

# some thoughts on the development of Greek Cypriot nationalism and its relationship to education under British rule

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This paper, written in 1977, is based on ideas drawn from her M. Phil. thesis.

Writing my M. Phil. thesis on educational policies in Cyprus under British Rule (1878-1960) I came up again and again on the issue of nationalism and came to realise the crucial part it played in the formation not only of educational policies but of all kinds of policies that were put forward either by the British Government or the Greek leaders during that period. In this piece of work I attempt to put forward some thoughts on the issue of Greek Cypriot nationalism as it developed under British Rule. My aim is to provide an understanding of the rationale of the nationalist movement and set up a framework, however tentative, for its analysis.

The history of Cyprus under British Rule is a history of acute conflict between the British Government and the Greek population of the island, as well as amongst different Greek sections, for the political domination of society. The nationalist movement lay at the center of the conflict: the Greek leaders made constant efforts to promote the movement, the Government made constant efforts to combat the movement and amongst the Greeks themselves there was increasingly an intense contest for the leadership of the movement. The nationalist movement was therefore the «independent» variable that the Greek leaders tried to promote, combat or control.

On the surface, all history appears to be the struggle between groups for political domination in society. What in fact makes one historical epoch different from another is the character of the struggle that dominated the epoch. In Cyprus, the political conflict that took place under British rule had distinct form, level of intensity and mode of expression that only appeared so under British Rule. My interest is exactly locating this conflict in its historical context and examining the historical and social conditions that gave rise to it or influenced its development giving it its particular characteristics.

Nationalism is a difficult area to tackle. Under its umbrella an enormous number of movements, arisen in different historical and social contexts and with different characteristics, are included. The Greek Cypriot nationalist movement is even more baffling. Through out its long history, though its overall aim, the union of Cyprus with Greece (Enosis), remained steady, its character, aims, membership and intensity changed over time.

Nationalism, as a doctrine or a movement «for the attainment and maintenance of self-government on behalf of a group, whose members conceive it to constitute an actual or potential 'nation' like others» has a recent history (Smith, 171). While there were always people with a national sentiment and a desire to be independent from outside control, such as the ancient Greeks, there was «little in the way of a doctrine or movement to express these attitudes in belief and action» (Smith, 168). Nationalism proper has originated

in 18th and 19th century Europe but continuously spread outside the European borders. Nationalist movements vary enormously. In 19th century Europe, nationalist movements sought to build or consolidate or unify nation-states on the bases of already existing cultural ties; in 20th century colonial Africa, nationalist movements sought to overthrow a «foreign» power and establish independent states on the bases of new political and cultural units; the minority nationalist movements of the 20th century seek to split away from an already existing state and, on the bases of already existing cultural ties, to establish their own nation-state or to unite with an already existing nation-state to which they consider that they belong. These varieties of nationalist movements by no means cover the whole range of nationalist movements.

Nationalism is, therefore, not inherent in the nature of things. It is rather a historical and social phenomenon: it made its appearance at a particular point in history and manifests itself only under certain social conditions. The time that a particular nationalist movement appears and the context from which it develops, in turn, determine the form that the movement takes.

For most of the available theories, European nationalism is associated with the growth of «nation-states», a «nation-state» being «a nation with de facto territorial sovereignty» (Smith, 189). The development of nation-states is, in turn, related to the growth of capitalism<sup>1</sup> or industrialisation<sup>2</sup> and the subsequent need for a basic political unit, i.e. the nation-state, in order to unify and coordinate certain processes, such as law and education, which are indispensable to the functioning of a capitalist or industrial society.

Nationalism outside the European borders is in most theoretical thinking usually associated with the «uneven» expansion of capitalist, industrial Europe in other parts of the world: «uneven» industrialisation, «uneven» development, «uneven» distribution of wealth, «uneven» participation in the administration and so on. The Europeans and the whites held all political and economic power in society and, through these kinds of power, managed to accrue for themselves all the benefits that society could offer; the natives, culturally or racially different, remained underprivileged. «...Culture, pigmentation etc.», Gellner writes in his article on «Nationalism», «provide means for exclusion for the benefit of the privileged, and a means of identification etc., for the underprivileged» (Gellner, 168). Tom Nairn, in his article «The modern Janus», also stressed the «unevenness» of western expansion: «...Progress could not help identifying herself to some degree with these particular places, classes and in-

terests... (The colonial people) learned quickly that Progress in the abstract meant domination in the concrete, by powers which they could not help identifying as foreign or alien» (Nairn, 10). Peter Worsley, in his book on *The Third World*, referring to the radicalisation of the Indian intelligentsia, writes: «Europeanized to this extent as they were, the new intelligentsia nevertheless soon found themselves disadvantaged because of their Indian-ness... They were excluded from higher posts in the Civil Service and Indians could only become members of the Legislative Council by appointment» (Worsley, 58).

Out of this «unevenness» and the frustrations that generated amongst the colonial people, and particularly amongst their elite, the will to change the situation was born: to take things into their own hands, to achieve progress their own way and not as it had been imposed on them, to correct the injustices. Slowly, a movement for independence from colonial rule develops.

