

Ireland and the End of the British Empire. The Republic and its Role in the Cyprus Emergency

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Translated in Greek:

Η Ιρλανδία και το Τέλος της Βρετανικής Αυτοκρατορίας. Η Ιρλανδική Ανάμειξη στον Αγώνα της ΕΟΚΑ

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This monograph was first published in 2014. A Greek translation was published in 2023. The Greek edition of the book is of the highest standard, and includes a wealth of additional footnotes by the editors. The author deserves praise for this well-documented volume. The first chapter analyses, in a detailed manner, the relationship between Ireland and Cyprus under the British Rule during 1878-1954, whereas the remaining chapters focus on the crucial period 1955-1959. The author has carefully studied and assesses a number of diverse sources, the Irish press, the IRA, the official foreign policy of Ireland, the role of Irish military and high-ranked administrative personnel in Cyprus, as well as the Irish Catholic press, including the Church of Ireland. This enables a comprehensive narrative which definitely settles existing questions, but simultaneously paves the way for new questions and more research on the subject.

The originality of the book is that it transfers the narrative from the relationship between the EOKA and IRA fighters, through individual narrations, to the search of an overall assessment of the relations between Cyprus and Ireland during the period within the wider setting of British-Ireland relations. The focus on the significant Irish presence in the British administration of Cyprus and the role that those Irish high-

ranked officials had in the history of the island is especially significant. The author correctly refers to the reaction of noted Cypriot poet Costas Montis who, when informed that the Irish Daniel Kinsella had been killed in the Liopetri battle, wrote: 'It was a great surprise for us the news that you were killed Daniel, that we killed you. We did not know that you were battling against us, we could not have imagined that you were battling against us.' The natural reaction of Greek Cypriots was to consider the Irish as their allies in the fight against Britain, considering Ireland's history. Whereas, however, it is true that Ireland in general viewed the EOKA struggle with sympathy and support, the reality, as the author carefully narrates, is more multidimensional and complex.

Whereas there was no Irish influence in the EOKA struggle, there were close relations between IRA and EOKA. Indeed, this was the closest case of cooperation between the IRA and members of a foreign anticolonial movement. The peculiar choice of the British to imprison members of the two organisations in British prisons led to the exchange of experiences and interaction amongst them. For Greek Cypriots, IRA fighters were comrades in arms. However, at the same time, as the author shows, the British colonial administration comprised of leading Irish, whom the Greek Cypriots faced as British. The author reminds that Chief Justice Sir Eric Hallinan, who presided the trial of the ship 'St Georgios' in 1955, as well as several trials of leading EOKA fighters such as Michalakis Karaolis and Andreas Demetriou, was Irish. James Trainor and Charles Vesey Boyle, judges of the special Assize Court established in Nicosia in November of 1955, were also Irish. Attorney-General James Henry, who had the overall supervision of criminal prosecutions against the EOKA fighters, and who had substituted Criton Tornaritis when the latter was sent to London in order to carry out special duties, was also Irish. Even Hallinan's successor, Sir Paget John Bourke, was Irish. When the publisher of the Cypriot newspaper *Times of Cyprus* Charles Foley, who descended from Ireland, was prosecuted because of a newspaper article allegedly violating the emergency regulations, the defendant (Foley), the prosecutor (Henry) and the judge (Hallinan) were all Irish, despite the fact that the trial was taking place in Cyprus under British rule.

The author discusses the internal state of Irish officials through an analysis of primary sources. Clearly senior officials are not expected to act against their Government and this was also evident in the position of even Greek Cypriot officials and judges during the period. However, the fact remains: when EOKA issued proclamations against Hallinan, Henry and the others, it targeted distinguished Irish high-

ranked officials, whom it considered as British. British and Irish officials therefore coincided in the exercise of British administration in Cyprus, despite Irish sympathy towards EOKA. The author briefly mentions that Barra O' Briain, the first President of the Cypriot Supreme Court following the 1960 Independence, was also Irish. The author's published research does not, of course, extend beyond the period of the British rule; however, I see fit to add a comment that might reinforce some of her arguments regarding the internal state of Irish leading officials. The 1961 *Kouppis* case referred to the conviction of former EOKA fighters for unlawfully carrying arms. The Supreme Court imposed on appeal six months imprisonment. The majority judgment was delivered by the two Greek Cypriot Judges (George Vasiliades and Julius Josephides) and the Turkish Cypriot Judge (Mehmet Zekia). The Irish President of the Court Barra O' Briain observed characteristically in his dissenting judgment that, whereas the accused indeed carried the arms unlawfully while they were EOKA fighters, it was a fact that the Republic of Cyprus, its flag and the Court itself, owed their very existence to EOKA.

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