Acceleration of History

War, Conflict, and Politics

edited by

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The Acceleration of History and Decolonization in the Eastern Mediterranean

The Case of Cyprus, 1945–1959

Andreas Karyos

INTRODUCTION

The end of the Second World War helped concretize a powerful bipolar global system, with the United States and the USSR as its main protagonists. At the same time, the process of decolonization, namely, the entrance of the European colonial empires (including Britain) into a phase in which they retreated from their colonial possessions and gradually dissolved their empires, became another characteristic of the postwar order.[1]

The aim of the present chapter is to examine whether the struggle carried out in the late 1950s by the Greek-Cypriot liberation movement of EOKA (*Ethniki Organosis Kyprion Agoniston*, National Organisation of Cypriot Fighters)[2] against the British colonial forces in Cyprus hastened the British decision to terminate its colonial rule on the island and establish the Cyprus Republic (August 1960). International historiography about the four-year insurgency in Cyprus has undoubtedly produced works focused on the political, diplomatic, and military planes, especially in recent years. There is further ground to be covered, however, not least concerning whether the phenomenon generally described as "acceleration of history," the increased speed of historical events, was in evidence

during the late period of British rule over Cyprus (the 1950s), which was marked by London's decision to grant the island independence. A variety of works bearing one way or another on British postwar colonial policies or Greek-Cypriot conduct of that time provide an important backdrop to our analysis.

BRITAIN AND CYPRUS: 1945–1955

Britain, Cyprus, and Middle East Priorities

Before turning toward the British approach to Cyprus as a Crown Colony, we note that the British Empire after the Second World War, politically and economically weak, coping with the mastery of the Cold War over international politics,[3] and facing the national aspirations of the colonial masses for self-determination and national liberation, had begun to experience serious pressures on its imperial obligations (Darwin 1991; Hatzivassiliou 2002, 341–44). The British government had already made two painful choices: to grant India independence in 1947 and to withdraw from Palestine in 1948. It was therefore reluctant to agree to any further development that could challenge the existing *status quo* or lead to any further retreat from empire (Karyos 2011, 34; Holland and Markides 2006, 218).

It is equally important to take into account the challenges experienced by Britain during the 1940s and 1950s in relation to the regional environment of the Eastern Mediterranean and the Middle East: the Soviet Union's effort to penetrate these critical regions (especially after 1953); the rise of Arab nationalism (especially in Egypt) and its increasingly anti-Western rhetoric; the Arab-Israeli conflict that soon broke out in Palestine; and American opposition to British initiatives in the Middle East (Hatzivassiliou 2002, 178–79; 2005, 286).

This state of affairs had crucial implications on the evolving Cyprus question. In the case of Cyprus, the mobilization (and contribution) of its inhabitants to the common front formed by Britain to contain the advancement of Fascism and Nazism once again raised longstanding hopes for the fulfillment of the desire for the union of Cyprus with Greece (*Enosis*). This clashed directly with Britain's uncompromising decision to maintain full sovereignty over Cyprus. The British stance originated in the greater strategic importance the Middle East gained in the eyes of British leadership after 1945; this geographical area was the only significant strategic territory in the globe that fell within the exclusive British zone of responsibility, intervention, and interest. Thus from a British point of view, control over the Middle East enabled Britain to protect its status as a Great Power (Hatzivassiliou 2013, 203). It was no coincidence that in the late 1940s a report by the British chiefs of staff exercised pres-

sure on Whitehall to give more emphasis to the defense of the Middle East than to the defense of Europe (Hatzivassiliou 2005, 287).

But how was Cyprus linked to London's geostrategic priorities in the Middle East? The island was the only territory in the wider region over which Britain maintained full sovereign control without any inherent limitations an international agreement (that is, the agreement for the Suez base) usually involved (Hatzivassiliou 2005). Therefore Britain's strategic and security assessment of the Middle East ruled out any prospect of abandoning Cyprus (Hatzivassiliou 2013, 203, 206, 209). Such priorities became even more vital when a crisis sparked in 1951 by growing anti-British hostility in Egypt toward the Suez base (not to be confused with the more famous Suez Crisis in 1956) forced London to re house the British Middle East Headquarters in Cyprus in 1954 (Colonial Reports 1956, 8); in this manner the colony became a key military foothold to serve British airpower in the Middle East and a base for covert facilities and listening stations for intercepting signals in the southern Soviet Union (Aldrich 2001, 567–69; Bell 1976, 124). Simultaneously, developments in Egypt made the government of Anthony Eden more vulnerable to criticism from a group in the Conservative Party on the charge of "liquidation of Empire." Therefore the British decision to preserve full sovereignty over Cyprus was not rhetorical but aimed at making clear within the United Kingdom and overseas that Britain was resolved to hold its position as the dominant power in the Middle East (Hatzivassiliou 2005, 290–91).

