

Propaganda War During the Peak of the *Enosis* Campaign: The Case of the English Edition of *Halkın Sesi*

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Abstract

During the second half of the 1950s, the Greek Cypriot leadership, the British colonial administration and the Turkish Cypriot community contested for the right to decide the future of the island. The local press had a unique role in this political battle as a medium for the unleashing of a fierce ‘propaganda war’. The British administration propagated its messages to the public through the local English-language press, while the Turkish Cypriot community took part in this ‘propaganda war’ through the short-lived ‘English Edition of the Halkın Sesi’, which is the object of this study. The study, which relies on archival material, finds that the second largest community of the island was not a reactionary element in Cyprus’ political field. With innovations, such as the English-language version of a propagandist newspaper, the Turkish Cypriot community emerged as a vital player in the field of the Cyprus Problem.

Keywords: Cyprus Problem, propaganda, Turkish Cypriots, Halkın Sesi, English language press

Introduction: Propaganda war in Cyprus’ English-language press during the peak of the *Enosis* campaign

We have decided to publish an English edition of *Halkın Sesi* after serious consideration. The object of this English edition is to state and restate the Turkish point of view on Cyprus and counter fight the prolific Greek propaganda, which is based on falsehoods or sentiment. We feel that it is high time the English-speaking world has a serious look at the other side of the Cyprus coin, a side, which in modesty and due to lack of means has not been sufficiently stated so far³.

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³ ‘Why This English Edition?’, *Weekly English Edition of Halkın Sesi*, 9 July 1956.

The abovementioned article was published in the first issue of Cyprus' new English-language newspaper only a few months after the commencement of EOKA's armed action. Whilst the Greek Cypriot community's quest for union (Enosis) with Greece amplified, the Turkish Cypriot leadership decided to initiate the publication of the English version of the well-known Turkish Cypriot newspaper, 'Halkın Sesi', who also fell victim to censorship and was suspended from January 21 until April 1943⁴.

The proprietor and editor of the four-page 'Weekly English Edition of the Halkın Sesi' was the leader of the Turkish Cypriot community, Dr Fazıl Küçük. The new edition had as a primary objective to propagate the thesis of the Turkish Cypriot leadership regarding the Cyprus Issue. The Greek Cypriot side, the British administration of Cyprus and the international community, were meant to be the recipients of the newspaper's messages. The newspaper published original articles, as well as articles discussing the Cyprus Issue, which were previously published in the Turkish press. The Turkish Cypriot newspaper began its journey on 9 July 1956. The last issue available to us dates back to 31 December 1956.

During the Cold War period of propaganda wars, the 'Weekly English Edition of the Halkın Sesi' was one of the few platforms available to the Turkish Cypriot community for voicing its aspirations. Contemporary studies relate the 'art of propaganda' with the art of persuasion and rhetoric, which lay at the epicentre of ancient Greek philosophy. According to Soules, the rhetoric is 'The art of communicating effectively and persuasively in a particular context'⁵. In addition, the successful practice of rhetoric depends on 'the faculty of observing in any given case the available means of persuasion'⁶. As Soules argues, the rhetoric is 'Moving toward propaganda when it is consciously misleading or exploits beliefs, values and attitudes for the propagandist's benefit'⁷. In accordance with this remark, Sophocleous stresses that 'the technique of propaganda is based on the successful combination of psychological and sociological principles and methods with the practical art of the capture, preparation and transmission of the message to the target. Its success is based on the observance of the basic principles of the

⁴ A. Sophocleous, *Press Censorship in Cyprus during British rule (1878-1960)* (Nicosia: En Typois, 2014) (in Greek), p. 187.

⁵ Marshall Soules, *Media, Persuasion and Propaganda*, (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2015) p. 3.

⁶ *Ibid*, p. 3.

⁷ *Ibid*, p. 3,4.

communication⁸. Furthermore, according to Sophocleous, ‘before proceeding with the selection of the instruments to be used (...) the propagandist must focus on a series of actions. After deciding on the objectives, proceeds to the selection of material, which will cause the appropriate reactions. (...) The next concern of the propagandist is the choice of the most appropriate means to convey the message to the target⁹.

In this context, the art of the propaganda according to Paddock ‘aims to win the compliance of its mass audience and mobilise it to act, or not act in the propagandist’s interests’ with the help of primary communication channels, such as newspapers. Paddock mentions that ‘newspapers shape stories for their audience with the intent of presenting a certain view (and) that even publicity is a form, albeit somewhat milder, of propaganda¹⁰. ‘Using language that the reader can understand, but also arguing from a perspective toward which the reader will also be ‘sympathetic’, the newspapers seek to ‘present the information that they had and were permitted to print¹¹.

If the prelude of the French Revolution and the period that followed the nineteenth century were the starting point of the propaganda wars, in which the newspaper played a leading role, then the ‘two world wars demonstrated the power of propaganda¹². Moreover, the post-1945 period witnessed the widespread utilisation of the lessons drawn from the wartime experience¹³. Regarding the British media, Jenks argues that the ‘legacy of total war and the exigencies of Cold War - particularly propaganda - kept the British media tightly self-disciplined when it came to the Soviet Union and Communism¹⁴ According to Jenks:

Two world wars and an international depression had eroded Britain’s ability to project power, but the global media system it had built in the nineteenth century and the propaganda expertise it had homed in the two world wars gave it

⁸ A. Sophocleous, *Introduction to Communication, Persuasion, Propaganda* (Nicosia: Nikoklis, 1999) (in Greek), p. 21. The translations belong to the authors.

⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 26-27.

¹⁰ Troy R. E. Paddock, ed., *A Call to Arms: Propaganda, Public Opinion and Newspapers in the Great War*. (Westport, Connecticut: Praeger Publishers, 2004), p. 8.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, p. 9.

