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L'insaisissable voie médiane : une analyse comparative du passé colonial de Chypre et de l'Irlande

Article publié le 15 juillet 2024.

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1. Mapping out the comparative dimension

1 It is remarkable how different the emotional response of the Irish and the Cypriots, two peoples formerly ruled by colonial Britain, was to the death of Queen Elizabeth II. While Northern Ireland's Catholics and Protestants surprisingly agreed to put aside politics and pay tribute to the late queen, the Cypriots chose to dredge up a painful past. They saw fit to draw the world's attention to the counterinsurgency campaign of the 1950s, and to the day when the queen refused to pardon two young EOKA fighters, and thus sent them to the gallows to be hanged (Hazou 2022). Is the Cypriot reaction a symptom of a neurotic people trapped in the past? Is it the sign of profound disappointment at the continuing political impasse? Does the Irish composure indicate, on the contrary, that the arduous peace process that culminated in the Good Friday Agreement of 1998 paved the way for political normalization and a more balanced approach to the past? With these difficult questions in mind, this article draws a parallel between the historical trajectories of the two islands underlining both similarities and differences, and explores the complex theme of the ultimate capture and annihilation of alternative paths to self-determination by an hegemonic and militant nationalism.

2 The two men who were denied royal pardon were Michalakis Karaolis, aged 23, and Andreas Demetriou, aged 22. They were executed on 10 May 1956, the former for the killing of Irodotos Poullis, a Greek police officer of the Special Branch involved in the spying of EOKA Nicosia groups, and the latter for the wounding of Intelligence Service agent Sidney Taylor. At that time, these executions gave rise to a massive public outcry against the methods of British colonial rule; in Cyprus, in Greece, in the House of Commons, and more relevantly in Ireland. On 1st November 1956, when the National Students' Council planned a demonstration in Dublin to commemorate the death of IRA volunteer, Kevin Barry, in 1920, alongside placards carrying the words "Barry for Ireland" were also placards with the words "Karaolis for Cyprus". The *Sunday Press* published an article headlined "Thousands sign to save Kevin Barry of Cyprus", and indeed the parallel between the two men was hard to ignore (O'Shea 2014: 77). Barry

was the first IRA member executed during the Irish War of Independence and Karaolis the first EOKA member executed during the Cypriot Emergency. Both were young idealists who paradoxically belonged to the aspiring middle class; Barry as a medical student and Karaolis as a clerk with the British administration in Nicosia. Thus the simplistic idea that opposition to colonialist domination is naturally a working-class phenomenon because it is the workers who stand to gain from it the most while the middle class acquiesces to it because the bourgeoisie's economic interests are bound with it, is resoundingly contradicted by the political choices of these two men. In this sense, they embody the experience of social and political *in-betweenness* which is at the heart of our argument here and calls for more in-depth analysis. Indeed, this theme cannot be limited to them because it reflects a larger and more complex reality. The colonial moment did not only give rise to a sterile binary confrontation or an absolute standoff. It also elicited liminal, ambivalent and sometimes contradictory responses from all the parties involved in this seemingly inexorable power dynamic, whether colonial authorities, settlers or subjugated indigenous people. In turn, the revolutionary moment welcomed obedience and cast out dissidence because militant nationalism felt threatened and undermined by Irish and Cypriots who advocated alternative paths to self-determination.

3 In the 1980s and 1990s, it was fashionable among some scholars sympathetic or not to the Irish nationalist goal of reunification to compare Ireland with India (Kiberd 1996), Palestine (T.G. Fraser 1984), Algeria (Roberts 1986), South Africa (Guelke 1991: 143-162), and other Third World countries, but Cyprus was rarely mentioned. In the following decades, it was most often political scientists who took the lead in comparing the ethnopolitical conflicts of Cyprus and Ireland.[1] Little interest was shown by historians until the work of Helen O'Shea, which still remains the most interesting and methodical comparative analysis of the two countries. More exactly, her research represents an exploration of independent Ireland's complex interaction with the British Empire, and in particular of Irish involvement in the Cyprus Emergency (O'Shea 2014). This article, conversely, adopts a wider bird's eye view in terms of a comparative approach and seeks to reopen historical vistas with a view to illuminating the "hidden histories" of the representatives of an elusive 'middle path'. As suggested

above, this dearth of comparative-historical studies is rather puzzling given that Ireland and Cyprus are both islands situated on European soil, albeit on its Eastern and Western outer edges. Both countries endured a prolonged period of colonial rule and were, what is more, colonized by 'Perfidious Albion', a fellow European power. Furthermore, in both cases, we are dealing with islands whose territorial oneness and integrity are generally considered to be a self-evident truth by a majority of their citizens; hence the opposition to the actual partition of Ireland since the 1920s and the opposition to the Turkish Cypriot demand for partition of Cyprus from 1954 onwards. Of course, the existence of similarities should not overshadow the existence of some notable differences which are also highlighted. Yet, without wanting to stray too far from a conventional Rankean approach to historical method with its stress on recovering the singularity of past situations, the weight of this article falls on the similarities because as Immanuel Wallerstein wisely stressed: "We can always pinpoint differences, it is the easiest of all scholarly tasks, since everything is always different in some ways from everything else across time and space. What is harder and takes priority is to discover similarities (Wallerstein 1988: 881)." Thus, on the one hand, Cyprus lived longer under the jackboot of the Ottomans (1571-1878) than it did under that of the British (1878-1960), following a full-scale assault that led to the violent deaths of many Greek and Armenian inhabitants and successfully wrested the island from the Venetians. On the other hand, in September 1572, Ottoman Emperor Selim II adopted a general method of domination that is redolent of the 'policy of plantation' imposed on Ireland by the English Crown in the 16th and 17th centuries (Gkotzaridis 2022: 178-179). It consisted in the confiscation of the land owned by the old Latin elite, most of which had been massacred during the siege or in the wake of the island's conquest, and the granting of that land to loyal subjects; namely Turkish Muslim soldiers and peasants who thereafter became the nucleus of the island's present-day Turkish community. This development is significant because as Van Coufoudakis explained "it completely altered the demographic patterns of the island by transplanting there a population different from the Greek native element by culture, ethnic origin, language and religion (VanCoufoudakis 1976: 33)." Having said that, if conquest in Cyprus and Ireland ushered equally in the arrival of settlers from the ruling metropoles, in Ireland, particularly in the North-

East region, the process of dispossession and displacement of the old Gaelic nobility by large numbers of English and Scottish Protestants, following the defeat of the former in the "Nine Years" War of 1603, occurred on a much grander scale. The Ulster Plantation of 1609, as it is called, was planned and overseen by King James I, and amounted to organised and systematic colonisation.

4 This massive enterprise of land theft and ethnic cleansing was further entrenched by the Penal Laws (1695) which significantly affected the ability of Catholics to acquire and bequeath land, hold public office, practice their faith, and enter a profession, among other things. In a nutshell, these harsh disabilities cemented Protestant domination, reduced Catholics to a permanent state of subordination in their own homeland and established a watertight political, social and cultural segregation (Darby 1976: 4).

