The bewildered peasant: family, migration and murder in the Greek Cypriot community in London

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Abstract

Greek Cypriots became a key feature of early post-Second World War London. This article focuses on the case of the penultimate woman hanged in Britain, Styllou Christofi, who was executed in December 1954 for the murder of her German-born daughter-in-law, Hella. It outlines the emergence of the Cypriot community in London, tackles the image of the Cypriot in the British imperial imagination and investigates the hostility that this new community faced in Britain. The article investigates the nature of family in Cyprus and London and questions why Cypriots have received so little attention from historians, despite their numbers.

At 8:30 p.m. on Wednesday 28 July 1954, Stavros Christofi left his home, which covered the ground and first floors of 11 South Hill Park in Hampstead, and proceeded to the Café de Paris in Coventry Street, where he worked as a sommelier. Stavros had migrated to Britain, like many other Cypriots, during the 1930s – in his case, in October 1937 – to work in the Central London catering trade. On 3 May 1941 he had met Hella Bleicher from Wuppertal in Germany, who had travelled to London in 1939 on her way to the U.S.A. but, owing to the outbreak of war, had remained in the imperial capital to marry Stavros and have three children. By July 1954 the children were twelve (Nicholas), ten (Peter) and eight (Stella). The family lived in the flat in Hampstead, along with the mother of Stavros, Styllou, who had arrived in July 1953. Stavros worked 'at the Café de Paris until approximately 3 o'clock on the morning of 29 July'. He later asserted: 'I got home at about half-past three that morning, to find that my wife was dead. The police were in possession' of the house. The following afternoon he 'went to St Pancras Mortuary and … saw the body of my wife. She would have been 37 Years old on the 24th August 1954'.[1]

Stavros's mother, Styllou Christofi, was born about 1901 in the north-eastern village of Rizokarpaso, Cyprus, with the maiden name of Stylliani (Styllou) Nicola Parpotta. At the age of fourteen she married Panoptios Christofi Antoniou, with whom she had five children, but subsequently separated from him to live in Varosha, Famagusta. It appears that the reason for this separation was that Styllou, together with two other women, had murdered Styllou's mother-in-law in 1925 by forcing a piece of burning wood into her mouth, for which she received a sentence of five years for manslaughter. While in

[1] These details are taken from The National Archives of the U.K., PCOM 9/1721, CHRISTOFI, Styllou Pantopiou: convicted at Central Criminal Court (CCC) on 28 October 1954 of murder; sentenced to death, executed 15 December 1954.

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Famagusta, Styllou survived by working as a fruit picker and by cleaning houses.[2] It was also widely believed by fellow villagers from Rizokarpaso that Styllou was responsible for a second murder during the Second World War in Varosha. She moved to London on 26 July 1953 and worked as a kitchen hand and a shirt maker, and she also received state income support. She also spent time at home looking after her grandchildren, while Stavros worked as a waiter and Hella worked as a ladies' belt maker in the West End. The year-long stay in her son's house proved problematic, with Styllou having to find alternative accommodation on three occasions. While this can be partially explained by the cramped conditions in which the family lived, with Stavos and Hella sharing a bedroom with daughter Stella and Styllou living in the same room as her grandsons, the main problem was that Hella and Styllou did not like each other – to the extent that both had to see doctors because Styllou 'was said to be suffering from anxiety and depression', while Hella's doctor 'found her to be in a highly nervous condition, pains in the chest and hair falling out'. Stavros decided to send his wife and children on holiday to stay with her relatives in Germany, during which time he persuaded his mother to return to Cyprus.[3]

Unfortunately, Styllou brutally took matters into her own hands on the night of 28 July 1954. She smashed Hella over the head with a heavy ash pan from the boiler. While she lay immobile on the floor, Styllou strangled her with a scarf, and thus asphyxiation was recorded as the official cause of death. In a clumsy attempt to hide her crime, Styllou set the corpse alight in the backyard. Styllou had removed her daughter-in-law's wedding ring before burning the body and hid the ring in her bedroom.[4] Despite denying the murder, claiming that two unknown men had carried it out, Styllou was found guilty and sentenced to death, becoming the penultimate woman hanged in Britain on 15 December 1954.[5]

Before analysing the trial and the stereotypes that may have operated during the proceedings, it is necessary to provide some background on British-controlled Cyprus, the centrality of peasant and family life in this society, and the development of the Greek Cypriot community in Britain from the 1930s to the 1960s, of which the Christofi family formed a part. While the Greek Cypriots in Britain have remained largely ignored in the growing historiography of migration in early post-war Britain,[6] from the 1930s Greek Cypriots became one of the most prominent migrant groups in London. In contrast to the growing African-Caribbean community after the Second World War,[7] the Greek Cypriots remained largely hidden from view. However, this community was also racialized and stereotyped (as were white colonial others), due to various factors including destitution (particularly in the early 1930s), deviant local and anti-colonial

[2] T.N.A., PCOM 9/1721; J. Christou, '"Middle aged, unattractive and foreign": the Cypriot murderess', *Cyprus Mail*, 31 Oct. 2016; and P. Jones, *Quickly to Her Fate* (Barton on Sea, 2010).