¹² Nicholas John Cull, David Holbrook Culbert, and David Welch, *Propaganda and Mass Persuasion: A Historical Encyclopedia, 1500 to the present*. (Santa Barbara-California: ABC-CLIO, 2003), p. 18.

¹³ *Ibid.*, p. 18.

¹⁴ John Jenks, *British Propaganda and News Media in the Cold War*, (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2006), p.2.

inordinate influence over global news media discourse. After 1945, the British government sought to use this influence and expertise, often in conjunction with the newly arrived Americans, to defend its still extensive strategic interests. The British preferred private entities such as Reuters, but increasingly turned to the quasi-official BBC and British Council and fact-based propaganda-overt, covert and mixed-both to supplement the increasingly anemic private news sector and to keep up with the burgeoning American and Soviet propaganda machines. The successful exercise of this system-private, public and subsidised-in the Cold War strengthened it and thus helped Britain preserve inordinate prestige, power and influence in the global media¹⁵.

In the case of Cyprus and the local English-language press, we found the government deeply involved in the news and information business. According to Stubbs and Taşeli the popular press in Cyprus was a constant source of frustration for the British. This led to the consistent suppress of newspapers when the ‘tensions between colonizers and colonized came to surface’¹⁶. The ultimate aim of the local authorities was to bolster the British influence in the political and diplomatic field of the Cyprus Issue. As in other parts of the world, the Cyprus media consensus and the government manipulation operated through the revision of the English-language media’s common view of the world situation and the Cyprus Issue.

The purpose of this paper is a thorough analysis of the Turkish Cypriot English-language newspaper ‘Weekly English Edition of the Halkın Sesi’ during the first period of EOKA’s armed action. Furthermore, with the ultimate aim of enriching the study and framing it with the available archival material of other English-language newspapers published during the same period, we have studied the publications of two local English-language newspapers, ‘Times of Cyprus’ and the ‘Cyprus Mail’. According to Sophocleous, during the period ‘after the outbreak of the EOKA’s liberation struggle on 1 April 1955, the English (authorities) introduced a state of emergency and martial law. From the 5 May 1955, the Governor had the power to impose a curfew on the inhabitants based on a relative law. Journalists had to carry out their mission with special identity cards’¹⁷. The local press reacted towards many of the measures taken by the Government, which had activated its own

¹⁵ John Jenks, *British Propaganda and News Media in the Cold War*, p.2.

¹⁶ Jonathan Stubbs, Bahar Taşeli, (2014) ‘Newspapers, Nationalism and Empire’, *Media History*, Vol.20, No.3, p286

¹⁷ A. Sophocleous, *Press Censorship in Cyprus during British rule (1878-1960)* (Nicosia: En Typois, 2014) (in Greek), p. 187.

‘propaganda mechanism’ and imposed ‘censorship on the press and all information and communication means in general’¹⁸.

Regarding this period, Sophocleous underlines that:

During the EOKA struggle (...) Cypriot journalists were cautious and self-aware because of strict censorship and emergency situations. They simply described the facts without commenting (...). It is worth mentioning that several journalists were simultaneously members of EOKA (...). Because the English significantly limited the sources of information that reached Cyprus regarding the activities of EOKA, Cypriot journalists had as basic sources of information the radio stations of Athens and Cairo¹⁹.

In this period of tremendous turmoil, ‘the English-speaking newspapers ‘Cyprus Mail’ and ‘Times of Cyprus’ were circulating in Cyprus. (...) The English-language Cypriot newspaper ‘Cyprus Mail’ (...) was not characterised by its support in the struggle of EOKA (...)’²⁰. The ‘Cyprus Mail’ was published for the first time in 1945. The newspaper had a conservative outlook and was unsympathetic towards the Greek Cypriot’s national aspirations. The ‘Cyprus Mail’ was considered the main rival of the ‘Times of Cyprus’ which is the second newspaper we will study.

The ‘Times of Cyprus’ was a weekly newspaper first published in May 1880 by Edward Henry Vizetely, a well-known journalist and author. In its first period, the newspaper had a liberal outlook and was in favour of the British annexation of Cyprus. The ‘Times of Cyprus’ has had a long history of demanding the implementation of the freedom of press principle. Regarding the role of the newspaper in the period that the present study focuses, Sophocleous emphasises that:

During the EOKA struggle, the trial of the English language newspaper ‘Times of Cyprus’, which was accused of supporting through its articles the EOKA struggle and the exiled Archbishop Makarios, was historic. The director of the newspaper, Charles Foley, was in danger of being sentenced to many years in prison. (...) Behind the publication of the English-speaking newspaper ‘Times of Cyprus’, which was very successful and had a great circulation, was Archbishop Makarios III (...)’²¹.

¹⁸ A. Sophocleous, *Press Censorship in Cyprus during British rule*, pp.160-62.

¹⁹ *Ibid*, p. 166.

²⁰ *Ibid*, p. 200.

²¹ *Ibid*, p. 170.

The ‘Times of Cyprus’ which defended the freedoms of speech and press was targeted by both the British authorities²² and the ‘Weekly English Edition of the Halkin Sesi’. The Turkish Cypriot newspaper opposed to many of the articles published by the ‘Times of Cyprus’ and argued that its own publication was a response to these positions and to the instruments that professed them. As we will see below the English-language Turkish Cypriot newspaper disagreed mainly on how to deal with the EOKA and the content of the final solution of the Cyprus problem.