Colonial independence movements are also nationalist movements: they appeal to the differentiae of culture, race, language, religion and so on in order to unify a group of people and mobilise them against the colonial rulers. Why should a movement that primarily aimed at economic and political emancipation use or, in some cases even invent racial and cultural characteristics in its appeal to the people? Because the underprivileged and underdeveloped section could identify itself as belonging to one cultural group or as holding together certain cultural and racial characteristics and because an appeal to culture, race, religion or whatever was an appeal that was easily understood and perceived by the people. «The new middle-class intelligentsia», Tom Nairn writes, «had to invite the masses into history; and the invitation card had to be written in a language they understood» (Nairn, 12).

Nationalist ideology has, in fact, a profound ambiguity: it both looks forward and backward. It looks forward to progress, independence, a fairer kind of society; it looks backward to one's own culture, ethnos, language, religion, race. Very often the one aspect is more stressed than the other and very often the people that support the movement see in it only one of its aspects. With justification, nationalism is indeed, as it has been described, a «Janus-like» phenomenon.<sup>3</sup> It seems to me that this ambiguity which is inherent in all nationalist movements is what has caused much confusion in the study and evaluation of the various nationalist movements. Cyprus is no exception. Was «Enosis» the crux of the nationalist movement in Cyprus and was, therefore, the movement a romantic movement based on ethnic ties and aiming at the union of Cyprus with Greece as the union of a daughter with its ethnic mother? Was «Enosis» merely the form of expression of a movement which in reality aimed at

1. J. Stalin, *Marxism and the National and Colonial Question*, Lawrence and Wishart, London, 1936.

2. E. Gellner, *Thought and Change*, Weidenfeld and Nicolson, London, 1964.

3. A. Smith, *Theories on Nationalism*, p. 256; Tom Nairn, *The Modern Janus*, p. 18.

political and economic emancipation? Or was the Enosis movement, as all other nationalist movements, inherently double-faced and were the two aspects of Enosis differently stressed at different times and by different people?

Thus for most of the recent well-known theories, such as those of Gellner (1964), Worsley (1967), Smith (1971) and Nairn (Nairn, 1975), nationalism is fundamentally a materialist phenomenon: it is a product of material developments that have been taking place in the last two centuries (industrialisation, capitalism, western expansion and the contradictions and «unevenness» that such developments created). For such theories, nationalism expresses the movement that basically attempts to resolve, somehow, some of the contradictions that these material developments have created. Culture, the ethnos, religion, language or race are mainly the ideological artifacts of a movement which is crucially materialist.

In the light of these theoretical ideas, let me examine briefly the Greek Cypriot nationalist movement.

The Greek Cypriot nationalist movement has its origins in the early 19th century. At this early period, the Greek Cypriot nationalist movement was part of the panhellenic movement for independence from Ottoman Rule. It is not my intention to provide here an analysis of the conditions that gave rise to the panhellenic struggle for independence. I will merely and briefly examine the origins of the nationalist movement in Cyprus and its character and ideology under Turkish rule.

Cyprus did not directly join in the Greek armed struggle for the overthrow of Ottoman Rule (1821-28). When the apostles of Philiki Hetaeria, a secret organization which initiated and enlisted people in the struggle for the revolutionary overthrow of Ottoman Rule, infiltrated Cyprus in 1820 and met the high clergy and other lay leaders, the Archbishop made clear to the hetaerists that Cyprus' close proximity to Ottoman territories made it very dangerous for her to participate in the struggle, because a rebellion in the island would be bloodily repressed (Hill, 124). Instead, he promised to assist in money or other provisions, a view accepted by the leading members of the organization (Koumoulides, 42). Besides financial assistance, young Cypriots fought in Greece against the Turks (ibid., 52). In July 1821, only a few months after the beginning of the armed insurrection in Greece, more than four hundred leading Greek Cypriots, including the Archbishop and the Bishops, were executed by the Turkish Governor of the island on the allegation of being involved in the Greek armed insurrection.<sup>4</sup> The massacres of 1821 were a turning point in the development of Greek nationalism in Cyprus: in the years to come reference to the massacres kept alive and reinforced Greek Cypriot nationalism.

4. For a description of the events that led to the 1821 massacres see Hill, pp. 122-137 and Koumoulides, pp. 40-65.

After the Greek independent state was established in 1828 and Cyprus was not included in it, the Greek Cypriot nationalist movement became a movement for the union of Cyprus with Greece. During the 19th century, the Enosis movement in Cyprus restricted itself to assisting the other nationalist, unionist movements of those Greek lands that were still under Ottoman Rule (i.e., Greek Cypriots volunteered and fought in Crete) and to cultivating, through the spreading of education, nationalist ideology and consciousness.

