

# **‘Cyprus in Twilight’: *The Times and The Manchester Guardian* on the Greek and Turkish Arguments, 1954-1959**

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## **Abstract**

*The paper analyses the arguments found in the editorials of two British newspapers, the Manchester Guardian and the Times, on the Cyprus issue. The analysis focuses mainly on the position of the newspapers’ editors on the Greek and Turkish political stands over Cyprus during the crucial period between 1954-1959. The major questions addressed are the following: to what extent did the views of the two newspapers conflict or coincide with one another? What was their starting point and what did they consider to be important in the discussion for Cyprus: Britain’s needs, Greek demands or Turkish anxieties? When did the editors publish editorials on Cyprus and what motivated them to do so? As Andreas Sophocleous wrote, the significance of the British press, as well as the Greek and the Turkish, in understanding the period 1955-1959, is great. The paper analyses sources that, despite their significance, remain only partially explored.*

**Keywords:** British Press, British Public Opinion, Cyprus 1955-1959, Enosis, Self-Determination, Partition, EOKA

## **Introduction: The importance of the Press**

During 1954-1959, significant political developments and diplomatic processes took place in Cyprus that shaped the future of the island. At the same time, situation was intensified by the armed insurgency led by EOKA (1955-1959). Consequently, this period is considered to be one of the most important in the recent history of Cyprus. The study of the various aspects of the historical past and the events that constructed the sociopolitical arena, require research in important decision-making power centers outside Cyprus, such as Britain. Such a research is required because it can give us a very informative insight of the British way of thinking and acting, as well as the divisions within British public opinion.

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For the purposes of the introduction, a brief analysis of the importance of the press will be outlined. According to Andreas Sophocleous, 'Press [...] and other forms of printed communication are now an integral part of our everyday life. They inform, keep us up-to-date, educate. They satisfy our needs, but also direct us, control and shape our opinion according to the interests they serve and promote'.<sup>2</sup> Moreover, the newspapers by endorsing and applauding or condemning and rejecting statements and views exert pressure and get transformed from mass media into a medium of political criticism.

Here comes the debate on the relationship of the press with the political parties and the dependence of the press on them. The nature of this relationship varies from a loose association between the newspaper-owner and a party to the situation that a party owns a newspaper. However, it is likely that there is no interdependence, but merely accord of opinion. Because, once the newspaper expresses its opinion, it is likely that this view will be the same as that of a party in one way or another.

The role of the press in shaping public opinion has to do with whether the information given to the reader is assimilated by him rather than reading it and then forgetting it. In this sense the view of a newspaper has an effect on the reader if it challenges him to think. A stronger impact is considered when it provokes changing or strengthening of the reader's view on a subject. Ultimately, the strongest effect is to cause not only a change in views but also in the actions of the reader, such as his electoral behavior.

Additionally, the press is not only influencing the reader but also the protagonists of the political events: party and government officials and MPs. This is based on the assumption that scandals and mismanagement by the government, will be dealt with, if they are revealed, if questions are raised and if criticism is exerted constructively. Regarding the sources used by the press, Andreas Sophocleous states that 'Press draws its information mainly from government sources, not only plain events, but also their interpretation and their analysis'.<sup>3</sup>

The distinctive power of the press as a means of communication stems from the ability of the editor to evaluate and prioritise the significance of news stories and

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<sup>2</sup> A. Sophocleous, *Introduction in communication, persuasion and propaganda* (in Greek) (Nicosia: n/a, 1977), p. 24.

<sup>3</sup> A. Sophocleous, *Press and Dependency, The Cyprus Crisis of 1974 and the newspaper The New York Times* (in Greek) (Nicosia: Intercollege, 1995), p. 10.

decide whether they will be included in the newspaper or not. Equally important, is the handling of information. The time of publication, the frequency of repetition, the position in the newspaper pages and layout style are factors that result to either great publicity and hence impact, or leave it to go 'in small print'.

Undoubtedly, however, the newspaper's view is not expressed through the news reports, but through the editorial article, usually written by the editor or the owner of the newspaper. The editorial article highlights an event and states the newspaper's position on it clearly. Although these articles are positioned under the newspaper's logo without signature may go unnoticed by the readers, this is not the case for journalists and politicians, as the official position of the newspaper is expressed through them. It is precisely these editorial articles that this article will analyse, because they are suitable for drawing conclusions, since they present the arguments and the official point of view of the newspaper on the events.

### **The British Press**

As to the significance of the study of the British press, Andreas Sophocleous, in the preface to the publication 'The EOKA Struggle (1955-1959) in the Athenian Press', had identified and stressed 'the great importance of gathering the material about the EOKA Struggle 1955-1959, from the British, Turkish, American and the rest of the European press. The creation of such a press archive will be a valuable source for the historians of the future who will study and evaluate the international dimensions of the struggle'.<sup>4</sup> Therefore, the importance of analyzing the views of British newspapers on the Cyprus issue is profound.