This paper, by analysing the rich archive material of the three abovementioned newspapers, attempts to provide answers to several important questions such as who was the common enemy in the eyes of the said newspapers and what was their approach? What were the stakes, according to the British authorities’ and the Turkish Cypriot leadership’s approach? How were those stakes discussed in the newspapers’ articles? How did the newspapers respond towards the said enemy? How did they cover the bloody conflicts of the 1950s? What was their approach towards the measures taken by the local government? The answers to these questions, intent to add to the existing knowledge of the history of contemporary Cypriot journalism and contribute to Cyprus’s modern political and diplomatic history.

The ‘Enemies’: The ‘Terrorists’ and the ‘Reds’

On 1 April 1955, Cyprus lived one of its most important moments in history when the organisation ‘EOKA (Εθνική Οργάνωση Κυπρίων Αγωνιστών)’ started its armed operations against the British local authorities with the ultimate goal of annexing Cyprus to Greece.²³

Since the beginning of the armed conflict, Cyprus’ English-language press described EOKA as an organisation which was willing to use ‘terrorist’ practises

²² Ibid, p. 171.

²³ David French, *Fighting EOKA: The British Counter-Insurgency Campaign on Cyprus 1955-1959*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015); Alexis Heraclides, ‘The Cyprus Problem’, *The Cyprus Review*, Vol. 16, No. 2, 2004; George Hill, *A History of Cyprus*, Vol. 3, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010); Christopher Hitchens, *Hostage to History: Cyprus from the Ottomans to Kissinger*, (London: Verso, 1997); James Ker-Lindsay, *The Cyprus Problem: What Everyone Needs to Know*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011); William Mallinson and Bill Mallinson, *Cyprus: A Modern History*, (London-New York: I.B. Tauris, 2005); Yiannis Papadakis, Nicos Peristianis, and Gisela Welz, eds, *Divided Cyprus: Modernity, History, and an Island in Conflict*, (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 2006).

in its effort to achieve its goal and promote the unification of Cyprus with Greece. Moreover, the Turkish Cypriot press in its entirety shared the same opinion,²⁴ whilst for some of the Greek Cypriot newspapers the Turkish Cypriots were the ‘raging mob’ causing the disturbances²⁵. In this context, EOKA was the first common enemy for all three English-language newspapers published in Cyprus during the 1950s. A couple of months before the first issue of the ‘Weekly English Edition of the *Halkın Sesi*’, ‘*Cyprus Mail*’ argued that EOKA consisted of a group of ‘terrorists’ who did not hesitate to attack even children:

With Nicosia bars and clubs enjoying a sudden spell of normality and many troops in the town, two homemade bombs were hurled in British-frequented bars last night. In one, only the pavement suffered. In the other, two young boys whose only offence was the attempt to sell flowers to the troops narrowly escaped their lives²⁶.

According to the English-language press, the Greek Cypriot leadership’s stance towards EOKA’s violence was problematic. Specifically, in October 1956 the ‘*Cyprus Mail*’ published the Archbishop’s comments regarding EOKA and pointed out his refusal to distance himself from its actions.:

Answering the question ‘Would you condemn violence’ the Archbishop said ‘I have never advised violence. British policy is entirely responsible for the use of the violence’. Pressed to say why he did not denounce the violence the Archbishop said: ‘I do not see any practical result out of my denunciation’.²⁷

In this context, the English-language press applied sharp criticism towards the Greek Cypriot leadership during the period in question. Furthermore, when discussing EOKA’s operations, the newspapers raised moral issues by focusing on the suffering of the ordinary citizens of Cyprus²⁸.

²⁴ Νίκος Στέλιος, *Ο αγώνας της ΕΟΚΑ 1955-1959 στα πρωτοσέλιδα του Τουρκοκυπριακού τύπου*, (Λευκωσία: Ινστιτούτο Μέσων Μαζικής Επικοινωνίας, 2014), p. 25.

²⁵ Μαγδαληνή Αντρέου, *Πως εμφανίζονται οι Τουρκοκύπριοι στην εφημερίδα ‘Ελευθερία’ την περίοδο 1930-1958*, unpublished master’s thesis (Athens: Panteion University, 2005), p. 107.

²⁶ ‘Terrorist Strike Again.’, *Cyprus Mail*, 21 May 1955.

²⁷ ‘I Have Never Advised Violence.’, *Cyprus Mail*, 13 October 1955. According to Holland, the Archbishop was also criticised by Harding for his reluctance to condemn violence. Robert Holland, *Britain and the Revolt in Cyprus, 1954-1959*, (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1998), p. 107.

²⁸ ‘Mother’s Sacrifice for Her Two Children.’, *Cyprus Mail*, 13 February 1956.

The English-language press was condemnatory towards the EOKA insurgents, whose 'criminal' actions could only be tackled by harsh punishments: 'Three EOKA terrorists under sentence of death to whom the Judicial Committee of the Privy Council refused special leave to appeal against convictions, have been told that they will be hanged tomorrow morning'²⁹.

On the other hand, the English language press expressed their concern regarding the authoritarian measures implemented by the government. As Karyos mentions, the British unsuccessful policing intervention, including measures such as curfew, large-scale detention and the imposition of the death penalty, caused the popular opinion to favour the insurgents³⁰. In the case of 'Times of Cyprus', the traditional liberal line and the bonds with the Greek Cypriot leadership and especially the Archbishop of Cyprus inspired the newspaper's more 'softer' stance towards EOKA's struggle. In conjunction with these bonds, the consequences of the deterioration of the overall situation on the island and the fruitless efforts of the British to deal with the crisis, led the 'Times of Cyprus' and the 'Cyprus Mail' to express alternative opinions. In this context, the newspapers stressed out the negative impact the government measures had on the prospect of reaching compromising solutions. The security measures taken between 1955-1956, such as the of establishment of the Police Mobile Reserve and the UK Police Unit which were staffed by Turkish Cypriot and British policemen respectively, added to the Greek Cypriots' distrust of the government³¹. According to the said newspapers, the government's policy was also blameworthy for the perpetuation of the current situation:

The more one ruminates on the week's curfew on Nicosia which afflicted some twelve thousand human beings; the more one must inevitably become convinced of the injustice and futility of such a form of collective punishment which hits indiscriminately at rich and poor, guilty and innocent³².

