

# Rethinking Cypriot State Formations

NICOS TRIMIKLINIOTIS, UMUT BOZKURT

## Abstract

*This paper evaluates and critiques the current state of knowledge on the theorisation of the Cypriot state formations and the nature of the conflict in the country. It aims to provide a prolegomenon for the re-conceptualisation of the Cyprus state formations as enmeshed in the 'Cyprus problem' within its regional and global settings. We examine the two main approaches theorising the Cypriot state formations, namely Weberian and Marxist inspired accounts and locate some of the problems and gaps. We argue that the current conjuncture is marked by significant social transformations both internally and adjacent to the country, which require a fresh perspective on 'the Cyprus problem'. Such a perspective is based on the premise that we must go beyond analyses that focus exclusively on either of the two competing dimensions of an unintuitive binary, either as global/regional geopolitical, or a local ethno-national identity conflict. These 'common sense' readings of the Cyprus problem, which can be referred to as the liberal conflict resolution model and the global/regional geopolitics model are not only limited theoretically but their contestation leads to a political cul-de-sac. Moreover, such perspectives in turn dis-empower the social and political forces within Cyprus to actively engage in bringing about an end to the partitionist divide in a country which is one of the most militarised zones in the world. The shortcomings of these approaches in making sense of the state formation and the dispute itself, underlines the necessity of a multi-faceted theoretical framework that assesses the role of class and other social forces as well as changing regional and global contexts which shape both the nature of the so-called Cyprus problem as well as the peculiar fragmentary state formations.*

**Keywords:** Cyprus problem, state formations global/regional geopolitical conflict, ethno-national identity conflict, state of exception

## Introduction

Apart from the past ten years the question of Cyprus has received little attention for over fifty years in international (essentially Anglophone) literature. After all, neither the size of this island state nor its lack of natural resources make Cyprus intrinsically significant;<sup>1</sup> any imperial interest in the country derived purely from its geographical position, and its usefulness as a pawn in imperial

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1 At least this was the case before the recent discovery of potential oil reserves.

games.<sup>2</sup> This interpretation was candidly admitted by a former governor of Cyprus, Sir Ronald Storrs, who said that the British ‘occupied Cyprus for strategic and imperial purposes.’<sup>3</sup> Western intelligence services showed some interest in the 1960s and 1970s, commissioning a number of studies on Cyprus and communism.<sup>4</sup> In those days when policy-makers and USA and NATO intelligence services feared the possible ascendancy of Communism in Cyprus, operations were initiated to monitor the country;<sup>5</sup> hence the references to the danger of Cyprus becoming a ‘Cuba of the Mediterranean.’<sup>6</sup> With few exceptions, primarily by Cypriots or researchers with some connection to Cyprus, little academic or research interest can be recorded until recently.

The situation has, however, drastically changed over the last ten years, as can be observed by an invigorated interest in both the country and the conflict in the run up to, and later rejection of, the UN plan in 2004 to resolve the Cyprus problem – known as the ‘Annan’ plan.<sup>7</sup> The transformations within Turkey, Turkey’s EU accession process and its new Cyprus policy since 2002 have opened possibilities for reaching an agreement on Cyprus. There has also been a new momentum in the search for a solution to the problem, following a stalemate in the immediate aftermath of the election of Dimitris Christofias, the leader of the AKEL party, as the only communist head of state in the EU. For two years Christofias negotiated with Mehmet Ali Talat,<sup>8</sup> the left-wing Turkish Cypriot leader of the (unrecognised/illegal) break-away Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus.<sup>9</sup> Renewed hopes then emerged that a settlement was within grasp, but time seems to be running out. Disillusionment amongst the Turkish Cypriots, who did not see the promises of accession/reunification materialise or the divisions narrow within the broad social/political movement that brought Talat to power, led to the replacement of the left-wing leader in the elections of April 2010. The new Turkish Cypriot leader – the veteran right-wing Derviş Eroğlu – was marginally elected in the first round with 50.3%. Nevertheless, the hopes for

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2 See A. Varnava (2006) ‘“Cyprus is of no use to anybody”: The Pawn 1878-1915’ in H. Faustmann and N. Peristianis (eds.), *Britain in Cyprus, Colonialism and Post-colonialism 1878-2006*, Mannheim and Mohnesee: Bibliopolis, pp. 35-60.

3 In Storrs’s book *Orientalisms*, p. 488.

4 See TW. Adams (1971) *AKEL: the Communist Party of Cyprus*, Stanford: Hoover Institution Press; TW. Adams and A.J. Cottrell (1968) *Cyprus between East and West*, Baltimore: The John Hopkins Press. Adams is the author of the US Army Area Handbook for Cyprus.

5 Various anti-communist funds were channelled, particularly via the Greek junta for this purpose.

6 Nixon is alleged to have referred to Makarios as ‘Castro in a cassock’, see R. Dunphy and T. Bale (2007) ‘Red Flag Still Flying?: Explaining AKEL – Cyprus’s Communist Anomaly’, *Party Politics*, Vol. 13, No. 3, pp. 287-304, p. 293.

7 See A. Varnava and H. Faustmann (eds.) (2009) *Reunifying Cyprus: The Annan Plan and Beyond*, London: I.B. Tauris.

8 He headed the Turkish Cypriot sister-party of AKEL, Republican Turkish Party (CTP).

9 Although the northern part of the island of Cyprus is referred to as the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus (TRNC) in this essay, it is acknowledged that the TRNC is not recognised by the international community except Turkey.

reunification have not been eradicated: following his electoral victory and contrary to his pre-election pledges, Eroğlu stated that he accepts what his predecessor has earlier agreed and vows to continue on the same route, seeking a solution by the end of 2010. Moreover, Erdoğan's Ankara, in the aftermath of AKP's victory in the recent referendum on constitutional reform, seems more confident than before to proceed with a settlement. Yet, nothing is certain; it is a struggle to the bitter end.

Beyond the issues relating to the specific context and conjuncture, there are important theoretical questions that have crucial political consequences. One particular issue that we would like to engage in this article is the question of whether the theorisation of the state form in Cyprus, in the context of conflict, is adequate against the backdrop of watershed transformations that took place a decade earlier, setting the world geographical scene.

We contend that the question of how to read the case of Cyprus has been opened up in ways which illustrate how much it reflects and can be read simultaneously as a site which lends itself to novel readings of current worldly political affairs and its crises: a country with strong communist loyalties (see Panayiotou, 2006). Its curious divisions and odd Cypriot state formations in its conflict-ridden context have lent it to alternative and/or complementary interpretations. Does it constitute an 'anomaly' (Dunphy and Bale, 2007), and/or a 'state of exception' (C.M. Constantinou, 2008; Trimikliniotis, 2007, 2010b), and/or 'a postcolonial quasi-stateness' (M. Constantinou, 2006), and/or is it yet another dimension of a modern state system (Navaro-Yashin, 2003, 2006, 2009)? These are but some formulations of the state/conflict situation in Cyprus, which we intend to scrutinise. Nearing the end of the current conjuncture, which began to take a specific form in the Cypriot context with the new millennium but was most probably initiated within the watershed of transformations that took place on the world geopolitical stage a decade earlier, we question here whether the theorisation over the Cyprus case [*state form plus conflict*] is adequate.