The criterion of selecting the British newspapers for this article was their positions towards the Cyprus issue. Two 'quality' newspapers were selected because of that and because of the volume of material found. These are the *Times* and the *Manchester Guardian*. Generally the 'quality press' largely focuses on political and economic affairs, while 'popular press' or 'Tabloids' focus mainly on social issues, entertainment, sports and television. Therefore, their readership is different. On average, the quality newspaper has three times more words than the popular one, which says what has to be said with more pictures and cartoons than the 'quality' newspapers.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> A. Sophocleous, (ed.), *The EOKA struggle (1955-1959) in the Athenian Press* (in Greek) (Nicosia: Mass Media Institute Intercollege, 2005), p. 10.

<sup>5</sup> The subject of the cartoons during this period is of particular interest. About the cartoons published

The *Times*, is one of the oldest (first published January 1, 1878), and most important British newspapers. During the period under research the *Times* was the quality newspaper with the second-highest circulation (following the *Daily Telegraph*). The owner of the newspaper, Colonel John Jacob Astor, despite having been a MP with the Conservative Party for 23 years (1922-1945), was trying not to interfere with the views of the newspaper, having the reputation that, although he was the owner, he did not even read it!<sup>6</sup> This was highlighted by the decision of John Jacob Astor not to accept the attribution of the Baron's title right away, in the 1956 annual honorary list, thinking that the acceptance of the title would seem as a retreat from the unfettered character of the newspaper.<sup>7</sup>

In terms of sales, a downward trend was noted from 1950, ending in 1956 at a loss of 8% compared to 1950. By 1960, however, sales returned to 1950 levels. The responsibility for the reduced circulation of *Times* is mainly attributed to the editor William Haley. The views he expressed in his editorials were not considered clear, and although he generally supported the Conservative Government, about Suez crisis, he changed his opinion three times.<sup>8</sup>

The *Manchester Guardian* was then being printed in Manchester but circulated across Britain.<sup>9</sup> In 1960 it dropped the local prefix from its name and the next year began printing in London. The *Manchester Guardian*, along with the *Times* and the *Daily Telegraph*, were considered to be the three major quality British newspapers. The *Manchester Guardian* had a clearer political affiliation than the *Times*, since it maintained traditional relations with the Liberal Party. The ownership of the newspaper at that time was held by the Scott Trust. The editor, A.P. Wadsworth, due to illness, ceded his place to the thirty-nine-year-old Alastair Hetherington in 1956, who was remembered for his fierce criticism against the British government.<sup>10</sup>

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in *The Manchester Guardian* and the *Daily Mirror* about Cyprus, see H. Alexandrou (ed.), *The Cyprus struggle (1955-1959) through the pen of the cartoonists of Manchester Guardian and Daily Mirror* (Nicosia: Council of the Historical Memory of EOKA Struggle, 2009, in Greek).

<sup>6</sup> C. Seymour-Ure, *The British Press and broadcasting since 1945* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1991), p. 35. More information about *The Times* see D. Griffiths (ed.), 'The Times', *The Encyclopedia of the British Press* (London: Macmillan, 1992), pp. 562-563 and I. MacDonald, *The History of Times*, V. 5 (London: Times Books, 1984).

<sup>7</sup> Griffiths, 'Astor, John Jacob, First Baron Astor of Hever', *Encyclopedia*, p. 81.

<sup>8</sup> Griffiths, 'Haley Sir William', *Encyclopedia*, p. 286.

<sup>9</sup> Griffiths, 'The Guardian', *Encyclopedia*, pp. 280-281.

<sup>10</sup> R. Greenslade, *Press gang, How newspapers make profit from propaganda* (London: Macmillan, 2003), p. 124 and A. Hetherington, *Guardian years* (London: Chatto & Windus, 1981), Introduction.

A few days before the 1950 elections, A.P. Wadsworth expressed the philosophy of the newspaper eloquently by writing that while it is hard for someone to be convinced that Conservatives or Labor have to be cordially supported, the common political instinct, asks to choose side. But maybe, he continues, sometimes the wisest way is to try to tell to all the parts their wrongs deeds and to suffer the derogatory remarks that always hurt the prospective friends.<sup>11</sup> The circulation of the newspaper in the 1950s increased 24.5%, taking advantage of the vacancy caused by the fall of the *Times* and also because of its steady position on serious domestic and foreign policy issues.<sup>12</sup>

### **British press on Cyprus**

The chronological breakpoints that define the beginning and the end of the period under consideration are on one side the first Greek recourse in December 1954 that effectively brought the Cyprus issue before the international audience and impelled the British political parties to re-examine and debate the Cyprus issue. On the other side is the signing of the Zurich-London Agreements on 19 February 1959 which was considered to be the solution to the issue.

