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Anglo-Hellenic Relations in Cyprus: Exploring the 1940s

This paper offers an overview of the development of relations between Greek Cypriots and the British during the 1940s, a period which proved fundamentally crucial for the course of the Cyprus Question. To begin with, the experience of the Second World War transformed political realities on the island and had a profound impact on the way the British and the Greek Cypriots viewed each other. Furthermore, the second half of the 1940s witnessed a hardening of attitudes of both Greek Cypriots and the British: the former demanded forcefully the union (“*Enosis*”) of Cyprus with Greece, whereas the latter were not prepared to give in to such demands for reasons which this paper will discuss. This study will further explore the role of the acting archbishop, the bishop of Paphos, Leontios (1933-1947), elected as archbishop of Cyprus in June 1947. Leontios remained a key figure of developments of Cypriot politics during the 1940s until his sudden death, a month following his enthronement. Undeniably developments that occurred during this decade –not least events concerning the acute polarization between the Cypriot Right and Left– had far reaching consequences for the future of the island.

The Experience of the Second World War, 1939-1945

The first half of the 1940s was crucial for the development of relations between Greek Cypriots and the British. The war experience placed this relationship in a new context. The fundamental reason for such an outcome was the firm loyalty Cypriots demonstrated towards the British once hostilities in Europe broke out. Governor Battershill, who assumed duties in August 1939, addressed the Advisory Council¹ in early September emphasizing that “Cyprus, not less than Britain and the Empire, has to play her own part in the present war... I am convinced that the people of Cyprus are willing and prepared to share the sufferings, the

1. Following the suppression of the 1931 Revolt, the British abolished the Legislative Council. In 1933 an Advisory Council was set up exclusively comprised by appointed members.

disasters and the trials which will come until we accomplish the final victory.”² Despite grievances experienced during the 1930s, Greek Cypriots affirmed their support towards the British Empire once hostilities in Europe broke out.³ This element is crucial in understanding the unfolding Anglo-hellenic relationship in later years. Overall, the Cypriot contribution in the war effort was overwhelming. In February 1940 a Cyprus Regiment was formed in which thousands of Cypriots served.⁴ This contribution was acknowledged in British official circles as well as in the British press.⁵ One further reason which influenced relations between Greek Cypriots and the British was the re-emergence of the “*Enosis*” movement once Greece, following the Italian invasion, entered the war by the side of the Allies in October 1940. Indeed, Greece’s entry in the war, and by extension her alliance with Britain enforced the revival of the “*Enosis*” movement (the power of which the British had tried –unsuccessfully as it turned out– to curtail ever since 1931). When the news of Greece’s entry to the hostilities broke out, Cypriots immediately held demonstrations in all major towns for which the governor exclaimed that “the spirit of excitement reached the bounds of hysteria.”⁶ The press and local politicians now pointed to the common Anglo-hellenic struggle. While the Greek consulate was placed at the center of popular attention, the key figure in the pro-Hellenic demonstrations on the island after 28 October 1940 was the acting archbishop, bishop of Paphos, Leontios. A seminal figure of modern Cypriot history, Leontios served as acting archbishop (or as *Locum Tenens*) following the death of Archbishop Cyril III in 1933. The absence of the bishops of Kitium and Kyrenia (they were exiled once the 1931 disturbances were suppressed) became an obstacle to the canonical election

2. “Η χθεσινή ομιλία του Κυβερνήτου ενώπιον του Συμβουλευτικού Σώματος” (Yesterday’s speech of the Governor to the Advisory Council), *Ελευθερία*, September 5, 1939.

3. See one indicative example in press, “Όλοι μας παρά το πλευρόν της Αυτοκρατορίας” (All of us by the side of the Empire), *Νέος Κυπριακός Φύλαξ*, September 2, 1939.

4. According to recent research the exact number of Cypriots who served in the Cyprus Regiment was 12216. See Petros Papapolyviou, *Οι Κύπριοι Εθελοντές του Β΄ Παγκοσμίου Πολέμου: Τα μητρώα, οι κατάλογοι και ο φόρος του αίματος* (Cypriot Volunteers during the Second World War: The registers, the lists and the blood tribute) (Nicosia: Ministry of Culture and Education, 2012), 22.

5. “The Cypriots’ War Record,” *The Times*, April 15, 1940.

6. Cypher telegram from Governor of Cyprus, 1 November 1940, CO 67/308/10, The National Archives of the UK (henceforth TNA).

according to the Charter of the Orthodox Church of Cyprus. The acting archbishop soon emerged as a leading personality capable of making life difficult for the colonial authorities.

The Orthodox Church and the movement for volunteers in the Greek Army

This held true during Cyprus' wartime experience. For example, Leontios initiative to organize a volunteering movement for enrollment in the Royal Hellenic Forces instead of in the Cyprus Regiment is revealing of the new circumstances in Cyprus. Indeed, soon after the entry of Greece in the European hostilities, the Greek consul in Nicosia, Eleftherios Mavrokefalos, became the recipient of a stream of Greek Cypriot applications offering their services to the Greek forces. Leontios played a leading part in organizing the movement of volunteers for Greece. The desire of Greek Cypriots to enroll to the Greek army instead of to the forces of the Cyprus Regiment, although not illegal, posed potential embarrassment for the British, particularly since volunteers for the latter were paid. In December, Leontios requested an urgent interview with the governor to discuss the matter⁷ to which request the governor agreed, but for a later date, pleading other, more immediate obligations.⁸ While the governor in Nicosia tried to convince his superiors in London that there was no genuine desire of Greek Cypriots to enroll to the volunteer movement,⁹ the overwhelming response to the call of the acting archbishop to all eligible men to present themselves in the archbishopric made things all the more complicated.¹⁰ With this move, Leontios made the Orthodox Church responsible for the organization of the volunteers and himself the Ethnarch of Greek Cypriots.

