

Independent Cyprus 1960-2010 *Selected Readings*

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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 Papandreu 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.

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