5 In Cyprus, alongside a group of generally poor and uneducated immigrants also arrived a class of 'superior' Muslims who became the linchpin that held the Ottoman colonial system together. Chief among them were the administrators, bureaucrats and military personnel who provided the bulwark of the status quo. In fact, in the same way as in the Irish situation, where we note the long-standing presence of a Protestant Anglican Ascendancy whose privileged position depended on the refusal of any economic and political influence to the Catholic majority, there was in the Cypriot situation a Muslim elite which monopolized every power avenue. Thus, Muslims were generally preferred over the majority of Christian 'infidels' for government, military and judicial roles, and their position in the colonial setting as well as their opportunities for advancement in the liberal professional sector were fully guaranteed (Apeyitou 2003: 69).

6 Britain took possession of Cyprus in 1878 following the Cyprus Convention; a secret agreement she concluded with the Ottoman Empire granting her administrative control of the island in exchange for her support of the Ottomans against a possible Russian aggression. She seized the opportunity to annex Cyprus when Turkey allied with Germany and Austria-Hungary in the First World War, and the island was declared a crown colony in 1925, after the Treaty of Lausanne of 1923 was signed and Turkey formally accepted its loss. Britain actually took possession of Cyprus as it lost control of its oldest colony, Ire-

land. Nevertheless, upon gaining its independence in 1960, Cyprus ended 82 years of British rule and 470 years without self-determination.

7 Furthermore, like Ireland before the Act of Union (1801), Cyprus, under British rule, was able to experience a semblance of a democratic process, after the creation of the local Legislative Council (1882-1931), even if the latter had a net tendency to foment and solidify communal division. Eighteen members sat in this chamber, including twelve elected, six official, and the High Commissioner who presided over it. With the twelve elected members, the colonial government decided to apply the principles of communal representation and majority rule by allocating nine seats to Christians and three seats to Muslims.

8 But in reality, majority rule almost never applied in the daily functioning of the House, because the six official members, the three Muslim members and the High Commissioner, could easily, with their casting votes, defeat any bill or any proposed discussion emanating from the Christian members, especially when they raised the controversial issue of *enosis*. The feeble and tenuous democratic character of this political system was also evident in the fact that only men over the age of 21 who paid taxes could vote, voting was not secret, and most problematically, eligible voters could choose only among the representatives of their religious community (Pollis 1998: 87-105).

9 The goal of *enosis* is another way in which the Greek majority of Cyprus differs from the Catholic majority of Ireland and even from other peoples under colonial rule because, unlike the latter, they never actively sought the independence which they achieved in August 1960, thanks to the signing of the London-Zurich agreements of February 1959 (Yiangou 2020: 46). We might go so far as to argue that, in their unremitting quest for *enosis*, Greek Cypriots are ironically less like Irish Catholics, and more like Ulster Protestants who opposed Home Rule from day one, and initially did not ask for the devolved and autonomous institutions they obtained following the passing of the Government of Ireland Act (1920) that divided the island into two separate political entities. At bottom, the goals of uniting with Greece and continuing the Union with Britain, were always

the be-all and end-all of their political struggle. Put another way, both peoples identified with an external and bigger ethnic group.

10 On the other hand, in its pursuit of the right to self-determination, a precondition for *enosis*, the Greek majority could also be compared to the Irish majority, because both regarded territorial integration—into the Greek State and into the Irish State—as a legitimate solution, and certainly among EOKA and IRA circles, as the only way to correct a historical wrong committed by a British Empire dead set on maintaining its tutelage over Cyprus and Ireland and 'divide and rule' through partition. As we will show, if we leave aside their difference in eschatological orientation [2], the Greek majority, in the 1930s, and the Irish majority, on the eve of WWI, were already engaged in a struggle for self-determination even if the means to reach the desired goal were still a subject of doubt. Above all, nothing was yet written in stone.

2. The 1931 October Revolt in Cyprus

11 Nominally, Cyprus was not ceded, only leased, and this meant that a tribute had to be paid to the Sultan. Unsurprisingly, it was the Cypriots who were saddled with the payment of this tribute, and their indignation was continuously aroused, not only because they had to cover the expenses incurred by the British colonial administration but also because the money was never paid to Turkey but deposited in the Bank of England to pay off Crimean War debts upon which Turkey had defaulted. [3] This tribute was a steady drain on an already poor Cypriot economy, and soon it became a symbol of British oppression which, in the following years, was going to fuel Greek Cypriot nationalism and further justify the demand for *enosis* (Kaloudis 1999: 9-10). In fact, this financial burden was widely considered as so unfair that even Winston Churchill, during his visit to Cyprus in 1907 as Under-Secretary of State for the Colonies, had criticised it and warned that "wherever there is economic injustice there will also be found political discontent (Georghallides 1979: 17)." The Cypriots were finally relieved of this annual tribute in 1927 (Moutsis 2014: 176), but this did not end either the economic grievances or the discontent felt by the Greek Cypriots at seeing their request for *enosis* continually

rebuffed by the British government. The relationship between Cyprus and England took a turn for the worse when a series of violent protests shook the island in October 1931; leading among other things to the raiding of many public offices which were stripped of the Union Jack and replaced by the Greek flag and even to the burning to the ground of Government House (the Governor's home) (Sakellaropoulos 2023: 169-227).

12 A catalyst for the outbreak of this hitherto unprecedented display of disobedience was the Great Depression whose negative effects were seriously being felt throughout the island just as they were all around the world at that time (Richter 2009: 133-134). However, another aggravating cause was Governor Ronald Storrs' decision to push the 1929 Education Bill through the Legislative Council; a bill that gave control over the appointment and dismissal of schoolteachers to the Governor, who could now ensure that fewer and fewer of them trained in the values of Greek nationalism could proselytize for the cause of *enosis* in the classroom (Coughlan / Mallinson 2005: 586). Finally, Storrs' blocking of a vote taken by the Legislative Council to halt a tax increase was the last straw that broke the camel's back and sparked general outrage (Klapsis 2009: 135). Historians of Cyprus agree that these apparently spontaneous riots seared themselves deeply in the memory of all contemporary actors. They became a foundational myth for Greek Cypriot nationalism and greatly frightened the colonial authorities, who from then on adopted an alarmist vision of politics or what Ranajit Guha has called a "prose of counterinsurgency" (Rappas 2008: 364). Thus whereas previously, they used to view the promotion of *enosis* with contempt or irritation, after these events, they deemed that the time had come for a more autocratic handling of Cyprus. They introduced a whole panoply of repressive measures such as the suspension of the Constitution, the banning of all political parties, the deportation for life of the arrested ringleaders, the discontinuation of municipal elections, and an official ban on making propaganda for *enosis*.

13 The first casualty of the 1931 Revolt, however, was the local Legislative Council which was immediately abolished, because as Governor Storrs wrote, it proved an "exasperating and humiliating nuisance" (Storrs 1937: 498), and for good reason, since the Turkish representatives had unconventionally broken ranks with the British Government,

and joined the Greek Cypriot opposition on this all-important issue of taxation. Certainly, seeing Greek and Turks overcome their deep-rooted mutual distrust and work together for a common purpose had always aroused the deepest concerns of the colonial government and the decision to get rid of this 'ineffective' institution was absolutely a reflection of those concerns (Yiangou 2010: 31).

