

The Impartial Soldier (in retrospect), by Michael Harbottle, Oxford University Press (Oxford, 1970), 210 pp.

Brigadier Michael Harbottle, author of one of the seminal books on UNFICYP's involvement in the Cyprus problem in the 1960s, and anecdotal work on peacekeeping in general, died recently. The book that survives him, although published in 1970 by Oxford University Press, still has much to teach academics and practitioners and contains insights on UN peacekeeping in general, despite its apparent focus on the military and peacekeeping aspects of the Cyprus problem. The book provides an insight into the genesis and development of what is today, a vital part of our armoury against conflict. When the book was written, peacekeeping was a relatively new and untested "... method of containing, and settling conflicts between states in the age of world-wide interdependence."¹ Today peacekeeping is much maligned and misunderstood but no less valuable.

Harbottle was Chief of Staff during the 1960s, at a time when UNFICYP was attempting to dampen down conflict across the entire island in order to prevent the conflict in Cyprus from spreading to Greece and Turkey and potentially destabilising NATO at the height of the Cold War. Harbottle was well aware and highly critical of the practical involvement of Greece and Turkey on the island although *The Impartial Soldier* concentrates on the inter-communal aspects of the Cyprus problem and communicates the despair that the author felt at neighbour fighting neighbour. Harbottle's involvement in Cyprus during the 1960s led to his subsequent collaboration with General Indarjit Rikhye, then military advisor to U Thant, the UN Secretary General. This relationship pioneered a significant understanding of the significance of UN peacekeeping in the context of world peace.

In the opening words of the book, Harbottle denied that he was the impartial soldier of the title. But whatever his personal stand on the Cyprus problem, in effect, during the period with UNFICYP he acted as if he was one of the soldiers of " . . . any nation who dons the light blue beret of the United Nations and serves anywhere in the world where trouble threatens and peace has to be maintained or restored."² Harbottle, present on the island during the EOKA campaign, was ever mindful of the battle of words which was waged (and is still being waged) between the Greek Cypriot and Turkish Cypriot sides, and was careful to point out in the opening pages of the book that if his work appeared more critical of Turkish Cypriot positions, this was merely because they were a minority and were therefore engaged in a more desperate struggle for human rights and personal liberties than the Greek Cypriot side. While this is a pertinent fact today which the Turkish Cypriot side may do well to take into consideration in their dealings with all official and international agents, the Greek Cypriot side too were and are in a similar position with respect to Turkey. This, I suspect was also in Harbottle's mind when he recounted the events of 1967 at *Kokkina*, of which he had first hand experience.

Harbottle was well aware of the fact that since 1964, UNFICYP had had a difficult and arduous task in quelling the intercommunal violence that had spread across the island, and holding the ring. He was also aware of the conceptual difficulties raised by the fact that while UNFICYP needed to create the necessary conditions for the UN mediator to help the two sides towards a solution, the peace-making operation in Cyprus was the weak link in the ring.³ This was because the two sides were holding out either for their maximum objectives or for the support of their motherlands and were determined not to give in. Harbottle's comments on the negotiations between the two sides were as follows:

"Repeatedly, throughout the pages of this book the same pattern of distrust, fear, evasion, and intransigence appears, often making negotiations and reasoning impossible."⁴

In the contemporary context these words seem to contain a certain grim foreboding. Harbottle must have been acutely aware of the fact that a peacekeeping operation could not hold the ring forever and that the two sides needed urgently to display the will, and make the necessary concessions, for a solution. A solution had to be found through negotiation and mediation, or more violence would ensue, as it did in 1974, after the failure and termination of Galo Plaza's UN mediation attempt in 1965 and the inconclusive inter-communal negotiations from 1968-1974. The book is littered with similar statements decrying the "... intransigent and stubborn attitudes by both Government and Turkish Cypriot leadership towards negotiated settlements in all matters-military, political, economic, and judicial" With the benefit of hindsight, it is clear to all today, that had a solution been reached during this period, which had provided the Turkish Cypriot side with the limited local autonomy that they were asking for, the situation today would have been very different. The hard-line elements of the Turkish Cypriot leadership and Turkey would never have been able to take control of the situation unless Greek Cypriot extremists had themselves intervened against Makarios' Government.