In the eyes of the English-language press, one of the collateral victims who suffered due to this irregular and violent situation was the press itself. On the

²⁹ 'Three Eoka Men to Die Tomorrow.', *Cyprus Mail*, 20 September 1956

³⁰ Andreas Karyos, 'Britain and Cyprus, 1955-1959: Key-Themes on the Counter-Insurgency Aspects of the Cyprus Revolt', in *Great Power Politics in Cyprus, Foreign Interventions and Domestic Perceptions*, eds. Michalis Kontos, Sozos-Christos Theodoulou, Nikos Panayiotides, Haralambos Alexandrou, (Tyne: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2014), p34.

³¹ David M. Anderson, (2008) 'Policing and communal conflict: The Cyprus emergency, 1954-1960', *The Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History*, Vol. 21, No. 3, pp. 186-195.

³² 'Thoughts on a Curfew.', *Cyprus Mail*, 10 October 1956.

occasion of the 1956 Cyprus Press Law, which allocated enhanced powers to the Governor, the local English-language press in addition to criticising the government's strict measures, called on London to offer a solution:

Sir Winston Churchill is among nearly 150 personalities in English public life to whom the Editor of the Times of Cyprus has made a personal appeal on behalf of the freedom of the press in Cyprus. 'I write', he says, 'to call your urgent attention to the dangers of the new Cyprus Press Law which empowers the Governor, at his absolute discretion, to suppress newspapers without notice or reason given³³.

While the stance of the two said newspapers towards both the EOKA's and the government's actions was critical, although not in equal measure, the same could not be said for the English-language newspaper of the Turkish Cypriot community. For the 'Weekly English Edition of the Halkın Sesi' the EOKA was undoubtedly a 'terrorist organisation', whose defeat demanded the assumption of strict measures on behalf of the government. The Turkish Cypriot newspaper emphasised how futile have EOKA's operations been proven since their primary objective of uniting Cyprus with Greece had not been achieved. Furthermore, the newspaper foresaw the imminent annihilation of the insurgence. In addition, people would soon realise that the British are here to stay and that Turkey's interests in Cyprus were sincere. In the meantime:

These fifteen months of murder, violence, hooliganism and vandalism by EOKA and its supporters, the innocent school boys, have therefore achieved nothing, apart from causing unimaginable hardship and suffering to innocent people, undermining the character of the youth and proving once again in the civilised days, the hope of achieving political ends through violence is a mad man's dream.³⁴

According to the 'Weekly English Edition of the Halkın Sesi,' the cooperation of the Turkish Cypriot community with the colonial administration depended on the perpetuation of the strict measures and the simultaneous defeat of EOKA and the project of Enosis. Only then, the Turkish Cypriot leadership would be ready to discuss the possibility of a new constitution, which would provide the members of the second largest community of the island equal rights with Greek Cypriots:

³³ 'The Times Appeals to England.', *Times of Cyprus*, 2 December 1956.

³⁴ 'EOKA's Achievements!', *Weekly English Edition of Halkın Sesi*, 23 July 1956.

However, even then, we have our conditions, which we have put forward as a matter of self-defence-viz: Equal rights and equal representation, and secondly, the final and conclusive closing the door to Enosis or its equivalent self-determination³⁵.

The second common enemy identified by the English-language newspapers of Cyprus during the 1950s were the communists. The 'Weekly English Edition of the Halkın Sesi', the 'Cyprus Mail' and the 'Times of Cyprus' agreed that Cyprus' future was in danger from both the EOKA and the 'communist threat'. Within this framework, the Turkish Cypriot newspaper frequently reproduced articles targeting the Soviet Union, which were previously published in the Turkish press. According to the 'Weekly English Edition of the Halkın Sesi' Cyprus, Great Britain and Turkey shared the important task of defeating communism:

'There is but one sacred cause today: the security of the free world. An island only forty miles from our shores cannot be reduced to the play-thing of Communists and a scheming combination of avaricious churchmen and imperialistic Megalo Idea visionaries. (...) The farce intended to be staged under the guise of self-determination, even if it is successful, will bring about the following consequences: Turkish security will be endangered in the rear by a complete encirclement, communism will become predominant in Cyprus, a British or NATO base initially established there with the consent of Greece will soon collapse, the security of mankind will be sacrificed (...). At this moment, Britons and Turks are facing history (...). The two sides which stand for the security of mankind will have to cooperate (...)'³⁶.

For the 'Weekly English Edition of the Halkın Sesi', Turkey and the Turkish Cypriots did not have the luxury to abandon the island to Greece, which due to its weaknesses may at any given time side with the Communist Bloc³⁷. According to Holland, British officials voiced a similar argument in the House of Commons on July 1954 when Greece was characterised as 'a friendly but unreliable ally'³⁸. While the local English-language newspapers were discussing the communist 'threat' over

³⁵ 'We Did Welcome You Lord Radcliffe Says Dr Fazıl Kuchuk.', *Weekly English Edition of Halkın Sesi*, 30 July 1956.

³⁶ Ahmed Emin Yalman, 'The New Eastern Question', *Weekly English Edition of Halkın Sesi*, 9 July 1956.

³⁷ 'Turkish Point of View Understood!', *Weekly English Edition of Halkın Sesi*, 16 July 1956.

³⁸ Robert Holland, (1995) 'NATO and the struggle for Cyprus', *Journal of Modern Greek Studies*, Vol.13, No. 1, p.36.