But what was the ideology and character of the Greek Cypriot nationalist movement during the 19th century? The ideology of the movement was an admixture of principles and notions that promised a brighter future (freedom, justice, equality, dignity, lawfulness, progress) and Greek revivalist and «nationalist» notions (revival of ancient Greek culture, stress on «Greek» identity). Like all nationalist movements, the Greek Cypriot nationalist movement was inherently both forward and backward looking, though sometimes and by some people the one aspect of the ideology was stressed and sometimes and by other people the other aspect was stressed. The pure doctrine, however, nicely intertwined the two aspects together: the past would provide the ideal and the guide for the future. Adamantios Koraes, the leading Greek intellectual of the late 18th and early 19th centuries, clearly exemplified this attitude. In a lecture which he delivered before a French audience in 1803, he told his audience of the despair that the Greeks felt after realising the distance between their ancestors' glory and their own decadence: «We are the descendants of Greeks, they implicitly told themselves, we must try to become again worthy of this name or we must not bear it».<sup>5</sup> For Elie Kedourie, this lecture of Koraes is one of the earliest pieces of evidence of nationalist themes that were repeated so often later in Asia and Africa, namely, the appeal to a glorious past which would help to build an equally glorious future (Kedourie, 42).

Thus, the nationalist movement in Cyprus in the 19th century appealed to freedom, justice and ethnic identity. Issues of economic exploitation, underdevelopment, lack of industrialisation and other economic issues are hardly noticeable.

In terms of its character, the movement during that period was elitist and clearly lacked a popular base. Its leadership was largely religious. In fact, under Ottoman Rule, the Orthodox Church in Cyprus was the only institution vested with political power (political rights were granted by the Porte to the Cypriot Church).<sup>6</sup>

5. A. Koraes' lecture «The Present State of Civilization in Greece» is included in E. Kedourie, *Nationalism in Africa and Asia*, pp. 151-187.

6. Around the 1660's, the Porte recognised the Bishops as official guardians and representatives of their subjects, and the Bishops were granted the right to appeal directly to the Porte at Constantinople (Hill, 69). A similar affirmation was made in 1754 when the Grand

economic power<sup>7</sup> and organization to respond to the impetus of nationalism. The primary task of the Church during this period was to spread education which was seen as a precondition for the development and spreading of nationalist ideology and feeling—the Cypriots had to be taught to think and feel Greek. This attitude was clearly expressed by Archbishop Kyprianos (1810-1821) who, in the foundation act of his school, stressed that the school aimed at educating people to love God and their fatherland (Philippou, 93-94). In 1830, just after the end of the Greek War of Independence the Church made the first organised attempt to establish schools in Cyprus. In that year, in an assembly of the Bishops and the leading laymen of the island, summoned by the Archbishop, the establishment of three schools was decided (Philippou, 164-165). By the turn of the century, there were 273 elementary schools and three secondary schools in the island.<sup>8</sup> In the curriculum of these schools Greek studies (modern and ancient Greek, Greek literature and Greek history) were dominant.

Under British Rule, and particularly from 1930's onwards, the nationalist movement in Cyprus underwent important changes: it became more intense and fierce; its traditional Church leadership was threatened; its popular base was widened; and its aims were broadened to include more clearly materialist aims. What developments took place under British Rule that affected the nationalist movement in Cyprus and brought about these changes? How do these developments relate to the dominant theories on nationalism, i.e., how far British Rule created certain kinds of «unevenness» within the Cypriot society and how far the nationalist movement in Cyprus expressed the need and the desire to «eliminate» these kinds of «unevenness»?

The British Government was a materially superior Government to the Ottoman Government. She had the power and the means to bring about and enforce changes in society, which in fact she did in a variety of ways. She was not, like the Ottoman Government, minimal and apathetic, though at times she chose to be

Vezir issued a firman appointing the Bishops official representatives and supervisors of the people (Hill, 78; Alastos, 274). Further than that, special rights and privileges were conferred upon the Church by the issue of an Imperial Berat, a document issued by the Sultan on the election of a new Bishop or Archbishop. Such rights guaranteed ecclesiastical property against any interference or destruction, freed Church property from taxes and legalised and backed (by the use of *zaptiehs*, i.e., policemen) the collection of the Church dues. The Archbishop was further given the right to act as a judge in all ecclesiastical offences that involved his subordinates in the ecclesiastical hierarchy (Cobham, 470-74).

7. Under Ottoman Rule the Church had built up large properties both through donations from devotees and from people who sought protection for the use of their land under the Church in whose property no one could interfere (Cobham, p. 472; Christodoulou, p. 72).

