Independence Day through the Colonial Eye: A View from the British Archive[1]

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Abstract

The confidential report of the Acting United Kingdom Representative in Cyprus, Ian F. Porter, to the British Secretary of State for Commonwealth Relations from September 1960s gives a detailed account of the actual events on Independence Day. Discovered in the British archives[2] and reproduced at the end of this Special Issue, this document is of high historical value for the history and historiography of Cyprus. For a better understanding of the document the account of Independence Day in Cyprus is put into its wider historical setting and located within the context of other independence days within the British Empire.

Keywords: Independence Day, decolonisation, British Colonial Rule

On 1 October 2010, the Republic of Cyprus celebrated the 50th anniversary of its independence. When the year began only few Cypriots were aware that for 47 years they had been commemorating the birth of their republic on the wrong day. Cyprus had in fact become independent on Tuesday, 16 August 1960 but in July 1963, the Cypriot cabinet unanimously moved Independence Day away from the summer heat and main holiday season to the more convenient but rather arbitrarily chosen 1 October.[3] This change already indicated the low esteem Cypriots felt for that day ever since independence. But if things had gone the way they were originally intended, this change would have not been necessary. At the time of the London conference in February 1959, the decision was taken to grant Cyprus its independence exactly one year after the end of the conference on 29 February 1960. However, things did not go as planned. In particular, the negotiations about the British military bases and other military requirements had resulted in repeated postponements. When Cyprus finally became independent, hardly six weeks had elapsed since the end of the long and intricate negotiations.[4] Only since July had it become

1 Parts of this text are based on: R. Holland (forthcoming, 2011) 'Off to a Good Start?: The Birth of Independent Cyprus, 16 August 1960' in A. Theophanous and N. Peristianis (eds.), *The Republic of Cyprus at Crossroads: Past, Present and Future*. Nicosia: University of Nicosia Press.

2 FO 371/152834. Report entitled 'Cyprus: Inauguration of the Republic' from I.F. Porter 7 September 1960.

3 'What's in a Date, a Flag and a Tune?', *Sunday Mail*, 26 September 2010.

4 For an analysis of the negotiations and the repeated postponements of independence see: H. Faustmann (1999) *Divide and Quit? British Colonial Policy in Cyprus 1878-1960. Including a Special Survey of the Transitional*

clear that independence was imminent and that it would be granted on 16 August. The Independence Bill was passed in the British House of Commons on 29 July 1960. Therefore, there had been no time for large-scale preparations of the celebrations which turned out simple and improvised. Foreign guests were not pouring in the island to mark a day hardly anybody wanted to celebrate anyway since it marked the emergence of a state nobody had really wanted. The four year anti-colonial struggle of EOKA (1955-1959), the Greek Cypriot right wing guerrilla organisation, had succeeded in ending British rule but had aimed at the union of Cyprus with Greece and not independence. The Turkish Cypriots and Turkey had been trying since 1956 to partition the island, whose two parts were then supposed to unite with their respective 'mother countries' after massive resettlements. Britain had originally tried to hold on to Cyprus indefinitely and then shifted from a policy to hold Cyprus permanently as a base to two permanent bases in Cyprus. The final outcome of this dispute, the creation of an independent Republic of Cyprus minus two sovereign British military bases was a compromise that ensured that none of the sides but Britain got what they wanted. Even Britain feared beneath the surface that independence was the worst of all solutions, worse even than *enosis*, because a fully self-governing Cyprus was likely to be one governed by their old opponent, Archbishop Makarios. Neither Greece nor Turkey gained territory or citizens in Cyprus. Instead, they became guarantor powers of the new state and obtained the right to station small military contingents on the island. Moreover, the constitution established the 18% Turkish minority on the island as a second almost equal community with far reaching veto rights and other privileges, which made this new state even less attractive for the Greek Cypriot majority. Consequently, this 'fettered' independence was for many on both sides at best acceptable as an interim arrangement but not as a permanent state of affairs. Clearly in the eyes of those present there was not much to celebrate in August 1960 and the somehow muted celebrations 50 years later still reflect some elements of the frustration and non-identification with the Republic from 1960. It is rather telling that 1 October was only made a public holiday in 1979 while the 16 August date is largely forgotten.[5] Since the late 1960s and in particular since the division of the island through the Turkish invasion of 1974, the Greek Cypriot majority has grown to identify with the Republic of Cyprus, which they exclusively control since the bicommunal violence of 1963. For many Turkish Cypriots, the Republic of Cyprus had ceased in effect to be their state, some of the resulting vacuum being filled by the so-called (and unrecognised) 'Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus' declared in November 1983. Suggestively there has been no official commemoration of the 50th anniversary amongst the Turkish-Cypriot community.