Cyprus, London was clarifying that it had no intention of abandoning the island at the mercy of the Eastern Bloc. In this context, the 'Cyprus Mail' published the British Foreign Minister's statements that 'if there were any chance of Cyprus going communist, Britain would not be able to carry out (its) commitments to the free world'³⁹. As the 'Cyprus Mail' mentioned in July 1956, London's ability to fulfil its obligations in NATO 'rested on the effective use of the defence facilities in Cyprus'⁴⁰. Moreover, amidst the developments of the Cold War, the newspaper expressed the opinion that even 'a NATO base in Cyprus would be insufficient for this purpose'⁴¹.

The Stakes: A Self-Governing British Dominion or Partition?

Although the three English-language newspapers of Cyprus agreed that the island's enemies were both the EOKA insurgents and the communists from inside and outside Cyprus, the Turkish Cypriot media had a different approach towards the measures the government should take to tackle the said enemies.

The 'Weekly English Edition of the Halkin Sesi', in contrast to the two English-language newspapers, insisted that the British local authorities should implement stricter measures in order to address the two abovementioned threats. According to the newspaper, which was propagating the position of the Turkish Cypriot leadership, tackling the EOKA threat was in the best interest of all the British residing in Cyprus, officials or civilians. In this spirit, the newspaper concluded that for Turkey and Britain to achieve their own private goals in Cyprus, the EOKA organisation and the Greek Cypriot's aspirations for self-determination and Enosis should be defeated.

Bearing in mind that the three English-language newspapers rejected both the union with Greece and the alignment with the Communist Block, we arrive at the question what did they want the future of Cyprus to be? Furthermore, we ask what were the plans of the British and Turkish Cypriot side for Cyprus, according to the English-language press of this period? Also, we examine the newspapers' common elements and their differences?

From the point of Cyprus' English-language press, the answer to the first question was clear. Amid the peak of the Cold War, Britain was obliged to keep Cyprus under its control, to safeguard its defensive and diplomatic interests in the

³⁹ 'If Cyprus Went to the Communists.', *Cyprus Mail*, 4 February 1956.

⁴⁰ 'NATO Base in Cyprus Would Not Be Enough.', *Cyprus Mail*, 8 July 1956

⁴¹ 'NATO Base in Cyprus Would Not Be Enough.', *Cyprus Mail*, 8 July 1956.

broader Middle East region. In early 1956, Britain's Defence Minister declared that 'a political agreement on Cyprus is desirable, but the island is a vital strategic necessity to Britain'⁴². The decision to introduce political reforms was according to Anderson related more with Britain's position in the Middle East and the Eastern Mediterranean and less with the desire 'to advance Cyprus towards a process of self-determination'⁴³. Moreover, according to the 'Cyprus Mail', Britain was willing to contribute to the economic development of the island and to pave the way for the creation of a new constitution that would put an end to political tension⁴⁴. For the British administration, the financial support of Cyprus was an essential tool in persuading the Greek Cypriots of the necessity to withdraw their request for self-determination. The ultimate aim for Britain was, of course, to maintain its rule over Cyprus and to safeguard its interests in the area. The Communist threat in the Eastern Mediterranean deemed the said interests extremely crucial. The 'Cyprus Mail' article of the 6 December 1955, which mentioned the statements of Britain's Minister of Foreign Affairs argued that:

The issue is not whether the principle of self-determination should be recognised, but whether it should be applied without regard to other considerations (...). Why cannot we all agree to work together for self-government while refraining from pressing at this anxious moment in the world's history too precise a definition of every word and phrase of our different approaches to the problem of the final status of the island?⁴⁵

Particularly amidst the Cold War conditions, London was not ready to accept the Greek Cypriots' demand for self-determination. Furthermore, starting from the late 1940s the repeated discussions for the introduction of constitutional reforms, which would offer a way out of the stalemate, were proven fruitless⁴⁶. Ergo, for the British side, the formula for resolving the Cyprus Issue was obvious. Britain must maintain its control over Cyprus' defence and foreign policy issues. Only this control could afford Britain the necessary legitimisation to perpetuate the presence of its

⁴² 'Cyprus Is Vital to Britain.', *Cyprus Mail*, 1 December 1955.

⁴³ David M. Anderson (2008), p. 181

⁴⁴ '38 Million for Cyprus.', *Cyprus Mail*, 17 November 1955.

⁴⁵ 'Principle of Self-Determination Not at Issue Says Foreign Secretary.', *Cyprus Mail*, 6 December 1955.

⁴⁶ Ρολάνδος Κατσιαούνης, *Η Διασκεπτική 1946-1948, με ανασκόπηση της περιόδου 1878-1960*, (Λευκωσία: Κέντρο Επιστημονικών Ερευνών, 2000); Νίκος Κρανιδιώτης, *Οι διαπραγματεύσεις Μακαρίου-Χάρτινγκ 1955-1956*, (Αθήνα: Ολκός, 1987).

troops on the island's territory. At the same time, Britain offered to introduce a new constitution, which would provide the communities of Cyprus with the freedom of managing the island's internal affairs⁴⁷.

The 'Weekly English Edition of the Halkın Sesi' and by extend the Turkish Cypriot leadership agreed with the abovementioned British formula. The said agreement was evident in the newspaper's first issue where an opinion article, previously published in a Turkish newspaper, was reproduced. The author of the article, like the Turkish Cypriot newspaper, favoured the perpetuation of the British administration in Cyprus:

We, the Turks, are not vindictive, nor are we pursuing imperialistic aims. However, a settlement that might lead to the annexation of Cyprus to Greece in some near or distant future will be regarded by us like a betrayal (...). Had Cyprus been given to Greece instead of Britain, Cypriot Turks, like their unfortunate brethren living under the Greek rule, would have long crushed and exterminated⁴⁸.