8. See Newham, F.D., «The system of Education in Cyprus», in C.D. Cobham's collection *Cyprus Pamphlets* Vol. 42.

so; she was rather highly innovatory and sometimes even forceful. Yet, she was not a Government of the people and for the people, though she alleged to be so: her policies and the changes she introduced were fundamentally determined by the interests of the British Empire. Where a threat to the British interests arose, all other considerations became of secondary importance. Take, for example, the political situation in Cyprus in the 1930's. As a reaction to the 1931 Greek uprising, the first serious threat to British supremacy on the island, the Government abolished or restricted all forms of popular expression and they sent a number of Cypriot leaders into exile. Greek control over a number of institutions, including education, was abolished and the Government from then onwards ruled virtually as a dictatorship. In education, in particular, the Government initiated a number of policies that were clearly the result of the felt threat to British interests that Greek education was seen as engendering and had nothing to do with the welfare of the people as the Government claimed. These policies included changes in the curriculum of elementary schools (the abolition of Greek History and Geography and the introduction of English language), conditions imposed on the Government's grants to secondary schools (i.e., the requirement that English should be the medium of instruction in the top two classes) and many other measures aimed at playing down Greek nationalism which was seen as being inflated at schools.<sup>9</sup> Such measures were interpreted by the Greek population as an attempt to «dehellenise» the new generation.

In the economic sphere, consider British investment in Cyprus. We notice that such investment hardly existed for the first at least years of British Rule. Cyprus, unlike a large number of colonial areas, was not occupied for economic exploitation. Strategic rather than economic reasons lay behind the acquisition of Cyprus. British occupation over Cyprus was intertwined with the so-called Eastern Question, namely the attempts of various European powers in the 19th century to prevent Russia from expanding into the declining Ottoman Empire. Further than that, British control over Cyprus had a provisional character (Hill, 302). There was therefore no motive for investment. Not surprisingly, the schemes of economic development, such as the Ten-year Programme of Development for Cyprus, initiated by the Government in the 1940's, were viewed with much suspicion by the local Greek population. Why, the Cypriots thought, should the Government that neglected the island for so long decide to invest resources for its development? An article in a local Greek newspaper titled «Cindearella doubts» expresses

9. For an elaboration of the policies followed by the British Government in Cyprus see E. Hadjiyannava, *Educational Policy and Political Conflict: Cyprus 1878-1960*, M. Phil. thesis, University of Kent at Canterbury, 1977.

this disbelief: «And now Cindarella wonders and asks: which is the motive which has promoted the present grant of favours made to me on the strength of the Colonial Development Law as if the authorities in London were not aware of my condition for over sixty years now?».<sup>10</sup> Clearly, for the Greek Cypriots, the motive was «to deflect the people of Cyprus from the desire to achieve Union with Greece» (Myriantopoulos, 120). In any case, these schemes did not include industrial development. Colonial industrial development was not on the agenda. In fact, the Government was seen as actually discouraging the industrial development of the island, in order to promote the import of British industrial goods. A booklet, published in 1956 by an organization called the «Greek Youth of Cyprus» and claiming to contain «indisputable all British documentary evidence of the seventy eight years colonial exploitation of the people of Cyprus by and for the enrichment of the British colonial masters», gives reference to a number of cases where the Government either discouraged or did not encourage local factories with the result that a number of such factories were forced to close down.<sup>11</sup> It is referred to, for example, that a match factory, the first in Cyprus, which was established just before World War II, was forced to close down four years later because the Government imposed a very high licence fee on it and a high duty on the matches in order to safeguard the import of matches from England and Australia.<sup>12</sup> It is also referred that five Cypriot Jam, Marmalade and Preserves Factories, which were established in Cyprus before and during the War, closed down shortly after the War, because the Government, which had a monopoly over the import of sugar, refused to sell sugar to the factories at a reasonable price, in order, again to safeguard imports from England and Australia. When a British Jam and Marmalade Factory was established in Cyprus in 1954, the Government handed over its monopoly on sugar to importers and, as a result of the competition, the price of sugar fell by half.<sup>13</sup> A British cement factory, which was established in Cyprus in the 1950's was vested, according to the same booklet, with privileges that no Cypriot enterprise ever had.<sup>14</sup>

There is no way of checking these facts. It is generally accepted, however, that British colonial policy in the 1930's and 40's did not encourage colonial industrial development.<sup>15</sup> On the contrary, through restrictions

on the import and export trade of the Empire, she attempted to promote the export of British industrial goods to the colonies. In Cyprus, by 1946, and due to Imperial Preference, imports from the United Kingdom and the other British possessions covered 64.02 % of the island's imports.<sup>16</sup> Most of these imports were manufactured goods of a consumer kind (passenger cars, wireless-sets, refrigerators, electric stoves, cigarettes and so on). Only in 1955, control over imports from non-stirring areas was liberalised, but the liberalisation was restricted to OEEC countries.<sup>17</sup>

Perhaps the greatest grievance and the one that alienated the Cypriots most from the Government was the «Tribute», namely, the annual sum of £92,799-11-3d that Britain under the terms of the 1878 Cyprus Convention (Annex of the 1st of July), undertook to pay to Turkey, a sum of money that was drained from Cyprus' resources (Hill, 291-2). For the Cypriots the payment of «Tribute» out of the island's resources was totally unfair. Not only the «Tribute» was an obligation that Britain, and not the people of Cyprus, undertook to fulfill, but the «Tribute» itself did not fulfill its alleged purpose: The sum collected was not paid to Turkey but was transferred to the British Treasury and out of this sum Great Britain paid an annual sum of £81,752 to the English creditors of Turkey as interest on a loan that Turkey had made for the purpose of Crimean War. The rest £11,047-11-3d was invested in Consols (Orr, 48). «What connection or responsibility, either moral or legal or any at all did the people of Cyprus have with the National Dept of Turkey to her English ...creditors?», the Cypriots asked.<sup>18</sup> The «Tribute» was abolished in 1927 but a sum of £10,000 was still extracted from the General Revenue of the island and transferred to the British Treasury for the defence of Cyprus by the British forces (Hill, 477).