### Theorising the State Formations in Cyprus within their Regional and Global Settings

Peter Worsley (1979, p. 10) reminded us that Cyprus was *not* perceived by the British as an economic asset due to the islands national strategic significance in the Eastern Mediterranean. He borrowed from the Nixon era the term 'benign neglect' to describe the colonial period. But thirty years on, a new generation of scholars, based on historical readings, can refer to the island as a 'mere pawn' for the British (Varnava, 2006), contrary to popular perceptions in Cyprus which ascribe a crucial significance to our small country for British colonialists then. As we approach the present, its importance is assumed to have increased over time for the global powers that be, in what is described as 'imperialism of our time'.<sup>10</sup> Yet, it accurately considered that the island's worth

10 See the volume, L. Panitch and C. Leys (eds.) (2004) *The Socialist Register 2004, The New Imperial Challenge*, Athens: Savalas Publications.

assumed greater value in 1950 with the advent of the Cold War and the rise of the USA as leader of the world capitalist camp and the decline of the British Empire. Britain's new role as a junior partner in a worldwide system meant that Cyprus was caught in Cold War games between the superpowers, because the near Middle East was a contested region.

Post independence Cyprus was a newly established state under a 'guarantor system' of three NATO 'allies' which oddly belonged to the non-aligned movement. On the international stage, the President of the country, archbishop Makarios, played one superpower against the other to outmanoeuvre successive efforts to shed this strip of land between two expansionist mother-countries, which threatened the stability of the eastern flank of NATO. Internally, the fine balance contained in the power-sharing consociation collapsed by 1963 and ethnic conflict tore the country apart: the Greek Cypriot power elite conquered the bicomunal state, as the Turkish Cypriot chauvinist elite imposed its siege mentality in the enclaves it controlled. Those who defied the ethnic division and insisted on intercommunal cooperation in a common state were silenced, murdered or ignored. By 1974, the Greek coup and Turkish invasion completed the *de facto* partition of a fragmented island, which has remained in a state of limbo until today. Soon after the 1974 disaster, Tom Nairn (1979) wondered whether two factors could shift the sand: firstly, the realisation by the Turkish Cypriots that their interests diverged from Turkey's as the Greek Cypriots came to realise in the 1960s with respect to Greece. Secondly, the role of the European Community presented itself as a possible outside force which might alter the relations in the triangle of Turkey-Greece-Cyprus and create conditions for a settlement. These two factors did indeed materialise and produce powerful results, but have not yet resulted in a solution. Together with Turkey's internal transformation and the regional/global context these factors are operative today, and are pushing history forwards. We cannot predict the outcome of this historical process but we do know that the coming reality will not resemble the current one.

In order to make sense of *Cyprus within the world*, particularly in relation to theorising the state form in Cyprus, we need to map the parameters of what is acknowledged by many scholars, historically speaking, as 'the peculiarity of Cyprus, 1878-1931'.<sup>11</sup> They start their account with a Colonial office minute 28 November 1901 'we are hampered on all sides by the peculiar position of Cyprus' (Holland and Markides, 2008, p. 162). These authors refer to 'the unusual limitations in the age of decolonization' imposed on the Republic and they trace the roots of a different historical path when compared to Greek islands which united with Greece. The story for Holland and Markides stops in 1960 as the travails of the resulting Republic are not their concern; they refer to the fact that 'the island was always surrounded by externalities, uncertainties and ambiguities'. We venture to propose that the big research political question for the current conjuncture lies precisely in bringing the story to the present; the idea is to re-evaluate such contentions *today*. The so-called 'peculiarity' entails one of the theoretical and ideological traps:

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11 See for instance the chapter by Holland and Markides (2008).

'exceptionalism', which blurs our conception of political reality as part of the world at large. The argument which we dispute is one that takes this 'peculiarity' as a given without questioning it: 'our case is so *sui generis* that makes it incomparable to anything else', hence the defensive line hinders any potential for learning by comparison.

## State Theory: Conceptualising the State in its Global Context

### *A Note on Theorising the Cypriot State Today*

This article aims to address the state question in Cyprus as a specific instance, reflective of a broader regional and global reality. In that sense, it takes Bob Jessop's conclusion that there can be no general theory of the State:<sup>12</sup> 'states in capitalist societies will necessarily differ from one another' as its main reference point.<sup>13</sup> Hence, we are of the view that we must resist the analysis that perceives the Cyprus case *exclusively as an 'exception to the norm'*, whilst simultaneously refusing to succumb to the exact opposite trap, i.e. the typical assumption that *Cyprus is but an instance of geopolitical interests where all is played at a global/regional map, where Cypriots have no role or significance*.

Overall, we aim to illustrate that there has been a long-standing difficulty in *theorising* the state formation(s) in Cyprus. This is hardly surprising. It was Louis Althusser,<sup>14</sup> who, many years ago, wrote about the inherent difficulty of moving from what he called a *descriptive theory* to a *genuine theory of the state*. The *descriptive theory* is but 'a phase in the constitution of theory' (Althusser, 2001, p. 93), whereas a 'theory as such' requires deeper insights into the apparatus of the state, or to go further using Althusser's terms, 'in order to understand the mechanism of the State in its functioning'. Since then, of course, we have witnessed the radical reshaping of the world as well as the mass expansion of theories of the state in different directions. We argue, however, that the 'nuts and bolts' or the foundations for such a theorisation were laid by what has become *classical twentieth century readings of the state*. Moreover, when dealing with the specific context of Cyprus, whilst there has been massive advancement in empirical studies of the Cypriot state formation(s), we can state that the theory of the Cypriot state formation(s) still remains at the descriptive phase with some notable exceptions. It is beyond the scope of this paper to offer an alternative theorisation; a task of this magnitude requires much more depth than we can provide in this article.<sup>15</sup> What we provide here is an appraisal and critique of the current level of knowledge

12 We use a capital letter for 'State' whenever we want to emphasise it or when it is a subject of enquiry, unless it is quoted otherwise.

13 B. Jessop (1990) *State Theory*, Pennsylvania University Press, p. 44.

14 In his famous article 'Ideology and Ideological State Apparatus (Notes towards an Investigation)', pp. 92-94, see L. Althusser (2001) *Lenin and Philosophy and other Essays*, Monthly Review Press.

15 We have tried to flesh out such a theorisation, but it is by no means complete. We do, however, have two chapters in which we elaborate our position in a forthcoming edited volume (see Trimikliniotis and Bozkurt, 2011 forthcoming).

as well as presenting a *rudimental* basis for a theorisation, in what might be called a prolegomena to a theorisation of the state formation(s) in Cyprus.

Hence the classical readings of the state will guide us in our attempt to conceptualise the state. Two broad theoretical approaches that inform the theories of the state can be cited: firstly, the Weberian or organisation-analytic approaches and secondly, Marxist or class-analytic approaches.<sup>16</sup> Weberian or organisation-analytic approaches emphasise the ways in which states constitute autonomous sources of power, and operate on the basis of institutional logics and dynamics with variable forms of interaction with other sources of power in society. Marxist or class-analytic approaches anchor the analysis of the state in terms of its structural relationship to capitalism as a system of class relations (Dunleavy and O'Leary, 1987).