It is important to provide some data which will help the understanding of the material. Editorials about Cyprus appeared in December 1954 when the issue of Cyprus was first discussed in the UN following the first Greek recourse, in July 1955, when the organisation of the Tripartite Conference was announced and then August-September when the Conference was held. The second instance that seems to have caused the great interest of the press was Archbishop Makarios' deportation in March 1956, as well as the leader of EOKA Dighenis' declaration of the first ceasefire in August of the same year. In 1957, the lowest number of editorials was recorded, mainly due to the EOKA ceasefire and the low profile that the British Government deliberately kept regarding the Cyprus issue. The consequences of the Suez crisis and the absence of any turbulent debates in the House of Commons about Cyprus is another reason why the number of such editorials about Cyprus was limited. However, in 1958 there was a sharp increase in numbers, mainly in the second half of the year due to the personal involvement of the Prime Minister, Har-

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<sup>11</sup> D. Ayerst, *'Guardian': A biography of a newspaper* (London: Collins, 1971), p. 605. This was the answer given by the editor of the *Manchester Guardian* to Winston Churchill who was delivering a pre-election speech in Manchester during which he called 'Mr Manchester Guardian' to choose his side as every Briton should do.

<sup>12</sup> Greenslade, *Press gang*, p. 122.

old Macmillan, on the Cyprus problem through the MacMillan Plan and the deterioration of the situation in the island caused by the intercommunal conflicts, the intense EOKA activity and the ill-treatment complaints against the British troops made by Cypriots.

In *Times* had published 155 editorials related to the Cyprus issue, while 187 were found in the *Manchester Guardian*. This means that from December 1954 to February 1959, for about 51 and a half months, on average one editorial about Cyprus was published every eight to ten days. The significance of the Cyprus issue for the British press is obvious just with a primary qualitative analysis. Quantitative analysis prior to December 1954, confirms these findings. The reduced importance of the Cyprus issue for the British press and the British political scene before the period under consideration is profound in the first lines of the *Times* editorial on February 25, 1954 titled 'The people of Cyprus': 'There is justice in Lord Winster's complaint that Cyprus is too rarely mentioned in Parliament, but the debate which he initiated in the House of Lords on Tuesday explained the reason. Neither Government nor Opposition speaker found anything new to say'.<sup>13</sup> Actually, the appearance of the Cyprus issue in the newspaper was rarer than in the House of Commons. Having laid the background, we move on to our main analysis. An issue highlighting the difference in the views and approaches of the two newspapers under consideration, are their stands regarding Greek and Turkish arguments on Cyprus.

### **Points of view on the Greek arguments**

Starting from the way the Greek arguments were presented, the editor of the *Times* argued on Britain's ability to act 'unfettered' in the Middle East, something that required Britain to retain sovereignty over Cyprus. He initially attributed responsibility for the deadlock with Greece, meaning the persistence of Athens in calling for a referendum in Cyprus, instead of accepting a constitution for Cyprus allowing self-government. According to Evanthis Hatzivassiliou, probably, the intention behind the suggestion of long-term self-determination was the hope for disintegration of the Enosis front. This hope was founded on the assumption (or the certainty) that during a long period of self-government, Right and Left will be in dispute and, as a result, the demand for Enosis would diminish.<sup>14</sup>

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<sup>13</sup> 'The people of Cyprus', *The Times*, 25 February 1954, p 7.

<sup>14</sup> E. Hatzivassiliou, *Britain and the international status of Cyprus* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota, 1997), p. 34.

The main argument put forward by the *Times* was that the demand for self-termination through a referendum, could not be accepted because it was not a policy that was applied by the British in their colonies.<sup>15</sup> Athens and the Ethnarch Council of the Greek Cypriots were also considered responsible also because they did not advise the Cypriots to accept self-government, since Britain had clearly rejected the request for a referendum. The editor also blamed Athens for the unconditional support for Cypriots and for ignoring the problems that the Enosis demand (the demand of the Cyprus union with Greece)<sup>16</sup> had created in Greek-Turkish relations and the Balkan Pact. Another major accusation against Greece was regarding the broadcasts of Athens radio, which were considered responsible for the turmoil in the island.<sup>17</sup> The Greek attitude was considered to be irresponsible by the editor of the *Times*, who thought it was creating problems for NATO's unity. What he suggested in September 1955 was self-government for Cypriots in the (undefined) future when the people will be more experienced to decide their fate.<sup>18</sup>

In the first editorial notes, the editor of the *Times* did not hesitate to recognize Britain's responsibility in the escalation of the crisis. In December 1955, he suggested to the British Government should have never stated 'never' but had to clarify his position in a more diplomatic way.<sup>19</sup> He also accused London of wasting time and denying to negotiate with Greece, actions that he considered to have intensified the crisis. In spite of the British responsibilities, his standpoint, which would re-

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<sup>15</sup> «Cyprus», *The Times*, 3 December 1955, p. 7.

