

Rural Cyprus, 1920-1940: Two factories, Two stories to tell

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Abstract

During the first three decades of the 20th century, the British made a substantial effort to upgrade Cyprus agriculture for export purposes. In the above context, silk and flax were of great value to Cypriots and were blooming during the period under study, yet only in the form of home industry. The present paper investigates two agricultural factories operating during the same period of time but very different in every aspect. The Flax Factory in Zodia was the creation of the Department of Agriculture and the present paper gives an overview of the course of the establishment through time and actions from 1923 to 1945. The second factory, the Cyprus Silk Filature in Yeroskipou, Paphos, was a factory established by a British company with the full support of the Cyprus colonial government. Two important aspects of the filature are under study, the working conditions and the company's – cocoon merchant's dispute.

Keywords: flax, silk, factory, Yeroskipos Filature, Zodia mill, scutching machine

Introduction

During the descent of the British to Cyprus towards the end of the 19th century, they were confronted with the fact that Cyprus agriculture was in a primitive stage and that Cypriot producers were very poor, suspicious and extremely difficult to changes.

Furthermore, the economic status of the rural Cyprus at the dawn of the 20th century was wretched. Heavy taxation, poverty and the inability of producers to secure money through financial institutions, led them directly to usurers. Hence, the need to find an immediate solution for a sustainable rural Cyprus was indeed imperative. During the same period the prospect of an Agricultural Bank, on the island of Cyprus, did not seem as an option,² making the situation even more difficult.

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² For more information on the establishment and operation of the Agricultural Bank, Christos K. Kyriakides 'The establishment of the Agricultural Bank in Cyprus in 1906: A long term request that failed' («Η ίδρυση Αγροτικής Τράπεζας στην Κύπρο το 1906: ένα μακροχρόνιο αίτημα που απέτυχε»), Proceedings of the 4th International Conference "Κυπρολογικό", Nicosia 29 April- 2 May 2008, volume C1 (Nicosia 2012) (in Greek) and Kyriakos Iakovides 'The request for the establishment of the Agricultural

Agriculture and Agriculture –Based Factories at the Dawn of the 20th Century

During the first three decades of the 20th century, the British made a substantial effort to upgrade the Cyprus agriculture aiming at the improvement of production methods and processing of agricultural products for export purposes.

In the context of the above mentioned effort, the British provided the Cypriot producers with all the necessary means to improve their growing techniques, their cultivation methods, the varieties used and their harvesting methods in order to maximise the quality of the final product. Examples of such agricultural products were flax and silk. These two products were of great value to Cypriots and were blooming during the period under study, yet in the form of home industry. Due to the efforts of the British government these two products achieved the factory level within a decade reaching notable export numbers.

Towards the upgrade of the Cyprus agriculture and the local agriculture based factories, a crucial step forward consisted the development of the Agricultural Bank in 1925 (Agreement of the 17th of June 1925) under the auspices of the Government, with initial capital (£50.000).³

Two Factories, Two Different Approaches

The present paper investigates two factories operating during the same period of time yet very different in every aspect. The Flax Processing Factory in Zodia was basically a creation of the Department of Agriculture, a vision of William Bevan the Director of Agriculture. The present paper gives an overview of the course of the establishment through time and actions from 1923 to 1945. The second factory, the Cyprus Silk Filature in Yeroskipou, Paphos, was a factory established by a British company with the full support of the colonial government from 1926 to 1945. The present paper discusses the two main reasons of the filatures failure. The first was the working condition issue and the second was the dispute of the company with the local cocoon merchants, a situation, which at the end, lead to the closure of the establishment.

Bank, 1878-1900' («Το αίτημα ίδρυσης Αγροτικής τράπεζας, 1878-1900», The History of the Cyprus Cooperative Movement vol. A (Nicosia 2015) 145 (in Greek).

³ Brewster J. Surridge, 'A survey of rural life in Cyprus: based on reports of investigators who visited villages throughout the colony during 1927 and 1928 and amplified by statistical and other information from the records of the government' (Nicosia: Government Printing Office 1930) 42.

Flax Processing Factory – Zodia Scutching Mill

Zodia Scutching Mill –Phase One, Production of Linen Thread, 1923-1929

On April 30th 1923, the law for the Co-operative Societies (other than Co-operative credit societies) was published in the Cyprus Gazette.⁴ The present law provided, among other, for acquisition and use in common of machinery and other implements of production, for the purchase and sale of commodities, for the purchase of raw materials for agricultural and industrial purpose. This was a very important upshot for the colonial government in terms of the development of the agricultural industry since about a month after the enactment of the co-operative law in 1923, the first Cyprus Flax Society was formed and a factory in Zodia was erected. In addition to the above, a filature was built in Yeroskipou. In the first case, it was the first society that was formed right after the enactment of the law and that is the reason behind the name the FIRST Cyprus Flax Society.⁵ The First Cyprus Flax Society filed an application at the Registry of the Co-operative societies with initial capital of £2000. The application was signed by seventeen people of different status and occupation including Abbot Kleopas Kykkos, Augustus Classen (an officer of the Agricultural Department, who was just recruited from the Ottoman Bank), the two important teachers of Zodia who were also notable farmers, two Agricultural Officers from the Department of Agriculture and some other producers from villages around Morphou.

At the same time, the Director of Agriculture initiated a discussion between Department of Agriculture and important flax producers and reached an agreement in March 1923. The agreement concerned the guaranty regarding the importation of a scutching machine for the Zodia factory. It stated that in the event of the importation of the scutching machine by the government, the flax producers were obliged to repay it in two years in equal installments per semester. The Commissioner requested from the Secretary of State for the Colonies the sum of £900 under 19 (B) Department of Agriculture, Other Changes 'Agricultural Tools and Improvements' for the purchase of the scutching machine. The argument of the Commissioner was that the flax production in Cyprus was very good yet the Cypriots were lagging behind in terms of processing techniques since the methods used were quite primitive. Thus, the purchase of the scutching machine was crucial for the development of flax in the Morphou area

⁴ Cyprus Gazette, 30 March 1923 No. 1569.

⁵ Charalambos Charalambous 'The law for the Co-operative Societies, 1923' («περί Συνεργατικών Εταιρειών Νόμος του 1923») Giorgos Georgis (ed), The History of the Cyprus Cooperative Movement vol. B (Nicosia 2017) 116 (in Greek).

which was the most important fibre flax producing area in Cyprus. The agreement was signed by the Director Agriculture, William Bevan and fourteen fibre flax producers mainly from Zodia (and other Morphou area villages). It is worth mentioning that the producers from Zodia who signed the agreement were financially ruined during the years that followed.⁶ It is not fully confirmed but their involvement in the repayment of the loan for the scutching machine most likely had something to do with their financial catastrophe.