This Weberian conception of a state as an autonomous apparatus that should not be imprisoned by social forces strongly informs the literature on Cyprus. Even so, 'the state as a neutral, liberal arbiter and autonomous source of power never emerged in Cyprus. Rather than being the functional substitute for vanishing communal solidarities and traditional forms of consensus, the post-colonial state became their direct and contradictory embodiment. It therefore did not quell intercommunal conflict but exacerbated it by becoming itself an additional bone of contention' (M. Constantinou, 2006, p. 296). In her article on the civil service in the TRNC, Navaro-Yashin reaches a similar conclusion. On the basis of her discussion of the Turkish Cypriot case, she argues that bureaucracy needs to be studied not as a practice which counters or extinguishes affect, but as one which produces and incites specific modes of affectivity in its own right. Her starting point is the Weberian ideal type of legal-rational state that study bureaucracy as a rationalising apparatus, instigating discipline and organising audit procedures, with no room for affect. Though Yashin is only critical of the so-called lack of affect within bureaucracy, she maintains that she does not contest the other aspects which relate to bureaucracy being a rationalising apparatus that instigates discipline (Navaro-Yashin, 2006, p. 282). It can be observed in both cases that whether the state structures in Cyprus are taken as examples of 'a postcolonial quasi-stateness' (M. Constantinou, 2006) or another dimension of a modern state system (Navaro-Yashin, 2003, 2006) the state is perceived as an apparatus that acts autonomously from social forces.<sup>17</sup>

An overall assessment of the literature cited reveals a fundamental problem regarding its theorisation of the state. First of all, most of the theorising on the state in Cyprus is made in terms of contrasts with ideal-typical forms. The Cypriot state formation(s) is/are mostly criticised for not conforming to these ideal types. On the one hand, this position glosses over the fact that the

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16 The variety of conceptualisations of the state mostly draws on one of these two main approaches.

17 We deal more specifically with the peculiarity of the unrecognised state formation of the TRNC: overall, the literature produced on the state structure in northern Cyprus is very limited. Apart from a few exceptions, it would not be wrong to say that the general tendency, in a way echoing the literature on the Republic, is that the state has not yet acquired the bureaucratic logic of the 'rational-legal' paradigm due to its 'deficient modernisation'.

Weberian ideal type is a mental construct, and treats the ideal type of Western capitalist state (i.e. legal-rational state) as though it corresponded to the empirical reality of developed capitalist societies (Yalman, 1997, p. 91). But on the other hand, the alleged non-conformity of the Cypriot formation to Weberian ideal types leads to the conception of the state as a *sui generis* reality. What is more, the state is seen as a neutral arbiter, a neutral agent of social transformation, independent of social classes. This approach presumes that a strong bureaucracy, expected to develop and implement policies at the expense of dominant societal interests, is the manifestation of the state's autonomy. Third world nation-states, post-colonial state formations, and the state formations in Cyprus are criticised on the basis of this Weberian ideal. The state, rather than acting as the liberal, neutral arbiter has given in to societal interests, thereby becoming compartmentalised among conflicting interests.

We now proceed to examine how the '*institutional materiality*' of the Cypriot state formation via its different shapes, forms and phases in transition, reflect various struggles/conflicts. When examining the part the Cypriot state formation and its colonial predecessor played in the ethnicity-class conflict and anti-colonialism, the State's constitutive role is particularly relevant. This dynamic perception provided by Poulantzas is later used to consider the construction of the Cypriot State.

This basic notion of post-coloniality was taken up explicitly and implicitly in describing and theorising the 'moments' or aspects of Cypriot administrations and power structures. Literature written in the immediate post-1974 period up until the early 1980s, mainly from Greek Cypriot scholars, viewed the Cyprus problem in a critical manner, and especially so in relation to the role of NATO, British policies and the role of British colonialism. Additionally, some Turkish Cypriots reached similar conclusions (see Salih, 1978), however most Turkish Cypriot scholars originally treated the advent of the Turkish army and partition with relief. Their approach was to try to assert Cypriot independence from western dependency, promote reconciliation between the two communities, and link Cyprus to the Non-Aligned Movement in line with the post-colonial and 'Third Worldist' tradition. The works of Attalides (1977, 1979); Kitromilides (1977, 1979, 1982, 1983); Markides (1977); Coufoudakis (1976); Salih (1978); Pollis (1979, 1998); Hitchens (1997); Anthias and Ayres (1978, 1983) and Anthias (1987) have all been considered. These works are amongst the most insightful and creative works undertaken that have provided the basis for the rethinking of policy on Cyprus. Some of the texts placed emphasis on internal dynamics of Cypriot society, without ignoring the international factors. Other works that look at the role of nationalism and ethnic conflict in Cyprus, over and above those mentioned, are works by Loizos (1974) and Stavrinides (1976).

Kitromilides (1979) wrote on the 'dialectic of intolerance' as a post-colonial remnant. He also noted that the legacy of colonialism was the ideological framework of political life, which was characterised by an absence of serious dissent that would challenge the dominant social and political life of Cyprus and result in a weakening of social critique (Kitromilides, 1982, pp. 451-453). The later versions of theorising of 'state and society' refer essentially to the Greek Cypriot

controlled state and society. Ierodiakonou (2003) wrote about the undemocratic elements and the deficiencies in observing the constitution, whilst Mavratsas (2003, pp. 119-157) attributes 'the atrophy of civil society' and 'clientelist neocorporatism' to be key characteristics of Greek Cypriot society. Similarly, Attalides (2006) in a recent review article makes similar observations. There are strong elements from 'modernisation' theory, many with a Weberian-derived logic – this circular argument that the state has not [yet] acquired the bureaucratic logic of the 'rational-legal' paradigm is due to the inherently insufficient and institutionally deficient modernisation of the state/country. According to the argument, accession to the EU will eventually achieve this. Philippou, in his *Foucaultian* reading of the 'austere Cypriot enclosure', drawing on Kitromilides (1998-1999) who refers to the 'sickliness of Greek Cypriot political thought' that ideologically entraps politics in a conventional and cyclical perception of the political problem, leads to a similar conclusion: A system which survives by suppressing questioning, concealing any potential for reflexivity, and by recycling clichés without reappraisal, dogmatic thinking and meaningless sound bites (Philippou, 2005, p. 70). As mentioned elsewhere (Trimikliniotis, 2006, 2010a) the above critiques do not properly capture and fully assess the complexity of Cypriot society, as though it were a large homogeneous space which is somehow 'weak' or 'unable to produce critical thinking'.