<sup>16</sup> It is worth noting that when the British newspapers referred to the issue of Cyprus, Union with Greece, they wrote 'Enosis' without explaining what was the meaning of the term. This alone demonstrates how much the British public has been concerned with the Cyprus issue.

<sup>17</sup> British Government replied to the 3<sup>rd</sup> Greek recourse to the UN with a counter-recourse titled 'Support from Greece for terrorism in Cyprus' and published a leaflet titled 'Greek Irredentism and Cyprus terrorism' in which could be found long quotations of the Athens radio broadcasts on Cyprus. The decision taken by the Governor John Harding, to jam the broadcasts in early 1956, makes obvious the relation between the Athens Radio and the 'terrorism' in Cyprus, according to the British perception

<sup>18</sup> 'Testing time', *The Times*, 5 September 1955, p. 9 and 'After the setback', 8 September 1955, p. 11, etc.

<sup>19</sup> Henry Hopkinson, Minister of State for Colonial Affairs, announcing the 'fresh initiative' of the British Government in Cyprus, made a statement that is considered to be responsible for the escalation of the tension between British Government and the Greeks. Especially the use of word 'never' was provocative for the Greeks: 'It has always been understood and agreed that there are certain territories in the Commonwealth which, owing to their particular circumstances, can never expect to be fully independent'. Debates (Commons), 1953-1954, vol. 531, 28 July 1954, par. 508.

main till the end, was that ‘the worst mistakes have, without any doubt, been made by the other side’.<sup>20</sup>

The editor of the *Guardian* agreed that London was supposed to face the Cyprus problem in response to the fulfillment of Britain’s and NATO’s geostrategic obligations in the Middle East. However, he perceived the situation differently as he considered the Greek requests justified and expressed the view that the possibility of conceding Cyprus to Greece would not affect the effectiveness of NATO in the Middle East. On the contrary, he believed that the bitterness and tension of the Greeks because of Britain’s refusal to grant the right of self-determination was the factor that would probably push Greece outside NATO, which would cause more damage to Britain and the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation than Enosis.<sup>21</sup>

The editor of the *Guardian* didn’t diminish the accountability of the British Government only in his first editorials, as his counterpart in the *Times*. The accusations against London were continuous and related to Whitehall’s procrastination in settling the Cyprus issue. In addition, the British government was accused that because of the expressed ‘never’, provoked an anti-colonial revolution and was running the visible risk of rupture in Greek-British and Greek-Turkish relations. Analyzing these circumstances David French, Evanthis Hatzivassiliou, Francois Crouzet and Robert Holland agree that in late 1956 and early 1957 was difficult for Eden and Macmillan governments to shape a clear policy on Cyprus mainly because of four reasons: Harding’s confidence that he was able to defeat EOKA, Britain’s obligations to Turkey through mainly the Baghdad Pact, Britain’s strategic needs in the Middle East and finally the need to appease the ‘Suez rebels’ (the backbenchers right wing Tories who were against every ‘sell-out’ of the ‘Empire’).<sup>22</sup> The result of all this was an erratic policy, which was portrayed by the editor of the *Manchester Guardian* in an ironic style:

The Government insists that it must retain sovereignty over Cyprus, because in its view the military base cannot in any other conditions operate effectively. But in the same breath it purports to promise the right of self-determination to

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<sup>20</sup> ‘Cyprus’, *The Times*, 3 December 1955, p. 7.

<sup>21</sup> ‘Cyprus’, *The Manchester Guardian*, 23 November 1955, p. 8.

