profound effect on the mentality of the Cypriot Muslims and heightened social conditions for the genesis not only of anti-colonial but also nationalistic sentiments.

Conclusion

This article has attempted to depict the transition from the Ottoman to the British regime, focusing on the effects that transition had on the institutions and foundations of the Muslim community of Cyprus. The Cyprus Convention, instead of safeguarding the Cypriot Muslims' rights and their position as the ruling class of the island, created the prerequisites for the colonial infiltration of the British to the main Muslim institutions. Through articles of the Convention the British managed to pass as the guardians and administrators of the Muslim communal institutions, mainly the Evkaf, due to the joint supervision they had over it with the Ottoman government. At the same time, the Ottoman government could not, or would not, interfere in the administration of the Evkaf, thus leaving the British to administrate the institution unattended and at the same time with full Ottoman legitimation.

Subsequently, the British managed to validate themselves in the community as successors of the Ottoman Imperial power and as custodians of the Cypriot Muslim position in Cyprus. At the same time, the Evkaf and other communal institutions such as religious tribunals underwent major reformations that stripped them of their communal and religious character. The Ottoman elite of the community was sidestepped by the British – in spite of their reactions – while a new elite started to form, having the new Evkaf administration at its centre and being compliant with the British. The result was an effort of 'colonisation' of the Muslim community by the British largely through its institutions. The latter had become communal only in name, whereas in reality they were departments of the British colonial administration.

45 G.S. Georghallides, *op. cit.*, p. 88.

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The Uncharted World of Cypriot Colonial Servants and the Ideological Foundations of British Rule

ALEXIS RAPPAS*

Abstract

As historical and anthropological studies show, British colonial rule contributed decisively to the institutionalisation, politicisation and deterioration of intercommunal differences in Cyprus. However at the same time as British colonial authorities implemented divisive policies, they created one institution necessitating the smooth cooperation between Greek and Turkish Cypriots: the colonial bureaucracy, the structure and function of which remains understudied. Based on the cases of three Cypriots appealing against their dismissal from the colonial civil service, this paper argues that exploring the uncharted world of 'native' employees provides important insights into the inconsistencies underpinning British rule. Indeed, the debates prompted by the dismissal procedures shows that notions such as 'nationality', 'loyalty', 'legality' and 'civilisation' constituting the ideological foundations of colonial rule are rather indeterminate. The article makes a case for the study of subaltern Cypriots as a vantage point to explore the points of articulation and cross-fertilisation between colonial morality and local self-representations.

Keywords: colonialism, interethnic conflict, subaltern studies, microhistory

Between Colonialism and Nationalism: In Search of Suppressed Voices

In 1915, thirty-seven years into the British occupation of Cyprus, the colonial governor¹ Sir John Eugene Clauson, shared his impressions of the island's inhabitants with his patron:

* This article is the outcome of a presentation made at the international conference 'One Island, Many Histories: Rethinking the Politics of the Past in Cyprus', held at Ledra Palace, Nicosia, on 28-29 November 2008, organised by Prof. Rebecca Bryant and sponsored by the Peace Research Institute Oslo (PRIO). I am grateful to the conference's organisers and sponsors and particularly to Rebecca Bryant for inviting me to this important event. I wish to thank the two anonymous reviewers for their detailed critiques as well as Professor İpek Çelik (Brown University) for her valuable suggestions on an earlier draft of this paper. Finally I extend my thanks to Professor Alexander Apostolides (European University Cyprus) for kindly providing me a copy of his doctoral dissertation. The thorough revision of this article in Fall 2011 was supported by a LabexMed postdoctoral fellowship at the Institut de Recherche et d'Etudes sur le Monde Arabe et Musulman (Maison Méditerranéenne des Sciences de l'Homme).

1 Or 'high commissioner' as governors were styled until 1925.

'It is creditable, in a way, to the Cypriot Greeks that they are as insistent as ever on Union. When the inconveniences of heavy taxation, conscription and other concomitants of Greek administration might seem to loom larger, one might have expected them to sing smaller. But their better part is bound up in the Quest, as well as their windiness, and their ideal and their appreciation of our English ways give them a much needed lift along the path of the civilisation they talk about so much and practice so little. The Turks of course simply point to their loyalty (not always stalwart at the division bell!) and appeal to our gentlemanly feeling.'²

Written at a time of great uncertainty for the political future of the island,³ this commentary encapsulates the main narrative of political histories of Cyprus under British rule: The increasingly vocal movement for *Enosis* – or the political union of Cyprus with Greece – among Greek Cypriots led to a tactical alliance between frustrated British officials and worried Turkish Cypriot leaders. According to the same historiography, British attitudes towards Greek nationalism escalated from caustic indifference – as reflected in the above citation – to frontal opposition.⁴ Then as Greek Cypriot nationalism became more radical, colonial policy eventually degenerated into crude divide and rule policies, and Turkish Cypriot forces were enrolled to repress the nationalist guerrilla campaign led by EOKA in the 1950s. This seamless and much repeated narrative is the product of an elitist, rather than simply nationalist, bias stemming from a conventional reading of official archives: The drama of British rule in Cyprus is often reduced to the squabbles between nationalist – 'Greek' and later 'Turkish' – Cypriot elites and their colonial rulers, as the former are taken to be speaking on behalf of their entire 'communities'.

Another historiographical approach adopts a *longue durée* perspective. Analyses of this type have argued that colonial rule not only exacerbated, but in fact helped congeal pre-colonial religious affiliations and practices into 'Greek' and 'Turkish' ethnic commonalities.⁵ Political scientist

2 Main Bodleian Library, Oxford University, Dep. 475: *Lewis Harcourt, Colonial Office, Correspondence with Governors, B-C*. Sir John Eugene Clauson, letter to Lord Lewis Harcourt, former secretary of state for the colonies, 4 January 1915.

3 Cyprus, occupied by the British in 1878, remained under Ottoman suzerainty. The island was annexed by the Crown shortly after the beginning of World War I, on 5 November 1914. Less than a year later, Great-Britain officially offered – in an aborted deal – Cyprus to Greece in exchange for the latter's entry into the war. This makes the allusion in the text to the Greek Cypriot wish for 'Union' and the preoccupation with Turkish Cypriot loyalty clearer.

4 Especially in G.S. Georghallides' work, a scholar who has written the most thoroughly-researched political histories of Cyprus under British rule: (1979) *A Political and Administrative History of Cyprus, 1918-1926: With a Survey on the Foundations of British Rule*, Nicosia: Cyprus Research Centre; and (1985) *Cyprus and the Governorship of Sir Ronald Storrs: The Causes of the 1931 Crisis*, Nicosia: Cyprus Research Centre.

5 Drawing on F. Cooper and R. Brubaker, 'commonality' is here preferred to 'identity', regularly used in the historiography reviewed here: (2000) 'Beyond Identity', *Theory and Society*, Vol. 29, No. 1, pp. 1-47. As the authors note, 'identity' has no analytical value, 'as it is riddled with ambiguity, riven with contradictory meanings, and encumbered by reifying connotations. Qualifying the noun with strings of adjectives – specifying that identity is

Adamantia Pollis was among the first to underscore the culture-defining capacity of British colonial institutions through what Foucauldian social scientists would later call ‘modern technologies of power’.⁶ Under the preceding Ottoman regime, Cypriots located themselves socially according to religion, class, kinship, patronage and locality. Their religious leaders – primarily the Greek-Orthodox Church – possessed wide civil powers over them and mediated their interactions with the state. Through their instruments of rule – censuses, surveys, registers – the British collapsed fuzzy religious and linguistic differences into three administrative categories: ‘Greek’, ‘Turkish’, and ‘Other’.⁷ In turn these categories served as the basis for the creation of administrative and political institutions – the legislative and municipal councils – and an educational system where Cypriots returned representatives according to their religion.⁸ In other words, the British supplanted Ottoman transversal and hierarchical relations with two vertical ones, with all Cypriots becoming separately equal before the (colonial) law.

Historians often mention the use of colonial institutions as platforms for the diffusion of nationalism in Cyprus. Paschalis Kitromilides shows how Greek Cypriot notables and schoolteachers, having received their higher education at the ‘national centre’, Athens, availed themselves of the liberal policy characterising the first years of British rule to promote Greek irredentism: *Enosis* thus became a fixture of debates and press articles covering the elections to the various representative bodies, from the municipality to the Legislative Council. School curricula were modelled on those of mainland Greece and children ‘were socialised in Greek nationalist values’.⁹ Andrekos Varnava recently revised this thesis by underscoring how the activities of ‘Hellenised’ Cypriots, making good use of the enhanced civic space under British administration, combated and eventually prevailed over, partisans of a more Orthodox-centric order.¹⁰

These studies illustrate the political and institutional transformations laid out by British colonial rule but do not – because it is not their primary concern – address their impact at the

multiple, fluid, constantly re-negotiated, and so on – does not solve the Orwellian problem with entrapment in a word. It yields little more than an oxymoron – a multiple singularity, a fluid crystallisation – but still begs the question of why one should use the same term to designate all this and more’. (p. 34).

- 6 B.S. Cohn, and N.B. Dirks (1988) ‘Beyond the Fringe: The Nation State, Colonialism and the Technologies of Power’, *Journal of Historical Sociology*, Vol. 1, No. 2, pp. 224-229.
- 7 *C.-4264 Report on the Census of Cyprus, 1881. With Appendix*, by F.W. Barry, London, Eyre and Spottiswoode, 1884.
- 8 A. Pollis (1973a) ‘Intergroup Conflict and British Colonial Policy: The Case of Cyprus’, *Comparative Politics*, Vol. 5, No. 4, pp. 575-599; *idem.*, (1973b) ‘Colonialism and Neo-colonialism: Determinants of Ethnic Conflict in Cyprus’, in Kitromilides, P. and Worsley, P. (eds), *Small States in the Modern World: The Conditions of Survival*, Nicosia: Stavrinides Press, pp. 45-80.
- 9 P. Kitromilides (1990) ‘Greek Irredentism in Asia Minor and Cyprus’, *Middle Eastern Studies*, Vol. 26, No. 1, pp. 3-17, here p. 5. See also *idem.*, (1979) ‘The Dialectic of Intolerance: Ideological Dimensions of Ethnic Conflict’, *Journal of the Hellenic Diaspora*, Vol. 6, No. 4, pp. 5-30.
- 10 A. Varnava (2009) *British Imperialism in Cyprus, 1878-1915: The Inconsequential Possession*, Manchester: Manchester University Press, chapter 6.

level of social practice. In other words, they do not measure the impact of colonial social and political engineering on the nationalist elites' capacity of mobilising their coreligionists and transform their self-representations. This is more thoroughly pursued in Rolandos Katsiaounis' work on the labouring poor (the great majority of the inhabitants) of Cyprus. Focusing on the pivotal transition from Ottoman to British rule, his study highlights the political usage of financial leverage in rural Cyprus and the ambiguous role of patrons – the Orthodox Church or the moneylenders – as both protectors and oppressors. Class is thus put in balance with nationalism and formal colonial rule and sheds some important light on how local clientelistic networks were marshalled in the frame of elections and modern politics.¹¹

Rebecca Bryant's work also explores the sinews of politicisation in Cyprus under British rule. Concentrating on the relations between modernity and nationalism, Bryant evinces how, with the abolition of official hierarchies by the British and the establishment of equality before the law, elite Orthodox and Muslim Cypriots began to compete for power over their coreligionists. In so doing they elicited the participation of the masses, through the press or petition campaigns requiring the signatures of the 'simple ones'. This newly created 'public sphere' incited otherwise unrelated Cypriots to perceive themselves as belonging to one of two mutually exclusive, imagined national communities.¹²

The works of Katsiaounis and Bryant greatly advance our understanding of the processes of mass politicisation under British rule and, consequently, the crystallisation of religious affiliations into ethnic allegiances in Cyprus. But out of necessity, their approach rests on a degree of abstraction. The Cypriot 'people' – as opposed to the elites – whose social and cultural environment is so vividly portrayed, remains a silent majority. The tension underpinning their quotidian transactions with their patrons on the one hand, and British officialdom on the other, is inferred from their socioeconomic background rather than collected from their own testimonies. In addition, Bryant and Katsiaounis' analyses of intra- and intercommunal relations are refracted through colonialism which tends to be presented as a cohesive process. Indeed a recurrent trend in the historiography of Cyprus is the radical distinction between 'colonialism' – understood either as British officialdom or a larger process such as 'modernity' – and Cypriot society. This premise compels scholars to envisage British occupation as a period of concatenated fissions where the colonial state's divisive policies and institutions compounded the existing cultural and class divisions.

11 R. Katsiaounis (1996) *Labour, Society and Politics in Cyprus during the Second Half of the Nineteenth Century*, Nicosia: Cyprus Research Centre. The order of the words in the title, relegating 'politics' at the end – as in fact, an epiphenomenon of 'labour' and 'society' – denotes the author's Marxist, or rather Thompsonian approach. The mobilisation of clientelistic relationships is also the subject of H. Faustmann's (1998) 'Clientelism in the Greek Cypriot Community of Cyprus under British Rule', *The Cyprus Review*, Vol. 10, No. 2, pp. 41-77. The author, however, challenges the political usefulness of these relations (p. 46).

12 R. Bryant (2004) *Imagining the Modern: The Cultures of Nationalism in Cyprus*, London: I.B. Tauris.

What such representation fails to capture however is the colonial state's efforts – of varying intensity and nature according to context – to gain the consensual acceptance of the vast majority of Cypriots, essentially the peasantry, independently of religious affiliation. Drawing on Gramsci, scholars of Southeast Asian and African history have termed these colonial designs in securing their subjects' acquiescence to imperial rule 'colonial hegemony'.¹³ While the use of 'hegemony' is controversial in colonial studies,¹⁴ a scrutiny of the ways in which the colonial state sought to legitimise itself through its daily transactions with ordinary Cypriots is assured to open new research perspectives. For one, it would embed the colonial state into the local society thereby eliding the risk of 'treating colonialism as an abstract process'.¹⁵ In addition, it would encompass a wide range of possible Cypriot responses, from consent, to strategies of accommodation, survival and resistance. This would show that Cypriot agency cannot be confined to the enactment of an ethnic 'identity'. And this in turn would dissipate the aura of inevitability on the gestation of ethnic conflict under colonial rule. In short, highlighting the frailty, and the anxieties marking the everyday interactions between colonial officials and ordinary Cypriots would reveal that nationalism was but one of the political options available to the latter. This approach would eschew implications that Cypriots were content with and under colonial rule.¹⁶ In effect, acquiescence is not collaboration, it means agreeing to play by the rules to pursue objectives that do not always fall in the realm of nationalism but could nonetheless be eminently subversive of the colonial order.¹⁷

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- 13 See D. Engels and S. Marks (eds), (1994) *Contesting Colonial Hegemony: State and Society in Africa and India*, London: I.B. Tauris. Especially the essays by the editors, 'Introduction: Hegemony in a Colonial Context', pp. 1-15, W.G. Clarence-Smith, 'The Organisation of Consent in British West Africa, 1820s to 1960s', pp. 55-78, and P. Chatterjee, 'Was There a Hegemonic Project of the Colonial State?', pp. 79-84.
- 14 S. Sarkar recalls that 'hegemony' in Gramsci's work 'is bound up with developed capitalist civil society' and therefore uneasily transposable to colonial settings characterised by an essentially agricultural economy. He further notes that disentangling hegemony from coercion and reducing the former 'to some sort of liberal consensual model, marginalising domination and conflict' is analytically flawed. See his 'Hegemony and Historical Practice', in *Contesting Colonial Hegemony*, *op. cit.*, pp. 277-281. Essentially for the same reasons, R. Guha prefers the notion of 'dominance' instead of 'hegemony' to illustrate relations of power between the colonial state and the subject society. See his (1997) *Dominance Without Hegemony: History and Power in Colonial India*, Cambridge: Harvard University Press.
- 15 F. Cooper and A.L. Stoler (1989) 'Introduction: Tensions of Empire: Colonial Control and Visions of Rule', *American Ethnologist*, Vol. 16, No. 4, pp. 609-621, here p. 609.
- 16 N. Doumanis, seeking to debunk the Greek nationalist myth of resistance to Italian rule falls precisely into the trap of making the implication that Orthodox Dodecanesians were happy with their colonial rulers. See his (1997) *Myth and Memory in the Mediterranean: Remembering Fascism's Empire*, London: Macmillan.
- 17 This approach might seem reminiscent of J.C. Scott's concept of 'everyday forms of resistance'. See his (1986) *Weapons of the Weak: Everyday Forms of Peasant Resistance*, New Haven: Yale University Press. But the suggestion in this paper is that all forms of interactions between ordinary Cypriots and the state need not be construed as falling within the realm of 'resistance'. Nor is it necessary, or indeed desirable, for research to be tracking open acts of resistance exclusively: The implication is that routine interactions between the state and its subjects could be subversive of the colonial order independently of the actors' intentions.

References to 'ordinary Cypriots' are numerous in the historiography. But with the exception of the works of Katsiaounis and Bryant, they often serve to paint a reverse image of Cypriot society under British rule. Drawing on the research conducted by Early Modernists,¹⁸ scholars regularly point to the hybridity of pre-colonial popular culture in Cyprus. Religious syncretism, cross-cultural political protests against fiscal oppressors (the Orthodox Church or the Ottoman state), linguistic affinities and inter-religious sexuality are regularly invoked to stress the high degree of cultural assimilation between Christian and Muslim Cypriots. These allusions to a pre-colonial situation of 'peaceful coexistence'¹⁹ where 'identities' were fluid too often construct what an observer termed an 'essential folklore'²⁰ and are deeply inflected by nostalgic political concerns in face of the island's lingering division. They are, in short, a discourse *on* the masses rather than *of* the masses.

Based on the cases of three Cypriot functionaries appealing against their dismissal from the colonial service, this paper explores ways to recover the voice of the masses. It urges to locate and analyse sources and archives ensconcing testimonies of ordinary Cypriots in order to better examine how they understood, internalised and negotiated the boundaries of colonial rule. And it makes a case for the study of subaltern Cypriots as a vantage point to explore the points of articulation and cross-fertilisation between colonial morality and local self-representations.

Locating Subaltern Cypriots: The Example of the Colonial Bureaucracy

Ranjit Guha demonstrated that adopting the subaltern classes' perspective enables to elucidate the series of codes defining and regulating their existence as members of the colonial society.²¹ He famously defined the category of the 'subaltern' as including the demographic difference between a total population and its elite. This was an intentionally broad characterisation aiming at

18 See, among others, R.C. Jennings (1993) *Christians and Muslims in Ottoman Cyprus and the Mediterranean World*, New York: New York University Press; and K. Çiçek (1993) 'Living Together: Muslim-Christians Relations in Eighteenth Century Cyprus as Reflected by the Shari'a Court Records', *Islam and Christian-Muslim Relations*, Vol. 4, No. 1, pp. 36-64. Although they are not Early Modernists, mention needs to be made of the work of historian M. Aymes and political scientist C.M. Constantinou and particularly their rehabilitation of the syncretic community known as *Linobambakoi*, too long considered as opportunists shifting between Islam and Christianity according to the political climate. See M. Aymes (2005) 'Lin-Coton: l'étoffe d'une communauté partagée' [Lin-Cotton: the fabric of a community shared], *Labyrinthe: Atelier Interdisciplinaire*, Vol. 21, No. 2, pp. 111-120; and C.M. Constantinou (2007) 'Aporias of Identity: Bicomunalism, Hybridity and the "Cyprus Problem"', *Cooperation and Conflict*, Vol. 42, No. 3, pp. 247-270, here pp. 251-253.

19 This is the title of a book by C.P. Kyrris (1977) *Peaceful Coexistence in Cyprus under British Rule (1878-1959) and After Independence: An Outline*, Nicosia: Public Information Office. For a discussion on the dangers associated with this concept, see R. Bryant and M. Hatay (2008) 'The Jasmine Scent of Nicosia: Of Returns, Revolutions, and the Longing for Forbidden Pasts', *Journal of Modern Greek Studies*, Vol. 26, No. 2, pp. 423-449.

20 S. Psmazoglou (2000) 'Essay Review: The Cyprus Problems', *Journal of Modern Greek Studies*, Vol. 18, No. 1, pp. 199-208, here p. 203.

underscoring the importance of chronological and geographical context: subaltern groups might ‘under circumstances act for the “elite” (...) and therefore be classified as such.’²² Irrespective of context however, a colonial subject is a subaltern when she or he undergoes at least two kinds of domination, that of the coloniser and that of the native elite.²³

In Cyprus – as in most colonial settings – ‘native’ colonial civil servants would perhaps best be classified as members of the elite on account of their income and social prestige. Yet their activities were framed by rigid regulations and, more importantly, they could never reach the higher administrative jobs occupied by British officials. They made visible, then, the racial divide, what Partha Chatterjee called ‘the rule of colonial difference’, which is the essence of colonialism.²⁴ Hence they were subalterns in a very strong sense, and this is the line which will be adopted here.

We know next to nothing about Cypriots who presented the peculiarity of being both colonial public servants and members of one of the subject communities. And yet the corps of Cypriot colonial civil servants represented a non-negligible social reality: By 1939, the colonial administration employed 2,045 permanent Cypriot colonial officials²⁵ (out of a population of 383,967²⁶) to whom can be added 1,400 elementary schoolmasters and mistresses remunerated by government funds.²⁷ Theirs was an enviable position in a society of indebted smallholding peasant-proprietors as it opened prospects of financial autonomy. Considering that there were slightly less than a hundred British officials in Cyprus in 1939,²⁸ Cypriot functionaries were the everyday face of colonialism in Cyprus. Finally, out of necessity, religious and linguistic differences were played down in the colonial bureaucracy and the administration’s official language was English.

The historiography’s neglect of Cypriot civil servants under British rule is not surprising. Governed by a strict set of rules and regulations which left them little initiative,²⁹ they often unhesitatingly espoused official policies. Hence if we are to believe Governor Sir Ronald Storrs, Greek Cypriot colonial employees were immune to *Enosis* since ‘[o]nce ... a Greek Cypriot had

21 R. Guha (1983) ‘The Prose of Counterinsurgency’, in Guha, R. (ed.), *Subaltern Studies II: Writings on South Asian History and Society*, Delhi: Oxford University Press, pp. 1-42, here p. 1.

22 R. Guha (1999) ‘On Some Aspects of the Historiography of Colonial India’, in Guha, R. (ed.), *Subaltern Studies I: Writings on South Asian History and Society*, Delhi: Oxford University Press, pp. 1-8, here p. 8.

23 G.C. Spivak famously unearthed a third kind of domination, that of gender. See her seminal (1988) ‘Can the Subaltern Speak?’ in Nelson, C. and Grossberg, L. (eds), *Marxism and the Interpretation of Culture*, Chicago: University of Illinois Press, pp. 271-316.

24 P. Chatterjee (1993) *The Nation and its Fragments: Colonial and Postcolonial Histories*, Princeton: Princeton University Press, pp. 14-34.

25 *The Cyprus Civil List 1939*, Nicosia, Government Printer, 1939.

26 *The Cyprus Blue Book of Statistics for the Year 1940*, p. 214.

27 *Report of the Department of Education for the School Year 1933-1934*, Nicosia, Government Printer, 1935, p. 8.

28 *The Cyprus Civil List 1939*, *op. cit.*

29 *Cyprus Government Standing Orders 1933. Together With a Table of Distances*, Nicosia, Government Printer, 1933.

been admitted to the Civil Service, it became a point of honour, which so far as I know was never transgressed, to support the Government loyally through thick and thin'.³⁰ The implication is that Cypriot colonial officials were a mere extension of the colonial state: Hence it seems that little is to be gained in studying a group which, in post-colonial Cyprus, carries the stigma of 'collaboration', which, pace Robinson,³¹ maintains its pejorative undertones.

Of course, only positivist research would select its historical objects according to some alleged intrinsic value; and Cypriot colonial officials certainly do not fit into nationalist narratives which are written in the positivist vein. Scholars have demonstrated that 'indigenous' colonial civil servants could not be reduced to mindless performers or 'transparent, unthinking conduits' of colonial rule.³² David Arnold's research on the Madras constabulary evinced the ways subaltern constables handled the potential conflict between their cultural background and their status as colonial employees.³³ Emily Lynn Osborn, who worked on the Guinée Française and the Soudan Français showed how 'low-level colonial employees ... possessed the linguistic capabilities, symbolic trappings and cultural know-how to mediate colonial rule' and reap benefits and power for their own personal use.³⁴ This paper goes further, and proposes to consider the lower echelons of the colonial bureaucracy as the interface between colonial rule and local society: As Cypriot colonial civil servants were both agents and subjects of colonial rule they blurred and often sought to renegotiate the boundaries between coloniser and colonised. In turn, the reactions they elicited from their British superiors illustrate what Cooper and Stoler refer to as 'colonial anxieties' that tensions among them might emerge, compromise the moral foundations of their dominance and 'fracture the façade'.³⁵

The remainder of this paper is built around the memoranda of three subaltern Cypriot officials appealing against their dismissal from the colonial civil service: a Greek Cypriot prison warden, a Turkish Cypriot schoolmaster and a Turkish Cypriot computation officer of the land registration department.³⁶ The objective is not to restore the elusive – maybe illusory – agency of one category of Cypriot subalterns under British rule. This will not be an argument about an

30 R. Storrs (1937) *Orientalisms*, London: Ivor and Nicolson, p. 551.

31 R. Robinson (1972) 'Non-European Foundations of European Imperialism: Sketch for a Theory of Collaboration', in Owen, R. and Sutcliffe, B. (eds), *Studies in the Theory of Imperialism*, London: Longman, pp. 117-141, here p. 120.

32 E.L. Osborn (2003) 'Circle of Iron: African Colonial Employees and the Interpretation of Colonial Rule in French West Africa', *Journal of African History*, Vol. 44, No. 1, pp. 29-50, here p. 36.

33 D. Arnold (1985) 'Bureaucratic Recruitment and Subordination in Colonial India: The Madras Constabulary, 1859-1947', in Guha, R. (ed.), *Subaltern Studies IV. Writings on South Asian History and Society*, Delhi: Oxford University Press, pp. 1-53.

34 Osborn, 2003, *op. cit.*, p. 30.

35 Cooper and Stoler, 1989, *op. cit.*, p. 609.

36 The right to appeal against dismissal was a formal right, enshrined in the *Colonial Regulations*, See *Regulations for His Majesty's Colonial Service*, London, HMSO, 1923, regulation 212.

atypical form of resistance to the arbitrariness of colonial rule where the aggrieved officers manage to 'use the system to beat the system'; in fact as will be seen, one of the officers failed to overturn the decision of his dismissal while the fate of the other two is not documented.³⁷ Instead, the paper argues that the dismissal of these officers generates enlightening debates on the constantly readjusted relations between national self-identification, imperial loyalty, civilisation and legality in colonial Cyprus; and that observing how these concepts were invested with different meanings according to the context is essential to understand the ideological foundations of British colonial rule in Cyprus. After briefly presenting the political conditions prevailing in the island in the 1930s, the cases will alternately be examined and will serve to discuss the heuristic potential and theoretical implications of a history of colonial Cyprus drawing on methodologies developed by Subaltern Studies and microhistory.

Cyprus in the 1930s and Colonialism's 'Only Means of Contact with the Outside World'

In 1934, the district commissioner of Nicosia, Charles-Henry Hart-Davis, a veteran colonial officer who presented the fast disappearing quality of speaking both Greek and Turkish, returned his memorandum on the *mudirs*. These Cypriot officials, who would later be called district inspectors:

'are the only agents for work outside the office at the disposal of a Commissioner. They are employed on enquiries into complaints and petitions of every kind. They keep the Commissioner informed of the condition and requirements of the villagers in their respective areas. They have to conduct inquiries, sometimes of a confidential nature, on behalf of the commissioner. They are, in fact, apart from the Commissioner's personal visits to villages and interviews with Mukhtars [village headmen] and other villagers, the Commissioners' only means of contact with the outside world.'³⁸

In the 1930s, this remark could easily be extended to all Cypriot colonial employees. Seizing the opportunity of an island-wide revolt in October 1931 leading to the burning down of the governor's residence, British authorities abolished all the representative institutions they had

37 Beyond this practical difficulty, as R. O'Hanlon and J. Wilson showed, the very concept of agency as a tool to 'recover the subject' and her/his capacity for autonomous initiative is theoretically flawed: Intended to outline a domain untinged by colonialism, it encapsulates some of the strongest tenets of Western Enlightenment (liberalism, free choice, individualism). R. O'Hanlon (1988) 'Recovering the Subject: Subaltern Studies and Histories of Resistance in Colonial South Asia', *Modern Asian Studies*, Vol. 22, No. 1, pp. 189-224; J. Wilson (2006) 'Subjects and Agents in the History of Imperialism and Resistance', in Hirschkind, C. and Scott, D. (eds), *Powers of the Secular Modern: Talal Asad and His Interlocutors*, Stanford: Stanford University Press, pp. 180-205.

38 Cyprus State Archive, Ministry of Justice and Public Order, SA1 484/1934 *Mudirs. Improvement of the Position of* – Memorandum by C.-H. Hart-Davis, district commissioner, Nicosia, 1934.

gradually granted the Cypriots since 1882.³⁹ The uprising was essentially motivated by fiscal and economic reasons against the background of the Great Depression,⁴⁰ and while only Greek Cypriots partook in it, the repressive measures were applied to all of the island's inhabitants indiscriminately.

In reality the revolt was a pretext to stamp out *Enosis* and the fledgling Kemalist movement from Cyprus, and implement an interventionist form of colonial rule relying on a public authority sufficiently strong to fast-track reforms without much time lost in deliberations. Pushing aside the Cypriot notability, which they represented as a 'numerically insignificant class of parasites who made a living out of the [peasant producer]';⁴¹ British authorities set out on a quest to find and protect an equally undifferentiated and imagined 'peasantry' as the legitimating basis of their policies. As they would accept no interlocutors to speak on behalf of '*bona fide* agriculturalists',⁴² colonial authorities relied exclusively on the civil service as their official interface with Cypriot society.⁴³ This put tremendous pressure on their recruiting policy which increasingly focused on 'loyalty'. An illustration of this is the following request by assistant colonial secretary Robert C.S. Stanley to the district commissioner of Limassol, Oswald R. Arthur:

The Promotions Board have been considering the filling of the vacancy of first clerk created by the retirement of Vassiliades. Your Chief Clerk, Soteriades, is very much in the picture and there are one or two others who judged by their reports have at least as good a claim to consideration. I know Soteriades personally and agree with everything that has been said about him in his confidential reports as to his ability, adaptability, initiative and energy. It would very much assist us if you could let me have a personal report on his politics, associations, partiality or otherwise for intrigue and in fact anything affecting his personal outlook and character which might assist us in forming a judgment.⁴⁴

Behind the veil of authoritarianism, these testimonies reflect the beleaguered mentality of British administrators in the wake of what they euphemistically called the 1931 'disturbances'.⁴⁵ At the time, the irruption of political violence in the island had transformed Clauson's confident

39 See D. Markides and G.S. Georghallides (1995) 'British Attitudes to Constitution-Making in Post-1931 Cyprus', *Journal of Modern Greek Studies*, Vol. 13, No. 1, pp. 63-81.

40 A. Apostolides (2010) 'Economic Growth or Continuing Stagnation? Estimating the GDP of Cyprus and Malta, 1921-1938', unpublished PhD dissertation, London School of Economics and Political Science, pp. 201-207.

41 Storrs, 1937, *op. cit.*, p. 553.

42 Storrs, 1937, *op. cit.*, p. 587.

43 For a discussion of British policies in 1930s Cyprus, see A. Rappas (2008) 'The Elusive Polity: Social Engineering and the Reinvention of Politics in Colonial Cyprus, 1931-1941', unpublished PhD dissertation, European University Institute.

44 SA1 949/1928 *Promotion Board. Minutes of Meeting*. Assistant Colonial Secretary Robert Christopher Stafford Stanley, dispatch to Oswald Raynor Arthur, district commissioner of Limassol, 16 September 1940.

45 National Archives, London, CO 67/243/1 and CO 67/243/2 *Cyprus. Report on the Disturbances of October 1931*, parts 1 and 2.

causticism into alarmism. And, as the first case will show, questions of self-identification in the colonial service became a primary source of anxiety for British authorities.