Period: February 1959-August 1960 (e-book). Available at: [http://www.uni-mannheim.de/mateo/verlag/diss/faustmann/Abstractfaust.html], Mannheim: Mateo, and H. Faustmann (2002) 'Independence Postponed: Cyprus 1959-1960', *The Cyprus Review*, Vol. 14, No. 2 (Fall), pp. 99-119.

5 'Our Pride in the Republic Comes 50 Years too Late'. *Cyprus Mail*, 1 October 2010.

But also in a comparative perspective, Cyprus' actual Independence Day was a rather muted affair. One reason for this was the fact that it differed from established patterns of British departure from a colony. Ever since independence day in India, the ritual or 'invented tradition'[6] of departing from a colony was based on celebrations shared by all involved, the former colonial subjects and the former colonial ruler alike. At least the facade was maintained, that the regime change was welcomed by both, Britain and the respective colonial people. Within this context the British self-image of its own imagined history based on reconciliation, compromise and bloodless evolution was tacked onto the newly independent state on its independence day. But such carefully orchestrated moments need a smooth and largely unchallenged narrative, sufficiently recognisable and mutual on all sides to fit a rough consensus. In Cyprus in the period leading up to 16 August 1960 there were no such overlapping versions of recent history.

The fact that none of the sides involved considered independence really desirable explains also the character of Independence Day. The Greek Cypriots wanted a low key, truncated and non-celebratory event or in the words of Archbishop Makarios a 'business handover'. But also Britain opposed anything excessively pictorial or enthusiastic. It is telling that the original suggestion for a minimal programme came from Governor Sir Hugh Foot to the Archbishop, not the other way around, as one might otherwise have expected. In detailing to Makarios what he had in mind during November 1959, Foot pared it down in advance to the necessary inauguration of a Parliament, the immediate signing of the Treaties prescribed under the Zurich-London accords (the immediacy arising from the need to give absolutely no opportunity for second thoughts), his own private farewells as Governor at Government House, the welcoming of the Greek and Turkish Army contingents at Famagusta, and, Foot hoped, ceremonies of thanksgiving in the Orthodox Churches and some suitable sign of satisfaction in the Turkish quarters.[7]

Notably, the bit of this sequence which Foot intended to make the most of was the formal induction of the foreign military contingents (that is, the bit which was least Cypriot of all). His conception was that in Famagusta there should be a formal ceremony in the moat, so that when British troops had taken up the lead position, dutifully followed by Greek and Turkish formations, the Union Jack should be run *up* (not down, as was usual in Independence rituals) the flagpole, and then the colours of Greece and Turkey on either side. At the end of this part of the proceedings the new flag of Cyprus should be raised in lonely isolation high up on the ramparts. This was to be, Foot felt, 'an occasion not for sadness at the end of a regime but rather rejoicing at the creation of an independent Republic in full allied agreement. We shall go out with flags flying'.[8] The last point – the parting flourish of the Union Jack itself – was almost the most vital point, as the snappy wording itself suggested. Finally, the Governor suggested, the Republic of Cyprus could

6 E. Hobsbawm and T. Ranger (1983) *The Invention of Tradition*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

7 CO 926/763. Note on Foot–Makarios Meeting 16 November 1959.

8 Quoted in R. Holland (1998) *Britain and the Revolt in Cyprus*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, p. 335.

hold an Independence celebration itself, perhaps a year or so in the future, inviting whomsoever one then wished. Foot did not add the rider, if the new polity actually lasted long enough for such an event to take place, but it might all too easily have slipped off the tongue. At least according to the report of I.F. Porter, in the first weeks after independence, Makarios still harboured the idea for a more elaborate and high profile celebration in the Spring of 1961. However, these plans – and therefore an alternative date to replace the 16 August as national holiday for Independence Day – never materialised.[9]