7. Archbishopric of Cyprus, Private Papers of Archbishop Leontios, Ο Τοποτηρητής του Αρχιεπισκοπικού Θρόνου Κύπρου προς την Αυτού Εξοχότητα τον Κυβερνήτη της Κύπρου (The Locum Tenens of the Archiepiscopal See of Cyprus to His Excellency the Governor of Cyprus), 10 December 1940, Book IH (18), 51.

8. Archbishopric of Cyprus, Private Papers of Archbishop Leontios, Colonial Secretary to the Locum

Tenens of the archiepiscopal See, 16 December 1940, Book IH (18), 57.

9. Telegram from Governor of Cyprus, 11 December 1940, FO 371/24912, R 8974/150/19, TNA.

10. "Εκκλησία της Κύπρου – Γνωστοποίηση" (Church of Cyprus – Announcement), *Ανεξάρτητος*, December 20, 1940.

Discussions between the Foreign Office, the British ambassador in Athens and the colonial authorities in Nicosia ensued as to how to handle the matter. Eventually, it was the Secretary of State for the Colonies Lord Lloyd who settled the question by noting that:

“Quite clearly the Greek government should be asked to say that they do not approve of the *Locum Tenens*’ step and that all Cypriots, who wish to serve the Allied cause, should join the British Army and the Cypriot section of it. The F.O. should so be told. We *must* make the Greeks do this.”¹¹

Following these instructions all involved parties acted accordingly. The Greek consul in Nicosia was instructed to ask Leontios abandon his effort. Consequently, the movement was discreetly halted although this did not forbid many Greek Cypriots travelling to Greece at their own expense to assist the Greek war effort. The episode is revealing of the British determination to deflate any Greek expectation while the war still went on. Leontios, on his part, would continue to promote the “*Enosis*” cause in every way possible.

Greek Cypriots, therefore, attested time and again their desire to be united with Greece. Conversely, Cyprus remained a focus of Greek irredentism and this held particularly true in the new circumstances created by the war. In early 1941 the Greek premier, Alexandros Koryzis, raised the subject of a future cession of Cyprus to Greece with the British Foreign Minister Anthony Eden. Koryzis told Eden:

“As the Greek people will be required to offer the greatest of sacrifices, they will need, in order to maintain the excellence of their morale, an immediate satisfaction of their demands. I cannot tell you how impressive in these hours of crisis, would a British gesture be whereby Cyprus should be ceded to Greece. I am simply putting forth a thought which will require further study and I am not demanding an answer.”¹²

11. Secretary of State for the Colonies note, 13 January 1941, CO 67/308/10, TNA. Emphasis in the original.

12. Constantinos Svolopoulos, “Anglo-Hellenic Talks on Cyprus during the Axis Campaign Against Greece,” *Balkan Studies* 23 (1982): 200.

Eden refrained from addressing the matter immediately. In April 1941, King George II again raised the issue and requested permission from the British for the establishment of an interim Greek capital in Cyprus.¹³ While, initially British officials did not entirely dismiss the request, William Battershill's urgent warnings convinced London that it would be impossible to cede even a small territory of Cyprus to the Greeks. The governor urged officials in London that ceding even a small part of the island to the Greek government would provide an overwhelming boost to the "Enosis" movement. Battershill was adamant, that no matter what guarantees would be made as to the temporary character of the movement of the Greek government to Cyprus, Greek Cypriots would anyway look upon it as their own, a fact which would antagonize both Turkish Cypriots as well as Ankara itself.¹⁴ However, following dramatic events of May 1941, the possibility of the movement of the Greek government to Cyprus reappeared. While further discussion on the matter took place, which revealed the capacity of the Cyprus Question in dividing British officialdom,¹⁵ the final decision lay with the prime minister himself. Winston Churchill emphasized that it would be better to leave all territorial settlement until after the War ended. The British prime minister stressed: "I have followed very closely all that has happened in Cyprus since I visited the island in 1907. I suppose you are aware there is a substantial, Moslem population in Cyprus who have (sic) been very loyal to us, and who would very much resent being handed over to the Greeks."¹⁶ Winston Churchill's intervention sealed the final decision on the fate of Cyprus during that critical time. In the years to follow, until at least the close of the 1940s, Athens would be too dependent on British assistance to raise more forcefully the question of Cyprus. Internal political turmoil, which climaxed with the onset of the Greek Civil War, was to seriously undermine Greece's ability in exerting pressure on Britain regarding the Cyprus Question.

13. From Athens to Foreign Office, 11 April 1941, CO 323/1864/7, TNA.

14. Officer administering the Government of Cyprus to the Secretary of State for the colonies, 13 April 1941, CO 323/1864/7, TNA.

15. For a discussion and further analysis of the incident see Anastasia Yiangou, *Cyprus in World War II: Politics and Conflict in the Eastern Mediterranean* (London: I.B.Tauris, 2010), 55-58.

16. Prime Minister's personal minute, 2 June 1941, FO 371/29846, R 5841/198/19, TNA; The minute is also cited in CAB 120/499, TNA.