Being Greek in a Time of Crisis: Nationality, Loyalty and the Sense of Duty

On 13 November 1931, A.E. Gallagher, chief commandant of police and inspector of prisons requested that fifty-one year old Styllis Savvas, assistant chief warder of the central prison in Nicosia be dismissed from the colonial service. The prison guard was found guilty of having displayed signs of a 'nervous and unreliable temperament in an emergency [which] consequently [made him] unfitted to occupy the post he is now filling',⁴⁶ During the events – namely the 1931 revolt – Savvas had asked his superior, resident superintendent of prisons H.L.D. Gee, not to be given the responsibility of Greek Cypriot political leaders arrested and awaiting deportation. Specifically he stated that:

'I asked Mr. Gee not to put the Bishop of Kyrenia under my charge, because the Prison Warders, some of whom are my enemies, would get me into trouble by concocting stories that I was treating him favourably ... Regarding the Bishop of Kyrenia, as I am a Greek and he is a Greek, I asked [the superintendent of prisons] to place Turkish warders in charge as I was afraid that if I were in charge of him, the warders might imply that I was carrying messages from him to outside persons and similarly conveying messages.'⁴⁷

This reasoning the colonial governor Sir Ronald Storrs found unacceptable as he observed that 'the greater proportion of the Police and Prisons establishment is composed of Greeks on whose loyalty and sense of duty, overriding sentiments of nationality, this Government is bound to rely for the maintenance of administration'.⁴⁸ But whereas Styllis Savvas' reference to his 'Greekness' was unacceptable to the governor, the Colonial Office in London on the contrary found that it was fully understandable. 'An officer with 33 years public service should deserve rather more consideration. It was after all, as a principal secretary at the Colonial Office stated, 'an exceptionally exciting and trying position for a Greek warder to find himself in'.⁴⁹ Hence the secretary of state for the colonies' official reply stated that:

'[T]he circumstances explained in Mr. Gee's report would scarcely seem ..., having regard to the difficult position of a Greek warder in the late emergency, to constitute sufficient

46 CO 323/1134/3 *Cyprus: S. Savva, Assistant Chief Warder at the Central Prison 1931-1932*. A.E. Gallagher, chief commandant of police and inspector of prisons, confidential dispatch to the colonial secretary, 13 November 1931.

47 CO 323/1134/3, *op. cit.*, report of the resident superintendent, central prison, read by A.E. Gallagher on 28 December 1931 and signed by Mr. Styllis Savvas, 28 December 1931.

48 CO 323/1134/3, *op. cit.*, Sir Ronald Storrs, confidential dispatch to the secretary of state for the colonies, 13 January 1932.

49 CO 323/1134/3, *op. cit.*, G.E.J. Gent, minute, 20 October 1931.

grounds for removing, on the ground of inefficiency, an officer of Mr. Savvas's long and apparently satisfactory service, without a personal and detailed investigation by the Head of his Department into his reported failure on the recent occasion.⁵⁰

The conclusion of this case remains unknown. The records only show that Savvas himself asked the chief commandant of police not to dismiss him but to allow him instead to apply to be retired on full pension.⁵¹

The crux of the problem in this case centred on the term 'Greek'. Being Greek for Savvas may have meant being 'Greek-Orthodox'. But he clearly understood that in the political configuration created by the revolt, his superiors construed claims to Greekness as national self-identification and, thence, as potential acts of sedition. Hence he crafted his statement around a plea for honesty and anticipated his loyalty would exonerate him from not performing his duty. The Colonial Office accepted this stand which they justified in regard to Savvas' seniority and impeccable record of service. The chief commandant of police and the colonial governor interpreted the situation in the exact reverse way: They saw the paralysing effects of conflicting loyalties, as Savvas was torn between the traditional leaders of his community for whom he refused to serve as gaoler and the state; and this was precisely the sort of dilemma they would be insistent in stamping out in the 1930s. It should be noted, finally, that the differing views of the metropole and the local colonial authorities may have hinged on different understandings of the word 'Greek'. As often noted, officials in London were more indifferent – and occasionally mildly sympathetic – to Cypriot claims to Greekness;⁵² on the other hand, colonial administrators in the island became increasingly less permissive to the point where Sir Reginald Stubbs requested that the term 'Greek' be removed from all official correspondence when referring to Orthodox Cypriots⁵³ (these 'bogus Greeks' as he colourfully put it⁵⁴).

This case highlights the centrality of loyalty in the colonial administration as well as the impossibility of reaching a consensual, uniformly applicable definition of the term. It is not Savvas' failure at accomplishing his duty that creates the debate; it is the fact that he presents his self-identification as 'Greek' as a proof of his loyalty. In this sense his deposition reveals a fundamental tension in the colonial regime between overlapping and conflicting senses of belonging. But what happens when no such ambiguity exists around loyalty? The following case explores another tension, this time between legal procedure and disloyalty.

50 CO 323/1134/3, *op. cit.*, secretary of state for the colonies, draft confidential dispatch to the governor of Cyprus, 12 December 1931.

51 CO 323/1134/3, *op. cit.*, A.E. Gallagher, chief commandant of police and inspector of prisons, confidential dispatch to the colonial secretary, 28 December 1931.

52 See for instance Varnava, 2009, *op. cit.*, p. 159.

53 CO 67/254/4 *Cyprus: Political Situation, 1934*. 'Memorandum by Sir. R.E. Stubbs', 16 October 1933.

54 CO 67/251/7 *Cyprus: Setting Up of an Advisory Council 1933*. Governor Stubbs, semi-private letter to the secretary of state for the colonies, 18 August 1933.

Law vs. Loyalty:**On the Blind Spots of 'Modern' Colonial Governance**

Mehmet Teki, headmaster of a Turkish Cypriot elementary school of Polis in Paphos and representative of the Turkish teachers' committee in Cyprus was dismissed in 1933 from the education department on the charges of drunkenness while on duty, absenteeism, attacks in the press against the education department, political propaganda and 'presumptuous public speeches to schoolmasters'. The colonial governor justified the sanction stressing the schoolmaster's links to the Kemalist Turkish National Congress – an organisation created in May 1930 by Necati Özkan⁵⁵ – and the fact that his insubordination had made him something of a hero in the eyes of many Turkish Cypriot nationalists.⁵⁶ Teki did not overtly contest the charges brought against him; instead he claimed that:

'Even if the delinquencies attributed to me by the Director of Education in his letter of June 23rd 1933 (...) were true, article 31 of the law cannot be applied owing to the fact that article 13 of the Regulations clearly stipulates the penalty for such delinquencies. Furthermore the delinquencies have not been proven.'⁵⁷

His dispassionate denunciation of a legal irregularity proved disconcerting with colonial authorities. Although the Colonial Office agreed with the governor that it was undesirable to keep Teki in the colonial service,⁵⁸ the secretary of state considered that, as a matter of principle, he must satisfy himself fully in regard to [the allegation of illegality made by Teki].⁵⁹

Whereas loyalty was at the centre of the debate in Savvas' case, here it is not even an issue. With his intimate knowledge and brazen utilisation of the colonial administration's rules and regulations, Teki appears to be what James C. Scott terms an 'intermediary': Namely a subaltern enhancing his agency through his fluency in the legal terminology and administrative technicalities of the state.⁶⁰ But there is another element to this case which may better explain the anxiety of colonial authorities over procedure. Teki was writing from Ankara in the new Turkish alphabet although he was fluent in English: This was a statement in itself as the dismissed schoolteacher positioned himself not as a colonial subject pleading for the clemency of his colonial

55 F. Crouzet (1973) *Le Conflit de Chypre, 1946-1959, Vol. 1* [The Cyprus Conflict, 1946-1959, Vol. 1], Brussels: Emile Bruylant, p. 172.

56 CO 67/252/15 *Cyprus: Petition from M. Tekki Effendi Against Dismissal as a Schoolmaster Nov. 1933-Feb. 1934*. Acting governor's official dispatch No. 457 to secretary of state for the colonies, 20 December 1933.

57 CO 67/252/15, *op. cit.*, Mehmet Teki, translation of a letter to the secretary of state for the colonies, 15 November 1933, enclosure to under-secretary of state for Foreign Affairs' official dispatch to under-secretary of state for the colonies, 6 December 1933.

58 CO 67/252/15, *op. cit.*, A.B. Acheson, minute, 12 January 1934.

59 CO 67/252/15, *op. cit.*, Sir Cosmo Parkinson, minute, 28 January 1934.

60 J.C. Scott (1998) *Seeing Like a State: How Certain Schemes to Improve the Human Condition Have Failed*, New Haven: Yale University Press, p. 48.

master, but as the citizen of the Kemalist Turkish Republic that demanded to be treated on equal terms by European powers with which it shared 'modernity' – secularism, law and order, equality before the law, rationalism, etc. By disclosing a procedural error which he exposed as an arbitrary decision, Teki reversed the roles and placed himself on a higher civilisational ground. The Colonial Office's anxiety indicated a desire to restore and hide again the 'rule of colonial difference' ensconced into the impersonal regulations and divulged by the ex-schoolmaster's initiative. But while procedure constituted a safe ground to discuss proper governance, the following case suggests that no such consensus existed among colonial authorities with regard to the notion of civilisation which nonetheless gave them a moral, if implicit, basis for the exercise of their rule.

When Otherness Pierces through Sameness: Honour and Civilisation

Thirty-three year old Ahmed Ratib, computation officer in the department of land registration and surveys, was dismissed by the government of Cyprus on the count of 'gross cruelty to a child' on 23 November 1933. This decision was reached after Ratib had been found guilty by the district court of Nicosia of having chained and beaten a six-year old girl whom he had hired as a servant. For the colonial governor, Ratib's conduct made him an unfit person to remain in the service of the Government.⁶¹ In his memorandum appealing against his dismissal, Ratib set out to correct the facts that were reproachful to him. He thus wrote that the girl was 11 and not 6-years old and that he did not beat her. He reported that the child had run away on two occasions from his house. On one of these occasions the dismissed computation officer had found her in a field, four miles away from Nicosia, accompanied by an unknown labourer:

'It was at this stage that I thought that the best way to support her life and her honour was to tie her for some hours with a thin chain so as to prevent her from running the risk of being molested. As she was under my charge I thought it was my duty to deliver her to her parents unmolested. I admit that at that time I could not apprehend that I was doing something wrong as I was under the impression that I was acting properly to safeguard the honour and life of a young girl who had been entrusted to my charge. I am extremely sorry that I could not then perceive that the steps taken by me were wrong and I now feel extremely sorry. I beg leave, Sir, to add that this girl was never ill-treated in my house. She was looked upon as a member of my family. She was living together with other members of my family. She was well dressed and even decorated with bracelets and earrings.'

Ratib added that the reason the girl repeatedly ran away was because her mother-tongue was Greek which prevented her from communicating with his family. He requested to be reinstated to

61 CO 850/28/4 *Cyprus: Cruelty 1933*. Governor's official dispatch No. 424 to the secretary of state for the colonies, 17 November 1933.

his post, suggesting that the conviction of the magisterial court which had sentenced him to pay a £25 fine was sufficient a punishment.⁶²

Though an investigation verified and confirmed Ratib's allegations, the governor noted that the computation officer was 'notoriously primitive in his rule of life', and should on this account be removed from the colonial service. In recommending this course of action, he wrote, 'the Executive Council was not so much desirous of punishing him as of removing from the service a person of a semi-civilised type who was not fitted to be a member of it'.⁶³ Although they regretted that the investigation leading to Ratib's conviction at the district court of Nicosia and his subsequent dismissal had been so hastily and carelessly led, London officials agreed that Ratib was better out of the service.⁶⁴

Colonial authorities presented the computation officer's actions as too alien to their own sense of ethics, what the governor of Cyprus called the 'Western mind'. This radical otherness made it impossible, in their minds, to conceive of him as a representative of the British colonial civil service. Not possessing Teki's bodacious rhetorical dexterity, Ratib reinforced the impression of an individual uneasily poised between two mutually exclusive moral universes, thereby exemplifying what Homi Bhabha called the 'mimic man': A subject who in spite of having assimilated the coloniser's language and norms remains 'emphatically' different, 'repeatedly turn[ing] from *mimicry* – a difference that is almost nothing but not quite – to *menace* – a difference that is almost total but not quite'.⁶⁵ But this difference between a 'modern' attitude shying away from corporal punishment and a 'primitive' tradition of rough handling women may have been a construction, a means for colonial authorities to negotiate their moral superiority. It is not clear that 'defending the honour and life' of a little girl and protecting her from the corrupting contact with older 'labourers' should appear so bizarre to British officials who were so anxious at home about what they perceived as the declining morality of women and girls.⁶⁶ Ratib's attitude, where moral concerns intersect with class prejudice could hardly shock a generation steeped in the literature of the likes of Jane Austen, Anthony Trollope or Wilkie Collins.⁶⁷

62 CO 850/28/4, *op. cit.*, Petition by Ahmed Ziaeddin Ratib Effendi to the secretary of state for the colonies, 23 November 1933, enclosure to acting governor's official dispatch No. 456 to the secretary of state for the colonies, 18 December 1933.

63 CO 850/28/4, *op. cit.*, acting governor's official dispatch No. 456 to the secretary of state for the colonies, 18 December 1933.

64 CO 850/28/4, *op. cit.*, A.B. Acheson, minute, 30 December 1933.

65 H. Bhabha (1984) 'Of Mimicry and Man: The Ambivalence of Colonial Discourse', *October*, Vol. 28, pp. 125-133, here p. 132.

66 S.O. Rose (1998) 'Sex, Citizenship, and the Nation in World War II Britain', *American Historical Review*, Vol. 103, No. 4, pp. 1147-1176.

67 Bodleian Rhodes House Library, University of Oxford, Brit.Emps.364, *David Athelstane Percival: Letters Home, Northern Nigeria, 1929-1939, Cyprus 1930-1939*, box 2. D.A. Percival, letter to his mother (where he mentions his readings), 10 September 1936. D.A. Percival remained for a long time in Cyprus serving at various positions. He is mostly known for coordinating and publishing the 1946 Cyprus census.

Another feature of this case which calls for comment but was ignored by British authorities is that the little girl whom Ratib was accused of having chained was obviously Greek-speaking. Although it is impossible to conclude that she was Christian, scholars have noted that the practice of impoverished rural families to send their daughters to work as domestic servants in rich urban families of a different faith was not unheard of.⁶⁸ If we assume that she was Christian, could not Ratib's anxiety over her honour and life be indicative of his eagerness to respect some tacit rule of intercommunal coexistence in Cyprus centred on the safeguard of the honour of women?

By Way of Conclusion:

Permanent Exceptionalism as the Foundation of Colonial Rule

This paper investigated ways to recover the subaltern Cypriots' voice. It showed that this can be done primarily through a microhistorical approach.⁶⁹ Perusing through court records, complaints, and any litigation, one will find testimonies of ordinary Cypriots, in however fragmentary form and however inaccurately transcribed.⁷⁰ A very close reading of these testimonies, 'against the grain' as it were – namely against the intention of those who produced them – might disclose the complex ways in which Cypriots understood, internalised and sought to negotiate the – sometimes conflicted – ways in which British colonisers sought to position themselves as their trustees.

It is indeed interesting to note how a fairly routinely procedure such as the dismissal of a Cypriot colonial civil servant generated debates which illustrated the tensions around notions such as 'national sentiment', 'loyalty', 'civilisation', which are nonetheless at the core of the ideological foundations of colonial rule. Members of a subject community, Cypriot colonial civil servants were also the everyday face of the colonial state. Their own self-understanding as agents and subjects of colonial rule mostly overlapped but occasionally conflicted with the expectations of British colonial authorities. The anxieties unmasked through such conflicts shed light on the multi-faceted relations between British rulers and Cypriot subjects and underscore the inconsistencies characterising these relations; in other words these conflicts highlight the shifting boundaries of colonial rule.

There is one general conclusion that can be drawn from the three cases. Taken together, they reveal colonial rule as a being in a state of 'permanent exceptionalism'⁷¹ which can be defined in the

68 V. Argyrou (1996) *Tradition and Modernity in the Mediterranean: The Wedding as Symbolic Struggle*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, pp. 31-32.

69 The literature on microhistory is voluminous, but a good clarification of its objectives and methodology can be found in C. Ginzburg (1993) 'Microhistory: Two or Three Things that I Know About It', *Critical Inquiry*, Vol. 20, No. 1, pp. 10-35 and M. Peltonen (2001) 'Clues, Margins and Monads: The Micro-Macro Link in Historical Research', *History and Theory*, Vol. 40, No. 3, pp. 347-359.

70 This discussion draws on G. Simonsen's remarkable work (2007) *Slave Stories: Gender, Representation, and the Court in the Danish West Indies, 1780s-1820s*, unpublished PhD dissertation, European University Institute.

71 The expression is borrowed from L. Panitch and D. Swartz, see their (1984) 'Toward Permanent Exceptionalism:

following way. The impersonal bureaucratic procedure allowing aggrieved 'native' officials to appeal to the secretary of state had a double purpose: It aimed to routinise – and therefore make predictable – these officials' potential conflicts with their British employers; and it was intended to uphold the Cypriots' confidence in the justice of British rule. Yet when Cypriot officials used this right, they generated conflicts between the metropole and local colonial authorities which were usually settled outside the realm of legality. The cases presented here qualify the much cited social performativity of colonial bureaucratic governance. Instead, they suggest that this 'modern' governance could be incapacitating when it raised hopes of fair and equal treatment and therefore ran counter to the fundamental arbitrariness of colonial rule. Each of these conundrums was treated as an exception and settled illicitly or discreetly shelved. The permanent exceptionalism buttressing the daily transactions between British administrators and subaltern Cypriots is indicative of the tensions lying at the core of colonial rule. Hence the scrutiny of such transactions allows a better grasp of the subtleties behind the irruption of political violence.

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Ronald Storrs and Mısırlızade Necati: The Governor's Encounter with the 'Thirteenth Greek'

ALTAY NEVZAT¹

Abstract

Relations between British colonial administrators and the Turkish Cypriots are commonly portrayed purely through the rigid framework of subservience and collaboration. Furnishing evidence through a micro-historical study of the relationship which developed in the late 1920s between Governor Ronald Storrs and Turkish Cypriot political leader Mısırlızade Necati, the paper proposes that this familiar portrayal is misleading and overlooks significant cases of conflict between the British authorities and prevailing Turkish Cypriot political forces. The argument is supported by a wider analysis of the two men's formative experiences and in particular of the 'public school spirit' inculcated in Storrs as invariably in other British administrators also. Based upon such analysis it is suggested that such dispute went beyond the solely personal and that the conflictual relationship that arose in this instance was largely a consequence of the colonial inability to adequately adapt to the novel force of Kemalist nationalism in Cyprus.

Keywords: British imperialism, colonialism, Cyprus, education, Kemalism, nationalism, Turkish Cypriots

Both in the pertinent historiography and in the common psyche of contemporary Turkish and especially Greek Cypriots, lies a powerful tendency to view, as conscious, constant and masterful, the British endeavours to manipulate the political forces in the colony of Cyprus. With the effects of this proficiency are sometimes also associated the rise of conflicting nationalisms and more generally the political woes of their isle.² Corollary propositions, sometimes implicit and more

1 A previous version of this paper was presented in Turkish at the 4th Symposium on Leading Turkish Cypriots in History, held at the Eastern Mediterranean University, 12-13 October 2006; The author also wishes to thank the anonymous reviewers of this article for their constructive suggestions which have helped enhance the final version of the work.

2 A recent study by Hadjipavlou found that, 'Almost 80% of Greek Cypriot interviewees believe that "divide-and-rule" policy of British colonialists contributed very much to the creation and perpetuation of the Cyprus conflict, as against 47% of Turkish Cypriots', and that a further 12% of Greek Cypriots and 22% of Turkish Cypriots believed it contributed 'somewhat'. M. Hadjipavlou (2007) 'The Cyprus Conflict: Root Causes and Implications for Peacebuilding', *Journal of Peace Research*, Vol. 44, No. 3, pp. 352-354; See also Y. Papadakis (2005) *Echoes From The Dead Zone: Across the Cyprus Divide*, London: I.B. Tauris, pp. 52, 64-65, and R. Bryant (2006) 'On the Condition of Postcoloniality in Cyprus', in Papadakis, Y., Peristianis, N. and Welz, G. (eds), *Divided Cyprus: Modernity, History, And An Island in Conflict*, Bloomington and Indiana: Indiana University Press, p. 62.

frequently attributable to Greek Cypriot sources as well as those more instinctively critical of the colonial, are that the Turkish Cypriot political elite functioned as a collaborationist prop to shore-up British rule and that it was the British who in fact encouraged the development of a Turkish national identity among the island's Cypriot Muslims in order to neutralise the growing threat of majority Greek nationalism to their rule.³

The troubled case of Sir Ronald Storrs and his relations with the Turkish Cypriot communal leader Mısırlızade Necati is one episode that illustrates how British authorities actually proved incapable of successfully managing the political challenges with which they were confronted in Cyprus and essentially acted, albeit to the imperial detriment, in a manner provoking the rising political tide of Turkish nationalism. It demonstrates also how, rather than continually operating as colonial collaborators, Turkish Cypriot political elites could and did sometimes display the capacity and will for confrontation with the colonial power coupled with the further potential for cooperation with other colonised communities.

Little indication as to the thought behind Storrs' appointment to replace Malcolm Stevenson as Governor in Cyprus is available from either colonial archives or from Storrs' personal papers and autobiography. His selection as Governor was a bit unusual, though not wholly exceptional, in that he had not risen through the ranks of the Colonial Service itself but rather had begun his career in the 'Anglo-Egyptian Civil Service'. Here he had started out as an adviser in the Ministry of Finance in Egypt, soon climbing in rank and eventually being drafted in as governor of Jerusalem during the War.⁴ Storrs' previous postings, 'had made him known to a wide circle of influential persons in Britain', and he also possessed potential patrons through the aristocratic connections devolving from his mother's side.⁵ It has been suggested that such influences may have assisted his elevation to the governorship of his first Crown Colony.⁶ Certainly it had not hurt that the year prior to his appointment he made a most positive impression on Leo Amery, the Secretary of State for the Colonies, acting as the minister's personal guide during an extended visit to Palestine. Amery noted that Storrs had been able to charm and befriend leading figures of all hues, whether, 'Arab, Jew or Greek'; a welcome skill for a governor replacing the universally unpopular Malcolm Stevenson.⁷

3 See, for example, P.M. Kitromilides (2011) 'Relevance or Irrelevance of Nationalism? A Perspective from the Eastern Mediterranean', *International Journal of Politics, Culture and Society*, Vol. 24, p. 60.

4 A. Kirk-Greene (2000) *Britain's Imperial Administrators, 1858-1966*, Basingstoke: Macmillan Press, pp. 68, 83-84.

5 His mother was the great-granddaughter of the Earl of Kilmorey. For further detail on Ronald Storrs' lineage see R. Storrs (1943) *Orientalisms* (definitive edition), London: Nicholson and Watson, p. 1.

6 G.S. Georghallides (1985) *Cyprus and the Governorship of Sir Ronald Storrs: The Causes of the 1931 Crisis*, Nicosia: Cyprus Research Centre, p. 2 and 3n.

7 L.S. Amery (1953) *My Political Life. Volume Two: War and Peace, 1914-1929*, London: Hutchinson, pp. 320-324, and G.S. Georghallides (1979) *A Political and Administrative History of Cyprus 1918-1926: With a Survey of the Foundations of British Rule*, Nicosia: Cyprus Research Centre, p. 18.

Yet even if his route to the governorship of Cyprus was somewhat unorthodox and dependent to some extent on his contacts, Storrs, in terms of educational and cultural background, matched the ideal type colonial appointment. Storrs, above all, was a 'nurtured' gentleman whose elite public school education had equipped him with the character and values that the Colonial Office top brass believed would hold any decent imperial officer in good stead. And here, in fact, lies much of the explanation for *Storrs'* failings. For, while he might not be exempted from all personal criticism, Storrs was himself the product of a particular process of socialisation and outlook on Empire that the overseas services actively sought for assignment. So, as will be explained at various junctures in this exposition, there were besides the personal, more systemic reasons also for the malfunctioning of British policy in Cyprus.

As to Storrs' remit in Cyprus, with the island's uncertain future status having apparently been conclusively settled by the Treaty of Lausanne (with Greece and Turkey both conceding to its conditions), Cyprus had finally been declared a Crown Colony in 1925.⁸ There was maybe no striking urgency in the agenda which the Colonial Office expected Storrs to manage, but overlapping with the diplomatic function of regaining public confidence, Storrs, it was expected, would soon put to work to spur the island's economic development. This, as Colonial Office officials had long admitted, had been unjustly hindered due to the burdens of the Turkish Tribute payments that were exacted from the populace of Cyprus and transferred to the Treasury in London.⁹ With Cyprus now a Crown Colony, the material advance of the island and its inhabitants took on priority; not only being deemed economically and politically expedient, but also, in the words of Amery himself, to now comprise, 'a more definite moral responsibility'.¹⁰ But it was not to be any economic advance of the Storrs' governorship which left its historic mark as much as it was the culmination of his period of rule in Government House, in crisis and conflict with both Greek and Turkish Cypriots. Regarding the latter, his chief adversary was to be Mısırlızade Necati.

'Worthless', 'nonentity', 'a man of straw', 'weak', 'irresponsible', 'bought', 'small Turk' ... and, perhaps most revealingly, 'the Thirteenth Greek'. These are but a few of the recorded, somewhat paradoxical and undoubtedly offensive words with which Sir Ronald Storrs found it appropriate to describe Mısırlızade Necati. Storrs is known, at least in private, to have on occasion used less than flattering epithets for even some of those with whom he was more closely allied, (referring quite patronisingly to the Turkish Cypriot political leader Münir Bey, for example, as 'the good fat Turk' and similarly to the Greek Cypriot Mayor of Nicosia as, 'a not disagreeable bandit'),¹¹ but such common behaviour barely explains the intense hostility which Storrs reserved for Necati.

8 Amery (1953), *op. cit.*, p. 367.

9 *Ibid.*, pp. 367-368.

10 *Ibid.*, p. 367.

11 Storrs' hand-written notes on a list of dinner guests for the evening of 16 October 1930. The Papers of Sir Ronald Storrs (1881-1956) from Pembroke College, Cambridge, BOX IV, Folder I, Cyprus, 1927-1931, Letters.

Here the author seeks to address the causes of Storrs' violent dislike of Necati, not only through contrasting the two men personally, but also through an analysis of the significant role that Necati played in disrupting Storrs' game plan for the island whilst Governor of Cyprus; Complimentary purposes are to highlight the reasons lying behind Storrs' approach, not so much to Necati as an individual, but to the rising force that he represented and more generally to expose the systemic foundations of the faults and limitations which became detrimental to colonial relations with the very Turkish community upon which the British often saw themselves as relying for support in maintaining their rule.

Storrs' Earlier Years in Cyprus and the Mounting Turkish Cypriot Challenge to Colonial Authority

At least as enthusiastically as previous British administrators of the island, if not more so, Storrs dutifully set out to improve the island's lot as he best saw fit. Amongst other endeavours he worked hard to promote its products and services in overseas markets (from Cyprus cigarettes to a nascent tourism) and supported the founding of a Chamber of Commerce.¹² Probably most significantly, though, it was under Storrs' watch, following his numerous personal interventions that the home authorities finally conceded to provide an extra £32,800 annually as aid to cover the remaining cost of the notoriously unpopular Turkish debt charge with which the island was encumbered.¹³ Even in pursuit of such efforts, however, Storrs' attitude to the people of the island was often revealed as rather condescending, commonly flaunting, 'the guardian spirit of paternalism', the roots of which Kirk-Greene finds discernible, 'in the formative structures and codes of the public school authority system'.¹⁴ In a private letter soliciting support from George Lloyd, Storrs, characteristically appealed, 'If you ... could even now intervene on behalf of my Islanders, tiresome though they are beyond belief, you would perhaps be fortified in your resolution by the remembrance that they represent, however unworthily, yet after all a British colony'.¹⁵

That the Turks in particular might from the outset have been relatively sceptical about Storrs' attitude would be understandable. Storrs was not only a self-declared life-long Philhellene upon whom the Greek Government had bestowed the title of Commander of the Order of St Saviour

12 See Storrs (1943) *op. cit.*, pp. 487-488, 498, and G.S. Georghallides (1988) *Cyprus, British Imperialism and Governor Sir Ronald Storrs*, Nicosia: Zavallis Press, pp. 24-25.

13 Sir G. Hill (1952) *A History of Cyprus; Volume IV The Ottoman Province The British Colony, 1571-1948*, edited by Sir Harry Luke, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, pp. 476-477; Indeed, on this occasion, Storrs had been greeted at Limassol upon his return from a trip to Rhodes by the members of the Legislative Council (Greek and Turk) who pronounced their joint gratefulness: 'for the great care and consideration which prompted your appeal to relieve Cyprus from the heavy burden of the Turkish Debt charge'. Storrs (1943) *op. cit.*, p. 478.

14 Kirk-Greene (2000) *op. cit.*, p. 282.

15 Storrs to GL, 15 November 1928. The Papers of Sir Ronald Storrs (1881-1956) from Pembroke College, Cambridge, BOX IV, Folder 1, Cyprus, 1927-1931, Letters.

and who, albeit a decade after having left the island, had apparently quite intently toasted, 'for the union of Cyprus with Greece'.¹⁶ In addition, Storrs was the associate of none other than Colonel T.E. Lawrence (aka 'Lawrence of Arabia') reviled by the Turks, but regarded by Storrs as, 'a loyal, unchanging and affectionate friend', to whom he insensitively offered a position in the Cyprus administration as Director of Archaeology.¹⁷ It was in Arabia that the two men had first worked together for British military intelligence to bring down the Ottoman Empire, and while Lawrence turned-down this newer offer, had it been accepted it might well have been considered an affront by the Turkish Cypriots.¹⁸

It was not though, as has been suggested, that, 'Storrs was a Philhellene who therefore confronted throughout his term as Governor the popular movement initiated to protect the national identity of the Turkish Cypriots and restore their rights'.¹⁹ While Storrs clearly and passionately admired the ancient Greeks, and may also have held some latent sympathies with Greek Cypriot aspirations for *enosis*, (if not for any effort to forcefully achieve it under his watch!); this does not appear to have directly motivated his actions towards the Turkish Cypriot community.²⁰ Nor is it wholly accurate to argue, as does Gazioglu, that he therefore, 'Supported obstructive initiatives to prevent the spread on the island of Atatürk's reforms', for at least in one instance, regarding the use of the Latin alphabet, he actually furnished his support, (on one account as a result of İsmet Paşa's personal intervention).²¹ The leading publication of the Turkish Cypriot Kemalists actually thanked the governor personally for his implementing the necessary changes.²² Were it not for the introduction of this reform, lines of exchange with Kemalist Turkey would no doubt have been strained. Children forced to use the old script would no longer have had access to the textbooks of Istanbul publishers, or adult readers to other Turkish publications. This might also have been expected, therefore, to have hampered the dissemination of Turkish nationalist sentiment. Nevertheless, it is additionally true that Turkish Cypriot Kemalists had already organised to voluntarily teach the new Latin characters to the public prior to Storrs' official decision and had Storrs followed a confrontational path on this matter he was liable to have faced

16 Georghallides (1988) *op. cit.*, pp. 23, 31.

17 Storrs (1943) *op. cit.*, pp. 22-23.

18 See T.E. Lawrence (1962) *Seven Pillars of Wisdom: A Triumph* (reprint of 1926), London: Penguin Books, pp. 56-57.

19 A.C. Gazioglu (1997) *Kıbrıs Tarihi: İngiliz Dönemi (1878-1960)* [The History of Cyprus: The British Period (1878-1960)], Lefkoşa: Kıbrıs Araştırma ve Yayın Merkezi, p. 62.

20 Storrs himself remarked, 'Even the political extremists must, I thought, realize that a British Governor, however Philhellene, was not appointed to give away portions of the Empire'. Storrs (1943) *op. cit.*, p. 478; See also Georghallides (1988) *op. cit.*, pp. 23, 31.