3. The Patriot Party and the United Irishmen: The Challenges of the Liminal Position

14 This pattern of a native organised rebellion directly leading to the termination of a problematic and unpredictable local parliament is, to a certain degree, reminiscent of historical developments in late 18th-century Ireland. The United Irishmen Rebellion of 1798, which was an early expression of the Irish people's fundamental right to freely determine their own destiny, led to the abolition of Henry Grattan's Parliament (1782) and to the consolidation of British power in Ireland via the route of a political and administrative merging of the two kingdoms.

15 Akin to the situation in Cyprus, this Irish Rebellion also occurred in a context of general frustration with the existing order not least because Grattan's legislative reforms did not live up to the expectations of more radical visionaries. Theobald Wolfe Tone, the leader of the United Irishmen, believed that there was little reason to praise these reforms because the Irish parliament remained "corrupt", "unrepresentative" and still subservient to the political demands of an executive appointed and controlled by the English government (Bartlett 1998: 281)." Granted, thanks to the leadership of enlightened protestants like Charles Lucas, Henry Flood and Henry Grattan but also the threat of armed forces represented by the paramilitary army of the Volunteers, the Patriot Party compelled England to concede some changes; mostly in the form of free trade, an end to the wringing of large sums of money from the Irish revenues to support the British government in and out of Ireland, and last but not least, a significant strengthening of the legislative power of the Irish House of Commons.

16 And yet, this fight for a real representative chamber, no longer reducible to a mere rubber-stamping mechanism of English decisions, had left unattended—due to lack of agreement between them—the most flagrant injustice of the time; namely that Irish Catholics, who made up nearly three fourths (70 to 75%) of the population, were barred from sitting as members or voting for members (Coquelin / Galliou / Robin 2009: 49). This suggests that whatever their liberal views, many of these men wanted to safeguard the monopoly of political power of the Protestant (Anglican) Ascendancy to which they belonged. They also belonged to the category of the *hybrid* as it was defined by the Indian theorist Homi K. Bhabha (1994: 117). These were men who felt politically ambivalent due to their *liminal* or *in-between* position in the colonial hierarchy, as they were superior to the native population in their objective social and economic conditions and yet they were treated as inferior by a colonial centre whose interests no longer overlapped with theirs. Many refused to make a deliberate choice between 'becoming Irish' or 'staying English' until this inevitability stared them in the face. To paraphrase Donal McCartney, their tragedy lay in the fact that they were born neither Irish nor English during a period when the Protestant Ascendancy was increasingly being pushed to make a conscious choice between the two (McCartney 1994: 193).

17 Conversely, the failed Rebellion of 1789 derived as much from a desire to deal a major blow to the English government as from a determination to resolve the major contradiction discussed above. Its leaders felt deeply inspired by the values of liberty, equality and fraternity advocated by the French Revolution and wanted above all to give them substance, by severing all ties with colonial England, and granting full emancipation to Catholics; thereby allowing them to play their rightful role in the political and economic life of Ireland (Paterson 2008: 1-2). This was a very different type of patriotism calling for the "substitution of the common name of Irishmen in place of the denomination of Protestant, Catholic and Dissenter" (Tone 1827: 64), and thus confronted with the real menace that this new inter-denominational solidarity posed, the English responded, as they did with Cyprus in the 1930s, by tightening their grip over this insubordinate territory. It is safe to say that the passing of the Act of Union, which was one of the most divisive moments of Ireland's political his-

tory since it was widely seen as resulting from "an orgy of corruption", was objectively an attempt to nip in the bud this dangerous patriotism, regain control of the Catholic problem, and ultimately stop this seditious 'hinterland' from ever becoming a launching pad for a French invasion of Britain (Campbell 2014: 180). Ironically, the legislative autonomy that came to an end in 1801 turned out to be a blessing in disguise for the native cause because the ultimate goal of Grattan's Parliament was probably the achievement of an independent Protestant nation. In such a scenario, Catholics would have found themselves trapped in a position of permanent subalterns, without the possibility of claiming their fundamental rights as a majority (O'Brien 1992: 247-251).

4. Greek Cypriot and Turkish Cypriot Collaboration: The Straddling of a Border

18 It should be emphasized that in Cyprus too the dividing line between the two communities was not always as sharp or flawless as England would have liked, and the likelihood of a grass-roots alliance beyond religious differences, particularly following the rise of working-class militancy during the 1930s in Britain and throughout the Empire, was a hydra about which the colonial authorities could not afford to be casual (Rappas 2009: 207-208). In 1903, 1927 and 1931, Turkish and Greek Cypriot deputies united their voices inside the Legislative Council to demand reform of colonial economic policies and better life conditions for their constituents. Furthermore, during and after the 1931 Revolt, some Turkish Cypriot workers had entered the Communist ranks and mobilized alongside Greek Cypriot workers during that crucial period of social protest despite the thinly veiled intimidation emanating from their own community. But remarkably enough, their stigmatization and persecution were not enough to prevent them from participating in joint demonstrations and strikes. Even when the Cypriot Communist Party (KKK) and other parties were outlawed in August 1933, Greek and Turkish Cypriot workers organised a joint strike at Mavrovouni (Nicosia district) against the American Mining Company in August 1936, and so did also female spinners

in Famagusta in June 1938 (Rappas 2014: 153, 161). It must be emphasized that the KKK was an original formation, on the one hand because it began to gain members when the hope that the British would grant union of Cyprus with Greece, as they did with the Ionian islands in 1884, was fading, and on the other hand because although it identified itself as anti-imperialist, it seemed to value the unity of the entire working class over the goal of *enosis*. That is why it was open to the alternative solution of self-government as a preliminary stage before reaching independence as a Cypriot Republic in a Balkan Communist confederation. [4]

19 That being so, in both historical contexts, we witness how, under the impact of radical ideologies, the old ethnic and religious boundaries of the Ancient Régime, imposed or strengthened by colonial rule, seem to lose their rigidity, giving way to an *in-between* or *interstitial* space where a new politics of solidarity and opposition to imperialist depredation becomes possible. In Cyprus, this phenomenon is all the more remarkable when we remember that this space of intercommunal collaboration on a social and political basis succeeded in emerging even when both communities were increasingly undergoing, through indoctrination by their separate educational system, a process of national identification with their powerful neighbours (or motherlands), and the pressure to conform to the values of those hegemonic nationalisms was anything but abating. By the 1920s, the Turkish schools had already come under government policy and were therefore funded by the Colonial Office while the Greek schools were zealously maintained and guarded by the wealthy Orthodox Church of Cyprus, convinced as it was that Britain's ultimate goal was to dehellenise the Greek youth and steer them away from the *enosis* movement (Heraclidou 2020: 2, 21).