The Remaking of Cypriot Politics

As the war went on, assisted by the relaxation of repressive measures, the island also witnessed the revival of its political life, which had been halted following the suppression of the 1931 disturbances. The foundation of the Progressive Party of Working People (Ανορθωτικό Κόμμα Εργαζόμενου Λαού – AKEL), in April 1941, was to have profound repercussions for the future. While local protagonists did not immediately grasp the importance of this development, it soon became clear for all that a new political power had emerged. Initially, AKEL maintained a discreet level of activity. However, the entry of the Soviet Union in the war, in June 1941, allowed the party to act further in the open, particularly in the villages, and to soon pose as a serious challenge for the colonial authorities. For example, the party called on workers to support the fight against the Axis powers by working voluntarily for one day a week at defense works, a call to which around 6000 people responded to by November 1941.¹⁷ During that month, Trade Unions managed to coordinate their efforts in organizing under one leading organ when the Pancyprian Trade Union Committee (Παγκύπρια Συντεχνιακή Επιτροπή – PSE.) was founded. By the end of the year, AKEL, under the influential leadership of its General Secretary Ploutis Servas, also positioned itself in favour of “*Enosis*.”¹⁸ Even though the British were determined to deflate any expectations on “*Enosis*,” while the war still went on, it was obvious that a new political power on the island had arrived.

Tension between the traditional Right-Wing powers and the Left took place as early as 1942, when the two camps held divergent views as to if and how the Greek Independence Day on 25 March should be celebrated.¹⁹ The expanding influence of AKEL in the rural areas also caused the reaction of the more conservative elements. The foundation of the Pancyprian Farmers’ Union (Παναγροτική Ένωση Κύπρου – PEK) in May 1942 served thereafter as the bastion of the more conservative rural elements on the island. The following year AKEL scored

17. Political Report for November 1941, CO 67/314/10, TNA.

18. The party had the opportunity of positioning itself in favor of “*Enosis*” in the wake of the Greek Premier Tsouderos speech in London in which he had envisioned Cyprus as part of Greece. The speech upset greatly British official circles and Tsouderos was even admonished by Anthony Eden. See Yiangou, *Cyprus in World War II*, 69-71.

19. Yiangou, *Cyprus in World War II*, 74-76.

important victories in the municipal elections (the first to be held since 1931) revealing the new state of political affairs which now existed in Cyprus. A call of the party to its members on 16 June 1943 to enroll in the Cyprus Regiment was met with considerable success. Simultaneously, that month also witnessed establishment of the Cypriot National Party (Κυπριακό Εθνικό Κόμμα – ΚΕΚ), under the leadership of the mayor of Nicosia Themistocles Dervis. This revival of political life went hand in hand with an intense antagonism between the Cypriot Left and Right. In 1944 the Labor Movement split into the “new” (Right-wing) trade unions and the “old” (Left-wing) ones. This rivalry only deepened as the war reached its close – itself a reflection of dramatic events then unfolding in Greece. All in all, by the end of 1940s acute polarization was to become a dominant feature of Greek Cypriot politics, the genesis of which can be traced during the war. At the center of this antagonism, during and immediately after the war, remained the acting archbishop since his moderate policy towards AKEL alienated and frustrated the more hard-core elements of the Right, particularly those supporting the exiled bishop of Kyrenia, Makarios.²⁰ Criticism for Leontios, also, arose from his anti-british policy: it, perhaps, remains an irony, especially in the light of later developments, that for the Right-Wing politicians, “*Enosis*” should be pursued strictly within the frame of Anglo-hellenic friendship. For their part, the British did not accept either AKEL or the Right and the Orthodox Church as acceptable partners on the island. Indeed, any possibility of cooperation between the two caused profound anxiety to the colonial authorities. Testimony of this was the relief expressed by the British when a common effort by Greek Cypriot parties failed: in the background of Greece’s liberation all political parties finally agreed, in late November 1944, to pursue together an “*Enosis*” agenda under the leadership of Leontios. This fragile agreement, however, collapsed once the Dekemvriana events broke out in Greece.²¹

20. Makarios Myriantheas, later Makarios II (1947-1950).

21. Acting Governor of Cyprus to Secretary of State for the colonies, 9 January 1945, CO 67/327/16, TNA.

The End of the War: Discussions for the Future of Cyprus

The end of the war, which saw the Allied victory against the Axis powers, was as elsewhere celebrated in Cyprus. In Nicosia, crowds gathered at the main square of the city and, according to the governor, the Union flags were flown almost as much as the Greek flags;²² an indication of the loyalty and faith the majority of Greek Cypriots bestowed on the British. The Trade Unions organized a procession which led to the Greek consulate, where the Greek National Anthem was sung, while the following day the representatives of the Trade Unions delivered a memorandum to the Government House while the crowd present shouted for “*Enosis*.”²³ Representatives of the Right-Wing political forces also addressed the crowds and sent telegrams to the governor and to the British Prime Minister Winston Churchill. The governor, along with Greek and British civil and military officials attended a service in the Phaneromeni Church in Nicosia whereas similar celebrations took place in all main towns of the island.

Furthermore, the end of the war witnessed an unprecedented expectation for “*Enosis*,” which was understandable: Greek Cypriots had demonstrated their loyalty towards Britain in a war fought for liberty and democracy. Self-determination and union with Greece could only be the recompense for their services in the war. Indeed, any reports of such prospect coming from abroad served in intensifying such expectations. For example, in early 1945 an article featured in the *New York Times* reported that the United States favored the cession of Cyprus to Greece.²⁴ At that time, Washington was rather critical of British intervention in Greece and in this context, there was an American tendency to look favorably upon the union of Cyprus with Greece. Edward Stettinius, the US Secretary of State, stated in a press conference that the *New York Times* reporter had “apparently saw some departmental study paper that was private and not final.”²⁵ The incident, however, was circulated in Greek Cypriot press giving rise to widespread speculation

22. Political Report for May 1945, CO 67/323/4, Governor of Cyprus to the Secretary of State for the colonies, TNA.

23. Political Report for May 1945, CO 67/323/4, Governor of Cyprus to the Secretary of State for the colonies, TNA.

24. George Kelling, *Countdown to Rebellion: British Policy in Cyprus 1939-1955* (New York: Greenwood Press, 1990), 46-47.

