# Divided Cyprus: Modernity, History, and an Island in Conflict

**Edited by Yiannis Papadakis, Nicos Peristianis and Gisela Welz**
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Of the various publications on contemporary Cyprus that deal with the issues of modernity, history, identity and the "Cyprus Problem",[1] Divided Cyprus ranks amongst the better in quality and value. This is because of the calibre of the editors and contributors. Nevertheless, the book, despite its quality and timeliness from an academic and also from a more general standpoint, is not above criticism.

One of the main reasons for the level of the publication being so high is the quality of its editors. Yiannis Papadakis, an Assistant Professor of Anthropology in the Department of Social and Political Sciences at the University of Cyprus, has managed, within a few years, to elevate his name to the top of the tree of anthropologists dealing with the "Cyprus Problem". His personal and thought-provoking book Echoes from the Dead Zone provides something that most studies do not, an understanding of the "Cyprus Problem" from a grass roots level, as well as from an enlightened academic framework. In more recent years, Nicos Peristianis, the Executive Dean of Intercollege, one of the better university colleges in Cyprus, has come out of his shell and helped produce some quality publications, such as Britain in Cyprus (with Hubert Faustmann). Peristianis, a sociologist, has not produced a major work in his own right, and seems content to assist in churning out and contributing to valuable collected works. Gisela Welz, Professor of Cultural Anthropology and European Ethnography at Goethe University, is perhaps the lesser known of the editors, but this does not detract from her work or as one of the editors of this publication. It is evident from the well written introduction, the very high standard of the contributors and the gelling together of their contributions, that the editors exerted appropriate control over the academic quality, scope and aims of the book. By comparison the closest competitor, Cyprus in the Modern World, published by the unknown Vanias publishing house, is patchy in quality, showing the lack of experience, control and vision from its editors. Michális Michael, a Research Fellow at La Trobe University, in Melbourne, has been attached to that university for the best part of twenty years, and yet has produced few publications until now. His co-editor, Anastasios Tamis, the Director of the National Centre for Hellenic Studies and Research at La Trobe University, has produced works on Greek migration, especially to Australia, which might be valuable to the non-academic reader, but

lack thorough research, analyses and contextualisation, and are ethnocentric in approach, thus lacking any real value to scholars and higher-education students.[2] Despite some contributions ranging from the excellent to the very good from Maria Hadjipavlou, Greg Deftereos, Caesar Mavratsas, Nayia Roussou, and a few others (including the interesting introduction by Michael), the publication is overly long, does not gel well, and has some poor contributions. Without question, Divided Cyprus is focused, well structured and researched, and works as a whole while each chapter also works individually.

Although some are more known than others, all the contributors to Divided Cyprus have carved out names for themselves. Here I wish to briefly comment on some of the contributions, space limiting comment on all, let alone more thorough analyses.

One colleague and friend has referred to Michael Herzfeld, a Professor of Anthropology at Harvard University, as "the Great Herzfeld", reflecting his influence on the study of identity of the pre-modern and modern "Greek" world. It was to my fortunate surprise that when it came to writing the chapter on identity formation for my PhD on early British Cyprus, I found that nobody had situated the primary source material within Herzfeld's theoretical context, where I determined it fitted nicely; indeed, ironically, one anthropologist examining Cyprus had rejected Herzfeld's approach.[3] In his contribution, he mentions but does not explore the triumph of European models of identity construction applied during the British period over the socio-cultural integration and religious cohabitation that had prevailed in the pre-modern era (34, 38). Herzfeld has argued that Europeans created a unitary ideal of Ancient Greece during the Enlightenment, and then created a unitary ideal of Modern Greece, which was even after 1830 largely under Ottoman control. I have shown that the British officials – primarily those in London – situated Cyprus within such an ideal, and so when it came to ruling Cyprus, the Liberal government after 1880 gave it a very liberal constitution, which introduced modern governmental and political structures. They also rejected introducing English to schools because Greek was a more than civilised language from which to progress the learning of the inhabitants.[4] The effect on the traditional approach to understanding identity formation and the origins of the "Cyprus Problem" are evident.