21 Gazioglu (1997), *op. cit.*, p. 62 and H. Behçet (1969) *Kıbrıs Türk Maarif Tarihi (1571-1968)* [The History of the Education of the Turks of Cyprus], Lefkoşa: Halkın Sesi, p. 314 and 314n.

22 Münir Bey *et al.*, to Colonial Secretary, 27 March 1930. SA1/1320/1928.

substantial opposition that could well have inflamed, rather than contained, the Kemalist surge.²³ Indeed, in other areas such as the replacement of the fez with the hat, Storrs' obstruction of Kemalist reforms only served to steel their supporters.²⁴

On taking up his post at the end of 1926, Storrs had found the three Turkish members of the Legislative Council amenable to his preferences and policies and had quickly built a fine rapport with their leading figure, Director of the Evkaf and newly elected member of the Council, Mehmet Münir. Not only did Storrs get on famously well with Münir himself, but the other two Turkish members were beholden to Münir, virtually guaranteeing that Storrs could rely upon their support too.²⁵ Eyyub was once a leading nationalist figure who had in December 1922 collected signatures so, 'that the Island may be abandoned and restored to the recent national government of Turkey which is the original master of the Island'.²⁶ He had later, however, become a passive supporter of British policy in the Council, following the lead of Münir.²⁷ On the other hand, Mahmut Celaleddin, regarded to have been a generally more pliable figure, was a relative of Münir.²⁸ The comfort possessed in carrying these three legislators appears to have made Storrs initially oblivious to the progressive challenge of Kemalism in Cyprus, and of growing public opposition to Münir and his faithful pro-British stance.

As expounded in depth elsewhere: 'Storrs [soon] set to work, in collusion with Münir, to bring under centralized control the autonomous or semi-autonomous institutions of the Moslem Turks'.²⁹ The Evkaf in particular, already under British domination in the mid-1920s, became ever more the chosen vehicle through which the British ventured to stamp their authority, albeit indirectly, over the Moslem community.³⁰ Perhaps most critically for the Turkish Cypriots, it was under Storrs that the traditionally autonomous institutions of the Müftülük and Kadılık were disbanded and their functions brought under the control of the Evkaf that Münir led; this despite communal opposition and despite the fact noted by Storrs himself that Münir supposedly had liberty to oppose any of the Governor's views, 'except where the Evkaf department is directly

23 Minute by C.H. Hart-Davis, 10 April 1929. SAI/1320/1928.

24 See, for example, Enclosure in Storrs to Secretary of State, 23 March 1932. CO 67/244/8.

25 Nicholson bluntly informed London that Münir, 'controls the votes of his two colleagues'. Nicholson to Secretary of State, 20 December 1928. CO 883/8.

26 Dr Eyyoub to Stevenson, 11 December 1922. SAI/1273/1922.

27 For a discussion as to why this may have been so see A. Nevzat (2005) *Nationalism Amongst the Turks of Cyprus: The First Wave*, Oulu: Oulu University Press, pp. 288-289.

28 Attachment to Storrs to Shuckburgh, 12 March 1930. CO 67/233/14.

29 A. Nevzat (2010) 'Securing the Office of Müftü: Nationalism, Religion and the Turks of Cyprus', in Aktar, A., Kızılyürek, N. and Özkırmlı, U. (eds), *Nationalism in the Troubled Triangle: Cyprus, Greece and Turkey*, Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, p. 163; For a more detailed consideration of the Turkish nationalist approach to the Müftülük in Cyprus see also Nevzat (2010) *passim*.

30 *Ibid.*, pp. 163-164.

concerned'.³¹ In Gürel's words: 'By striking against these institutions the British administration was in a way depriving the Turkish community of its fundamental institutions of leadership and representation'.³²

Having been appointed to direct the Evkaf in addition to leading the Moslem contingent in the Legislative Council, Münir was thereby to become the principal agent of British policy *vis-à-vis* the Moslem Turks. In time, he came to hold charge of virtually every other significant Turkish Cypriot power-base (from educational committees to representation on the Museum Board). Importantly, Münir was also an appointed member of the inner circle Executive Council that advised the Governor on policy. So reliant did Storrs become on Münir that when during an extended period when Storrs lay incapacitated by ill health, Acting Governor Reginald Nicholson proceeded to have tendered Münir's resignation from this Council, Storrs would not let the matter lie. Upon his return, he overruled Nicholson and reversed his decision, re-appointing Münir and justifying his decision to London by declaring that Münir was 'invaluable' and 'independent'.³³

Storrs viewed those leading the Kemalist movement in Cyprus as but a handful of ungrateful, disloyal troublemakers, disassociated from any social underpinning. And he did so even more than with those championing the *enotist* cause. Subsequently, he also apportioned blame to the activities of the first Turkish Consul, Asaf Bey, whom he accused in his memoirs of, 'creating a small but active element of opposition to the loyal Turkish majority'.³⁴ Certainly Asaf did in some ways assist the island's Kemalist movement and even campaigned on behalf of Mısırlızade Necati and his allies,³⁵ but Asaf was a contributing factor to, rather than the font of early Turkish nationalism in Cyprus.

The origins of Turkish nationalism in Cyprus are quite often still sought in the 1950s and perceived solely as a reaction to the climax of demands for *enosis*. Yet it had been developing its first rudimentary roots on the island from the early twentieth century onwards, largely as a consequence of interactions with the wider Turkish world beyond the island's shores. Ideas and sentiments of nation and nationalism had initially begun to permeate the consciousness of certain members of the more educated urban elite through the Young Turk movement. Some Turkish Cypriots had actually been active in this movement during studies and residence in Ottoman

31 *Ibid.*

32 Ş.S. Gürel (1984) *Kıbrıs Tarihi, 1878-1960: Kolonyalizm, Ulusçuluk ve Uluslararası Politika, I. cilt* [The History of Cyprus, 1878-1960: Colonialism, Nationalism and International Politics, Vol. 1], Ankara: Kaynak Yayınları, p. 172.

33 Storrs to Secretary of State, 7 May 1930. CO 67/235/13.

34 Storrs (1943) *op. cit.*, p. 501.

35 See, for instance, H.D. Purcell (1969) *Cyprus*, New York/Washington: Praeger, p. 243 and Georghallides (1985) *op. cit.*, p. 467; See also J.A. McHenry (1987) *The Uneasy Partnership on Cyprus 1919-1939: The Political and Diplomatic Interaction between Great Britain, Turkey and the Turkish Cypriot Community*, New York: Garland Publishing Inc., p. 134.

Turkey. Others, (as will be remarked upon further below), were influenced by Turkish schoolmasters who came from the 'motherland', through clubs and associations and through the written media including Young Turk journals published and disseminated in Cyprus.³⁶ It was in the 1920s, however, when, (notwithstanding the disillusionment and sense of abandonment resulting from Lausanne), an incipient Turkish nationalism began to spread amongst the broader Turkish Cypriot populace under the impact of the Kemalist success in Anatolia. Its diffusion was facilitated to an increasingly educated and literate people through the schools, and again, importantly, through the press. The popular *Doğru Yol* and *Söz* newspapers and periodical *Ankebut* were prime examples of post-World War One publications that championed the nationalist idea and proudly communicated the initiatives and exploits of Mustafa Kemal in Anatolia to their readers in Cyprus. As early as 1921, while battle still raged precariously between irredentist Greek forces and Kemal's armies, a poem published in *Ankebut* had, for instance, boldly commenced:

Anatolia is the hearth of the Turks,
And Cyprus is a part of it,
Could the flag of the Greek be raised,
While there exists the red standard of the Turk.³⁷

A year later, with the Kemalist armies now approaching victory, the same publication conveyed Kemal's words to the 'great noble Turkish nation' and adorned its copy with a handsome sketch of the leader of said nation, hailing him as '*Our Commander-in-Chief*'.³⁸

The leading Kemalist Turks of Cyprus opposed the traditionalist and conservative manner of rule over them that Storrs and Münir saw fit and were increasingly willing to make their opposition known and felt to a receptive public. The loyal and submissive Moslem population that Storrs (and many others in the Colonial Service) wished to perceive the Turkish Cypriots as being, was gradually being transformed into a more politically demanding and less subservient force which wanted, amongst other things, to have its modern Turkish identity highlighted as opposed to traditional Islamic identity. In defence of Storrs' inadequacy in fully fathoming such change it might be granted that even with hindsight this transformation is still not fully appreciated. For example, having noted how Storrs recognised the 'Greekness' of the Greek Cypriots, one prominent contemporary scholar still makes a fundamental error when he says: 'By the same token, Storrs accepted the Turkishness of the Turks, and his "administrative tactics" led him to flit from a Greek social gathering, where he liked to display his considerable classical learning, to some Turkish reception where a sprig of green would be worn in his white lapel'. Green, was of course

36 For reference to the early Young Turk impact see Nevzat (2005) *op. cit.*, pp. 147-152.

37 *Ankebut*, 23 October 1921.

38 (Emphasis added). *Ankebut*, 13 September 1922.

the traditionally espoused colour of Islam. Were Storrs to have commonly pandered to the Turkishness of the Turkish Cypriots, to their burgeoning 'national' identity he would instead have been sure to have worn red!³⁹

An early warning sign should have been detected in the summer of 1928, when Storrs took a leading role in the organisation of celebrations of the fiftieth jubilee anniversary of the British occupation of the island. In his memoirs Storrs recounted that, 'the Turks compensated ... for the relative absence of Greek spectators by running a special train of Moslem sportsmen from Famagusta', to make up for the shortfall of local participation resulting from a Greek Cypriot boycott.⁴⁰ He failed to mention here, however, that participation in the celebrations also became an issue in the Turkish Cypriot community and that a manifesto signed by four Nicosia councillors, (Fadıl Korkut, Şevket Bahçe, Mehmet Necmi (Avkıran) and Dr Pertev), protesting the celebrations, pronounced: 'The day on which the Turkish flag was lowered from the bastions of Cyprus is for the Turks of Cyprus not a day of festivity, but a day of mourning'.⁴¹ While the masses did not in this case *all* follow their lead, these pioneering anti-colonial nationalists nevertheless symbolised the fundamental shift underway in Turkish Cypriot politics. A new generation imbued with Turkish nationalist sentiments, modern values concerning political representation, and ample political skills, was now to make progressive difficulties for the British policy of depending wholly upon the traditional Moslem elite in the face of Greek Cypriot opposition.

Interestingly, on this occasion, Misırlızade Necati was not one of those who had supported the boycott, and had in fact supported and campaigned for the Evkaf camp's call to participate in the festivities, albeit on the premise that to do otherwise would be to play into the hands of the Greeks. 'What a strange outcome', reflected Korkut, 'that the Legislative Council elections would bring Storrs and Necati into confrontation just a short while after this event'.⁴² Indeed, it was to be in alliance with the very same municipal councillors that Necati was to spearhead the campaign of a Kemalist trio of Turkish Cypriot candidates to replace the pro-British forces in the Legislative Council in the elections of 1930.

Storrs should perhaps have also taken greater notice of his sometimes more perceptive deputy, Reginald Nicholson. In a confidential despatch sent to the Secretary of State in December 1928, while standing in for Storrs as Acting Governor, Nicholson had already forecast trouble ahead, alerting London:

39 R. Holland (1998) *Britain and the Revolt in Cyprus, 1954-1959*, Oxford: Clarendon Press, p. 9.

40 Storrs (1943) *op. cit.*, pp. 488-489.

41 F.N. Korkut (2000) *Hatıralar* [Memoirs], edited by Fedai, H. and Altan, M.H. with a foreword by Fedai, H., Famagusta: Eastern Mediterranean University Press, p. 68.

42 *Ibid.*, p. 36; Further correspondence, comments and articles related to the position of the Turks of Cyprus during the celebrations can be found in SA1/623/1928.

'Neither is it certain that Government will invariably be able to count upon the votes of all the Turkish members. Signs are not wanting of a determined movement, supported if not directed by foreign agencies, in favour of introducing in Cyprus the reforms recently carried out in Turkey and the cleavage between the Old and New Turks is already in process of breaking down the solidarity of the Turkish community.

It is not impossible that an adherent of the new school may displace one of the present Turkish members at the next election and, in that event, that he might throw in his lot with the Greek majority whenever his party saw any advantage in such a course.'⁴³

The comparative abilities of others to sometimes grasp realities more astutely than Storrs and personal animosities aside, it was, however, the wider, more essential gulf between Storrs and Necati based upon their cultural and social underpinnings which truly hampered Storrs' ability to adequately negotiate the escalating challenges of the Turkish nationalists in Cyprus.

Sources of Confrontation between 'Old Boys' and 'New Turks'

Eldest son of an Anglican priest, later to become Dean of Rochester, much of Ronald Storrs' earlier upbringing and socialisation was the product of an elite public school education, first at the illustrious Temple Grove and then, even more formatively, as a boarder at the more pastoral institution of Charterhouse, one of the nine uppermost 'Clarendon Schools' which consistently provided the 'cream of the crop' for colonial service.⁴⁴ With respect to those of Storrs' generation, Heussler wrote: 'Of the three major stages in the development of the character and capacity of the typical English civil servant – family, Public School and university – there can be little doubt that the Public School stage exerts the most lasting and coherent influence.'⁴⁵ It was especially at schools of the calibre of Charterhouse, where pupils and future imperial masters learnt the ropes and experienced the 'deliberate inculcation of character, loyalty, hierarchical respect, service and self-discipline'.⁴⁶ Of the public schools taken together it has been entered that they, 'not only instilled in a boy the qualities required by that imperial class which the expanding empire needed but also taught him the art of imperial administration: "he learned, in short, to rule".'⁴⁷ Of Charterhouse, one noted present-day observer studying the architecture of the school's memorial chapel more recently remarked: 'Its geometric spires and minarets proclaim complete confidence that

43 Nicholson to Secretary of State, 6 December 1928. CO 67/227/4.

44 For a brief historical introduction to the Temple Grove School see *sn. sa*; The other eight members of the Clarendon cluster were Eton, Harrow, Merchant Taylors, Rugby, St. Paul's, Shrewsbury, Westminster and Winchester. Kirk-Greene (2000) *op. cit.*, 293n.

45 R. Heussler (1963) *Yesterday's Rulers: The Making of the British Colonial Service*, Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, p. 92.

46 Kirk-Greene (2000) *op. cit.*, p. 10.

47 *Ibid.*, p. 14.

Charterhouse educates men who are destined to rule the universe'.⁴⁸ This was indeed what the overseas services' chief recruiters put their trust in. From their perspective, 'the importance of Public Schools as sources of recruitment', was essential for, 'Colonial officials were not just civil servants with a serious duty to the nation ... their responsibility for protecting and guiding native peoples in primitive societies was unique. They were the bearers of civilization, the custodians of a sacred trust'.⁴⁹ Notwithstanding any status and 'character' associated with his family's aristocratic ties, which were relatively removed anyway and no longer the primary construct of overseas imperial service, Storrs was a shining example of the 'nurturing', of the 'elitist moulding' of the public schools that was supplemented, 'actively but less pressingly, in the universities'.⁵⁰ Yet as Heussler and Kirk-Greene have both underlined, while the public schools reliably delivered the 'character-building' values of loyalty and honesty and instilled the self-confidence, 'the habit of ready authority which was often looked on as ... the trait of the imperial administrator', they were also inclined to, 'undervalue the qualities of imagination, sensibility and critical ability'.⁵¹

From Charterhouse, Storrs had followed the almost predictable educational trajectory of a prospective imperial officer to Oxbridge. He reinforced the usual foundations of regard for the ancients of Greece received in British public schools generally, and at Charterhouse even more robustly, by proceeding to study the classics at his father's old college of Pembroke.⁵² After graduating he returned to Cambridge for an extra year to study Arabic, having been recruited in the meantime to join the 'Anglo-Egyptian Civil Service'. Though in comparison to the much larger and more institutionalised Colonial Service, the Anglo-Egyptian was considered to have been, 'less of a career, less of a Service', rewarding direct appointments could be had there all the same.⁵³ This was, therefore, an opportunity he could be pleased with, for as with other, 'sons of landed or formerly landed families', such placements acted, 'as guarantees of continued status for their families', and, 'Within the Oxbridge world', in particular, appointment to Egypt, 'was a prized position'.⁵⁴

Necati, on the other hand, was not a character likely to agree with the elitist and aristocratic airs of the Charterhouse and Cambridge-educated, classicist Storrs who had developed, 'notions of

48 Roy Hattersley, 'Private Pleasure but no Public Virtue', in *The Guardian*, 17 July 2007.

49 Heussler (1963) *op. cit.*, pp. 82-83.

50 Kirk-Greene (2000), *op. cit.*, pp. 9, 16-17.

51 *Ibid.*, p. 13 and Heussler (1963) *op. cit.*, p. 89.

52 Storrs (1943), *op. cit.*, pp. 1-2, 10.

53 Kirk-Greene (2000) *op. cit.*, p. 70.

54 *Ibid.*, p. 67 and Heussler (1963) *op. cit.*; Storrs' family appeared to have maintained a fair but not very lavish standard of living, most of their more ancient aristocratic ancestors' family wealth having long since been depleted. Storrs notes proudly his mother's thriftiness, and of his great-grandmother, Lady Anna Maria Needham, jovially relates that she, 'was fortunate enough to have been twice smuggled out of a Debtors' Prison in a coffin'. See Storrs (1943) *op. cit.*, pp. 1, 4-6.

cultural and national superiority', through, 'the conventional English upper class education of his time'.⁵⁵ Emanating from a politically inclined family whose defiant members had faced-off against pro-British Evkaf candidates before, Necati was educated at the İdadi school in Nicosia, where many of the period's leading Turkish nationalists first developed their nationalist sensitivities. The İdadi, (later to become the Turkish Lycée), was certainly not Charterhouse, but was similarly formative of the beliefs, attitude and manner of Necati. It was the most modern and advanced of the island's Turkish educational establishments, following a secular curriculum modelled on that of its counterparts in mainland Turkey that contrasted with the relatively more provincial and religiously-oriented education traditionally proffered by the island's other schools. In addition to the imported texts followed by its pupils, many of the school's masters, particularly the more senior, also came from Turkey. Necati graduated in 1915, by which time pre-Kemalist Turkish nationalism was already making its mark. Indeed, while the permeation of Kemalist nationalism through schoolteachers in the Turkish Lycée (Storrs preferred to have it called the 'Moslem' Lycée) during the 1920s is quite widely documented, it has also been contended that, 'in the pre-World War I era the Ottoman authorities required that any teachers to be seconded for service in Cyprus had to be supporters ... of the pan-Turkist Türk Ocağı'.⁵⁶ As Landau explains, the very founding objective of the 'Türk Ocağı' (or 'Turkish Hearth') was to extend Turkish and pan-Turkish nationalism especially through education and by mobilising public opinion.⁵⁷ The membership and activities of the Türk Ocağı have been shown also to have been linked to those of the Kardeş Ocağı (or 'Hearth of Brethren') and its forerunners in Cyprus.⁵⁸ Moreover, the social influence of such schoolmasters was not confined to the cadres of the İdadi alone, but actually proliferated from therein, for it was the very graduates of this school who typically ended up staffing the more junior Turkish schools around the island.⁵⁹

Necati's interaction with such early nationalists and his socialisation at the İdadi did not cease either upon his graduation for he returned again later in a temporary role lecturing on Ottoman history and was to become closely associated with the Kardeş Ocağı too.⁶⁰ The latter, in fact, was to ardently campaign on his behalf in his famed electoral success of 1930.⁶¹ As with growing numbers of the younger generation of Turkish Cypriots, Necati was thus imbued with the Turkish nationalist sentiment and buoyed, by the self-assurance and pride of fellowship with the new

55 Georghallides (1988) *op. cit.*, pp. 18-19.

56 Nevzat (2005) *op. cit.*, pp. 208-209, 302.

57 J.M. Landau (1995) *Pan-Turkism: From Irredentism to Cooperation*, 2nd edition, London: Hurst and Co., p. 41.

58 Nevzat (2005) *op. cit.*, pp. 182-183, 361-365.

59 *Ibid.*, p. 302.

60 *Ibid.*, pp. 302, 361, 364-365, 378.

61 *Ibid.*, pp. 361, 364-365, 378, 426.

dynamic Kemalist nation-state of Turkey, as opposed to being weighed and downtrodden by subject affiliation with its aloof but decrepit Ottoman predecessor. Necati was of a modern breed of Turk; a clearly ambitious, charismatic, determined and rather stubborn young man who felt destined to become a populist politician, a 'champion' of his nation, and was not unwilling to spend a small fortune of his personal inheritance on a well-planned electoral campaign that contended with colonial authority and ultimately dethroned its chief advocate Münir.⁶² Several years Storrs' junior, this youthful Turk was somewhat of a firebrand who was unwilling to pay traditional deference to age or authority and was not culturally anglicised in a manner with which Storrs could associate. On the contrary, the very conversation of this foremost example of the unfamiliar 'New Turk' referred to by Nicholson was indirectly conducted with Storrs by means of translation.⁶³

Necati was neither from the stately imperial mould of Turk, to which Storrs had paid his respects in his preservation of the burial ground of the Cyprus born (and buried) Ottoman Grand Vizier Kamil Pasha, recording on his engraved epitaph that he was, 'A Great Turk and a Great Man';⁶⁴ Nor was he of the class of 'gentleman' to which Münir belonged and further aspired to. In supporting his legal training in England, Storrs' predecessor Stevenson had explained not just that Münir possessed, 'an excellent knowledge of English', and was, 'a very able official', who already had under his belt, '15 years' service in the Treasury Department', but also that Münir was the son-in-law of the island's Müftü, came from, 'one of the best local Turkish families', and was overall of exceptional 'social standing'. It was in British interest, Stevenson had argued, for one such as Münir to be financially supported in such undertakings.⁶⁵ It was also more broadly comprehensible that it would be Münir rather than Necati to whom Storrs would attach his loyalty and camaraderie. 'The domestic social hierarchy', Heussler observed, 'transferred its spirit to the colonies', where, 'Officials found native aristocrats worthy of one kind of treatment and other natives worthy of another. This was not discrimination in the usual unsavoury sense but simply a matter of following habit and the line of least resistance'.⁶⁶ As Cannadine reflects: 'From one perspective, the British may indeed have seen the peoples of their empire as alien, as other, as beneath them – to be lorded over and condescended to. But from another, they also saw them as similar, as analogous, as

62 Korkut (2000) *op. cit.*, pp. 39-40.

63 M. Necati Özkan (1967); This and other information was recorded by Necati in an extensive interview conducted by the Turkish Cypriot educationist Ali Süha in the mid-1960s after the former had retired from politics. The only known tapes of the interview are held by the Necati Özkan Foundation in Nicosia which kindly granted the author access. The author of this article has suggested to the Foundations' administrators that the tapes be digitalised, both to ease access for future researchers and due to the real danger of deterioration of material stored in this now aged technological medium.

64 Storrs (1943) *op. cit.*, pp. 496-497.

65 See Nicholson to Secretary of State, 7 September 1927. CO 67/203.

66 Heussler (1963) *op. cit.*, p. 98.

equal and sometimes even as better than they were themselves'.⁶⁷ British imperialists such as Storrs thus appreciated, 'status similarities based on perceptions of affinity', an affinity that Storrs could establish with a respectable man of status the likes of which were possessed by Mûnir, but not with the 'little Turk' Necati.⁶⁸ Cannadine elucidates further in an associated vein:

'Britons came from what they believed to be a hierarchical society, it was natural for them, when doing business or negotiating power, to search for overseas collaborators from the top of the indigenous social spectrum, rather than from lower down, whom they supported, whose co-operation they needed, and through whom they ruled. The British chose the allies they did abroad because of the social conditioning and social perceptions they brought with them from home.'⁶⁹

Storrs' approach to Necati was not interpreted by the Turkish Cypriot nationalists as a purely incidental and personal affair either, but rather as a reflection of a more general posture towards their community. Believing as they did in their national credentials and popular legitimacy they saw Mûnir as being used simply as a minion to govern over base people. One early Turkish Cypriot nationalist, Faiz Kaymak, was to bitterly complain of the era that the island's Turks were ruled over somewhat like a 'tribe' by its 'chieftains'.⁷⁰ Paralleling the more commonly documented Greek Cypriot dislike of being branded by the British in a similar category to the Empire's Asian and African subjects, an irate Korkut was to write specifically of Governor Storrs that he, 'considered us a herd lowlier than the Negroes of Africa'.⁷¹

Support for the proposition that Storrs was indeed, on one level at least, an enduringly prejudiced orientalist is unequivocally given by Edward Said himself. Said, in fact, classes Storrs as a model 'Orientalist-cum-imperial agent' who ultimately, 'expressed the traditional Western hostility to and fear of the Orient'. While it is hard to retroactively fathom the degree to which Storrs' Orientalism may have been a root cause of his extended and vehement dislike of Mısırlızade Necati, rather than it being a more private abhorrence associated with Necati's having caused

67 D. Cannadine (2001) 'Ornamentalism', *History Today*, Vol. 51, No. 5, p. 14.

68 Storrs (1943) *op. cit.*, p. 502.

69 *Ibid.*, p. 15.

70 F. Kaymak (1968) *Kıbnı Türkleri Bu Duruma Nasıl Düştü?* [How Did The Turks of Cyprus Come To This Point?], İstanbul: Alpay Basımevi, p. 9.

71 Korkut (2000) *op. cit.*, p. 70; As Bryant highlights with reference to commentary in the Greek Cypriot press of as early as 1889, 'the Greek Orthodox majority in the island claimed not only to possess European ancestry but even that they were the real ancestors of Europe', and did not wish to countenance that the English rule over them in like manner as they did the Africans and Asians. Bryant (2006) *op. cit.*, pp. 48-49; Likewise, Holland notes a more general sense of demeanment felt by Greek Cypriot nationalists by the posting to Cyprus of countless British officials who had previously served in 'backward' African colonies. Holland (1998) *op. cit.*, p. 14. That this was the case was in some ways hardly surprising considering that such a high proportion of posts were in Africa. See Heussler (1963) *op. cit.*, p. 3.

humiliation and disruption to his plans of action, Said at least suggests another relevant, broader context through which to appreciate Storrs' conduct. And, Mısrılızade Necati, (the epithet 'Mısrılızade', by the way, indicating the familial association of Necati with forefathers from – an even more oriental? – Egypt), could conceivably as a result be considered a particularly explicable target of Storrs' warped chauvinism.⁷²

The Kemalist Electoral Coup and 'Ungentlemanly' Conduct

There is much that might be said of the election campaign of 1930, in which Necati defeated Münir Bey by a handsome margin, his colleague Zeka Bey replaced Celaleddin Efendi, and the third within the Kemalist trio, Ahmed Said came within a whisker of unseating Eyyub who held on by only twenty-four votes.⁷³ The focus here though must lie on Storrs' reaction to the challenge.

No sooner were the results in than Storrs began accusing Necati of having, 'secured his election by a very lavish disbursement of money'.⁷⁴ Necati did indeed spend a large sum on the campaign, some of which he frankly revealed later had been used for less than orthodox purposes, including the finance of moles placed to spy on the Münir camp. Necati disclosed in his own words that as:

'the days of the election neared, I had a spy too ... Halum Agha's Remzi Bey. This man was Münir's friend whom he liked a lot. I helped him, I gave [him] money, but I requested only that, "you should not leave Münir Bey's side and you should write me a journal [of his activities ...] and post it [to me] so that I know [what he's doing and planning]". And he did this loyally.⁷⁵

Nevertheless, trying to explain away Necati's success in elections simply on the basis of corrupt electoral practice was really an attempt by Storrs to conceal his own inability to assess the strength of Necati's support and the concomitant opposition to Münir's pro-British stance.⁷⁶ Storrs, like virtually all colonial administrators, genuinely had little faith in electoral politics in Cyprus, (presumably more so because he did not like the results!). Belonging to a, 'deeply conservative ... nation emphatically not dedicated to the proposition that all men (let alone women) were created equal', he, as with his peers, it could be argued, was not either a great admirer of democratic elections in principle.⁷⁷ 'The root of the matter', Storrs wrote, 'is that election by

72 EW. Said (1979) *Orientalism*, New York: Vintage Books, pp. 237, 245-246.

73 See Enclosure in Storrs to Secretary of State, 29 October 1930. SAI/1430/1930.

74 Storrs to Secretary of State, 12 March 1931. CO 67/238/11.

75 Necati also admits to having his supporters spread false propaganda in the villages and also of posting misleading letters to Münir under an alias. Özkan (1967) *op. cit.*

76 Necati defeated the incumbent, Münir, by 1,993 to 1,553 votes. Enclosure in Storrs to Secretary of State, 29 October 1930. SAI/1430/1930.

77 Cannadine (2001) *op. cit.*, p. 13.

popular vote has been proved, in every single way in which it has been tried for all forms of general and local administration, to be in Cyprus a failure. Elections without exception have resulted in nothing but disorder, corruption and demoralization and have failed to produce representation which is not a mockery.⁷⁸ Yet, as he himself acknowledged, corrupt electoral practices were in Cyprus the norm rather than exceptional, and Mûnir had the capacity that Necati lacked, to mobilise Evkaf resources, a valuable source of patronage that the British had conceded previously played a role in electoral campaigns.⁷⁹ Indeed, it has been claimed that Storrs himself directly intervened in the electoral process in favour of Mûnir, interjecting, for example, with the managers of mining concerns so that they lean upon Turkish Cypriot employees to oppose Necati.⁸⁰

So concerned had Necati been by the danger of Storrs meddling in the elections that he apparently requested of the Parliamentary Undersecretary of State, Dr Drummond Shiels, that he be present to bear witness to the final stages of the electoral process.⁸¹ British administrators displayed some unease at the fact that Shiels did actually bring forward his expected visit to the island to coincide with the last leg of the election campaign.⁸² This rearrangement appears to have been more welcomed, however, by Necati and his allies, Korkut reflecting: 'According to the belief held by our community at the time, had Doctor Shiller [sic] not been present in Cyprus, it was not inconceivable that Storrs would have acted more aggressively towards us and disrupted the elections.'⁸³

Whatever the still disputed original inspiration for Shiels' 'unofficial' visit, there is little doubt that the defeat of Storrs' protégé, the staunchly pro-British Mûnir at the hands of the young, inexperienced and brash Kemalist, was a serious blow to the Governor, and one that was compounded by the presence of his Colonial Office superior. In fact, before long London was openly expressing a loss of faith in the ability of its Governor to read social and political developments pertaining to the Turks of Cyprus. Shortly after his eventful visit to Cyprus, having been informed of new disputes between Raif Efendi (another of the class of early Kemalists and the father of Rauf Denktaş) and the Storrs-Mûnir duo, Shiels commented:

'I must confess that I have the feeling that the Gov[erno]r is influenced in his outlook by his great admiration of and personal friendship for Munir Bey. He was much disappointed at his non-success in the elections. ... The Greeks are fairly solid against the Gov[ernmen]t, and the Turks have been helpful to the Gov[ernmen]t, the Leg[islative] Council being

78 Storrs to Shuckburgh, 12 March 1930. CO 67/233/14.

79 The electoral utility of Evkaf resources had also been recognised at an earlier date in relation to Mûnir's predecessor. See Clauson to Bonar Law, 6 November 1916. CO 67/182.

