

Great Power Politics in Cyprus

Great Power Politics in Cyprus:
Foreign Interventions
and Domestic Perceptions

Edited by

Michalis Kontos, Sozos-Christos Theodoulou,
Nikos Panayiotides and Haralambos Alexandrou

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P U B L I S H I N G

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and Haralambos Alexandrou
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PREFACE

Whenever one attempts to analyse the political situation in any country or area, one must take into consideration a plethora of factors. The latter vary, according to the specific circumstances of that place and are rarely the same. Nevertheless, no one can seriously contest the fact that the in-depth study of the historical background of a territory plays a significant role in the formation of its future, especially because it influences in a great extent the perceptions and subsequent actions of the population concerned.

The case of Cyprus is no different. A number of states-who happen to be among the most powerful in the world-are highly interested in what is taking place on this tiny island in the South Eastern Mediterranean. These states have participated-in a larger or smaller degree-in the country's pathway in time and are somehow still present in current Cypriot politics.

The authors of this book, all Cypriots, genuinely interested in and concerned about the future of our homeland and being convinced that the interaction between foreign interventions and domestic perceptions deriving from them has defined the current social and political framework of the Cyprus problem, have joined forces, in order to publish a book focused on great power politics in Cyprus, with special reference to their interventions and subsequent domestic perceptions. Each one of us is a researcher who deals with this issue, specialised in his own field (history, political science and international politics, international law).

A good opportunity for a discussion of this issue emerged when the four of us met during a conference in Nicosia, in July 2012, where we participated in a relevant workshop. After the completion of the conference, we convened several other colleagues, having similar interests and specialisations, and formed what we consider to be an academically robust and highly qualified team of talented experts, who are capable of offering to the public an-as much as possible-objective view of the topic. Hence, the volume provides a mature debate with a variety of approaches and assumptions which, in some instances, are even conflicting.

With this occasion, we would like to thank Cambridge Scholars Publishing, for their support and smooth cooperation, as well as-and especially-the six authors for their valuable contribution. Finally, we would like to thank Maria Drakou and Natalie Michaelides who also contributed to the final outcome in several ways, mainly related to the manuscript's editing.

INTRODUCTION

FOREIGN INTERVENTIONS AND DOMESTIC PERCEPTIONS: AN ANALYTICAL FRAMEWORK

MICHALIS KONTOS

1. Foreign intervention in international politics

The general objective of this volume is to outline the interests and corresponding policies of great powers regarding Cyprus, with special focus on their interventions in the island's domestic affairs as well as the perceptions these interventions have generated among the local population, especially the Greek Cypriots. By "great powers" we refer to the United Kingdom (UK), the United States (US) and the Soviet Union (USSR)/Russia. These states hold a great power status because they are (or have been) global players in economic and/or military terms, and they are (or have been) interested in the Cyprus question as a result of their engagement in the Southeastern Mediterranean and the Middle East. This volume also deals with Greece and Turkey and their respective policies and interventions in Cyprus, especially under the prism of their guarantor power status since 1960. Both Greece and Turkey have played a pivotal role in the island's modern history, as the "motherlands" influencing the Greek Cypriot and the Turkish Cypriot communities of the island respectively.

The concept of foreign intervention mainly corresponds to an international actor's (a nation-state, a coalition, an international organization etc.) interference (or intention of interfering) in another state's affairs. It has been in the forefront of several fields, such as international law, international politics and conflict resolution since the end of the 19th century. An extensive bibliography is available, with particular impetus after the end of the Cold War mainly due to a renewed wave of US

interventionism during the 1990's.¹ Direct (or overt) military interventions comprise the most concrete group of cases. However, interventions which have been conducted through military means but in indirect ways, as well as through other than military means, could be equally (or even more) effective, in terms of serving the intervening part's objectives. This conceptual flexibility raises questions regarding the concept's scope. At the end of the day though, as Rosenau points out, what "divides interventionary behavior from other types of international action"² is inevitably vague. For example, could a phone call or a letter sent from a highly prestigious statesman of a great power to a leader of a smaller and weaker state, asking him to act in a specific way, be interpreted as an intervention? Or, could a threat of using violence or imposing other sort of penalties be considered as interventionary behaviour, just like an overt military intervention is? Having this intrinsic vagueness in mind, an effort to provide a precise definition-or a categorisation of sorts of intervention-beforehand in pursuit of clarifying our analytical framework would be an erroneous decision. Instead, we use "intervention" to mean

¹ See for example, Richard J. Barnet, *Intervention and Revolution. The United States in the Third World* (New York and Cleveland: The World Publishing Company, 1968); Richard N. Haass, *Intervention. The Use of American Military Force in the Post-Cold War World* (Washington D.C.: The Brookings Institution, 1999); Frederic S. Pearson, "Geographic Proximity and Foreign Military Intervention," *The Journal of Conflict Resolution* 18 (1974): 432-460; Patrick M. Regan, "Conditions of Successful Third-Party Intervention in Intrastate Conflicts," *The Journal of Conflict Resolution* 40 (1996): 336-359; Ellery C. Stowell, "Humanitarian Intervention," *The American Journal of International Law* 33 (1939): 733-736; Ryan Goodman, "Humanitarian Intervention and Pretexts for War," *The American Journal of International Law* 100 (2006): 107-141; Herbert K. Tillema, "Foreign Overt Military Intervention in the Nuclear Age," *Journal of Peace Research* 26 (1989): 179-196; James N. Rosenau, "Intervention as a Scientific Concept," *The Journal of Conflict Resolution* (1969): 149-171; Mi Yung Yoon, "Explaining U.S. Intervention in Third World Internal Wars, 1945-1989," *The Journal of Conflict Resolution* 41 (1997): 580-602; Michael J. Butler, "U.S. Military Intervention in Crisis, 1945-1994: An Empirical Inquiry of Just War Theory," *The Journal of Conflict Resolution* 47 (2003): 226-248; Wolfgang Friedman, "Interventionism, Liberalism, and Power-Politics: The Unfinished Revolution in International Thinking," *Political Science Quarterly* 83 (1968): 169-189; Patrick M. Regan, "Choosing to Intervene: Outside Interventions in Internal Conflicts," *The Journal of Politics* 60 (1998): 754-779.

