

CYPRUS AND THE CULTURAL DEFENCE OF THE GREEK CIVILIZATION

Cyprus occupies an important role in Greek mythology, being the birthplace of Aphrodite and Adonis

The cultural identity of the island was decisively and indelibly determined by the settlement of the Mycenaean and Achaean Greeks between the thirteenth and the eleventh century BC.

We Greeks, share a common ethnicity, heritage, language, and religion, leading to an exceptionally close relationship between the two countries

The Greek presence in Cyprus dates back to ancient times, with the island's strategic location serving as a bridge between the Greek mainland and the wider Mediterranean world. Greek settlers established colonies on the island as early as the 3rd millennium BC, bringing with them their language, religion, and cultural practices. Over the centuries, Cyprus became closely intertwined with Greek history, mythology, and identity, shaping its destiny in profound ways.

One of the most enduring legacies of the Greek civilization in Cyprus is the Greek language, which remains the tongue spoken by all the population, even the Turkish settlers. From the Homeric epics to the philosophical dialogues of Plato and Aristotle, our common history is something which cannot be denied by anyone. The same religion and mythology since the start of times is palpable, with ancient deities such as Zeus, Athena, and Aphrodite revered alongside Christian saints and martyrs of modern orthodox history. You can find ancient temples and orthodox monasteries together with sculptures quite similar to those you find all over Greece.

Greek art and architecture have left an indelible mark on the landscape of Cyprus, from the majestic ruins of ancient temples and theaters to the intricate mosaics adorning Byzantine churches and monasteries.

We, from greek mainland often mock the Cypriots about the way they speak greek. The Cypriot idiom is adhered to ancient greek and cretan idiom more than the mainlands, they add an n to the end of most of the words, resulting to a rather funny sound of our language.

THE ENGLISH INVASION

The English invasion of Cyprus in the late 19th century marked a significant turning point in the island's history, ushering in a period of colonial rule that would leave a lasting impact on its society, economy, and political landscape.

Historical Background: In 1878, following the Congress of Berlin, the Ottoman Empire leased Cyprus to the British Empire in exchange for military support against Russia. The British sought control of the island primarily for strategic reasons, as it provided a crucial naval base in the eastern Mediterranean. Thus, Cyprus came under British administration as a Crown colony, effectively ending centuries of Ottoman rule.

The English invasion brought significant changes to Cypriot society and economy..

Furthermore, the English invasion led to the displacement of traditional agricultural practices, as large portion of land were converted into commercial plantations, primarily for the cultivation of citrus fruits and cotton. This shift towards export-oriented agriculture disrupted traditional livelihoods and exacerbated rural poverty, leading to social unrest and resistance among the Cypriot peasantry.

Politically, the English invasion entrenched British colonial rule in Cyprus, stifling aspirations for self-determination and independence among the population. The imposition of British administrative structures and laws marginalized Cypriot participation in governance and perpetuated a system of authoritarian rule under British colonial governors.

Additionally, the English invasion fueled nationalist sentiments among Cypriots, leading to the emergence of organized resistance movements advocating for self-rule and eventual union with Greece (Enosis). The struggle for independence culminated in widespread protests, strikes, and acts of civil disobedience, challenging the legitimacy of British colonial authority in Cyprus.

The legacy of the English invasion continues to shape contemporary Cypriot society and politics. While British colonial rule formally ended with Cyprus's independence in 1960, its influence is still evident in the island's political institutions, legal system, and cultural practices.

Especially, the legal system is totally similar to British common law, we as Greek lawyers cannot act in Cyprus although we share the greek language, because the greek law derives from the continental european law

The English invasion left a legacy of division and polarization, with enduring tensions between Greek and Turkish Cypriots, exacerbated by the unresolved issue of partition since the 1974 Turkish invasion.

Furthermore, the English invasion contributed to the emergence of a distinct Cypriot national identity, forged through shared experiences of colonialism, resistance, and struggle for self-determination.

British rule in Cyprus, which began in 1878 following the island's transfer from Ottoman to British control, was met with resistance from the outset. Cypriots, disillusioned with colonial exploitation and marginalization, organized various forms of dissent to challenge British authority. However, it was not until the emergence of EOKA (National Resistance Movement) in the mid-20th century that the resistance movement gained significant momentum.