Britain, the Greeks, and Enosis

The sober-minded exploration of Cyprus's crucial position within the context of British postwar world strategy does not provide us with any strong evidence to confirm a hypothesis that Britain was predisposed to withdraw from Cyprus and that, even more, EOKA's subversive campaign intensified such a process. On the contrary, the British attitude at the time reflected the adamant British position to reject any proposal that would contribute to the termination of colonial rule over Cyprus: in September 1945, Archbishop Damaskinos, the Greek Regent, proposed to London the union of Cyprus with Greece in exchange for bases in Cyprus or Greece. His initiative did not meet with approval, mainly due to opposition from the Colonial Office and the chiefs of staff; the latter reconfirmed their position in 1951 (Vlachos 2003, 15; Richter 2011, 85). In early 1947, the Greek parliament passed a resolution in favor of the pursuit of *Enosis*, but Britain disregarded it (Hatzivassiliou 2013, 205). The Church of Cyprus (*Ethnarchy*), an institution with a protagonist role in Cypriot political affairs, sponsored a plebiscite in January 1950 in which around 96 percent of the Greek-Cypriot votes were for the union of Cyprus with Greece; nevertheless, the British side gave its customary reply that there

was no possibility for any change in the international status of Cyprus (Crouzet 2011, 257; Holland 2001, 46; Crawshaw 1978, 49). In May 1951, the Greek government under Sophocles Venizelos, having secured the consent of the Greek political elites, promoted *Enosis* through a similar proposal to that of Damaskinos: it proposed to Britain the possession of military bases not only in Cyprus but, further on, in mainland Greece. Whitehall again ruled out any discussion with Athens (Vlachos 2003, 46–54). Moreover, Britain's firm attitude against *Enosis* was clearly voiced by Anthony Eden, the British Foreign Minister, during his private conversation in November 1951 with the Deputy Foreign Minister of Greece Evangelos Averoff-Tossizza. The British official plainly stated that the British Empire was not for sale and that the issue of Cyprus was not only closed but nonexistent (Richter 2011, 77, 82, 94; Vlachos 2003, 56). The provocative denial by London to discuss the Cyprus problem, even within the framework of a Greco-British understanding, dominated the *Enosis* discourse between Greece and Britain during the following years. In September 1953, however, the tone sharpened when Eden stated to the prime minister of Greece Marshall Alexandros Papagos that there existed no Cyprus problem for the British government (Holland 2001, 69–70). To this incident was added a statement made in 1954 by the Conservative Under-Secretary for the Colonies Henry Hopkinson. His notorious "never" in reply to a question from a Labor MP about the dominion status of Cyprus and the ultimate right of self-determination enraged the Greek side, particularly the Greek-Cypriots (Crawshaw 1978, 76, 81–82). Additionally, in the same year, Greece appealed to the UN, asking the organization to grant the right of self-determination to Cyprus (an alternative tactic to achieve *Enosis*). In this manner Athens adopted the policy of "internationalization" of the Cyprus Question, hoping to create international pressure that would force London to accept negotiations on *Enosis*. British diplomacy nonetheless successfully confronted the Greek appeal by gathering enough support within the General Assembly of the UN for *not* discussing the case of Cyprus for "the time being" (Richter 2011, 192–207).

BRITAIN AND CYPRUS: 1955–1959

The British Diplomatic and Political Initiatives

That EOKA's insurgent campaign in Cyprus did not accelerate a decision by London prior to the insurgency to gradually retreat from the colony also becomes evident when focusing on the political and diplomatic initiatives of the imperial power to control the insurgency. From the onset of the revolt, Whitehall gave preference to diplomatic maneuvers such as the Tripartite Conference between Britain, Turkey, and

Greece (London, August 1955). The conference was presented as a discussion of strategic matters related to the Eastern Mediterranean. Its genuine purpose, however, was to restore Ankara as a key factor in the settlement of the Cyprus question. The logic behind the new policy adopted by London (which now distanced itself from the line that Cyprus was an internal affair of the British Empire and began emphasizing the international dimensions of the issue) was "to invite the Turks to balance the Greeks" (Hatzivassiliou 2013, 217). More specifically, it attempted to add more fuel to the hot disputes between Athens and Ankara about the island's future, to prove their positions were clearly incompatible so as to present British plans for self-government as a mutually conciliatory solution.[4] Therefore in the face of such a calculated deadlock, British sovereignty over the colony would be maintained (Holland 2001, 114, 124–25, 136–45; Mallinson 2011, 23).

