British Cyprus and the Long Great War, 1914-1925: Empire, Loyalties and Democratic Deficit. By Andrekos Varnava (Abingdon, Oxon and New York, NY: Routledge 2020), pp. xiv+242.

Historians of the first world war face the daunting task of offering a fresh and original perspective on this much-researched subject. Andrekos Varnava successfully meets this challenge with his latest monograph. In this publication, he provides a new interpretation of the Great War and its impact. Varnava focuses on a non-settler part of the British Empire, Cyprus, and covers the period from the start of the war until its proclamation as a Crown Colony. In this book, he studies three key themes: the impact of the war on the British Empire focusing on one of its smallest parts; the loyalties of the population especially the often overlooked majority lower classes; and the disproportionate role of elites-whether these were the colonial administrators or the local leading elites- in shaping the future of Cyprus resulting in a democratic deficit. In doing so, Varnava provides a compelling analysis of the political objectives, social structures and attitudes prevailing in British Cyprus.

This new monograph expands scholarship on multiple levels. I consider two elements that merit distinct mention here. First, Varnava portrays the Cypriots as a diverse group of people with varying ideologies, identities and aspirations during and after the Great War. This conclusion is most profound when addressing the future political status of the island. Varnava deconstructs the domineering view that divides Cypriots along religious lines on the question of *enosis* (unification) with Greece. Rather than perpetuating the simplified view that Orthodox Christians overwhelmingly supported *enosis* while the Muslim Cypriots rejected it, he highlights that social and economic class, and individual circumstances moulded and informed the Cypriot identity and political perception. He confidently stresses that ‘truly the silent majority’ (p.115) opposed unification with Greece. Only a small nationalistic elite promoted *enosis* with Greece at the early stages of the Cyprus question. Today historiography on the struggle for an independent Cyprus arrives at a similar assessment of the complex views held amongst the Cypriot population in the 1950s. However, the monolithic view of Orthodox and Muslim Cypriots persisted for too long, and still influences public discourse. Thus, it would have been interesting if this publication had delved further into the reasons and origins of this interpretation.

Second, Varnava also analyses the implications of the Great War and regional developments on the refugees and displaced people that found themselves in Cyprus during the period. The analysis underscores that often, if not always, power structures disregarded the will and curtailed the ability of these groups of people to shape their own future. The specific cases mentioned in the book humanise and highlight their plight. Their stories unquestionably enrich this monograph and contribute to the broader scholarship.

Varvava is fully aware that not everyone will agree with or accept his conclusions. His arguments, even controversial for some, are well-founded. This new publication is the result of exhaustive multi-lingual and multi-archival research. In doing so, the author succeeds in presenting an all-encompassing interpretation of British Cyprus. Indeed, this book assesses the military, political and social developments of the period using Cyprus as a case study. Varnava, in particular, gives voice to the middle and lower classes of Cypriots, which research in the modern history of Cyprus has often, if not always, dismissed. As an academic publication, this new book will find its way as suggested reading material for postgraduate and some more advanced undergraduate courses focusing on aspects of twentieth century European history. Finally, this monograph is a welcome addition to scholarship concerning the smaller actors and their role in international developments, in this case, the history of first world war.

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