The Factory in Zodia

The flax processing factory was built in Kato Zodia. Kato Zodia was considered to be the center of fiber flax production in Cyprus thus it was the most suitable place for the erection of such an establishment. Zodia is an agricultural village situated in the western plain of Mesaoria. According to Nearchos Cleredes, it is about two villages, Pano and Kato Zodia. The residents of Zodia believe that their village was named after ghosts that in the Cypriot dialect are called Zodka.⁷ The factory was erected based on the Department of Agriculture specifications. The tender for the construction was awarded to Nikoforos and Achilleas Constantinou for the amount of £281.00.⁸

According to the relevant description in Stavros Tantas's Book '....The factory was brick built, simple construction with tiles on the roof just outside Kato Zodia on the north side of the road connecting Zodia – Katokopia , from east to west. A long wall divided the building in two long wings. On the west side of the building, the engine room was situated, along with the director's office. Next, the scutching machine room, leading to the back wing entrance....'⁹

According to Zodia residents, the factory was situated on the east side of the village¹⁰, close to the boys' school. The factory hours were 'from dawn to dusk'¹¹ with a half an hour break during lunch time. According to a testimonial of the Oral Tradition

⁶ Personal Interview Chistodoulos Kattirtzies, March 2019.

⁷ Nearchos Clerides, 'Villages and Cities of Cyprus' («Χωριά και Πολιτείες της Κύπρου») (Nicosia 2005) 94 (in Greek).

⁸ 'Cyprus Flax Society' (« Συνεργατική Εταιρεία Λινού») *Eleftheria* (Nicosia, 15 August 1923) 3 (in Greek).

⁹ Stavros Tantas, 'Zodia during the old times' («Η Ζώδια τα παλιά χρόνια») (Nicosia 1995) 53 (in Greek).

¹⁰ Cyprus Research Center (henceforth CRC)/Oral Tradition Archive (henceforth OTA), Registration No. 4427, Nicosia (K. Zodia 48). Testimony Ch. Elenides (13.3.1995).

¹¹ CRC/OTA, Registration No. 840, Nicosia, (K. Zodia 2). Testimony M. Koudouna (16-17.6.1991).

Archive,¹² the sound of the sirens of the factory, morning, midday and afternoon was a way the residents could assume the time! The staff of the factory was mainly young women (12-15 years old) from Zodia mostly but also other villages.¹³ During the first phase of the factory's operation, the factory was engaged in the production of linen thread from June to November. The rest of the year, the workers were engaged with other agricultural chores of their own.¹⁴

Based on testimonies of the Oral Traditional Archive, the division of labour within the factory was as follows. On the scutching machine there were approximately 30 young women. Twenty on first station of the machine where the flax was cut in pieces (in the Cypriot dialect it is called Melitzia), three on the second station, the brushes station, four on the pound station (in Cypriot, Koupani) and four on the loom station (rokkouda). Furthermore, some young women (usually the beginners) carried the flax to the machine. The first station was the most difficult due to the large amount of dust involved during the process. For this reason, the workers were paid more, 6 piastres a day as beginners and then 1 shilling (9 piastres) as experienced workers.¹⁵ According to the testimony of the only worker still alive (Mr. Christodoulou), further to the young women staff, who was the majority of the staff, there was a man superintendent and a factory manager. Mr. Christodoulou was about 10 years old at the time and was responsible for feeding the scutching steamed machine with debris of flax.

The Annual Report of the Director of Agriculture¹⁶ in 1923 stated that the Zodia scutching mill commenced working full time and the scutching machine has arrived. Furthermore, the report stated that Augustus Classen was a full time employee of the Department of Agriculture as the Flax instructor. A year later, in the 1924 Annual Report of the Director of Agriculture¹⁷ it was recorded that all necessary construction tasks, at the scutching mill were completed and most of the Cyprus fibre flax was being processed at the Zodia factory (also mentioned as Zodia scutching mill). In the same report, it is noted that the erection and operation of the Zodia scutching mill along with the two private mills that commenced operation right after the Zodia mill, increased the production of flax in Cyprus since in 1924, more area was cultivated for

¹² CRC/ATA, Registration No. 4427, Nicosia (K. Zodia 48). Testimony Ch. Elenides (13.3.1995).

¹³ CRC/OTA, Registration No. 840, Nicosia, (K. Zodia 2). Testimony M. Koudouna (16-17.6.1991).

¹⁴ CRC/OTA, Registration No. 2821, Nicosia (K. Zodia 13), Testimony E. Hatziyianni (26.2.92).

¹⁵ CRC/OTA, Registration No. 840, Nicosia, (K. Zodia 2). Testimony M. Koudouna (16-17.6.1991).

¹⁶ Annual Report for the Year 1923, (Nicosia: Department of Agriculture 1924) 6.

¹⁷ Annual Report for the Year 1924, (Nicosia: Department of Agriculture 1925) 6.

fibre flax. This mainly resulted due to the increasing demand for Cyprus linen in the European market (UK and Belgium).

It should be noted that the president of the First Cyprus Flax Society was Abbot of Kykko Kleopas and the Secretary was Augustus Classen who was also the flax instructor in the Department of Agriculture as previously mentioned.

Financial Difficulties of the Cyprus Flax Society

Despite the good omens of the beginning of the First Cyprus Flax Society, the company could not meet its obligation to repay the government the installments as agreed in 1923 for the purchase of the scutching machine. In January 1925, Abbot of Kykko Kleopas (being the president of the Society) sent a letter to the Director of Agriculture in an attempt to prevent the government from taking legal action against the Society for the scutching machine debt.¹⁸ During 1925 and 1926 the factory was forced to close¹⁹, since despite all the actions taken by Abbot of Kykko and Augustus Classen, the referral of the debt to the court could not be prevented. Thus, on the 18th of August 1926 the court decided that the society should pay the amount of £480, Decision no. 455, 1926.

Strangely enough, in the 1925 Annual Report of the Director of Agriculture, there was not even a hint about the financial problems that the Society was facing²⁰. On the contrary, the only reference made on the Zodia factory was the fact that despite the poor quality of the product harvested due to adverse weather conditions, the factory was able to process the product which would otherwise be useless. During the same year, during the Commissioner's opening statement at the Annual Legislative Council Meeting²¹ he expressed his satisfaction for the progress made in the flax processing sector. He mentioned the fact that the First Cyprus Flax Society was using the scutching machine and that other private initiatives followed the Zodia factory's example. The Commissioner concluded that the above mentioned actions along with the importation and introduction to the producers of new fibre flax varieties aided tremendously the increase of the produced processed flax.