Harbottle was unequivocally clear that the UN mission (but more particularly the United Kingdom's contribution) acted according to the principles of non-intervention, impartiality and consent. He quotes the then US Ambassador to Cyprus to this end: "When you are unpopular with both sides at once then you're really know that you are doing your job properly-with total impartiality."⁵

For those who are studying the Cyprus Problem in the 1960s, this is an invaluable text. Not only does it give an early glimpse into the inner workings of a peacekeeping force, and its evolving philosophy during such turbulent times, but it also provides an interesting insight into the characters of the opposing sides. It does this in a monolithic sense in terms of the conflict itself, but also in terms of the principal figures (such as Makarios, Grivas, and Georghadjis) who were involved in the conflict, or those who were or attempting to prevent the situation from escalating further

(such as Osorio-Tafall, and Bernades). His view of UNFICYP was that it was involved in an important role and was doing the best it could to prevent violence in a heated and often irrational environment. He believed that this latter point was responsible for the failure of UNFICYP to carry out part of its mandate, that is to effect a return to normal conditions. He was often scathing of the lack of co-operation that Grivas, for example, showed to the Force. He was also scathing of the stands that the Turkish Cypriot side often took against Makarios Government's attempts at normalisation. For example in the 1967 *Kokkina* incident he was clear that the Cypriot Government had the right to resume its police patrols in the region and viewed Turkish Cypriot opposition to their resumption as inspired by purely political motives. Thus while he thought that the Government's decision to restart its patrols in the region was insensitive, he thought that Turkish Cypriot opposition was calculated to escalate tension.⁶ Therefore, the UN did fail to prevent the ensuing battle, which, however, led to the withdrawal of Grivas and the Greek troops and to the start of the intercommunal negotiations. In Harbottle's words, "Avowedly evil does bring forth good-sometimes."⁷

The definition of how successful UNFICYP has been depends on how one looks at the role of UNFICYP from the early sixties to the present day. During Harbottle's time the force patrolled a complex series of fault lines in order to bring about a stable situation in which negotiations towards a settlement could flourish. But he was well aware of a fact that few today pay much attention to: the UN force depends on the consent and co-operation of the two parties which in return expect that it will behave neutrally and will not intervene in the dispute in any way, other than to dampen down violence. But if the two sides do not want a stable situation, or successful negotiations, the UN force can do little more than attempt to dampen the conflict. This in itself was considered enough in the Cold War era. In the post Cold War era, and despite many arguments to the contrary, this must still be defined as success as open conflict is obviously worse than the current situation of stability and quiet:

"Peace-keeping must be the compliment of peace-making; without it the other cannot proceed ... People tend to forget that the peace-keeper is not the peacemaker. The peace-keeper can only provide the stable military situation, within the atmosphere of which peaceful solutions to the problems can be worked out and ratified....Achievement therefore for the peace-keeper is to maintain that stability and to prevent an outbreak or renewal of the fighting ... He does need to run very fast to stay in the same place, but provided he does this and does not slip back, then he is achieving the object and purpose for which he has been provided."⁸

Harbottles' words cut to the root of the role of a peacekeeping force: according to his interpretation UNFICYP has indeed been a successful force. But given the lack of will, or the ability of the parties to utilise the peacemaking resources of the

UN it can achieve little more than it has already achieved. What is more, efforts to fundamentally alter the concept of peacekeeping such as in Somalia or in Bosnia are doomed to failure. The concept of peacekeeping is derived from the diplomatic function of the UN rather than the military concept of enforcement. It is a compromise between enforcement and inaction and it is the best tool we have for preventing the escalation of disputes and preserving a basic form of peace and security, which after all, is the primary function of the UN. Harbottle's views were thus. Peacekeeping is a limited exercise that has an intrinsic value, while the success of peacemaking depends on the will of the disputants. The two are separate concepts and must not be confused. **Oliver Richmond.**

Comments

1. Foreword by K.G. Younger, in Michael Harbottle: *The Impartial Soldier*, London; New York: OUP, 1970, p.viii.
2. *Ibid.*, p.xi.
3. *Ibid.*, p.3. Harbottle writes that UNFICYP was not successful in providing conditions which would enable talks to lead to a settlement although it was generally able to contain violent incidents.
4. *Ibid.*, pp. 14-15.
5. *Ibid.*, p. 18.
6. *Ibid.*, pp. 158-159.
7. *Ibid.*, p. 160.
8. *Ibid.*, p. 197.

Words of Cyprus

Etymologicon lexicon tis omiloumenis Kypriakis dialectou (Etymological Dictionary of the Spoken Cyprus Dialect), by Kyriacos Hadjioannou, Tamassos Press (Nicosia 1996), pp. 265.

Kyriacos Hadjioannou is a philologist and historian of some distinction who has written over a dozen scholarly works on the language, the culture and the history of Cyprus including his eight-volume magisterial collection of excerpts entitled *Ancient Cyprus in Greek Sources*, published between 1971 and 1992.

The present work, which includes a very short toponymic supplement, is a mine of information on the etymology of many, but by no means all, words of the Cyprus dialect, a dialect which can be distinguished from standard Modern Greek not only