Another interesting point is that during the four-year insurgency in Cyprus, London proposed to the Greek side four constitutional formulas for a settlement of the conflict. Any superficial interpretation, however, that from the onset of EOKA's subversive campaign the British intensified their decision to withdraw must remain on the fringe. As analyses of archival material reveal, the British formulas (the Harding-Makarios talks in late 1955 and early 1956, the Radcliffe Report in 1956, the Foot Plan in 1958, and the Macmillan Plan the same year) did not lead to a progressive British withdrawal from Cyprus; on the contrary, they promoted the survival of the colonial regime based on the establishment of complex self-governing constitutions or the introduction of partitionist dynamics (Christodoulides 2010, 44–137; Hatzivassiliou 2013, 219–20, 224–25, 230–32; Karyos 2011, 81–87). Indeed, the "Harding-Makarios Talks" was a series of seven meetings between the British governor of Cyprus, Field-Marshal Sir John Harding, and the leader of the Greek-Cypriots, Archbishop Makarios III, to discuss the future international status of Cyprus. These meetings lasted from October 1955 until February 1956 and were so crucial for the events that followed[5] that some scholars consider them a lost opportunity for a peaceful settlement of the dispute. During the talks, Britain indirectly accepted the eventual exercise of the right of self-determination for the Cypriots, but with gradual constitutional developments in the interim (Averoff-Tossizza 1982, 95; Kranidiotis 1987, 12; Alexandrakis et al. 1987, 77). The new British line marked the retreat of Whitehall from its previous uncompromising position (that the principle of self-determination was not applicable to Cyprus), at least at a theoretical level. Nevertheless, the formula upon which Britain based its offer was too complex and did not contain any substantial guarantees that London would eventually respect its commitments. More importantly, opposite to Greek-Cypriot desires, the issue of continued British sovereignty for an indefinite period remained open. Consequently, the negotiations during the seventh meeting reached a deadlock, and a few days

later the British deported Makarios to another British colony, the Seychelles Islands (Hatzivassiliou 1998, 77, 81).

In late 1956, the British side made another constitutional offer for a settlement of the conflict. The Radcliffe Report (or the "Radcliffe Plan" as it is titled in Greek-language historiography) did not provide for self-determination (*Enosis*); it made no mention of it at all. It didn't provide for genuine self-government; it suggested the implementation of a diarchic system according to which political power would be distributed between the British colonial authorities and the Cypriot people through a restored Cypriot Legislative Assembly. But the substance of the Radcliffe Report was to secure sovereignty in British hands while allowing the colonial government to function regardless of any constitutional opposition from Cypriot elected representatives. Indicatively, the report enabled the colonial government to interfere in the Cypriot system of education; foreign affairs, defense, and internal security would remain the governor's responsibility. The members of the parliamentary government would be appointed by the governor of Cyprus, who would have the power to dismiss and replace them, and the governor's decrees would prevail over those of the colonial legislation. Finally, the governor would be the only authority to decide whether or not his actions fell within with his competences (Lambrou 2008, 53–54; Hatzivassiliou 1998, 86–96; Christodoulides 2010, 78–109). Above all, that the presentation of the Radcliffe Report in the British House of Commons was accompanied by the statement of the British Secretary for the Colonies, Alan Lennox-Boyd, on December 19, 1956, which recognized that the principle of self-determination on a communal basis should be applied not only to the Greek-Cypriots but also to the Turkish-Cypriots, thereby introducing the threat of partition, can be clearly interpreted as an effort to politically intimidate the Greek community to desist from its pursuit of *Enosis*, terminate the EOKA struggle, and orient itself toward solutions in line with British strategic interests, particularly self-government (Christodoulides 2010, 109).

In early 1958, the recently appointed governor of Cyprus Sir Hugh Foot devised a plan for a temporary (but not definite) settlement. The new constitutional offer aspired to fulfill the demands of Turkey and to satisfy British priorities, despite the awareness of British officials that some of its provisions were inapplicable without the use of force. The Foot Plan proposed the introduction of a self-government constitution for seven years; after the termination of this period, a final decision about Cyprus's international status would be reached by Britain, Turkey, and Greece, with the consent of the two largest ethnic communities of the island. The plan adopted the British statement for the separate exercise of the right of self-determination for the Greeks and the Turks of Cyprus (although the Turkish population was dispersed throughout Cyprus, resulting in no Turkish-Cypriot majorities), whereas provisions were in-

cluded for the preservation of sovereign British bases. Moreover, Archbishop Makarios would be allowed to return to Cyprus and the Emergency measures would be revoked. Both Athens and Ankara expressed opposition to the Foot Plan for different reasons (Foot 1964, 159; Christodoulides 2010, 114–19).

After the impasse that emerged in the wake of the Foot Plan, the British side continued its effort to design a new formula that might resolve the Cyprus Question. On June 19, 1958 British prime minister Harold Macmillan presented a new proposal that became known as the "Macmillan Plan." The British offer proposed the continuation of the British sovereignty over Cyprus for seven years and a shared sovereignty (condominium) between Britain, Greece, and Turkey after this period. Simultaneously, the governments of Greece and Turkey would appoint representatives who would assist the British governor in the administration of the island. The Greek-Cypriots and the Turkish-Cypriots would maintain British citizenship, but they would also obtain the citizenship of their motherlands. With regard to communal affairs, the two largest ethnic groups of Cyprus would decide on the principle of maximum communal autonomy: two parliaments would be established, one for each community (Reddaway 1986, 107–10; Hatzivassiliou 1998, 97–107; Christodoulides 2010, 120–37). The substance of the proposal bore a partitionist dynamic and, according to a Greek diplomat of the time, Angelos Vlachos (1999, 434), "the Plan typically did not provide for partition, but it did, in reality establish it." According to the same source, this new British offer was devised by London to force Greece to choose between two "evils": preservation of British sovereignty over Cyprus or partition after seven years.