¹⁸ Cyprus State Archives (henceforth CSA) :SA1: 1254/1922/1, Letter of the First Cyprus Flax Society to the Director of Agriculture Cyprus, 20 January 1925.

¹⁹ CSA: SA1:1113/1921, Letter of the Director of Agriculture to the Secretary of State, Cyprus, 6 July 1926.

²⁰ Annual Report for the Year 1925, (Nicosia: Department of Agriculture 1926) 7. Also states that processed product from the Zodia Factory was exported to the UK for £85/ ton c.i.f. at the company Malcolm of Belfast.

²¹ Cyprus Gazette, 13 November 1925, No. 673, 1731.

The course of the factory after the court's decision was very clearly seen through the correspondence between Augustus Classen, the secretary of the Society and the Director of Agriculture. Classen's suggestions for the future of the factory consisted of two choices.²² Either the government should ceded the management of the factory to Abbot of Kykkos who has greatly invested in the factory, with an additional subsidy of £500, or alternatively, the government should fully undertake the management of the factory. The Director of Agriculture²³ strongly disagreed with Classen's suggestion for the government to fully undertake the management of the factory stating that due to the financial chaos that the society was into, the above mentioned suggestion was not in the best interest of the government. His suggestion was the privatization of the factory, citing as an example the fact that two private flax processing factories were operating smoothly (Baldassare's in Limassol and Matsoukis in Paphos). The Secretary of State's instructions²⁴ were to immediately sell the factory in order to collect the debt, based on the Court decision. The confiscation order was an issue vividly discussed in the press at the time²⁵ stating that the government issued an interim decree for the scutching machine of the Zodia factory.

The financial chaos and the insecurity that prevailed in the First Cyprus Flax Society were clearly stated in the correspondence of Abbot of Kykko and the colonial government. Abbot of Kykkos²⁶ informed the government that he has already sent all the applications for shareholder applications which he could collect, and that many flax producers were very cautious in applying due to the pressure exercised by lawyers. Through the letter of the Abbot of Kykko, the mentality of the Cypriot flax producers as well as insecurity feelings were vividly exposed. According the Abbot of Kykko all irregularities '...were a caprice of a group of shareholder peasants who want to be erased from the society either due to ignorance or due to false accusations that were spread.' Furthermore the Abbot of Kykko, blamed (indirectly) the Department of Agriculture for not properly implementing the member registration of the Society. In addition to the Abbot of Kykko, the Registrar of the Cooperative Societies, also described the chaotic situation that occurred in the society²⁷ He reported that from

²² CSA: SA1: 1254/1922/1, Letter of Classen to Director t of Agriculture , Cyprus 7 September 1926.

²³ ²² Ibid. Letter of the Director of Agriculture to the Secretary of State, Cyprus, 22 September 1926.

²⁴ Ibid. Letter of Secretary of State to the Director of Agriculture, Cyprus, 23 September 1926.

²⁵ 'Confiscation Order against the Flax Company' («Διάταγμα κατασχέσεως κατά της εταιρείας Λι-νού») *Neos Kypriakos Phylax* (Limassol, 18 August 1926) 4 (in Greek).

²⁶ CSA: SA1: 1254/1922/1, Letter of Abbot of Kykko to Stivadoros (lawyer), Cyprus, 10 August 1926.

²⁷ Moisis Zarifis according *Viografikon Lexikon Kypriou 1800-1920 Vol. A*, p.190 by Aristides Kou-

the £1748 registered shares, the £727 were pending, stating that most of the amount pending was coming from people who were in a position to pay their debts. He further informed that legal action was taken against 93 person for arrears of £153, but they were able to collect the debt from only sixteen person, totaling £28. Yet, even in those cases, the credit was not recorded in the society's accounts. Moreover, the registrar stated that the society's lawyer, also gave the president, Abbot of Kykko on 15/2/1925 the amount of £30 from debt collection, and again this amount was not credited to the account of the society. Closing this revealing correspondence, the Registrar urged the government to retreat the scutching machine and initiate an investigation for the unpleasant situation that occurred.

The above mentioned correspondence, revealed a very ugly yet realistic side of rural Cyprus. The producers were extremely poor yet very skeptic and tried to survive in any way. On the other hand, usurers and lawyers took advantage of the illiterate and poor producers.

The Director of Agriculture²⁸ stated that due to the lack of money the factory was unable to operate in 1926. The Governor²⁹ stated that the Zodia factory which operated under the Cooperative society regime, could not operate in 1926 due to financial difficulties and that in the near future the factory will resume operation under new management. According to the present report, most likely under new management the factory would be able to show its potential since flax has proven to be an economically viable product for Cyprus.

In October 1926, Abbot of Kykko Kleopas, presented another proposal to the government. He asked to buy the factory for the price of £480, fully repaid in three years plus interest. Augustus Classen was also in favour of the above mentioned proposal and also stressed that it was urgent to find a solution for the factory due to the large volume of flax (previous year's stock) that was in danger to be destroyed by the rain. Finally, the colonial government approved the temporary operation of the factory to the First Cyprus Flax Society under Classen's responsibility³⁰. It should be noted that a week before the approval of the Treasurer, the machinery was returned to the First Cyprus Flax Society under a temporary lending regime.

dounaris, was the first Registrar of the Cooperative Societies, CSA: SA1: 1254/1922/1, Letter of the Registrar of the Cooperative Societies to the Treasurer, Cyprus, 21 September 1926.

²⁸ Annual Report of the Year 1926 (Nicosia: Department of Agriculture 1927) 6.

²⁹ Colonial Reports, No. 1366, Annual Report for 1926 (London 1928) 43.

³⁰ CSA: SA1: 1254/1922/1, Letter of Treasurer to Augustus Classen, Cyprus, 19 November 1926.

In 1927, the factory was sold to Kykko Monastery for the amount of £177 including buildings, machinery and land!³¹ Despite of the sale, the Department of Agriculture continued occasionally to sublet the factory in order to aid and encourage the flax producers. Furthermore, the involvement of the government in the factory's business is also revealed through Classen's letter to the Director of Agriculture³² in which he made a suggestion to expand the factory's business with the addition of a spinning and weaving establishment. This, according to Classen could be done with very little expense and could be profitable.