² Rosenau, "Intervention as a Scientific Concept," 154.

“different levels of action ranging from verbal statements, economic assistance or the withholding of economic assistance, initiation or increase of arms supply, deployment of advisers, deployment of combat personnel into a war zone, to actual military engagement in combat operation.”³

In other words, intervention is

“not necessarily associated with particular instruments of policy. It is sometimes conceived to include effects of meddlesome diplomacy, as well as direct military operations.”⁴

2. The case of Cyprus

Apart from conceptual vagueness, there is another reason which led us to implement this rather loose analytical framework: the nature of Cyprus as a case. Cyprus has been a field of constant foreign interference, especially since the early 1950s, when the Greek Cypriots intensified their efforts in pursuit of self-determination and union with Greece (“enosis”). Albeit studying intervention in Cyprus suggests a rather complicated task due to the fact that diametrically different perceptions among distinct actors have led to contrasting narratives regarding the island’s modern history, this volume aspires to illuminate some cases of interventionary behaviour.

From a historical standpoint, the volume mainly focuses on two periods: 1950-1959 and 1960-1974. These two periods have some different characteristics in relation to the volume’s scope. Starting with the first period, from the Greek Cypriot majority’s point of view the people of Cyprus should be granted the right to decide for its own future and according to the same perception-Cyprus should be “unified with mother Greece.”⁵ Under this prism, the Greek Cypriot majority perceived itself as

³ Yoon, “Explaining U.S. Intervention in Third World Internal Wars,” 585.

⁴ Tillema, “Foreign Overt Military Intervention in the Nuclear Age,” 181.

⁵ The demand for self-determination and “Enosis” appears repeatedly in EOKA leaflets, the main means of EOKA’s propaganda and communication with the people. For example see the leaflet titled “Our soul will not bend” signed by EOKA’s leader, Georgios Grivas, and distributed in July 1958 in Greek: “Self-determination is the only objective of our struggle and if we don’t achieve it the struggle will not stop neither by threats nor by diplomatic deceits”. Spyros Papageorgiou, *Archive of the Illegal Documents of the Cyprus Struggle 1955-1959* (Nicosia: Epiphaniou publications, 1984), 119-121 (in Greek). The demand for Enosis was captured by the camera of the diplomat and poet George Seferiadis

possessing a moral right to enjoy freedom and self-determination, in line with the Charter of the United Nations' (UN) provisions.⁶ At the same time, the UK rejected this angle and pursued the continuation of London's imperial rule. This clash of perceptions led to the launch of EOKA⁷ armed struggle in 1955 and to counter-insurgency measures, ranging from police detentions and military coercion to the imposition of death penalty. During the same period, Greece submitted five subsequent appeals to the UN, aiming to enhance the Cypriots' claim for self-determination, while Turkey demanded a say on the island's future. A few months after the beginning of EOKA's armed activity, the first inter-communal clash burst after the emergence of intense Turkish Cypriot opposition to "enosis" and demand for partition ("taksim"). While these developments were taking place the Cold War was escalating, stimulating thus a US interest in working for the preservation of NATO's unity in Southeastern Mediterranean (Greece and Turkey had jointly accessed the Organisation in 1952), in view of a potential increase of the Soviet influence in the region.

Students of Cypriot history of the decade of 1950 should take into account the existence of a mosaic of perceptions of what was morally "right" and "legal", which derived from a vacuum of legitimacy created by the anti-colonial spirit of that time and by the complexity of national interests and ethnic claims. However, studying this decade is of paramount importance not only *per se*, but for at least one more reason: Detailed study of the sociopolitical dynamics and policies which developed during that decade is the bedrock of understanding Cypriot history thereafter, particularly: 1. interests and strategies lying behind foreign intervention in Cyprus, and 2. the formation of domestic perceptions which defined (and-to a degree-still do) Cypriot (especially Greek Cypriot) views in relation to the modern history of Cyprus, the "foreigners" and Cyprus problem itself.

In 1960 Cyprus became an independent state. Nevertheless, it soon became obvious that the young Republic of Cyprus was built on weak foundations: inter-communal strife, peculiarities of the Treaties of Establishment, Alliance and Guarantee, political instability in Greece, politico-ideological remnants of the previous decade which eventually led

(Seferis) written in a poetic way on a wall in Alona village in 1954: "We want Greece even if we will be eating rocks".

⁶ According to Article 1, par. 2 of the Charter, among the United Nations' purposes was to "develop friendly relations among nations based on respect for the principle of equal rights and self-determination of peoples, and to take other appropriate measures to strengthen universal peace."

⁷ Ethniki Organosi Kyprion Agoniston (National Organisation of Cypriot Fighters).

to domestic violence among Greek Cypriots, Turkish demands and great power interests (amidst the looming Cold War) set the framework of repeated foreign intervention, which peaked in 1974. Despite the creation of an independent state foreign intervention not only did not cease, but it dramatically increased. The study of 1960-1974 provides dozens of clear-cut examples of foreign intervention of several types and various directions: diplomatic initiatives, threats, intra-communal influence, indirect and direct military interventions, etc. Contrary to the difficulty of defining interventionary behaviour during the 1950s resulting from clashing perceptions of what was “legal” and “moral”, things are much clearer regarding this period. This clarity derives from the fact that the establishment of the Republic of Cyprus and its accession to the UN created a new order of things which was galvanised by international law, setting thus a firewall of legitimacy in favour of the newly established independent state. The fact that this firewall was violated by essentially all the implicated foreign powers indicates the extent of the interventionary phenomenon in Cyprus, at the expense of the sovereignty, the independence and the integrity of the Republic.