A striking omission from the start of British planning for Independence Day in Cyprus was any arrangement for a special representative of Her Majesty the Queen. Such a representative would normally have been a member of the Royal family. That this was not the case was probably inevitable in the circumstances. 'So far as I am aware' one official in Whitehall remarked with a hint of sarcasm 'there have been few manifestations of loyalty to the Crown from the island'.[10] Even the Queen's coronation in 1953 had been marked by a student disturbance. Although there is no overt mention, there was almost certainly a fear on the British side that any Royal presence might meet with some embarrassment in Cyprus, especially in light of the absence of any pardon in the case of those individuals executed for EOKA-related offences in 1956-1957. As for manifestations of loyalty, the fact was that Cypriots, of whatever ethnicity, had not been given much of a chance to display such sentiments over a prolonged period, even had they been inclined to do so, since no British Royal apart from the Duke of Kent in 1942 had visited the island since it had become a 'real' colony in 1925. By the time Queen Elizabeth attended the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting in Limassol in 1992, not without some local controversy, the last royal English presence on the island, that of Richard I in 1191, seemed very distant indeed. Overall, the absence of British royalty in Nicosia was reflective more than anything else of the somewhat idiosyncratic, even slightly *abandoned*, character of Cyprus as a British colonial possession.

In fact more telling than the non-attendance of Royalty was the fact that there was no ministerial or senior political representative of Her Majesty's *Government* in Nicosia on Independence Day. After all, Royalty at bottom simply sprinkles stardust on an event; a Government Minister implies commitment of a more practical kind. In early July 1960, when the date of Independence was finally set for Cyprus, an experienced official in Whitehall pointed out that if any agreements had been signed in connection with the transfer of sovereignty, it followed that a Minister should be present to mark the fact.[11] In the case of Cyprus the logical person was the Foreign Secretary, Selwyn Lloyd, because he had been so closely involved in those international negotiations which were the hallmark of Cyprus' approach to statehood. 'It would surely be a little odd' this official sought to clinch his case for at least a junior minister to be given the task 'if ... we

9 FO 371/152834. I.F. Porter report entitled 'Cyprus: Inauguration of the Republic' 7 September 1960.

10 CO926/763. J. Piper minute 5 July 1960.

11 FO371/152849. J. Chadwick minute 12 January 1960.

were to show through the non-attendance of any UK minister that we were somewhat more tepid in our attitude towards Cyprus'.[12] It is clear, however, that such a contention got short-shrift from those higher up the chain of command. One slightly petulant scribble in the Foreign Office, 'Why cannot the Governor sign?', echoed the general mood,[13] whilst the conclusion of the discussion was that Sir Hugh Foot was 'our man for the dotted line'.[14] Again, the breezy and nonchalant style was suggestive. From this decision flowed the prominence of Sir Hugh Foot on Independence Day, doubling up the roles of departing Governor and Representative of the British Government. Though easily overlooked, this was in fact not normal at all. By the time *colonies* arrived at Independence, Governors were invariably very much pushed to the sidelines. In the case of Cyprus, as we shall see, Foot kept himself very much in the limelight. In this spirit *Our Man for the Dotted Line* might have provided a more intriguing title for his later memoirs than the more banal *A Start in Freedom.*

Local sensitivities and the legacy of the EOKA struggle also played an important role in the planning for Independence Day. Makarios' potential vulnerability within Greek-Cypriot politics was central to an imponderable: the return of EOKA exiles from abroad, mainly from Athens. Tensions here would almost certainly have been eased if these individuals had come back *before* August 16, and in ones and twos. Just as getting the leader of the EOKA struggle, Grivas, *out* of the island without detriment to British military 'honour' in the immediate aftermath of the Lancaster House Agreements had been a crucial consideration,[15] so Foot was adamant that permits would not be issued for any EOKA re-entry *prior* to the ending of British responsibility in the bulk of the island.[16] Pride was the driving force here. This made it certain that the exiles would come back on Independence Day itself, with all the distraction this ensured. According to rumours reaching the British, Makarios and his advisers carefully scrutinised the list of intending returnees to see who might be excluded as constituting a danger to the settlement. Various names were mentioned, including Renos Kyriakides and Sophocleous Rossides, the latter now finally split off from the Archbishop, but the critical decision concerned Nikos Sampson. Again, information reaching Whitehall – doubtless from Makarios circles – was that Sampson had become 'completely unbalanced'.[17] In the same way, however, that the Archbishop had taken as inclusive a delegation as possible to London in February 1959, so in this case he decided that Sampson could do more damage if he were kept out of Cyprus than if he were allowed to come back in. However accurate this might have been as a piece of political calculation, it illustrates that although