Zodia Scutching Mill –Phase Two, Production of Linen Thread Factory, Spinning and Weaving Establishment and School, 1929 -1934

An important milestone in the factory's history was the cancellation of the registration of the First Cyprus Flax Society in 1929.³³ The Director of Agriculture expressed his frustration over the fact that the flax producers refused to deliver their product to the factory. He noted that the issue with the producers/members of the First Cyprus Flax Society had many adverse effects on the colonial government. He further stated that a thorough and transparent investigation was needed in order to fully expose the reasons of the flax society's failure.

Despite the cancelation of the society from the register of Cooperative Societies, the government continued to promote the interests of the Zodia factory. This fact could be justified by the correspondence between the Director of Agriculture and the Imperial Institute³⁴ regarding a textile sample, promoting Cyprus linen in The United Kingdom. Moreover, a post in the press³⁵ confirmed the intention of the Department of Agriculture to lease 'the mill' once more for 1 piastres per oke for the flax producers and 1.5 piastres per oke for merchants. In the same post, it was noted that the intention of the government was to further expand the 'mill' to an educational center for weaving as well as thread production. Furthermore, the fields around the 'mill' would be used for experimental purposes.

³¹ Ibid. Letter of Director of Land Registry to the Secretary of State, Cyprus, 28 July 1927.

³² CSA:SA1671/1928, Letter of Augustus Classen to Director of Agriculture, Cyprus, 28 April 1928.

³³ CSA:SA1:890/1923, Letter of the Director Agriculture to the Cooperative Society Registrar, Cyprus, 17 August 1929.

³⁴ CSA:SA1:1113/1921, Letter of Director of Agriculture to the Imperial Institute, Cyprus, 5 December 1929.

³⁵ 'From the Cyprus Gazette' («Από την Επίσημη Εφημερίδα») *Paratiritis* (Limassol, 22 June 1929) 2 (in Greek).

The parallel operation of the Zodia factory as a school was confirmed by the correspondence of the Director of Agriculture with the Principal of the School of Blind (Lady Storrs) whom he invited to the factory,³⁶ in order to observe first-hand the educational programme. In the above mentioned letter, the use of looms and spinning wheels for educational purposes was noted along with the fact that young women from Zodia villages as well as other villages of the Morphou area attend the school in an attempt to upgrade this home industry of great importance to the Morphou area.

The looms as well as the spinning wheels expanded the factory from production of linen thread alone to a spinning and weaving establishment that produced not only linen threads but also linen goods. In the Oral Tradition Archive³⁷ there is a very vivid description of the spinning wheels and looms and the purpose of the upgrade which enabled the factory to enter a new industry³⁸. In the same testimony, it is mentioned that all the linen for the newly operated grand hotel in Prodromos village, Verengaria, were made by the Zodia factory.

According to the Annual Report of the Director of Agriculture³⁹ during 1929, the factory was leased by the colonial government and the Department of Agriculture bought 51000 okes of flax which after processing in the Zodia factory was sent to the Great Britain for sale. Furthermore, the report noted the successful securing of a grant from the Empire Marketing Board exclusively for the development of flax in Cyprus. During the same year, the Governor's Annual Report⁴⁰ stated that the quantity of processed flax in Cyprus doubled in 1929, yet due to the collapse of the prices in the international market, it was not possible to export any processed product and thus the product was stored both in Zodia factory and in Yeroskopou (the private flax processing factory).

The colonial government, mostly through the Department of Agriculture, continued the effort to keep the Zodia factory alive. This was well justified through the official correspondence⁴¹ that noted the unsuccessful attempt of the Department of

³⁶ CSA:SA1:1648/1930, Letter of the Director of Agriculture to the Principal of the School of the Blind, Cyprus, 18 December 1930.

³⁷ CSC/OTA, Registration No. 2821, Nicosia (K. Zodia 13). Testimony E. Hatzigianni (26.2.92).

³⁸ Vasos G. Appios, 'Memories from occupied Zodia' («Αναμνήσεις από την κατεχόμενη Ζώδια») (Nicosia, 1999) 45 (in Greek).

³⁹ Annual Report of the Year 1929 (Nicosia: Department of Agriculture 1930) 10.

⁴⁰ Colonial Reports, No. 1514, Annual Report for 1929 (London, 1930) 8.

⁴¹ CSA: SA1:1398/1928/1, Letter of the Director of Agriculture to the Secretary of State, Cyprus 16 July 1929.

Agriculture to sell the produced product to P.Joannou and Co. It also revealed that because of the circumstances, the Department of Agriculture⁴² was granted permission to buy the factory's production for the sum of £3,600, about 600 tons of material. This gesture demonstrated the Department of Agriculture efforts to keep flax production and processing at equilibrium levels.

The current status continued during the next year, In the Annual Report of the Director of Agriculture for 1930⁴³ it stated that the Zodia Mill operated in 1930, under the management of the Department of Agriculture (under a leasing regime from the Kykko Monastery), 22,000 okes of flax were received and 4 tons of processed product were prepared for export.

In March 1931, Abbot of Kykko, Kleopas⁴⁴ announced to the Director of Agriculture his intention to sell the land, machinery and production to the colonial government for the sum of £528 which was immediately implemented.⁴⁵ The efforts of the Director of Agriculture to ensure the renewal of the grant from the Empire Marketing Board for another three year period along with the payment of some pending expenses continued during the next two years (1931 and 1932). Yet, the Empire Marketing Board was strongly against the renewal of the grant for flax production in Cyprus.⁴⁶ The situation deteriorated even further due to the severe drought in 1931 that affected greatly the flax production. The Director of Agriculture⁴⁷ was confronted, on one side with the bad financial situation of the Zodia factory and on the other side, with the severe problems that occurred due to the drought. He suggested the leasing the Zodia Mill for £5 per month, a suggestion which was immediately implemented.⁴⁸ Despite the drought problem, and the inferior quality of the flax produced, the Zodia factory continued processing and was able to export all the product. According to the Governor's Annual Report 1931, the processing of flax in both factories (Zodia and Yeroskipou) continued and the product was sold in the Great Britain market along with the previous year's stock.⁴⁹ The value of the Zodia Factory during the drought

⁴² Ibid., Letter of the Secretary of State to the Director of Agriculture, Cyprus 25 July 1929.

⁴³ Annual Report of the Year 1930 (Nicosia: Department of Agriculture 1931) 10.

⁴⁴ CSA: SA1:1254/1922/1 Letter of Abbot of Kykko to the Director of Agriculture, Cyprus 29 March 1929.