25. *New York Times* report on United States policy concerning the cession of Cyprus

and many telegrams of gratitude were sent to the United States. The mayor of Nicosia and leader of the National Party, Themistocles Dervis, for example, addressed to the *New York Times* a telegram in which he thanked Washington for its “support to the just national desire of the Greek people of Cyprus.”²⁶ However, small the incident and tentative US policy may have been this represents the first involvement of American policy-makers in Cypriot affairs, which was later to become increasingly prominent.

The future of Cyprus was once again discussed in British official circles in early 1945 as the close of the war was approaching. The Foreign and Colonial Offices held sharply divergent opinions on the Question of Cyprus. During 1944-1945 the Foreign Office was clearly favorably disposed towards Hellenic aspirations. Indeed, memorandums prepared during that period overall favored the cession of Cyprus to Greece.²⁷ On the other hand, the Colonial Office as well as the governor in Nicosia disagreed with such possibility. By that time Governor Woolley was determined to deflate any expectations on the future of the island. In fact, Woolley had insisted during the war –and had done more so as the war neared its end– that a definite statement about the future of Cyprus should be made, one which would reinforce the notion that the British had no intention of retreating from the island. As the British were prepared to announce a ten-year economic development plan for Cyprus, which was hoped to divert Greek Cypriot focus from “*Enosis*” aspirations, and for which Greek Cypriot cooperation would be needed, the necessity for making British intentions clear became imperative. The Secretary of State for the colonies, Sir Oliver Stanley, approached his Foreign Office counterpart, Sir Anthony Eden, requesting his support on such announcement, but also enquiring whether London could approach the Greek government in order to secure its promise that “*Enosis*” would not be part of any postwar settlement.²⁸ Eden, however, just

to Greece, From Foreign Office to Washington, 4 January 1945, FO 371/48360, R 708/708/19, TNA.

26. *New York Times* report on United States policy concerning the cession of Cyprus to Greece, From acting Governor of Cyprus to the Secretary of State for the colonies, 19 January, FO 371/48360, R 1653/708/19, TNA.

27. See for example, The Greek claim to Cyprus, Research Department of Foreign Office, March 1944, CO 67/319/5, TNA.

28. S. E. V. Luke to the Under-secretary of State for the Foreign Office, 12 March 1945, CO 67/327/16, TNA.

like Churchill, was adamant that no decisions bearing on Greece should be made prior to a Peace Conference, a position which was inextricably connected to uncertainties regarding Dodecanese and the role of Turkey after the war, which had finally entered the war in February 1945. Discussions on Cyprus continued in months to follow, while the advent of Clement Attlee's Labor Government, in July 1945, was hailed by the Greeks of Cyprus as a step closer to "Enosis." However, in September, the chiefs of staff report on the future of Cyprus turned the tide decisively towards the retention of the island by the British. This was a crucial turning point since thereafter Cyprus was established as a fixed designation in British calculations, and further assessments about Egypt and Palestine always took the Cyprus factor into account.²⁹ Therefore, the proposal put forward by Greek regent, Archbishop Damaskinos, during his visit in London in September 1945 suggesting the transfer of Cyprus to Greece in exchange of bases (not only on the island but also anywhere on the Greek mainland) fell on deaf ears.³⁰ But it is important to note that voices of sympathy for the Cypriot cause in the Foreign Office were not immediately silenced and can be in fact traced until at least 1947. For example, Sir Oliver Harvey, Deputy Under-secretary of State noted in September 1947:

"We can now do little materially to help Greece, although it is of the first importance to maintain her confidence in Great Britain and herself. I suggest therefore that further consideration be given to the question of the cession of Cyprus... We have in fact never made use of the island for military purposes and we have spent next to nothing on its material and social betterment. We have nothing to be proud of here. It can hardly be questioned that Greece, who has long governed Crete effectively, and has now been given the Dodecanese, can equally well govern Cyprus (there is a small Turkish minority whose rights would be secured)... I would strongly advocate that consideration be

29. Wm. Roger Louis, *The British Empire in the Middle East 1945-1951: Arab Nationalism, the United States and Post war Imperialism* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1998), 210.

30. Ioannis D. Stefanidis, "The Cyprus Question, 1949-1952: British attitude, American reactions and Greek dilemmas," *Byzantine and Modern Greek Studies* 15, (1991): 214.

given to the very early cession of Cyprus to Greece, before the Cypriot campaign is embittered by violence and before cession can be represented as yielding to force.”³¹

By then, however, developments in Europe as well as elsewhere in the world made containment of Communism an absolute priority for the British. “*Enosis*” then was ruled out and this remained a permanent parameter of British policy until the final collapse of the relationship with Greek Cypriots in the 1950s. Simultaneously, the new Labor government of Clement Attlee went ahead with withdrawing from other parts of the Empire, the retreat from India in 1947 posing as the most notable example. In this *milieu* Cyprus’ strategic importance was elevated and London became increasingly resistant to any challenge to the *status quo*.³² Retaining control over Cyprus became all the more imperative and this further hardened British attitude at a time when the Greek Cypriot position became equally intransigent.

Political Developments in Cyprus, 1945-1946

The internal situation in Cyprus reflected such considerations since the colonial authorities became increasingly worried about AKEL and what they regarded as a potential danger from the Left. At the same time, it was observed that dissensions within Church circles had seriously damaged its influence. In 1945, Governor Woolley had noted to the Colonial Office that:

“The influence of the Church has greatly diminished. In 1931 the Church was the power which inspired and organized sedition. All contemporary accounts emphasize not only that the bishops were the leaders of insurrection, but that the forces of disorder largely depended on Church influence. The Church was

31. Cyprus policy, minute by Sir O. Harvey, FO 371/67084, 26 September 1947. See also Yiorghos Leventis, *Cyprus: The Struggle for Self-determination in the 1940s: Prelude to Deeper Crisis* (Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang, 2002), 129-132.