3. Impact on Greek Cypriot politics: subsequent domestic perceptions

While clashing agendas were unfolding and the “Cyprus question” was becoming a “Cyprus problem”, Cypriot domestic politics were being influenced accordingly, mainly as a result of the transforming perceptions. Since the Cyprus question has always been a core issue in Greek Cypriot politics, one must focus on how the Greek Cypriots perceive the Cyprus question in retrospect, in order to study and deeply understand the contemporary political system and party politics of the (*de facto* run by Greek Cypriots, based on the law of necessity) Republic of Cyprus. Perceptions are very important because they create models of consistency, which define the way we interpret developments in the domain of international politics. As Robert Jervis observes:

“We tend to believe that countries we like do things we like, support goals we favor, and oppose countries we oppose. We tend to think that countries that are our enemies make proposals that would harm us, work against the interests of our friends, and aid our opponents.”⁸

⁸ Robert Jervis, *Perceptions and Misperceptions in International Politics* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1976), 117-118.

Greek Cypriot perceptions of the “foreigners” and their past actions inevitably affect what the Greek Cypriots believe in relation to their future intentions as well. Having in mind the volume and frequency of interventionary activity in Cyprus, studying Greek Cypriot perceptions of foreign intervention, its consequences and the potential dangers looming ahead suggests a crucial parameter for understanding the Cyprus question in retrospect. According to Jervis,

“the process of drawing inferences in light of logic and past experience that produces rational cognitive consistency also causes people to fit incoming information into pre-existing beliefs and to perceive what they expect to be there. (...) We ignore information that does not fit, twist it so that it confirms, or at least does not contradict, our beliefs, and deny its validity. Confirming evidence, by contrast, is quickly and accurately noted.”⁹

4. The volume

This volume consists of three parts, in addition to this introductory chapter and the epilogue. The first part, titled “Foreign Intervention in Cyprus: Vertical Approaches”, aspires to approach great power politics and interventions in Cyprus through a case-by-case historical analysis. *Achilles Emilianides* presents the debates on Cyprus which took place before the House of Commons of England from 1954-1955. Such debates have not so far been systematically considered by researchers of the Cyprus question, despite their significance for the understanding of British policy and perceptions towards Cyprus. The paper considers these primary sources within the overall context of the Cyprus question and determines the recurring themes and approaches, with special focus on the debates from 1954-1955. *Andreas Karyos* provides a penetrating enquiry of selected aspects of the British security efforts during the Cyprus revolt, 1955-1959, which proved to be crucial in the UK’s failure to maintain colonial rule of Cyprus. Beyond any doubt Britain failed to suppress the insurgency in Cyprus, and EOKA survived as an important fighting force with its nucleus more or less unaffected until the Zurich-London settlement. The long-term complications brought about by British policy during 1955-1959 damaged relations between the Greek-Cypriot population and the British government, as well as between the Greek-Cypriots and the Turkish-Cypriots. *Sozos-Christos Theodoulou* evaluates the legal status of the British Military Bases in Cyprus, as well as their historical background and geopolitical impact. Through detailed analysis

⁹ Ibid., 143.

and interpretation of several annexes of the Treaties of Establishment, Alliance and Guarantee, he outlines the limits of British sovereignty over the Bases and offers a number of legal arguments which could question the 1960 treaties, in part or in their entirety. He argues that this legal limbo calls for renegotiation of the Treaties. *Nicos Panayiotides's* chapter suggests a critical review of the great powers' interventionary activity in Cyprus, with special reference to the period between the establishment of the Republic of Cyprus and the Turkish invasion. He approaches the Cyprus question mainly in the context of the Cold War strategies of the US and the UK, under the prism of hegemonic structures which define relations between strong and weak states. *Petros Savvides's* study, which mainly draws from archival sources, examines Soviet and British involvement in Cyprus in the Summer of 1974, with special reference to diplomatic and military activity in view of the Greek Junta's coup d' état and the Turkish invasion. Moreover, it revises a series of dominant Greek Cypriot perceptions of the great powers' role, especially focusing on perceptions of the British stance in relation to the Turkish plans.

The second part, under the title "Systemic Aspects of Intervention: Horizontal Approaches", focuses on the implementation of systemic models of analysis in approaching foreign interventions in Cyprus. *Evagoras Evagorou's* chapter analyses the behaviour of the states involved in the Cyprus issue and interprets their long time strategy through the implementation of theory of international relations-specifically this of structural realism-and strategic analysis. The author attempts to identify the roots of state behaviour in the strategic complex of the Cyprus issue and to determine the influence of systemic factors in the main actors' strategies. *Giorgos Kentas* revisits the concept of "balance" between Turkey and Greece and looks into its relevance to the Cyprus problem. He examines the historical roots of that concept and the way it appears in the context of negotiations. Emphasis is attached on the way in which the concept of "balance" between Turkey and Greece militates against an independent and sovereign state in Cyprus. According to the author, that peculiar concept of "balance" did not work in the past and the chances of working in the future are quite slim.