[3] T.N.A., PCOM 9/1721.

[4] Christou, '"Middle aged, unattractive and foreign"'; Jones, *Quickly to Her Fate*; and M. Aston, *Foul Deeds and Suspicious Deaths in Hampstead, Holborn and St Pancras* (London, 2005), pp. 161–2.

[5] The details of her final hours can be found in London Metropolitan Archives (hereafter L.M.A.), CLA/003/PR/04/003, Correspondence and papers relating to Styllou Christofi.

[6] Much of this research has tended to focus on arrivals from the West Indies. Recent notable contributions to this literature include K. H. Perry, *London Is the Place for Me: Black Britons, Citizenship, and the Politics of Race* (Oxford, 2015); and R. Waters, *Thinking Black: Britain, 1964–1985* (Berkeley, 2019).

[7] See e.g., E. Pilkington, *Beyond the Mother Country: West Indians and the Notting Hill White Riots* (London, 1988); and M. Collins, 'Pride and prejudice: West Indian men in mid-twentieth century Britain', *Journal of British Studies*, xl (2001), 391–418. John Davis ('Containing racism? The London experience, 1958–1968', in *The Subversive Special Relationship: Race and Protest in the United Kingdom and United States in the Civil Rights Era*, ed. S. Tuck (Basingstoke, 2012), pp. 125–46) considers hostility to a variety of groups and the reaction to this.

politics (especially trade unionism and communism), and criminality, as well as the reporting of the trial of Styllou Christofi.[8]

This article uses the case of Styllou Christofi to explore the Greek Cypriot community in early post-war multicultural London, demonstrating the way this group faced ethnic stereotyping and racism originating in British control of Cyprus. The article begins by outlining the stereotypes that the British official and unofficial mind developed after the takeover of the island in 1878, arguing that one key trope consisted of the backward peasant. It then traces the evolution of the Greek Cypriot community in London from the interwar to the post-war years, demonstrating the existence of hostility towards the group, drawing on the stereotype of the Cypriot peasant, and focusing on the perceived threat the community posed as a consequence of the campaign for unification with Greece in the 1950s. The stereotype of the Cypriot peasant becomes apparent in the trial of Styllou Christofi and its coverage by the British press. The article concludes by stressing the centrality of the Greek Cypriot community in early multicultural London, focusing on the usually endogamous Cypriot family (although not in the case of the Christofis, whose tragic fate finds partial explanation in a clash of cultures in 1950s London).

The concept of the 'bewildered peasant' may not be applicable to the entire Greek Cypriot community in London, as migrants from this community came from a range of social backgrounds, but the vast majority had rural origins. Upon arrival in London, they undertook a variety of jobs, such as catering, though many owned businesses and others had trade skills. These settlers held various political views, yet most were 'apolitical' (as discussed below). The concept of the 'bewildered peasant' was centred around Cypriot migrants with peasant backgrounds and mindsets, although it was an idea that circulated among British elites rather than a reality, both because most of the migrants became integrated into British society through their work environment and because they tended to arrive as families, with the children entering the British education system.

The focus of this article is the Greek Cypriot community rather than the Turkish Cypriots, who are an even smaller migrant grouping and have received even less attention in academic circles. While the two communities may have interacted in many ways, especially in the workplace, and while the Turkish Cypriots may have similar demographic characteristics to the Greek Cypriots, it is important to establish here that they have their own distinct history, revolving around their own linguistic and religious traditions, as well as different patterns of settlement, making their history in Britain unique. While the community evolved in the early post-war period, they became increasingly invisible, partly because they became subsumed in the emerging group of migrants from mainland Turkey in London.[9]

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[8] E. Smith and A. Varnava, 'Creating a "suspect community": monitoring and controlling the Cypriot community in inter-war London', *English Historical Review*, cxxxii (2017), 1149–81; and A. Varnava and E. Smith, 'Destitute Cypriots abroad, 1914–1931', in *Australia, Migration and Empire: Immigrants in a Globalised World*, ed. P. Payton and A. Varnava (Basingstoke, 2019), pp. 277–312.