But the injustices felt were not limited to the economic sphere. In the social sphere, different standards were used for the native population and the British officials. The Civil Service, for example, employed a number of colonial people but top places remained closed to them. Significant differences in wages and other opportunities existed, too, between the British officials and the native officials. In Cyprus for example, the British officials in addition to their high salaries—which were paid out of the island's revenues—

The former would produce manufactures, and the latter would produce primary products. «Development» meant increasing the Empire's production of these products; the means were research, medical improvement, railways, ports and emigration of men and capital funds. Resources would flow slowly from Britain to the Empire, and goods would flow back» (I. Drummond, *Imperial Economic Policy 1917-1939*, George Allen and Unwin Ltd, London 1974, p. 33).

16. Colonial Reports, Cyprus 1946. Imperial preference was in practice from the early 1930's, see Colonial Reports, Cyprus 1934, p. 24.

17. Colonial Reports, Cyprus 1955, p. 21 and Cyprus 1956, p. 28.  
18. *A Cyprus pocket book*, op. cit., p. 14.

10. C.O. (Colonial Office) 67/323, File 90215, Despatch of Governor Woolley to Oliver Stanley, Sec. of State for the Colonies, 4 July 1945.

11. *A Cyprus pocket book* by The Greek Youth of Cyprus, Cyprus, 1956.

12. *Ibid.*, pp. 20-21.

13. *Ibid.*, pp. 22-23.

14. *Ibid.*, p.23

15. For Ian Drummond, author of *Imperial Economic Policy 1917-1939*, «the visionaries of the colonial development strategy» did not really oppose industrialisation overseas. But they tended to assume a natural division of labour between Britain and the Empire.

were given an extra 20% allowance per annum for voluntary work abroad. British officials were, further, provided with low-rent houses which were built by the Government out of the island's revenues. No such houses were provided for the local officials.<sup>19</sup>

To crown it all, the usual legitimations for inequalities and racialism were either out of date or inapplicable to the Cyprus context. The principles of liberalism, social justice, humanism, equal opportunity and reward according to talent were dominant in Britain in the 20th century and it is these principles that the Government claimed to uphold both at home and abroad. Yet, in a number of cases, the Government failed to apply these principles in Cyprus (i.e. the post-1931 dictatorship). The pure colonial ideology (i.e. colonial people were uncivilised and ignorant and needed to be governed and protected by a Western government) was increasingly losing ground as an ideology that justified colonial rule and this was particularly so for Cyprus where the people, by the time of British occupation, had an already organised educational system. In fact any attempt to put the Cypriots on the same level as the other colonial people raised strong reaction from the Cypriots.<sup>20</sup>

To sum up, British policies in Cyprus were manifestly biased to British interests and led to the creation of various kinds of «unevenness» in the economic, political and social sphere. In the economic sphere, «development schemes» excluded industrial development and, where such existed, the Government did nothing to materially or legally assist it; instead, she openly encouraged the import of British industrial goods and assisted the establishment of British-owned factories in the island. In the political sphere, the Government, through its final and after the 1930's exclusive control over the means of legal and physical enforcement, extended its control over the various institutions of society and attempted to introduce changes that would facilitate or legitimise British Rule. In the social sphere, ethnic identity did to a large extent define one's rewards and privileges (or his exclusion from them) in society. Finally, the usual legitimations for inequalities were either absent or, where such existed, they were largely ineffective and as a consequence the inequalities and injustices were much more deeply felt. All

19. Memorial addressed to the Secretary of State for the Colonies by the Greek elected members of the Legislative Council of Cyprus, 20 July 1929, pp. 9-10; *A Cyprus pocket book*, op. cit., pp. 30-31.

20. The Locum Tenens to the Archbishopric throne expresses this attitude well when he talks after the abolition of the Greek History from the curriculum of elementary schools in 1935: «...But what kind of an island is this? Is it one of those English occupied islands of the Far East? If this had been the case, it would not, perhaps, have been so deplorable for the Government. But Cyprus is a Greek island having a history of 5,000 years, a history of glorious civilization...» (Myrantonopoulos, 124-125).

in all, British Rule gave the knowledge and the hope for material progress but refused to somehow evenly share it out.