Finally, in the third part titled "Domestic Perceptions and Political Outcomes" the volume deals with Greek Cypriot perceptions formed as a result of foreign intervention in Cyprus and with their impact on the Cyprus problem politics. Particular attention is paid on social perceptions, policies and public rhetoric. *Haralambos Alexandrou* analyses the way EOKA perceived global affairs, as well as the way it presented them to its Cypriot audience. The author draws from the leaflets EOKA-and its

branches-printed and circulated in the context of its propaganda. *Michalis Kontos* aims at challenging the concept of the “Anglo-American factor”, a terminology which is widely employed by Greek Cypriot decision makers, opinion leaders and students of the Cyprus problem in a way that implies the existence of constantly joint Anglo-American interests and a unitary decision making process. In order to question this concept’s validity, the author refers to cases drawn by the period between 1947 and 1956, including the first years of the Greek Cypriot revolt. *Constantinos Adamides* approaches the Cyprus question as an intractable conflict and he focuses on the consequences and impact of the intractability of the conflict on the Greek Cypriot perceptions regarding foreign actors and how the former in turn influence the prospect for a settlement. In order to enhance his argument, the author provides a number of tables, as well as some figures which have been published in the Greek and Greek Cypriot press and depict Greek Cypriot perceptions.

PART I.

FOREIGN INTERVENTIONS IN CYPRUS: VERTICAL APPROACHES

CHAPTER ONE

THE CYPRUS QUESTION BEFORE THE HOUSE OF COMMONS: 1954-1955

ACHILLES C. EMILIANIDES

1. Introduction

The aim of this paper is to analyse the debates on Cyprus which took place before the House of Commons of England between 1954-1955.¹ The House of Commons is, as it is well known, the lower house of the Parliament of the United Kingdom and an elected body. During the crucial period of 1954-1958, the House of Commons frequently revisited the Cyprus question and the corresponding British strategy and politics. Such debates have not so far been systematically considered by researchers of the Cyprus question, despite their significance for the understanding of British policy and perceptions towards Cyprus. This paper shall consider such primary sources within the overall context of the question of Cyprus and shall determine the recurring themes and approaches. Since this is the first time that research of such kind is being systematically undertaken within the framework of the Cyprus question and an extensive analysis is considered as necessary, this paper shall only consider the debates between 1954-1955; future research work might extend the scope of the analysis to the subsequent period of 1956-1958.

This paper shall be in three parts. The first part shall analyse the framework of Hopkinson's "never" statement of July 1954 and the debate that followed before the House of Commons. The second part shall consider the debate of May 1955, which followed the outbreak of revolt in the island, whereas the third part shall focus on the debate on Cyprus of December 1955, which addressed the outcome of the tripartite conference

¹ All references herewith shall be to the *Hansard* transcripts of parliamentary debates.

between Britain, Greece and Turkey on the future of Cyprus. It is noted at the outset that parliamentary history is considered as a valuable methodological tool for approaching perceptions and the historical development of the actors; however, it is obviously not the only, or even the most important methodological instrument. Accordingly, any systematic analysis which is based on parliamentary debates does not aim at providing a complete picture of the subject-matter, but rather to add new elements in the analysis and enable the researcher to approach the subject-matter from different, and previously unaccounted for, angles.²

2. The framework of Hopkinson's statement: July 1954

The administration of Cyprus by Great Britain was a colonial one, without genuine involvement by the native population. The objective of the colonial administration was to equalise the influence of the votes of the Greek Cypriots in the Legislative Council, who were the majority of the population, with the combined votes of the British and the Turkish Cypriots. The colonial Government further had the right not to enforce any decision reached by the Legislative Council.³ Eventually, the Legislative Council was itself abolished, as a response to the disturbances of 1931, which culminated with the burning down of the Government House in Nicosia; the demonstrations were the outcome of the disappointment of Greek Cypriots towards the colonial Government for what they considered to be a series of arbitrary decisions, as well as the rejection of their plea for Union of the island with Greece.⁴ Britain reacted with military force and

² For a more elaborate analysis of the interaction between parliamentary history and the Cyprus problem, see Achilles Emilianides, *The Parliamentary Co-Existence of Greeks and Turks in Cyprus* (Nicosia: Epifaniou, 1963, in Greek); Idem, *Parliamentary History of Cyprus: 1964-1976* (Nicosia: Egean, 2007, in Greek).

³ See Achilles Emilianides, "Justice and Human Rights during British Rule in Cyprus," *Cyprus Law Tribune* 3 [2006]: 66 - 96 (in Greek); Idem, "Conflict of Laws during British Rule," in *Proceedings of the Fourth Cypriological Conference*, v. III, (Nicosia: Society for Cypriot Studies, 2012): 67-77 (in Greek); Symeon Symeonides, "Introduction to Cypriot Law," in *Comparative Law*, Fokion Frantzeskakis, Dimitris Evrigenis, Symeon Symeonides, (Thessaloniki: Sakkoulas 1978, in Greek): 375ff.

⁴ See Petros Stylianou, *The Movement of October of 1931 in Cyprus* (Nicosia, 1984, in Greek); Vias Livadas, Giannis Spanos, Petros Papapolyviou, *The Insurrection of October 1931* (Nicosia, 2004, in Greek); George Georgallides, "Church and State in Cyprus October 1931 to November 1932: A Systematic

administrative repression. In a referendum held on 15 January 1950 and organised by the Church, more than 95% of the indigenous Greek population voted in favour of the Union (Enosis) of the island with Greece, demanding that the people of Cyprus be allowed to exercise their right to self-determination;⁵ however, the British colonial Government rejected the Greek position.