80 Korkut (2000) *op. cit.*, pp. 38-40.

81 Özkan (1967) *op. cit.*

82 Georghallides (1985) *op. cit.*, pp. 381-383.

83 Korkut (2000) *op. cit.*, p. 40.

constituted as it is, it is very important that the Gov[erno]r should not appear to side with one section of the Turks in the split which has taken place. I know it is for the best reasons that he is drawn to Munir bey's party – because they are strongly pro British – but we don't want the other section made more anti-British, as they may become if Munir Bey's party is too much backed up at Gov[ernmen]t House.⁸⁴

In the aftermath of the elections tensions continued to mount. Storrs was already stressed by the unwelcome election of a more nationalist contingent of Greek Cypriot legislators.⁸⁵ But it was his relationship with Necati that was for some time the principal thorn-in-the-side for the still incensed governor. This he reflected in a series of despatches to London in which he confirmed that Necati was, 'in the forefront of the Kemalist anti-Government movement'. Alleging that Necati was responsible for instigating violent rioting among Turkish Lycée students on the eve of the election, Storrs reported that Necati's activities were being kept under close police surveillance.⁸⁶ Necati, however, denied any such responsibility and maintained that the commotion experienced at the Lycée was solely the natural exuberance of a new generation of Turks greeting his electoral triumph. Over the following weeks the events at the Lycée continued to be the subject of a string of official communications largely focused on condemning Necati. On the one hand, it was almost as if the issue were being purposefully strung out, perhaps as a pretext to try and rein in the feisty and unpredictable budding legislator before he wrought more serious damage to colonial interests and to the Governor's prestige. On the other, the Governor's persistent pursuit of what he perceived to be indiscipline engendered by Necati at a school mastered by English schoolteachers was explicable also in terms of his own socialisation. 'The unique contribution of the Public Schools to the forming', of colonial officers, writes Heussler, 'was to tolerate any sort of eccentricity so long as it did not violate the tenets of gentlemanly behaviour.'⁸⁷ It was a line which Necati's uncouth behaviour had insolently crossed and for which he needed to be harshly chided. This Storrs sought to do with little reference to his mother's entreaties upon learning that her son had risen in rank within the Charterhouse's cadet corps. Lucy Storrs had written: 'We are so glad you are a Sergeant: do use your privileges with mercy.'⁸⁸

Colonial Secretary Henniker-Heatton had first tried a softer, more flattering approach, inviting Necati to afternoon tea and proffering his warm congratulations on Necati's success. The polite atmosphere began to sour, however, when he persisted in a line of questioning as to Necati's political plans. Necati claimed that when he pushed Henniker-Heatton to be more forthright the latter finally asked plainly whether Necati intended to maintain a vote in accordance with the

84 Minute by Dr Drummond Shiels, 26 May 1931. CO 67/238/11.

85 Georghallides (1985) *op. cit.*, pp. 380-381.

86 Storrs to Secretary of State, 12 March 1931. CO 67/238/11.

87 Heussler (1963) *op. cit.*, p. 104.

88 Storrs (1943) *op. cit.*, p. 6.

Government lead, or else to collude with Greek Cypriot legislators. Necati states that he was so angered that he walked out of the meeting after responding that he could not be 'bought' and that he would, 'stand wherever I see the interests of my nation'.⁸⁹ Henniker-Heatton now advised Storrs that he should intervene and plainly spell out to Necati, 'that the only course now left for him is to try to repair the damage he has caused', which he could only do, 'by apologizing to the Headmaster and throwing what influence he carries on to the side of discipline'.⁹⁰ A few days later Necati was indeed sent for by the Governor. In the presence of the imposing Chief Commandant of Police, Colonel Gallagher, Governor Storrs sternly reprimanded Necati regarding his behaviour at the Lycée and implied more serious consequences if he did not correct his ways. Storrs recorded of Necati that he had 'caused' Necati, 'to apologize, on the spot, v[ery] humbly', to the school's headmaster Mr Grant.⁹¹

The pro-Münir Hakikat newspaper, alleging access to inside information, unsurprisingly reported Storrs' version of events and in a belittling manner stated that a jittery Necati had, 'prayed to be pardoned!'⁹² It was perhaps being presumed that Necati, having received a strong dose of discipline, as well as reproached within both the four walls of the Governor's Office and publicly, would be browbeaten into silence. Necati was not, however, cowed and provided a very different story as to the goings on at Government House.

'They thought I was a child ... they would scare me. That day was the 28th of October. The following day was Republic Day [the anniversary of the establishment of the Turkish Republic]. "Will you go to Larnaca to pay your respects to the Turkish Consul?" [the Governor asked]. "Of course I will go, as I always do", I said. "Will you address the crowds if they gather in Nicosia?" [he asked]. "We'll see", I said ... "I will make up my own mind what I will say on such national days".'⁹³

The following day Necati not only made a public address but also visited the school which was the centre of controversy and was welcomed there by students singing the Turkish national anthem.⁹⁴ He proceeded also to petition the Secretary of State for the Colonies, then Lord Passfield, 'strongly protesting' against the insulting treatment meted out to him by Storrs.⁹⁵ Storrs also persisted in conveying his own negative views and concerns regarding Necati whom he now

89 Özkan (1967) *op. cit.*

90 Minute by Henniker-Heatton, 25 October 1930. SAI/1420/1930.

91 Minute by Storrs, 30 October 1930. SAI/1420/1930.

92 See Hakikat, 'Necati Bey offered an apology to the Headmaster of the Lycée before His Excellency the Governor', and 'Necati Bey's Apology Communicated to the Students', undated extracts translated from Hakikat, in SAI/950/1926; See also 'The Question of Interview'. Extract from Hakikat 25 November 1930. SAI/ 950/1926.

93 Özkan (1967) *op. cit.*

94 *Söz*, 6 November 1930.

95 Özkan (1967) *op. cit.*, and Nedjari to Secretary of State, 5 November 1930. SAI/1420/1930.

described as 'irresponsible' and 'a weak character'. More ominously he cautioned London that: 'In view of his adherence to the "turkish nationalist" creed, which is of recent growth and, I believe, extraneous origin, I am quite unable to foretell what his attitude in the Council will be. Indeed the objectives of the movement which he represents are by no means clear.'⁹⁶

Although Storrs' dislike of and appetite to demean Necati had apparently not abated, an extended evaluation of the political situation which he sent to London six months later, did suggest that Storrs was finally drawing firmer conclusions regarding the implications of the political rise of Mısırlızade Necati. He notified Passfield that:

'The attitude of the Greek members, always disagreeable and sometimes trying, has been ineffective for so long as the Government could rely on loyal Turkish cooperation. This is no longer available as the Greeks, taking advantage of personal and party rivalries within the Turkish community, have been enabled to buy or otherwise persuade a recently elected Turkish nonentity, Nejatı Bey, to vote with them ... There is every reason to suppose that Nejatı Bey can be counted upon for full participation in all steps taken to embarrass the Government. He has recently joined Mr. Theodotou, a Greek member of Council of the extreme left wing, in moving a resolution for the abolition of the post of Director of Education as at present constituted and for substituting therefore a Greek and a Turkish Director. No ardent supporter of the Union movement could wish for anything better and if the resolution is brought under debate it would of course be carried. Nejatı Bey has travelled through the country stirring up Turkish national feelings. On the 1st May he assembled a meeting of Turks from all parts of the Island to appoint a Mufti as political and religious leader and a committee to take over the Evkaf Department. This meeting, composed of some 140 persons, was entitled a National Congress and manifestos, of which I enclose copies, were issued by the Central Committee and the "Mufti." ... As recently stated by [Member of the Executive Council] Mr. Stavrinakis the constitution now centres round the person of the worthless Nejatı Bey.'⁹⁷

In essence, Stavrinakis and Storrs were right. Under a different constitutional system Necati might have been more easily ignored and the forces he represented more easily side-lined, at least in the short term. Yet, the relatively liberal scheme of government that the British had foreseen for Cyprus, including as it did a delicately balanced elected majority for its legislative division, meant the colonial administration could ill afford a permanent rupture with Necati and his faction if it wished to maintain its unbridled command.⁹⁸

96 Storrs to Secretary of State, 29 October 1930. SAI/1430/1930 and Storrs to Secretary of State, 19 November 1930. SAI/1420/1930.

97 Storrs to Secretary of State, 4 June 1931. CO 67/239/14; For a more detailed exposition of post-election developments and the 'The Turkish National Congress of Cyprus' see Nevzat (2005) *op. cit.*, pp. 373-398.

98 Georghallides (1988) *op. cit.*, pp. 13-14.

The Threat to the Constitutional System and 'the Thirteenth Greek'

The conventional colonial system of manipulating the balance in the Legislative Council had in the case of Cyprus anticipated the opportunity of combining the three Turkish votes with those of the nine appointed British officials (and the Governor's own casting vote) and thereby countering the twelve Greek representatives' votes. The truth that such computations had not always materialised in practice and the fact that when they had turned out as originally calculated it had appeared (as it no doubt felt) rather undignified for the imperial overlords to seem beholden to the Turkish minority, had led to considerable soul-searching in colonial quarters. Intensive communications regarding constitutional revision that would eliminate the need to rely on this balance were conducted between London and Nicosia during the second half of the 1920s onwards. Multiple variations of the basic proposal to guarantee a majority of members be officially nominated rather than popularly elected went back-and-forth, but came to naught when Lord Passfield finally decided that the time was not appropriate for any such change.⁹⁹ The previous three elected Turks had been largely accommodating of Storrs' agenda, but Storrs was clearly less optimistic regarding prospects with Necati. The greatest immediate threat in Necati's election was therefore the possibility that he might cooperate with the Council's Greek members in opposition to the colonial government's policies and thus, in Storrs' words, become, 'the Thirteenth Greek', who, 'voted with the traditional enemies of his race'.¹⁰⁰

Indeed Necati had openly conceded that he was willing to work together with the Greek political class during his electoral campaign. He had in fact publicly applauded some of the bold positions taken in contravention of the Governor's wishes by the Greek members of the Legislative Council which he contrasted with the slavish obedience of Münir. Addressing his own electorate he had said:

'If the members of the Legislative Council and especially our Turkish Members of the Legislative Council did not co-operate with the English Members, this would not have happened. Although the Greek Members of the Legislative Council always try for the benefit of the Island, they are always defeated because they are 12 united votes, but the Turkish and English members are [with the Governor's casting vote] 13. The leader of our members of the Legislative Council, Munir Bey, never raises any objection in the Legislative Council. ... Munir is serving as a Member of the Legislative Council since 5 years. I want you to tell me what good he has done to any of you?'¹⁰¹

99 See Georghallides (1985) *op. cit.*, pp. 154-197, 248-252, 280-292; See also Nevzat (2005) *op. cit.*, pp. 329-338.

100 Storrs (1943) *op. cit.*, p. 502.

101 Attachment to Local Commandant of Police to Chief Commandant of Police, 4 September 1930. SA1/1576/1929/1.

Necati had promised that upon his own election, the British would no longer be able to count on the vote of the leading Turkish legislator.¹⁰²

Storrs was for some time evidently dejected by the outcome of the election. In a personal letter drafted to his friend Philip Graves, with whom, in his younger days, he had shared lodgings when the former was working as the Cairo correspondent of the *Egyptian Gazette*, Storrs grumbled:

‘You find me dragging my budget with rough strife through the iron gates of a newly elected and unusually crapulous Legislative Council. The Greeks have purchased one of the three Turkish members upon whose vote I ultimately rely for the passing of any legislation.’¹⁰³

Nevertheless, Storrs’ unsubstantiated accusation that Necati had been ‘bought’ by the Greeks again masks reality. What Necati, quite legitimately was willing to do was find common ground with Greek Cypriots in opposition to certain government policies; but he certainly gave no ground on what might be considered core ‘national’ issues. Indeed, it was this unresolved fundamental divergence between the Greek and Turkish nationalists who won the elections in 1930 that Storrs might have exploited if he had not burnt his bridges with Necati and his supporters; if he had been more politically astute in recognising their growing strength and courting their support; if he had in fact been able to show the ‘adaptability to changing circumstances’, that conservatively educated former public school boys were least prone to do. ‘Single-minded and unflinching in the performance of duty’, explains Heussler:

‘Old Boys were just as single-minded in their attitudes towards any phenomenon or movement which was unfamiliar or irregular to them. If they were incorruptible they were also unreceptive to criticism and unimaginative in the face of changing circumstances. Up to 1920 in most colonies this was not particularly important; in fact it can be argued that the attitudes of the [public school] prefect were exactly what was needed to bring order to primitive, tribal anarchy. Colonial government was such as to demand more persistence in the face of hardship than adaptability to changing circumstances.’¹⁰⁴

As Georghallides puts it:

‘Storrs’s unwillingness to adapt the nexus of Anglo-Turkish political relations to the reality of the election of two Kemalist deputies and the ensuing disputes with the Turkish leaders had, from the Greeks’ point of view, a beneficial effect on the work of the Council. Although Nejadi showed himself to be as opposed to the prospect of *enosis* as his immediate predecessors, Munir and Irfan beys, he broke ranks with the British on communal matters

102 *Ibid.*

103 Storrs to Graves, 26 November 1930, (draft). The Papers of Sir Ronald Storrs (1881-1956) from Pembroke College, Cambridge, BOX IV, Folder 1, Cyprus, 1927-1931, Letters. See also Storrs (1943) *op. cit.*, pp. 48-49.

104 Heussler (1963) *op. cit.*, p. 101.

regarding which he was in conflict with the authorities; and on other issues joined the Greeks for a perceived common good.¹⁰⁵

For the Kemalists within the fledgling Republic of Turkey, laden as they were with numerous more pressing issues at home and recognisant through their 'National Pact' that Cyprus lay beyond the boundaries of their new nation-state, the question of Cyprus and even of its possible union with Greece was then hardly even of peripheral importance.¹⁰⁶ However, the prospect of *enosis* was much more disquieting to, and ardently resisted by those who were actually resident in the periphery. The fate of Turkish communities in Crete and in the Balkans upon these territories' transfer to Greece had long reverberated with Turkish nationalists on the island and they would continue to struggle for several decades to overcome the physical and psychological constraints of the National Pact in terms of drawing political support from the authorities of mainland Turkey.¹⁰⁷ Such context, it could be posited, provided the opportunity for the British to maintain the alignment of the new Turkish Cypriot leadership which in the final analysis still retained dependence on upholding the British obstacle to *enosis*.

True, as Storrs had earlier conveyed, even with Theodorou Necati could find common ground that at times perturbed the British.¹⁰⁸ True also that many of Necati's Greek Cypriot counterparts, had consistently made calls for the election of Turks less beholden to the colonial authorities, but Necati was by no means their 'puppet' as Storrs and others would have believe.¹⁰⁹ As written elsewhere:

'It was this very same "puppet" who shortly before joining forces with the Greeks to defeat the Government in the critical spring session of 1931, had adamantly insisted in the Legislative Council that Greece had no claim to Cyprus, that its geographical and historical attachment was to Turkey, and to the fury of the Greek members of the Council that, "as this island is part of Asia Minor those who are strangers in it may go to Greece[!]". And while Necati did not, in the face of the cries for *enosis*, openly call for an end to British rule, he did demand that the rights and autonomy of the island's Turks should be respected.'¹¹⁰

Yet Storrs largely overlooked the still existent possibilities for conciliation and continued to choose conflict with the ascendant Turkish nationalist wing. Envisioning an alternative path of compromise and reasonable concessions he may well have caused them to adjust to their new-

105 Georghallides (1985) *op. cit.*, p. 638.

106 See Nevzat (2005) *op. cit.*, pp. 257-258.

107 *Ibid.*, 271-272; See also Amery (1953) *op. cit.*, p. 368.

108 Henniker-Heatton to Secretary of State, 7 August 1931. SA1/698/1931.

109 Unfortunately several British scholars unquestioningly followed Storrs' lead, notably Sir George Hill. Based upon the sole testimony of Storrs, Hill described Necati, somewhat nonsensically, as, 'a puppet whom the Greeks, thanks to the intrigues of the Turkish Consul Asaf Bey, had got elected to the Council'. Hill (1952) *op. cit.*, p. 460.

110 Nevzat (2005) *op. cit.*, p. 399.

found political status in a manner more agreeable to and favourable for British rule. Perhaps blinded by the self-confidence that had been fostered in his youth and that was typically considered a prerequisite for any high-ranking imperial administrator, he stubbornly stuck to the old rather than reaching out to the new.¹¹¹ Just days after the Turkish Cypriot electorate had signified a virtually seismic shift in its allegiance Storrs had indignantly re-appointed Münir to the colony's governing Executive Council. Then, 'Continuing to defy Münir Bey's critics', he proceeded a few weeks thereafter to bestow upon Münir, 'the insignia of an officer of the British Empire during the ... official opening of the spring session of the Legislative Council, to which Münir no longer belonged[!]'¹¹² Except that with Kemalism having weakened the sanctity of traditional lines of authority and Kemalist leaders claiming authority for their roles through popular legitimacy and appeals to the national, the orthodox lines of power through which Storrs and others had tried to govern over Cyprus' Moslem Turks were no longer dependable.

Storrs should further have contemplated the greater possibilities at this point in time for an alliance, however ephemeral, between Greek and Turkish political figures due to the opportune external conditions of Graeco-Turkish reconciliation. After the pains of the bitter war in Anatolia had subsided, the two states and their leaders, Venizelos and Kemal, had by 1931 'buried the hatchet', reciprocal state visits had been undertaken and treaties of friendship and cooperation signed.¹¹³ These developments did not go wholly unnoticed in Cyprus where the leaders of the two national communities came to openly acknowledge that it would be paradoxical, even disloyal, for them to be in confrontation on the island at a time when their national centres were moving in such sync. Indeed, on both sides, the newly emerged opportunities for a merger of political platforms were being publicly ascribed to.¹¹⁴ Necati had made clear that he was prepared to champion a movement of more comprehensive cooperation with the island's Greeks against the Colonial Government and had even pledged to do so during a conference with Archbishop Kyrillos.¹¹⁵ An encouraging international environment had created a special opening for rapprochement, and gradually, with persistence, leadership and compromise an overriding and shared 'Cypriot' political identity paving the way for a unified perspective on the future post-colonial political status of the island might have evolved. Nonetheless, the island's Greeks and Turks still seemed quite far away from resolving the most deep-seated of their nationalist divergences. As such, presuming it was his goal to ward off the potential threat to British rule, there

111 Kirk-Greene (2000) *op. cit.*, pp. 276-277.

112 Cyprus Blue Book (1930), p. 108 and Georghallides (1985) *op. cit.*, p. 477.

113 M. Gönübol and C. Sar (1974) *1919-1938 Yılları Arasında Türk Dış Politikası. Olaylarla Türk Dış Politikası* [Turkish Foreign Policy in the Years From 1919-1938. Events and Turkish Foreign Policy], Ankara: Ankara Üniversitesi Siyasal Bilgiler Fakültesi Yayınları, pp. 72-74.

114 See, for example, Georghallides (1985) *op. cit.*, pp. 418-420, 474, 476.

115 *Ibid.*, p. 483 and Özkan (1967) *op. cit.*

was still perhaps space for Storrs to woo back Cyprus' new Turks and forestall the loss of a valuable alliance.

Regardless, Storrs failed to aptly appreciate this and a fairly predictable crisis ensued when, as the impact of the Great Depression began to bite, Storrs' efforts to raise new taxes were voted down in the Legislative Council by the dreaded Greek-Turkish alliance. Turkish historian Gürel, describes Necati's simply having voted with the Greek Cypriot members as 'remarkable' and the Greek Cypriot historian Doros, states, 'For the first time on 28 April, 1931, a Turkish representative ... voted with the Greek members in the Legislative Council'.¹¹⁶ In fact, this was definitely not the first time such cooperation had occurred, it had happened on multiple occasions.¹¹⁷ What is truly 'remarkable' is that Greek/Greek Cypriot and Turkish/Turkish Cypriot historians and frequently British authors and even administrators too, believed and reflected this to be the case. Perhaps there is also an echo of the common Turkish misperception that the politics espoused by the Turks always diverged with that of the Greeks, and of the common Greek misconception that all Turks were always under the British thumb.¹¹⁸ Yet, it had been only a few years earlier, at the start of such a renewed bout of constitutional debate in 1926, that Colonial Office civil servant Alexander Fiddian wrote of multiple precedents of the elected members of the Legislative Council joining forces to block the Government's initiatives. He commented: 'When I took over this Department in February I was agreeably surprised to see that there was very little evidence of real friction between the Administration and the Elected Members, and it is only fair to say that a period of comparative calm in the internal politics of Cyprus is a development which the history of the Island ... gave one no reason to expect'.¹¹⁹ What was special though about this instance of intercommunal cooperation of the political elites was that it came at a critical juncture, had popular reinforcement and was not founded on an *ad hoc* basis. Necati and his supporters were prepared it seemed, to enter a sustained period of coalition with their Greek Cypriot compatriots.

To tackle the crisis Storrs now forced austerity measures through by Order-in-Council, completely ignoring the will of the peoples' representatives and enraging both Greeks and Turks. Reacting in his leading editorial column under the heading of 'The Government Brandishes its Fist', Remzi Bey had written in Söz:

116 Gürel (1984) *op. cit.*, 134n, and A. Doros (1955) *Cyprus in History: A Survey of 5,000 Years*, London: Zeno Publishers, p. 350.

117 Nevzat (2005) *op. cit.*, pp. 122-125, 216-217, 321.

118 Already at the turn of the century High Commissioner Haynes-Smith had written to London that, 'The Constitution of the Legislative Council was based on the idea that there would be a proper balance of parties in the island, because when the Turkish members agreed with the Government the two would form a majority. This safeguard', he wrote with exasperation, 'has not worked in practice'. Haynes-Smith to Chamberlain, 28 November 1901. CO 883/6, pp. 360-336; It should also not be forgotten that only the day before Storrs set foot on the island the Turkish members of the Legislative Council led by Mehmet Münir had again acted in concert with the Greeks on a similar matter. Storrs (1943) *op. cit.*, p. 456.

119 Minute by A. Fiddian, 1 December 1916. CO 67/219/14.

'While all the Governments on the face of the world defer their most cumbersome measures to allay the calamity of this frightful crisis ... there is no doubt that [our] Government's decision to follow this path will cause despair and alarm among the general public of Cyprus and cause the elected representatives to think at length as to whether or not to continue to sit in the Legislative Council. We believe it is questionable whether there is any need or benefit left in returning to the Council for it is now openly evident that votes given to reflect the desires and objectives of the people have no importance or value.'¹²⁰

Problems for the Administration were compounded when it was exposed that Storrs had been economic with the truth when announcing a few years earlier that the Tribute had been ended, (concealing that the surplus paid by the Cypriots had been appropriated by the British Treasury, and would not be returned!). With conditions on the island rapidly deteriorating under the impact of worldwide economic crisis, circumstances were ripe for some form of political upheaval.¹²¹

Perhaps, from a public perspective, an effort to further a common cause and develop fully a common programme of anti-colonial resistance to be shared by Greek and Turkish Cypriots alike would have been more opportune. Indeed, this was a path that Necati seemed amenable to and that at least some Greek Cypriots did consider.¹²² Instead, however, it was with the call for *enosis*, utterly rejected by the Turkish Cypriots, that Greek Cypriot political leaders, encouraged by the Greek Consul Kyrou, chose to raise the standard of resistance and as such there was no way that the Turkish Cypriots would partake in their efforts.¹²³ In his epic study of the era Georghallides ultimately acknowledges that it was the inability of the more moderate Greek political class to take advantage of this opportunity which permitted those more radical to project their own, more exclusive, schemes and agenda.¹²⁴

The October Revolt that followed did not result in *enosis*, but was nevertheless a source of embarrassment for the colonial regime and its chief administrator on the island, particularly with the burning down of Government House, the Governor's residence and workplace.¹²⁵ The

120 *Söz* 17 September 1931.

121 McHenry (1987) *op. cit.*, p. 86 and Storrs (1943) *op. cit.*, pp. 503-504.

122 Georghallides' records, for example, the support for such a scheme expressed by the established Greek Cypriot politician Ioannis Kyriakides. Georghallides (1985) *op. cit.*, pp. 668-669.

123 For Kyrou's role see P. Terlexis (1968) 'Greece's Foreign Policy and Attitude towards the Problem of Cyprus'. A Dissertation in the Department of Politics Submitted to the Faculty of the Graduate School of Arts and Science in Partial Fulfilment of the Requirements for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy at New York University, pp. 73-80, Storrs (1943) *op. cit.*, pp. 503-509, Storrs to Secretary of State, 21 October 1931. CO 67/237/11 and Storrs to Secretary of State, 22 October 1931. CO 67/240/13.

124 Georghallides (1985) *op. cit.*, p. 640.

125 This led to the loss of many of Storrs' prized personal possessions, and unfortunately also (as in the case of a later fire that destroyed Necati's home) to the loss of possibly valuable materials such as letters and notes that might have been of assistance to contemporary historians. See Storrs (1943) *op. cit.*, pp. 512-513, Storrs to Secretary of State, 16

attempted insurrection was quelled quite quickly, but together with the burning of colonial buildings and flags, much of Storrs' pride and reputation also went up in flames.¹²⁶

Conclusion

In evaluating Storrs' interaction with Necati we must recognise of the latter that he was no political innocent, that he was able to employ Machiavellian political tactics and that he was motivated, like nearly all political leaders, by a combination of factors including that of personal ambition. Necati's defiance of Storrs and his triumph in the elections of 1930 were an early high-point in his career, possibly its most remarkable, and the spectacular heights of which he never again quite reached despite continued active political involvement over the next quarter of a century. For Storrs, on the other hand, his inadequacy in Cyprus essentially marked the end of what had appeared to be quite a promising career that might well have seen him reach newer heights had he been able to complete his tour of duty on the island more successfully. His inability to develop appropriate and effective remedies to deal with the changing nature of Turkish politics in Cyprus can be attributed to manifold causes:

Storrs was probably too loyal to Mūnir with whom he established a personal friendship and on whom he relied over excessively, going so far as to refer to him as, 'the indispensable and permanent Ataturk of Cyprus'.¹²⁷ Displaying the continued hold of the value of loyalty instilled (maybe too far) as part of his self-described 'public school spirit' Storrs later declared that he was, 'a pro-man and not an anti-man. ... But if I were put up against a wall and ordered on pain of death to be anti-something I should (swiftly) declare myself anti-ingratitude and anti-disloyalty'.¹²⁸ It was not that Mūnir Bey could not be an effective administrator or lacked capacity, for he was undoubtedly a talented man too; but he lacked the popular appeal of a more charismatic leader such as Necati and was not fully in touch with the transformation of the society from which he emanated; he was certainly much more distant, if not wholly averse to the Kemalist line than Necati. It might be argued that Mūnir's official powers and status were continuously bolstered by

March 1932 The Papers of Sir Ronald Storrs (1881-1956) from Pembroke College, Cambridge, BOX IV, Folder 2, Cyprus, 1932, Letters; One of those to make personal donations of artistic, literary and/or archaeological material to try to recompense Storrs for his loss was T.E. Lawrence. See R.W. Storrs (1940) *Lawrence of Arabia, Zionism and Palestine*, New York: Penguin Books, p. 17.

126 Georghallides states that: 'In spite of a good start, Cyprus was to destroy Storrs' reputation as a competent Governor and to thwart his hopes for a major promotion either in the Near East or in India'. Georghallides (1988) *op. cit.*, p. 23. In private correspondence Storrs also expressed that he would, 'have liked Ceylon' and his overoptimistic belief, 'if I have merited anything it is a move, and a move upward'. See Storrs to GL, 3 December 1931 (copy) The Papers of Sir Ronald Storrs (1881-1956) from Pembroke College, Cambridge, BOX IV, Folder 3, Cyprus, 1931. The Burning of Government House.

127 Storrs (1943) *op. cit.*, pp. 492-493.

128 *Ibid.*, pp. 11, 437.

Storrs so that he might possess the means to repel the Kemalist challenge, but, despite the warnings of his colleagues, he was also in the process turning Münir into a 'puppet' in the eyes of his own people.¹²⁹

Somewhat related to the above, Storrs failed in practice to show the *savoir-faire* and skill necessary to communicate on a productive basis with Turkish Cypriots that did not necessarily possess the deferential cultural vocabulary to which he was accustomed. Necati's brash and bold, demanding personality may have been personally repugnant to his more aristocratic, perhaps conceited approach. If, however, he was half the diplomatic genius – the skilful manipulator of native peoples described by Lawrence as, 'the most brilliant Englishman in the Near East' – presenting, 'a lesson to every Englishmen alive of how to deal with suspicious or unwilling orientals', then one would have expected Storrs to have been able to reach out even to Necati.¹³⁰ Maybe such praise need be tempered by Lawrence's further potentially contradictory observation that Storrs was possessing of an, 'intolerant brain [that] seldom stooped to company'.¹³¹

Again in an associated manner, Storrs failed miserably to appreciate the growth of Turkish nationalist sentiment in Cyprus, of which Necati's success was, partially at least, a consequence. For Storrs, till it was too late, the Kemalists were only an irksome nuisance, but little threat to the allegiance of the Moslem Turkish masses. True, following the October Revolt, expressions of Kemalism were cracked down upon just as systematically as those of Greek nationalism, but by then, in both cases, such repressive measures were too little too late, in fact prone to backfire. 'Aloofness from the general populace, which was characteristic of Public School boys', and which tended to follow them thereafter, was no doubt also a cause of Storrs' inability to fathom the true extent of the popular 'winds of change' that were transforming Turkish Cypriot society.¹³²

In terms of 'backfiring', Storrs' efforts to demote and centralise under the purview of the Evkaf the Turkish Cypriots' traditional communal institutions of Müftü and Kadi, as well as his insistence on providing British oversight over the Lycée, actually became a sore bone of contention between the new Turkish Cypriot leadership and the colonial authorities, not just during Storrs' tenure, but for many years thereafter. Discontent was augmented by the sharp contrast with the much greater autonomy of comparative Greek Cypriot institutions. Little was achieved by these moves save furnishing opponents with tangible issues around which to coalesce their opposition.

Furthermore, Storrs failed to factor in the impact of warmer relations between Greece and Turkey that began to emerge at the close of the 1920s and that should have cautioned greater finesse and flexibility in his policies. Accusations that Necati was pro-Greek, or even 'the Thirteenth

129 See, for example, Nicholson to Secretary of State, 31 December 1928. CO 883/8, p. 27.

130 Lawrence declaring with admiration also that it was, 'nearly impossible to resist him for more than a few minutes'. Lawrence (1962) *op. cit.*, pp. 56, 71.

131 *Ibid.*, p. 65.

132 Heussler (1963) *op. cit.*, pp. 112-113.

Greek' may have been particularly detrimental to this novice politician's chances at a different point in time, but in an era of Graeco-Turkish accord they did little to stain Necati's political reputation.

It was largely then and as a result of such failures, that Storrs lost the basic colonial hold over the Turkish Cypriot community that he had been fortunate enough to arrive to. It can legitimately be contended further that the particularly harsh terminology which Storrs used to deride Necati, if partially a reaction to what was perceived as Necati's insolence, was also partly reflective of Storrs' own subconscious recognition of his failure; failure to recognise and deal appropriately with who Necati was and what he represented; it was an inner acknowledgement of culpability. Ultimately, Necati was not an adequate scapegoat for Storrs' own sense of guilt.

And yet, underlying all of the above must be determined not simply the personal errors or weaknesses of one individual man, but witnessed also the broader deficiencies of the British imperial outlook and over-reliance on the values and spirit of the public school system in the staffing of empire. Whether it be the guilt that he felt for failing in duty, the sense of being trumped by an inferior, the inability to gauge and the inflexibility to respond to changes in circumstance, the cultural ineptness of communicating with outsiders beyond the circle, or excessive fidelity to those within, in each can be determined the imprint of a systemic flaw. Thus Storrs in the final analysis was a victim not only of 'the thirteenth Greek', but of the conservative, elitist system in which he was rooted.

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Conspiracy Theories and the Decolonisation of Cyprus under the Weight of Historical Evidence, 1955 - 1959

DEMETRIS ASSOS

Abstract

A commonly held Greek Cypriot opinion is that the EOKA struggle failed to achieve its objective of enosis because of some dark machination. According to this view, the 'heroic' struggle of EOKA was frustrated either because of the inept handling of the Cyprus problem by the Greek government and/or Makarios or because of some international intrigue which undermined the 'fair' demand for enosis resulting in the reluctant independence of 1960. This paper will assess these claims in light of the available historical evidence and demonstrate that they are fundamentally flawed. It will argue that no conspiracy took place in the 1950s against the Greek Cypriots and that independence was a consequence of the forces that were set in motion in 1955. Finally it will discuss both the reasons for the proliferation of such theories and whether there is a need for mainstream history to respond to such theories.