Colonial Rule could not by itself resolve the contradictions on which it was based. However hard the colonial Government tried to convince the others (and perhaps itself too) that its role was beneficial to the island, the inescapable fact that no one could fail to realise was that colonial Rule served the interests (economic, strategic or political) of the colonial power and could not afford to do otherwise. It was the task of the nationalist movement to resolve the contradictions of the British Rule: its unevenness, its bias, its racism, its dependence on interests other than those of the Cyprus people, all of which left the Cypriot people in an unfair second-class position and «suffocated» their economic and social prospects. Not surprisingly, the issue of «exploitation» became increasingly central in the nationalist movement and the appeal to the need to take things into one's hands in order to eliminate «exploitation» became increasingly one of the main aims of the movement.

If British policies, through the various kinds of «unevenness» that created largely affected, if not determined, the character and intensity of the nationalist movement in Cyprus, British Rule affected the movement in another way: it created the preconditions that facilitated the further development of the movement. For example, British Rule raised the level of education in the island. In Cyprus, where education was largely directly or indirectly under the control of the Greek leaders, a raising in the level of education also meant a raising in the level of political education (i.e., nationalist education) and a raising in the level of awareness of the existing injustice and inequalities. But perhaps education had also unintended consequences. Western humanist education, at any rate, is supposed to promote the values of justice, freedom and equality and create in the pupils an attitude of questioning and criticizing. If this is in fact the case, a raising in the level of education in Cyprus could not but work against British Rule which manifestly in practice failed to fulfill the standards of liberal democracy and social justice. Schools do not, however, only provide a meeting ground for the exchange and development of ideas; they provide, too, an easy ground for political mobilisation. In Cyprus, in the 1950's, the schools played an active part in organising demonstrations, protests and boycotts against the Government.

Changes of an economic and demographic kind that took place under British Rule—and particularly from 1940's onwards—but which cannot be directly attributed to British Rule, were, perhaps, conducive to the development of the nationalist movement. From 1940's onwards there is a sudden increase in the number of people who leave the countryside and move

into towns;<sup>21</sup> there is a relative increase in the number of people engaging in construction, clerical, trade or service jobs vis-a-vis jobs in agriculture or manufacturing industries;<sup>22</sup> there is a change in the pattern of investment;<sup>23</sup> the number of Trade Unions and other associations rapidly increased;<sup>24</sup> the number of newspapers and periodicals also rapidly grew.<sup>25</sup> All these developments and changes drove people away from their traditional milieu, opened up their horizons, raised the level of their aspirations and, potentially, at least, made them more responsive to political mobilisation.

Another development which had no connection to British Rule in Cyprus but which helped to raise the level of political education and involvement of the people was the growth of the communist movement. The Communist party, which was established in Cyprus during the 1920's, prescribed in 1931 and reappeared under the name of AKEL in 1941, affected the nationalist movement in Cyprus in a variety of ways: it helped to organize the workers and farmers into Unions and thus made possible and effective the mobilisation of workers and farmers;<sup>26</sup> it broadened the popular base of the movement; it stressed and brought into the forum the issues of exploitation, capitalism and imperialism

21. Between 1931 and 1946 the town population increased by 53.6% while the village population increased only by 22.6% (D.A. Percival, *Census of Population and Agriculture 1946*, London 1949, p.3). Between 1946 and 1960 the town population increased by 61% while the village population increased by only 18.2% (Republic of Cyprus *Census of Population and Agriculture 1960*, Vol. III, Demographic characteristics).

22. In 1946 there were 5,897 people employed in the construction industry; in 1960 their number increased to 20,447. In 1946 there were 2,687 clerical workers; in 1960 there were 13,220. In 1946 there were 6,916 people employed in trade and commerce; in 1960 there were 16,230. In contrast, the number of people employed in manufacturing industries even showed a decline from 33,668 in 1946 to 32,357 in 1960 (*Census of Population and Agriculture 1946*, London 1949, pp. 53-59 and Republic of Cyprus *Census of Population and Agriculture 1960*, Vol. V, Employment and Education).

23. In the post-war period investment in construction rapidly increased. Between 1953-58, 50% of the total investment went into construction, 10% into transportation, 31% into machinery and production goods and 5% into plantations and mines. See, Meyer and Vassiliou, *The Economy of Cyprus*, p.17.

24. In 1932 there was only one Trade Union with 84 members, in 1944 there were 62 Trade Unions with 10,694 members, in 1954 there were 130 Trade Unions with around 26,000 members and in 1958 there were 284 Trade Unions with around 56,000 members. See, Alastos, *Cyprus in History*, p. 360 and Meyer and Vassiliou, *op. cit.*, p. 48.

25. Until 1932, there was no daily newspaper; by 1952 there were 6 Greek daily newspapers, 3 Turkish daily newspapers and one English daily paper. In addition there were 18 weekly papers. See, Alastos, *op. cit.*, p. 360.