On 28 July 1954 it was announced that the Churchill Government had reached an agreement in principle with the Egyptian Government on the future of the Suez Canal Zone Base, which provided that all British forces would withdraw from the Canal Zone within a period of 20 months.⁶ This effectively implied that the Middle East Headquarters were to move from Suez to Cyprus, since Cyprus remained the only comparatively large colony in the region from where they could deploy their forces. A number of conservative MP's opposed their party's decision to withdraw from the Suez Canal Base and exercised pressure to the Government to maintain Britain's military presence at Suez, as they considered that such was a key strategic region; such MPs, collectively referred to as the "Suez Group" from 1953-1957, exercised a fair amount of internal party pressure to the foreign policy of the Conservative Party, which influenced the Party's rhetoric towards the Cyprus question.⁷ Such existence of passionate opposition within the Conservative Party prompted the Churchill Government to signify in powerful terms that it was not willing to consider withdrawing from Cyprus.

On the same day that withdrawal from the Suez Canal was announced, Henry Hopkinson, the Minister of State for Colonial Affairs in the

Humiliation of the Autocephalous Church of Cyprus," *Yearbook of the Cyprus Research Centre* 19 (1992): 361 - 448.

⁵ See Savvas Loizides, *The Right to Self - Determination and the Cyprus Question* (Athens, 1957); Criton Tornaritis, *The Right of Self - Determination with Special Reference to the Republic of Cyprus* (Nicosia, 1973); Spyros Calogeropoulos-Stratis, 'Le droit des peuples à disposer d' eux – mêmes et la question de Chypre' in *Das Selbstbestimmungsrecht der Völker* (Thessaloniki, 1967), 53-61.

⁶ House of Commons, July 28, 1954: 496ff. For the framework of the Suez crisis, which culminated in the following years, see e.g. Keith Kyle, *Suez: Britain's End of Empire in the Middle East* (London: Tauris, 2011); Scott Lucas, *Britain and Suez: The Lion's Last Roar* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1996). See also David Devereux, *The Formulation of British Defence Policy towards the Middle East* (London: McMillan, 1990).

⁷ See Sue Onslow, *Backbench Debate within the Conservative Party and its Influence on British Foreign Policy. 1948-1957* (London: McMillan, 1997).

Government of Winston Churchill,⁸ stated before the House of Commons that the time had come for a fresh initiative in the development of self-governing institutions in Cyprus.⁹ The previous constitutional offer of 1948, which had been proposed by the Labour Government, had been rejected by the Cypriots. The new constitutional offer was the outcome of an elaborate plan by the British Government to disclaim accusations that it had been depriving Cypriots of their freedom;¹⁰ in April 1954, just a few months prior, the Greek Government had decided to appeal to the United Nations (UN) over Cyprus¹¹ and it was considered that the new constitutional proposal would help British diplomacy argue that the Cyprus question was an internal matter for the British empire and secure support by UN member states.

It was decided that the British Government would introduce a modified constitution in the near future, which would reintroduce a legislature containing a majority of official members who would be nominated by the Governor and a minority of elected members and also for the appointment to the Executive Council of some unofficial members of the legislature. The proposed Constitution would provide for eighteen appointed members in the Legislative Council (six British and 12 appointed from amongst members of the population) and fifteen elected members (twelve Greeks and three Turks). This was a drawback from the constitutional offer of 1948 which provided for a majority of elected as against nominated members.¹² Hopkinson expressed his, rather vain, hope that there would be “enough men of good will and of moderate views” who would be willing to embrace the new constitution.¹³ The reasoning of the British Government was that there would be a sufficient number of Greek Cypriots who would be willing to co-operate with the colonial authorities, despite the refusal of the Ethnarchy or AKEL, the Communist party of

⁸ Hopkinson (a Conservative MP from 1950-1956 who was subsequently elevated to peerage as the 1st Baron Colyton) was appointed as the Minister of State for Colonial Affairs from 1952-1955. The position was subordinate to that of the Secretary of State for the Colonies.

⁹ House of Commons, July 28, 1954, 504ff.

¹⁰ See Evanthis Hatzivassiliou, *The Cyprus Question 1878 - 1960: The Constitutional Aspect*, (Minnesota: University of Minnesota, 2002), 51.

¹¹ See Savvas Loizides, *The Cyprus Question and the Law of the United Nations* (2nd Ed., Nicosia: Ethnarchy of Cyprus, 1954); Idem, “The Cyprus Question in the United Nations,” *Revue Hellenique de Droit International* 7 (1954): 214-219.

¹² For which see Nicos Christodoulides, *The Plans for the Solution of the Cyprus Problem: 1948-1978* (Athens: Kastaniotis, 2009, in Greek).

¹³ House of Commons, July 28, 1954: 506.

Cyprus,¹⁴ to co-operate. This was obviously misguided, as no Greek Cypriot leaders or personalities would be willing to disassociate themselves from the Archbishop and the Ethnarchy.¹⁵

Hopkinson further stated that the British Government did not contemplate a change of sovereignty in Cyprus.¹⁶ The Welsh Labour MP James Griffiths,¹⁷ proceeded to ask certain questions, amongst which, was the crucial question of whether the modified constitution would eventually lead to full Dominion status, so that Cyprus would have the right to decide its own future and thereby exercise the right to self-determination.¹⁸ Hopkinson reiterated that there could be no question of any change of sovereignty in Cyprus.¹⁹ When Griffiths reminded the Minister of the declared policy of the House to assist the Colonies towards self-government, so that they could eventually reach a stage at which they would be, within the meaning of the Statute of Westminster, independent and entitled to determine their future relations with the Commonwealth for themselves,²⁰ Hopkinson made one of the most controversial statements in the history of the Cyprus question by stating that:

“it has always been understood and agreed that there are certain territories in the Commonwealth which, owing to their particular circumstances, can never expect to be fully independent.”²¹

Hopkinson cited the particular strategic importance of Cyprus for British interests and further declared that: “I do not see any reason to expect any difficulties in Cyprus as a result of this statement”,²² in retrospect, the latter part was an extremely unfortunate statement, as Hopkinson’s absolutist (and politically non prudent) “never” became a cornerstone of the rhetoric of Cypriot leaders as to why their only option was an armed struggle against British colonial forces. At the time, the

¹⁴ For AKEL (Progressive Party of Working People) see Thomas W. Adams, *AKEL: The Communist Party of Cyprus* (Stanford: Hoover Institution Press: 1971).