One researcher may suggest that, with regard to these constitutional proposals, the full-scale physical struggle in Cyprus accelerated the insertion of criterion into the discussion of the Cyprus problem that gave more emphasis to the international balance of power than to the Cypriot political scene. Nonetheless, Britain's movement in this direction can be seen in many of the actions it had undertaken since its arrival on the island; one of the most significant examples is that Britain took control of Cyprus in 1878 simply to prevent other European powers from doing so (Dwight 1934; Beckett 2001, 152). Therefore British diplomacy with regard to Cyprus during this period should not be perceived as any sort of acceleration, but as a method London adopted to handle the crisis in an international context.

The British Counter-Insurgency Methods

That London was unwilling to retreat from Cyprus as soon as the Greek-Cypriot insurgency broke out is also indicative of Britain's attitude toward internal security. Initially, the policy makers in London did not

opt for forceful suppression as the proper reaction when EOKA opened its subversive campaign in April 1955, mainly because they underestimated the insurgent organization. On the contrary, they gave priority to diplomatic initiatives such as calling the Tripartite Conference in London and blocking a possible discussion of the Cyprus Question at the United Nations. During this period, Britain proceeded with a progressive tightening of internal security, including the imposition of curfews, military control of road traffic, and more patrols in the countryside, all to supplement its political handling of the insurgency. Whitehall also decided to increase the strength of its military force on the island (Karyos 2013a, 39–41; Blaxland 1971, 297).

In October 1955, Field Marshal Sir John Harding, a prominent military man, was appointed as governor of Cyprus and provided with ample military units and advanced military equipment. He was given a green light to declare a state of emergency that involved, among other things, control of movement, detention of persons suspected of "terrorism," collective punishment of the Cypriot population, wider powers for the police and the army, and the imposition of the death penalty (Karyos 2013a, 42–43). Harding's pattern of activity included the formation of a centralized system to achieve close cooperation between the civic authorities, the police, and the army. Special attention was given to security, communications, public relations and intelligence, and an antismuggling campaign was launched, with increased navy patrols (Carver 1978, 204). Above all, it was necessary for the field marshal to free up manpower to conduct large-scale search operations (the big sweeps) of EOKA bases up in the mountains and in the countryside. Thus more personnel were recruited, primarily from the Turkish-Cypriot community, to strengthen the police, whose staff grew from 1,397 in 1954 to 5,878 in 1956; an influx of troops augmented the military garrison to more than 20,000 men by early 1956 (Corum 2006, 29, 31; Blaxland 1971, 298; Robbins 2012, 726).

When the British authorities realized that the challenge posed by EOKA remained significant, they did not hesitate to turn toward more austere methods, thereby seeking a definite military solution to the Cyprus Question. They deported Archbishop Makarios III to the archipelago of Seychelles, which destroyed any bridges that could lead to a political settlement (Holland 2001, 214). Such a development marked the beginning of a new phase of the conflict, during which the physical confrontation between the forces of the British colonial regime and EOKA escalated rapidly (Karyos 2013a, 42). Nonetheless, beginning in 1957 the preference of London for political criterion to effect a solution was a nascent idea in the mind of British prime minister Harold Macmillan, in 1957, and by autumn 1958 he initiated a new policy for Cyprus: he reestablished the political factor as the most decisive, playing an arbitrating role between Athens, Ankara, and the two largest communities of Cyprus so as to preserve British sovereignty; at the same time, his own role

in the process would enable him to circumnavigate the necessity to crush EOKA with force (Holland 2001, 374; Markides 2010, 424). In December 1958, Macmillan urged the British garrison in Cyprus to intensify its efforts to defeat EOKA, which would improve Britain's position during negotiations (Markides 2010, 424–25).

Overall, the primacy of security initiatives with regard to a solution to the Cyprus question proved unsuccessful, in that British military (counter-insurgency) prestige and Anglo-Cypriot relations were gradually battered, whereas EOKA survived to the end as a considerable force. London's hardening of its stance, however, as demonstrated by its counter-insurgency measures, reflects its will to preserve the colonial regime in Cyprus (Karyos 2013a, 41–42).

Any Acceleration of History?

If there is any evidence of acceleration of events with respect to the Cyprus question after 1945, it relates to the dynamic of the Cypriot *Enosis* movement itself . The origins of the demand for *Enosis* as a national claim were closely connected with the development of Greek irredentism on the Greek mainland, which can be traced back to the nineteenth century. Though the formative stage of the *Enosis* movement occurred in the late Ottoman period, it was manifested as a solid and direct demand during British colonial rule. The mediums through which Greek-Cypriots expressed their national *desiderata* were peaceful: petitions or pleas to the governor of Cyprus; missions to the British government in London; speeches during sporting events; articles in the press; plebiscites;[6] and the participation of Greek-Cypriot volunteers in the Greek armed forces on various occasions (Hadjidemetriou 2007, 331–33; Papapolyviou 2013a, 172–73). Petros Papapolyviou (2013b, 298–99) points out that "the rhetoric of the *Enosis* movements gradually became more aggressive, but in substance no one considered that any alternative existed than the usual practice of memorandums, resolutions and noisy mass meetings in favor of union with Greece." The years from 1920 to 1925 were a period of strong disappointment due to the British attitude against *Enosis*, which contravened Britain's declarations during the Great War that it fought for the principle of nationalities. Nevertheless, an inclination toward a forceful solution did not dominate Greek-Cypriot politics. During the years from 1925 to 1931, the new Greek-Cypriot political leadership did not dispute the demand for *Enosis*; it paid more attention to the efforts necessary to develop the island's economy (Papapolyviou 2013b, 299). In this context, relations between the Greek-Cypriots and the British ruling elite sharpened, resulting in the Greek-Cypriot uprising of October 1931, which was suppressed by British forces. The harsh measures the colonial authorities adopted over the following years, including a revocation of the Cyprus Constitution, resulted into a further widening of the gap be-