⁴⁵ Ibid., Letter of the Secretary of State to the Director of Agriculture, Cyprus 30 July 1931.

⁴⁶ CSA: SA1:1254/1922/1, Letter from the Empire Marketing Board to the Minister of Colonies, London 10 September 1931.

⁴⁷ Ibid., Letter of the Director of Agriculture to the Secretary of State, Cyprus 28 June 1932.

⁴⁸ Ibid., Letter of the Secretary of State to the Director of Agriculture, Cyprus 30 June 1932.

⁴⁹ Colonial Reports, No. 1574, Annual Report for 1931, (London, 1932) 9.

regarding the rural Morphou area was well stressed in an Oral Tradition Archive testimony. According to this testimony, a young woman working at the factory and her family were able to survive during the drought due to her salary at the Zodia factory⁵⁰. In other words, the Zodia factory contributed the most during a very hard period of rural Cyprus despite its internal problems.

Privatization of the Factory

Towards to end of 1932, the colonial government of Cyprus decided to change the operating regime of the Zodia factory. The Director of Agriculture⁵¹ suggested that the factory should be granted to Augustus Classen on terms of a private enterprise with the precondition to continue the effort to keep the Zodia factory and the educational center running. The Department of Agriculture's proposal included the following terms: Augustus Classen would take over the management of the factory with an annual allowance of £100.

The 1932⁵² Annual Report of the Director of Agriculture noted the limited operation of the Zodia factory yet the full operation of the educational center. Furthermore, despite the problems of the factory, the spinning and weaving establishment continued its business. This was made obvious by the correspondence of the manager of the Verengaria hotel with Augustus Classen, who complained about the quality of the products (linen).⁵³ The range of products mentioned in the letter enabled for a full view of what the Zodia factory was producing and included rags, curtains, table cloths, napkins and towel.

In January 1933, the agreement between Augustus Classen and the Department of Agriculture was finally signed.⁵⁴ With the current agreement the effort of the Department of Agriculture to support Zodia factory was once again evident. The two year agreement (with the prospect of renewal for two more) set the following obligations for Classen. He had to undertake the scutching mill and the spinning and weaving establishment, at his own expense and on his own account to the satisfaction of the Governor and to employ no less than 15 young women per day. He had to

⁵⁰ CRC/OTA, Registration No. 2821, Nicosia, (K. Zodia 13). Testimony E. Hatziyianni (26.2.1993).

⁵¹ CSA: SA1:1254/1922/1, Director of Agriculture to Secretary of State, Cyprus, 30 December 1932.

⁵² Annual Report of the Year 1932 (Nicosia: Department of Agriculture 1933) 8.

⁵³ CSA: SA1:1648/1930, Letter of Yiannis Kokkalos to the Director of Agriculture, Cyprus 21 December 1932.

⁵⁴ CSA: SA1:1254/1922/1, Agreement between the Director of Agriculture with Augustus Classen, Cyprus 25 January 1933.

scutch all flax brought to the mill by flax producers at a rate that had to be approved from time to time by the Director of Agriculture, to tender to the best of his known and ability to the Department of Agriculture advice on any matter touching upon flax or flax industry. On the other hand, the government should pay Classen the sum of £100 per annum as a subsidy and retaining fee for the services of the flax adviser and to provide him with all the machinery, accessories and furniture. All except from the scutching mill.

In the 1934 Annual Report of the Director of Agriculture⁵⁵ there was no reference regarding the Zodia factory. Yet an increase in production as well in the domestic demand was indeed reported. Although the Zodia factory was not mentioned in the report, there was a general comment regarding the high quality of processing in the Cyprus flax processing factories.

Zodia Scutching Mill –Phase Three, Production of Linen Thread Factory in Zodia and the Relocation of the Spinning and Weaving Establishment in Nicosia, 1935-1945

In 1935, Augustus Classen decided to relocate the spinning and weaving establishment to Nicosia and at the same time the linen thread factory (otherwise scutching mill or Zodia factory) carried on its business in Zodia. Testimonies (OTA and personal interviews) revealed that Classen continued to manage both premises. Some of the workers, including the factory's superintendent continued to serve both premises.⁵⁶ According to as revealed in his correspondence with the Treasurer,⁵⁷ in an attempt to ensure a loan, the reason behind the relocation was the distance from Zodia to Nicosia. It was necessary for the spinning and weaving establishment to be closer to the center in order to better manage the orders of the colonial government. In addition to the above, Classen noted that despite the fact that labor was much cheaper in the area of Zodia yet it was hard to find due to the mentality of the peasants. Another conjecture on the relocation of the spinning and weaving establishment was the decreasing fibre flax production in the area.⁵⁸ An argument that also coincides with Classen's stated reasoning was the fact that rural women got married at a very young age thus had to quit their jobs to stay home.⁵⁹

⁵⁵ Annual Report of the Year 1934 (Nicosia: Department of Agriculture 1935) 10.

⁵⁶ CRS/OTA, Registration No. 4427, Nicosia, (K.Zodia 48). Testimony C.Elenides (13.3.1995).

⁵⁷ CSA:SA1:1254/1922/1, Letter of Augustus Classen to Treasurer, Cyprus 3 April 1936.

⁵⁸ CRS/OTA, Registration No. 4427, Nicosia,, (K.Zodia 48). Testimony C.Elenides (13.3.1995).

⁵⁹ CRS/OTA, Registration No 2821, Nicosia, (K. Zodia.13). Testimony E. Hatziyianni (26.2.1993).

Classen tried very hard to keep the Zodia factory running. In spring 1937, taking advantage of a post in the Sunday Times (28th March 1937) titled 'More British flax need', in a letter to the Director of Agriculture gave a brief overview of flax production and processing, especially in the Morphou area.⁶⁰ In Classen's overview, from the first step of the Zodia factory in 1923 to 1937, he stated that although the flax production in 1937 was in good quantity and quality, it could not be sold due to cash flow problems. Classen suggested that the colonial government should guarantee the sale of the product to the banks or alternatively, the Department of Agriculture should buy the production, which was done in the past. Classen also stressed that the production was already available along with the generation of people that have the expertise and the experience of producing and processing flax that could make the revival of flax production and processing possible.

The Zodia factory continued its business for the production of linen thread under the supervision of Augustus Classen. In addition to the above, the Kykko Monastery was also still involved. This could be justified by a post in a newspaper⁶¹ referring to a visit of an important Egyptian linen merchant who visited the Zodia factory along with Abbot of Kykko in order to examine the prospects of a cooperation with the factory. Classen's⁶² attempts to secure a loan from the colonial government as a guarantee for the spinning and weaving establishment and the Zodia factory, were once again unsuccessful.