However, the 'Weekly English Edition of the Halkın Sesi' occasionally opposed the views expressed in the other local English-language newspapers. Specifically, the newspaper disagreed with the opinion that London might at some point concede Cyprus to Greece. The newspaper, while exercising sharp criticism towards the English-language press due to the publication of such 'dangerous' views, also expressed the opinion that if Britain was ever to abandon the island, then Cyprus had to be surrendered to its former owner, meaning the heir of the Ottoman Empire, Turkey⁴⁹. This argument which dates back to the early decades of British rule lays at the epicenter of Turkish Cypriot nationalism⁵⁰.

According to the Turkish Cypriots, international treaties did not allow the island to be returned to Turkey in the past. Nevertheless, the perpetuation of the British administration during the past decades has lifted those obstacles. Additionally, the safety and well-being of the Turkish Cypriot community, which was guaranteed by the British authorities, would be in danger in case of a political changeover. Based on this hypothesis, the 'Weekly English Edition of the Halkın Sesi' made

⁴⁷ 'New Cyprus Formula under Consideration.', *Cyprus Mail*, 22 November 1955.

⁴⁸ 'Cyprus and Britain.', *Weekly English Edition of Halkın Sesi*, 9 July 1956.

⁴⁹ 'Clerides Regards EOKA as Heroes!', *Weekly English Edition of Halkın Sesi*, 23 July 1956.

⁵⁰ Altay Nevzat, *Nationalism Amongst the Turks of Cyprus: The First Wave*, (Oulu: Oulun Yliopisto, 2005).

clear that the Turkish Cypriot would side with the continuation of the British administration if certain terms were met. Regardless of the island's population composition, the Turkish Cypriots, which according to the newspaper were not a minority community, had the same rights with the Greek Cypriots and as a separate entity of the island were entitled to the same privileges. The 'Weekly English Edition of the Halkın Sesi' demanded that its community would have equal power and rights in the island's governance. Furthermore, the Turkish Cypriots would be entitled to manage their community affairs freely. Setting the withdrawal of the demand of Enosis as a precondition, the community was willing to collaborate for the creation of the island's new constitution. According to the newspaper, under the new constitution, the two communities would have equal participation in the governance of the island and separate autonomous structures for the management of their internal affairs. In discussing the issue of the judicial authorities' future, the newspaper shed light on the collective stake of the Greek and Turkish Cypriot community:

The machinery of justice must be so arranged as to give adequate protection to Greek and Turk alike. In view of the conflicting interests of the two communities, it is only fair and just that the supreme authority holding the scales of justice should be in the hands of a British Chief Justice. Greek and Turkish judges should be adequately represented in the Supreme Court (...). A Constitutional Court consisting of a British, a Turkish and a Greek Judge, should be set up (...). Taxation of the Turkish Community should be in the hands of the Turkish officials (...). Government departments must be treated theoretically, as divided into two branches. (...) In matters affecting solely one community, the other should have no say at all. The police force should be so composed as to have Greeks and Turks at all levels equally represented (...)⁵¹.

For the 'Weekly English Edition of the Halkın Sesi', the success of the aforementioned project, which opened the way for the perpetuation of the British administration in Cyprus, ultimately depended on the termination of 'terrorist acts', the ceasement of the local press' 'dangerous' publications and the final withdrawal of the demand for Enosis⁵². According to the newspaper's view, after the eradication of 'terrorism' a period of 'training in the democratic rule' would follow in Cyprus. During the said period, the inhabitants of the island would familiarise themselves

⁵¹ 'Open Letter to Lord Radcliffe.' *Weekly English Edition of Halkın Sesi*, 3 September 1956.

⁵² 'Terms of Reference for Lord Radcliffe.' *Weekly English Edition of Halkın Sesi*, 17 September 1956.

with the new constitution and the idea of the political equality between the two largest communities of Cyprus⁵³.

The War: The Depiction of a Tripartite Struggle

The confrontation of the opposing camps and the conflicting political goals had an impact on the headlines of the English-language press of Cyprus during the first years of EOKA's armed struggle. Specifically, the English-language newspapers offered extensive coverage of the conflicts and bloodshed occurring in Cyprus' streets during the period in question. At the same time, the newspapers discussed and analysed in their articles the prospects of compromising solutions. When debating the issue of containing the EOKA's action the 'Cyprus Mail' and 'Times of Cyprus' had different opinions to the 'Weekly English Edition of the Halkin Sesi'. The two newspapers believed that the final political solution and not EOKA's military defeat would return the streets of Cyprus to normality.

In covering the conflict, the two English-language newspapers focused on the human aspect and especially in the family stories and tragedies. For example, on 9 July 1956, the 'Cyprus Mail' informed its readers in detail about the killing of the first Briton woman since the commencement of the EOKA's struggle⁵⁴. At the same time, the newspapers expressed their strong concern regarding the intensification of the bloodshed and the increase in the number of victims⁵⁵. In this regard, the two newspapers discussed questions such as what were the real motives behind EOKA's actions and what were the measures taken by the local government to neutralise the organisation's operations⁵⁶? Within this framework, the government's decision that the death penalty was the most appropriate measure to control the Greek Cypriot's riotous actions was debated in the newspaper's articles⁵⁷. Furthermore, the death sentences passed on EOKA members often made the front-pages of the said newspapers⁵⁸.

The issue of the financial aspect of both the bloodshed and the strict government measures was likewise mentioned in the two newspapers' articles. In this context, subjects such as market instability and the cost of the imposed curfew were

⁵³ 'Democracy and Anarchy.' *Weekly English Edition of Halkin Sesi*, 8 October 1956.