<sup>22</sup> D. French, *Fighting EOKA, The British Counter-Insurgency Campaign on Cyprus, 1955-1959* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015), p. 187; Hatzivassiliou, *Britain and the international status of Cyprus*, pp. 89-93; F. Crouzet, (translation in Greek: Aristotelis Fridas), *The Cyprus Conflict 1949-1959* (Athens: MIET, 2011), p. 848; R. Holland, *Britain and the revolt in Cyprus 1954-1959* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1998), p. 136.



the Cypriots 'in the course of time'. Unless it is proposing an infinite delay in application, or implying that soon there will be no need for military base in the island, its position is self-contradictory. Probably it has no idea what it means. It must speak more plainly.<sup>23</sup>

The international complications created by the Cyprus problem led the *Guardian* editor to make an important proposal early on: the Cyprus issue to be handled no longer by the Colonial Office, but by the Foreign Office. When he realised that hopes for resolving the issue arose, especially during periods of diplomatic processes, he made recommendations to Athens and London. During the negotiations between Archbishop Makarios and Governor John Harding (October 1955-February 1956), the editor suggested to the Greeks to accept the British proposals because the difference from self-government to self-determination was not great. Furthermore, he proposed to the Greeks to accept self-government and reach self-determination, in a way, which would not affect the collective security system in the region and would not worry Turkey. At the same time, he credited time to the British Government to prove its intentions, not requiring that the time limit for self-determination should be set. He was satisfied by the replacement of 'never' with 'not in the foreseeable future'.<sup>24</sup>

The editor of the *Times* introduced for the first time yet another argument in December 1955 by supporting that Greek attitude in Cyprus urged the Greek Leftists to pursue a more unfettered international orientation for Greece and expressed fears about the outcome of the upcoming elections in Greece. The same fear was expressed by the editor of the *Guardian* in his editorial on the occasion of the collapse of the Tripartite Conference in September 1955 and the anti-Hellenic pogroms in Constantinople organised by the Turkish Government. The fear of a change in Greek position/stance did not originate, according to the *Guardian*, from Greece's irresponsibility as claimed by the *Times*, but from Britain's failed initiative of the Tripartite, which, according to the *Guardian* editor, 'is declared to have been worse than a failure'.<sup>25</sup>

The *Times*, echoing the rhetoric of British diplomacy, introduced the 'Lost Opportunity Theory' in June and August 1958. The aim was to blackmail the Greeks to accept the Macmillan Plan, which was then under discussion. In one of his edi-

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<sup>23</sup> 'When?', *The Manchester Guardian*, 20 July 1956, p. 6.

<sup>24</sup> 'The Greek Question', *The Manchester Guardian*, 13 October 1955, p. 6.

<sup>25</sup> 'Greek dismay', *The Manchester Guardian*, 16 September 1955, p. 8.

torials, the editor of the *Times*, referred to the Radcliffe constitution presented and rejected the previous year 'as a good opportunity that has been lost'.<sup>26</sup> In another editorial he tried to persuade the Greeks (both Greek Cypriots and the mainland Greeks) that Enosis, which he considered unfeasible in June 1958, could have been achieved by accepting Britain's first proposals in 1955 and 1956 on 'smooth constitutional development'. The contradiction in this view lies in the fact that in the *Times* editorial published on, July 29, 1954, a day after the Hopkinson's 'never', satisfaction was expressed because 'any development of self-government will be separate from the right of self-determination'.<sup>27</sup> Therefore, despite the fact that up to 1956 he keenly rejected Enosis, even as the final stage of the process of self-government, in 1958 he considered that Enosis could have been achieved if Greeks were more prudent. The reason that prompted the editor to make this recommendation to the Greeks, despite the contradiction, was to convince them that their strategies they followed had failed and therefore had to support the new British proposals, the Macmillan Plan. The editor of the *Guardian* also tried to put forward the 'Lost and Last Opportunity Theory' in his editorial on 16 August 1958, in order to bend Greeks morale and persuade them that if they did not accept the Macmillan plan, chaos would prevail.

### Points of view on the Turkish arguments

As for the Turkish positions, mainly the demand for partition of the island, the *Times* initially made occasional reports stating that Ankara's interest in the island had to be taken into account. The editor of the newspaper expressed the view that Turkey was more important than Greece, having as a criterion, as mentioned earlier, Britain's geostrategic needs.<sup>28</sup> On March 12, 1956, three days after Makarios' deportation from Cyprus, which caused a stormy international reaction, the editor of the *Times* instead of commenting on the deportation, published an editorial titled 'The Best Ally'. The editorial emphasised and analysed Ankara's role as an important British ally in the Middle East, the Eastern Mediterranean, the Balkans, Europe and NATO. The intention of the editor, was to emphasise that Britain could not overlook the importance of Turkey by accepting the Greek demands. This emphasis on the Turkish factor and Turkish sensitivities in Cyprus were made in order to stress the role of Britain on the island as mediator between Greeks and Turks of

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<sup>26</sup> 'Last chance', *The Times*, 16 June 1958, p. 9.

<sup>27</sup> 'No to Cyprus', *The Times*, 29 July 1954, p. 7.