Gramsci's contribution to the study of civil society provides a different approach to the dominant western advances (Gramsci, 1982) which has proved quite influential and innovative in the development and renewal of Cypriot sociological thought. A number of studies which open up accepted wisdom contra the dominant Weberian-pluralist model have drawn on Gramscian thinking. The essential features of the difference contained in Gramscian and other radical points of view is that such frames of reference are *critiques* to the dominant perspectives, in their liberal and conservative variants, from the vantage point of drawing out the potential for, or the structural constraints to, radical social transformation. Reading Gramsci has been instrumental in opening routes for rethinking and activating social and political transformation via merging politics to economics and culture, empowering the subaltern, renewing radical thought and praxis as well as liberating it from reductionist and dogmatic (mis)readings of Marxism, dominant in the Stalinist era. Such readings are particularly fruitful when trying to rethink the state and the global: there is a vast literature along with different disciplines from social history to cultural, subaltern and post-colonial studies to international political economy.<sup>18</sup>

In the context of Cyprus, Gramscian-inspired critiques led to a variety of ideological and political orientations and approaches from Marxist, to anarcho-syndicalist to post-structuralist and post-colonial readings. A few examples include the following: Kattos (1999) uses all the basic Gramscian conceptual tools to advance his reading of the state, labour and capital in Cyprus;<sup>19</sup>

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18 The oeuvre of Gramsci has penetrated diverse thinkers such as Eric Hobsbawm, E.P Thompson, Edward Said, Louis Althusser, Nicos Poulantzas, and Robert Cox.

19 We are referring to his PhD thesis, which unfortunately has not been published but is the basic underpinning of his weekly columns in the popular *Politis* newspaper. He has, however, published various other articles in journals.

Niyazi Kızılyürek's work (2009) on the conflict in Cyprus, the Turkish Cypriots, and Turkey has strong Gramscian influences; Anna Agathangelou's global political economy of sex draws on neo-Gramscian thinking; Rolandos Katsiaounis' brilliant study of labour, class and politics in the late nineteenth century Cyprus, which is influenced by E.P. Thompson's classic *The Making of the English Working Class*, plus one of the current authors has also drawn on Gramsci.<sup>20</sup> Moreover, Andreas Panayiotou (1999, 2005, 2006) adopts a Gramscian reading of Cypriot context in what is the most comprehensive study on the role of the Left *within civil society*, and sketches out an alternative view of understanding civil society, modernisation and the development of Cypriot/Greek Cypriot political culture. The Left has historically played a crucial role in Cyprus' own route to modernity in the twentieth century, but the contest for hegemony between the Greek Cypriot and the Turkish Cypriot elite resulted in a distorted public sphere and shaped civil society accordingly. Others also have been influenced by Gramsci.<sup>21</sup>

Another type of theorisation can be considered as deriving its inspiration primarily from critical and post-colonial theory. Vassos Argyrou (1994) offered a post-colonial anthropological reading that aimed to counter Eurocentric biases, whilst Marios Constantinou (2006) advanced the notion of quasi-stateness as the central element of his post-colonial sociological theorisation of the Cypriot state, and Costas Constantinou (2008) presented a critical post-modern reading of a post-colonial state. Papadakis (2007) narrates this post-colonial condition as an ethnographic personal journey in his 'echoes from the dead zone'. These are Greek Cypriot readings of the Republic of Cyprus – the 'stronger' state of a 'weak' post-colonial regime.

The problem, we argue, regarding the lack of theory of the Cypriot state formations, as exemplified in the studies of the Republic of Cyprus, is even more acute in the way the TRNC is described, whether by those who add the adjectives illegal/unrecognised or those who consider it a legitimate state.

### *On the Cypriot States of Exception: New Insight into Theorising the State in Cyprus?*

Costas M. Constantinou aptly refers to 'the Cypriot states of exception'<sup>22</sup> to exemplify the multiple exceptionalism that defines the political-legal order of Cyprus, where one exception generates another. This brings us to the heart of 'the Cyprus problem', which cuts across the country and naturally intersects with the operation of the *acquis* in a *de facto* divided country. The invocation of exception blurs the distinctions between legality and illegality, normality and abnormality and opens up 'opportunities' for those in power to extend their discretion in what Poulantzas referred

20 See Trimikliniotis, 2000 and 2010a.

21 For instance Marios Constantinou's post-structuralist and post-colonial work on the state, federalism and conflict on Cyprus and the works of C.M. Constantinou's post-colonial/post-modern readings of Cyprus and Europe have Gramscian leanings.

22 C.M. Constantinou, 2008, pp. 145-164.

to as *authoritarian statism* – as Carl Schmitt long established, the regimes of exception allow the sovereign to decide *when* and *how* to invoke the emergency situation. In this sense, Cyprus is a bizarre case particularly where the distinction between the ‘exception’ and the ‘norm’ is not easy to decipher. When ‘norm’ and ‘exception’ are so intertwined and interdependent, the edges of the ‘grey zones’, or what is assumed to be the edge, becomes the core. Agamben (2005, p. 1) advocates that if current global reality is characterised by a generalised state of exception, then we ought to examine the intersection between norm and exception in the specific EU context: ‘the question of borders becomes all the more urgent’, indeed. The reference here is to the ‘edges’ of the law and politics where there is an ‘ambiguous, uncertain, borderline fringe, at the intersection between the legal and the political.’<sup>23</sup> The analytical insight into the ambiguity and uncertainty of ‘the no-man’s land between the public law and political fact’ and between the judicial order and life, must move beyond the philosophical and the abstract to the specific legal and political context if it is to have a bearing on the socio-legal and political reality that is currently reshaping the EU.

There is an abundance of literature – essentially apologetics of each of the ethnic states of exceptions – following the collapse of the bicomunal regime in 1963-1964. It was this collapse which generated the Republic of Cyprus (RoC) state of exception, known as ‘the doctrine of necessity’. This doctrine was legitimised via the Supreme Court in the famous case of Mustafa Ibrahim whereupon the court considered this extraordinary excerpt to be so significant that it was included as part of the summary judgement:<sup>24</sup>

‘This court now, in its all-important and responsible function of transforming legal theory into living law, applied to the facts of daily life for the preservation of social order, is faced with the question whether the legal doctrine of necessity discussed earlier in this judgment, should or should not, be read in the provisions of the written Constitution of the Republic of Cyprus. Our unanimous view, and unhesitating answer to this question, is in the affirmative’, p. 97.

Apologist-type studies are often, as Costas Constantinou, 2008, points out:

‘legalistic in character, safely assuming the jurisprudential basis of the doctrine, and simply looking at its interpretations and applications. Such works take the Roman maxim *salus populi suprema lex* (people’s safety is the supreme law) for granted, without being concerned with “whose safety” is secured and at what price’.

Greek Cypriot apologist accounts, which argue that the ‘doctrine of necessity’ is a valid system of law,<sup>25</sup> are equivalent to Turkish Cypriot accounts which argue the complete opposite for the

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23 Agamben here quotes Fontana (1999, p. 16).

24 The attorney-General of the Republic *v. Mustafa Ibrahim and others*, Criminal Appeals No. 2729, 1964 Oct. 6, 7, 8, Nov. 102734, 2735 (1964) CLR 195.