32. Robert Holland and Diana Markides, *The British and the Hellenes: Struggles for Mastery in the Eastern Mediterranean 1850-1960* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006), 218.

the rallying point of sedition and based its influence as much as on its nationalistic as its religious appeal. The reaction following the restoration of order, coupled with the lack of effective direction of ecclesiastical affairs and dissensions within the Church itself reduced the hold of Church on the people to an extent, which would have been impossible had its leadership been more spiritual and less political. Today both the power and the inclination to create disorder have almost entirely passed from the hands of the Church to the new political organization, which until a year or two ago openly attacked organized religion... With an equal cynicism and opportunism, the AKEL party has stolen both the policy and the champion of its opponents.”³³

Also, the end of the war highlighted the need for collective action on the “*Enosis*” front. Leontios pressed towards that direction with the formation of a “Bureau of Ethnarchy” in January 1945.³⁴ In its first statement, the bureau claimed to be above all parties and asked for the cooperation of all Greek Cypriots in order to best promote the national cause.³⁵ Following events at the village of Lefkoniko in March 1945, which signaled the climax of wartime confrontation between the local Right and the Left, voices were again heard from various quarters of Greek Cypriot society, which urged Leontios to assume the initiative, as the Ethnarch, for the promotion of the “*Enosis*” movement.³⁶ Particular pressure towards such an outcome was exerted by a new movement, ELES (Ενωση Λεμεσού Εθνικής Συνεργασίας – Limassol Committee for National Cooperation), which was founded in Limassol and was under the influence of AKEL. ELES appealed for the cooperation

33. Governor Woolley to Oliver Stanley, 31 March 1945, CO 67/324/4, TNA.

34. In 1941, Leontios had founded the “Popular Advisory Committee of the Church of Cyprus,” an advisory body under his leadership that assumed full administrative responsibility for the Orthodox Church of Cyprus.

35. Archbishopric of Cyprus, Private Papers of Archbishop Leontios, Statement of the Bureau of Ethnarchy, 5 January 1945, Book ΙΣΤ (16), 2. The Bureau’s members were Stavros Stavrinakis, Georgios Makrides, Ioannis Clerides and Achilleas Emilianides. Reserving members were Cyrillos Pavlides and Nicolaos Iacovides.

36. Archbishopric of Cyprus, Private Papers of Archbishop Leontios, Evsevia Greek Club to the Locum Tenens, 21.4.1945, Book ΙΣΤ (16), 34; See also Letter submitted to the Locum Tenens by Chr. Papadopoulos, Chr. Ieronimides, M. Papapetrou, P. Xioutas, Pigm. Ioannides, Book ΙΣΤ (16), 35.

and coordination of parties under the leadership of Leontios. For their part, the National Party (KEK), the Pancyprian Farmers Union (PEK) and the Pancyprian Hellenic Socialist Vanguard (Παγκύπρια Ελληνική Σοσιαλιστική Πρωτοπορία – PESP) went ahead with the formation of their own “plan for national action.” According to their own communiqué addressed to the *Locum Tenens*, they would wholeheartedly support any national body which the Ethnarchy would establish provided such a body would not include persons considered suspicious of damaging the national cause through their “anti-national and anti-Hellenic” stance.³⁷ Finally, the three parties declared their faith that Leontios would make the “proper choice of persons” who would be members of a national body enforced with the task of coordinating the “Enosis” struggle.

Leontios proceeded to the re-organization and expansion of the Bureau of Ethnarchy. In doing so, he tried to invite members from all political parties. Leontios’ efforts, however, were met with criticism from the bishopric of the Kyrenia. As long as Leontios refused to denounce Communism in general and AKEL in particular, the supporters of the bishop of Kyrenia, especially the secretary of the Kyrenia See, Polikarpos Ioannides, retained a rather critical attitude towards the acting archbishop.³⁸ Such reactions were probably the reason why Leontios did not include any members of the Left in the new synthesis of the body: the seven members were now increased to a total twenty-one³⁹ and included both secular and clerical members from all towns. The enlargement of the Bureau of Ethnarchy was criticized by ELES and the Left in general, which asked for the establishment of a National Council, elected by all Cypriots.⁴⁰

37. Archbishopric of Cyprus, Private Papers of Archbishop Leontios, Statement by Char. Hatziharos, Chr. Galatopoulos and Them. Dervis, 8 July 1945, Book ΙΣΤ (16), 41.

38. Archbishopric of Cyprus, Private Papers of Archbishop Leontios, Polikarpos Ioannides to the *Locum Tenens* Leontios, 22 July 1945, Book ΙΣΤ (16), 50.

39. This number included: four regular secular members and two reserving secular members from the bishopric districts of Famagusta, Paphos, Larnaca and Limassol. It also included six Abbots (four of them regular, the rest reserving members of the Council). The seats of the bishopric of Kyrenia remained vacant; a reminder that the bishop of Kyrenia did not agree with this development. See also Kostis Kokkinoftas, *Αρχιεπίσκοπος Κύπρου Λεόντιος* (Archbishop of Cyprus Leontios) (Nicosia, 2015), 146-147.

40. Archbishopric of Cyprus, Private Papers of Archbishop Leontios, Ioannis Kyriakides to the *Locum Tenens* Leontios, 27 July 1945, Book ΙΣΤ (16), 67.