¹⁵ See e.g. the testimony of Costas Manglis to Lawrence Durrell, *Bitter Lemons of Cyprus* (London: Faber & Faber, 1985, original edition 1957), 147-148.

¹⁶ House of Commons, July 28, 1954: 504ff

¹⁷ Griffiths, an MP from 1936-1970, was a former Secretary of State for the Colonies for the Labour Government (1950-1951) and was the Deputy Leader of the Labour Party from December 1955- May 1959.

¹⁸ House of Commons, July 28, 1954: 506.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 507.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, 507.

²¹ *Ibid.*, 508.

²² *Ibid.*, 511.

Minister's statement was the spark that led to a highly interesting discussion taking place before the House of Commons, with respect to the future of Cyprus.²³

Labour and Tory MPs clearly had different perspectives on the Cypriot case. William Rees-Davies²⁴ expressed the general feeling within the Conservative Party, when he noted that there had never been any great enforced demand for Enosis and that Cyprus never had any history or traditional background as a part of Greece;²⁵ it was argued that a peculiar alliance of Orthodox leaders and Communists had been engaging in political propaganda in order to "capture a small island for the sovereignty of Greece and not for the benefit of the people."²⁶ The position generally expressed by the Tories was that the influence of the Orthodox Church and the Communists needed to be restricted, in order to co-operate with those Cypriots who opposed Enosis. The arguments of the conservative MPs expressed a rather paternalistic approach; it was alleged that Greeks were normally passionate and this caused them to act contrary to their best interests, which in this case were better served by remaining as a member of the Commonwealth.²⁷

In truth, however, the main concern of the Conservative Party was one of security, especially following the withdrawal of Britain from Suez.²⁸ Sir William Traven Aitken, one of the leading figures of the Conservative

²³ It should be noted that such debates were never broadcasted in Cyprus, as the official radio service in Cyprus had explicit directions not to broadcast anything concerning the island, other than Hopkinson's statement. This was indeed ill-advised, as a broadcast of the speeches by Labour MPs might have had a positive influence on Cypriots. See House of Commons, July 28, 1954: 1924ff.

²⁴ An MP from 1953-1983, he was the son of Sir William Rees-Davies, who served as King's Advocate in Cyprus from 1902-1907.

²⁵ House of Commons, July 28, 1954: 523.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, 525.

²⁷ See also the speech by Niall Macpherson, an MP from 1945-1963, who was later elevated to peerage as the 1st Baron Drumalbyn, House of Commons, July 28, 1954: 529ff.

²⁸ See e.g. the speech of Conservative MP Harry Legge-Bourke, who served as an MP from 1945-1973, House of Commons, July 28, 1954, 556ff. Criticizing the Government's approach, Labour MP Woodrow Wyatt, an MP from 1945-1955, noted that whereas the main concern of the Conservatives ought to have been to secure a base and not to govern Cyprus, their rhetoric and actions amounted to a different outcome and concluded: "what we ought to be concerned with as a leading nation of the free world is only having bases in a way which is consistent with the rights of the inhabitants of the country concerned." See House of Commons, July 28, 1954: 569.

Commonwealth Affairs Committee,²⁹ declared that the people of Cyprus were not hostile towards Britain and that the military British bases were secured only so long as the island was under British sovereignty. On the contrary, the political situation in Greece was unstable and the communists might eventually dominate the island. Furthermore, he alleged that many Cypriots would move their money out of Cyprus into England, if the island was to join a political union with Greece. Essentially, he argued that Britain ought to remain in Cyprus both for security purposes and in order to safeguard the material interests of Cypriots themselves, since they might fail to safeguard them themselves. He concluded by arguing that he did not trust plebiscites, and especially those run by the Church, holding that a plebiscite would only be fair if Cypriots could realize that Enosis would put them in a worse position—a fact, however, which they failed to realize.³⁰ Obviously, this was a very paternalistic view of plebiscites, which essentially implied that a plebiscite would only be fair if Cypriots were to agree with Aitken's views.

The position of Labour MPs was fundamentally different. Lena Jeger³¹ reminded the House that Winston Churchill himself, the then leader of the Tories, had declared in 1907 before the Legislative Council of Cyprus that it was only natural that Cypriots should regard their incorporation with Greece, their motherland, as an ideal to be fervently cherished and that such a feeling was an example of the patriotic devotion which so nobly characterized the Greek nation. Jeger declared that Cypriots, just as in 1907, continued to wish to be united with Greece; this was no communist plan, but the plain truth.³² The results of a plebiscite, Jeger noted, were no less true, depending on whether one agreed with them or not. She had herself asked the opinions of more than 10,000 Cypriots who resided in her constituency at St Pancras and they unanimously wanted to unite with Greece.³³ Expressing the opinion that the number of “stooges” willing to be appointed by the Governor in Cyprus was limited, Jeger wondered why Cypriots, who were Europeans with a long tradition of culture, should not have the same opportunity to express their opinion as the people of, for instance Sudan.³⁴

²⁹ An MP from 1950 until his death in 1964, he served as the Vice-Chairman of the Conservative Commonwealth Affairs Committee.

³⁰ House of Commons, July 28, 1954: 537ff.

³¹ Baroness Lena May Jeger was an MP from 1953-1959 and then from 1964-1979, when she became a life peer at the House of Lords until her death in 2007.