Rebecca Bryant, Assistant Professor of Anthropology at George Mason University, has, in a short amount of time, carved a name for herself as the pre-eminent historical anthropologist of Cyprus, primarily through her excellent book, Imagining the Modern. In Divided Cyprus she examines the relationship between modernity and nationalism in Cyprus, revealing the continuities and discontinuities of tradition. Bryant argues that from the beginning of British rule the Greek Cypriots claimed to be the real ancestors of Europe by virtue of their Ancient Greek past,

using a quote from a Greek language newspaper in 1889. This is true for only a very very small section of the population, most of whom were Cypriot by virtue of having migrated from places such as the Ionian Islands to Cyprus. The majority of the population, including the clergy – and the archbishop, Sophronios III – did not identify with Ancient Greece and called themselves Romiee, that is, Orthodox Christians of the Eastern dogma, whose homeland was Cyprus. Greece, and being Greek, was rarely mentioned in early correspondence with the British. The Hellenic discourse does not begin to gain momentum until after Sophronios died in 1900 and does not become institutionalised as the focus of political demands until 1910, when the archiepiscopal dispute is resolved with a nationalist victory. Bryant's alternative explanation to account for the rise of Greek and Turkish nationalisms to British "divide and rule" is the set of ideas the British allowed to flourish and which the negotiation of the Cypriots rejected, accepted and/or adapted. This I agree with, however it takes the British out as actors to a large extent when they are equal actors in this process, especially given the clear and significant transformations in identity.

Papadakis' chapter on the propaganda and ethno-centrism of both Cypriot communities, although on the odd occasion reading like a summary of Echoes from the Dead Zone, is fascinating for its analysis of official government publications, such as those of the respective Public Information Offices. His discussion of the denial of each antagonistic sides opposing understanding of the past and the use of "evidence" in official publications to endorse the respective ethnocentric versions of the past is excellent.

Peristianis' chapter is also of interest, especially since he is one of the few sociologist contributors and because there has been little if any focus on civic nationalism in Cyprus. His approach is to look at social structures and political party formations. Peristianis argues that Greek-Cypriot society is divided between those who take an ethnocentric view of the past and their identity and those who take a civic-centric view. He claims that President Archbishop Makarios turned from ethno to civil nationalism in the late 1960s when he made his famous "what is desirable is not always feasible" speech. But in this speech Makarios only abandoned enosis temporarily and so he was not moving from ethno to civil nationalism permanently and therefore he was not abandoning his ethnic identity for a civil identity at all. Further complications in Peristianis' thesis arise where he claims that concessionalists and rejectionists over a solution to the "Cyprus Problem" correspond to civic-centricism and ethno-centricism respectively. If Makarios adopted a civic-centric approach after the late 1960s, he certainly was no more concessionist to the Turkish Cypriots, as Glafkos Clerides has shown,[5] while he may have changed after the invasion of 1974, but this was not immediate, as Makarios Droushiotis has revealed.[6] Also, Peristianis' distinction (which is quite right) that AKEL (Progressive Party of the Working People – left-wing) has

traditionally been civic-centric, while DISY (Democratic Rally – right-wing) was founded on ethno-centrism contradicts his theory because DISY has traditionally been as concessionalist as AKEL, and this it showed when it was the only major party to support the UN peace plan put to the people in the referendum of 2004, while AKEL supported the rejectionist camp. This camp also included the party founded to represent Makarios' political principles. Nevertheless, Peristianis' chapter is thought-provoking on other levels, especially when he analyses his quantitative data and reveals how certain interviewees believed that rapprochement was impossible because of the different versions of the past that members of each community held.

Lack of space forces me to now make passing reference to the other contributions, all of which are very interesting, well researched and provoke food for thought. Yael Navaro-Yashin, a Lecturer in Social Anthropology at the University of Cambridge, challenges Political Science and other disciplines that define the "Cyprus Problem" as an ethnic problem by highlighting the political and social conflicts that have arisen since Turkish Cypriots and mainland Turks have come into contact after the 1974 war. Spyros Spyrou, Assistant Professor of Anthropology and Sociology at Cyprus College, looks at how national education determines a child's outlook on identity and history. In this most interesting chapter, he reveals the contradiction that Greek-Cypriot children are taught that the Turkish Cypriots are the barbaric "other" and yet in the official Greek-Cypriot political discourse the Turkish Cypriots are as Cypriot as the Greek Cypriots. Paul Sant-Cassia, a Reader in Anthropology at the University of Durham, and well known for his book Bodies of Evidence, examines how the exhumations at Lakatamia sustain social order through the emotion of suffering and mourning. Meanwhile, Anne Jepson, a Research Fellow at the University of Edinburgh, shows how gardens preserve social memory for those who left homes behind in 1974. Floya Anthias, a Professor of Sociology at Oxford Brookes University, reveals how a new underclass of foreign workers (from eastern Europe and the Sub-continent) are often erased from public awareness or more often legitimised by the prevailing racist stereotypes. Anthias is right in proposing that the government must be more aware of Cyprus' role as a translocation place and where the flow of ethnicities effect and are effected by social structures. The last chapter sees Vassos Argyrou, a Senior Lecturer in Social Anthropology at the University of Hull, reflect on the impossibility that the anthropological project can escape ethnocentrism because it divides the world and does not unite it.