25 We are referring to the Greek Cypriot legal scholars such as G. Tornaritis (1982a) *Cyprus and Its Legal and Constitutional and Other Problems*, Nicosia: Public information Office; (1982b) *Το πολιτειακό δικαίο της Κυπριακής Δημοκρατίας* [Constitutional Law of the Republic of Cyprus], Λευκωσία; K. Chrysostomides (2000)

doctrine of necessity but are apologist accounts for the TRNC.<sup>26</sup> Regardless of opinion, a number of critical studies are making their appearance.<sup>27</sup> The fact that a number of critiques to the state of exception in Cyprus have appeared in the public domain and are beginning to have some influence in the public debates opens up ways of viewing the state in Cyprus in a more critical manner. Costas Constantinou was correct to note that the case was overstated, ‘the end of the road for the de-legitimization process of the law of necessity has been reached’.<sup>28</sup> Costas Constantinou’s (2008, p. 145) starting point is:

‘Certain states of exception are more comfortable than others. Even while they appear problematic or absurd to those experiencing them they can still be judged preferable – less bad, less risky – than available alternatives’.

Our argument is that the dice has yet to be cast. The basic argument elaborated elsewhere is that the Cypriot states of exception, in the forms of the Greek Cypriot ‘doctrine of necessity’, the ‘TRNC’, the British ‘sovereign bases’, and the ‘Green line’ are undergoing a process of long-term erosion and de-legitimation, in spite of the efforts to re-legitimise them, an aspect C.M. Constantinou perhaps over-states. We may begin to talk about an ‘organic crisis of the Cypriot state of exception’<sup>29</sup> but as Gramsci would have it ‘the old is dying but the new is yet to be born’.

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*The Republic of Cyprus, A Study in International Law*, Martinus Nijhoff Publishers; G.M. Pikiş (2006) *Constitutionalism – Human Rights – Separation of Powers, The Cyprus Precedent*, Martinus Nijhoff Publishers; Z.M. Necatigil (1989) *The Cyprus Question and the Turkish Position in International Law*, Oxford: Oxford University Press; L. Papaphilippou (1995) *Το Δίκαιο της Ανάγκης στη Κύπρο*, Λευκωσία [Law of Necessity and Constitutional Order in Cyprus], Nicosia: SEK; S. Soulioti (2006) *Fettered Independence: Cyprus 1878-1964, Vol. I: The Narrative*, Minneapolis: Minnesota Mediterranean and East European Monographs; C. Schmitt (2005) *Political Theology: Four Chapters on the Concept of Sovereignty*, Chicago: Chicago University Press.

26 For instance M. Tamkoc (1988) *The Turkish Cypriot State: The Embodiment of the Right of Self-Determination*, London: Rustem; Z.M. Necatigil (1989) *The Cyprus Question and the Turkish Position in International Law*, Oxford: Oxford University Press; M. Moran (1999) *Sovereignty Divided: Essays on the International Dimensions of the Cyprus Problem*, Nicosia: CYREP; K. Özersay (2005) ‘The Excuse of State Necessity and Its Implications on the Cyprus Conflict’, *Perceptions: Journal of International Affairs*, Vol. 9, No. 4, pp. 31-70. The latter is certainly more critical but it remains within the same school of thought.

27 Apart from C.M. Constantinou, 2008; Trimikliniotis, 2007, 2010a, 2010b.

28 See Trimikliniotis (2007, p. 40) ‘Το Κυπριακό «δόγμα της ανάγκης»: Μια (μη-)δημοκρατία σε κατάσταση εξαιρέσεως» [The Cypriot ‘Doctrine of Necessity’: A (Non-)Democracy in a State of Exception?], *Περιπέτειες Ιδεών*, Τεύχος 15, *Πολίτης*, 2 September 2007.

29 Elsewhere it has been argued that there is a long-term process of the demise of the Cypriot State of Exception and argued that the organic crisis may lead to transcendence of the ‘doctrine of necessity’. See Trimikliniotis (2010b) ‘Η παρακμή του Κυπριακού καθεστώτος εξαιρέσεως: Από την οργανική κρίση στην υπέρβαση του «δόγματος της ανάγκης»», [The Demise of the Cypriot State of Exception: From Organic Crisis to Transcendence of the “Doctrine of Necessity”?], chapter in C. Perikleous (ed.), (2010) *Κυπριακή Δημοκρατία 50 Χρόνια Επώδυνη Πορεία* [Cyprus Republic 50 years of Independence], Athens: Papazizi, pp. 209-234. A similar argument was made in Trimikliniotis (2010a), chapter 3.

*A Note on Theorising the TRNC*

What is a lacuna in the theory of the state form in Cyprus, is the failure to *theorise* the unrecognised and, according to international law, illegal TRNC: the result of having such polarised approaches to the regime in the northern part of the country either as ‘the embodiment of self-determination’ for the apologists of the self-declared independence, or the ‘pseudo-state’ as Greek Cypriots love to call it, is that the issue is mystified even further and the development of a proper ‘state theory’ within the specific context is obscured. Greek Cypriot accounts tend to present the TRNC as a mere ‘puppet’ of Ankara<sup>30</sup> and the Turkish Cypriots are depicted in a recent documentary as the ‘the other enclave/captive persons’.<sup>31</sup> The Turkish Cypriot equivalent depicts the TRNC as a normal functioning state.<sup>32</sup>

Although a number of valuable works have been produced on the infamous Cyprus problem, the literature produced in Turkish and English is largely predominated with empirical findings with little theorisation of the state. The authors who provide theorisation are few. Costas Constantinou offers a critical post-modern reading of a post-colonial state where he defines the TRNC as a ‘state of exception’ (C.M. Constantinou, 2008). This is a useful starting point before attempting to decipher the extent to which there is ‘relative autonomy’ of the unrecognised/illegal TRNC from Turkey and, more importantly, the question of actual political autonomy of Turkish Cypriot politics (see Trimikliniotis, 2010a, 2010b). Yael Navaro-Yashin depicts the TRNC as a form of legal-rational state (2006, p. 282). Sertaç Sonan depicts the system in northern Cyprus as ‘constituency clientelism and patronage’ (2007). Kızılyürek, on the other hand, defines the system of the Turkish Cypriot community as a *sui generis case*. Due to this ‘bizarre modernity’, there is no bourgeoisie or ‘free market’ within the Turkish Cypriot community as one would expect to observe in advanced capitalist states. Kızılyürek shares Sonan’s assessment in categorising the system as a patronage system (2009).

It can be observed overall that Weberian conceptions of the state strongly inform the literature on Cyprus. And, it can be argued that the general tendency, in a way echoing the literature on the Republic, is that the state has not yet acquired the bureaucratic logic of the ‘rational-legal’ paradigm due to its deficient modernisation. In exceptional cases such as Yashin, the TRNC is not taken as an anomaly that counters the valid procedures of modern and legal states in its entirety (Navara-Yashin, 2006). Furthermore, in both cases, whether the state is viewed as

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30 See C.P. Ioannides (1991) *In Turkey’s Image: The Transformation of Occupied Cyprus into a Turkish Province*, New Rochelle, NY: A.D. Caratzas Publisher; C. Yennaris (2003) *From the East: Conflict and Partition in Cyprus*, London: Elliot and Thompson.

31 The above words are translated from «Οι Τουρκοκύπριοι: οι άλλοι εγκλωβισμένοι» [The Turkish Cypriots: The Other Enclaved], which was the title of the documentary series of Costas Yennaris «Ανοικτοί Φάκελοι» [Open Folders], 11 June 2008, the state channel CyBC.