5. British Colonial Policies in Ireland and Cyprus in Response to the Demand for Self-Determination

20 The 1931 Revolt and the 1798 Rebellion, with their barely tapped potential for the rise of a non-sectarian mass social movement, constituted therefore a wake-up call or a sudden awareness to the English government that its control over these islands was slipping away and that it had to take urgent steps to halt this situation. This is also the reason why these staggering events pushed the English to adopt a more interventionist attitude and above all to think about ways to de-politicise the two societies. Thus, the ultimate purpose of the 1801 Union, whose defence was often dressed up in abundant emollient language to persuade the elite that their country would be granted a political and economic status equal to that of Scotland, Wales and England, was certainly to de-politicise the Irish Question. [5] The paradox is that it did not succeed even when the general direction of the reforms implemented by the English throughout the 19th century, beginning with the Roman Catholic Relief Act 1829 which fully restored the civil rights of all Catholics in the newly united kingdom, benefited in the long term Ireland's subaltern majority. The English enacted five important Land Laws (1870, 1881, 1885, 1887, 1903) which led to a gradual transfer of land from the Protestant minority to the Catholic majority with the result that almost two-thirds of the land was again in native hands by the early 1920s. In the same vein, they also pursued a policy of *constructive unionism* in the hope of solving long-standing economic and social grievances (Gailey 1987: 310).

21 This included Arthur Balfour's efforts to alleviate poverty and congested living conditions in the West and parts of the North-West of Ireland in 1891 or the establishment of a system of Irish local government in 1898 which effectively brought landlord control to an end (Breathnach 2005). And yet, these far-reaching changes designed to "kill Home Rule by kindness" as Gerald Balfour, the Irish Chief Secretary, said in 1895, abysmally failed to dampen down the great autonomist or separatist movements as embodied by Daniel O'Connell's

campaign to repeal the Act of Union or indeed Charles Parnell's struggle to achieve Home Rule. [6]

22 In Cyprus, the English colonial approach was quite similar on fundamental points because it sought to convince Cypriots of the benefits to be gained from 'the British connection' and to cajole them away from what they perceived as 'petty politics'. Intense repression in the aftermath of the 1931 October events gave way to the authoritarian era of Governor Sir Richmond Palmer [7] during which the overriding goal was to fashion an ideal polity composed of loyal and contented British subjects. More exactly, the Colonial Authorities dreamed of manifesting a predominantly pastoral society of small farmers over which the strongly nationalist middle-classes made up of large landowners, merchants, money-lenders, doctors, lawyers, clergy and 'demagogues' (professional politicians) could no longer exert their habitual financial and political influence. They wanted to break the relational model of clientelism and paternalism that tied the poor to the rich because this was the structural principle on which nationalist politics had largely developed and thrived.

23 To this end, they embarked on a number of reforms to relieve peasants of their crushing debts and the general state of poverty under which they lived; mainly the setting-up of farmers' associations, co-operative credit societies as well as changes in the Agricultural Bank in order to bolster their overall autonomy (Karsourides 2017: 48-49). A considerable amount of thought and money was also spent on reforming the educational system, particularly the elementary schools, always in the hope of erasing from the minds of younger Greek Cypriots their identification with 'Mother Greece' and instilling instead the virtues of British civility and respect for authority. In practice, much emphasis was placed on teaching the English language and promoting English culture, often at the expense of time devoted to Greek and Turkish, while aspiring teachers and civil servants of the local administration were required to obtain English language certificates. Efforts were also deployed to set up rural schools providing not the usual classical education but agricultural training because the more young people were enticed to stay on the land the less they would fall prey to urban politics and "such chimerical ideas as union with Greece" (Heraclidou 2020: 85).

24 All the same, Palmer's more benevolent social and economic experiments in Cyprus did not rule out the use of repression. He was actually a master of the art of 'carrot and stick' when it came to dousing the flames of nationalist passion. A good illustration of this is what happened in the late summer of 1936. A deputation of Greek Cypriot members of the abolished Legislative Council travelled to London to make a plea to the Colonial Secretary for a return to political normality. Their written petition called for a revised constitution allowing *extended* rights of *self-government* within the British Empire and the re-introduction of elections because Cypriots who were "British subjects" did not deserve to be treated as "uncivilised people" and "the present system of Government" (direct rule of the Governor with decrees without Cypriot participation) "amounted to an absolute dictatorship". By 1937, however, this bold move had resulted in the deportation of two of the three members while *Eleftheria*, the newspaper which covered the whole incident, was suspended for three months (Heraclidou 2020: 79).

25 It is therefore worth underlining that these British efforts to tackle the long-standing socio-economic problems in the hope of putting the kibosh on the fight for self-determination of the Irish and the Cypriots failed over the long term since neither of them proved overly susceptible to the British 'carrot' or 'kindness'. We could go so far as to say that the British ultimately miscalculated in both situations because this fight was not a derivative but an absolute.

26 Yet we should not underestimate the extent to which British failure to make good on its promise of treating Ireland as an equal partner kept nationalism alive. The twenty-eight years that elapsed before Catholic emancipation was passed, were filled with bitterness and frustration, and the "stunted" and "begrudging" (Jackson 2004: 134) relief efforts of the Government at the height of the Potato Famine (1840s) were the strongest proof in the eyes of many that England continued to treat Ireland as a 'latifundia apartheid state' (Gillissen 2014: 332-347). Nevertheless, this is not to say that the conciliatory

stratagems described above were not destabilizing or divisive for the communities and their political leadership. In Cyprus, everything suggests that this policy was favourably received by the rural population as a whole, and in particular by the Turks. Hence, when news of the delegation demanding more self-government reached several villages of Famagusta and Limassol, the villagers led by their Mukhtars (local chiefs) sent many petitions to Palmer voicing their "absolute loyalty (to) and full confidence (in)" the British Government and their opposition to those who wished to restore the old status quo. They insisted that what they needed was not more political representation but rather more debt relief, improved irrigation and, above all, the introduction of direct taxation on the wealthy urban Cypriots (Heraclidou 2020: 80).

27 In Ireland, in the decade following the passage of the Wyndham Act (1903) which sounded the death knell for the Anglo-Irish landowning class, Irish farmers and cattle merchants enjoyed an unprecedented degree of prosperity and began to see the benefits of the British connection. As a consequence, it had become more difficult for separatist politicians to harness agrarian discontent to advance their own, somewhat different, cause (Garvin 1987: 6). The extent to which these remedial measures should be supported even became a major bone of contention within the Home Rule Party, with John Redmond's faction showing cautious support for them and John Dillon's faction viewing them as the ultimate deceitful ploy (Lee 2008: 126). The remarks of historian Alvin Jackson point in the same direction as Dillon's since behind the policy of land purchase he perceives a clear intention "to disconnect the land and the national questions" as well as "to separate rural from urban nationalism." There is therefore no doubt in his mind that "this reformist and paternalist type of government was of a piece with other British strategies of divide and rule (Jackson: 132)."