tween Britain and the Greek-Cypriot masses (Holland 2001, 31). As for the demand for *Enosis*, it "had been obscured, though not eradicated" for the remainder of the 1930s (Holland and Markides 2006, 215).

The outbreak of the Second World War, however, was followed by a revival of calls for *Enosis* from the Greek-Cypriot community. As Robert Holland and Diana Markides acutely state, "The Second World War . . . put the enosis ideal back into the frame of public consciousness" (2006, 215). After the termination of the war, the crisis of trust between the Greek-Cypriots and the British reached its zenith and moved rapidly toward a more confrontational level as the 1950s unfolded. The memoirs of Angelos Vlachos (2003, 10–11), a Greek diplomat, vividly describe the sentiment of urgency that prevailed among the Greek-Cypriot community. The Greek-Cypriot elites and the public of the 1950s were gripped by the feeling of "if not now, when?" (Hatzivassiliou 2005, 26–27). According to Doros Alastos (1960, 30), the conduct of most of the Greek-Cypriots is epitomized in the words of a woman from Paphos, who asked him in the late 1950s, "How much longer could we have waited? Had we not waited long enough?" The orientation of the Greek community of Cyprus toward a radical approach to the Cyprus Question was given its character and direction by exacerbated impatience: the idealistic nature of the *Enosis* movement had already been radicalized—after the events of 1931 but especially after 1945—by the bitter disappointment and frustration brought about by British determination to preserve the island's colonial status.[7] Indeed, it is fundamental to our analysis to interpret the standpoint of the Greek-Cypriot community of the time: the great majority of Greeks of Cyprus came to feel successive British governments had been deceiving them since the beginning of British rule in 1878, and that London's policy for the island would not change, even subsequent to global developments, such as the two world wars (Hatzivassiliou 2005, 25). Such an assessment appeared to make more sense, particularly after 1945, when other territories of the British Empire (Burma, Ceylon, India, Palestine, and Pakistan) moved rapidly toward independence. Speeches, memoranda, and missions, even plebiscites, all peaceful means, seemed to have no effect on London (Alastos 1960, 60). Under these circumstances, the Greek-Cypriots gradually came to believe the normal roads were blocked and that the only available solution was a resort to force.[8] In this light, the pursuit of political aims involving physical methods gained ground in Cypriot politics and finally materialized as the secret organization of EOKA (Hatzivassiliou 2005, 25–27).

Having explained the mentality that dominated the late *Enosis* movement, the exploration of the course of events after 1945 is essential to fully understand the expanding *Enosis* dynamic on the Cypriot home front. Despite the conviction that various British civil servants had expressed from time to time during the 1950s that the Greek-Cypriots were moderate people incapable of radicalization and that the real threat came specif-

ically from *Enosis* supporters in Greece and not from the Greek-Cypriots on the island, this was mostly wishful thinking (Karyos 2011, 37–39). Such perceptions were in fact counter-balanced by the anxiety of the British colonial authorities who, due to the enthusiasm and the prolonged persistence of the *Enosis* movement, felt they had been living on the edge of a precipice since the establishment of British rule in 1878 and, moreover, that the danger of a physical rebellion had been in the air since at least the beginning of the twentieth century.[9] Such feelings grew stronger during the Second World War: Governor Sir Charles Woolley was convinced a new "trial of strength" between the British and the pro-*Enosis* Greek-Cypriots would occur before too long (Holland and Markides 2006, 217). In 1941 the communist party of AKEL (*Anorthotiko Komma Ergazomenou Laou*, Progressive Party for the Working People) was founded. The increasing popularity of AKEL provoked, in 1943, the reflex of the Greek-Cypriot Right: the latter began to organize in the form of a new political entity, KEK (*Kypriakon Ethnikon Komma*, Cypriot National Party) and pursued an alliance with the Church of Cyprus to confront the common communist "danger." KEK's main political claim was the granting of political liberties and *Enosis*, but the purpose of *Enosis* was included in AKEL's rhetoric too. The contest between the Left and the Right was manifested intensely in various political, economic, and social activities; eventually, this affected the ideal of *Enosis* itself, and AKEL intensified its call for *Enosis* during 1944–1945 (Holland and Markides 2006, 216; Papapolyviou 2010, 19–21). Indicatively, the 1944 visit of Sir Cosmo Parkinson, a high-ranking British official of the Colonial Office, met with an enormous number of pro-*Enosis* petitions. That same year, AKEL was the organizing force behind a strike held to give the Greek-Cypriots the opportunity to voice their national feelings. The protest was terminated, and colonial forces then pursued several prosecutions (Crawshaw 1978, 32). The increase of cries for *Enosis*, as well as the growing political strength of AKEL, forced British authorities to resort to repressive reaction: on March 25, 1945, during the celebration of Greek Independence Day in Lefkoniko, the police opened fire, killing three Greek-Cypriots (Papapolyviou 2010, 21);[10] on October 8, 1945, a demonstration by Cypriot soldiers against further service overseas ended with the death of a sergeant and the wounding of four soldiers (Crawshaw 1978, 32). In December 1945, the leadership of the trade union movement of PSE (*Pankypria Syntechniaki Epitropi*, Pancyprian Committee of Workers),[11] which maintained links with AKEL, was sentenced to prison for seditious conspiracy. The colonial authorities released the leaders of PSE within nine months, but the organization had already been proscribed (Adams 1971, 28). The arrival of the new British governor of Cyprus, Lord Winster, on March 27, 1947, was met with a boycott of his reception by Greek-Cypriots; only Greek-Cypriot officials attended (Crawshaw 1978, 36). The record of aggressive anti-British behavior described so far neither implies