12 *Ibid.*

13 FO 371/152854. See annotation on 'Cyprus: Arrangements for the Transfer of Sovereignty and the Inauguration of the Republic' January 1960.

14 FO 371/152833. Minute 5 July 1960.

15 See Holland, *Britain and the Revolt in Cyprus*, p. 278.

16 See the discussions on this matter in CO 926/1472.

17 CO 926/1472. Foot telegram to Colonial Office 5 August 1960.

Makarios, with more or less undoubted sincerity, spoke of a 'golden bridge' between Greek and Turkish Cypriots, the bridge he had above all to guard was one between Greek-Cypriots themselves. Much in the future hinged on whether these two bridges pointed in the same direction.

Claims concerning victory, defeat and the moral high ground also vibrated throughout the run-up to Cypriot Independence. In Whitehall consideration was given to the commissioning of a history of the recent Emergency that would put British actions in the best light. Identifying the 'soundest' person was not easy. Figures like Lawrence Durrell and C.M. Woodhouse were considered before being cast aside – the latter, for example, was 'too Hellenic', and the former, one imagines, simply too much of a loose cannon.[18] In the end no such book appeared. But there was also the question of who had actually won the confrontation in the island. Just like the French Army command in Algeria at the same period in regard to its own insurgency,[19] the British Army in Cyprus, and above all, General Darling, was determined to claim that EOKA had been on the verge of defeat when the politicians at Lancaster House had cut their deal. In the Colonial Office it was reckoned that Darling was the source of the suggestion that a Thanksgiving Service for British army personnel who had lost their lives in Cyprus should be held at about the same time as Independence Day in Nicosia.[20] The proposed venue was St. Martin-in-the-Fields in Trafalgar Square, with its intimations of worthwhile sacrifice. In Whitehall, however, the whole idea was quietly squashed. This was at least one matter on which the argument that nothing should be done to make the Archbishop's job in Nicosia harder than it already was gained some traction.[21] But anyway it was much better for the British Government that Cypriot independence should come and go with their own public, still sensitive to any reminder that British soldiers had died to seemingly very little purpose so far as national interest was concerned, hardly even being aware of it. This is what happened, as the very cursory coverage in the United Kingdom press indicates. In truth, neither the British nor the Greek-Cypriots had 'won' in Cyprus; they had merely succeeded in hurting each other, though this was too damning for Darling on the one side, or the champions of EOKA on the other, ever to admit.

When August 16 finally dawned in Cyprus, the exiguousness of high-level British representation, Foot apart, meant that the main eye-witness report on the event was that by Ian Porter, an official of the Commonwealth Relations Office who was Acting United Kingdom Representative in Cyprus at the time of writing in early September 1960.[22] It is, in its way,

18 For this discussion see the material in CO 926/1076.

19 For a comparison see R. Holland (1995) *Dirty Wars: Algeria and Cyprus Compared, 1954-62*, Paris: Karthala; C.-R. Ageron and M. Michel (1995) (eds.), *L'ère des décolonisations*. Paris: Editions Karthala, p. 46.