32 See C.H. Dodd (ed.), *The Political, Social and Economic Development of Northern Cyprus*, Huntingdon, UK: Eothen Press.

another dimension of a modern state system, or exhibiting clientelist characteristics due to its deficient modernisation, the state is perceived as an apparatus that acts autonomously from social forces.

The problems associated with this perception have been drawn out earlier in this article. Henceforth, the lesson derived in the previous section cannot be underlined enough in relation to the state decisions that are taken at any particular moment in history, reflecting a particular solution to conflicting class interests and the interests of other internal and external actors at that particular conjunction. The TRNC is not an exception to this rule and the state decisions that are taken at various conjunctures are not the result of a so-called potent state apparatus acting autonomously from the point of view of class interests and external actors (in this case Turkey). Rather, they reflect the particular solution in the interests of domestic and external factors. Although we agree with Kızılyürek's statement that the context is very different from advanced capitalist states, we do not share his analysis that the Turkish Cypriot community is a *sui generis* case which does not permit a class analysis.<sup>33</sup>

We would like to close this section, which merely opened the discussion and set out some key questions<sup>34</sup> that would serve as enquiries for further developing a *theorisation* of the TRNC, irrespective of questions of legality and non-recognition, where there have been some contributions:<sup>35</sup>

- a. What is the socio-political nature of the TRNC? What sort of 'State' are we dealing with?
- b. To what extent is there autonomy of the TRNC from Ankara?
- c. What are the social, economic and political and class parameters in the TRNC?
- d. To what extent can Turkish Cypriots genuinely and authentically exercise power given the overwhelming presence of Turkish troops and settlers?

33 A detailed genesis of state and class formation of the Turkish Cypriot community is undertaken in Trimikliniotis and Bozkurt (eds), 2011 forthcoming.

34 A rudimental analysis based on these questions has been set out in the following section 'The transformational "mother country", the Turkish Cypriots and the Cyprus Problem: Towards the theorisation of the Cyprus Problem' in Trimikliniotis, 2010a, An updated version is available in the forthcoming ΘΕΣΕΙΣ 114 journal. «Σημείωση για την Μη Αναγνωρισμένη Τουρκικής Δημοκρατίας της Βόρειας Κύπρου' ΤΔΒΚ Ταξικές Παραμέτρποι» [Note on the Unrecognised "Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus". Class Parameters], pp. 137-158.

35 Some legal work has been undertaken, see Trimikliniotis 'Exceptions, Soft Borders and Free Movement for Workers', P. Minderhoud and N. Trimikliniotis (eds), *Rethinking the Free Movement of Workers: The European Challenges Ahead*, University of Nijmegen, October 2009, pp. 135-154; *Free Movement of Workers in Cyprus and the EU*, Vol. 1 of *Studies on Fundamental Rights in Cyprus*, published by the Centre for the Study of Migration, Inter-ethnic and Labour Rights, University of Nicosia and PRIO Cyprus Centre, 2010; P. Athanassiou (2010) 'The Status of the "TRNC" through the Prism of Recent Legal Developments: Towards a Furtive Recognition?', *The Cyprus Review*, Vol. 22, No. 1 (Spring), pp. 15-38.

## Placing State Formations in the Context of the Cyprus Problem: Geopolitics vs. Ethnic Conflict

We now proceed to discuss the particularity of the Cypriot state formation(s), which essentially relate to how the role of the State formations are located in their different mutations, fragmentations and transformations within the so-called 'Cyprus problem', i.e. the conflict in and over Cyprus. To this end one must enquire how the conflict in and over Cyprus is perceived so as to place the State formation question within it.

Despite their very different ideological and methodological outlook, many perspectives on the Cyprus problem can at least complement one another and set out various aspects, albeit in a fragmental manner, and provide the basis for theorising the particularity/globality dialectic of the Cypriot post-colonial condition. Be that as it may, what is missing is *the holistic reading* that would try to critically string such perspectives together in a manner that would properly grasp the vitality and actual agency of the *local* dynamic and potential for social-political action. Most readings are not concerned with such issues, as they are either interested in recording the *specificity* within the 'global' or 'regional' aspect, or cannot go beyond the fact that the situation in northern Cyprus is so fundamentally different in terms of the unrecognised state formation, highly dependent on Turkey, which fail to grasp the wider processes within which to locate this state formation.

We argue that the 'Cyprus problem' consists of multiple sets of conflicts and is riddled with local, regional and international contradictions. It is a condensation of a complex set of local/global factors, which cannot be reduced to one-dimensional readings but must be understood as a systemic whole, i.e. it must be read as *a local problem within the global/regional context*. An assessment of the 'common sense' readings of the Cyprus question which are reproduced by textbooks, journalistic and other studies leads us to two sets of readings that are often juxtaposed as two alternative theorisations, which are locked within a counter-intuitive binary logic of perceiving the problem as one of two possibilities. Cyprus is either perceived as a problem of historic enmity between Greeks and Turks, manifested as an identity conflict over control of a state, or as the manifestation of geopolitical conflicts reflected in the externally-imposed rigid constitutional structure which imploded into fragments due to foreign machinations. The first approach represents the failure to properly address the various interconnected dimensions of the problem and is thus an illustration of a theoretical crisis relating to the conceptualisation of the international system of states, as explained by its liberal and conservative apologists. Let us call this the *liberal conflict resolution model*. The second approach reflects a crisis of some dominant strands within radical thought: it can be read as a crisis of anti-imperialism in addressing the 'national question' in the so-called globalisation era. Let us call this the *global/regional geopolitics model*.

Both approaches contain some elements of truth, but they ultimately fail to capture the essence of the 'Cyprus problem' in a holistic manner, particularly as it unfolds in the current conjuncture. Even more sophisticated approaches, which do attempt to synthesise both dimensions, ultimately, have one of the two as 'dominant' and the other as 'subordinate', or 'main

cause' and 'effect', or as the 'core' and 'epiphenomenon'. Moreover, most approaches fail to provide any real insight into a political strategy that would, in the current real world, allow for the transcendence of the current partitionist cul-de-sac. The policy implications of the thinking produced by both schools of thought contain implicit assumptions about the power relations of the global/regional system and what Cypriots must do, and this perception leaves little room for manoeuvre or choice in terms of the struggles for a common future that transcends the ethnic/state divide and the partitionist *status quo*. Without a radical transformation of the balance of global/regional geopolitical forces, any resolution of the problem would inevitably reflect and condense these wider forces which the people of Cyprus are essentially powerless to do anything about. For the *liberal conflict resolution model* it is a matter of fine-tuning the demands of the two sides to reach an optimum outcome; for the *global/regional geopolitics model* the genuine concerns of Cypriot independence would be subordinated either by accepting their subordination to 'Empire',<sup>36</sup> or rejecting it, which would also mean accepting the power of 'Empire', via the consolidation of partitionism. We advocate that both schools of thought are disabling and contain falsities in their assumptions and political implications which undermine the real potential available.