6. Ireland and Cyprus during World War I and World War II: A Via Media between Empire and Nationalism?

28 The military involvement of Ireland and Cyprus in the First and Second World Wars successively represented an important moment for the development of their nationalist movements and, on this point too, there is room for comparison. Encouraged by Ioannis C. Clerides, an influential lawyer and member of the 1937 delegation which went to London to ask for greater self-government, and even more by Greece's entry in the war on 28 October 1940 after the attack by Fascist Italy, Cypriots decided to show their loyalty to the British and to take part generously in the war effort (Yiangou: 25). Between 25,000 and 30,000 Cypriots, volunteers drawn mostly from the Greek and Turkish communities, ultimately helped the Allies achieve victory over totalitarianism.[8] It was obvious, however, that the main reason the Greek Cypriots were willing to accept such a sacrifice was because they believed *enosis* was on the horizon. Both Winston Churchill and Anthony Eden had raised expectations by making vague reassurances to this effect, and Greeks were quick to hear what suited them and to claim *enosis* as their due and just reward. Still, this show of popular goodwill was seriously put to the test when at one point the British considered introducing military conscription. The Greek political leadership (The Communist Party and the Church) argued that the imposition of such a measure was 'unconstitutional' since Cypriots did not even have a representative body for agreeing or disagreeing to such a step. It also seized the opportunity to venture a deal.

29 Their proposal, published and discussed in the press, put forward two prerequisites: firstly, that the British formally declare that the principle of self-determination enshrined in the Atlantic Charter would also apply to Cyprus after the war was over and secondly, that they undertake to restore a Cypriot legislature whose elected members would be responsible for all financial matters in the colony (Yiangou:

81-82). The British would not accept these conditions and soon abandoned the idea of compulsory conscription.

30 Interestingly, in Ireland a similar British plan to impose conscription in April 1918 seriously backfired, as it not only rallied the entire spectrum of Irish nationalist opinion against the plan, but also radicalised to an unprecedented degree the Irish people, as historian Emmanuel Destenay has persuasively argued (Destenay 2002: xii-xiii). Specifically, Lloyd George's new suggestion that Home Rule (already adopted in 1914) had somehow become conditional on conscription, pushed Ireland in the bosom of a new political party dedicated to establishing an independent Irish Republic (Ward 1974: 107-129).

31 Unlike the Cypriots, the Irish had a much more serious reason to believe that self-government (aka. Home Rule) was nigh for them. More precisely, in 1910, their forty-year-old struggle in the British Parliament was about to bear fruit as the 73 Irish MPs sitting in Westminster now held the balance of power. To remain in power and pass the 'People's Budget', Liberal Premier Herbert Asquith pledged to facilitate the advent of Home Rule in exchange for Irish unconditional support. And that is exactly what he did when he challenged the almighty power of the House of Lords by passing the Parliament Act of 1911 (Destenay 2021: 3). Thereafter, the Lords could only delay the introduction of any public bill passed by the House of Commons for a maximum period of two years, after which it automatically became law without their assent (Dickson / Carmichael / 1999: 9).

32 Thus, if not for the outbreak of the First World War in September, the third Home Rule Bill (April 1912) providing for a bicameral parliament in Dublin with powers to legislate on most national affairs as well as statutory guarantees for the rights of the Protestant minority, was due to become law in 1914. As in Cyprus, a significant number of Irishmen, about 200,000 in total, around half of whom were Catholic Nationalists and half Protestant Unionists, volunteered to fight alongside the British Army (Biagini: 271). The Irish nationalists did so not only because Belgium, a small neutral Catholic country, needed to be defended against a brutal aggressor but also because they felt that by risking their lives to show they could be counted on to help England and the Empire at times of dire need, they could earn her respect and force her to honor her commitment to implement a Home Rule that

had been placed on the statute book but suspended for the duration of the war. Going to war on the side of the Allies therefore meant not only championing the "freedom of small nations" on the European continent, but also that of Ireland. Underneath it all, there was also an idealism, expressed most eloquently by John Redmond, the leader of the Irish Parliamentary Party, in the House of Commons, on 3 August 1914, on the eve of Britain's declaration of war on Germany. That day, before Edward Carson, leader of the Ulster unionists, had a chance to make an announcement in the Commons, he declared:

> I say to the Government that they may to-morrow withdraw every one of their troops from Ireland. I say that the coast of Ireland will be defended from foreign invasion by her armed sons, and for this purpose armed Nationalist Catholics in the South will be only too glad to join arms with the armed Protestant Ulstermen in the North. Is it too much to hope that out of this situation there may spring a result which will be good not merely for the Empire, but good for the future welfare and integrity of the Irish nation? [9]

33 With these words, the leader of the constitutional path to freedom endeavoured to square the circle between defending British interests and defending Irish interests, as it were. He wanted to persuade Republicans, Conservatives, and Ulster loyalists of the judiciousness and the moral rightness of an *in-between solution* in which none of them had ever believed. He was also sending subtle cues to everyone, and particularly to the English, by hammering home the message that the way forward for a free Ireland lay neither in the Fenian dogma that "England's difficulty is Ireland's opportunity" nor in becoming a fifth column by inviting an enemy in, like the United Irishmen did in 1798. Rather, his solution to the centuries-old mistrust that had tormented his country was to exercise forbearance with Unionism and to offer collaboration to Britain when it most needed it, confident that it would profoundly 'reshuffle' the entire set of relationships and raise Ireland to a position of parity with her in the future. Redmond's speech is properly remarkable when we remember that it was pronounced when the First World War had not only put Home Rule in cold storage, but also halted a rapidly developing incipient civil war between the Catholic majority and the Protestant minority.

34 Facts matter here. In early April 1914, the Unionists who had vowed to destroy "the conspiracy to set up a Home Rule Parliament" in their Covenant of September 1912, began drilling a 90,000-strong force of Ulster Volunteers and efficiently organizing a major gun smuggling operation in flagrant violation of the law (McLean / McMillan / 2005: 125). The Nationalists soon followed suit by creating their own Irish Volunteer Army in November 1913 and arranging for their own importation of firearms to protect Home Rule from its enemies. Last but not least, some British army officers of the Curragh Camp, the largest British army base in Ireland, had threatened to resign in March 1914 if ordered by the War Office to march against Ulster to ensure the implementation of Home Rule.

35 In short, those officers were not afraid to show that their loyalty lay, not with the British Government, but with the men who had first broken the law and instigated civil war in Ireland.[10] There is a certain irony in the fact that when the British state seemed most amenable to some form of *middle way*, the majority and the minority were equally poised to wage war on it if it acceded to the demands of the opposite camp. And the irony perhaps weighed more heavily on the minority because their professions of absolute devotion and loyalty to Britain seemed hollow and conditional in the circumstances. Yet despite a political polarization that seemed headed toward a horrible climax, Redmond continued to preach the possibilities of a *third way*, even going so far as to imagine the growth of a "union of hearts" between Orange (Protestants) and Green (Catholics) because of all the sons of Ireland "fighting and shedding their blood side by side" on the European battlefields. Redmond's speech is reminiscent of an article written by Clerides in *Eleftheria* in which he enjoined Cypriots not to agitate for *enosis* but to leave the Cypriot Government and the Colonial Office alone to successfully deal with the crucial war ahead; meanwhile sagaciously drawing their attention, and especially that of the Secretary of State for Colonies, to the fact that being "Greeks does not make us any less interested in the fate of the British Empire than any other British citizen."[11] These politicians therefore preferred the path of loyalty and compromise rather than fanning the flames of nationalist passion. Solidarity with Britain during the war was presented positively as an intermediate step in the fulfilment of a long-cherished dream.