Keywords: Greek Cypriot attitude, conspiracy theories, EOKA struggle, criticism, historical evidence

The decolonisation of Cyprus was a complex and tortuous process which did not turn out as the Greek Cypriots, the majority ethnic group on the island, had hoped for. On 1 April 1955, the Greek Cypriot paramilitary organisation EOKA¹ launched a campaign that aimed to end British rule and unite Cyprus with Greece. However, the outcome of the EOKA struggle was the establishment of an independent bi-communal republic with Turkish Cypriot partnership under the international guarantee of Britain, Greece and Turkey.² In response to the frustration of *enosis* (union with Greece), which was a long cherished Greek Cypriot national aspiration, different conspiracy theories have emerged to explain how events led to the reluctant republic which was established in 1960. However in the academic literature which examines the EOKA struggle there is no substantial discussion of such conspiracy theories.³ This is due to lack of archival

1 Εθνική Οργάνωση Κυπρίων Αγώνιστών (National Organisation of Cypriot Fighters).

2 The Turkish Cypriots were the minority ethnic group. In 1956 out of a total population of 528,879 the Greek Cypriots were 416,986 (78.8%) while the Turkish Cypriots were 92,642 (17.5%). *Cyprus Population Estimates, October 1956*, Cyprus Government (Nicosia, 1957).

3 For example see, N. Crawshaw (1978) *The Cyprus Revolt*, London: Allen and Unwin; H. Faustmann, (1999) 'Divide and Quit? The History of British Colonial Rule in Cyprus, 1878-1960', PhD thesis, University of Mannheim; E. Hatzivassiliou (1997) *Britain and the International Status of Cyprus, 1955-59*, Minneapolis:

evidence to sustain such theories rather than an academic oversight. Thus, although mainstream scholarship rejects conspiracy theories as an interpretive narrative for understanding the EOKA struggle, these theories have and still influence Greek Cypriot popular perceptions of how the Cypriot independence was achieved despite the false assumptions they make. The present paper will investigate the claims of two of the most dominant conspiracy theories pertaining to the decolonisation of Cyprus and examine them mainly in light of primary documents and scholarly interpretations of the period under investigation. It will argue that these theories are flawed because they are not consistent with the historical record and the evidence available. The final part will discuss briefly the reasons behind the proliferation of such theories and reflect on the question of whether mainstream historians should challenge them.

A conspiracy theory that one encounters when studying the EOKA struggle from a Greek Cypriot perspective, is the one which claims that the treaties of Zurich-London, which established an independent Cyprus, were the result of either the Greek government or Makarios selling out on the vision of *enosis*. According to this theory the two culprits could have achieved *enosis* if they had not settled for independence. This theory was advocated by Grivas himself, but also by other EOKA contemporaries and their supporters.⁴ It argues that the signing of the agreements was not only a mistake, but the result of a plot to undermine the 'heroic' struggle of EOKA which aimed to achieve *enosis*. However this theory contradicts the historical record and glosses over the actual conditions which led the Greek government and Makarios to accept the compromise of Zurich. Greece had always been reluctant to get involved in the Cyprus affair. After the end of the Second World War successive Greek governments maintained a cautious attitude on the issue of Cyprus. When the Greek Cypriots sent a delegation to Greece to raise awareness about the plebiscite, that was held in January 1950 which called for *enosis*, behind close doors the delegation was told: 'Today Greece breathes with two lungs; one British, the other American. Therefore she cannot afford to

University of Minnesota and (2002) *The Cyprus Question, 1878-1960: The Constitutional Aspect*, Minneapolis: University of Minnesota; C. Nicolet (2001) *United States Policy Towards Cyprus, 1954-1974: Removing the Greek-Turkish Bone of Contention*, Mannheim: Bibliopolis; R. Holland (1998) *Britain and the Revolt in Cyprus, 1954-1959*, Oxford: Oxford University Press; DW. Markides (2001) *Cyprus, 1957-1963: From Colonial Conflict to Constitutional Crisis. The Key Role of the Municipal Issue*, Minneapolis: University of Minnesota.

- 4 G. Grivas (1961) *Απομνημονεύματα Αγώνος ΕΟΚΑ, 1955-1959* [Memoirs of the EOKA Struggle, 1955-1959], Athens, pp. 374-386. At different points Grivas suggests that the conduct of the Greek diplomacy was suspicious and dishonest. Papagathagelou, a priest who was involved in EOKA asserts that *enosis* was 'sold out' for nothing, implying that there was betrayal from the Athens government and Makarios; P. Papagathagelou (1995) *Η Μαρτυρία Μου, Πως έζησα την προπαρασκευή και τον αγώνα της ΕΟΚΑ* [My Witness, How I lived the preparation and the struggle of EOKA], Nicosia: Έκδοση Ιδρύματος Απελευθερωτικού Αγώνα ΕΟΚΑ 1955-59 [Foundation of the Liberating Struggle of EOKA 1955-1959], p. 509. Leonidou, asserts that the lack of firmness by the Greek government neutralised the advantages gained by the EOKA struggle, an argument essentially reproduced from Grivas' memoirs; L.F. Leonidou (1997) *Γεώργιος Γριβας Διγενής* [Georgios Grivas Dighenis], Nicosia: L. Leonidou, p. 481.

be suffocated because of the Cyprus problem'.⁵ Makarios, who after he became Archbishop in 1950 launched a sustained effort to convince the Greek government to recourse to the UN on behalf of Cyprus, was met with similar comments both in 1951 and in 1952.⁶ Characteristically Sophocles Venizelos the foreign minister of Greece told Makarios: 'I will not allow you to direct the foreign policy of Greece'.⁷

Only when Field Marshal Papagos came to power in November 1952 did the Greek government adopt a more assertive policy on Cyprus. Even then that was partly in response to Eden's refusal to talk to Papagos about Cyprus which infuriated deeply Papagos and paved the way to the first Greek recourse to the UN.⁸ Nevertheless Papagos did not approve of paramilitary action in Cyprus against the British. Papagos' secret police kept a careful watch on Grivas' clandestine activities and even issued an arrest warrant against him.⁹ It was only when the diplomatic options were thoroughly exhausted that Papagos finally acquiesced to violence.¹⁰ Yet according to Kranidiotis the Field-Marshal on his death bed appeared to have second thoughts about the struggle but by then he was too infirm to act on them.¹¹

Why were successive Greek governments cautious in embracing the cause of Cyprus? The reasons behind this caution were grounded in the Cold War realities and the greater strategic needs of Greece. The Greek civil war (1946-1949) had been won with American and British aid. Therefore Greece was reluctant to antagonise Britain, which clearly wanted to retain Cyprus, and the US, which did not want disunity among its allies, by raising the Cyprus problem. Greek reliance on its British and American allies did not end with the conclusion of the civil war but continued unabated because of the 'menace from the north'. This was a fusion of the old regional rivalries with other Balkan states and the Cold War polarisation. Yugoslavia had aided the communist guerrillas during the civil war but even more dangerous was the Bulgarian threat. Bulgaria traditionally coveted an outlet to the Mediterranean in the shape of Salonica, the second biggest Greek city, and for this reason invaded Greece on three different occasions in 1913, 1916 and 1941. The fact that Bulgaria was now a Soviet satellite turned Greece's northern border into a long vulnerable defence line. The need to defend this border dominated early Greek Cold War

5 Quoted in P. Terlexis (1968) 'Greece's Policy and Attitude towards the Problem of Cyprus', New York University PhD, pp. 90-91.

6 Athens to Foreign Office, no. 25, 26 March 1951, FO 371/95133; E. Averoff (1986) *Lost Opportunities: The Cyprus Question*, New Rochelle, New York: A.D. Caratzas, p. 10.

7 Quoted in P. Terlexis, *op. cit.*, p. 92.

8 I. Stefanides (1999) *Isle of Discord*, New York: New York University Press, pp. 47-66.

9 Grivas, *Memoirs*, p. 18; A. Azinas (2001) *50 Χρόνια Σιωπής* [50 Years of Silence], Nicosia: Airwaves Ltd., pp. 275-276.

10 N. Crawshaw (1978) *The Cyprus Revolt*, p. 99; S. Xydis (1967) *Cyprus: Conflict and Conciliation*, Columbus: Ohio State University Press, p. 72.

11 N. Kranidiotis (1981) *Δύσκολα Χρόνια* [Difficult Years], Athens: Estia, p. 97.

strategy, which was bent on the preservation of the *status quo*, and made imperative the need to join NATO in order to counterbalance the pressure on its northern border.¹²

There were also domestic considerations in Greece that militated against an adventurous foreign policy. After the civil war there was urgent need to restore the economy and rebuild the country's damaged infrastructure. Economic weakness was coupled with chronic political weakness. Since the end of the civil war the country was ruled by a string of weak coalition governments which did not have the political capital or will to embark on such an ambitious project, especially given the fragile international position of Greece.

Finally Greece had to nurse a burgeoning but delicate Greco-Turkish friendship that was partly stimulated by the common Soviet threat and their simultaneous accession into NATO. In the early 1950s, officially at least, Turkey showed little interest in the Cypriot issue even though Turkish emotion was brewing both on the island and in Turkey itself.¹³ In this sense it was wiser for the Greek government to avoid agitation over Cyprus lest it would provoke the interest and latent rivalry of Turkey.

In the greater scheme of things Cyprus was only one of the many issues which preoccupied Greek foreign policy. Raising the Cyprus issue would alienate Greece within NATO at a time when NATO membership was considered to be the cornerstone of Greek foreign and security policy. The Greek Cypriots consistently failed to appreciate that Greece had other objectives and policies beyond the Cyprus problem. They could not understand why Greece was reluctant to bend its entire foreign policy toward this end and refused to acknowledge the possibility that Greece might lack the capacity to achieve this aim. The attitude of Premier Constantine Karamanlis, who essentially handled the Cyprus problem after the death of Papagos until the signing of the agreements is telling: 'I will not blow up Greece for their sake! The Cypriots must cease to think that they can dictate to me the policy of Greece. I determine Greek policy and the limits within which it operates'.¹⁴ This was consistent with the attitude of previous Greek prime ministers who were reluctant to antagonise Britain and risk Greece's national interests for the sake of Cyprus.

As the EOKA struggle started to unfold the cautious stance of the Greek government proved to be correct. Greece was too weak to promote the cause of *enosis*. Efforts in the UN to secure favourable resolutions proved to be in vain. Instead Britain was capable of blocking such moves. The futility of the UN strategy was underlined further by the fact that it was not an international court of justice which could issue legally binding decisions. Britain aiming to counterbalance the Greek claims introduced Turkey as an interested party in the dispute. This eventually transformed

12 E. Hatzivassiliou (2006) *Greece and the Cold War, Frontline State, 1952-1967*, London: Routledge, pp. 5-11.

13 Political situation report September 1953, CO 926/20.

14 A. Vlachos (1986) *Μια φορά κι ένα καιρό ένας διπλωμάτης* τόμος 4 [Once upon a time there was a diplomat, Vol. 4], Athens: Estia, p. 233.

the whole issue into a full-blown international dispute but also led Britain to increasingly rely more on Turkey to maintain its position in Cyprus. As a result Britain made concessions to the Turkish side which undermined the Greek Cypriot demand for *enosis* and eventually outflanked entirely the EOKA struggle.

A crucial turning point was the statement on double self-determination that was made in the House of Commons on 19 December 1956 by the Colonial Secretary Lennox-Boyd:

'Any exercise of self-determination should be effected in such a manner that the Turkish Cypriot community, no less than the Greek Cypriot community, shall, in the special circumstances of Cyprus, be given freedom to decide for themselves their future status. In other words, Her Majesty's Government recognise that the exercise of self-determination in such a mixed population must include partition among the eventual options.'¹⁵

The aim of this statement was to make the Radcliffe constitution, which was to be submitted for the consideration of the Cypriot communities, more palatable to the Turkish Cypriots and use the spectre of partition as a stick against the demand for *enosis*. If partition would be included in the possible outcomes of a plebiscite, then the Greek Cypriots could choose to remain under British sovereignty, while it would offer the necessary safeguard to enable the Turkish government to give its consent.¹⁶

The introduction of the idea of double self-determination struck a mortal blow to the idea of *enosis* for two reasons. Firstly, it outflanked the demand for *enosis* because insistence for the application of the principle of self-determination could now lead to partition. This undermined the EOKA struggle and made its continuation counter-productive because it was more likely to lead to partition rather than *enosis*.¹⁷ Secondly, Britain by acknowledging that partition was a possible outcome for the future of Cyprus, even if it was an expedient tactic rather than genuine intention, encouraged Turkey and the Turkish Cypriots to work toward that objective. After the release of Makarios in the spring of 1957, Turkey progressively hardened its attitude on the Cyprus issue and started to demand partition as the only possible outcome of this dispute.¹⁸ At the same time the Turkish Cypriots launched their own counter-campaign for partition which complicated the political situation on the island immensely.¹⁹ After the emergence of the Turkish demand for

15 *House of Commons Debates* vol. 562, cc 1268.

16 Minute by Sir John Martin titled Partition, 7 June 1956, CO 926/277.

17 E. Hatzivassiliou (1997) *Britain and the International Status of Cyprus, 1955-59*, p. 98.

18 Ankara embassy to Foreign Office, no. 288, 24 March 1957, CO 926/949; RGC 10344/38E Foreign Office to Ankara, no. 799, 9 April 1957, FO 371/130095; RGC 1072/38G Ankara to Foreign Office, no. 362, 9 April 1957, FO 371/130138; RGC 10344/35B From Ankara to Foreign Office, no. 313, 29 March 1957, FO 371/130095.

19 RGC 1782/44, Turkish News Bulletin, 3 May 1957, FO 371/130164; DW. Markides (2001) *Cyprus, 1957-1963: From Colonial Conflict to Constitutional Crisis*, p. 16; Lennox-Boyd to Harding, no. 1308, 14 August 1957, CO 926/615.

partition *enosis* became impossible. Short of an overwhelming military victory – which was beyond EOKA's capacity anyway – against both the British Security Forces and the Turkish Cypriots, *enosis* was no longer feasible.

The tipping point for the Greek side, which forced the switch to independence as a compromise in order to avert an even worse solution, was the Macmillan plan. Briefly the plan envisioned the separation of the island's population into two nominal communities – Greek and Turkish Cypriot – which were given equal rights. Both communities were accorded 'self-government and communal autonomy' which translated into a separate House of Representatives for each community. Members of either community would have the right to double nationality, Greek or Turkish, while retaining the British one. The most problematic provision was the legal standing which was conceded to Turkey in Cypriot internal affairs. Both Greek and Turkish governments were given the right to appoint special representatives, to help in the administration of the island. This meant that Turkey acquired a legal stake in Cyprus. Matters pertaining to foreign policy, internal security and defence were reserved to the Governor, who would seek the advice of the Greek and the Turkish representatives on such matters.²⁰ At the end of a seven-year period, Britain would ask Greece and Turkey to share sovereignty of the island, except for the military enclaves reserved for strategic reasons, thus leading to a tridominium.²¹

The pending implementation of the Macmillan plan left the Greek government and Makarios with few options. There was little that could be achieved in the UN. As the British Foreign Secretary Selwyn Lloyd told his Greek counterpart Evangelos Averoff, no recourse to the UN could change the British position which was to press ahead with the implementation of the plan: 'We have no other choice but to apply it. Do you wish to accept it? We shall be happy. If you do not, we shall implement it with the Turks as best we can. Sooner or later a part of the population will help us. In one way or another we must close this problem'.²²

Continuation of the EOKA struggle now bore the danger of partition because further violence in Cyprus could trigger the British decision for the division of the island. When the Cyprus Committee was established in April 1957, its mission was 'to review the implications of a Partition of Cyprus'.²³ The Turkish Cypriots, however, were a majority at virtually no part of the island because of its ethnic composition, which meant that any partition would involve substantial forced migration across superficially created borders.²⁴ Yet all British plans after the Radcliffe constitution included the promise of partition in order to gain Turkish endorsement. Nevertheless,

20 Draft White Paper on Cyprus, 9 May 1958, CAB 129/93 C 102 (58).

21 Minute 2, 13 May 1958, CC 42 (58) CAB 128/32.

22 S.G. Xydis (1973) *Cyprus Reluctant Republic*, The Hague: Mouton, p. 236.

23 Cabinet Cyprus Committee, 'A note by the Secretary', C.Y. (0) (57) I, 4 April, CAB 21/4267.

24 A Memorandum on Possible Schemes for the Partition of Cyprus, Secretariat, Nicosia, 10 November 1956, CO 926/277.

the cabinet concluded that outright partition remained a last resort option in the face of protracted terrorism, reasoning that the British government 'could not carry indefinitely the burden of sole responsibility for the administration of the island'.²⁵ This reasoning was reiterated on 22 January 1958: 'If terrorism broke out again in Cyprus, we could not afford indefinitely to devote military resources to its repression'.²⁶ This warning was conveyed to the Greek government and Makarios in February 1958 when a British delegation travelled to Athens for consultations and was later repeated in May 1958.²⁷ It is also pertinent to point out that when the Cabinet discussed the Macmillan plan in May 1958 it concluded that:

'If, however, the plan failed and it became necessary to seek a final solution of the problem of Cyprus on other lines, we should regard ourselves as bound by our previous assurances in regard to the application of the principle of self-determination'.²⁸

In other words if EOKA was to resist the plan through widespread violence destabilising the island further it would force the British to divide the island and retreat. By 1958 if not earlier, the EOKA struggle had become a liability and was more likely to contribute to the partition of Cyprus rather than its union with Greece.

The Karamanlis administration now had two options: either to risk an all out war with Turkey or to climb down from the demand of Cypriot self-determination. A war with Turkey had too many risks and it was not clear what the attitude of Britain would be. Additionally, it would definitely further alienate Greece within NATO if not lead to its expulsion. There was no guarantee that Bulgaria and the Soviet Union would not try to take advantage of this situation. Furthermore it was far from clear if Greece could impose a conclusive military victory on Turkey in order to force it to accept *enosis*. Clearly the risks were too great and the possible gains did not outweigh the sacrifices Greece would have to exert. For Karamanlis there was only one option and that was to abandon the demand of *enosis* and seek a compromise solution. Makarios was more reluctant to accept the realities of the issue but eventually declared his support for an independent Cyprus in order to avert the implementation of the Macmillan plan. Once the Archbishop gave his blessing to this compromise Karamanlis seized the opportunity of the Greco-Turkish rapprochement that started to blossom in December 1958, when Averoff and his Turkish counterpart Fatin Zorlu met secretly to discuss the Cyprus issue.

The treaties of Zurich-London were the price the Greek side had to pay in order to avoid the Macmillan plan which was so detrimental to the Greek Cypriots. The accusation that either the

25 Minute 6, CC 51 (57) CAB 128/31, 11 July 1957.

26 Minute 5, CC 8 (58) CAB 128/32, 22 January 1958.

27 Record of conversation between the Governor of Cyprus and Archbishop Makarios, in Athens 13 February 1958, RGC 1782/9, FO 371/130132; Record of meeting with Greek Prime Minister, 12 February 1958, RGC 10319/66, FO 371/136306; Foreign Office to Athens embassy, telegram no. 622, 7 June 1958, PREM 11/2262.

28 Minute 2, CC 42 (58) CAB 128/32, 13 May 1958.

Greek government or Makarios could do something more but instead chose to 'betray' the Greek Cypriots and the cause of *enosis* must be dismissed as false. The advocates of this theory must explain what more could be done. Grivas said that he was prepared to fight to the last man,²⁹ but as it has been argued above such self-consuming heroism would merely accelerate the advent of partition since there was no chance of victory. Politics after all is the art of the possible and this must be borne in mind when the treaties are explained away as 'treason'. Understandably the treaties were not to the liking of the majority of the Greek Cypriots but this does not answer the question: what else could be done? The other problem with this theory is that there is no real motive for either the Greek government or Makarios to simply accept these agreements if indeed they had the power not to do so. Why would any Greek government balk at the prospect of *enosis*? An adequate motive for this action must be provided. The treaties simply reflected the weakness of the Greek side and not some dark conspiracy which for an unspecified reason chose to frustrate *enosis*. The only conspiracy, if this word can be used, which merits further study is the case whether there was substantial disagreement between the Archbishop and the Greek government regarding the agreements. This has been discussed elsewhere but it suffices to say that despite the reluctance of the Archbishop to sign the agreements, in the end he did so declaring afterwards that he chose the lesser evil.³⁰

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The second conspiracy is more popular and is slightly harder to refute because it contains some grains of truth. According to this theory the only reason why *enosis* was not achieved is because of some dark international conspiracy. The blame is shifted on the international community and often more specifically on Britain. For example in a book published under the auspices of the EOKA foundation (Ίδρυμα Απελευθερωτικού Αγώνα ΕΟΚΑ) the author claims that the British foreign policy diverted the Cyprus problem from its 'natural course'.³¹ Claims of international conspiracies and British machinations are fairly common in Greek Cypriot media and are probably the most popular explanation since it glosses over a complex issue and any need for introspection and critical approach to this period of Cypriot history. In a nutshell the argument is that the 'fair' demand for *enosis* was ignored by the British who did their best to block *enosis* by conspiring against the Greek Cypriots primarily through the employment of 'divide and rule' tactics. Although this argument emotionally resonates in Greek Cypriot society it is misleading

29 Grivas, *Memoirs*, p. 293.

30 D. Assos (2009) 'Makarios: A Study of Anticolonial Nationalist Leadership, 1950-1959', unpublished PhD thesis, University of London. Refer especially to chapter 8. *Makarios*, pp. 216-217.

31 A. Varnava (2002) *Ιστορία Του Απελευθερωτικού Αγώνα Της ΕΟΚΑ, 1955-1959* [History of the Liberating Struggle of EOKA], Nicosia: Ίδρυμα Απελευθερωτικού Αγώνα ΕΟΚΑ 1955-59 [Foundation of the Liberating Struggle of EOKA 1955-1959], p. 381.

and offers a biased and simplistic understanding of the causes and processes that led to the reluctant independence of 1959. Essentially the end point of independence was not the result of a British conspiracy but a case of a political strategy that went wrong resulting in unintended consequences.

Grivas himself wrote that 'through military action we did not seek to defeat the English but to coerce a political solution according to our desires'.³² This comment goes to the heart of the strategy which the EOKA struggle had to implement. In retrospect the aim of the EOKA struggle was rather sophisticated which required political prudence and an impeccable sense of timing. That is an important factor to be borne in mind when assessing the reasons why it failed. Essentially the aim of EOKA's violence was to nudge the British from the position of 'never' they had publicly taken in the summer of 1954 to negotiations that would pave the way to *enosis*.³³ Therefore the campaign was a balancing act between striking a sense of urgency to the British over Cyprus and avoiding the destruction of Greco-British relations. It was a given that ultimately a solution to the problem would be the result of Greco-British negotiations. For this reason Makarios wanted to avoid bloodshed and insisted only on a 'sabotage only' campaign and even envisioned a fairly brief campaign that would be over within six or so months. At no point did he anticipate a struggle of almost four years and all the bloodshed and ill-will that came with it.³⁴

There were two important flaws in this strategy which contributed significantly to the undoing of *enosis*. The first one was to ignore Turkish objections to *enosis*. The Greek Cypriot leadership overlooked Turkish Cypriots anxiety regarding their welfare in case Cyprus became part of Greece. It was almost an article of faith that the Turkish Cypriots simply had to accept their fate as the minority, and the possibility that Turkey might develop interest in the political future of the island was dismissed. The common belief among Greek Cypriots that the Turkish Cypriots were driven to violence because of British encouragement or that Turkey became interested in Cyprus only because of Britain's policy, is naïve to say the least. Given the legacy of Greco-Turkish conflict and rivalry, that dated back to the Greek War of Independence in the 1820s and lasted until the 1920s, Cyprus could not escape from its shadow. The Turkish Cypriots were always uncomfortable about the possibility of *enosis*; it was the Greek Cypriots who failed to heed their concerns.³⁵ Turkey was bound to oppose *enosis* for a combination of reasons. Britain's diplomacy

32 Makarios, p. 573.

33 *House of Commons Debates*, vol. 484, c.508, 28 July 1954.

34 E. Hatzivassiliou (2005) *Στρατηγικές του Κυπριακού, Η δεκαετία του 1950* [Strategies of the Cyprus Question: The 1950s], Athens: Patakis, pp. 267-268; D. Assos, 'Makarios: A Study of Anticolonial Nationalist Leadership', see chapter 4.

35 The celebrated Greek Cypriot plebiscite in favour of *enosis* that took place in 1950 was opposed by the Turkish Cypriots but this fact has been casually overlooked by the Greek Cypriots. See, *Turks of Cyprus Protest: Against the Desire for Union With Greece*, CO 537/6235; Dr Fazıl Kuçuk's (Cyprus Turkish National Party president) telegram to Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, 13 December 1949; CO 67/352/2.

did not conjure up the Greco-Turkish rivalry, even though in the beginning of the struggle it tried to goad the Turkish government toward a more confrontational attitude.³⁶ However, with the outbreak of violence Cyprus was destined to become a cause for renewing old animosities and hatreds.

The second flaw was the underestimation of British insistence to remain on the island. Britain had no intention to abandon Cyprus in the mid-1950s. In fact the struggle broke out at a time when Cyprus was considered to be a fundamental aspect of British policy in the Middle East. British strategic planning perceived Cyprus as its last foothold in the vital area of the eastern Mediterranean and Middle East. In 1950 the Chiefs of Staff committee unequivocally urged the full retention of the island under British sovereignty if Britain was to retain its position in the Middle East.³⁷ The strategic value of the island had increased even further by 1954, with the transfer of the Middle East Headquarters there.³⁸

Moreover the resort to violence was resented by Britain as it had raised the embarrassing issue of Cyprus. In fact the campaign of EOKA damaged Greece's image in London, as the British policy makers now regarded Greece as a weak and unreliable ally compared to Turkey. In the 1950s Turkey became an increasingly important ally to Britain because of its geographical location. Bordering with Soviet Union, Turkey was considered an important bulwark against Soviet efforts to penetrate into the Middle East. In addition, Turkey was a senior member of the Baghdad Pact, an anti-Soviet alliance which Britain hoped to use to extend its influence and prestige in the Arab world. As a result Britain in the face of Greek Cypriot violence and what it perceived to be Greek unreliability turned to Turkey as the perfect foil to Greek demands. It was expediency rather than pure Machiavellian 'divide and rule' tactics which guided British policy on Cyprus. The aim was to preserve Cyprus in the face of an embarrassing demand and the means to do it was to highlight Turkish reservations and counter claims. For this reason the Tripartite Conference that took place in 1955 was engineered in such a way as to demonstrate the impossibility of *enosis* on account of Turkish objections. It was also expediency which led to the systematic employment of Turkish Cypriots in the British security forces, a practice which was resented deeply by the Greek Cypriots and led to accusations of 'divide and rule'. It was primarily done because of the exodus of Greek Cypriots from the police force after the outbreak of violence and the increased need for more policemen that forced the Cyprus government to turn to the Turkish Cypriot community.³⁹

36 Memorandum by the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, 25 July 1955, C.P. 94(55) CAB 129/76.

37 Strategic importance of full sovereignty in Cyprus, 25 May 1950, DEFE 11/30.

38 Cyprus: Memorandum by the Secretary of State for the Colonies and the Minister of State, 21 July 1954, C (54) 245, CAB 129/69.

39 D.M. Anderson (1993) 'Policing and Communal Conflict: The Cyprus Emergency, 1954-1960', *Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History*, Vol. 21, pp. 177-207.

The opposition of Britain to *enosis* was perhaps the single most important factor militating against Greek Cypriot designs. It must be stressed that all the British measures which subsequently were interpreted as part of a conspiracy were in fact the reaction of an imperial administration nursing an injured prestige which chose to obstinately dig in its position of no change. Turning to Turkey for succour was not part of a conspiracy but an act of necessity to preserve what it considered to be its vital interests. The theory of collusion does not hold in face of the deterioration of Turko-British relations after the release of Makarios in the spring of 1957 which lasted until the acceptance of the Macmillan plan by Turkey in August 1958. During this period Turkey adopted a more aggressive stance *vis-à-vis* Britain demanding the immediate implementation of partition. At the same time the Turkish Cypriots through their own paramilitary campaign attempted to demonstrate the impossibility of peaceful co-existence of the two communities. In the Macmillan plan Britain conceded too much to the Turkish side not because of some pre-arranged agreement, but because it had come to rely too much on Turkish goodwill to preserve its position in Cyprus. The British government became a prisoner of its early promises to Turkey which were made in order to gain Turkish support to British designs in Cyprus. When Turkey turned against Britain by demanding partition the British government was forced to make even more concessions in order to regain the support of Turkey. It was British *weakness vis-à-vis* Turkey that led to the Macmillan plan and not collusion.

In refuting the conspiracy theory that Britain had designed a Machiavellian scheme which defeated the heroic struggle of EOKA it is important to bear in mind that despite some important qualifications the British administration *did* offer to the Greek Cypriots the promise of unitary self-determination at some unspecified moment in future, during the negotiations of Makarios with Field Marshal John Harding. The reasons for the collapse of the talks have been discussed elsewhere and they will not be discussed here.⁴⁰ However it needs to be stressed that in hindsight the rejection of this offer was the most important turning point in the EOKA struggle for *enosis*. It was the only time the British talked exclusively to the Greek Cypriot leadership conceding theoretically at least the possibility of unitary self-determination. After the collapse of the talks the British government resolved that it could not deal with the Greek Cypriots or the Greek government anymore. Thus Makarios was deported, Harding oversaw a vigorous anti-terrorist campaign that sought to suppress EOKA and subsequent proposals from the Greek government were ignored. Instead Britain sought the support of Turkey in its Cyprus policy which sealed the fate of *enosis* forever. It is for this reason that the negotiations of Makarios with Harding were such an important turning point for the EOKA strategy. Effectively it was the only chance the Greek Cypriots were given to secure unitary self-determination through talks with the British, which was

40 DW. Markides (1995) 'Britain's "New Look" Policy for Cyprus and the Makarios-Harding Talks', January 1955-March 1956, *Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History*, Vol. 23, pp. 479-502.

the original aim of the EOKA struggle. With the failure of the talks the Greek Cypriot strategy became derailed and 'the prospect of Cypriot self-determination had faded into the realms of political make-believe'.⁴¹ The refusal of the British government to negotiate with the Greek Cypriots again – from now on the consent of the Turkish Cypriots would be sought first, combined with the weakness of Greece to promote the cause of *enosis* – meant that the EOKA struggle had no chance of achieving its aim.

It is of course counterfactual to argue that the talks were a lost opportunity but it is pertinent to point out that some British officials were thinking that it was wise to 'tell the Turks that 18 per cent of the [Cypriot] population cannot have an unqualified veto on the remaining 82 per cent'.⁴² Even Harding would later come to the conclusion that self-determination was the only permanent solution of the Cyprus problem.⁴³ Moreover, Eden, himself, admitted that the rejection of Greek Cypriot majority was not entirely down to Turkish objections but due to domestic pressure.⁴⁴ Thus it is possible to argue that had the Greek Cypriots accepted the offer they could have secured *enosis* through the back door, especially if we consider the gradualist British pattern of decolonisation.

The Harding proposal demonstrated that there was no conspiracy and that the British were willing, albeit with considerable qualifications, to consider Cypriot self-determination. Makarios' refusal, which was not due to ineptitude but mostly due to distrust of the British and a maximalist outlook which prevented him from securing an interim deal with long term prospects, had a direct and tangible bearing on the outcome because it antagonised the British while not having enough military force to achieve its declared purpose. In other words the Greek Cypriots were not the hapless victims of British designs but through their own actions and choice contributed to the undesirable independence.

Appearances suggested that there was some form of collusion between the British and the Turks. The preoccupation of British policy to secure Turkish assent to its plans and the uneven treatment of Turkish Cypriot violence compared to how ruthlessly EOKA was hunted down understandably fed Greek Cypriot suspicions. However in reality British policy was merely the response to the Greek Cypriot violence. Resorting to violence was a massive gamble given the British attitude of 'no change'. This gamble failed the moment the Harding proposal was turned down. From that point onwards the British government frustrated with the Greek Cypriots

41 *Ibid.*, p. 501.

42 Ward, minute, 28 February 1956, RG 1081/327, FO 371/123871.

43 Appreciation by the Governor of the situation on 4 April 1956, PREM 11/1251. 'Against this background I conclude that the basic principle for any real attempt to reconcile the conflict of interests must be the application of self-determination to Cyprus in our own time and on our own terms. The time should be dictated mainly by our own military requirements.