The resistance against British colonialism in Cyprus was driven by a desire for self-determination, national liberation, and the unification of the island with Greece (Enosis). Cypriots, inspired by nationalist fervor and the success of other anti-colonial movements around the world, sought to assert their rights and reclaim their sovereignty from foreign rule. EOKA, led by Greek Cypriot nationalist Georgios Grivas, became the vanguard of the resistance, employing guerrilla warfare and acts of sabotage to undermine British authority.

A FEW WORDS ABOUT THE NATIONAL HERO, GRIVAS

Georgios Grivas, commonly known as "Digenis" (meaning "The Brave"), was a prominent Greek military officer and nationalist figure who played a significant role in the struggle for Cyprus's independence from British colonial rule and its subsequent union with Greece (Enosis).

Grivas was born on July 6, 1897, in the village of Trikomo in Cyprus, which was then under British colonial rule. He pursued a military career, attending the Hellenic Military Academy in Greece and later serving in the Greek Army. Grivas distinguished himself as a capable and courageous officer during Greece's military campaigns in World War I and the Greco-Turkish War.

In the 1950s, Grivas emerged as a key figure in the nationalist movement for Cyprus's independence from British colonial rule. He founded the National Organization of Cypriot Fighters (Ethniki Organosis Kyprion Agoniston, or EOKA) in 1954, with the goal of achieving Enosis—union with Greece. EOKA waged an armed struggle against British colonial authorities, employing guerrilla tactics and acts of sabotage to undermine British control of the island.

Grivas's leadership of EOKA made him a symbol of Cypriot nationalism and resistance against colonial oppression. His uncompromising stance on Enosis and his advocacy for armed struggle led to tensions within the Cypriot nationalist movement and strained relations with moderate Greek Cypriot leaders who favored a diplomatic approach to achieving independence like Archbishop Makarios who is considered among Greek nationalists, a modern traitor.

After Cyprus gained independence in 1960, Grivas continued to advocate for Enosis and remained active in Cypriot politics. However, his influence waned in the aftermath of intercommunal violence between Greek and Turkish Cypriots, which erupted in the early 1960s. Grivas eventually left Cyprus and returned to Greece, where he continued to be involved in nationalist and anti-communist activities.

Grivas passed away on January 27, 1974, in Athens, Greece.

TACTICS OF EOKA

EOKA's tactics against the British colonial administration included targeted assassinations, bombings, and armed insurrections aimed at disrupting the colonial apparatus and instilling fear among British officials and collaborators. The organization also engaged in propaganda campaigns, strikes, and civil disobedience to mobilize popular support and galvanize resistance against colonial oppression. Despite facing a formidable adversary in the British security forces, EOKA demonstrated resilience and determination in its struggle for independence.

The Cypriot resistance against British colonialism and the activities of EOKA had profound consequences for the island's history and future trajectory. The British response, characterized by draconian measures and mass arrests, further fueled resentment and radicalization among Cypriots, deepening divisions within society. The young kids, Andreas Karaolis and Michalis Dimitriou were captured by British forces in separate incidents and were subsequently tried by a military court for their involvement in armed resistance against British rule. Despite international appeals for clemency, including petitions to Queen Elizabeth II, who was the reigning monarch at the time, the executions went ahead.

The British government's decision not to grant clemency to Karaolis and Dimitriou was met with widespread condemnation and outrage both in Cyprus and internationally. Their executions further fueled patriotic upsurge and galvanized support for the Cypriot independence movement.

Ultimately, the Cypriot struggle for independence culminated in the establishment of the Republic of Cyprus in 1960, marking the end of British colonial rule..

MAKARIOS

Just prior to the Turkish invasion of Cyprus in 1974, Archbishop Makarios III, then President of Cyprus, delivered a crucial speech at the United Nations in New York. Makarios's statements during this address reflected the urgency of the situation and emphasized the need for diplomatic intervention to prevent further escalation of tensions.

In his speech, Makarios while condemning hypocritically the Turkish government's unilateral actions and military aggression against Cyprus, he accepted that both communities greek and turks ask for international intervention to resolve the Cypriot issue, thus accepting that both countries create problems to his country. This was an urge to the Turks to invade for a second time in Cyprus as they did.

The Turkish invasion proceeded, resulting in the de facto partition of the island and the displacement of thousands of people.