20 CO926/1668. Higham minute 18 July 1960.

21 CO926/1668. Meville minute 8 August 1960.

22 FO 371/152834. I.F. Porter report entitled 'Cyprus: Inauguration of the Republic' 7 September 1960.

intriguing that none of the senior Colonial Office figures in Whitehall, like Sir John Martin, whose involvement in Cypriot affairs went back many years, and even decades, did not out of sheer curiosity turn up to see how things went. In truth, for outsiders it was a day to hold at arm's length, not to embrace at all closely. As Porter recounted, the ceremonies were 'simple, unpretentious and to a large extent improvised. This was in tune with the rather muted and uncertain feeling which prevailed generally in the final few days before Independence'.[23] Such mute unease had prevailed in the initial period after Lancaster House, and the fact that it still existed was testimony to the failure to create a better mood during the extended interval that had followed. This was a failure, perhaps, of circumstances, but it was also one of policy, and a reflection that the Lancaster House 'settlement' was always more of a truce, or holding action, than a lasting dispensation.

At the stroke of midnight on a new day and era in Nicosia Archbishop Makarios, Kucuk, the Ministers in the transitional Government, members elect of the House of Representatives, the Consuls-General of Greece and Turkey, and of course Sir Hugh Foot gathered in the Council of Ministers building. A large crowd of up to 20,000 Cypriots from all communities stood outside, huge loudspeakers transmitted to the crowds what was happening inside.[24] Foot duly inaugurated the new Constitution, anomalous though it was for an ex-Governor so to do. The announcement was followed by a 21-gun salute fired by a troop of the 42 Field Regiment Royal Artillery. There then followed a one-hour period during which all the necessary signatures on the dotted lines of the Treaties of Establishment and Guarantee were secured. Following the speeches, Foot was the last to read out messages by the Queen and the Prime Minister. He then added his own good wishes to the Republic and the proceedings closed. The only discordant note during the ceremony, according to Porter, had been that of the Greek Consul-General who 'addressed his audience with a rhetoric which would have been more appropriate at an election rally'. The prejudice in this description is transparent. Nevertheless, it rings true in one important respect. If, bases apart, the British wanted to keep the consummation of Cypriot independence at a certain distance, even delicately holding their nose in doing so, this was even more true of the Greeks. Ever since Foreign Minister Averoff had his famous conversation with Zorlu in New York during October 1959, the Greek Government had done everything it could to see that the Cypriots were fitted, however reluctantly into a Turco-Greek-British grand compromise.

Only when the Lancaster House Agreements were absolutely irreversible did the representative of Greece suddenly go off on a tangent so as to indicate that the responsibility for what was happening had nothing to do with that country. One curious aspect of Cyprus' Independence Day was that at no point was the Union Jack actually *lowered* in a formal and public arena. The Union flag over Government House – the Presidential Palace to be – was lowered as usual on the evening of 15 August, and simply not raised again. The dipping of the

23 *Ibid.*

24 'The Republic is Born. Proud, Historic Day, Says the President'. *Cyprus Mail*, Tuesday 16 August 1960.

British colours, and the elevation of those of the new state, a ritual that was to be the centre-piece of the iconography of independence in so many venues, never actually happened in Cyprus. The ceremonies at Government House immediately after the signing ceremony and then in the morning were purely private, in keeping with general obliqueness of the whole event. At the end of the brief ceremonial leave-taking at Government House in the morning the British National Anthem was played for the last time in the eighty-two years and one month of British rule over the island.[25] Then Foot left for Famagusta. There he made a final troop inspection before he boarded the HMS *Chichester* and 'as the ship cast off Pipe-Major Rodden played a bagpipe lament followed by his own composition, "Sir Hugh Foot's Farewell to Cyprus"'.[26] British rulers in their empire had habitually arrived on ships, as General Wolseley had arrived off Larnaca on HMS *Himalaya* in 1878, and they invariably left on ships as well, even in the age of aviation. Whilst Foot was clambering up the gangplank, back in Nicosia the House of Representatives was formally inducted. Mr Glafkos Clerides was elected as President of the House, Dr Orhan Muderrisoghlou as Vice-President whilst the President and Vice-President of the Republic were both invested with their offices and duties. As the climax of this sequence, the flag of the Republic was itself at last raised for the first time on the mast-head above the Councils of Ministers building, though, suggestively, without the representatives of foreign governments being there to pay respects. Then Makarios proceeded to the Phaneromeni Church were at a Te Deum service, he gave an address, pledging that he would devote himself for the service of the Cypriot people.[27]

No 'allied' ceremony at Famagusta to welcome the guarantor powers, as Foot had hoped, in the end took place, if only because Greece demurred. Instead, the Greek and Turkish contingents disembarked and immediately took different routes to their allocated camps once they arrived in the afternoon. According to Ian Porter's description, there was a clear difference in the receptions given by the respective Cypriot communities. The Turkish-Cypriots were warm in their response to the presence of Turkish soldiers, whereas the Greek-Cypriot crowd that gathered to see the progress of the Royal Hellenic troops was small, and appeared 'mild and reserved' in attitude. Insofar as this was true, it was anyway in line with the evolving dynamic of relations between Cypriot communities and their external sponsors or 'Motherlands'.