Yet, Classen was not ready to give up on the Zodia factory. In the official correspondence of Classen with the Director of Agriculture⁶³ he initially warned the colonial government that due to the global crisis, the inception of the WWII, the lack of linen in the international market could be a great opportunity for the Cyprus fibre flax. Furthermore, Classen insisted once more on the revival of the production and processing of fibre flax. He considered the revival and reconstruction of the factory of great importance to the Cyprus agriculture. He reminded the Director of Agriculture, which the development of the factory in 1923 was done based on the great potential that the area of Morphou exhibited in fibre flax production and processing. In Classen's second letter it was obvious that he was no longer the owner of the factory and

⁶⁰ CSA:SA1:914/1937, Letter of Augustus Classen to Director of Agriculture, Cyprus 29 April 1937.

⁶¹ 'Specialist in Linen' (« Ειδικός εις το Λινάρι»), Proini, (Nicosia, 14 July 1936) 2 (in Greek).

⁶² CSA:SA1:914/1937, Letter of Treasurer to the Secretary of State, and Letter of Secretary of State to Treasury Cyprus 17 May 1937.

⁶³ CSA: SA1:1254/1922/2, Letters of Classen to Director of Agriculture, 21 September and 14 October 1939.

that it has been returned to the Kykko Monastery. The Director of Agriculture⁶⁴ then reported that from November 1939 on, the colonial government rented the Zodia factory from the Kykko Monastery for £10/annum for two years and in the future, in the case that the work load increased the rent would also be increased to £50/annum for another two years. During the same year, the Department of Agriculture issued a newsletter⁶⁵ for fibre flax producers with instructions on good quality fibre flax and also noted the government's intention to reopen the Zodia Factory during the following season.

Despite all the above mentioned efforts from the colonial government and Clasen, the factory gradually lost its initial glamour and in 1945 the doors closed permanently. During the same period⁶⁶, the scutching machine was transferred to the School for Deaf in Nicosia. Some of the younger workers continued to work in the spinning and weaving establishment in Nicosia and the rest continued weaving at home.

The doors of the Zodia factory remained closed until 1953,⁶⁷ when a Zodia resident bought the land at an auction and built three houses in the area that used to be the Zodia factory premises.

Discussion and Conclusions for the Case of the Zodia Factory

Based on the above findings it was obvious that fibre flax production and processing was very important during the colonial period. Yet it is also profound that the Zodia factory was never stable nor profitable during the period that operated from 1924 to 1945. The production of fibre flax decreased after the WWII when the production for linseed increased (like it used to be before 1910) and consequently the factory gradually lost its power. As stated by D. Christodoulou,⁶⁸ despite the fact Cyprus flax was suitable for fibre, after 1946 it was only used as linseed. The instability of the factory as well as the ongoing changes within it, could mainly be because of the fact that within the two decades of the Zodia factory operation, it was globally a very difficult period with political instability and large fluctuation of market prices.

⁶⁴ Ibid., Director of Agriculture report, Cyprus 23 February 1940.

⁶⁵ Ibid., Newsletter on flax production, Department of Agriculture, Cyprus 11 October 1940.

⁶⁶ CRC/OTA, Registration No. 2821, Nicosia, (K. Zodia 13). Testimony E. Hatzizianni (26.2.1993).

⁶⁷ Personal Interview Chistodoulos Kattirtzies, March 2019.

⁶⁸ Demetris Christodoulou, 'The evolution of the Rural Land Use Pattern in Cyprus' (London 1959)143.

Last but not least, the financial hardship of the producers along with the inability to trust was a large negative factor for the prosperity of the sector. Both W. Bevan in 1919 and D. Christodoulou later on, characterise the Cyprus producer as very poor and very distrustful and difficult in change. The above finding was once more justified by Augustus Classen in 1937: ... *lack of commercial enterprise and the peculiar character of the Cypriot, which precludes co-operation, deprive Great Britain of a source of supply, as well as Cyprus of a source of revenue which deserves developing more than any other branch of agriculture...*⁶⁹

The Cyprus Silk Filature in Yeroskipou

The Preparation

During the first two decades of the 20th century the government took an initiative to investigate the perspective of the silk industry in Cyprus. As in the case of flax, the silk industry was a domestic industry that thrived in rural Cyprus. The investigation included sample shipments in the Imperial Institute as well as consultations with different British companies in the field of silk. The government was in the search for an investor/company to develop a silk filature in Cyprus. In December 1922, Norton Breton, the director of Henckell du Buisson and Co forwarded to the Advisory Committee on Silk Production of the Imperial Institute in London⁷⁰, a memorandum with the possible terms of agreement of his company with the colonial government of Cyprus. The present terms were the aftereffect of a thorough investigation conducted by the company. In the text, it was pointed out that only one filature should be erected in Cyprus. The continues supply of cocoons should be ensured in order to cover the filature's and consequently the company's expenses. The company further suggested the introduction of export duties as a safety measure. Due to the inexperience of the staff during the first year of operation and the potential losses , the producers should settle for lower prices. Lastly, the community authorities should be responsible of the securing of the land of the potential filature.

At this point, it is worth mentioning the in August 1925⁷¹, the company Societe Francaise de Sericulture de Marseille through the French ambassador in Cyprus, ex-

⁶⁹ CSA: SA1:914/1937, Letter of Classen to Director of Agriculture, Cyprus 29 April 1937.

⁷⁰ CSA: SA1:1181/1922, Letter of Henckell du Buisson and Co to Imperial Institute, Advisory Committee on Silk Production, Cyprus Silk Filature, London 5 December 1922.

⁷¹ CSA : SA1: 724/1922, Report on Sericulture , September 1925.

pressed their interest to erect a filature in Cyprus yet the colonial government refused since it was obvious that the search was focused on British companies.

The Cyprus Silk Filature

Based on the above data collected and actions taken by the colonial government, the Department of Agriculture proceeded, in 1925, with the erection of the Yeroskipos Filature in Paphos, which, according to the Director of Agriculture, was expected to give a huge boost to the sericulture sector of the island.⁷² The Cyprus Silk Filature commenced its business on the 25 March 1926 with great potential. It could absorb all the cocoon production of the island along with the same amount of imported cocoons.⁷³ The opening ceremony took place on the 24 of May 1926 in the presence of the Governor and the Bishop of Paphos. According to the description given in the book of Christos and Ekaterini Aristidou,⁷⁴ 'the filature was stone built. The largest hall was the silk extraction room with two lines of basins (totaling 80) and the production machines'. The description also included drying halls and quality control area. In 1926, Norton Breton, who had the full responsibility (as the president and the manager) of the establishment noted that the filature had 80 looms and employed 180 workers. He further revealed that the filature absorbed 150,000 kilos of cocoons annually from which resulted 120-130 of 100 kilo parcels of silk thread.