36 Sadly, in the decades following the World Wars, general goodwill towards colonial England dried up in both countries. Furthermore, this period is particularly interesting not only because it spells the end of the pursuit of a *via media* between empire and nationalism in the face of the arrival of radical political forces on the historical scene, but also because it is witness to a growing cleavage and a definitive rupture within the broadly-understood anti-colonial movement.

7. Revolution and Partition in Ireland and Cyprus: The End of the 'Via Media' and the Onset of Sectarian Conflict

37 While in Ireland, an all-out civil war between majority and minority was averted at the last minute due to the continental conflagration and, later, partition, in Cyprus the situation between them deteriorated rapidly. Despite more than three centuries of peaceful coexistence, Greek-Turkish relations descended into fear, hostility and, ultimately, violence in the 1950s and 1960s. Political fears may be unfounded, but they are nonetheless real and difficult to dispel. Turkish Cypriots feared that in the event of *enosis* they would suffer the same fate as their co-religionists in Crete at the end of the 19th century (1897-98). The fact that the enosists tended to ignore their existence, due to "the ethnic predominance of the Greek element on the island" (Kitromelides 1990: 13), naturally did nothing to allay this fear. They mobilised around the right-wing "Party for the Protection of the Turkish Minority (KATAK)" and sought leadership from Fazıl Küçük and Rauf Raif Denktaş, two Kemalist intellectuals advocating Taksim (partition in Turkish). Achieving *enosis* in a land with a sizeable Turkish-speaking community (20% of the population) was indeed bound to be difficult but perhaps nothing proved more counterproductive to this objective and more damaging to the relationship between the two communities than the Greek Cypriot decision to use force. Things changed irrevocably when colonial inflexibility was countered by the guerrilla war of the *National Organisation of Cypriot Fighters* (Aka. EOKA[12]) that began with a series of bomb attacks in Nicosia on 1st April 1955. The Cyprus Emergency was characterised by

four years of a ruthless EOKA terror campaign, British systematic punishment of its members with the use of torture and extrajudicial killings, communal violence culminating in June 1958 with a false flag bomb attack at the Turkish Embassy that led to the eviction of Greek Cypriots from Turkish neighbourhoods in Nicosia and other cities, the emergence of a piecemeal partition out of the new self-contained Turkish enclaves, and constant diplomatic deadlock. We could argue that EOKA, led by George Grivas, a fanatical anti-communist colonel of the Greek Army, had a symbolic mandate given that a referendum organised from 15 until 22 January 1950 by the ethnarchy, held in the island's churches, and supported by both the Right and the Left, showed that 96% of Greek Cypriots and even 800 Turkish Cypriots wanted *enosis*.[13] But although EOKA was supported by a large part of the Greek Cypriot population, its methods were by no means unanimously accepted. It was the new Progressive Party of Working People (AKEL[14]) which, from the beginning, expressed doubts and showed another way. Prior to the Referendum, on 27 September 1949, the party had invited the ethnarchy[15] to submit a common memo at the UN General Meeting, to send a representation there, and to organise demonstrations and workers' strikes. But the ethnarchy rejected the offer of collaboration mainly because it feared that the Communists would take the lead of the Enosis movement. Ultimately, the Left abandoned its '*Gandhiesque*' approach of civil disobedience and urged its members to vote in the referendum, but not without criticizing the anti-communism of the Church (Terzis 2009: 9). However, since this instance of open defiance of nationalist orthodoxy, the Left has never been trusted again, assuming she ever was, and has generally been treated by Enosists as the 'enemy within' and the 'anti-Hellene' with all the consequences that this entailed. Thus, during the Emergency, such ideological blinders made AKEL members vulnerable to EOKA's violence. And although the issue has been extremely controversial and taboo for nearly half a century, a group of relatives of executed left wingers, under AKEL guidance, decided to lift the taboo by setting up the 'Association of Relatives of Persons Murdered for their Beliefs, 1955 – 59' which collected details of the circumstances under which twenty-three of their kinsmen were murdered[16].

38 In the early years of the struggle, EOKA was careful to target only British personnel and suspected collaborators ('traitors' in Greek Cypriot nationalist parlance) and not Turkish Cypriots, lest its anti-colonial campaign might degenerate into ethnic conflict, but, as the tension escalated, this situation inevitably changed. It is a truism that violence begets violence and guerrilla warfare, despite claims to the contrary, can cause considerable collateral damage. There is, however, a Greek Cypriot claim, often supported by scholarly consensus, that the British deliberately chose to play the 'Turkish Cypriot card' in their determination to crush the insurgency, and that this tactic was part and parcel of a broader policy of divide and rule.[17] Whatever their ulterior motive, they replaced the Greek Cypriot policemen, whom they considered unreliable because their sympathy for or fear of EOKA compromised their ability to function, with Turks. More exactly, they raised an Emergency Auxiliary Force and they also added a Police Mobile Reserve, "dipping for the purpose into the lumpen element in the Turkish community (Anderson 2008)." Over time, the entire security machine came to depend on Turkish auxiliaries.[18] The conditions on the ground were therefore ripe for a growing estrangement and even a lethal confrontation between Greeks and Turks because as the latter became Britain's law enforcers they too became EOKA targets (Demetriou 2019: 406). That the British government was in a state of collusion with the Turkish Cypriots is also evident from their tendency to turn a blind eye to the violence wielded by this side. While the harshest punishments were meted out to the men of EOKA, very few men of the Volkan[19] were ever put on trial (Hitchens 1997: 46). When all Greek Cypriot political parties were banned, Turkish Cypriots were allowed to set up a party called "Cyprus is Turkish." (Hitchens 1997: 45).

39 At this point, the historical parallels with Ireland readily come to mind. The general election of December 1918, which could be seen as a sort of equivalent of the 1950 Cypriot plebiscite, constituted an absolute turning point in Irish history because it led to the defeat of the moderate and constitutionalist path to freedom represented by the Irish Parliamentary Party and to the landslide victory of Sinn Féin ('we ourselves'), a hard-line nationalist party led by Arthur Griffith (Laffan 1999: 166). This was also the moment when the Irish Republican Army commenced their guerilla war against British security

forces but also to a lesser extent against Ulster loyalists. That being said, although no full-blown war ever took place between nationalist Ireland and loyalist Ulster, mainly because the IRA had only limited capacity to lead the fight against Ulster, nevertheless serious sectarian clashes broke out between Catholics and Protestants while a piecemeal ethnic cleansing occurred in the summer of 1920 and continued intermittently for two years in this last bastion of the Union (O'Halphin 2012: 152).