44 R. Holland (1998) *Britain and the Revolt in Cyprus, 1954-1959*, p. 113.

pursued a solution to the Cyprus problem according to its interests aiming to neutralise the *enosis* demand with an increasing involvement of Turkey. British policy itself was undermined by subsequent Turkish demands for partition. The actual aim of Britain was to continue ruling Cyprus by using Turkish demands as a counter balance to the Greek claim for *enosis* and did not want or hoped for an independent Cyprus. Once *enosis* was ruled out as a possible solution the EOKA struggle was doomed to failure. As a result the Zurich agreements reflected the failure of the EOKA strategy and the subsequent weakness of the Greek side to achieve its aim against the direction of British policy.

Conspiracy theories have always been part of the public discourse in Cyprus, a place where urban myths, Chinese whispers and conspiracy theories blend seamlessly into each other. The prime reason behind the proliferation of such theories lies in the nature of Greek nationalism which had prevailed in Cyprus. When the EOKA struggle began the majority of the Greek Cypriots genuinely thought that the manifest destiny of Cyprus was to be part of Greece. This was especially true for the members of EOKA but also its leadership. A Greco-centric education system for decades had inculcated Greek consciousness to Greek Cypriot students. In combination with the rise of a militantly nationalist Church leadership in the late 1940s *enosis* became a by-word for a worldly deliverance from all worries. In many respects the *enosis* movement by the mid-1950s had become a secular millenarian movement which anticipated its eschatological salvation, union with Greece, with an almost religious zeal. Therefore the culmination of the EOKA struggle was a psychological blow to the Greek Cypriots who had neither sought nor fought for independence. Conspiracy theories offered a way of reconciling their belief in *enosis* as the natural course of history with the reality on the ground. *Enosis* was denied because of some dark conspiracy.

The ideological apparatus of the newly found republic partly encouraged the proliferation of conspiracy theories as a means of deflecting attention from the flaws of the EOKA struggle and as a legitimisation process. Since the majority of the Greek Cypriot politicians who were in power in the 1960s, 1970s and even beyond were also intimately involved in the struggle it was in their interest to cultivate an uncritical adoration of the EOKA struggle. Especially after the departure of the Turkish Cypriots from the state apparatus in 1964, the use of the EOKA struggle as the foundation myth for a virtually Greek Cypriot Cyprus republic was entirely unchallenged. Yet in this narrative the most vexing question remained unanswered. If the struggle took place for *enosis* why was Cyprus an independent state and not part of Greece? The narration of the struggle in school text books, in the state's propaganda, rhetoric and commemoration always glossed over this critical question thus giving plenty of scope to the general public to explain this contradiction by inventing conspiracy theories. Vague references to impersonal international forces which opposed the 'fair' demand of *enosis* encouraged this speculation.

According to Eco the need for a conspiracy stems from a 'deep, private frustration'. A conspiracy theory offers a way out of this frustration because 'there can be no failure if there really is' a conspiracy theory. The failure of the struggle was not because of the fault of any Greek Cypriot

or their leadership. Through a conspiracy theory the frustration of *enosis* is ascribed to a superior dark force which absolves its victims from any guilt and instead raises them to the status of martyr. Fittingly the EOKA narrative stresses the victimization of the Greek Cypriots and venerates as martyrs of the nation all the fighters who lost their lives during the struggle. In the same vein the proliferation of conspiracy theories reflects the collective low self-esteem of Greek Cypriot society and a lack of confidence to accept reality for what it is. Power struggles are hardly 'fair'. Every action has a reaction and violence not only causes counter-violence but often it has unpleasant unintended consequences. There was nothing unique about the case of Cyprus nor was it the only colony to go through a tortuous decolonisation process. Most importantly there was nothing inevitable about *enosis* and like any other political aim it was not achieved because of the mistakes made in the execution of its strategy. Because the Greek Cypriot 'lacks steady nerves asks himself: Who's behind this plot, who's benefitting? He has to find an enemy, a plotter, or it will be, God forbid, his fault'.⁴⁵

Should historians engage with such conspiracy theories? Is there any merit in debunking theories which clearly do not conform to scholarship standards and do a disservice to the study of history? Normally mainstream historians tend to steer away from such theories because academics generally have a low opinion of such theories which are often thought as irrational and unscientific. Although the theories themselves might not be serious the pronounced impact they have had in public perceptions of the past of Cyprus is not a trivial issue.

The most obvious flaw of these theories is that from a methodological point of view they are fundamentally flawed. At their heart lies selective memory and partial reading of the past which is often used as an ideological battleground to justify current political debates. Evidence does not drive the theory but it is the other way round as evidence is usually tweaked to fit the theory. Evidence which disproves the theory is conveniently overlooked or played down. In other words such theories constitute a bad form of history since they contravene the methodological foundation of its study and from a purist point of view they should not be left unchecked. Historical truth does matter and for this reason these theories need to be tackled because they obscure our understanding of the past. This is not to say that the concept of historical truth is unproblematic or that truth no matter how one may define it is easy to establish. Yet certain interpretations should be dismissed as false or else we open the doors to a pernicious relativism where anything goes. That is not the aim of history and for this reason the historian has a duty to separate the metaphorical dross from the gold.

The second point which is especially pertinent to the Cypriot context is that conspiracy theories have a disproportional influence on non-academic historical knowledge. The belief that at some point a conspiracy changed the course of history is still widespread in Greek Cypriot society. Because of the reluctance of the historians to challenge this attitude the popular understanding of

45 U. Eco (2001) *Foucault's Pendulum*, London: Vintage Random House, p. 619.

Cypriot history has been dominated by conspiracies and a simplistic binary world view where the non-Greek Cypriots are often perceived as potential plotters or enemies of the nation. Whereas in other countries conspiracy theories are on the fringe of historiography in Cyprus they are virtually embedded in the public discourse and their proponents even challenge scholarly historical interpretations. Interpretations which call for self-criticism and a cool appraisal of the EOKA struggle are dismissed by EOKA supporters as yet another conspiracy which aims to undermine the national identity of the Greek Cypriots. In the current debate on the revision of school history text books the proponents of no change, which incidentally are supporters of EOKA, implicitly accept that some conspiracy took place. By opposing any change they want to preserve a distorted view of history where conspiracies take precedence over rational and empirical interpretations of history. Behind such theories lies a reluctance to accept the findings of scientific historical inquiry and a deep seated anti-intellectualism which prefers to view history in emotional terms.

As it was argued above the Zurich-London treaties were the result of the weakness of Greece and the Greek Cypriots to achieve *enosis*, and not of some conspiracy of the Greek leadership. Greece was too weak and had lost too much favour to be heeded by Britain which was anxious to placate Turkey over its Cyprus policy. On the other hand EOKA, despite the sacrifices it had made and was willing to make, was locked in a struggle that it could not win and was only going to exacerbate the situation. Neither Karamanlis nor Makarios had a serious incentive to betray the struggle. On the contrary both leaders received unfair criticism for this decision. Faced with the dilemma to choose between more bloodshed and even partition on one hand and an independent Cyprus on the other they made the right decision. It was a realistic appraisal of the critical conditions that led to independence rather than a conspiracy to thwart *enosis*. The second conspiracy analysed earlier is also patently false despite the fact that Britain did use Turkey to block *enosis*. This was not a conspiracy but instead it was in line with the publicly declared British policy in Cyprus. The British aim was to hold on to Cyprus and once violence broke out and its position on the island became difficult, it resorted to the expediency of using Turkey against the Greek claim. However Britain failed to achieve its objective, to retain Cyprus, when Turkey started to demand partition. Faced with the twin opposition of Greece and Turkey, Britain was forced to change its attitude and accept the necessity of abandoning Cyprus. If this was a conspiracy it was a badly executed one which failed in its putative aim. In reality the decolonisation of Cyprus was the result of Greek Cypriot strategy going awry in the face of superior conflicting forces. Crucially its end was unintentional, a compromise born out of necessity between all interested parties as everybody settled for less than they had hoped for.

Therefore it is important for historians to begin addressing conspiracy theories which relate to the history of the Cyprus problem. The study of history is not only for academic debate in the ivory towers of the university. The mission of academia is also the diffusion of knowledge to the general public and the history of Cyprus cannot be an exception to this rule. Cypriot history has been abused a lot in the past by different groups and agents, each seeking to appropriate it according to some political agenda. The time is ripe to reclaim the history of Cyprus and set it free

from all sorts of falsehoods and distortions of truth which have kept it in captivity. It is not an easy task and such an effort is bound to meet resistance but even the longest journey must begin at some point.

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Conspiracy Theories and Cypriot History: The Comfort of Commonly Perceived Enemies

JAN ASMUSSEN

Abstract

A distinct Cypriot history as opposed to a Greek and Turkish national narrative did not appear before the catastrophe of 1974. Even after that, no consensus on the main parameters of recent Cypriot history emerged. One unifying element, however, did exist to which most Cypriots from different communities and political factions adhere, and this is the widespread conviction that Cyprus has fallen victim to foreign powers.¹ According to this school of thought no violence would have occurred if not for the poisonous influence of Anglo-American conspiracy. Far from being confined to popular discourse, this theory exists and repeats itself in academic circles and 'scholarly' research. It seems to provide a comfortable – yet dangerous – exit from considering each other's responsibilities for various aspects of the 'Cyprus problem'. In order to put major conspiracy theories to the test, some aspects of British colonial policy in Cyprus and British-American involvement in the Cyprus Crisis of 1974 will be examined here. The intention is to exemplify the thorny passage to a future scholarship-based rewriting of a common Cypriot history.

Keywords: Conspiracy theories, diplomatic history, British colonial administration, American diplomacy, 1974 crisis in Cyprus

British Colonial Conspiracies

Those who sense British conspiracy mainly adhere to the thesis that Britain tried to apply a policy of *divide et impera*, or divide and rule policy, on the island of Cyprus. The argument here is that British colonial policy has deliberately played Turkish and Greek Cypriots against one another. The protagonists of this school of thought cite the following acts on behalf of the colonial government to prove their theory:

1. The British decision to divide the school system between Greek (i.e., orthodox Christian) and Turkish (i.e., Muslim) schools (Kitromilides, 1977, p. 171; Kitromilides and Couloumbis, 1976, p. 170);

1 This view is often transported on the horseback of sensational book titles such as 'The Tortured Island' or 'In the Crosshairs of NATO' (Sherman, 1999; Kadritzke and Wagner, 1976).

2. British insistence to give Turkish Cypriots a disproportional share of members in the *Medjlis Idarë* (later Legislative Council) (Yennaris, 2003, p. 20);
3. Introduction of a Turkish staffed riot police (Auxiliary Police) during the EOKA-Period (Mallinson, 2005, p. 26).

All three points should not be easily discarded. Unquestionably, the non-existence of a mixed educational system made any dream of a common Cypriot identity based on a shared understanding of history impossible. Moreover, by sourcing ideas, schoolbooks and teachers from Greece and Turkey, nationalism was imported as well. Conversely, if this is to be called a conspiracy we need to analyse the British motivation to opt for a diverted system. First, we should concede that the Colonial government did not divide the school system in Cyprus, but chose to leave the Ottoman system in place which left religious communities in control. What is more, the British government made the miscalculation that this would avoid racial troubles rather than inspire them. To this effect the Cyprus colonial government celebrated its success in 1913 by asserting that 'the religious question, so pregnant with difficulties in other countries, has been easily solved by the dual school system' (Lukach and Jardine, 1913, p. 137).

There is nothing to suggest that Britain attempted to keep the communities apart in order to stir up trouble or solidify division by means of education. Above all, one must also ask whether an imposed unified – possibly British – educational system would have resulted in a common Cypriot identity. Given the vicinity of the motherlands such a system might well have encountered utter resentment by Greek and Turkish Cypriots alike.

At first sight, the second argument appears more serious. The set-up in the Legislative Council clearly provided for a system that relied on Muslim/Turkish-Cypriot support for the British official members, whose combined votes secured a majority in the assembly. There is no doubt that the Turkish-Cypriot vote could have had a negative effect on Greco-Turkish relations on the island. What we have here is a pattern of British colonialism that can be traced undeniably to many other parts of the British Empire where the deepening of interethnic strife had resulted in Ceylon, Bengal, or Malaysia for instance. Still, in Cyprus, the British could not rely on the Turkish-Cypriot vote. The elected members of the Legislative Council basically shared the aim of paying fewer taxes to the colonial administration and since the Legislative Council decided the budget there was a strong possibility that the system might not have secured the desired automatic vote for the colonial administration. What really prevented Greco-Turkish co-operation was not the constitutional set-up, but the introduction of Greek desires for *Enosis* to the budget discussions (Georghallides, 1979, p. 75). Nevertheless, on a few occasions Turkish-Cypriot members voted with their Greek counterparts. In such cases the British governors, using the instrument of the *King's order in council*, simply by-passed these decisions (Georghallides, 1985, pp. 666-667). As the British Empire was exactly that – a colonial Empire and not a democracy for the benefit of the commonwealth – this should not come as a surprise. As for the question of whether this has contributed to Greco-Turkish division, we have to maintain that since the system was replaced by

the British in 1931 for a more direct and openly undemocratic one, ethnic strife in Cyprus did not increase. If the British had any intention in 1931 to foster Turkish-Cypriot political rights at the expense of the Greek Cypriots, they refrained from doing so and instead the island remained under authoritarian rule until 1960.

The third element quoted as proof of a British divide-and-rule conspiracy is the introduction of a special police force that was staffed by Turkish Cypriots and commanded by British officers.² In terms of results of British policy in Cyprus the ramification has been a devastating one. Images appeared in the local and world press showing Turkish-Cypriot policemen searching Greek houses and fighting against Greek-Cypriot students. The upshot of this could only end in interethnic trouble. Additionally, more Turkish Cypriots were recruited into the regular Cyprus Police Force. However, while the number of Turkish-Cypriot policeman grew, Greek Cypriots still remained in the local security forces in large numbers.³ Apart from British soldiers and government officials, policemen were prime targets of the EOKA (Ethniki Organosis Kypriou Agoniston⁴). As more Turkish Cypriots joined the force, more Turkish-Cypriot policemen were killed which led to the second disastrous effect – Turkish-Cypriot leaders and the press did not report such killings as those of combatants in a guerrilla war, but as Turks murdered by Greeks. The result was that the conflict which began as one between EOKA and the British, then transformed into one between

2 In December 1955 the Auxiliary Police Force consisted of 1,009 men; Robins, George Herbert: Reports as Commissioner of Police, Cyprus, 1955-1956, MSS. Medit. s. 9; Progress Report on Development and build up of the Cyprus Police Force, Commissioner and Deputy Governor, 9 December 1955, 'The strength of the Auxiliary Police has risen very slightly and is now 1153, making a total strength in the force of 2997 all ranks', MSS. Medit. s. 9; Progress Report, Development and Expansion of the Cyprus Police Force, Chief of Staff, Office of Commissioner of Police Cyprus and Governor, 10 February 1956. By March 1956 the numbers had risen to 1,172 policemen. MSS. Medit. s. 9; Progress Report, 13 March 1956.

3 In 1955 the Cyprus Police Force had 1,003 Greek-Cypriot (54.57%) and 734 Turkish-Cypriot (39.93%) members. In 1958 the ratio was 920 Greek-Cypriots (31%) to 1,429 Turkish Cypriots (47%). At the time of independence the ratio was reduced to 493 Greek-Cypriots (60.64%) and 309 Turkish Cypriots (38.1%). CO 69/59 Administration Reports 1955 Part II; Annual Report on the Cyprus Police Force for the Year 1955 by G.H. Robins, MBE, Commissioner of Police, Cyprus. CO 69/65 Cyprus Administration Reports 1958 Part 2; Annual Report on the Cyprus Police Force for the Year 1958 by John E.S. Brown Esq. OBE, Chief Constable of Cyprus, Nicosia 1959, NA. CO 69/68 Administration Reports 1960 Part I; Annual Report on the Cyprus Gendarmerie Force for the Period 16 August 1960-31 December 1960 by Ahmed Niazi Esq. Commander, Cyprus Gendarmerie. CO 69/59 Administration Reports 1955 Part II; Annual Report on the Cyprus Police Force for the Year 1955 by G.H. Robins, MBE, Commissioner of Police, Cyprus. CO 69/65 Cyprus Administration Reports 1958 Part 2; Annual Report on the Cyprus Police Force for the Year 1958 by John E.S. Brown Esq. OBE, Chief Constable of Cyprus, Nicosia 1959, NA. CO 69/68 Administration Reports 1960 Part I; Annual Report on the Cyprus Gendarmerie Force for the Period 16 August 1960-31 December 1960 by Ahmed Niazi Esq. Commander, Cyprus Gendarmerie.

4 Ethniki Organosis Kypriou Agoniston (EOKA): National Organisation of Cypriot Fighters.

Greek and Turkish Cypriots.⁵ By 1958 full-scale fighting occurred throughout the island. Did the British anticipate that the enlargement of the police force would provoke this result? A comprehensive study of the Auxiliary Police has still to be undertaken, but what can be said at this stage, is that those responsible for re-organising the Cyprus Police had given surprisingly little thought toward the outcome of changing the ethnical composition of the force. The main arguments cited for expanding Turkish recruitment were:

1. The large number of resignations by Greek-Cypriot policemen, who either felt intimidated by EOKA or shared EOKA's aims.
2. The feeling that some Greek-Cypriot members cooperated with EOKA and were, therefore, deemed unreliable.
3. That Turkish Cypriots, for the same reasons, would prove more loyal (interview with Philis Roushias, Cyprus CID (1940-1955), 14 May 1996).

The main rationale seemed to be to install a loyal police force that could be used against EOKA. John E.S. Brown, Chief Constable of Cyprus, described the unusually high numbers of Turkish Cypriots in the following terms:

'The racial composition of the force normally remains fairly constant as between Greek and Turkish Cypriots. As for the previous two and a half years, however, the racial balance has remained upset because of the emergency and there was still an abnormally high Turkish Cypriot element' (CO 69/65).

Apparently, the idea that a Turkish police force might have negative effects on interethnic relations did not figure highly – if discussed at all – among those who put it in place.

The three points discussed above exemplify the main flaw in the theory of a divide-and-rule conspiracy. British decisions were generally taken with no such policy in mind, yet the outcome served to support this theory.

5 'Until recently there had not been any serious inter-community trouble in Cyprus, although Turkish community feeling had run high on a number of occasions when Turkish Cypriots were injured as a result of terrorist activity'. Mediterranean Department, Colonial Office: The Turkish Community in Cyprus, Brief for Sir Hugh Foot, No. 7, July 1956, Foot papers - Additional MSS; MSS. Medit. s. 35; Box 1/Folder 1 1957 Registry Number 181/2, RHL. 'It is clear that the Turkish Cypriot community is thoroughly incensed and that further EOKA outrages claiming Turkish Cypriot victims are likely to be the occasion for retaliation against Greek Cypriots'. CO 926/422 Confidential, Inter-Communal Strife in Cyprus, J.E. Galsworthy, 15 June 1956, NA. 'Daily Sitrep No. 109 covering period 11/12 Jan. [1956] One Paphos. At 07:40 hrs. Turkish Cypriot Police detective shot and killed outside his house. Believed one attacker only. Funeral attended by large crowd but pas[s]ed off peacefully. Two. There were demonstrations by Turkish Cypriots in main towns in Protest against Paphos shooting referred above. Small Incidents reported, incl. Greek Turkish clashes, but generally all were dispersed peacefully'. CO 926/416 Sabotage and Incidents in Cyprus 1955/1956; MIDEAST Main and War Office. MIDEAST Rear. Confidential, 12 January 1956, NA.

British Rule in Cyprus in a Broader Context

Huge emphasis has been placed on Britain's focal role in the Cyprus conflict. In order to put into perspective the British legacy in Cyprus we need to compare the developments on the island with those of the region. Indeed, the island's history differs considerably from neighbouring areas of the former Byzantine and Ottoman Empires.

Major political developments that took place in Anatolia, the Aegean and the Balkans, did not occur in Cyprus precisely because it was occupied by the British. As a consequence, Cyprus and its communities did not experience events like the Cretan uprising, the Balkan Wars, and the Greco-Turkish War. While these areas suffered considerable shifts in their ethnical formation due to the nature of war, ethnical cleansing or 'population exchange', Cyprus remained untouched by such horrors and also continued to be largely unaffected by the first and second World Wars. Few Cypriots joined up to fight since the island's male population was not conscripted to the British Army which accepted volunteers only (Asmussen, 2006).

One effect of the absence of war was, for much of the British period, that national discourses in Cyprus did not have the same brutal side-effects as those in the so-called 'motherlands' (Asmussen, 2001). Violent clashes among Greek and Turkish Cypriots only occurred in a few confined cases in the period up to the mid-1950s (Asmussen, 2004).

Thus, British imperialism in Cyprus served as a buffer that softened nationalistic discourse, however, it did not alleviate the rise of nationalism but rather helped to delay a process that had been completed in the motherlands some thirty years earlier. The British neither tried to deliberately divide the Cypriots, nor attempted to solve the divisions by what the District Commissioner for Famagusta, Bertram John Weston, termed 'creating a Cypriot' (Rhodes House: Weston).⁶ Until 1954 at least, Cyprus had only marginal economic and strategic significance for the Empire. Subsequently, Britain took little interest in the island's development and even less interest in its inhabitants. Robert Holland justly reckoned that 'the truth was that as late as the beginning of 1954 the *beau idea* of British rule in Cyprus was not to be soiled and comprised by involvement in communal politics, but rather to be suspended above it' (1998, p. 67). It was not British foresight and good governance, but rather luck that prevented Cyprus to fall earlier into the trap of nationalism.

Anglo-American Post-Independence Conspiracies – The 1974 Crisis⁷

Due to particular features of the post-independence Cyprus conflict it lent itself easily to mythmaking. The parties involved in the conflict were the NATO Allies, Greece, Turkey, the

6 'I have long maintained that our failure to produce a Cypriot in 79 years is one of the weakest points in our armament ...' Weston, Bertram John: Correspondence 1954-1959 with Colonial Secretary, RHL MSS. Medit. s. 12; BJ. Weston to A.F. John Reddaway, Administrative Secretary, 26 February 1957, RHL.

7 This sub-chapter summarises some of the findings of my recent work on the 1974 war in Cyprus. For a more

United States, and Great Britain. There was also the existence of Europe's biggest Communist Party outside of the Soviet block, the Greek-Cypriot AKEL, and a lingering ethnic conflict between Greek and Turkish Cypriots. This, along with the presence of a United Nations peace force stationed in Cyprus since 1964, provided the perfect background for a considerable number of conspiracy theories to evolve.

Among the theories, the most prominent was the involvement of the United States, especially of Henry Kissinger and the CIA, with the aim of replacing the 'Castro of the Mediterranean', i.e., Makarios, and dividing the island between two NATO allies. Another contains similar explanations of the British involvement.

O'Malley and Craig, for example, in their 'Cyprus Conspiracy' argued 'that the Cyprus crisis was no failure of American diplomacy, but a deliberate Cold War plot to divide the island and save the top secret spying and defence facilities from the twin threats of a communist takeover or British withdrawal' (1999, p. x). Hitchens (1997) and Mallinson (2005) argue in similar ways. The following serve as 'proof' for these theories:

1. The American reluctance to continue to recognise Makarios as the legitimate President of Cyprus.
2. Britain's refusal to intervene on behalf of Makarios and her subsequent negative response to a call by Turkey for joint intervention.

But what is really behind the Cyprus crises of 1974 and what were the principles guiding British and especially American policy towards it? In April 1976 the House of Commons Select Committee on Cyprus published its report and asked the question: 'Why in fact then did not Britain intervene?' It concluded, that 'the full truth will never be known unless and until all official papers of the period can be seen' (House of Commons, 1976, p. ix).

The thirty-year restriction limit on the opening of British Government files for 1974 has now passed and the papers are open for reviewing. Similarly, US files have also been released. Apart from the question of why Britain failed to fulfil its obligation under the Treaty of Alliance other questions need to be addressed such as:

1. Did the US or the British Governments know of the coup in advance?
2. Did both consider intervening on behalf of Makarios?
3. What were Anglo-American attitudes towards the post-coup Government in Cyprus?
4. What did American and British intelligence reveal about Turkish aims and objectives as Turks prepared to land in Cyprus?

detailed account please refer to Jan Asmussen (2008a) *Cyprus at War: Diplomacy and Conflict During the 1974 Crisis*. London: I.B. Tauris.

5. Was there at any point any possibility that British or American troops would engage or confront Turkish ones in order to stop their advance?
6. Were there any combined US/British initiatives to diffuse the crisis before it was too late?

Intelligence on the Coup

Contrary to Kissinger's claim, that the information 'was not exactly lying around the streets', the likelihood of a coup in Cyprus was actually well known. From February 1974, the State Department was aware, based on information gathered by the CIA, that Ioannides was contemplating the removal of Makarios (Constandinos, 2009, p. 375). On 17 May, upon receipt of CIA reports, the State Department Area Specialist for Cyprus, Thomas Boyatt, anticipated trouble in Cyprus and attempted to do something about it. He wrote: 'If the National Guard and EOKA-B succeed in getting rid of Makarios, a direct confrontation between Greece and Turkey would be inevitable' (Nixon: STATE 103030). However, the American Ambassador to Greece, Henry J. Tasca, argued against any strong action and made a low-key representation to the Greek Government instead of talking to the Military who were actually in command in Athens. Tasca, who was basically a Nixon associate, had long been regarded by Kissinger as a mere spokesperson for the Junta (Constandinos, 2009, p. 166). His reluctance to deal with the existent leadership, coupled with Kissinger's indifference on the issue, resulted in the CIA being the only real contact with the Junta. As far as Ioannides was concerned, CIA Station Chief Stanley Hulse, represented the US government, but Hulse is reported to have been shouted at by Ioannides shortly before the coup, an indication that Hulse might have warned him against it (*ibid.*, p. 168).

On 14 July the CIA reported that the leader of the Greek Military Junta, Dimitrios Ioannides, had decided not to intervene, and on 15 July, the day of the actual coup, the CIA summary contained a statement to the same effect. The State Department's ex-post-assessment was that Ioannides had deliberately misled the US Government (Ford: Boyatt to Kissinger).

It seems the intelligence on Cyprus was at best 'conflicting', and Kissinger had no clear forewarning at the time of the coup. Whether individual CIA agents in Athens had encouraged Ioannides to believe that he had American acquiescence remains to be seen when more CIA material is declassified. In any case, involvement on behalf of the Secretary of State can be ruled out. Kissinger had failed to take advice by his department specialists and had, therefore, failed to impress on the Junta earlier that the US would not support the coup. As rumours of a pending coup were frequent, Kissinger did not take them serious enough. CIA Director, William Colby, took part of the blame and enacted a new warning system called the 'Alert Memorandum' (Constandinos, 2009, p. 377).

For the UK side, the British fortnightly Intelligence Summary No 13/74 for the period 19 June-2 July 1974 of the Joint Intelligence Group, did not contain any hint of a possible coup. Regarding Makarios' decision to reduce conscription from two years to fourteen months, and his call on Greece to withdraw its officers from Cyprus, the summary commented:

'To date there is no public comment from the Greek Government either about the Cyprus Government's announcement that members of the Greek regime are behind EOKA-B and Cyprus Government proposed changes in the National Guard' (WO 386/12, Fortnightly Intelligence Summary No 13/74).

The British High Commissioner in Nicosia, Stephen Olver, later stated that 'a coup had always been a possibility' (FCO 9/1914), and John Aiken, the Commander of the British Forces in the Near East, reported that reliable sources had for some time confirmed that a coup was inevitable, but indications were that the plan was to act in October (WO 386/21, p. 13, note 2). Nevertheless, there are no indications that Callaghan took the situation in Cyprus any more serious than Kissinger did. What can be stated here is that while there is little indication that the coup had American or British support, determined action that could have prevented it was pending.

Intervention on behalf of Makarios

US strategies were defined at the Washington Special Action Group (WSAG) meeting of the National Security Council (NSC), on 18 July as follows:

1. Avoiding the exercise of the military option, and thus, a war between Turkey and Greece, or civil war in Cyprus;
2. Minimising Soviet involvement;
3. Avoiding a situation in which the US would be seen as colluding on the side of one NATO ally against the other;
4. Promoting a solution which on Cyprus itself will be in our interests and will not lead either to further instability or increased leftist/east block influence. US Government (USG) shall take no specific position on possible elements of settlement before Sisco's mission is completed.⁸

The WSAG meeting further decided to 'avoid tipping our hand now on the immediate problem of Makarios'. Some scenario involving Makarios' return was not ruled out but depended 'heavily on the attitude of our allies'.

For the moment the immediate US strategy was defined as:

1. Staying in touch with Sisco until consensus ripens;
2. Stalling action at the UN even if Makarios appeared, and depending on what he would say as a result of his talks in London;
3. Keeping a close eye on Turk, Greek and Soviet force dispositions and movements;
4. US Government's public line would 'not now' reflect any specific decision on the fate of

8 Under Secretary Joe Sisco was sent on a shuttle mission between Athens and Ankara to contain the crisis.

Makarios. They were already on record supporting the sovereignty and integrity of Cyprus (Nixon: Memorandum, Brent Scowcroft to Nixon).

The main reason to keep the UN out of the affair remained clearly to forestall a possible Soviet involvement. Kissinger, however, was clearly not a big fan of Secretary-General Kurt Waldheim, who he described, a 'horse's ass' during a conversation with his staff a day before the Turkish intervention started (Nixon: Telecon Kissinger/McCloskey).

While the Americans kept a 'wait-and-see policy', the British Prime Minister, Harold Wilson, had asked the Chief of Staff to evaluate a possible intervention. Nonetheless, it was never taken seriously into consideration. A contingency plan, estimating the need of some 20,000 troops, was drawn up to demonstrate the dangers of such a move rather than contemplating any real preparations. The plan warned that Britain could find itself 'facing an open-ended and expensive situation, similar to Northern Ireland' (PREM 16/19).

Instead three other contingency plans were implemented:

- Op SKYLARK – Evacuation of Makarios. (WO 386/21 Report of the Commander of the British Forces Near East on the Cyprus Emergency, p. 7)
- Op ABLAUT – Reinforcement of SBAs (WO 386/21, Annex C)
- Op PLATYBUS – Replacement of local SBA staff with British military personal (WO 386/21, Annex D)

A total of 2,700 officers and men, tanks and a small armada were despatched to Cyprus, which joined the two regiments already on training there (WO 386/21, Annex C).

Attitude towards the Sampson Government

The reinforcements under Op ABLAUT spawned the most press reports suggesting a possible British intervention. High Commissioner Olver vigorously complained about this, and argued that:

'The new regime backed by the National Guard is now in control of virtually the entire island. Opposition has to all intents and purposes died out. The Police Tactical Reserve has surrendered, and most of its members are under arrest. I discount the possibility of any local uprising to restore Makarios. The National Guard could without difficulties put down any such attempt. Many Cypriots will be sad that Makarios has gone. Many of them have no respect or affection for the new regime. Nevertheless, the regime cannot now be overthrown by any force within Cyprus. Makarios could only re-establish himself with military assistance of some foreign powers. Many people dislike the thought that Sampson has been brought to power on the backs of Greek Military; but there is relief at the disappearance of some aspects of Makarios' regime: his restoration by force would be very far from popular, and would cause more problems locally than it would serve' (WO 386/21, Tel No 230).

It appears that at least Her Majesty's representative in Cyprus recognised the new state of affairs and disapproved of taking any action. Similar observations could be made by reading the first cables coming in from the US ambassador to Cyprus, Roger Davis. Kissinger, however, repeatedly made clear that the US Government would continue to recognise the existing government (Nixon: Telcon Callaghan/Kissinger).

The US Government preferred a solution in which Makarios would be replaced legally by Glafkos Clerides, the President of the House of Representatives. He was the long-standing Greek-Cypriot negotiator during the intercommunal talks and was considered to be much more reasonable than the Archbishop. On 17 July Kissinger told Nixon that the US would 'work for a compromise in which neither Makarios [n]or the other guy [Nikos Sampson] take over' (Nixon: Telcon Nixon/Kissinger: 17 July 1974).

Kissinger's main fear was that Makarios would be accepting a Soviet offer to restore him, which the US could hardly resist (Nixon: Telcon Nixon/Kissinger: 17 July 1974).