Notwithstanding these tensions and reactions, the enlarged Ethnarchy Council had its first meeting, under the leadership of the acting archbishop, on 19 September 1945. Leontios reminded the rest of the members that the primary aim of the Council was the union of Cyprus with Greece; that it remained above all parties and ideologies and that it would continue to follow the policy of the Greek government on the National Question. Greek Cypriots, the acting archbishop continued, was also to be by the side of Greece's ally, Britain.⁴¹ In the months that followed, Leontios continued to promote a moderate policy in relation to internal political developments and towards AKEL more particularly a fact which dissatisfied certain Right-Wing circles and brought further divisions with the Cypriot Right. Such divisions unavoidably affected the potential power of the Church and the Right especially when the acting archbishop publicly refused to denounce Communism, insisting that the national cause concerned all Greek Cypriots.⁴²

Simultaneously, British concern towards AKEL and trade unions increased and was exemplified immediately after the end of the war. Governor Woolley ordered the search of all AKEL and Trade Union premises which turned up documents considered to be seditious.⁴³ Over the next few months the leaders of PSE were tried on various charges, including conspiracy to overthrow the *status quo* and in early 1946 the organization was declared illegal. Inevitably, this series of repressive measures inaugurated a period of acute tension between the colonial authorities and the Cypriot Left. Trade Union action, nevertheless, continued and March 1946 witnessed the foundation of the Pancyprian Labor Federation (Παγκύπρια Εργατική Ομοσπονδία– ΠΕΟ). When in late May 1946 AKEL scored further victories in the municipal elections, this brought more anxiety to the British as well as to the local Right.

41. Archbishopric of Cyprus, Private Papers of Archbishop Leontios, Cyprus' National Question: The First Meeting of the Ethnarchy Council, 19 September 1945, Book ΙΣΤ (16), 73.

42. Archbishopric of Cyprus, Archive of Archbishop Leontios, Book 16, Announcement of Ethnarchy Council, 24 April 1946; Report for Political Situation in Cyprus in March 1946, CO 67/323/4, TNA.

43. Prosecution of members of the Pancyprian Trade Unionist Committee, 24 October 1945, CO 67/323/5, TNA. See also Notes on whether AKEL and PSE are cooperating or affiliated bodies, 31 January 1946, FCO 141/2894, TNA.

The 1946 Delegation to London

Precisely because the British had decided to retain the island, some reform in the internal situation of Cyprus should be implemented. On 23 October 1946, the Secretary of State for the colonies, Arthur Creech Jones, announced the convening of a Consultative Assembly with Cypriot participation to draft a new constitution. Simultaneously, it was further announced that a new governor, Lord Winster, was to assume duties on the island. The re-introduction of political reforms was to be accompanied with a ten-year plan for the economic development of the island. Furthermore, the British announced the repeal of the 1937 ecclesiastical laws which, until then, formed an impediment for the conduct of an election for a new archbishop and allowed the 1931 exiles to return home. Governor Woolley had, once the war ended, repeatedly urged London to put an end to the “Ecclesiastical Question.” Woolley had advised London that solving the Ecclesiastical Question was a matter of vital importance for Greek Cypriots. Resolving the matter would, the governor believed, counteract the force of the “*Enosis*” movement and would moderate public reactions when it would be officially announced that the British intended to keep the island.⁴⁴ The governor believed that repealing the ecclesiastical laws would also bring Leontios in a difficult position, since he had repeatedly declared he did not intend to stand as a candidate. For Woolley, the return of the exiled bishop of Kyrenia, Makarios Myriantheas, was not to be without advantages for the British. On one hand, Makarios was staunchly anti-communist. On the other hand, he was, the governor believed, to promote the cause for “*Enosis*” strictly within the bounds of the Anglo-hellenic relationship. Governor Woolley, paradoxically urged London that the only likelihood in preserving a political balance on the island – especially once a statement regarding the future of Cyprus was made – was in a revived Orthodox Church.⁴⁵ This did not mean that the traditional suspicion towards the Church ceased to exist. On the contrary, as with AKEL, the British remained deeply opposed to Leontios and the Church in general.

Introducing a new constitution, however liberal, was not an easy

44. Extract from Top Secret Letter from Charles Woolley to Sir Andrew Dawe, 23 March 1946, CO 67/321/8, TNA.

45. Ibid.

course to follow precisely because of the war experience. Having sided with the British in a war for “freedom and Greece” meant expectations in the postwar era were running high. Unavoidably, disappointment dominated Greek Cypriots once the announcement was made, especially as many had believed Woolley was to be the last governor to serve on the island.⁴⁶ The ten-year development program was also confronted with disbelief, since it was understood by Greek Cypriots as an effort to distract demands for “*Enosis*.”⁴⁷ Consequently, under the leadership of the acting Archbishop Leontios, a national delegation was formed to visit London, via Athens, to pursue its national demands.⁴⁸ Correspondence between the Secretary of State for the Colonies and the Governor of Cyprus reveals that the former feared that any possible stop of the delegation in Athens would be exploited to the full by Greek communists and suggested that no permission should be granted to its members to stop in the Greek capital.⁴⁹ Woolley, however, advised that any such move, at this point, or any effort indeed, to prevent the departure of the Delegation would only provoke immediate crisis. In Woolley’s view the Delegation was committed to refuse cooperation with communists and he believed that it would hardly travel beyond Athens.⁵⁰ Although some uncertainty ensued as to if and when the Delegation would depart for its destination, it finally did so on 10 November 1946. It arrived in Athens where it was enthusiastically welcomed.⁵¹ Its members met with the Greek premier, Constantinos Tsaldaris, as well as with other prominent members of the Greek political arena. Nevertheless, despite offering moral support, the Greek government did not wish to upset in any way the British: The Delegation was not allowed to present its case in the Greek Parliament.⁵² The Delegation reached London in December 1946 where it remained until February 1947. After much

46. Political Situation October 1946, CO 67/323/7, TNA.

47. Ibid.

48. The other members were Ioannis Clerides, D.N. Demetriou and Zeno Rossides.

49. Secretary of State for the Colonies to the Governor of Cyprus, 1 November 1946, FCO 141/2978, TNA.

50. Governor of Cyprus to the Secretary of State for the colonies, 3 November 1946, FCO 141/2978, TNA.

51. See generally CO 67/352/1, TNA. For telegrams of support which reached the Delegation during its stay in London see CO 67/351/4, TNA.