Mild reserve was not a description that could be given to what for Greek-Cypriots was the most popular part of Independence proceedings: the return of the 21 EOKA exiles from Athens. Unsurprisingly and in line with his superiors in London it is here, that Porter's otherwise largely neutral and descriptive account (with the notable exception of the jibe against the speech of the Greek Consul General above) changes tone bearing the marks of a British colonial official writing about his adversaries. Referring to the EOKA 'heroes' in inverted commas (though is not clear

25 'Flag of Freedom Unfurled. Independence Day Will Live in Memory of Cyprus'. Cyprus Mail, 17 August 1960.

26 FO 371/152834. I F. Porter report entitled 'Cyprus: Inauguration of the Republic' 7 September 1960.

27 *Ibid.*

from the text if the inverted commas are simply a reference to the Greek Cypriot terminology used at the airport or an ironic comment) he describes them as 'men with particularly vicious records who only had been released from custody after the conclusion of the Zurich and London Agreements on the understanding that they would go to Greece and not return to Cyprus until so permitted by the Cyprus Government. Among the most dangerous are Nicos Sampson, a young journalist, who is believed to have been responsible for at least 24 murders (and is proud enough of the fact to boast of it)'.[28] The group arrived at Nicosia airport at 5.30 p.m., and they were carried shoulder-high to the airport lounge. They were then transported to the main Stadium in the town, with a garlanded Sampson in the lead vehicle. Inside the Stadium the Archbishop gave an address in which he skirted round the outcome of the recent upheavals with the delicacy that was increasingly second-nature to him. The rhetorical skills of Sampson in his reply are acknowledged by Porter: 'The content of what he had to say was not extraordinary, but he spoke with power and authority, and handled his crowd skilfully'.[29] The British eyewitness reckoned that his listeners were more pro-Makarios than pro-'Dighenis', though how this might usefully be measured is unclear; on this particular day there was an emotional overload that probably made the distinction even less meaningful than usual, at least at this stage in Cypriot political development. Of all the differences from norms elsewhere marking Independence Day, however, the fact that the most warmly greeted event was not part of the transfer of power as such, and indeed had little or nothing to do with Independence, is arguably the most striking.

Ian Porter's conclusions on the inauguration of the Republic as a whole for his superiors back in London were finely balanced. There had been at least a glimmer of celebration amongst ordinary Cypriots or as Porter put it a 'good deal less apathy among the general public when the day came than had earlier seemed likely',[30] though what was being celebrated was not entirely clear – perhaps just the usual human hope that the future might be better than the past. There had been no disorder, and especially no clash, or even tension, along inter-communal lines. Both Makarios and Kucuk had been punctilious in carrying out their parts of the formal proceedings. The Cyprus Police, controlling order for the first time without British colleagues, had been wholly efficient at the job. Against these good points, there were some on the other side. The Cyprus flag had scarcely been in evidence beyond the usual public edifices. Whilst there was no actual clash, ordinary Greek and Turkish Cypriots had 'welcomed' the new regime solely within their own communities, and according to their own reservations and concerns. This separateness but in particular the role of the press in the three weeks that had passed since Independence Day deeply concerned Porter:

> 'The communal nature of the celebrations is not surprising. The Cypriots have been conditioned to think of themselves not as Cypriots, but as Greeks, Turks or Armenians and

28 *Ibid.*

29 *Ibid.*

30 *Ibid.*

> the local Press are quick to jump on any public figure who is rash enough to imply that Cypriots might now develop some sort of national consciousness as Cypriots'.