<sup>28</sup> 'Limited patience?', *The Times*, 18 February 1958, p. 9.

the island. In this notion Britain's withdrawal would create chaos as it happened in Palestine, where Britain's withdrawal did not bridge the gap between Arabs and Israelis.<sup>29</sup> However, actually the situation was more serious in Cyprus than in Palestine. Greece and Turkey were both members of NATO and a Greco-Turkish war over Cyprus would have been extremely disastrous for the Southeastern flank of NATO.

Gradually in *Times* editorials another parameter was gaining ground: The argument put forward by Turkey that the country's interest on Cyprus was not only due to strategic reasons but also for the protection of the Turkish population which consisted the one fourth of the population of the whole island. However, on March 23, 1956, two weeks after the deportation of Archbishop Makarios, the same editor in his editorial titled 'The Turks in Cyprus' admitted that Turkey's objection to Enosis was not so much the concern for the Turkish community on the island as much as the strategic value of Cyprus, which Turkey considered an extension of Asia Minor.<sup>30</sup> An important comment made in the same editorial was that EOKA's tactics, the 'Greek terrorism' did not directly aim the Turks.<sup>31</sup>

What differentiated the editor of the *Guardian* from the editor of *Times* was the view of the former that the concerns of Turkey were unreasonable. In July 1956, the editor of the *Guardian*, on the occasion of the assignment of Lord Radcliffe to create a constitution for Cyprus, published an editorial note whose first sentence gives the mark: 'The government prefers Turks to the Greeks, but it must have been studying at Delphi'.<sup>32</sup> Referring to the ambiguous, controversial and sibyllic statements on the future of Cyprus made by the Government officials, he re-published the words of Clement Davies, the head of the Liberal Party in the House of Commons: 'Ankara has succeeded in dictating to Whitehall (...) and the Turks in Cyprus may take a stubborn cue.' The editor's opinion was also stated: that the Government was not decisive towards the Turks, but also that the British Government was using the Turks to justify its reluctance to act.<sup>33</sup> Additionally, in an editorial in January 1958 the editor expressed the opinion that London's acceptance of parti-

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<sup>29</sup> 'Forced move', *The Times*, 14 March 1956, p. 11.

<sup>30</sup> 'The Cyprus talks', *The Times*, 6 February 1956, p. 9 and 'Limited patience?', *The Times*, 18 February 1958, p. 9.

<sup>31</sup> 'The Turks in Cyprus', *The Times*, 23 March 1956, p. 11.

<sup>32</sup> 'When?', *The Manchester Guardian*, 20 July 1956, p. 6.

<sup>33</sup> 'Little and late', *The Manchester Guardian*, 13 July 1956, p. 8 and 'Nothing to offer', *The Manchester Guardian*, 15 May 1956, p. 6.

tion, only because Turkey was considered by Whitehall to be a more important ally than Greece, was an unjust decision for the Cypriots.

Furthermore, the editor of the *Guardian*, commenting on Turkish concerns, stressed that these concerns could not be used indefinitely to justify the oppression of the four-fifths of the Cyprus population. It therefore called the Turks to realise that their interests would be better served by a solution which would guarantee the future of the Turkish population on the island, in contrast to the continuing impasse. He continued with the fact that the Turks of Cyprus had no reason to feel insecure if Cyprus was united with Greece, because, Greece as a civilised country, respected and protected the Turkish populations that existed in Thrace. The *Guardian* also stressed that Greece was an ally in NATO and gave no reasons for not trusting it. But even if Communists would come into power in Greece (which was an argument against Enosis put forward by Turks), it would be such a blow to Turkey that the occupation of Cyprus from Greece or Britain would not matter much.

The rejection of Turkish arguments by the *Guardian* can be found in the editorial of September 7, 1957 titled 'Lord Byron's mistake'. In this article the editor replied point-to-point to the Turkish arguments as published in a bulletin issued by the Turkish Embassy in London. Amongst others, the editor replied to the Turkish argument that 'Cyprus is 'a natural continuation of Anatolia' and 'part of Turkey geopolitically', stating that 'Canada, likewise, is part of the United States geopolitically, and Holland of Germany; it is an argument which has endless possibilities'. Answering to the racist argument that 'the Christian population of Cyprus is not Greek, but a 'mixed race'' he referred to the right of the people to self-determine their selves: 'This is probably true, for everybody in Europe belongs to a mixed race; one wonders why they [the Greeks of Cyprus] are so ignorant as to want to join their Greek rather than their Anatolian kinsmen'. The last sentence shows diachronically the misunderstanding which occurs when a diplomatic mission reproduces internationally, arguments suitable only for domestic use: 'Every country has its wild men, but their theories are not usually disseminated in embassy bulletins'.<sup>34</sup>

Regarding the Turkish positions, the main issue for the editors of the newspapers to comment on, was the Turkish request of Partition. The *Guardian* considered that the only reason it would be useful to refer to partition during the talks

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<sup>34</sup> 'Lord Byron's mistake', *The Manchester Guardian*, 7 September 1957, p. 4.

was to put pressure on the Greeks. This was also the view of the editor of the *Times*, who warned that it would eventually become inevitable because of the action of the Greek 'extremists'.