52. Secretary of State to Governor of Cyprus, 2 December 1946, FCO 141/2978, TNA. See also Kokkinoftas, *Leontios*, 167.

waiting, the members of the Delegation met with the Secretary of State for the Colonies Arthur Creech Jones, to whom they submitted a memorandum. The memorandum stressed the Greek character of Cyprus, the right for self-determination and “*Enosis*” and dismissed the constitutional and economic measures, which were announced by the British.⁵³ The Secretary of State for the colonies asked whether the process for constitutional reform could proceed in case Britain rejected the Greek Cypriot claims for “*Enosis*” to which the members of the Delegation gave a negative reply. Creech Jones then gave the stereotype statement that no change was contemplated in the status of the island, something which he formally confirmed on 27 February.⁵⁴ Frustration and disappointment dominated the members of the Delegation, who could now not agree whether they should remain in London to pursue their efforts or return to Cyprus. In the meantime, in Athens a new government had been formed in January 1947 under Demetrios Maximos. On 28 February, the Greek Parliament, unanimously approved the call for the union of Cyprus with Greece, although such resolution was carefully formulated so as to not displease Great Britain.⁵⁵ In Cyprus where developments were followed closely, a national rally was held presided by the Acting Chair of the Ethnarchy Council, the Bishop of Kyrenia Makarios, who had finally been allowed to return from exile in late 1946. Makarios referred to the Cypriot contribution in the war, to promises made by Allies, which were now abandoned and urged everybody to contribute to the National Question in all ways possible. He also stressed that Greek Cypriots would always act in the lines of the Anglo-hellenic friendship.⁵⁶ A resolution was in the end approved, which was addressed to the British Prime Minister Clement Attlee.⁵⁷ The visit of the

53. National Delegation to the Secretary of State for the colonies A. Creech Jones, 7 February 1947, CO 67/352/1, TNA.

54. See details of meeting on Note of Meeting, 7 February 1947 and E. Edmonds to National Delegation Cyprus, 27 February 1947, CO 67/352/1, TNA.

55. “Greece and union with Cyprus,” *The Times*, 1 March 1947, cited in CO 67/352/1, TNA.

56. Commissioner of Police to colonial secretary, 17 February 1947, FCO 141/2978, TNA.

57. Bishop of Kyrenia, Acting Locum Tenens to the acting Governor of Cyprus, 19 February 1947, FCO 141/2978, TNA.

Cyprus Delegation in the UK was also discussed in the House of Commons.⁵⁸ Eventually, the Ethnarchy Council in Nicosia called the Delegation to return home in an environment in which tensions had peaked.

The Climax of Political Tension, 1947-1950

In March 1947, the new governor, Lord Winster arrived in Cyprus and he quickly authorized the conduct of archiepiscopal elections. This finally brought an end to the long-standing question of the vacant archiepiscopal throne. A few remarks ought to be made about the elections. The British hoped that Leontios would not be elected and that a more moderate figure would rise as the new archbishop.⁵⁹ Leontios himself had repeatedly stated that he would not be a candidate for the throne and only yielded to pressure at the very last moment. AKEL supported his election to the throne. The second candidate for the archiepiscopal throne, the Bishop of Sinai Porfirios, was supported by the Right. The archiepiscopal election, the first to take place since 1916, formed the ground for bitter antagonism between the two camps. Developments taking place in the Greek mainland, where the Civil War was in full force, also contributed towards such polarization. Interestingly, the Greek ministry of Foreign Affairs was also involved in the election. In seeking to minimize the influence of AKEL in Greek Cypriot society, the Greek government favored the election of Porfirios. Such election, it was believed, would ensure that the new archbishop would align himself with the Greek policy and would cooperate with colonial authorities, thus, acting strictly within the frame of Anglo-hellenic friendship.⁶⁰ Eventually, contrary to what the colonial authorities repeatedly asserted – that Leontios did not enjoy the support of Cypriots – he was elected as the new archbishop on 20 June 1947.⁶¹ The crucial element in the election was the support Leontios received from AKEL, which

58. House of Commons Debates, 12 March 1947, volume 434, columns 1318-1319.

59. Francois Crouzet, *Η Κυπριακή Διένεξη 1946-1959* (The Cyprus Conflict 1946-1959) (Athens: National Bank of Greece Cultural Foundation, 2011), vol.1, 200-201.

60. Vasilis Protopapas, *Εκλογική Ιστορία της Κύπρου: Πολιτευτές, κόμματα και εκλογές στην Αγγλοκρατία 1878-1960* (History of elections in Cyprus: Politicians, political parties and elections during the British rule 1878-1960) (Athens: Themelio, 2012), 421-422.

61. From Governor of Cyprus to the Secretary of State for the colonies, 20 June 1947, CO 67/337/4, TNA.

held an intensive campaign in his favor. Indeed, the party strengthened by the victories of the 1946 municipal elections, now posed as the more powerful political power on the island. At the same time, however, AKEL's successes convinced the Right for the need of effective and quick reorganization.⁶²

In early July, Lord Winster invited Cypriot representatives to join the works of the Consultative Assembly. Leontios rejected the governor's invitation. This was to be the final – yet extremely important – political move of the archbishop, who suddenly died on 26 July 1946. By rejecting the invitation, Leontios turned down any possibility of cooperation with the British. Indeed, any hopes the British might had entertained that the election of a new archbishop would result in the improvement of relations with the Orthodox Church were refuted. Simultaneously, Leontios distanced himself from AKEL, which had supported his election and accepted the governor's invitation. An analysis of the works of the Consultative Assembly has been explored in existing bibliography.⁶³ Here, it suffices saying that the experience served in widening the gap of division between the Cypriot Left and Right. The latter and the Ethnarchy rejected participation, while AKEL agreed to participate. However, the party's representatives withdrew from the Assembly when, following discussions, the British offered a Greek Cypriot majority in the Legislative Council (a long-standing Greek Cypriot demand) but refused to grant self-government.