While, according to Porter, Makarios and Turkish Vice-President Kutchuk were co-operating sincerely to make the 'rigid and artificial Constitution work as best as it can', a look at the press, he noted, 'is sufficient to show how uncertain are the foundations on which rests the Archbishop's policy of establishing a responsible Government in co-operation with the Turkish Cypriots'. [...] 'The Greek and Turkish newspapers snipe at each other continuously. They will seize on any straw to work on the feelings of communal hostility and mistrust that exists so close to the surface'.[31] Clearly, three weeks into independence in both communities there were those already working hard to destabilise the basis on which that Independence had come. The Archbishop had already taken a crucial action to limit this process by inducting senior EOKA figures into his own Cabinet, though this held dangers of its own. Porter's parting estimation may be left to speak for itself. He stated:

> 'In summary, it can be said that the Republic has got away to a good start; that the President and Vice-President are, at the moment, jointly prepared to do all they can to build up the authenticity of a new state and to make the Constitution work as best it can and to govern in a responsible and sober manner, but that the tensions and emotional strains of the last few years are still very close to the surface'.[32]

In assessing Independence Day and its surrounding context in Cyprus, a degree of proportionality is required, not least when comparing with other examples within the canon of British decolonisation. Because the most suitable analogue would surely be in the Mediterranean, the case of Malta comes readily to mind. During the summer of 1960 it was Malta, not Cyprus, which was characterised by recurring riots and demonstrations, and about whose stability the British had become deeply worried. Indeed, in the run-up to Maltese Independence in September 1964 Whitehall had visions of outright civil war in the island;[33] and although those celebrations were finally attended by the Duke of Edinburgh, there was a fear that he might be caught in the cross-fire of an assassination attempt on Borg Olivier, the Prime Minister.[34] At least in Nicosia on 16 August 1960 there had been no fear of shots being fired at those dignitaries who were present. Furthermore, the same doubts about the reality of newly-gained independence felt amongst Cypriots were equally strongly entertained by many Maltese four years later, not least because a British military presence was to continue in Malta without any apparent date for termination. In other words, Cyprus was certainly always different, but other decolonising states in the region had anxieties and difficulties that were comparable. In this vein the Republic of Cyprus setting off on

31 *Ibid.*

32 *Ibid.*

33 CAB163/34. Civil War in Malta: Internal Security.

34 Visit by the Duke of Edinburgh to Athens and Malta CAB 121/5971.

its journey was surely not doomed at birth, whatever the real disadvantages under which it had to labour. Finally, Sir Hugh Foot's suggestion that the Republic should after an interval hold a *real* Independence Day, pomp and all, was quickly forgotten.

Yet, in retrospect, indeed, much more might have been done in the long interval since the Lancaster House conference to push the existing strains on and over the island further beneath the surface than ultimately proved to be the case. The reasons why this had not been achieved may be found amongst all the protagonists, the tell-tale signs of failure being the muteness and unease of Greek-Cypriots, the suspicious introspection of their Turkish compatriots, the desire to keep as much distance as possible from the Cypriot transition in Athens, the absolute determination in Ankara that Cyprus should be 'Greek-Turkish' *a la* Zurich rather than become truly Cypriot, and the 'somewhat tepid' feeling of the British that has been sufficiently evoked in this account. The real danger after 16 August 1960, however, was that such shared tepidness might spread not just to the ritual aspects of Independence, but to the authenticity of the new state itself. The general awareness about this danger was expressed in the - necessarily optimistic - farewell radio address of Governor Foot to the people of Cyprus on the night of August 15:

> 'What of the future? It is for you to answer that question. A few dismal commentators say that the people of Cyprus will destroy each other. They say that you will tear yourself to bits - Greek against Turk and Left against Right. There are a few who say that the Island will go down in a sea of blood and hate.
> It could be – but I don't believe it. People who have been to the brink of hell don't want to go over the edge. I know the difficulties and dangers as well as anyone, but I myself have faith in your ability, and in your good sense too. I believe that the forces of moderation and tolerance and compassion, and the desire to serve all the people of Cyprus well, and an overwhelming wish for peace, will prevail'.[35]

Unfortunately for Cyprus the 'dismal commentators' would be proven right. In retrospect, Independence Day was not the end but just the beginning of another phase in the Cyprus problem.

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