⁵⁴ 'First British Woman Murdered in Ambush.', *Cyprus Mail*, 9 July 1956.

⁵⁵ "Black November.", *Cyprus Mail*, 19 November 1956.

⁵⁶ 'What Is EOKA up To?', *Times of Cyprus*, 27 July 1956.

⁵⁷ 'Death Penalty Is Extended.', *Cyprus Mail*, 23 November 1956.

⁵⁸ 'Triple Executions Cause Three Days 'Strike.', *Cyprus Mail*, 23 September 1956.

discussed⁵⁹. Nevertheless, according to the 'Cyprus Mail', all the appropriate conditions for the final and peaceful settlement of the Cyprus Problem existed within Cyprus, despite the ongoing bloodshed:

There is a chance to get something moving, and we can hardly believe that with the mood of the people as it exists today, after all they have suffered during the past seventeen months, either side will stand on their dignity rather than seize the last opportunity for a settlement that will present itself for a long time to come⁶⁰

As the 'Times of Cyprus' argued in December 1956, the transition of Cyprus' status into a self-governing dominion was a viable solution to the Cyprus Issue. The British plan for the transformation of Cyprus' political regime, which also provided for the active involvement of both Greece and Turkey in the negotiation process was a one-way solution for the island. As the Colonial Secretary said in the House of Commons:

When the international and strategic situation permits and provided that self-government is working satisfactorily the British Government will be ready to review the question of the application of self-determination—and then popped out a brand new jack in the box: The question of partitioning the island must be included in any exercise of self-determination.⁶¹

For the 'Weekly English Edition of the Halkın Sesi', the tripartite confrontation between the British, Turkish and Greek political actors left little room for the settlement of the Cyprus problem in any way other than the island's partition. The explicit reference to the possibility of partition was precisely what the 'Weekly English Edition of the Halkın Sesi' wanted to 'hear' from London and the local press. According to the newspaper, the parties involved needed radical solutions, and the partition of the island was the most appropriate formula. In this context, the Turkish Cypriot side welcomed the British proposal for granting to Cyprus the status of a self-governed dominion: 'We call on the Greeks to abandon their wild dream of Enosis and acknowledge that as Cypriots they have no ambition further

⁵⁹ 'Curfew May Cost Cyprus.', *Times of Cyprus*, 9 October 1956.

⁶⁰ 'There Is Still Time.', *Cyprus Mail*, 25 August 1956.

⁶¹ 'A Solemn Act of Faith.', *Times of Cyprus*, 22 December 1956.

than self-government within the British Commonwealth, a form of self-government in which the Turks will have an equal say in running their own [Cypriot] affairs'⁶².

Turkey, on its part, fully agreed with the 'Weekly English Edition of the Halkın Sesi' and the Turkish Cypriot leadership in accepting the British plan. According to the newspaper article published in November 1956, Selim Sarper who was a member of the Turkish delegation to the UN thought that the measures taken by Sir John Harding during the recent months have already started yielding positive results:

Under such circumstances, self-government may be given to the island on the basis of the equality of rights of the two communities so that no religious or ethnic group may dominate and crush others. (...) The details should be left to future studies and consultations among experts of Constitutional Law. However, one can say that there are many examples of various kinds of measures being applied in different parts of the world.⁶³

For the 'Weekly English Edition of the Halkın Sesi', the first step for the final settlement of the Cyprus Problem was, as we have mentioned above, the crushing of the EOKA insurgents. This was also Ankara's opinion. Furthermore, unlike the 'Cyprus Mail' and 'Times of Cyprus', the Turkish Cypriot newspaper did not have second thoughts about the death penalty⁶⁴. On the contrary, the newspaper welcomed all the 'firm measures' assumed by the local government and especially the most frequent imposition of the death penalty and press censorship. In October 1956, the 'newspaper argued that the time has come for the badly beaten EOKA to be crushed, even at the expense of innocent people.:

We honestly believe that the time has come for press censorship, speeding up the pressure of curfews, collective punishments, searches, screenings and above all the establishment of Military Courts for offences like gun carrying, bomb-throwing, wounding and murder. People who have a fear of EOKA in their hearts must be given an alternative fear, i.e. that of Law and Security Forces.⁶⁵

⁶² 'Turkish Rights Shall Be Guaranteed.', *Weekly English Edition of Halkın Sesi*, 3 September 1956.

⁶³ 'Turkish Case Re-Stated in Two Dozen Questions and Answers.', *Weekly English Edition of Halkın Sesi*, 12 November 1956.

⁶⁴ 'Dramatic Developments in Cyprus.', *Weekly English Edition of Halkın Sesi*, 26 November 1956.

⁶⁵ 'Firm Measures.', *Weekly English Edition of Halkın Sesi*, 8 October 1956.

The second condition set forth by the Turkish Cypriot community for accepting and implementing the British plan for Cyprus was the essential partition of the island. The Turkish side was ready to negotiate any proposal that paved the way for the perpetuation of the British sovereignty with the fundamental premise that it would create a distinct Turkish Cypriot sphere of influence in Cyprus. According to the 'Weekly English Edition of the Halkın Sesi' the Turkish Prime Minister thought Mr Lennox-Boyd's statement with regard to the possible application of self-determination in Cyprus noteworthy. Also:

After having explained that the population of Cyprus did not comprise one single entity, the Colonial Secretary said that any exercise self-determination should be effected in such a manner that the Turkish Cypriot community, no less than the Greek Cypriot community, should be given freedom to decide for themselves their future status and pointed out that this might amount to the partition of the island.⁶⁶

For the 'Weekly English Edition of the Halkın Sesi', the new plan, could offer a peaceful solution to the tripartite struggle if both the Greek and Turkish Cypriot communities were simultaneously granted the right to self-determination. According to the Turkish side, this solution was a 'big sacrifice':

'Turkey has said it again. Cyprus will never become Greek territory because we cannot abandon our one hundred and twenty thousand brethren to foreign rule, nor can we overlook the vital strategic importance of an island base which commands Turkey's southern ports (...). We feel that we should be making a great sacrifice by accepting the partition proposals'⁶⁷.