Needless to say Kissinger was delighted as Clerides was sworn in as interim President after the Turkish landing in Cyprus. He said to Callaghan that 'although the process had been very painful the present situation was probably a net gain for the West' (FCO 9/1897).

Callaghan, while being sympathetic to the idea, was sceptical as to whether Clerides could cope with the situation in Cyprus. That being the case, Britain did not totally abandon the idea of a possible return of Makarios. British soldiers actually saved the Archbishop's life by putting into force a contingency plan developed in 1972 (WO 386/21 Report of the Commander British Forces Near East on the Cyprus Emergency, p. 7).

Intelligence about the Turkish Aims and Possible Anglo-American Actions

Both British and American Intelligence circles were able to predict Turkish plans. A report directed by the Joint Intelligence Committee – the highest body of the British Secret Services – was presented to the Cabinet on Friday 19 July. This account, just one day before the Turkish intervention shows that Britain knew exactly what the Turkish aims were and explains to some extent Britain's later stance towards her own possible intervention against Turkey. The committee assessed that the Turks would seek to seize the port of Famagusta, the airfield at Tymbou (today Ercan Airport) and finally advance to the Morphou area in the west. It concluded:

'We see the primary military objectives being to achieve a de facto partition of the island, with the Turks occupying the North-East, including the Turkish quarter of Nicosia and the Port of Famagusta. (...) We do not believe that the Greeks could prevent the Turks from attaining their military objectives' (WO 386/21 JIC London to Paris).

The US State Department was doubtless opposed to the partition of Cyprus since it could 'sow the seeds of future Cyprus problems. Greece and Turkey would [just] have another frontier to dispute' (Nixon: Contingency Study for Cyprus).

Unlike 1964 and 1967 the US failed to discourage Turkey's involvement. Instead of issuing strong statements Kissinger confined himself to informing the Turkish Government that the US understood the Turkish concerns but instructed Undersecretary Sisco to make it clear in Ankara that an armed intervention would set in train events which would be damaging to Turkey's long term interests (Nixon: STATE 157127). The USG would take a very serious view towards armed Turkish intervention. This could hardly be understood as a deterrent by the Turks and after Turkish soldiers had landed and advanced in Cyprus, Kissinger realised that he needed to take a stronger stance if he wanted the Turks to agree, at least, to a cease-fire. Subsequently he instructed Sisco to be 'brutally frank' with the Turks (Nixon: STATE 157969).

Sisco had indeed been instructed that 'a central objective of [his] mission' was 'to persuade the Turks to hold off military intervention' (Nixon: Memorandum, Saunders to Kissinger). As the Turks prepared for landing in Cyprus, Kissinger, in a phone conversation with Nixon on 19 July, confessed that 'the only way (...) we could have done it [i.e., stop the Turks] was by being more threatening which we weren't. We were maybe too pleading but frankly we didn't think they'd move this fast' (Nixon: Telcon, Kissinger/Nixon, 19 July 1974).

In sum, Kissinger misjudged the situation and failed to take a firmer stand on the issue. After the Turks started to move he could only try to mend the situation by suggesting a quick replacement of Sampson by Clerides or consent to partition. To Defence Secretary James A. Schlesinger he said 'we will work for double enosis or for Clerides, whichever works out' (Nixon: Telcon, Schlesinger/Kissinger).

Likelihood of British (American)/Turkish Confrontation

The main prevailing principle of American and British policy throughout the crisis was to prevent war between Greece and Turkey. In order to do so Britain seriously considered stopping Turkey's advance. The main consideration behind this was that the newly installed Karamanlis Government in Greece might not survive if Turkey tried to divide the island. In this case as Sir Robin Hooper, HM Ambassador in Athens cautioned, referring to information from the spokesman of the Greek Government before the 2nd Geneva Conference:

'Karamanlis Government might be replaced by a military one. This might be followed after the inevitable defeat by civil war from which there might emerge a left-wing Government under Papandreu which would withdraw from NATO and either declare neutrality or take Greece into the Soviet block' (WO 386/21 Report of the Commander British Forces Near East on the Cyprus Emergency, p. 65).

However, Britain was not prepared to confront Turkey alone – The preferred British scenario would have been a joint action by UNFICYP, the British Forces in Cyprus and the US Sixth Fleet in order to stop the Turkish advance. Despite this there were at least three occasions in which a major confrontation between British and Turkish forces were stopped at the very last minute.

These were:

- The evacuation of Kyrenia of British and foreign nationals (22-23 July);
- The confrontation between UNFICYP and Turkish troops at Nicosia Airport (24 July);
- The proposed blockade of Turkish reinforcements and Turkish advance under UN authorisation (23/25/30 July/10 August).

In light of Turkish cease fire violations Britain considered to impose a joint Anglo-American blockade on sea traffic to northern Cyprus. It was assessed that 'present Royal Navy forces were adequate for the blockade but that if the Turks were to use all the forces at their disposal the blockade might be unable to guarantee 100% effectiveness. US Sixth Fleet assistance would make the task much easier' (FCO 9/1901 Callaghan to UKMIS).

Regardless, the US answer was that they 'would in no circumstances use force or the threat of force to deter Turkey' (FCO 9/1901 Richard, UKMIS New York to FCO). Unlike the British the Americans, notably Kissinger, did not believe that Greece would at that stage go to war with Turkey. Subsequently an armed American engagement was not needed to prevent a major NATO crisis in the Eastern Mediterranean. Secondly, Kissinger made a total miscalculation on his personal influence on Ecevit. Ecevit had taken courses as a student of the Secretary at Harvard, consequently Kissinger tried to play on this teacher-student relationship and failed to see the Turkish determination to go ahead.

Finally Callaghan judged that any naval force even as part of UNFICYP would open the door to most unwelcome questions on the UNFICYP mandate. Following this, the Royal Navy Task Group already standing by at Cape Andreas was ordered to withdraw. Another proposal for a blockade was put forward by UN General Prem Chand who on 25 July suggested a UN operation cordon around the cease fire line in order to deter a Turkish break-out towards Kythrea and perhaps Famagusta. Even though the proposal found British support it failed to get Waldheim's approval, who argued that this was not covered by UNFICYP's mandate. A final debate on possible British/UNFICYP intervention was initiated by Callaghan on 10 August suggesting the strong reinforcement of Peacekeepers. The aim was now only deterrence, since the Turks had reached a force level which made effective opposition almost impossible. Nonetheless, by that time British policy had changed: During a meeting held early on 14 August between the Prime Minister, Foreign Secretary, Defence Secretary and the Chief of Staff it was decided that 'HMG's policy should be one of a long diplomatic haul and that we would continue to maintain a low key military posture concentrating upon the security of our Sovereign Base Areas and our own nationals'. The main reason for this shift may well be connected to the fact that Callaghan had now joined Kissinger in his conviction that Greece would not go to war with Turkey anyway (WO 386/21 Report of the Commander British Forces Near East on the Cyprus Emergency, p. 85).

Failure at Geneva – The American Cantonal Proposal

While Kissinger and Callaghan tried to streamline their policies at the beginning of the Second Geneva Conference (8-13 August 1974), they ultimately failed. Callaghan still believed that only a strong deterrent could prevent Turkey from taking by force what she could not acquire at the negotiation table. In the wake of the conference it became apparent that the Greek side was totally opposed to a federal solution, which would lead to the partition of Cyprus into separate Greek and Turkish zones. Such a solution, which would include the exchange of population, was for a long time the main Turkish target.

Kissinger, who later stated that there was 'no American reason why the Turks should not have one-third of Cyprus' (Ford: Memorandum of conversation, Ford, Kissinger, Scowcroft), realised that there was no progress at the conference table. He, therefore, decided to bring forward his own proposal: a cantonal solution. He explained this new approach in a phone conversation with President Ford on 10 August as follows:

'The Turks propose two areas – one Turkish – one Greek. I think the Greeks we can push into a position where they would be willing to accept two or three autonomous Turkish areas but not one contiguous area. That would avoid population transfer' (Ford: Telecon, Ford/Kissinger).

The next day Kissinger wrote to Ecevit and suggested that:

'your Government could consider two or three well-defined Turkish areas rather than one single geographic zone' (Ford: STATE 175382).

The US Ambassador to Ankara, William B. Macomber, submitted the text to Ecevit on the morning of 11 August. He actually drew possible lines for the proposed canton on a map and suggested 'one or two major cantons' and up to four smaller ones. Ecevit – as Macomber was drawing – became 'more interested in some lines' and finally accepted considering an alternative arrangement of this kind (Ford: ANKARA 6412). The Turks swiftly started to work on the proposal and came up with a cantonal solution during the evening of the same day (6.30 p.m.) in a message to Kissinger. The Turkish proposal foresaw that Turkish-Cypriot administration zones should be formed in one-third of the island. There should be one main zone, which should immediately be defined and adopted for Turkish-Cypriot administration amounting to about 17% of the total area of Cyprus. Additionally, the Turks proposed five cantons in Lefka, Polis, Paphos, Larnaca, and Karpasia. The exact demarcations and areas of the cantons proposed were to be defined later by a commission of experts (Ford: ANKARA 6414).

Kissinger was very keen to point out that the entire idea was not an American proposal as had been leaked through the press. He instructed Macomber early in the process to impress this on the Turks (Ford: STATE 175402). However, when Ecevit answered to Kissinger, he began by saying, 'we have studied your proposal', which left no doubt about the origin of the cantonal idea (Ford: ANKARA 6414).

When the Turks finally presented the proposal at Geneva, it took all parties by surprise. Neither the British, nor the Greek and Greek-Cypriots had been forewarned. Subsequently, the affair was viewed as an unacceptable ultimatum rather than a suitable compromise. Callaghan was evidently angry and asked the Americans whether they regarded him as a dummy (FCO 9/1922: Doc 67). As a consequence, the British did not push for the cantonal solution and favoured the federal model. Thus, the American initiative failed to gain any support because of the obvious lack of US diplomatic preparations in Athens and London.

Kissinger ultimately tried to pin the blame on the British. On 13 August, as the conference was drawing to an end, he told President Ford that the US had tried to 'bail' the Cyprus situation out after it got out of control. 'The British have made a mess of it' (Ford: Memorandum of conversation, Ford, Kissinger, Scowcroft, 9 a.m., 13 August 1974). About a week later in a conversation with Cyrus Vance, Kissinger claimed that the Americans had been 'extremely forbearing' with the British. He continued to say that 'they insisted that we had the problem solved. They did not want us to send anybody to Geneva. We did not realize until Monday that there was going to be a blow-up. Callaghan had made some threatening statements. I had put forward a proposal that I thought the Turks would accept. Callaghan went through the roof that I put forward a proposal so that made the Greeks reject it' (FOIA).

In fact, a unique opportunity was lost, not because the British were messing it up, but because the Americans failed to file the British in time to develop a strategy under which the Greek side might have accepted a solution which would have been much better than what followed: A second round of fighting which resulted in the violent partition of Cyprus and in thousands of people becoming refugees.

Confusion instead of Conspiracy

To recapitulate to this point, the US Government had conflicting evidence on the coup and the CIA was probably misled by the Greek colonels. Britain had no idea when exactly a coup d'état would take place – but she knew that it might come. Neither the US nor Britain did consider intervening on behalf of Makarios. The Ambassadors on the ground, for some hours or days, even deliberated acknowledging the coupist Sampson Government. The US Government favoured the replacement of Sampson by Clerides instead of a return of Makarios. British and American Intelligence reports revealed knowledge of the objectives of the Turkish military operations in advance. US contingency planning was opposed to the 'partition' of Cyprus since it would continue to form a bone of contention between Greece and Turkey and in light of the danger of a Greco-Turkish war and its negative repercussions on NATO's southern flank the Wilson Government was prepared to halt a Turkish advance. As the danger of war waned, Britain abandoned the idea of intervention altogether. The US Government was at no point prepared to intervene and confront vital NATO allies. Add to that the fact that Henry Kissinger did not believe there was a real danger of a Greco-Turkish war. Moreover, he trusted his diplomatic skills

and ability to contain the Turks through personal conversations with his 'student' Bülent Ecevit. The US Government convinced the Turks to abandon their aim of partition in favour of a cantonal solution, but the affair, like the entire crisis, was so badly handled that the outcome of the initiative led to the rejection by all other parties. The fact that the Cyprus crisis (15 July-16 August 1974) coincided with the climax of the Watergate scandal (Nixon resigned on 8 August 1974) must be taken into account as well when we judge the measures taken by the American government towards Cyprus. The scandal left the White House in political limbo and while Nixon was struggling for his political survival, the real power lay in the hands of Henry Kissinger, and his style of 'secret' foreign policy frequently antagonised American allies and American diplomats alike. Kissinger, who developed a kind of paranoia regarding leaking information from State Department officials, preferred running Foreign Affairs within his own trusted 'kitchen cabinet'. He frequently neglected expert advice on behalf of his departmental staff (Ford: Boyatt to Kissinger). All US contingency planning was based on the assumption that the US could contain any conflict in Cyprus before it could evolve (Nixon: Contingency Study for Cyprus). There was no contingency planning for a failure to do so. Having said that, US policy, faced with this event had run out of options and the result was a terrible debacle.

The Function of Conspiracy Theories in Cypriot Historiography

Conspiracy theories can mainly develop in areas where hard evidence is lacking or withheld by interested parties. Freedom of information acts that are in place in much of Europe and North America have resulted in a great deal of revelations that pointed to real conspiracies by Western governments. The US involvement in Latin America and Asia (United Fruit/Honduras/Guatemala [Bucheli, 2005], Cambodia, Chile [US Congress, 94th Congress]) has supported the view that there are still a lot of details to discover about the handling of international affairs on behalf of the Americans during the Cold War years. In spite of that, those revelations have also proven that American foreign policy in the 1970s was orientated towards a perceived self-interest, rather than driven by an overall paranoia against communism. In the case of British colonialism a closer look toward American interest in the region is needed in order to evaluate what happened in Cyprus. It is amazing how many scholars and individuals have treated the island as a cosmos in its own right. The two British military bases and the American surveillance installations were defined as vital for western interest without defining what that interest actually was. There is a widespread tendency both among Cypriots and those dealing with the history of the island to view it as a focal point of international attention. As a result, they fail to see that international powers might have quite a different perspective. In fact, military installations in Cyprus were not of vital importance for American strategy in the Eastern Mediterranean. What was vital, were the installations the USA had in Turkey (Asmussen, 2008b). As the Soviet Union showed no initiatives to engage in Cyprus, the Americans did not promote any specific set-up for the future of the island – as long as it remained in the Western sphere. Consequently, since 1968, Turkish and

Greek Cypriots had considerable leverage regarding the possible shape of a common state in Cyprus. Neither superpower forced them to adopt a specific model of governance.

The conspiracy theories that exist about Cyprus would suggest the exact opposite: the image is one of an innocent island with an idle population that has fallen victim to international powers. The merits of this view are obvious – if there was a conspiracy, the sole responsibility for the Cyprus problem rests with aliens. Thus, conspiracy theories serve as a remedy for those who do not wish to engage in discussions as to how wrongdoings on behalf of Cypriots have attributed to the present situation. As those conspiracy theories have unmistakably failed the litmus test of archival research, it is time to move on to a far more difficult task which is that of establishing truth and reconciliation between Greek and Turkish Cypriots.

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BOOK
REVIEWS

VOLUME 23

NUMBER 2



Sweet and Bitter Island: A History of the British in Cyprus

TABITHA MORGAN

I.B. Tauris (London, 2010), 320 pp., 22 illustrations, 1 map

ISBN: 978-1-84885-329-4 (hardback)

When I decide to review books on Cyprus published by I.B. Tauris it is with much trepidation because of the inconsistent quality of their publications. Tabitha Morgan's book is an exception.

Journalists have probably written more books on the history of modern Cyprus than scholars, ranging from Nancy Crawshaw, Charles Foley, Robert Stephens, Christopher Hitchens, Ian Craig and Brendan O'Malley. It did not concern me that Morgan was a journalist when she informed me of her plans for a book because of her enthusiasm and willingness to consult widely the archival material. Yet I was concerned by the line in the preface which claims that this book 'makes no claims to be an academic history'. I was unsure whether to read this as an excuse for any inaccuracies and/or omissions, or that Morgan was simply recognising that she is not a professional historian. As it turns out, the book is academic, as well as entertaining. Although not perfect, this is more to do with certain limitations, by way of sources (although Morgan has accessed many primary sources never before used, she has not extensively consulted the widely available secondary sources); and length restrictions, partly the result of the publisher, and partly because Morgan came close to 'biting more off than she could chew'.

In terms of Cypriot historiography, Morgan's book can be situated alongside the best in secondary scholarship for it supports recent challenges to received wisdoms, while it also fills a void with its specific focus. From the first chapter, Morgan establishes that the British 'often felt confused about Cyprus ...' [and] 'uncertainty about the territory, in particular about who their colonial subjects were, provided a leitmotif throughout the British occupation of the island'. She adds in the same paragraph that: 'at the same time the colonists found many aspects of their new territory, particularly its geography and its archaeological and linguistic connections with ancient Greece, reassuringly familiar, in some cases even an extension of home'. This was one of the main arguments of my monograph, and it is reassuring that Morgan agrees, despite such findings being maligned elsewhere, ironically by someone who fails to see that Morgan argues the exact same thing!!

1 A. Varnava (2010) *British Imperialism in Cyprus, 1878-1915: The Inconsequential Possession*, Manchester: Manchester University Press; W. Mallinson (2011) 'Spies, Jolly Hockeysticks and Imperialism in Cyprus', *Journal of Balkan and Near Eastern Studies*, Vol. XIII, No. 2, pp. 263-268.

The other main thrust of Morgan's monograph is that Cyprus was for the most part of British rule a backwater. This argument also supports the contention in my monograph, although I disagree with Morgan's view that Cyprus became a backwater only after the British occupied Egypt.² Nevertheless, Morgan's argument that British confusion and often ad hoc policies regarding Cyprus owed itself to Cyprus' status as a backwater is true, although there were times when Cyprus' position as a backwater engendered specific policy decisions.

Before embarking on a critical analysis of Morgan's text, I would like to focus on her wonderful achievement and the new and interesting revelations she offers. I enjoyed Morgan's discussion on how Louisa Wolseley's choice of wallpaper highlighted a traditional and perceived organic pre-industrial vision, which mirrored colonial spaces (p. 9). The opening to chapter 2 is brilliant, with Morgan's discussion of the building of St Paul's Anglican Cathedral and how the destruction of St George's Cathedral, because it had started sinking, reflected the sinking feeling of many British elites in both Cyprus and Britain that Cyprus was the 'Whitest of White Elephants', or as I have put it, the 'Mediterranean El Dorado'. The discussion and theorisation of Biddulph's speech to the Royal Geographical Society in 1889 is ingenious: Morgan sees in this speech the obvious anxiety between the occident and the orient (continued in chapter 3), which many commentators have criticised me for revealing, but goes beyond this argument to also discuss an anxiety between modernisation, especially technical and industrial, and the pre-industrial and highly romanticised vision of rural/country life, which Cyprus offered. This led Morgan into an interesting debate on the Troodos Hill Station, although she should have consulted my article on this subject in volume XVII of *The Cyprus Review* of 2005. In chapter 4 Morgan offers a fascinating exchange on the 'model' government farm five miles outside Old Nicosia at Athalassa, from which the government aimed to provide a 'model' for the Cypriots and for investors, by providing a first-class breeding station, which would loan stud animals in order to create perfect breeds. This section fits nicely with new research that identifies an increase in agricultural production during this period, and the establishment of co-operative banks by the private sector, which the legislative council finally legislated on in 1914.³ Also impressive is Morgan's discussion of how High Commissioner Hamilton Goold-Adams handled the outbreak of the First World War. Goold-Adams, who claimed that his chief secretary Charles Orr was 'highly strung', proved an incompetent high commissioner, and himself highly strung, suffering a nervous breakdown before being shipped off to the ceremonial post of governor of Queensland. Equally excellent is Morgan's treatment of Malcolm Stevenson's tenure as high commissioner/governor in chapter 7. Important are the occasional comparisons with other parts of the Empire, such as when Morgan reveals that there had been 5000 prosecutions per year for illegal grazing in Cyprus, while only 130 in the United India Provinces (p. 108). Cyprus' development under Sir Ronald Storrs is well

2 Varnava, *British Imperialism in Cyprus*, *op. cit.*

3 A. Varnava and P. Clarke, 'The Development of Accountancy in Early British Cyprus', under review.

covered, and it was interesting to read how the improvement of Nicosia airfield allowed Jean Batten, then flying solo from England to Australia, to land to refuel, being one of the few truly historical feats to have included Cyprus (pp. 116-117). Morgan expertly and concisely evaluates the evidence on the enlistment in the Cyprus Regiment and the British Army generally during the Second World War and contradicts a recent nationalist approach (ironically also published by I.B. Tauris) that recruitment picked-up only when Greece entered the war,⁴ by showing that enlistment was so strong that conscription was rejected (pp. 146-147). An interesting point and one that adds to the questioning of Cyprus' strategic value is Morgan's point that had the German's established themselves in Syria during the Second World War a defence of Cyprus would be hopeless (p. 162). The discourse on espionage during the Second World War is very informative and solid – much more authoritative than recent efforts (in yet another I.B. Tauris book)⁵ – even if Morgan did not use the memoir of an intelligence officer, W.E. Benyon-Tinker. I enjoyed immensely Morgan's refreshing framing of chapter 12 around the outstanding Cypriot Dr Mehmet Aziz, whose pivotal and forgotten work eradicated malaria from the island. Equally pleasing is how Morgan succeeded in offering a balanced account of the 'emergency', discussing EOKA's notorious and yet little studied targeting of civilians, with British brutality, while also discussing how some Greek Cypriots protected British friends. Finally, but not least, Morgan makes an important point that the British were marginalised at the point of decolonisation in so many ways, a point I have also made elsewhere,⁶ and which needs comparison with other cases. Throughout there are some fascinating pieces of information, such as the fact that one-sixth of Cyprus' forests were felled in the First World War (p. 106), or that people were living in caves in Paphos into the 1920s (p. 108), and that Leontios was draped in the British, Greek and Turkish flags (p. 155), while addressing a crowd in Larnaca in 1940.

Morgan's book offers avenues for serious critical engagement, so important in any academic study. I question the often repeated claim that the insecure British tenure of Cyprus inhibited the development of the island (p. 3), putting this down to its status as a backwater and to the British preferring to recoup the tribute for the defaulted Ottoman Crimean War Loan of 1854 and so not wanting to spend local funds on development.⁷ I also question Morgan's support of Clauson over his disagreements with the various military intelligence officers during the First World War (p. 91), especially since in April 1918 Clauson accepted their proposals to upgrade martial law in

4 A. Yiangou (2010) *Cyprus in World War II: Politics and Conflict in the Eastern Mediterranean*, London: I.B. Tauris.

5 P. Dimitrakis (2010) *Military Intelligence in Cyprus from the Great War to Middle East Crises*, London: I.B. Tauris; See also my forthcoming review in *Journal of Mediterranean Studies*.

6 A. Varnava (2010) 'Reinterpreting Macmillan's Cyprus Policy, 1957-1960', *The Cyprus Review*, Vol. XXII, No. 1, pp. 79-106.

7 Varnava, *British Imperialism in Cyprus*, *op. cit.*, pp. 127-151.

line with Egypt, indicating a begrudging acceptance for tighter controls.⁸ Also, the British ruled Cyprus despotically after 1931 (p. 126), yet Cypriot elites rejected a constitution granting them limited self-government in 1948, so they preferred 'despotic rule' to limited self-government because of their *enosis* obsession.⁹ Also incomplete is Morgan's portrayal of the 'Oktovriana' (pp. 126-127) because she did not discuss the agrarian dimension of the disorders. I cannot agree with the claim that the Labour movement was incompatible with Empire (p. 199), since the Fabian Socialists were pro-Empire, justifying their stance by seeing the Empire as fertile ground in which to spread their socialist utopia. I equally could not agree with Morgan's uncritical depiction of the *enosis* 'plebiscite' (p. 205) and its claim to reflect a 'mass movement' (p. 207), because it was conducted undemocratically (an open ballot in churches) and it ignored Turkish Cypriot views. Morgan is generous to describe Grivas' 'X' organisation as shadowy (p. 206) given the overwhelming evidence of its collaboration with the Germans during the occupation. She is harsh on Robert Armitage, a view based on Robert Holland's fine book, and not on the more authoritative monograph by Colin Baker (a splendid I.B. Tauris publication¹⁰), which asserts that Armitage's dismissal from the Cyprus governorship was harsh because his replacement, Field-Marshal Sir John Harding, adopted many of his ideas.¹¹ I question that *enosis* and especially EOKA violence had deep-rooted support (p. 218), given that more Greek Cypriots were killed than any other ethnic group, when the supposed targets were British and later Turkish Cypriots, although I agree that British actions (p. 229) pushed some indifferent Greek Cypriots towards EOKA, it also worked the other way around. Finally, there are some minor errors and omissions: in the preface Morgan states that Cyprus became a Crown Colony in 1926 when it was in 1925; in chapter 1 that Wolseley's administration was to be temporary, when in fact it came to a sudden and unplanned end in 1879; that Government House in Nicosia was a military barracks meant for Ceylon, and not for civilian use as claimed; in chapter 2 it is implied that the British occupation of Egypt was intended to be permanent, which it was not, and there were serious proposals to move the British forces from Egypt to Troodos; also in chapter 2 it is claimed that Dr Frederick Heidenstam was the long-awaited government doctor, when he had in fact been in Cyprus before the British occupation; it was also a mistake to claim that the British had imposed the Tribute not believing that the British would retain Cyprus on a long-term basis, since they had secretly agreed to the Russians retaining Ardahan, Kars and Batoum, after promising to return Cyprus to the Sultan if the Russians returned Ardahan, Kars and Batoum; in chapter 3 the claim that Major-

8 A. Varnava (2012) 'British Military Intelligence in Cyprus during the Great War', *War in History*, forthcoming, Vol. XIX, No. 2.

9 In this connection, Richter's claim that the British ruled by decree is wrong, p. 132.

10 A. Varnava (1998) Review of Colin Baker's, *Retreat from Empire: Sir Robert Armitage in Africa and Cyprus*, London/New York: I.B. Tauris, and (2004) *Melbourne Historical Journal*, Vol. XXXII, pp. 83-85.

11 C. Baker (1998) *Retreat from Empire: Sir Robert Armitage in Africa and Cyprus*, New York: I.B. Tauris.

General Sir Robert Biddulph proposed to introduce English as the language of instruction in schools, an often repeated assertion, was not true – the aim was to introduce English alongside the local languages; also erroneous is the claim that the Church of Cyprus thought the teaching of the Greek language was pivotal to the ‘survival of Hellenism’, when in fact the majority of the Church elites during the nineteenth century did not have a Hellenic identity at all, but considered themselves to have a religious national identity, as Eastern Orthodox Christians of Cyprus; Sir Harry Luke was not a Philhellenist (p. 42), but a Turcophile, and did not succeed Storrs as Oriental Secretary in Egypt (p. 112); Lord Elgin was not the Foreign Secretary (p. 53), but the Colonial Secretary; the Troodos Hill Station served as the capital of the island for six months of the year, not three months (p. 69); Doros Alastos was not a historian (p. 132), but a Cypriot *enosis* lobbyist in London whose real name was Evdoros Ioannides; Richmond Palmer did not succeed Storrs (p. 134), this was Reginald Stubbs; it was decided to move the British Middle East HQ from the Suez Canal Base to Cyprus in 1952 not in 1954 (p. 208); Discussion on the origins of tricondominium are incorrect (p. 215); use of the term ‘inter-communal’ violence, an anachronism that panders to the Greek Cypriot position which does not view events as a civil war, as civil war experts do, because they wish to blame Turkish Cypriots for the violence (p. 239); the notion that there was no ‘inter-communal’ violence before Sir Hugh Foot became governor is contradicted later, when Morgan states that violence started in November 1957, yet Foot arrived the next month (pp. 240, 243-243). Finally, on a few occasions, Morgan fails to provide sources to account for her evidence, such as for the intriguing Fascist Italian map on Cyprus’ defences (p. 161) and when General Darling had surrounded Grivas (p. 251).

One of the most positive elements to come from Morgan’s book is that she touched upon so many events, developments, and themes that could and indeed should be studied further. For example:

- The reference to Richmond Palmer’s governorship as a ‘Colonel Blimps regime’ (p. 142) was fascinating because it opens the way for further dialogue, in either book or article form, on what the metropolis thought of the periphery in this case;
- The British settlement in Kyrenia (p. 145) certainly needs further study both in relation to quantification and importance to the development of society and business;
- The Breslau broadcasts (p. 150) would make a compelling article;
- The 500-strong Polish community settled in Cyprus in 1940 who were the first compulsory ethnic group evacuated to Egypt (p. 164) would make an interesting article if situated within a wider comparative context;
- Prostitution during the Second World War (pp. 177-178) and a comparison with other colonial possessions would also make a fascinating article;
- A book could be written about the developments in medical treatments in Cyprus from the work of Heidenstam, Ross and Aziz, and a comparison with other colonial possessions;

- Finally, but not least, there is great potential for further research into the impact of EOKA on the English School and the links between youth, political violence, and recruitment.

Also exciting is Morgan's use of archives that have previously not been accessed, especially the material from Rhodes House Oxford, the Imperial War Museum, and the Middle East Centre Archive, at St Anthony's College, Oxford. In particular it was a delight to see Morgan use a number of unpublished memoirs, namely those of William Battershill, Vivian Hart-Davis, Robert Hepburn Wright, Evelyn Newman, Geoff Chapman, Paul Griffin, John Reddaway, and General Sir Kenneth Darling, which I would urge her to consider obtaining the rights to publish.¹²

Morgan's book is a must read, for it is the first to detail the British experience in Cyprus during British rule, and it does so in a richly detailed, mostly accurate, and always perceptive and entertaining account.

ANDREKOS VARNAVA

12 For a few cases (i.e. Chapman and Griffin) Morgan did not provide full references for these memoirs to enable others to both access and verify her sources.

Colonial Cyprus 1878-1960 *Selected Readings*

Edited by EMILIOS SOLOMOU AND HUBERT FAUSTMANN
University of Nicosia Press (Nicosia, 2010), 375 pp.
ISBN: 978-9963-634-89-7

One might ask why it was worth republishing this selection of articles taken from issues of *The Cyprus Review* published over the last twenty years. There are good reasons. *The Cyprus Review* has a much broader focus, concentrating heavily on current Cyprus issues. This volume seeks to highlight the existence of a series specifically on colonial Cyprus. Most of these articles avoid particular events. Rather they draw our attention to the social and political framework in which these events unfold. The point is not to provide an *alternative* to the established authorities on this period – and we are lucky enough to have several – but to compliment and enrich them. The articles in this book, on the whole, do exactly that. Of course, any compilation of this kind is bound to present varying standards of sophistication in the analyses presented. But they all have something to contribute.

The book is arranged chronologically which is a logical sequence if one is reading the book from cover to cover, but if we look at them thematically, we see that the articles offer information on aspects of colonial history that are often ancillary to a mainstream analysis, but which clarify, embellish and sometimes raise questions about those main themes. It begins with a masterly summary of the Eastern Question by Victor Papacosmas. This puts the history of colonial Cyprus firmly within its international context. ‘The Eastern Question is a fact’, wrote Britain’s famous minister to the Porte, Stratford De Radcliffe, in a letter to *The Times* in 1875, and cited in the Papacosmas article, ‘a reality of infinite duration’. Thus the developments in colonial Cyprus are put in a context that makes them comprehensible – a context that is revisited in some of the articles covering the final years 1958-1960. At that time there was a new uncertainty as to the island’s future in an area once more engulfed in ripples of regional tension. These tensions affected the nature of the settlement reached.

This interaction between internal Cypriot and regional developments reappears in the very interesting articles by Heinz Richter and Yiorghos Leventis on the relations between AKEL and international communism. In Yiorghos Leventis’ penetrating look at exactly what happened in 1948, we see the AKEL leaders seeking guidance from Andreas Zachariades, the communist leader in Greece then torn apart by civil war. What course was AKEL to take after the breakdown in negotiations at the consultative assembly for a new constitution for the island? That the surprised Cypriots obeyed in such a submissive way, Zacharias’ somewhat off-hand order to change

course from gradualism to obstructionism, throws an interesting light on the mechanics of international socialism. But one wonders if there actually was any choice? Once the church and the politicians of the right had walked out on the consultative assembly, could the left have avoided a struggle for immediate *enosis* and retained its constituency? It would have been a huge risk to take. There are internal dynamics at work here too.