³² House of Commons, July 28., 1954: 525-526.

³³ *Ibid.*, 528ff.

³⁴ *Ibid.*, 525ff.

Labour MP Thomas Driberg³⁵ argued that Hopkinson's statement was one of the most extraordinary and dangerous statements ever to originate from the Government. He reasoned that it essentially amounted to an abandonment of a fundamental and commonly accepted principle of colonial development, namely that the right to self-government includes the right to opt out of the Commonwealth.³⁶ Driberg rightly pointed out that there could be no optimism that any Cypriot, "except a few stooges"³⁷ might co-operate with the Government with respect to their new constitutional proposal; a proposal leading to an undemocratic constitution, whose only purpose would be to safeguard that there could never be proper self-government on the grounds that Cyprus was strategically too important to British interests. He pointed out that 90% of Cypriots wanted Enosis and whereas this might seem foolish, this was their will and ought to be respected.³⁸

The opinions expressed by other Labour MPs were also in favour of the right of Cypriots to self-determination.³⁹ Joseph Mallalieu⁴⁰ noted that the existence of a small minority in Cyprus, such as the Turkish Cypriots, was not sufficient to hinder the application of the will of the majority. He further pointed out that there had been repeated demonstrations in Cyprus of the will of the people to unite with Greece, culminating in the 1931 events and that Cyprus could not adequately function as a military base, unless the Cypriot population was willing to co-operate. In view of the above, it was argued that Enosis should be promoted, and, in consideration, the Greek government had already declared that it would be willing to grant military bases in the island to Britain.⁴¹

Labour MP Richard Crossman⁴² went further and wondered what would be the difference between Britain and the Soviet Union, if it was accepted that a country might be occupied for security purposes, irrespective of plebiscites or elections and under the illusion that only the

³⁵ A former member of the British Communist Party, Driberg was an MP from 1942-1955 and 1959-1974.

³⁶ House of Commons, July 28, 1954: 517ff.

³⁷ *Ibid.*, 519.

³⁸ *Ibid.*, 519ff.

³⁹ See e.g. the speech of James Griffiths, House of Commons, July 28, 1954: 553ff.

⁴⁰ An MP of the Labour Party from 1945-1979.

⁴¹ House of Commons, July 28, 1954: 533ff.

⁴² An MP from 1945-1970 who served as Lord President of the Council and Leader of the House of Commons from 1966 -1968 and as Secretary of State for Health and Social Services from 1968-1970.

British know the best solution for the local population.⁴³ Questioning the allegations that the desire of Cypriots for Enosis was the outcome of propaganda, he pointed out that more than 10.000 Cypriots living in Britain, far away from the influence of the Church and the communists, wholeheartedly supported Enosis. Crossman reminded that Cypriots, while peaceful, burned down the Government House in 1931, and argued, quite correctly, that insulting statements such as Hopkinson's one, would lead to the very result the statement was supposed to prevent, namely stimulation of resistance and a movement for independence. He further pointed out that:

“human beings sometimes prefer to be free with fewer of the material advantages. If we could only learn that now, it would be a step in the right direction.”⁴⁴

The Secretary of State for the Colonies Oliver Lyttelton⁴⁵ characterised Crossman's speech as extremely irresponsible and dangerous and reminded that support for Enosis would have grave effect upon Turkish opinion; Turkey's solidarity, he pointed out, was of primary importance in the scheme of defence of the Eastern Mediterranean. Furthermore, whereas Greece was a friendly power, it was currently unstable and handing Cyprus over to it would effectively undermine the standard of life of the population and the Eastern bastion of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO).⁴⁶ In an attempt to mitigate the effect of Hopkinson's statement, Lyttelton declared that he had never used the term “never”, but that self-determination was “a most unlikely thing in any future we can foresee”,⁴⁷ a phrase which essentially amounted to the same notion: that self-determination was not an option for Cyprus. There is indeed little doubt that Anthony Eden,⁴⁸ then Foreign Secretary and subsequently Prime-Minister, regarded Turkey as Britain's primary ally in the area and

⁴³ House of Commons, July 28, 1954: 341ff.

⁴⁴ Ibid., 545.

⁴⁵ Lyttelton, an MP from 1940-1954, was appointed as a Secretary of State for the Colonies from 1951-1954 and was then elevated to peerage as the 1st Viscount Chandos.

⁴⁶ House of Commons, July 28, 1954: 548ff.

⁴⁷ Ibid: 549.

⁴⁸ Sir Anthony Eden, an MP from 1923-1957, was Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs from 1935-1938, 1940-1945 and 1951-1955, Deputy Prime Minister from 1951-1955 and Prime Minister from 1955-1957.

as a vital cog in the formulation of British policy in the Middle East.⁴⁹ Labour MP Aneurin Bevan⁵⁰ criticizing the manner in which the Government approached the issue, pointed out that it essentially amounted to an open invitation “to the people of Cyprus to take whatever measures they think they can take to make things as uncomfortable as possible for us when we establish a base there.”⁵¹

3. May 1955: The revolt begins

As would be expected, Greek Cypriots were unwilling to accept appointment in the Legislative Council and the 1954 fresh constitutional initiative was rejected by the Ethnarchy and AKEL. The Greek Government lodged an application with the United Nations on 22 August 1954.⁵² The inscription of the item on the final UN agenda was vehemently, and successfully, opposed by the Government of the United Kingdom. The UN General Assembly decided in its Resolution of 17 December 1954, not to consider further the item in question. On 1 April 1955 the National Organisation of Cypriot Fighters (EOKA), led by George Grivas (alias Dhigenis), a Greek Cypriot who was a colonel in the Greek army, declared an armed insurrection against the British, demanding the Union (Enosis) of the island with Greece.⁵³ The political leader of the Greek Cypriots was Makarios III, who was also the Archbishop of the Greek Orthodox Church. This was due to the fact that during the British rule of Cyprus, the Orthodox Church constituted the nation - leading political organisation of the Greeks of Cyprus under foreign sovereignty as the Ethnarchy.⁵⁴ At the beginning of April 1955

⁴⁹ See e.g. Sir Anthony Eden, *Memoirs: Full Circle* (London: Cassel, 1960): 414; George Horton Kelling, *Countdown to Rebellion: British Policy in Cyprus 1939-1955* (Michigan: Greenwood Press, 1990): 141, even claimed that “Eden’s concentration on the importance of the Turkish alliance verged on obsession.”