Within this framework, the 'Weekly English Edition of the Halkın Sesi' in its last available issue called for the implementation of a plan that would offer the solution of the Cyprus Problem while serving the individual interests of all sides concerned. Ergo, according to the newspaper, through the proposed plan, Britain would be able to perpetuate its sovereignty in Cyprus while partially satisfying the demands of the two largest communities. The Greek Cypriots, on the other hand, would secure access to the local state mechanism and have the necessary autonomy

⁶⁶ 'The Turkish Government Will Continue Discussions on This Basis.', *Weekly English Edition of Halkın Sesi*, 24 December 1956.

⁶⁷ 'Solution to the Cyprus Problem: Partition.', *Weekly English Edition of Halkın Sesi*, 31 December 1956.

in managing their affairs. Moreover, the Turkish Cypriot side would acquire an autonomous sphere of influence and of course, enjoy equal representation in local government. It should be stressed that since the end of 1956, this formula, which was widely discussed in all three English-language newspapers of Cyprus, remained the official policy line of both Ankara and the Turkish Cypriot leadership up until the establishment of the Republic of Cyprus.

Conclusion: Common Enemies, Similar Stakes, Different Priorities

The comparative study of the archival material of the ‘Cyprus Mail’, the ‘Times of Cyprus’ and the ‘Weekly English Edition of the Halkin Sesi’ leads us to three conclusions and one observation concerning the media history of Cyprus. These findings seek to add to the existing knowledge regarding the first period of EOKA’s armed operations and the island’s media history.

Our first conclusion suggests that all three English-language newspapers of Cyprus approached the first period of EOKA’s armed struggle in a similar manner. Namely, the shared starting point for the three newspaper is that the EOKA organisation is the ‘common enemy’ that endangers peace and stability on the broader region. Both the ‘Weekly English Edition of the Halkin Sesi’ and the two English-language local press characterised the EOKA members as ‘terrorists’ who used all kinds of means to achieve their goals. In its entirety, the English media of Cyprus, during the period 1955-1956, developed into a useful propaganda tool used by the local government and the Turkish Cypriot leadership for the promotion of their respective individual positions for the Cyprus Issue.

The second conclusion we have arrived at through the archival research is that all three newspapers shared a common understanding of what was at stake in the case of the Cyprus Issue. During the 1955-1956 period, the local English-language press discussed the proposed plans for the solution of the Cyprus problem. The British side and the Turkish Cypriot leadership believed that there were elements within these plans, which could pave the way for the cooperation of the two sides after the EOKA ‘threat’ was neutralised. With the ultimate goal of perpetuating its military presence on the island, amid the Cold War, London proposed granting Cyprus the status of the self-governed dominion. By proposing this plan, the British side implied that it was ready to guarantee the interests of the second largest community of the island. The Turkish Cypriot side relied on the said guarantee to underline the importance of the partition plan. At the same time, it stated that

it does not object to the continuation of British sovereignty. By developing these positions in their articles, both the 'Weekly English Edition of the Halkın Sesi' and the other English newspapers functioned as an alternative communication and negotiation tool between the British side and the Turkish Cypriot leadership, which as we have mentioned above, had the full support of Ankara.

In this context, the common enemies and stakes bring the colonial administration and the second largest –population-wise– community of Cyprus, together. However, the analyses, reports and statements published in the three newspapers lead us to a third important conclusion. At a time when the British side was attempting to stem the Greek Cypriot aspirations for Enosis by proposing instead a plan for the autonomy, the Turkish Cypriot side in close cooperation with Ankara appeared ready to push the parties involved one step further and ensure the most potent autonomous radius of action for Cyprus' communities. Thus, the Turkish Cypriot side called for the immediate withdrawal of the demand for Enosis and insisted on the 'Turkishness' of Cyprus. From its point of view, the 'duty' of the British side and the international community was to support the island's essential partition and not to grant new privileges to the Greek Cypriot side⁶⁸.

In contrast to the English-language newspapers, the 'Weekly English Edition of the Halkın Sesi' demanded the surrender of the EOKA members and the unconditional abandonment of the Greek Cypriots' aspirations. Moreover, both the 'Cyprus Mail' and the 'Times of Cyprus' were concerned about the effectiveness of the government's strict response to EOKA, while the 'Weekly English Edition of the Halkın Sesi' on the other hand applauded the government's policy. After the total defeat of the insurgent, Britain could rely on the Turkish Cypriots' cooperation on the condition that an essential partition of the island was on its way.

In addition to the abovementioned conclusions, a thorough analysis of the archival material allowed us to make an interesting observation regarding the contemporary history of Cypriot journalism. Namely, we have observed that although Cyprus' English-language press propagated the government's views regarding EOKA and the 'communist threat', as well as the 'British future' of the island, at the same time, it did not fail to criticise the authorities. Unlike the 'Weekly English Edition of the Halkın Sesi', which agreed with the government's

⁶⁸ Küçük Fazıl, 'Turkish National Policy v. Greek Megalo Idea', *Weekly English Edition of Halkın Sesi*, 31 December 1956.

strict measures, the other local English-language media raised their voices against the new Press Law and defended the freedom of the press. Thus, we observe that when the newspapers' interests were jeopardised, they did not hesitate in breaking away from the official line of the local government.

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