Let us start by critiquing the first approach, the *liberal conflict resolution model*, which is the dominant liberal and conservative approach in international relations and conflict resolution schools as regard the Cyprus question.<sup>37</sup> The 'Cyprus problem' is often depicted as a classic example of identities in conflict, a case of a generic ethnic enmity since time immemorial: the main 'contradiction' here is merely an internal one and everything else is essentially adjacent to it. This is a theoretical and political trap which overplays the generic ethnic antagonism at the expense of the international geopolitical conflicts as well as the 'internal' non-ethnic factors (i.e. intra-ethnic and inter-ethnic) class and political/social relations and polarisations. Also, sometimes such perspectives may, by default, consciously explain away, or even may justify *status quo de facto* partition as 'inevitable' or 'necessary'.<sup>38</sup> In addition, such approaches often obscure the geopolitical interests and historical role of the imperial forces/powers, particularly the UK, the USA and NATO, as well as the role of so-called 'mother countries', Greece and Turkey. The unique geopolitical conditions surrounding the Cyprus problem, which created the conditions that provided for such a 'fettered' or 'restricted independence' in the Zurich – London accord must be

36 We use the term 'Empire' critically; hence we place it in inverted commas. For a useful critique of M. Hardt and A. Negri's noteworthy book *Empire*, see the book edited by G. Balakrishnan (2003) *Debating Empire*.

37 To a large extent this is the approach taken by Sir David Hannay in his book *Cyprus: The Search for a Solution*, London: I.B. Tauris, 2005. For a critical review see N. Trimikliniotis (Spring 2005) 'The Cyprus Problem: An International Relations Debacle or Merely An Unclimbed Peak?', *The Cyprus Review*, Vol. 17, No. 1 (Spring), pp. 144-153; also see Trimikliniotis (2000).

38 See for instance V.D. Volkan (1998) 'Turks and Greeks of Cyprus: Psycho-political Considerations', in V. Calotychos (ed.), *Cyprus and Its People, Nation, Identity, and Experience in an Unimaginable Community, 1995-1997*, Oxford: Westview Press, pp. 277-300.

properly connected to imperial interests or designs, the various attempts to destabilise the newly independent country, and the various partitionist plans and designs proposed by Turkey, Britain and America between 1956 and 1974 to 'accommodate' the two NATO allies in order to maintain the integrity of the southern flank of NATO.<sup>39</sup> Despite the radical transformation of the world order in the post-Cold War era, Cyprus by and large is still seen as 'an unsinkable aircraft carrier' by the regional and international powers. As an astute Turkish journalist points out: 'Cyprus is still a giant aircraft carrier, just like it was from the 1950s to 1980. Whichever side maintains authority on this aircraft carrier will take this strategic point in the Mediterranean under its control'.<sup>40</sup> The role of Greece, which first tried to keep Cyprus under its wing as a 'second Greek State', but then destabilised it and finally instigated the coup with its local Para fascist groups, is often underestimated. Finally, the current *reality* of the Turkish military occupation of the northern part of Cyprus<sup>41</sup> is often obscured; Turkey, as the regional superpower is ultimately backing (economically, militarily and ideologically) the regime in the north.

Within the last decade Turkey has been undergoing a significant transformation and the most important actor responsible for this transformation is the European Union. This does not, however, mean that the EU has been the principal explanatory variable of Turkey's domestic metamorphosis as wider international changes as well as internal dynamics are crucial in determining domestic trends in Turkey. Nevertheless, EU relations are important due to the ways in which they impact on the positioning of domestic actors in Turkey. Trying to understand the Turkish policy on Cyprus requires that we go beyond an analysis of diplomatic relations by assessing the role of social forces that form and transform Turkish policy on Cyprus.<sup>42</sup> That being said, it is misleading and patronising to ascribe Turkish Cypriots with no agency, role, autonomy or power in the north. In fact, understanding the extent of autonomy of Turkish Cypriots within the unrecognised TRNC is both a theoretical and an empirical question which has received very little attention so far.<sup>43</sup>

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39 Most widely known are the Macmillan plan 1956 (UK) and various versions of the Acheson plans in 1964 (USA). These are well documented: See C. Hitchens (1997) 'Afterword' in *Cyprus: Hostage to History, Cyprus from the Ottomans to Kissinger*, 3rd edition, London: Verso; B. O'Malley and I. Craig (1999) *The Cyprus Conspiracy – America, Espionage and the Turkish Invasion*, London: I.B. Tauris; N. Christodoulides (2010) *Ta oxedia λύσης του Κυπριακού 1948-1978* [The Plans for Solution to Cyprus], Athens: Kastaniotis.

40 M.A. Birand (1998) 'Consequences of the Cyprus Problem', *Sabah*, Internet Version 2 April 1998.

41 Since 1974, the northern third of the island, or 3,367 sq km (1,300 sq miles), has been under the *de facto* control of the Turkish Cypriot Federated State (proclaimed in 1975), which on 15 November 1983 proclaimed its independence as the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus; the southern two-thirds (5,884 sq km/2,272 sq miles) are controlled by the government of the Republic of Cyprus. A narrow zone called the 'green line', patrolled by UN forces, separates the two regions and divides Nicosia, the national capital.

42 See chapter 3 in N. Trimikliniotis and U. Bozkurt (2011).

43 An exception is the work of Yael Navaro-Yashin (2003, 2006, 2009); an endeavour is made by one of the authors to study the 'relative autonomy' of the unrecognised TRNC: see Trimikliniotis (2010a), but there is a distinct lack of literature.

The second approach, the *global/regional geopolitics model* is essentially a geopolitical reading of the problem. There are 'right-wing' and 'left-wing' versions: often the 'left-wing' version is a mirror image of the international relations model, which takes for granted the basic assumptions of the neorealist model and is dressed as 'anti-imperialism'. The right-wing versions are often legalistic,<sup>44</sup> international relations and/or political works,<sup>45</sup> or journalistic types of best seller conspiracy theories.<sup>46</sup> A recent example of a left-wing version of this school of thought is the paper of Perry Anderson<sup>47</sup> and others (e.g. Fouskas and Tackie, 2009). Such readings fail to grasp the complex interaction between the 'local', the 'regional' and the 'global', and they undervalue the significance of political and class relations and contradictions that exist within Cyprus, which are connected to regional and global class interests. History is the result of fierce contestations; nothing is predetermined even if there is disequilibrium of forces. The notion of collective communal victimhood may act as an obstacle both to a fair historical understanding of the past as well as the prospects of reconciliation in the future.

The 'Cyprus problem' is a combination of multiple sets of conflicts and only via a multifaceted and complex theory that assesses the role of 'imperialism' today,<sup>48</sup> alongside nationalism, class and other social conflicts, inter- and intra-regional state projects and rivalries can we gain insight to appreciate it and devise the necessary strategies and tactics. There is a delicately balanced equation to be observed in such an analysis that can easily be 'tilted over' should we over-stress one side of the equation at the expense of the other. A crucial element in this 'equation' is the 'internal' versus 'external' components of the 'Cyprus problem' – both of which are of equal importance and priority. In reality the history of the country illustrates that 'internal' political, economic, and social dynamics have historically co-determined the outcome of events together with regional, global and other 'foreign' factors. Any other reading leaves people, classes, political and socio-economic forces within nation-states, even if these are 'small states', with no agency or contribution to the making of history; such forces are reduced to empty vessels of global geopolitics, or 'puppets' of

44 See C. Palley *An International Relations Debacle. The UN Secretary-General's Mission of Good Offices in Cyprus 1999-2004*, Oxford/Portland, Oregon: Hart Publishing.