The Turkish invasion of Cyprus in 1974 stands as one of the darkest chapters in the island's history, marked by widespread violence, displacement, and human suffering. It Resulted in the occupation of northern Cyprus by Turkish military forces and the subsequent division of the island along ethnic lines. The consequences of the invasion were profound, with numerous victims on both sides of the conflict enduring untold hardships and trauma.

1. **Military Assault:** The Turkish invasion, launched on July 20, 1974, involved a large-scale military assault on multiple fronts, targeting Greek Cypriot enclaves and population centers in the northern part of the island. Turkish armed forces, supported by air and naval bombardment, quickly overwhelmed the ill-prepared Greek Cypriot National Guard, leading to widespread panic and chaos.

2. **Civilian Casualties:** The invasion resulted in a significant loss of civilian life, with thousands of innocent men, women, and children falling victim to indiscriminate shelling, aerial bombardment, and ground combat. Civilians caught in the crossfire of the conflict faced the terrifying reality of displacement, injury, and death, as their homes and communities were reduced to rubble.
3. The Turkish invasion precipitated a massive exodus of civilians, Greek Cypriots, fleeing the violence and upheaval. Hundreds of thousands of people were displaced from their homes, forced to abandon their belongings and livelihoods in search of safety and shelter. Many sought refuge in makeshift camps or fled to the relative safety of the southern part of the island, while others were evacuated by international peacekeeping forces.
4. The aftermath of the invasion was characterized by widespread human rights abuses, including arbitrary arrests, torture, and enforced disappearances perpetrated by both Turkish military forces and paramilitary groups. Civilians, particularly those of Greek Cypriot descent, were subjected to intimidation, harassment, and discrimination, leading to a climate of fear and insecurity.
5. : One of the enduring tragedies of the Cyprus conflict is the issue of missing persons, with thousands of individuals still unaccounted for decades after the invasion. Many families continue to search for their loved ones, hoping for closure and justice, while efforts to uncover the truth about mass graves and wartime atrocities remain ongoing.

The Turkish invasion of Cyprus and its aftermath left a deep scar on the collective memory of the Cypriot people, dividing communities and perpetuating a cycle of resentment and distrust. The human cost of the conflict, reflected in the countless lives lost and shattered, serves as a stark reminder of the urgent need for reconciliation, healing, and a comprehensive resolution to the Cyprus problem. Following the invasion and subsequent occupation of the northern part of Cyprus by Turkish military forces, there was a deliberate policy by the Turkish government to encourage the settlement of mainland Turks in the occupied territories. This policy aimed to alter the demographic composition of the island, consolidate Turkish control over the occupied area, and undermine the prospects for a peaceful resolution to the Cyprus problem.

The influx of Turkish settlers into northern Cyprus has been widely condemned by the international community and constitutes a violation of

international law, including the Fourth Geneva Convention, which prohibits the transfer of civilian populations into occupied territories. These settlers, often referred to as "illegal settlers," have been granted citizenship and provided with incentives by the Turkish Cypriot administration and Turkish authorities to relocate to the occupied area.

The presence of Turkish illegal settlers has had significant social, economic, and political implications for Cyprus. Socially, it has contributed to tensions and divisions between the Greek Cypriot and Turkish Cypriot communities, exacerbating existing grievances and hindering efforts at reconciliation and reunification. Economic disparities have also emerged, as Turkish settlers have been given preferential treatment in employment, housing, and access to resources, leading to marginalization and discrimination against the indigenous Turkish Cypriot population.

Moreover, the settlement of Turkish illegal settlers has complicated efforts to reach a comprehensive solution to the Cyprus problem, which cannot be other than the removal of all Turkish army from the occupied territory. The presence of a significant number of Turkish settlers complicates the issue of property rights and territorial adjustments, further complicating the already complex negotiations between Greek and Turkish Cypriot leaders.

Despite repeated calls by the international community for the withdrawal of Turkish illegal settlers and the restoration of the rights of displaced Greek Cypriot property owners, the issue remains unresolved. USA, its UN puppet and the EU do not want the issue to be resolved according to the international law and treaties.

Cypriots , unfortunately have become more globalists than us, in mainland. Their connection to the British and their cosmopolitan life, made them to forget their land, the occupation and their country, except a minority which still resists.

Eventually, and I am sure about that, Cyprus will achieve the spirit of Enosis (unification) and Grivas will finally rest in peace, sure that his struggles did not go in vain.

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