26. Most of the Trade Unions that were established in Cyprus from the 1930's onwards were under communist control. In 1940 the various unions were united into the Pancyprian Committee of Workers (PSE) which a few years later was succeeded by the Pancyprian Federation of Labour (PEO) both of which were under communist control (Adams, pp. 21,27).

and thus helped to broaden the aims of the movement;<sup>27</sup> it threatened traditional right-wing leadership and thus forced it to reorganize itself (the establishment of right-wing parties, Trade Unions and other organizations) and to broaden its ground of appeal (socialist verbiage, i.e., social justice, fair distribution of income and so on came to supplement the pure nationalist doctrine)<sup>28</sup>

Undoubtedly, nationalism meant different things to different people, but the movement did express, to a large extent, the needs, interests, and aspirations of these various people. For the pure nationalist, nationalism was a means of fulfilling one's «Greekness»; for others it was a means of getting things into one's hands and putting forward the right policies that would promote development (perhaps the economic betterment of the island, perhaps their private economic betterment); for others it was a means of eliminating exploitation and creating a fairer society; and for others, i.e., the communists, nationalism and Enosis were merely the form that the anti-imperialist struggle in Cyprus happened to take. More often than not, and for most people, nationalism meant an admixture of things, some purely nationalist and some purely materialist, some backward looking and some forward looking.

How, then, does the nationalist movement in Cyprus under British Rule compare to the other nationalist movements of the colonial world? How far do the dominant theories on nationalism apply to the nationalist movement in Cyprus under British Rule?

The aim of «Enosis» (Union of Cyprus with Greece) which played a central part in the nationalist movement of Cyprus differentiated the Cyprus movement

27. The first constitution of the communist party, drawn up in 1926, declared that the party would «struggle for the organization and the economic improvement of the circumstances of the classes fettered by the present day capitalists of Cyprus» and that it would struggle for «the political independence of Cyprus from the imperialistic yoke of the United Kingdom» (Adams, 14).

28. In the 1946 Municipal elections, the left-wing coalition which was dominated by AKEL, the communist party of Cyprus, won in all principal towns but the smaller two towns of Paphos and Kyrenia (Alastos, 367).

In 1943, a right-wing party, the Cyprus Nationalist Party (KEK) was established (C.O. 67/314, File 90215, Despatch 22 of the acting Governor of Cyprus to Oliver F.G. Stanley, Sec. of State for the Colonies, 22 July 1943); the Cyprus Council of Ethnarchy claiming to be the overall policy-making body for the nationalist cause and excluding both Communists and Turks was set up in 1948 (Psyrroukis, 258); a right-wing Trade Union, the Confederation of Cyprus Workers (SEK), was set up in 1943 to counterbalance the communist-dominated PEO (Adams, 29).

The following quote from General Grivas, a devoted anti-communist and leader of the underground organization EOKA which staged a guerrilla war against the British between 1955-59, is indicative of the appeal to socialist ideas in order to draw the support of the people: «...but we love a just community as well in which everyone will be rewarded according to his pains and where the individual will not remain undefended and be exploited by the clever». He went on to stress: «Fanatic patriots, but fanatically just in the distribution of wealth. This is our 'creed'» (Adams, 218).

from other movements in the colonial world which simply aimed at the overthrow of the colonial Rule and the establishment of a people's own independent state. The appeal to Enosis consequently gave a particular colour to the nationalist movement in Cyprus: the emphasis on «Greekness», «Orthodoxy», culture and language, pride in one's own ancestors, all of which were indispensable to the maintenance of the Enosis idea, gave a predominantly «nationalist» colour to the movement. On the other hand, the nationalist movement in Cyprus in the 20th century did increasingly open up its aims. Issues of a more materialist and forward-looking nature (exploitation and the need to eliminate it, lack or distorted economic development and the need to bring about economic development on the correct lines) became more and more dominant. In this latter sense, perhaps, the nationalist movement in Cyprus resembles the other nationalist movements of the colonial era, though the comparison, because of the lack of first-hand information on such movements, can only be provisional.

As regards the application of recent theories on nationalism on the nationalist movement in Cyprus, it does seem to me that the movement in the 20th century was crucially affected by developments that a number of recent theories on nationalism (Gellner, Nairn, Smith) have pointed out, namely, «uneven» development, «uneven» industrialisation, «uneven» treatment (= discrimination) and other kinds of «unevenness» that Colonial Rule had brought about. In fact, the change in the character and aims of the nationalist movement was, it seems, the result of the impact of these developments; and if the Cyprus nationalist movement resembles at all the other nationalist movements of the colonial world this was so because both the Cyprus and the other nationalist movements came under and reacted to the same influences, namely, Colonial Rule.

### **nationalism and education**

Nationalism involves two sets of recipes: a recipe for action (action towards self-government) and a recipe for beliefs (nationalist ideology). In fact the latter gives meaning and legitimises the former. A nationalist ideology is therefore an indispensable part of a nationalist movement.

A nationalist ideology, in its pure form, by emphasizing certain aspects of tradition or certain cultural characteristics provides a sense of identity for a group of people who claim to share such characteristics and, on the bases of these characteristics, claim to form a «nation». Nationalist ideology further provides a sense of solidarity amongst those who claim to belong to the

same «nation».<sup>29</sup> Finally, a nationalist ideology, by appealing to «national» identity and solidarity, provides an easy ground for popular mobilisation against other, similarly identified groups of people.