The declaration of the Minister of Colonies in the House of Commons on 19 December 1956 is considered to have signaled the dialogue on the issue of partition. The Colonial Minister had stated: 'Any exercise of self-determination should be effected in such manner that the Turkish Cypriot community shall, in the special circumstances of Cyprus, be given freedom to decide for themselves their future status. In other words, Her Majesty's Government, recognises that the exercise of self-determination in such a mixed population must include partition among eventual options'.<sup>35</sup>

The *Guardian*, while admitting that partition 'seemed plausible, in the last resort', nevertheless characterised it as 'craven', 'ill fated' and 'an abdication of responsibility' since it considered that the government, by partitioning Cyprus, would create a mess that would affect international relations for many years. India, Palestine and Ireland, were indicated as examples to be avoided because those cases proved that partition would not serve the security of Turkey and the West.<sup>36</sup> Moreover, the editor considered that partition was inapplicable for both political and economic reasons and that the bloodshed between the Greeks and the Turkish Cypriots would not stop if partition was promoted. On the contrary, partition, according to the editor of the *Guardian*, would threaten Turkish interests and he raised once more the question of whether Cyprus, united to the Greek state, would be more dangerous for Turkey than Bulgaria and the Soviet Union, hostile countries with which Turkey shared borders too. The editor of the *Guardian* insisted on arguing against partition, by writing that it would not solve the problem that Turkey faced at its southeastern border after the Iraqi revolution that left the country exposed and the Baghdad Pact without... Baghdad. On the contrary, he supported that partition would worsen the problem, as the danger of the encirclement of Turkey by hostile countries, if Greece left NATO due to the Cyprus problem, was visible.

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<sup>35</sup> Debates (Commons), 1956-1957, vol. 562, 19 December 1956, col 1268. The same period the Turkish Prime Minister, Adnan Menderes, asked the Professor (and afterwards Foreign Minister) Nihat Erim to form reports that would be the policy of the country on the Cyprus issue. Those reports dated 24.11.1956 and 22.12.1956 inter alia considered out of question both Enosis and the return of the island to Turkey and proposed partition as a 'compromise' solution..

<sup>36</sup> 'Up to Britain', *The Manchester Guardian*, 29 January 1958, p. 6 and 'Second chance', *The Manchester Guardian*, 28 January 1957, p. 6.

The *Times*' view was identical with that of the *Guardian*, that partition was the hindmost solution. But the justification suggested by the editor of *The Times* was different. He argued that partition was inappropriate in Cyprus because there was simply no population separation since Greeks and Turks were scattered throughout the island. Partitioning was therefore a solution that, according to an editorial note of May 1957, raised objections, since in order to be implemented, Cypriots should be 'uprooted and moved'.<sup>37</sup> In February 1957, the editor considered the partition unacceptable, unworkable and dysfunctional because it would cause administrative difficulties. The editor in order to emphasise his negative view on partition did not hesitate on July 24, 1958 to describe the appeals made by the Turkish Cypriot leader, Fazıl Kuchukto Ankara for military intervention, as a 'stupid threat'.<sup>38</sup> However, this threat was not made accidentally. The summer of 1958 was a dramatic one because of the intercommunal clashes between Greek and Turkish Cypriots. Turks became more intransigent because they were exploiting the British preference for them and realised that 'the more violent and unreasonable the Turks became, the more the British moved to their views'.<sup>39</sup>

## Conclusion

Summing up, it appears that the factor which determined the way Greek and Turkish positions were dealt by the British newspapers was what they considered the essence of the issue. In general, British newspapers dealt with the Cyprus issue when the echo of events reached London, mainly through parliamentary debates in the House of Commons, Greek recourses to UN or when a new diplomatic initiative was being prepared. It is worth mentioning that the Greek positions are more commented than the Turkish ones, since the crisis had arisen from the diplomatic confrontation between Greece and Britain. The systematic commentary on Turkish positions can be seen after December 1956 and focuses on the demand for partition. Another finding seen through the comparison of the editorial notes of the newspapers to the arguments put forward during discussions in the House of Commons on the Cyprus issue, is that the press followed the divisions of the British political scene, the Conservative Government on the one hand and on the other the Labour opposition which expressed the decolonization notion. Thus the *Times* (and other newspapers identified with the Government's views) largely reproduced the

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<sup>37</sup> 'A task for NATO', *The Times*, 04 May 1957, p. 7.