Working Conditions in the Filature

In December 1926, Governor Ronald Storrs, visited the filature during a tour in rural Paphos⁷⁵. He observed irregularities in the working conditions in the filature and asked for explanations. He personally asked the Secretary of State⁷⁶ to relieve Dr. Millard (the medical officer of health) from all his duties and ask him to immediately investigate the establishment. He further justified his instructions based on some observation he made during his visit. He observed that some workers had to work standing for long hours and that the atmosphere was oppressive even though the windows were open.

⁷² Annual Report of the Year 1925 (Nicosia: Department of Agriculture 1926) 7.

⁷³ J. De Leon, 'Sericulture in Cyprus' (Tel-Aviv, 1933) 8.

⁷⁴ Christos and Ekaterini Aristidou, 'Yeroskipou, The city of sacred garden' (« Η πόλη των ιερών κήπων») (Nicosia, 2010) 114 (in Greek).

⁷⁵ 'Erga ke imere tou neou kivernitou', («Έργα και ημέραι του νέου κυβερνήτου») *Neos Kypriakos Fylax*, (Limassol, 15 December 1926) 3 (in Greek).

⁷⁶ CSA: SA1:1614/1926, Letter of the Governor to the Secretary of State, Cyprus 14 December 1926.

Dr. Milland's report,⁷⁷ recorded many irregularities regarding the filature staff. He confirmed that the atmosphere where the silk was spumed was oppressive. He also confirmed that the workers had to stand at their work for nine hours a day. Moreover, the young girls that worked at the factory had to alternately dip their fingers into very hot water and then into cold water in doing a few simple mechanical actions. What seemed to bother Dr. Milland the most was the fact that most of the workers were young girls between the ages 12 and 15 and were treated very badly. During his interviews he even came across girls under twelve years of age (which was illegal). He was also troubled with the fact that many twelve year old girls had to travel two or sometimes three hours on foot to go to the filature. This alone was very stressful yet the fact that these young women had no place to rest during their lunch break made things even worse. He also reported extremely low wages. Millard's worries were the way that the young women, basically girls, were treated as he stated '...In considering the conditions of work at the filature, I am of the opinion that the conditions under which child servants are employed should also be enquired into. These children are occasionally burnt to death and their happiness or misery depends very largely upon the characters of those who employ them'. The company's respond on Dr. Millard's report directly to the Governor,⁷⁸ revealed the inhuman philosophy of the company and its representative, Norton Breton. To begin with, Breton noted that the oppressive atmosphere was normal since there were 120 basins full of hot water yet there was ample ventilation. For the alternation of hot and cold water, Breton explained that that was the procedure used and the cold water was for soothing the hands of the workers. He stated that this procedure was done for the convenience and comfort of the workers. He further stated that at the close of the day's work a bowl of very diluted sulphuric acid was provided for the workers to dip their hands in order to protect their hands from injury. Breton was very derisive in the letter when he tried to defend the company for the fact that women under the age of twelve were working in the filature stating that this was entirely outside the company's control. The same argument was used for the fact that women traveled a great distance to go to work and basically noted that it was their choice and not the company's. He did mention that an area for the workers to rest during lunch was under construction. The last part of the letter concerning the criticism regarding the wage paid, revealed the way

⁷⁷ Ibid., Letter of the Medical Officer of Health to the Chief Medical Officer, Cyprus 17 January 1927.

⁷⁸ CSA: SA1:1614/1926, Letter of the Director of the Filature to the Governor, Cyprus 10 February 1927.

the company thought and treated the work force in the filature. ‘...To English ears the amounts may sound extremely small without considering local conditions. A wage of 11/2d per day to an Aboriginal male in the Northern Territory of Australia, mentioned in Lord Apsely’s book, sound akin to slavery, but the conditions under which he lives leave him quite content with this wage..’

Norton Breton expressed his disdain regarding the ‘natives’ in many occasions. A very strong statement was made when pressure was put in the company to improve the infrastructure in order make working conditions better. ‘... As soon as the Company finds its feed i.e. begins to make a little money instead of losing it, we can do more, but my experience with the oriental has taught me to go slowly with him, if you give him benefit after benefit which he has never had before in very short time his attitude will be... “Thank you for nothing”’.

Despite the assurances given to the colonial government by Breton, the working conditions at the filature did not improve at all. During a visit of the Secretary of State in person, in September 1930, he observed that the workers were still working standing up for nine hours, and the wage was still extremely low. The Secretary of State⁷⁹ demanded a report on the working conditions in the filature and more details on the Bonus System mentioned by Breton during his visit. Once more, Breton’s reply was very disparagingly about the working force of the filature. ⁸⁰. To begin with, he noted that for similar work, workers in the US received 5 piastres, in England 3 piastres, in Italy and France 2 piastres, thus the wage of 1 piastres in Cyprus was more than satisfying !! He further informed the Secretary of State that due to the silk crisis the filature intended to further decrease the wages. For the Retirement Bonus Fund, he explained that it was a fund given to the workers at the end of the financial year and the company credited the workers with 10% of their total wages as a bonus fund. Yet, due to the financial problems that the company faced during the current period, the fund was used to pay the wages of the workers during time the filature remained closed due to the lack of cocoons. As for the extra hall , the resting area for the workers along with the stools for the comfort of the workers that had to work standing up for nine hours, Breton just stated that there was no budget to spare for this reason at the moment.

⁷⁹ CSA: SA1:887/1927, Letter of the Secretary of State to Norton Breton (Heckell du Buisson, The Cyprus Filature), Cyprus 27 September 1930.

⁸⁰ Ibid., Letter of Norton Breton to Secretary of State, Cyprus 9 October, 1930.

The Dispute of the Cocoon Merchant with the Filature's Administration

Further to the working conditions situation that occurred, the administration of the filature had another serious obstacle to overcome for the development of the establishment. It was the dispute between the local cocoon merchants and the filature that put a lot of pressure on the company.