The dynamics of internal politics and their relation to the changing patterns of patronage, as the island moved into modern gear, crop up in several articles. This changing framework is clearly set out by Hubert Faustmann in his article on clientelism. Many of the articles refer to that most potent form of obligation created by money lending – form of investment indulged in at many levels, even by members of the legislative council.

The legislative council, the body that was at the heart of the island's politics for the first fifty or so years of British rule is referred to in several articles. There is much more to be written on this subject. A closer look at the council's minutes and colonial correspondence during the early years of British rule would put paid to the perception of this forum which comes across most strongly in this book. Was it simply a toy parliament – a divide and rule tool? – Far from it. The political manoeuvrings of the legislative council – with its constituents, with the colonial government, with the archbishop, with the Cadis and Efkar – were far more complicated.

There is a very informative, if somewhat judgemental article, by Michael Michaelides on Turkish Cypriots and the labour movement. It is clear from this and other articles of Jeanette Choisi and Stefanos Papageorgiou, how economic and social interests *transcended* the religious and nationalist divide throughout colonial rule. And many new details come to light. It had not occurred to me, for example – but it must have been so – what a large number of Turkish Cypriot farmers were in debt to Greek Cypriot money lenders. Also, that although the cooperative movement (like the trade union movement) was a high point of cooperation between Greek and Turkish Cypriots to their mutual economic interest, there were from as far back as 1948 a growing number of separate Turkish Cypriot cooperatives (113 in 1946 to 148 in 1956). Perhaps this was natural since the cooperatives were village institutions, encouraged by the British, to by-pass the money lenders, and we are reminded by Jan Asmussen that there was an escalating decrease in the number of mixed villages in the island. There has, it seems, been much discussion as to the causes of the disappearance of 94 of the over 300 mixed villages between 1891 and 1931. There is a lot of scope for further study on this kind of subject. Have there been such studies? What are the results? Which community remained in the village in each case?

The causes of migration at that point would have been largely socio-economic and do not necessarily indicate a widening gap between the communities. Likewise, regarding intercommunal life and strife, apart from easily pinpointed periods when strife related to internal and external political tensions, attacks on individuals tended to be examples of common crime or disputes that had more to do with the ownership of land, animals, or even women. This was certainly true in Crete at the turn of the century. Looking beyond the narrow limits of this island

is a necessary part of seeking to understand developments within it. The broader regional context of internal developments is not, on the whole, explored by the authors of this collection of articles.

This is especially true of the many articles in the book that touch on the evolution of Greek and Turkish nationalism in Cyprus. Hakan Yanuz places the beginning of nationalist trends well before British rule. He associates it with the modernising effect on the Ottoman Empire of the Tanzimat reforms in the mid nineteenth century. All discuss how, when and why education came to be bound up with the growth of Greek and Turkish nationalism. Let me just make a comment on the currently fashionable references to a hypothetical common Cypriot nationalism, the growth of which, according to Jeanette Choisi the British Government 'was so afraid of'.

It is sometimes assumed that Cypriot *autonomy* as a target for the future would have had more chance of allowing Turkish Cypriot collaboration than the chronic campaign for union with Greece. *Enosis* clearly left the Turkish Cypriots out in the cold. The fact is that autonomy was *not* an acceptable alternative to *enosis* – probably not for the Turkish Cypriots and certainly not for Turkey. Jeanette Choisi quotes the Turkish Cypriot slogans used during the huge rally against the referendum for *enosis* conducted by the Greek Cypriot community in 1950. The two slogans were 'Enosis means death' but also 'autonomy means enslavement'. She tends to ignore the latter. The fear that majority rule just as much as *enosis* would lead to the disappearance of the Turkish Cypriot community as a separate political force is longstanding and certainly not a British invention. Although the conclusion is not drawn, from the developments described in these articles, it is clear that there could be no common Cypriot target for the future of the island and without a common target for the future there could not be a common nationalism. Greek Cypriot majority rule was fought just as strongly as *enosis* right through from the 1950s up to 1974. Ironically, it is only now that federation is acknowledged as the only possible way forward, that there is the possibility of a common Cypriot target.

Regarding perceptions of the Greekness of the Greek Cypriots – another fashionable subject touched on in this book: perceptions change with circumstances. It has been suggested recently, and is echoed in some of these articles, that the Greekness of Cypriots was somehow British inspired. We only have to get away from the insular approach, to see that that could not have been so. Indeed the Greekness of Cypriots was a perception the British were busily trying to undo in the 1930s. They wanted to replace it with a Cypriot or even British consciousness. They were trying, in fact, to take a leaf out of Italian policy in the Dodecanese (which incidentally failed dismally). The tone in these articles in this book is simply reflecting a general trend. Analysts tackling the thorny but central issue of nationalism and identity tend not to look beyond Cyprus – to behave as though the island existed in a political vacuum. Far from it, the growth of nationalisms in the eastern Mediterranean have rarely respected any borders real or imaginary.

By the end of World War II, the British knew that only by accommodating a Hellenic Identity could they keep the lid on Cyprus. The problem was – how to separate this perception from the aspiration for union with Greece. This is spelt out clearly by George Kelling in his

interesting article on 'Cyprus and the Official Mind of Imperialism in the Post-war World'. Initial inclinations within the Foreign Office to cede the island to Greece, are overtaken by ideas as to how to cope with 'Hellenic Identity' in an island which was to be considered a British 'fortress' colony and therefore not to be allowed the luxury of self determination.

By the 1950s, new nationalist stirrings in the Middle East, and particularly in Egypt, were to bring Turkey back into the centre of the strategic arena. These developments involved the island in a cold war version of the Eastern Question.

Another central factor in the British decision-making process regarding Cyprus – and this is touched on in Andrekos Varnava's article – was the acute sensitivity, the handling of Egyptian nationalism had created in the Prime Minister Antony Eden's relations with the strongly imperialist right wing of the Conservative party. His successor Harold Macmillan inherited this sensitivity which affected British decision making on Cyprus right up until 1960. In fact domestic politics within the island as well as the domestic politics of Britain, Turkey and Greece tended to impinge negatively on developments beyond the declaration of Cypriot Independence. The turmoil within the Conservative party over Rhodesia would have a desultory effect on British actions, but even more on Britain's failure to act soon enough on Cyprus in 1963. But that is a story beyond the time frame of this very worthwhile volume.

DIANA MARKIDES

Independent Cyprus 1960-2010 *Selected Readings*

Edited by HUBERT FAUSTMANN AND EMILIOS SOLOMOU
University of Nicosia Press (Nicosia, 2011), 448 pp.
ISBN: 978-9963-634-90-3

The approach in this review does not precisely conform to the guidelines for book reviews in *The Cyprus Review*. And this is because in preparing a presentation of this volume, I found that about a half, or ten out of the total of twenty-one papers, were directly concerned with the issues connected to questions of foreign intervention in the development of the situation in Cyprus, normally referred to as *The Cyprus Problem*. They are by far the largest thematic group in the volume. And they all come to the conclusion that there was no foreign intervention, or at least that foreign intervention cannot be held responsible for the catastrophes in Cyprus.

There are also papers of considerable interest on other aspects of the history of Cyprus. As previously mentioned there are twenty-one contributions on the recent history of Cyprus in the volume. There are three (Stamatakis, Sarris and Faustmann) on sociological topics, one on the external orientations of Cyprus since independence (Ker-Lindsay), one on the intercommunal talks after the Turkish invasion, (Michael), and five (Mirbagheri, Fouskas, Joseph, Richmond and Newman) are on the United Nations intervention in Cyprus.

Returning to the group of papers concentrating on external intervention, it occurred to me that whether the authors conclude that there has been substantial foreign intervention or not in the development of the *Cyprus Problem* does not just depend on the historical facts which their research uncovers. The issue of whether or not one finds substantial foreign intervention seems to be as much a methodological one, depending to a considerable degree on the questions which are posed. There is also a question of interpretation involved, namely what is meant by responsibility, and how demanding the concept is applied.

In the case of foreign intervention and responsibilities in Cyprus, the viewpoints, as unfortunately in many other areas of political interpretation, have been considerably polarised and absolutised. In other words instead of searching for the degree to which attribution of causation and therefore responsibility is internal, and the degree to which it is international, there is usually an absolute attribution of causation on the one or the other alternative.

In general, this is an area where everyday politics in Cyprus finds it convenient to attribute all responsibility to the outside world, since this has the tendency to obscure both blunders and crimes. On the other hand, most of the outside world, including historians and political scientists, find it convenient to attribute all responsibility to Cypriot factors, British analysts in particular

being partial to attributing all responsibility to the Greek Cypriots, while most western views have a tendency to attribute responsibility to the 'two communities'. Needless to say, this clearly absolves the outside world of any responsibility to act for the redress of the situation, leaving all responsibility to the two communities, not a minor gain when rectifying the situation would involve having to deal with Turkey.

The first author to whose work I shall refer is not British, it is Alexis Heraclides, who in his 'Bird's Eye View' of the 'Cyprus Debacle', clearly rejects the view that external forces have been the main negative factor in the Cyprus Debacle, and in fact proposes, in an in effect black and white view, that 'the Cyprus question is above all an ethnic clash and far less an international one ...', though intriguingly, he continues by making two of the three crises periods in the Cyprus Problem an exception, and as such he lists the 1950s and briefly in the summer of 1974. As we shall see, recent research documents intervention in the 60s most convincingly.

He calls the external approach a fallacy. His basic reasons for asserting this are also intriguing: The last one is that only by dealing with the ethnic conflict could the Cyprus Problem be resolved, thus he clearly links current perceived political necessities to historical causality, consequently reasoning in a kind of reverse teleological approach. His second reason is also fascinating in that he admits that external parties intervened, but he claims that they made a mess of it or at least 'made little headway in ... satisfying their own interests, or in trying to assist in a settlement of the conflict'. And finally, and here there is a ring of truth, the international dimension is of the 'pull' rather than the push variety, in the sense that the Cypriots pulled Greece and Turkey to intervene. This last comment is persuasive, though he does not explain as to how they 'pulled' Britain.

Heraclides three reasons for rejecting the 'intervention fallacy' actually stimulated my consideration of five reasons for being aware of the 'internalization fallacy' and they are the following: This interpretation squarely allocates responsibility for the solution of the problem to the Cypriot communities. It shifts enquiry away from the occasionally unsavoury activities in Cyprus of outside powers. It coincides with Turkey's interpretation of past and current events, and therefore conveniently absolves the outside world from the unthankful task of having a different view to that of Turkey. Failure to reach a solution does not tar the reputation of external powers. And in the end the strong indication of pull factors provides justification for those who wished to intervene, or did intervene.

Joseph Joseph, in his contribution, follows a much more subtle and sophisticated approach in seeking to interlink internal and external factors in explaining developments, rather than choosing between them in a simplistic way. As for example in referring to 'the first external interference as occurring when Turkey joined the Turkish Cypriots in rejecting Makarios' thirteen points', which, however, also agrees with Heraclides 'pull character', for had Makarios and the other Greek Cypriot leaders engaged more adequately with political prediction, they might have avoided the thirteen points.

Joseph also introduces another subtlety to the analysis of intervention, by acknowledging two other factors not recognised by Heraclides. One is the formative colonial relationship where

Britain could exercise what Joseph calls its 'divide and rule policies' as an internal actor, the Government of the island. The second more subtle factor which Joseph introduces was the relationship of agent and client or allied states, as for example, when he says that 'The United States could use its allies – Britain, Greece and Turkey – to influence events towards a settlement safeguarding Western interests'. Though he does not say so, he also implicitly recognises that the Soviet Union had an internal avenue of influence. He refers to it without distinguishing it analytically, as the fact that the Soviet Union could use both the Greek and Turkish Cypriot communist parties to penetrate Cypriot politics.

The way in which this indirect intervention worked is well illustrated in 1964, when Joseph observes that 'The summer 1964 Turkish bombings occurred at the time Acheson was promoting his plan. The Turkish action was in harmony with the American objective of bringing Makarios to his knees and making him receptive to Western proposals. The US State Department completely distrusted the "Castro of the Mediterranean", and believed the only way to deal with him was through pressure, threat and coercion'.

Of course, intervention sometimes worked to the benefit of Cyprus, as with the 1964 letter of Johnson to Inonu, where the demand to avoid wider conflict prevented a Turkish invasion.

It is true that Joseph does not document US direct intervention in 1974, other than the creation, in the 1960s, of the mind-set among its allies, in the words of George Ball, that any plan that 'called for the ouster of Makarios enhanced its attractiveness'. He also documents the clear responsibility of criminal dictator Ioannides for the coup, the determination of Turkey to settle 'old scores' in Kissinger's words, and the changed Turkey USSR relations, which made the invasion safe for the rest of the world. But he does not investigate relations between the US and the Junta in Greece.

This complex of factors is investigated by Demetrios Theophylactou, in his article entitled 'American Foreign Policy vis-à-vis Turkey, Greece and Cyprus'. The careful proponents of the outside intervention fallacy argue that there is no trace of evidence, even now that the archives have been opened, that the UK or the US organised the coup and the invasion in 1974 (leaving out of consideration the 1960s). No one to my knowledge has seriously argued that the UK was implicated. But what if at the time Greece and Turkey respectively were executing US policy? And this seems to be precisely what Theophylactou argues. His general thesis is that '... the United States remained an important player on Cyprus in the post-war years by exercising control over both Greek and Turkish politics'. The United States received the baton of intervention in internal Greek politics in 1947 from the British, and this marked the beginning of US involvement in internal Greek affairs, which ultimately had a decisive impact on Cyprus.

Theophylactou cites Laurence Wittner, a US historian as indicating that the Greek KYP (the Greek Central Intelligence Agency, from which Ioannides emerged) was directly funded by the US agencies. Wittner quotes a US embassy official in Athens as stating that '... the CIA was in bed with the palace, the army, the Greek intelligence service, the rightist parties, the conservative business community, the establishment in general'. By the early 1960s, asserted the Washington

Post, 'Greece more than any other country in Europe had become an American cold war protectorate'.

Wittner also analyses the rise of the Centre Union in Greece, led by Papandreou father and son, as questioning the protectorate status of Greece, and quotes president Johnson's far from delicate reaction to doubts expressed by the Greek Ambassador to Washington over the Acheson plan as: 'Fuck your Parliament and your constitution. America is an elephant, Cyprus is a flea. Greece is a flea. If these two fellows continue itching the elephant, they may just get whacked by the elephant's trunk, whacked good ... If your Prime Minister gives me talk about democracy, parliament and constitution, he, his parliament and his constitution may not last long'.

This is precisely what happened in 1967, and 'The United States' according to Theophylactou, 'not only did not oppose the Greek Junta but it helped keep it in power'. Theophylactou cites Wittner to say that Georgios Papadopoulos, the Junta chief who led the coup in 1967, and was dictator of Greece during the phase before Ioannides took over in November, 1973, was on the CIA payroll since 1952. Theophylactou also asserts, but does not adduce evidence, that the CIA financed EOKA B in Cyprus.

Most of this is widely accepted, as is also the clear prediction that a coup would inevitably be followed by a Turkish invasion. What has been disputed by Kissinger was whether anyone could predict that a coup would be organised in Cyprus.

Andreas Constandinos has recently, in doing his PhD thesis, looked at the British and US archives to investigate what the UK and the US knew and did, in 1974. Before that, a look at two contributions that concentrate on the role of the British in Cyprus. The two contributors are Andreas Avgousti 'The Indigenous Foreigner' which concentrates on 1963-1965 and Claude Nicolet who writes on the whole period of 1960-1974. Avgousti basically argues that the UK was neither foreign, nor indigenous, and that it had no long-term objectives. In reviewing British policy he rejects also that there is evidence of any US intervention, even dismissing the events surrounding the Acheson Plan, with the difficult phrase 'Whereas the Acheson proposals can certainly be characterised as evidence of a growing US involvement in Cyprus, the historian must be careful not to conflate this initiative with an assumption of responsibility for Cyprus by the US'. As far as I understand his position, it is that the uncertainty about what the communities wanted makes Ball's and Acheson's promotion of partition irrelevant, and not constituting an intervention.

Nicolet presents us with a very well researched and well reasoned account of the conspiracies between 1960 and 1974. His conclusion is that 'British policy on Cyprus was thus mainly characterized by both, failure and impotence ... Nevertheless this does not mean that Britain, or the US for that matter, can be blamed for the various disasters that Cyprus experienced between 1960 and 1974. After all most of the Cypriot problems were still homemade'. It is surprising to see such a careful researcher opt, in a sweeping conclusion, for the all or nothing version which the phrase 'can be blamed for' implies.

What he actually shows in his careful account, much more careful than his conclusion, is that the 'pull' factors were very strong, that is that the Cypriots themselves were pulling the outsiders into Cyprus through the, for them, unforeseen consequences of their actions. What he also shows is that when Britain, the US, Greece or Turkey intervened, they intervened not in the interests of Cyprus but in their own interests. He documents a conspiratorial Acheson plan for the removal of Makarios by Greek troops, who were in Cyprus at his invitation, and its failure because Greek-Turkish agreement for its implementation was not achieved. (Greece disagreed). Nicolet does not say this, but it might be said that 1974 saw a botched re-enactment, without what were regarded by some as the proper safeguards, of the 1964 conspiracies.

What Nicolet does document and conclude was that in 1972 there was joint UK and US intervention in Athens to stop a coup against Makarios. This fact complicates the task of anyone who wants to investigate these issues. Why did they wish to prevent the coup in 1972 and not in 1974? Does the Watergate distraction, Tusca not wanting to visit a cop (Ioannides) etc. gain credence? Or, and this is a personal hunch, is it relevant that in 1972 Henry Kissinger was only National Security Adviser, which perhaps allowed the State Department to act independently of his preferences, whereas in 1974 he was both National Security Adviser and Secretary of State? It is also evident that Nicolet has not found any immediate and overt US involvement in organising the coup and the invasion in 1974, something which hardly anyone claims. But this is the question that is investigated by Constandinos.

It must also be mentioned that Nicolet documents James Callaghan's honourable role in 1974, and Kissinger's complaint that the British were 'threatening military action against the Turks which is one of the stupidest things that I have heard', while Callaghan accused the Americans of 'disgraceful and duplicitous behaviour'.

Andreas Constandinos has two papers in the volume. The first one is 'Britain, America and the Sovereign Base Areas from 1960-1978'. It is an interesting investigation of Britain's continuing colonial footprint in Cyprus, without much bearing on the theme I have chosen for this review, except that I cannot resist mentioning that there is slight evidence for the widespread popular belief in Cyprus that a non-solution of the Cyprus Problem was in Britain's interest. The British Archives reveal that in a letter written by Julian Amery, Minister for Public Works, in 1970, to Lord Carrington, the Defence Secretary, he says 'As long as there is tension between Turks and Greeks, I think we have little to worry about in terms of our tenure of the Sovereign Base Areas ...', whereas in 1971, the Prime Minister, Edward Heath, commented that despite the cost and political disadvantages of the continued absence of a solution to the Cyprus Problem the 'situation in Cyprus does not suit us too badly'.

His second paper, sourced from his doctoral research into British and American archives, on what they had to reveal about responsibilities of these countries for events in Cyprus is scholarly, interesting and revealing. His conclusion is a subtle one, and to my knowledge a valid one: '... the British and American Governments were responsible for the events on Cyprus in 1974 by virtue of acts of omission rather than commission'. Three observations about this conclusion: First that

there was responsibility. Secondly that the responsibility was through not acting in habitual ways, e.g. as in dissuading the colonels from mounting a coup in 1972, and warning Turkey against invading, as in 1964 and 1967. And thirdly that no one is going to find evidence of organisation of the coup and the invasion in 1974, because they were organised by the Junta in Greece and the Government in Turkey and not by the UK or (directly) by the US.

On 1964, Constandinos is clear: 'Research in the National Archives of both Britain and the US verifies the multitude of secondary sources that have suggested that in 1964 Washington was intent on dividing the strategically valuable island between Greece and Turkey, thereby securing a NATO stake in Cyprus, securing the Sovereign Base Areas and US communication facilities on Cyprus and eliminating Makarios'.

Were these contingency plans or were they initiatives? Constandinos vacillates about the words, which in the present context have a great deal of significance and difference. But he clearly finds and offers evidence that: There were discussions, probably involving both Greece and Turkey, of a coup by Greece against Makarios, declaration of *Enosis*, and a Turkish invasion which would occupy some Cypriot territory and would be unopposed by Greece. During this time Athens must have received a clear impression that a coup in Cyprus would not be opposed by the US, provided it resulted in the removal of Makarios and the declaration of *Enosis*.

The existence of these contingency plans (or initiatives) in 1964, comments Constandinos, has led to the naive view of many commentators that the events of 1974 were part of an Anglo-American conspiracy. What the archives reveal, according to Constandinos, was that Ioannides informed the CIA of his ability to remove Makarios, and did not receive strong representation from the CIA against this. Kissinger actually appears to have lied in public saying that information on the coup 'was not exactly lying in the street'.

The archives also reveal that 'Ultimately, allowing Turkey to take a third of the island was not against American interests, as with Greece in no position to oppose Turkey, the threat of war within NATO ceased to be of concern. In fact allowing Turkey to proceed might actually be better than the uneasy *status quo ante bellum*'. Kissinger regarded what was happening as a 'minor-league crisis over a third-rate island ...'. Clearly these elements were those of omission and not of commission, though the nurturing of nationalism and the running of governance in Greece through the CIA were not.

Glen Camp in his detailed account of the subsequent period, 1980-1990, makes only passing comments to the effect that Cyprus in 1974 was simply another casualty of the Cold War which afforded little time on either side for the felt needs of small, local communities, such as Cypriot Greeks and Turks. He also comments that 'The July days of 1974 brought little credit to US foreign policy or the Secretary of State Kissinger ...'

Andreas Stergiou in his well researched 'Soviet Policy Toward Cyprus' basically concludes that in the years following 1974 the USSR adopted a 'no crisis no solution' policy which basically benefited Turkey, with which country its relations had steadily improved after 1964. This

improvement constituted the basic difference between the crisis of 1974, compared to 1964 and 1967. At the latter date the US had no concern about possible Soviet reactions to a Turkish invasion of Cyprus.

Finally I will conclude with a comment from Van Coufoudakis' contribution, which is about the post-Cold War era, and not on the period on which I have concentrated. But he makes one observation which has perennial interest, which is that in the eyes of US policy-makers Turkey could not be managed as the Turks would not tolerate external interference in their politics and policies, and that political conditions in that country limited the exercise of American influence. Greece, by contrast, though more strategically important than Turkey during the Cold War, in Coufoudakis' view, failed to assert its independence and convince them of its strategic importance, and therefore allowed the development of the view in Washington that Greece could be managed.

That Cyprus could be subject to management efforts in one way or another, seems to come out easily from this volume. The first conclusion is that the degree of disagreement on attributions of causality, which in human affairs is sometimes called responsibility, among historians contributing to one volume, about these efforts is quite remarkable. Even at a time when most of the facts appear to be known.

The second conclusion is this: Contemporary Cypriots are quite adept at doing cockeyed things which are included in the Guinness Book of Records. It may be that the most cockeyed and remarkable thing that they have ever done is to consistently succeed in pulling, attracting and opening the way into their country of interventions, of a number, magnitude and enormity of maleficent consequences, which easily could get into the Guinness Book of Records.

The third conclusion is about historical work on Cyprus. My observation is that it is only to a relatively small extent cumulative. There is little accumulation of answers to the same questions, and references to previous work are quite selective and have not on the whole identified key questions, nor do they identify differences in answers given to the same questions.

MICHALIS ATTALIDES



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A Concise History of Modern Cyprus, 1878-2009

HEINZ RICHTER

Verlag Franz Philipp Rutzen (Ruhpolding, 2010), 232 pp.

ISBN: 978-3-938646-53-3

In his book *A Concise History of Modern Cyprus, 1878-2009*, Professor Heinz Richter has created a summarised version of his four volume, over 2,500 word opus *Geschichte der Insel Zypern* which begins with Britain leasing Cyprus from the Ottoman Empire in 1878 and culminates in 1977 with the death of President Makarios. Richter himself asserts within the preface of his book that:

‘The aim was an easy to read fascinating text satisfying all scholarly standards with one exception: I waived an extensive scholarly reference apparatus of footnotes and bibliographies.’

In addition to condensing his four volumes into one very accessible book, Richter has also added a short overview of developments since 1977 up until 2009 which he subdivides into the Kyprianou, Vassiliou and Clerides presidencies. By his own admission, the facts in this shortened book have inevitably been reduced to a minimum, but the evaluation of what the author sees as the most crucial events in the history of modern Cyprus have been preserved. The result of this is a very professional book, littered with lots of interesting images, which whilst not quite being an academic textbook is so much more than just a guidebook. Although Richter’s book does not fill a lacunae within the current literature it nicely compliments, as pointed out by the author himself, the work done by Sir George Hill (*A History of Cyprus*, Cambridge University Press, 1952) and more recently William Mallinson (*Cyprus: A Modern History*, I.B. Tauris, 2005) and therefore can be considered as making a valuable contribution to its field.

Much has already been written about how Britain came to acquire Cyprus, the British colonial period, the EOKA campaign and the way in which the constitution of the Republic of Cyprus broke down. Consequently, the strength of Richter’s book is not in the way in which these definitive events in Cypriot history are portrayed but in the book as a collective resource in which the reader can refer to every major event from 1878 to 2009. Having said that, *A Concise History of Modern Cyprus, 1878-2009* does look at some often overlooked and frequently misconstrued events, which are certainly worth mentioning.

The book begins by acknowledging that Britain’s decision to lease Cyprus from the Ottoman Empire was the result of ‘highly complex developments far away from the island’ (p. 10), a notion which has accompanied, rightly and wrongly, our understanding of much of contemporary Cypriot history. In the chapter entitled ‘The Struggle for *Enosis*’, Richter, in considerable detail, discusses the complex and often neglected way in which the nationalist and romantic dream of union with

Greece divided the Cypriot Left and Right. Had Cyprus become 'just' another Greek island, where following the Greek Civil War the KKE (the Greek Communist party), had been outlawed, AKEL would almost certainly have been proscribed, which meant that Cyprus' Communist party found itself in a catch-22 situation. Denouncing *Enosis* would have left them open to accusations of treachery whilst supporting *Enosis* would have spelt the end of the party's very existence.

In terms of Britain's role in the process of decolonisation, Richter confirms Britain's non-involvement in this development. Additionally, it is suggested that three years later, there existed no urgent need for Makarios to propose his 13 points, and that the Archbishop's miscalculation as well as poor communication from Britain's High Commissioner Sir Arthur Clark presented Denktash with the opportunity of declaring that the Greek Cypriots had unilaterally dissolved the Republic, an argument that continues to be as prevalent today as it was in the 1960s.

However, by far the most important part of the book is Richter's excellent discussion of the events of 1974. This chapter is based on volume IV of the *Geschichte der Insel Zypern* series and is based upon an extensive analysis of the secondary literature as well as original government documents recently released from the British and American national archives. Quite unequivocally, Richter dispels the widely-held idea of a conspiracy and rejects the notion that Henry Kissinger was the 'architect' of the Cyprus Problem.

The author puts forward the argument that the conspiracy theory is based on prejudice rather than historical truths and that Washington, and in particular Secretary of State Dr. Kissinger, acted in a calculated manner based on ignorance, arrogance and lack of information. From a *Realpolitik* perspective of the world, Turkey was simply more important to US interests than Greece and especially the fate of the island of Cyprus.

Crucially, Richter makes the distinction between the foreign and defence policies of the Johnson and then the Nixon administration in supporting his argument. Kissinger ignored the warnings he received from the State Department's Cyprus desk officer Thomas Boyatt because he was too busy focusing on the balance of power within the world in which the tiny island of Cyprus, with a population of less than a million played a relatively insignificant role. Consequently, Kissinger's failure to intervene in the developments of early 1974 allowed the junta and Ioannides in particular, to make the assumption that this gave Athens a green light to launch its ill-fated coup against President Makarios. In explaining why the idea of a conspiracy was so attractive to both the Greeks and Greek Cypriots, Richter cites the conviction that has permeated Greek politics since the mid-nineteenth century namely that any negative development within its world was the result of foreign, and often the American, factor.

In my view, *A Concise History of Modern Cyprus, 1878-2009* makes an important contribution to our understanding of 1974 chiefly through supporting the conclusions other historians and academics have recently come too – a conclusion that I have also reached in my own work through researching the very same sources (Jan Asmussen, *Cyprus at War: Diplomacy and Conflict during the 1974 Crisis*, 2008 and Andreas Constandinos, *Cyprus Crisis*, 2011).

Nevertheless, I do have two main criticisms of Richter's work. The first revolves around the fact that scattered throughout the book are spelling mistakes, inconsistencies and factual

inaccuracies. For example, at times the United Nations is referred to as the 'UN' and at other times by the German acronym the 'UNO' (p. 41). The Suez Crisis is said to have taken place in 1967 (p. 66) instead of 1956 and Grivas' order of an EOKA attack on the British in 1968 (p. 84) instead of 1958. Additionally, the text is littered with careless spelling. Whilst this criticism, the responsibility for which also rests with the editor, in the context of such an excellent piece of research might seem pedantic, it detracts somewhat from the otherwise very professional appearance of Richter's book.

The second criticism is more fundamental and centres around the certainty with which Richter makes some of his assertions, in particular with reference to the events of 1974. Based on the information currently within the public domain, Richter has indisputably come to the correct conclusions in terms of the role played by Washington in the Greek coup and subsequent Turkish invasion. However, I would like to cite one of the great *Lebensphilosophen* Friedrich Nietzsche's dictum of 'There is no truth, there is only interpretation', when suggesting that the truth is an ideal that is essentially unattainable. In doing so, *i.e.* asserting that a particular piece of work pertains to be revealing a given truth, historians, academics and commentators on Cypriot history in general, run the risk of making the same mistake that those who continue to cling to the idea of a conspiracy have made ever since 1974. Here, two important points need to be made.

First of all, a lot of information remains classified and may not be accessible within the public domain for a long time to come. Until that day comes, if that is even possible, we should err on the side of caution and acknowledge that these conclusions and evaluations, whilst based on good methodical research, only constitute the 'truth' based on what information we currently have access too. In other words, we simply do not know whether one day a document currently classified, however unlikely, might reveal the 'smoking gun' proving all those who believe in a conspiracy to have been right all along. Secondly, for the purpose of Richter's research, as well as that of Jan Asmussen and me, the conspiracy has been rigidly defined as a government actively being involved in a plan to (a) overthrow Makarios and (b) collude with Turkey in its subsequent invasion of Cyprus. Such a definition ignores the possibility of an alternative definition, namely that by acquiescing to the actions of both the Greek and Turkish government, both the United States and to a lesser extent the United Kingdom were involved in a conspiracy in 1974.

Nonetheless, *A Concise History of Modern Cyprus, 1878-2009* achieves, without doubt, exactly what it was supposed to, namely 'an easy to read fascinating text satisfying all scholarly standards'.

ANDREAS CONSTANDINOS

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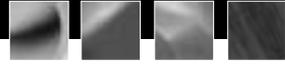
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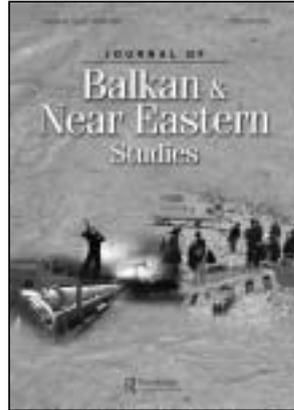


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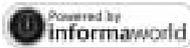


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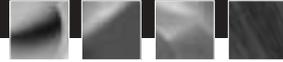
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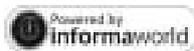
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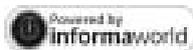
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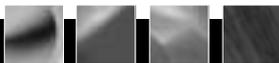
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