that the Greek-Cypriots physically harassed the British troops during these years, nor that law and order were under serious threat. It must be plainly understood, however, that the pursuit of *Enosis* had indeed started down a more persistent course toward radicalization. The echo of the deteriorating conditions could no longer be ignored by London, which attempted to preserve its sovereignty over Cyprus through the introduction of a degree of self-government. A Consultative Assembly[12] was convened in the colony in 1947–1948 to draw up a constitution with the participation of British authorities, seven Turkish-Cypriot representatives, ten Greek-Cypriots (eight came from AKEL),[13] and one Maronite. The Church of Cyprus and the Right refused to collaborate, maintaining that they would settle for nothing less than the immediate granting of *Enosis*.[14] The British constitutional proposal failed to fulfill Greek-Cypriot expectations for authentic self-government, and the Church grasped the opportunity to describe it as "phoney." AKEL, which up to that moment had been strongly criticized by the church and the Right for its collaboration with the British, sharply reversed its position, withdrew its representatives, and called for *Enosis* with more ardent zeal than it had before (Holland 2001, 40–41). Hereafter, the influence of the Left on the *Enosis* movement declined, to the great advantage of the Church of Cyprus. August 1948 witnessed serious riots between the Right-wing and the Left-wing unions at the mines of Amiandos; these riots illustrated the competitive rivalry between the ecclesiastical Right and the secular Left for dominance within the Greek-Cypriot community—this rivalry was the distinguishing feature of Cypriot politics during the late 1940s. Still, the British did not escape a connection to the crisis: the Right-wing unions accused the authorities of failing to take effective measures against the communists, while the Left-wing unions blamed the British side because, according to them, the police showed "almost benevolent toleration" to Right-wing aggressiveness against the Left trade unionists (Crawshaw 1978, 39–40).

The beginning of the following decade saw the further acceleration of the *Enosis* movement alongside an escalation of anticolonial agitation. This shift was reflected in the constant requests made by the colonial authorities in Cyprus for new repressive powers from early 1950 onward (such requests were denied by Whitehall). The plebiscite on the question of *Enosis* by the Church of Cyprus in January 1950 definitively marked the point at which the mobilization for *Enosis* became massive (Holland and Markides 2006, 223, 225). It also meant the leadership of the *Enosis* movement, the church, was ready to opt for a frontal confrontation with the British side (Holland 2001, 45). The denial by the colonial regime to accept the collective Greek-Cypriot demand, as it was expressed in the result of the plebiscite (almost 96 percent in favor of *Enosis*), forced the Church to terminate its efforts to settle the Cyprus Question within the framework of a bilateral Greco-British understanding. Therefore it de-