Following Leontios' death, the election in December 1947 to the archiepiscopal throne of Makarios, bishop of Kyrenia, was another turning point in developments. Makarios II positioned himself strongly against the introduction of a constitution insisting on the "Enosis and only Enosis" policy. Indeed, the Church took the lead in rejecting participation in the Consultative Assembly and in condemning AKEL's decision to participate. Simultaneously, new bishops were elected, the most important being the new Bishop of Kitium, Makarios (later Archbishop Makarios III). The failure of the Consultative Assembly left the Cyprus Question at an impasse. Lord Winster resigned and

62. Cyprus National Party, 22 June 1949, FCO 141/4281, TNA.

63. Rolandos Katsiaounis, *Η Διασκεπτική 1946-1948: Με επισκόπηση της περιόδου 1878-1945* (The Consultative Assembly 1946-1948: With an overview of the period 1878-1945) (Nicosia: Cyprus Research Centre, 2000).

was replaced by Sir Andrew Wright. The latter's appointment proved to be more of a "Bourbon restoration" rather than provide any actual opportunity to break the deadlock.⁶⁴ Indeed, no new initiative on the constitutional aspect would resume. Instead, emphasis was placed on the implementation of the development program. In the meantime, however, further internal unrest ensued as the polarization between the political parties and in Greek Cypriot society in general peaked. Furthermore, the confrontation of AKEL with the British was also expressed in labor relations especially during 1948. Indeed, the year witnessed large-scale strikes such as the strike of the Cyprus Mines Corporation (CMC), of the Asbestos mines and of builders in the main cities. Supported by AKEL, the workers sought to improve their working conditions, including *inter alia*, an increase in wages and an eight-hour working day. The campaign of AKEL resulted in the intense reaction not only of the colonial authorities, but also of the Right. The former reacted with police action and repression, while the latter also confronted the strikers. Such social and political intensity intertwined with the reflections of the Greek Civil War on the island. The split in Greek Cypriot society was most profoundly evident in the declaration of an "economic war" between the Left and the Right in 1948. Consequently, the supporters of each coalition avoided purchasing goods or employing services offered by the "other" group. Similarly, all athletic and social clubs were divided into Right-Wing and Left-Wing ones.

Greek nationalist agitation on the island also intensified and in early 1949 AKEL, having previously briefly supported a policy line of self-government as a preliminary to full self-determination, now reversed to unconditional pursue of "*Enosis*." This decision had followed the visit of AKEL leaders (Fifis Ioannou and Andreas Ziartides) to Nicos Zachariades, leader of the Greek Communist Party seeking advice.⁶⁵ Zachariades criticized AKEL's readiness to discuss any constitutional development under British "imperialist" auspices. The party consequently reversed its policy to the "*Enosis* only" policy. This, however, signaled

64. Ronald Hyam (ed.), *The Labor Government and the End of Empire 1945-1951* (London: HMSO, 1992), xli.

65. Fifis Ioannou, *Έτσι Άρχισε το Κυπριακό* (This is how the Cyprus Question began) (Athens: Filistor, 2005), 319-354.

an important blow for the party, which appeared to give in to the pressure exerted by the Church and the Right. The party consequently experienced a crisis within its ranks –following also a change of guard in the leadership of the party as Ezekias Papaioannou replaced Fifis Ioannou as the new general secretary– and suffered setbacks in the 1949 municipal elections (the first since its foundation in 1941), giving the Right and the Church in particular room for reorganization and regaining its influence.⁶⁶ Simultaneously, the victory of the anti-communist camp in the Greek Civil War boosted the confidence of the Right-Wing forces in Cyprus, which was also assisted in its resurgence by the fact that the British sought to reassert their authority on the island by taking steps, which were mainly directed against AKEL. Indeed, the Right had managed to impose its “*Enosis* only” line on the National Question and by January 1950 with the organization of a Greek Cypriot “*Enosis*” plebiscite assumed the initiative on the promotion of the National Question.

By the close of the 1940s therefore Cyprus was ready to enter a new phase of its turbulent history. The British were not prepared to withdraw from the island, and this was reaffirmed in a new chief of staff report in 1950, which reasserted that retention of Cyprus was vital for British interests in the Middle East. By then, however, disappointment, mistrust and suspicion came to be the main components of the Anglo-cypriot relations. In such *milieu* the Cypriot Left and Right would continue to remain far apart from each other. The rise of Archbishop Makarios III in 1950 would –along with other developments– lead to the intensification of the “*Enosis*” struggle. As the bishop of Kitium, Makarios had played an instrumental role in the organization of the plebiscite for “*Enosis*” in January 1950. His speech on the eve of the plebiscite was revealing of the new state of affairs: “The plebiscite,” Makarios told his audience, “is a key which is designed to open the doors of our bondage. Should the foreign ruler refuse to open them, we shall force them open.”⁶⁷ The 1950s would indeed witness the collapse of the Anglo-cypriot relationship, as Greek Cypriots would openly defiance their colonial rulers.

66. The Influence of the Orthodox Church, 22 June 1949, FCO 141/4281, TNA.

67. A patriotic speech by the bishop of Kitium, 14 January 1950, FCO 141/3155, TNA.