40 It is interesting to note that, to manage the crisis, the British government approved a Unionist "proposal" that was in reality a "carbon copy" of the method used in Cyprus more than thirty years later. On 22 October 1920, shortly before partition, under the command of Lieutenant Colonel Charles Wickham, the Ulster Special Constabulary, a force drawn from the "loyal population" and exclusively protestant, was set up to deal with subversion and outside aggression (Farrell 1983: 75). The concept of a partisan special force was widely criticised by all nationalists, North and South, but also by some prominent personalities of the British army and administration, without, however, making any difference.[20] The Ulster Special Constabulary was to become notorious for carrying out revenge killings and reprisals against Catholic civilians in response to IRA border raids. Above all, in Cyprus as in Ireland, the anticolonial movement split following a major agreement concluded with the British Government. In Cyprus, the settlement reached in 1959 established a Republic with presidential rule[21] and a demanding and intricate power-sharing government which was, in its fundamental principles, similar to the Sunningdale Agreement brokered for Northern Ireland in 1973 (Cochrane / Loizides /Bodson 2018: 208). Much like that deal, it proved short-lived. It was after all a "Reluctant democracy"[22] since neither the Greeks nor the Turks viewed this new arrangement favourably, firstly because they were not involved in the negotiations and, secondly, and more importantly, because the former were forced to abandon *enosis* while the latter were forced to abandon partition (Ghai 2000: 223). Furthermore, Greek nationalist opinion, in general, claimed that it suffered from one fundamental weakness in that the participation of Turkish Cypriots in the new government was much higher than their actual proportion in the island's population. And that this also applied to their power of veto, which could systematic-

ally prevent any exercise of authority consistent with the will of the majority. In the Greek Parliament, critics of the settlement predicted the regime's demise: it was "too complex to be workable", a "monstrosity", and with it, Cyprus had become a "powder-keg" (Xydis: 463). Also interesting, although not so surprising, is the opinion of a well-known Irish Republican, who paid close attention to the Cyprus issue. When he heard that Makarios, the religious and political leader of the Greek Cypriots, was prepared to accept the 1959 compromise settlement, the later chief of the Provisional IRA, Sean Mac Stiofain, wrote that the situation was reminiscent of the end of the Anglo-Irish War (1919-1921) and the awful divisions that followed among Irish militants (Mac Stiofain 1974: 78).

41 In Ireland, the IRA led by their Director of Intelligence, Michael Collins, forced the Lloyd George Government to the negotiating table, and succeeded in securing dominion status, namely an unprecedented degree of freedom under the umbrella of the British Commonwealth. Unfortunately, the Anglo-Irish Treaty of December 1921 also had serious drawbacks, which were anathema to some intransigent Irish Republicans mainly because it fell short of full-fledged republican independence, imposed a 'humiliating' oath of fealty to the British monarch [23] and to a lesser extent because it gave Northern Unionists the option of voting themselves out of the Irish Free State. Indeed, although in close examinations of the Treaty debate in Dáil Éireann (House of Deputies), Irish historians have found that complaint about the oath largely took precedence over that of partition, it is wrong to assume that the latter mattered less (Wall 1966: 84). Rather the downplaying of this issue then seems to have reflected a general feeling of powerlessness towards the reality of Ulster Unionism. As Collins put it: “What was the use of talking big phrases about not agreeing to the partition of our country? Surely we recognise the North-East corner does exist.” (Martin 1999: 71). However, the Treaty could not satisfy the absolutist vision that had nestled within the minds of the combatants for so long. Their bitter disappointment had to find a way out and so civil war broke out between the diehards and the compromisers. Yet if the 26 county-Irish Free State managed to survive the Anti-Treaty military challenge, and from 1923, the Irish there were able to once again enjoy some significant level of political stability, in Cyprus the derailment

was total and seemingly unstoppable. By the end of 1963, intercommunal violence had flared up with a vengeance because the minority rejected the thirteen constitutional amendments proposed by Makarios. In their eyes, this initiative amounted to subversion while for the majority and their leader it was merely a last-ditch effort to salvage the government from imminent collapse. In truth, neither Greeks nor Turks were fully committed to the 1959 constitution as it stood. They saw it not as an end in itself, but rather as a means to an end. The Greeks hoped to remove the many legal constraints, restore balance in favour of majority government and push for *Enosis* again while the Turks hoped to nudge the situation in the direction of partition or federation. Thus, according to historian Andrekos Varnava, when Makarios proposed independence in September 1958, he also made sure to "keep the door open to pursue *enosis* once Cyprus had become independent, even though this was prohibited by the independence agreements." (Varnava 2024: 18). As if that were not enough, the new political order was now besieged by dissident elements of the old anti-colonial movement, in the form of a resurgent EOKA [24] led by the same Col. Grivas, who felt that his fight to wrest *enosis* from the British had been sourly betrayed. It was this latest challenge that drove the final nail into the coffin of an independent and territorially-united Cyprus. Backed by the Greek Junta ensconced in Athens since 1967 and led by hardliner Dimitrios Ioannides, the anti-Makarios faction launched a coup on 15 July 1974 to depose Makarios and unite Cyprus with Greece by force. Five days later, Turkey used its official status as guarantor of the 1960 constitution and protector of the minority to invade the island from the North. This invasion led to a terrible campaign of ethnic cleansing with the forced displacement of hundreds of thousands of Cypriots, imprisonment and torture of Greek prisoners of war in Turkish prisons, killings on both sides of the local divide, military occupation, and partition of the island. [25]

42 The granting of full (Cyprus) or partial (Ireland) independence did not succeed in either containing or ending the intercommunal antagonism which had hardened during the era of British colonial domination. The difference is that in Cyprus open violence broke out just three years after the *London* and *Zürich Agreements* while in Ireland it broke out fifty years after the Anglo-Irish Treaty. In fact, in Ireland,

partition simply had the effect of pushing and condensing the old enmity into a smaller geographical area, since the crucial question of which side would prevail politically and economically over the other still remained. The only significant difference is that Ulster Unionists now enjoyed a clear demographic majority inside the new political entity. Tragically, instead of building fair structures and institutions capable of cementing Northern Ireland's democratic foundations and perhaps sowing the seeds of future Catholic acceptance of the state, they consolidated their hegemony by subjecting the Catholics to a heavy regime of discrimination in such key areas as voting, employment, housing, and education. In 1968, the situation changed utterly, when the Civil Rights Association (NICRA) made up of middle-class nationalists, trade unionists, socialists, and communists, but also a few Unionists, undertook a campaign of peaceful activism to end discrimination. Immediately, William Craig, Minister of Home Affairs, and the entire Unionist monolith at Stormont, interpreted this campaign for social justice as a façade for an assault on the very existence of the state, and dashed its moderate expectations. Then, like their European and American comrades, the Irish radical Left, represented by the student organisation *People's Democracy*, decided to expose to the world the state's barely concealed brutality and its supremacist character by pushing security forces to overreact (Prince 2006: 853). Its goal was to unite Protestant and Catholic workers and to destroy an apartheid-style state that had condemned Catholics to the status of undesirable second-class citizens. But as a violent overthrow of Northern Ireland increasingly appeared to be the only alternative to stubborn unionist opposition to reform and socialists chose to lend tactical support to the Provisional IRA, the conflict quickly lost its socialist and internationalist influences and took on an old sectarian flavour (Arthur 1974). Finally, it is no exaggeration to say that if partition, the solution favoured by Turkish Cypriots and Ulster Unionists, was devised to separate majority and minority forever, then it certainly came at a high human, social and economic cost in both islands, and it certainly failed to achieve this basic goal in Northern Ireland. There, the willingness of the adversarial parties to rethink the procedural workings of power-sharing to solidify democracy and to govern together to guarantee political stability, is still a matter of serious doubt, more than twenty-five years after the signing of the Good Friday agreement.