From the very beginning, the local cocoon merchants strongly reacted to the low prices that the filature was buying cocoons. During spring 1927, Norton Breton, confidentially informed the Secretary of State⁸¹ that the local merchants bought cocoons from the producers and exported them in France and Italy where, at the same time, the filature did not have enough raw material to continue working. Breton further asked the colonial government to grant the filature an exemption permit in order to import cocoons. In addition to the above, Breton asked the government to impose export duties in order to prevent the exportation of cocoons by the merchants. In June 1928, Norton Breton informed the Secretary of State⁸² that the filature was able to survive and did not have to suspend the operations despite the persistence of the local merchants to keep the prices steady ½ piastres higher than the price of the filature. A few months later, a post in the *Eleftheria* newspaper⁸³ reported that the colonial government did not support the development of local industries, on the contrary, the government aided the development of British companies. The example given was the filature, explaining that since the beginning, the government prohibited by law the establishment of another filature and furthermore once the administration of the filature had problems with the local merchants that the government granted an exemption permit to the filature in order to import cocoons from Syria, to protect it.

Norton Breton then directly contacted Governor Storrs⁸⁴ and informed him about the many difficulties that the filature faced because of the reduced quantities of cocoons available in the filature. He further informed the Governor that the local merchants (and especially the ones in the Paphos District) were about to export cocoons in Greece and asked for an exemption permit in order to import cocoons like in 1927.

⁸¹ CSA: SA1:887/1927, Letter of Norton Breton (Heckell du Buisson, The Cyprus Filature) to the Secretary of State, Cyprus 24 May 1927.

⁸² *Ibid.*, Letter of Norton Breton (Heckell du Buisson, The Cyprus Filature) to the Secretary of State, Cyprus 7 June 1928.

⁸³ 'From other towns, From Larnaca' («Από τις άλλες πόλεις, Λάρνακα») *Eleftheria* (Limassol 14 November 1928) 3 (in Greek).

⁸⁴ CSA: SA1: 887/1927, Letter of Norton Breton to Storrs, Cyprus 1 August 1929.

Once more, the permit was granted. Yet, despite the government's assistance, in 1930 the filature was forced to temporarily close⁸⁵ since most of the cocoons in the market were exported to France. The filature, according to Breton, was not in a position to continue imports of cocoons because of the very high cost.

The dispute between the administration of the filature and the merchants carried on. During the following year the company tried repeatedly to consult with the merchant representatives all around Cyprus. In May 1931, the colonial government tried to help save the company once more: Wrongfully, tried to impose export duties for the cocoons yet the bill was not voted by the Greek Cypriot members of the Legislative Council in the absence of the ottoman members⁸⁶. The persistence of the colonial government was even more obvious in 1932, when the Secretary of State⁸⁷ informed Norton Breton about the government's intention to pass the export duty law for the cocoons seeking assurances than in that case the filature would reopen. In April 1932 the export duties for the cocoon law was passed for the impose of 1 shelling and 3 piastres export duty subject to change by the Governor at any time through the Cyprus Gazette⁸⁸. This provision in the above mentioned regulation demonstrated that the colonial government was fully aware of that the law was neither correct nor fair.

The annual report of the Director of Agriculture 1933⁸⁹ stated that the filature was able to continue operation for nine months having adequate amount of cocoons. During 1934 though, the situation got worse and Governor Palmer informed the Secretary of State for the Colonies⁹⁰ that he had already discussed the options of the fate of the filature with the President (Norton Breton) and the possibility of the final closure of the establishment. Norton Breton suggested the subsidy of the difference between the prices of the cocoons from the merchants to the ones the filature normally bought for a year or alternatively grants an o exception of export duties to the UK to the filature. Palmer further informed the Secretary of State for the Colonies that he already informed the president of the filature that the colonial government was not in

⁸⁵ Ibid., Letter of Norton Breton to the Secretary of State, Cyprus 19 February 1930.

⁸⁶ 'The cocoon issue. Do we benefit from the monopoly?' («το Ζήτημα των κουκουλιών»), *Paphos* (Paphos 29 May 1931) 2 (in Greek).

⁸⁷ CSA: SA1: 887/1927, Letter of Secretary of State to Norton Breton (Heckell du Buisson, The Cyprus Filature), Cyprus 10 March 1932.

⁸⁸ Ibid., A Law to amend the customs, Cyprus 5 April 1932.

⁸⁹ Annual Report of the Year 1933 (Nicosia: Department of Agriculture 1934) 16.

⁹⁰ CSA: SA1:887/1927, Letter of the Governor Palmer to the Secretary of State for the Colonies, Cyprus 15 May 1934.

a position to subsidize the difference in price and asked whether it was possible grant the exception to the filature. Two months later the British government replied to Governor Palmer⁹¹ that no exception was possible due to a special agreement with France (Protocol Cmd 4633 Silk duties recommendations of the import duties, Cmd 4632, Trade and Commerce Protocols, UK and French Republic). In August 1934 a notice in the press⁹² informed the public to settle any debts with the establishment since the filature was about to close for good. The filature (for the phase under investigation for the purpose of the current paper) closed down during the Summer of 1934. The 1934 report of the Director of Agriculture⁹³ stated that during 1934 the filature was able to continue its operation for a short period of time before closing down for good due to adverse marketing conditions in the silk industry.

Discussion and Conclusions for the Case of the Filature

During the first decades of the 20th century, sericulture was a promising home industry. The erection of the Cyprus Silk Filature was a move by the British Empire to promote Cyprus Silk yet the decision to appoint a British company to establish and operate the filature in Cyprus proved to be a mistake. The filature took advantage of the very poor peasants in rural Paphos and very serious abuse of the labour force was indeed reported repeatedly. Furthermore, the dispute of the British company with the local merchants (due again to the exploitation of rural Cyprus) was a serious issue that the company was not able to overcome and in the end, forced it to close.

To sum up, the two factories operating almost simultaneously in two different areas of Cyprus, failed to meet the colonial government's and the producer's expectations. The reasons behind the Flax Processing Factory in Zodia failure were the producer's attitude as well as the fact that committee managing the financial situation lost control despite the Department's of Agriculture efforts to keep the factory running for the sake of the producers. On the other hand, the filature was owned by a British company that tried to take advantage of every aspect of the operation of the filature. The working conditions were extremely bad and the payment of the producers meager. The filature failed at the end, despite the colonial government's extreme efforts because of the power that the local merchants exhibited.

⁹¹ Ibid., Letter of P. Cuhllife-Lister to Governor Palmer, London 27 September 1934.

⁹² 'Filature' («Μεταξοπυργείο») *Proini* (Nicosia, 17 August 1934) 3(in Greek).

⁹³ Annual Report of the Year 1934 (Nicosia: Department of Agriculture 1935) 41.

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