The only weakness of Divided Cyprus is that the subtitle Modernity, History, and an Island in Conflict implies that History will be a focus of the book, and yet there is no contribution by an historian. Although the word "history" can of course simply mean "the past" and historians do not have a monopoly over the past, but they are the primary members of academia that deal with the past and for them History is a

discipline that has its own unique methodologies and approaches. The book only comprises contributors from the anthropology and sociology disciplines. Perhaps this is a reflection on the fact that when it comes to Cyprus' past there is a dearth of serious historians interested in it and it is left to other disciplines to attempt to fill this void. In analysing the history of Cyprus (see Introduction), the editors do an excellent job. They look at significant works, such as those by Paschales Kitromilides, Adamantia Pollis, Stephen Xydis, Richard Patrick, Hugh Purcell, Vamik Volkan and manage to produce a thoroughly progressive sketch, but not all of the above were produced by historians, while there have been other works by historians that may have been considered, namely George Georghallides, Rolandos Katsiaounis and Robert Holland. If one of the main aims of the book was to "analyse the issues concerning the construction and uses of the past" (6) and one of the focuses was the British period, where, as the editors admit, the coloniser was in the peculiar situation of sharing the same repertoire of myths with the majority of the natives (4-5), a chapter or two on this exact subject – the imperial encounter within the context of the British cultural and imperial imagination – might have been appropriate. An historian, too, would have known that the quote on page four attributed to Sir Richard Palmer, was from Sir Richmond Palmer, and would have referenced the original source, his published speech,[7] and not a secondary source.

My other criticisms of Divided Cyprus are more minor. One of the most annoying errors virtually throughout this publication (which is also in evidence on the back of the book) is the persistent use of Cyprus's (which means more than one, such as: "how many Cyprus's are there?) to mean Cyprus' (an example: Cyprus' strategic importance was more imagined than real"). Aside from this and a few minor stylistic quibbles, which are present in most publications, the book is very well written.

Of the recent publications on the "Cyprus Problem", Divided Cyprus ranks amongst the best. It is scholarly, very well conceived, nicely structured, and expertly executed. Most importantly, it is thought provoking. I highly recommend it to any serious scholar of Cyprus' past and present, and to those interested in its future progress.

**Andrekos Varnava**

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1. William Mallinson, Cyprus: A Modern History, IB Tauris, London, 2005. See my review of Mallinson's book on the University of Melbourne Repository [http://eprints.infodiv.unimelb.edu.au/archive/00001951/]; (ed.), Michális Michael and Anastasios M. Tamis, Cyprus in the Modern World, Vanias, Salonica, 2005.

2. See my review of Tamis' The Greeks in Australia, Cambridge University Press, New York, 2005, Melbourne Historical Journal, XXXIII, 2005, pp. 80-82.
3. Rebecca Bryant, Imagining the Modern: The Cultures of Nationalism in Cyprus, IB Taurus, London, 2004, p. xi.
4. See my paper entitled 'The Emergence of Greek National Identity amongst the Orthodox Cypriots: British Imperialism and Modernity, 1878-1910', presented at the conference Nationalism in a Troubled Triangle: Cyprus, Greece and Turkey, at the University of Cyprus, 10-11 November 2006.
5. Glafkos Clerides, Cyprus: My Deposition, 4 Vol., Alitheia Pub, Nicosia 1989, Vol. I, 356-360, Vol. II, pp. 75-77, 204-207.
6. Makarios Droushiotis, Cyprus 1974, Bibliopolis, 2006.
7. Sir Richmond Palmer, 'Cyprus', Royal Central Asian Society Journal, 1939, pp. 599-618.