A nationalist ideology is easy to develop because it works on what is there: it merely selects elements from the present and the past. It is unimportant if the past is not correctly reconstructed; it is irrelevant if the aspects of the present that the nationalist ideology has chosen to promote are exaggerated or even distorted. What is important is that the ideology manages to fulfill its functions: that it creates a sense of identity, which is continuous in time, for a group of people, it promotes a sense of solidarity between them and lays the bases for effective popular mobilisation.

It is because schools are believed to be the most modern and effective means for transmitting ideologies that they are considered indispensable to all nationalist movements. Consider, for example, this situation. A nationalist movement, under the leadership of a few intellectuals, is beginning to emerge amongst people who, though they may share a few racial or cultural characteristics, do not feel themselves as constituting a «nation»; in society at large a «nationalist» ideology is absent. In such a society, the existing sources of ideological transmission, such as the family, cannot transmit the ideology of nationalism because they themselves had not been imbued with such an ideology. Under the circumstances, the schools, under the guidance of the few intellectuals, become the only means available for the transmission of a nationalist ideology.

In the Greek world, in the late 18th and early 19th century, the situation was rather different. A common language, a common religion and a common locality and in addition, the Ottoman «millet» system, which identified the various religious groups and treated them as corporate groups, kept alive religious-ethnic identity and feeling. But again, a «nationalist» ideology cannot be said to have existed: the continuity of the ethnic identity could not be traced, a knowledge of the «achievements» of the ancestors was hardly in existence and a clearly-perceived conception of a «nation» accompanied with the desire to achieve self-government on the bases of the «nation» was not present. Schools were, therefore, required to spread «nationalist» ideology and reinforce ethnic identity. The spreading of education all over the Greek world during the early part of the 19th century was clearly a response to the need to spread nationalist ideology and consciousness. The curriculum of schools in the 19th century almost exclusively concentrated on the study of

29. For David Apter any ideology in order to be effective must establish identity and solidarity. See, D. Apter, *The Politics of Modernisation*, p. 328.



ancient Greek language, literature and history. The past was glorified at schools; a historical continuity between the past and the present was discovered; and the past was explicitly treated as the guide for the future.

The study of ancient Greek literature and history was hoped not merely to reinforce «nationalist» consciousness but also to promote the principles, values and feelings which would provide the basis for political mobilisation. The following quote from *Elliniki Monarchia* (1806), whose author remains anonymous, exemplifies this hope: «... and when they (the pupils) have read sweet Xenophon, wise Plutarch and the other historians and philosophers of our ancestors, they see the mire of tyranny and weep for the misfortunes of our homeland. They no longer mumble, as they used to, the name of freedom with fear... instead they pronounce it with the boldness that slaves cannot possess».<sup>30</sup>

Education, therefore, was hoped to fulfill all the three functions of the nationalist ideology: to create and reinforce identity and solidarity amongst the Greek people, and, most importantly, by generating amongst the pupils and students the right principles, values and feelings, to lay down the prerequisites of political mobilisation. Education was clearly a political act.

British Rule, accepting the political significance of education, attempted, first, to control it and, secondly, to introduce such changes in it that would eliminate the nationalist bias in Greek education, a bias which the Government saw detrimental to British Rule in Cyprus. Continuously and in a variety of ways, the government tried to remove from the curriculum of elementary and secondary schools their strongly «nationalist» element (i.e., the abolition of Greek history and geography from

the curriculum of elementary schools) and to eliminate from the training of the teachers all elements that were likely to reinforce their nationalist feelings.

The government's policies largely failed. Most of the teachers and students remained ideologically loyal to the cause of Greek nationalism. Outside the formal educational establishments, night classes, catechetical schools and youth organizations kept alive the teaching of Greek history, culture and religion and thus spread nationalist ideology.

Most education policy-makers are optimist. They tend to view the students as empty bottles ready to be filled with the knowledge, views and values that the education process offers. This is what at least the Cyprus policy-makers tended to think. The failure of the Government, in spite of its resources and organization, to eliminate nationalist ideology and implant in the pupils' minds new ideas points to the shortcomings of education as a mechanism for the effective transmission of new ideas. It seems, that if education is to be such a mechanism, the participants in the educational process must be positively inclined and receptive to the ideology. In Cyprus, a nationalist ideology was successfully transmitted at schools because teachers and students were positively inclined to it. At school, they merely found the knowledge that completed and reinforced their inclinations.

But why should the Greek Cypriots be receptive towards a nationalist ideology? Because the nationalist ideology gave people a sense of identity and a sense of their own worth and significance. Further than that, the nationalist ideology provided an explanation of the injustices and inequalities of the existing state of affairs (it largely attributed them to the «alien» rule). Finally, the nationalist ideology gave the hope for a brighter future where there would be more justice, more freedom and more dignity.

30. Quoted in K. Koumariou, *The Contribution of the Intelligentsia towards the Greek Independence Movement, 1798-1821*, pp. 78-79.

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