⁵⁰ An MP from 1929-1960 who served as Deputy Leader of the Labour Party from 1959-1960.

⁵¹ House of Commons, July 28, 1954: 566.

⁵² For a criticism, see Evanthis Hatzivassiliou, *Strategies of the Cyprus Problem: The 1950 Decade* (Athens: Patakis, 2005): 103ff (in Greek).

⁵³ SIMAE (Council for the Preservation of Historical Memory of the EOKA Struggle), *Fifty Years on from the EOKA Struggle* (Nicosia: Ministry of Education, 2006, in Greek); Robert Holland, *Britain and the Revolt in Cyprus: 1954 - 1959* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1998).

⁵⁴ See Andreas Gavrielides, *The Ethnarchic Rights and the Referendum for Union with Greece* (2nd Ed., Nicosia: 1972, in Greek); Prokopis N. Vanezis, *Makarios: Life and Leadership* (London: Abelard-Schuman, 1979).

Anthony Eden became Prime Minister of the United Kingdom following Churchill's resignation. On 5 May 1955 the Labour Party requested for time to discuss the Cyprus question before the House of Commons.

Lena Jeger noted that the elected representatives of the Cypriots did not wish to co-operate with the Government with respect to their latest constitutional offer. She contended that when both Left and Right, Christian and anti-Christian, opposed something, this was in itself a powerful argument for listening to them.⁵⁵ It would be unwise to claim that those Cypriots who were in favour of the proposed constitution were afraid to say so, because

“we cannot put the constitutional future of Cyprus into the hands of mute and frightened men who have no support from the whole range of public opinion.”⁵⁶

Jeger argued that people should be invited, but not compelled, to stay in the British Empire and that any useful debate ought to begin with acknowledging that Cypriots, apart from the Turkish minority, are Greeks.⁵⁷

It would not be helpful, Jeger argued, to continue to insist that Cypriots have obtained material benefits from British rule; she stated: “that is the argument which parents often use with children when they want to leave home, but I do not believe that one wayward child has been kept at home by that argument.”⁵⁸ Jeger wondered why Turkish views are referred to sympathetically and more strongly than the views of Greece, which “after all has perhaps a better record of alliance with this country.”⁵⁹ She opined that there was no evidence that the Turkish minority was to be persecuted in case that Cyprus became part of Greece, and argued that the rights of the Turkish minority could be properly safeguarded, stating that: “while I emphasise the rights of the minority, we must be honest and agree that it is not only minorities who have rights”.⁶⁰

Henry Hopkinson replied that, whereas no one would deny the Hellenic identity of the Greek population of Cyprus, the Turkish minority of the island should enjoy an equal right to respect their identity.⁶¹ While

⁵⁵ House of Commons, May 5, 1955: 1912ff.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, 1913.

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, 1917.

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, 1920.

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, 1922.

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*

⁶¹ *Ibid.*, 1927.

the Government understood the emotional attraction of Greek Cypriots towards Greece, he maintained, British strategic interests necessitated continued sovereignty over Cyprus. Hopkinson further noted that the recent “terrorist activities” had been a further drawback on the attempt to consult with the leaders of the Greek Cypriots, especially since the Orthodox Church had failed to condemn such activities.⁶² However, it was clear that the “never” policy was being somewhat weakened rhetorically; the new statement was that “British control in Cyprus must be maintained unimpaired during this period of world tension.”⁶³

Labour MPs were highly dismissive of the Minister’s speech. MP Driberg reminded that the official position of the Labour Party had been officially modified and that it now provided that the people of Cyprus should have self-determination;⁶⁴ he stated that

“all that the Labour Party stands for is self-determination. In the present context of the Cyprus problem that probably means Enosis. It is not our business here to argue for or against Enosis, but merely to say that the Cypriot people, like all other peoples in the world, are absolutely entitled....to have a say in their own future.”⁶⁵

Similarly, MP Reginald Paget⁶⁶ questioned rather provocatively:

“first we do nothing because there is not a sufficient level of demand in the community with democratic means to express it, and then, of course, we cannot do anything because they have reverted to violence. Surely we are not going back to that?”⁶⁷

MP Kenneth Robinson⁶⁸ opined that the demand for Enosis was not related to social or economic factors, but to real and sincere principles of freedom and self-determination, principles which should be respected even if it would be inconvenient to do so.⁶⁹

⁶² Ibid., 1929.

⁶³ Ibid., 1935.

⁶⁴ Ibid., 1931.

⁶⁵ Ibid., 1979.

⁶⁶ Elevated to peerage in 1975 as Baron Paget.

⁶⁷ House of Commons, May 5, 1955: 1930.

⁶⁸ An MP from 1949-1970.

⁶⁹ House of Commons, May 5, 1955: 1936ff. See also the speech of Labour MP Arthur Creech Jones (an MP from 1935-1950 and 1954-1964 who served as the Secretary of State for the Colonies from 1946-1950) at House of Commons, May 5, 1955: 1979.