Conclusion

43 The process of decolonization did not prove straightforward, neither in the Irish case nor in the Cypriot case. The call for self-determination forced Imperial Britain to engineer ways, whether the 'high-minded' policy of constructive unionism or the 'unscrupulous policy' of divide and rule—to defuse nationalist fervour, prevent inter-ethnic solidarity, and protect its geopolitical interests. The pursuit of a via media between empire and nationalism became less tenable in the wake of the world wars as the right of self-determination for all peoples became a cardinal principle of modern international law and physical-force nationalism prevailed morally and politically over constitutional nationalism. On the other hand, the presence within the broad anticolonial movement of proponents of a 'middle path' may not have completely thrown off kilter the goal of separatism, but it nevertheless introduced a degree of volatility and unpredictability along the great dividing line, which had to be watched and even policed sometimes by a diehard separatism, as this transpired in Cyprus after the rise of working-class militancy in the 1930s. And yet, some of these elements, straddling the ethnic and colonial border, have not always harmed the anticolonial cause; on the contrary, as in Ireland, the patriotism of the Protestant Ascendancy, however imperfect and contradictory it may be, imposed, with its stirring political rhetoric, a certain standard from which too-obvious deviations became henceforth unacceptable. Finally, in Cyprus, the process of decolonization was further complicated by Greece and Turkey, whose violent interventions sealed the fate of the short-lived republic of 1961: a truth which, in 1974, gave the British government carte blanche to assert that while the island was 'one of its problems', it was not 'one of its making'.

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1 Loizides 2016. See also Brody 2016.

2 Independence for Ireland and *enosis* for Cyprus.

3 Markides 2019: 213. See also Solsten 1991: 20.

4 Alecou 2016: 15. See also Varnava 2024: 5. open access article.

5 Larkin 2014: 169. On the arguments used by Prime Minister William Pitt to advocate the Union, see Jenkins 1988: 5.

6 On the rationale underpinning this experiment in social radicalism by a Conservative government see Biagini 2018: 267-68.

7 This period is pejoratively called 'Palmerocracy' by Greek Cypriots.

8 Siammas 2023. See also Nancy Crawshaw who argues that the majority of the volunteers who served in the Cypriot Regiment were Turkish Cypriots (1978: 43).

9 Minutes of the House of Commons: Monday 3rdAugust 1914, Vol. 65, Column 1829, Hansard.

10 This incident is called the 'Curragh mutiny', although, technically speaking, the officers did not mutiny because the order was never issued. See O'Brien 2014.

11 "Να αφήσωμεν Κυβέρνησιν και Υπουργείον απερίσπαστα εν όσω εξακολουθεί η κρίσις" (We must leave the Government and the Ministry undistracted while the crisis continues), *Eleftheria*, 30 August 1939.

12 EOKA in Greek is an acronym for "Ethniki Organosis Kyprion Agoniston".

13 The results of this referendum were immediately rejected by the British government. See also Kapardis / Alecou 2014: 7125.

14 AKEL in Greek is an acronym for "Anorthotikó Kómma Ergazómenou Laoú". It was the new community party of Cyprus founded in 1941, composed of both communists and socialists. It replaced the KKK created in 1926.

15 The Ethnarchy is the leadership of the Greek Orthodox Church in Cyprus, personified by Archbishop Makarios III. In the 1950s, he became the undisputed political leader of the *enosis* movement and later, in 1959, the President of the Republic of Cyprus.

16 On EOKA's executions of AKEL members and other left-wingers, see Michail 2016. In chapter 18, the author claims that Grivas had prepared a plan to fight AKEL to the end.

17 The argument of an ulterior divide and rule policy is partially disputed by Andrew R. Novo (2012: 425-426).

18 Holland 2002: 223. See also French 2015: 118.

19 Later it was re-named the Turkish Resistance Organisation.

20 For e. g. Henry Hughes Wilson, Chief of the Imperial General Staff and Security advisor to the Northern Ireland government, said that the creation of a partisan constabulary was tantamount to "taking sides, civil war and savage reprisals." See Bew 2002: 28.

21 The constitution provided for a Greek Cypriot president and a Turkish Cypriot vice-president. But as critics pointed out, due to the absolute veto granted to the vice president, the regime amounted to a co-presidency. A detailed account of the background negotiations of the agreement can be found in Xydis (1973: 462).

22 The expression is taken from Xydis' book which is already referenced.

23 A pledge of loyalty to the British monarch that all Irish MPs and senators were required to take before sitting in the Lower and Upper Houses.

24 EOKA – B or 2, as it was called.

25 The international community has refused to recognize the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus established by Turkey in 1983.

English

This article proposes a comparative and longue durée analysis of Ireland and Cyprus; two predominantly white and Christian nations, but with some of the most intractable ethnopolitical conflicts of the 20th century to have erupted on European soil. Its objective is twofold. First, it highlights similarities and differences in their colonial history, that is both in the ways they were ruled by Imperial Britain and the ways they responded to her rule, particularly after the emergence of nationalism and the outbreak of insurgency campaigns calling into question the legitimacy of British presence there. Second, it illustrates the challenges of overcoming the rigid boundary dictated by colonialism and nationalism and defending a credible 'middle path' on either side of the colonial divide.

Français
Cet article propose une analyse comparative de l'Irlande et de Chypre, sur la longue durée ; deux nations à prédominance blanche et chrétienne, mais avec deux conflits ethnopolitiques comptant parmi les plus insolubles du XX^{e} siècle qui aient éclaté sur le sol européen. Son objectif est double. Premièrement, il met en évidence les similitudes et les différences dans leur histoire coloniale, c'est-à-dire dans la manière dont ils ont été gouvernés par l'Angleterre impériale et dans la manière dont ils ont réagi à son règne, en particulier après l'émergence du nationalisme et le déclenchement de campagnes d'insurrection remettant en question la légitimité de la présence britannique là-bas. Deuxièmement, il illustre les défis liés au dépassement de la frontière rigide dictée par le colonialisme et le nationalisme et à la défense d'une « voie médiane » crédible de part et d'autre de la fracture coloniale.

Mots-clés
Chypre, Irlande, colonialisme, insurrection, contre-insurrection, comparaison, liminal

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Cyprus, Ireland, colonialism, insurgency, counter-insurgency, comparison, liminal

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