<sup>38</sup> 'Incipient civil war', *The Times*, 24 July 1958, p. 9.

<sup>39</sup> Hatzivassiliou, *Britain and the international status of Cyprus*, p. 128.

arguments of the Conservative government, while the *Guardian* (and other newspapers identified with the opposition's views) used the opposition rhetoric.

The reader could reasonably ask whether the criticism of the government made by the opposition was honest. Was the Labour party pro-Greek, or were they criticizing the Government in order to corrode its power hoping for the next elections? What would happen if Labour was Government? Would they apply what they promised? No one can know for sure.

Their previous act of not accepting the volumes of the 1950 Enosis Referendum and the refusal to discuss the Cyprus issue when they were in power, although the circumstances were different back in 1950, gives a partial answer. However, the Labour M.P. Tom Driberg was fiercely attacked by the Conservative Press because in August 1954 he was present during a sermon in Cyprus where Archbishop Makarios denounced the anti-sedition law which was enacted earlier that month and declared the tenacious and persistent Enosis struggle.<sup>40</sup> In addition, the annual Labour Conference which took place in Brighton (30 September-4 October) decided that self-determination was the solution for Cyprus: 'Mrs Barbara Castle gave two assurances by the Executive: 'The next Labour Government within lifetime would try to give Cyprus self-determination without partition''.<sup>41</sup> Nevertheless, Labour party supported the Macmillan Plan in 1958, when the General Elections of 1959 were closer. Nancy Crawshaw spots the relation between the positions of the Labour Party and the Greek anticipations, referring to the Macmillan Plan: 'In spite of the attitude of the socialist and liberal newspapers in Britain, the Greek Cypriots still hoped for the support of the Labour Party'.<sup>42</sup> Last but not least, another factor must be added. The decade of 1950 was the decade when the de-colonisation of the British Empire reached a peak. It seems that the de-colonisation notion, expressed mainly by the Labour Party, was another 'prism' through which the arguments about Cyprus were seen. Nevertheless, John Reddaway, who was serving as Administrative Secretary in Cyprus (1957-1960) writes down his straightforward opinion. 'If they [the British Labour Party] had found themselves in power when the crunch came over the application of self-determination to Cyprus it is probable they too would have ended up in much the same position as the Conservatives'.<sup>43</sup>

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<sup>40</sup> 'Tom Driberg gets a hero's 'Hello'', *Daily Express*, 23 August 1954, p. 2.

<sup>41</sup> 'Labour Party Conference, Concern for the Colonies', *The Manchester Guardian*, 05 October 1957, p. 2.

<sup>42</sup> N. Crawshaw, *The Cyprus revolt* (London: George Allen & Unwin, 1978), p. 297.

<sup>43</sup> J. Reddaway, *Burdened with Cyprus* (London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1986), p. 101

The arguments of the newspapers were based on the way their editors perceived the situation. The *Times* advocated maintaining sovereignty over the island as important for Britain's ability to fulfill its strategic obligations in the Middle East and to shape international and colonial policies. The *Guardian*, having the same criterion, defending the Middle East from the Soviet threat, faced with more sensitivity and realism the demands of the Greeks and argued that Enosis would not have negative impact on Britain's Middle East interests and Turkish security.

From the first editorials, it appears that the editor of the *Guardian* did not overlook Britain's strategic interests in the Middle East by supporting self-determination, but, free from colonial obsessions, considered that the concession of Cyprus to Greece did not diminish the operational capacity of the British in the Middle East. On the other hand, for the editor of the *Times*, the demands of the Greeks for self-determination were not justified, so they were presented in a negative way. The conclusion was that Greece was responsible for the turmoil in Cyprus and the deterioration of the Greek- Turkish relations. In this context, it was necessary for Britain to retain the control of the island having the role of the arbitrator. Although the *Guardian* did not hesitate to attribute accountability to Greece, mainly for the broadcasts of Athens radio, expressed the opinion that the burden of responsibility was on the British Government, which took such actions that, instead of solving the problem, made it more complicated. Regarding the role played by Britain, the newspaper did not accept that it should be that of the arbitrator, but, having ruled the island for about 80 years, was obliged to find a viable solution. The editor of the *Guardian* therefore worried that, with irresponsible actions, Britain would create chaos, recalling the results that caused similar decisions in other colonies. Finally yet importantly, the attitude of each newspaper to the essence of the Cyprus problem is to be found in the way they dealt with the Zurich-London agreements in February 1959. The *Times* hailed them as proof that NATO could solve its internal problems efficiently and the *Guardian* as a victory of reason.

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