45 See for instance V. Coufoudakis (Fall 2004) 'Cyprus – The Referendum and its Aftermath', *The Cyprus Review*, Vol. 16, No. 2, pp. 67-82. He has subsequently reproduced the same basic argument elsewhere.

46 Greek Cypriot society has been bombarded with the mass production of magazines, journals, books demonising the Annan plan as an 'Anglo-American and Turkish conspiracy'; a 'classic' is the best-seller of Ignatiou, Venizelos and Meletis, with the telling title *The Secret Bazaar*. The book repeats all the myths, exaggerations, even fabrications about 'the Turks taking all they asked for in the final stages of peace talks' (see M. Ignatiou, C. Venizelos and M. Meletis (2005) *Το Μυστικό Παζάρι, 129 μέρες που συγκλόνησαν τον ελληνισμό* [The Secret Bazaar, 129 Days which Shocked Hellenism], εκδ. Α.Α. Λιβάνη).

47 See Perry Anderson's commentary 'The Divisions of Cyprus', *London Review of Books*, 24 April 2008.

48 See A. Ahmad (2004) 'Imperialism of Our Time', 'Preface' in L. Panitch and C. Leys (eds.), *The New Imperial Challenge*, Athens: Savalas Publications.

imperialism.<sup>49</sup> Moreover, by undervaluing the importance of class struggles and local political contestations *within* Cyprus between various alternative forces of the Left and Right, obliterating in effect these historical struggles by default or design, the story is depicted as a simplistic and one-sided history that suits nationalist mythologies of Greek Cypriot and Greek chauvinist historiography, which today masquerades as ‘anti-imperialistic’.<sup>50</sup> There are equivalent Turkish and Turkish Cypriot approaches: it is no coincidence that the fears of ‘*Enosis*’ (union with Greece) and *Turkish expansionism* are what one scholar aptly refers to as ‘mythical realities’ within an ideological system of nationalists of both sides which confirm each other’s myths.<sup>51</sup>

On a theoretical level, it is apparent that in analysing the relation between ‘nation’ and ‘state’, the ‘national question’ cannot ignore the internal configuration of social/political forces as well as the various expressions and *alternative* nationalisms, as though ‘all nationalisms are good’ as long as they are in conflict with ‘imperialism’. The outcome of the ‘national question’ is not teleological, but it is the result of a struggle between the social, economic, political, and ideological forces: The ‘ideological and political ingredients’ are in the making during the ongoing struggles. This framework can be thought of in terms of the late Althusser, ‘necessity of contingency’.<sup>52</sup> During an epoch marked by significant social transformations, both internal and adjacent to the Cypriot context, critical thought must rethink the current conjuncture to provide new insights in devising political strategies for transformations of the future. Cyprus is a post-colonial divided small state which has always been a *border society* at the crossroads between East and West, between Europe, Africa and Asia.<sup>53</sup> The island is a multi-ethnic and multicultural society in the Eastern Mediterranean that is characterised by its plurality, contrary to nationalistic and orientalist readings of a romanticised or vilified ‘Cypriot Levant’, which (re)produces ‘ancient hatreds’ of Greeks versus Turks. Cypriotness, as a political cultural space, has the potential of becoming a

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49 For a discussion on this issue see Trimikliniotis (Spring 2006) ‘A Communist’s Post-modern Power Dilemma: One Step Back, Two Steps Forward, “Soft No” and “Hard Choices”’, *The Cyprus Review*, Vol. 18, No. 1 (Spring), pp. 37-86.

50 The works of N. Psyroukis and his heir is an example which was critiqued by one of the authors of this article. See N. Trimikliniotis (2010a). Other examples can be found in the Greek edition of Monthly Review, D. Konstantakopoulos (2009) «Κυπριακό: η γεωπολιτική συμπίκνωση του ‘ελληνικού προβλήματος’» in the collective volume Κύπρος, *Γεωπολιτικές εξελίξεις στον 21<sup>ο</sup> αιώνα* [Geopolitical Developments in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century], edited by B. Chorafas and L. Rizas, Monthly Review, Athens.

51 Y. Papadakis (1996) ‘Enosis and Turkish Expansionism: Real Myths or Mythic Realities?’ in V. Calotychos (ed.), *Cyprus and Its People, Nation, Identity, and Experience in an Unimaginable Community, 1995-1997*, Oxford: Westview Press, pp. 69-86.

52 See his later text ‘The Underground Current of the Materialism of the Encounter’ in L. Althusser, *Philosophy of the Encounter, Later Writings, 1978-1987*, edited by F. Matheron and O. Corbet, London: Verso, 2006.

53 Despite accession to the EU, Cyprus remains a ‘border society’ as it links these continents and it retains extremely important relations with them. Moreover, the reference to Cyprus as a border society is a sociological observation regarding Cypriot society and its challenges.

significant third space, which opens up the possibility for plurality, non-essentialism and authenticity of a historic bridge culture located at the crossroads of civilisations and power interests. At the same time the historical shortcomings and failures of such ventures cannot be overlooked, as the history of the country is far from some idyllic scenario: the short life of 'independence', which is itself a limited independence marked by a turbulent geopolitical and ethno-national conflict, a coup, and war, which has resulted in a barbed wire division across the country. In that sense it is not surprising that, at least today, Cyprus, despite its negligible size, is one of the most militarised zones on the planet,<sup>54</sup> with four foreign armies and two large British bases used to spy in the region.

## Conclusion

The aim of this paper was to review, locate the gaps in knowledge, and critique the approaches to the theorisation of State formation in Cyprus. It offered a rudimentary frame with the intention of making State formations in Cyprus more understandable, arguing for the need to further elaborate on a theorisation of the state in Cyprus beyond the descriptive and empiricist accounts. It then placed the theorisations of the state formations within the conflict in the country. It challenged widespread but problematic one-dimensional contentions of the Cyprus conflict by countering such approaches on empirical grounds and presenting thorough theoretical and contextual alternative explanations. To this end, the paper aimed to illustrate that the interest in the case of Cyprus is not confined to its contextual specificities of area studies because it lends itself as an interesting instance in comparative politics, state formation and the international political economy of a localised abridgment of local, regional and global conflicts. The case of Cyprus is a subject of study that extends beyond local interest, not so much in the divisions of the past, but in the processes unleashed currently which create the potential for a *new* Cyprus emerging from the lessons of past fragmentations.

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54 According to point 28 of the UN Report of the Secretary-General on Cyprus 7 June 1994 S/1994/680: 'It is estimated that in recent years there have been in the northern part of island a little less than 30,000 members of the armed forces of the Republic of Turkey (Turkish Forces), making it one of the most highly militarised areas in the world in terms of the ratio between the numbers of troops and civilian population'. Available at [<http://daccess-dds-ny.un.org/doc/UNDOC/GEN/N94/237/70/IMG/N9423770.pdf?OpenElement>].

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