cided to promote *Enosis* in the international arena by undertaking initiatives on its own. The efforts of the commissions sent to the UN, the United States, Britain, France, and Greece by the *Ethnarchy*, and to various communist countries by AKEL, all to make the results of the plebiscite known, did not occasion any substantial results for the Greek-Cypriot cause. Nevertheless, the new archbishop of Cyprus, Makarios III, brought a new dimension to the island's national question: he put into effect a passionate campaign to mobilize significant segments of Greek-Cypriot society, mainland Greeks, and the Greek Orthodox communities in the neighboring Arab states, a goal which in turn would enable him to exert leverage upon the Greek government to launch an appeal to the UN. Indeed, in 1951, he proceeded with the foundation of the militant organization of PEON (*Pankypria Ethniki Organosi Neoleas*, Pancyprian National Organization of Youths) to gain political control over the youth movement. His visit to Greece was accompanied by pro-*Enosis* demonstrations, in which the students of the University of Athens played a key role. In the same year, the first slogans painted in blue on the walls of Cyprus stating "Long live *Enosis*" appeared; this practice would continue in the following years, becoming one of the principal insurgent methods of Cypriot students from 1955 to 1959 (Richter 2011, 43–55, 74–75, 87, 97). In January 1952, during the second anniversary of the 1950 plebiscite in favor of *Enosis*, the archbishop's public speech (in which he assured the Greek-Cypriots that the struggle for national liberation had received a new impetus) was followed by riots by high school students in Paphos. The temperature rose, especially after April 25, 1952, when a Pancyprian National Assembly was convened by the *Ethnarchy*. During the assembly, the British authorities were criticized for the dehellenization of Greek-Cypriot education. Warnings of civil disobedience or refusal to pay taxes were given and, even more important, hints were made that if the Greek government failed to support the Greek-Cypriot cause, the Greek-Cypriots would not hesitate to seek assistance elsewhere (Crawshaw 1978, 52). That same year, the archbishop visited Egypt, Lebanon, and Syria to gain support for the case of Cyprus (Hatzivassiliou 2013, 208; Holland 2001, 63). In June 1952, he returned to Greece, where he once more pressed Athens to uphold the Cypriot cause at the UN. The Greek government once again rebuffed Makarios's request, and the archbishop resorted to stirring Greek public opinion: he publicly denounced the Greek policy that, according to the archbishop, lacked courage and thus deceived the Greek community of Cyprus. Makarios clearly showed his intention to behave with relative autonomy from Athens (this motive would be repeated in various occasions, not only during the EOKA struggle that followed, but also following independence). After 1952, the popular masses in Cyprus became eager to adopt popular protest as a method to express their demand for *Enosis*. In March 1953, after successive visits to New York, London, and Athens, Makarios returned to Cyprus, where he

gave another fiery speech in front of a huge audience in the Cathedral of Saint John (Nicosia) against the colonial regime and in favor of a new plebiscite or a Greek appeal to the UN; should these initiatives fail, he stated, many other routes existed, hinting at an armed liberation struggle (Richter 2011, 105–9, 123–24).

Queen Elizabeth's coronation in early June 1953 saw a dynamic demonstration of pro-*Enosis* sentiments in Paphos.[15] Apart from the expected boycott of festivities by the Greek-Cypriots, serious agitation marked the day, in which secondary students, clashing with the security forces, were again the main protagonists (Mayes 1960, 29; Crawshaw 1978, 54). In response, the British authorities proscribed PEON. Archbishop Makarios then sought permission for the organization of a rally in favor of PEON. The British side refused to acquiesce, so the *Ethnarchy* called for a mass protest meeting at the Phaneromeni Church (Nicosia). During the meeting, which was attended by fifteen thousand people, Makarios called for further intensification of the struggle for *Enosis* (Richter 2011, 126–27; Hatzivassiliou 2013, 208). Hopkinson's "never" and the intention of the British side to grant Cyprus a constitution that contained undemocratic provisions marked the beginning, in August 1954, of mass Greek-Cypriot protests and strikes. The rhetoric against colonial rule became dominant; in certain instances, the army was called in to disperse anti-British crowds (Richter 2011, 176–77). This situation compelled the British to adopt stricter sedition legislation, but Archbishop Makarios provocatively defied them with a new and ardent speech at Phaneromeni Church (the "Oath of Phaneromeni") on August 22, 1954; he spoke against British measures and concluded by inviting the crowd to take an oath to struggle for *Enosis* until death (Kranidiotis 1981, 70). The mounting pressure from Makarios and from the popular masses in Greece eventually forced Athens to raise the Cyprus issue at the UN (the appeal was inscribed in the discussion agenda in September 1954). In October 1954, a British official in Cyprus reported on the recent and unforeseen turn of the rural population toward *Enosis*, thus demonstrating that prevailing conditions in Cyprus were closely connected with the developments at the UN (Holland 2001, 92). Indeed, the warning by Archbishop Makarios just a few weeks before the Greek appeal to the UN, in late 1954, that a possible rejection of the appeal, in tandem with British intransigence on the matter, would push the Greek-Cypriot people to extremes, became reality. The UN General Assembly's resolution on December 17, 1954, to discuss the Cyprus item on a future occasion sparked an outburst of violent popular protests on the island on December 19, and British authorities had to call in army units to deal with the situation in the island's urban areas. The most serious incidents were in the city of Limassol, where troops opened fire on demonstrators, wounding several, after the mob assaulted a police station (Holland 2001, 93; Crawshaw 1978, 89). After the Greek government's fiasco at the UN, the Greek-Cypriot community became even

more ready to consider other options, primarily the option of an attempt at armed liberation (Hatzivassiliou 2013, 212). Makarios contributed to the prevailing mood with a public speech during a mass meeting in Nicosia in January 1955. The archbishop denounced British colonial sovereignty and announced that Greek-Cypriots should no longer expect everything from Greece; on the contrary, they should intensify their efforts and, if necessary, be ready to sacrifice themselves (Holland 2001, 95). Indeed, beginning around 1952–1953, the idea for an armed struggle was taking shape and the creation of an organization commenced. The strategic principle behind the EOKA movement, when the organization committed itself to military action in April 1955, was neither to seek an ultimate military victory, nor to undertake control of any territorial part of Cyprus, nor to aim at open warfare. Its goal was to accelerate the course of events in the direction of *Enosis* by pressing the British side to soften its adamant position and commence negotiations that addressed the union of Cyprus with Greece. The subordination of political criterion to military action to press Britain remained constant until February 1959, when the Zurich and London Agreements provided for the termination of British colonial rule and the establishment of the Cyprus Republic (Karyos 2011, 33, 102–3, 107; 2013b, 98–104).

CONCLUSION

This analysis examines a special case of postwar British decolonization to evaluate whether the emergence and development of the armed *Enosis* movement in Cyprus from 1955 to 1959 had any accelerating effect upon the progress of events leading to London's final consent to terminate the colonial status of the island. The findings of our investigation demonstrate that such an interpretation cannot be substantiated because the political choices of official British leadership, after the assessment of the geostrategic position of the colony, intensified London's determination to retain Cyprus: Britain did not wish to make a prompt withdrawal from the island. Besides, such a conclusion is impossible given Britain's adamant denials in response to any political or diplomatic initiative undertaken by the Greek and Greek-Cypriot sides to set the stage for a settlement within a cordial Greco-British understanding. Moreover, we reach the same conclusion when we concentrate on London's diplomatic, political, and counter-insurgency choices to promote calculated diplomatic impasses, devise complex constitutional formulas for its continued sovereignty over the island, and its suppression of the insurgency. On the contrary, our research demonstrates that any acceleration of the Cyprus Question and its resolution was exclusively that of the Greek-Cypriot *Enosis* movement itself. The movement, in the face of provocative British persistence not to withdraw from Cyprus, was progressively radicalized

after the mid-1940s and through the mid-1950s, reaching its climax with EOKA's physical insurgency from 1955 to 1959.

NOTES

1. For a broader discussion on the development of the process of decolonization see Holland 1985; Richards 2005 (579–82); Hatzivassiliou 2002 (321–82).

2. For an assessment of EOKA's formation, evolution, and *modus operandi*, see Karyos 2011; Crouzet 2011 (465–630).

3. It must be underlined, however, that from the mid-1940s through the mid-1950s, the developments in Cyprus were not directly affected by the intense competition between the United States and the USSR; the antagonism between the two main opponents of the Cold War from 1945 to 1953 was mainly focused in Europe and the Far East. See Hatzivassiliou 2002 (62).

4. The British proposal included among other things the restoration of a legislative council with members elected—not appointed—by the Greek and Turkish communities of Cyprus, the establishment of ministries, and a prime minister with executive powers. The British governor's powers, however, would still be extended to foreign affairs, defense, and internal security. See Christodoulides 2010 (46–47).

5. The collapse of the talks was followed by the hardening of the British stance against EOKA and the Greek-Cypriots and the pursuit, by Britain, of a definite military solution to the insurgency. See Karyos 2013a (41–42).

6. The conference "Τα Ενωτικά Δημοψηφίσματα-Εκατό Χρόνια από το Δημοψήφισμα του 1914" [The Plebiscites for *Enosis*-100 Years since the Plebiscite of 1914] was held at the University of Cyprus in Nicosia on November 20–21, 2014; it focused on various aspects of the four pro-*Enosis* plebiscites that took place in 1914, 1921, 1930, and 1950 in Cyprus.

7. The prolonged frustration and disappointment the pro-*Enosis* side felt in the face of British obduracy is clearly reflected in a statement made by a leading personality of the *Enosis* movement, Savvas Loizidis, at the UN on December 11, 1957: "the patience of our generation—my patience—had already been exhausted in 1931. . . . Once again the Cypriot people showed patience. A Second World War occurred. But now patience has been exhausted. You have seen that we do not find any response neither at the United Kingdom nor at the United Nations. This is the reason why the Cypriot people resorts to what is called violence. We do not wish this but we are forced towards it after so many years seeking a peaceful solution." Quoted in Greek in Loizidis 1980 (143).

8. The hesitation of the Greek-Cypriots to use force against their old allies, the British, but their final acceptance of it as the only remaining solution, due to Britain's intransigence stand, is vividly described in the novel *The Age of Bronze* by Rodis Roufos. Roufos's work is based on his experiences in Cyprus during the years 1954–1956. See Roufos 1960.

9. Find various instances of British "anxiety" in Holland and Markides 2006 (162–88, 214).

10. Crawshaw states that in this incident two Greek-Cypriots were killed and fourteen were injured. See Crawshaw 1978 (32).

11. Another translation of the acronym PSE is Pancyprian Trade Union Committee. See Crawshaw 1978 (30).

12. The events related to the Consultative Assembly are fully described in Katsiaounis 2000; Crawshaw 1978 (37–39); Hatzivassiliou 1998 (59–65).

13. The party had agreed to participate with self-government for an interim period before the achievement of *Enosis*.

14. The matter of *Enosis* was excluded from the discussion agenda of the Consultative Assembly.

15. It must be specified that the demonstrators used the coronation festivities to express their political goals (*Enosis*) and not because they desired a different person on the British throne.

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