[9] F. M. Bhatti, *Turkish Cypriots in London* (Birmingham, 1981); S. Ladbury, 'The Turkish Cypriots: ethnic relations in London and Cyprus', in *Between Two Cultures: Migrants and Minorities in Britain*, ed. J. L. Watson (Oxford, 1977), pp. 301–31; K. Robins and A. Aksoy, 'From spaces of identity to mental spaces: lessons from Turkish-Cypriot cultural experience in Britain', *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies*, xxvii (2001), 685–711; H. Abdullah and M. Sinker, *Departures and Arrivals: Turkish Cypriots Who Came to England Between 1934 and 1963* (London, 2006); and P. Panayi, *Migrant City: a New History of London* (London, 2020), pp. 88, 105–6.

In 1926 the British government decided to carry out an investigation into the rural population of Cyprus led by Brewster J. Surridge, the district commissioner of Larnaca, who had been in Cyprus since the First World War.[10] The report, published in 1930, found that 80 per cent of the population lived on or below the subsistence line.[11] Although the report was essentially factual, involving 'Government officials, retired officials, lawyers and merchants – from 4–6 persons in each district, exclusive of the District Commissioners',[12] the research and the findings drew on contemporary imperial stereotypes. While the Cypriot peasant 'is one of the hardest working and most courteous in the world', he remained 'backward and (for centuries with good reason) distrustful'.[13] Although it focused on the economic life of the rural population, the survey also digressed into issues such as hygiene, stating that it 'is not easy to fix a standard of cleanliness' but that 'the majority are moderately clean while a certain number are definitely dirty',[14] and that 'moral conditions' were regarded as 'satisfactory' because 'Cyprus is only on the fringe of the East and the lightest whisper against the innocence of a village girl will endanger her chances of marriage'.[15] At almost the same time as the publication of Surridge's survey, there appeared a short booklet by the Cypriot Demetrios Stylianou (who had benefited from ten years abroad) that looked at the customs and superstitions by which rural society in Cyprus functioned. Stylianou described the life of the peasantry as 'saturated' with 'traditions, customs, and beliefs' and observed that they remained 'human beings with innocent, child-like, hospitable souls, not yet spoiled by the materialism of our age'.[16] Apart from superstition, the other driving force behind the life of the Cypriot peasant, and largely determining these superstitions, was religion.[17]

These two sources reveal both the realities of Cypriot rural life under the British and the stereotypes that could emerge from these facts, especially during the 'Cyprus frenzy' in British public opinion that began immediately after Britain took control of the island in 1878.[18] Several late Victorian and Edwardian works contained sections on Cypriot peasants. William Hepworth Dixon described the population of the island in orientalist and racist language, distinguishing between Greeks and Turks but also dividing the population of the island in various other ways, including according to skin colour and facial shape. He described the Greeks as lazy and 'living hand to mouth' and also claimed that they had developed a Virgin Mary cult, thus making them the equivalent of Roman Catholics. He described Cyprus as an 'oriental' country.[19] The account of the barrister and Indian civil servant Fred Fisher also used condescending orientalism,

[10] A. Varnava, *Serving the Empire in the Great War: the Cypriot Mule Corps, Imperial Identity and Silenced Memory* (Manchester, 2017), pp. 144, 153, 189.

[11] B. J. Surridge, *A Survey of Rural Life in Cyprus* (Nicosia, 1930).

[12] Surridge, *Rural Life in Cyprus*, p. 7.

[13] Surridge, *Rural Life in Cyprus*, p. 5.

[14] Surridge, *Rural Life in Cyprus*, p. 13.

[15] Surridge, *Rural Life in Cyprus*, p. 21. See also A. Varnava, 'The origins and prevalence of and campaigns to eradicate venereal diseases in British Colonial Cyprus, 1916–1939', *Social History of Medicine*, xxxiii (2020), 173–200.

[16] D. Stylianou, *The Inner Life of Cyprus: a Collection of the Traditions, Customs, Beliefs and Wisdom of the Peasantry of Cyprus* (Nicosia, 1931), p. 13.

[17] Stylianou, *Inner Life of Cyprus*, *passim*.

[18] M. Pourgouris, *The Cyprus Frenzy of 1878 and the British Press* (Lanham, Md., 2019); A. Varnava, *British Imperialism in Cyprus, 1878–1915: the Inconsequential Possession* (Manchester, 2009), pp. 93–100; and A. Varnava, 'Punch and the British occupation of Cyprus in 1878', *Byzantine and Modern Greek Studies*, xxix (2005), 167–86.

[19] W. H. Dixon, *British Cyprus* (London, 1879), pp. 19–30. While anti-Catholic feeling may have declined in Britain during the course of the 19th century, it certainly persisted, (see e.g., E. R. Norman, *Anti-Catholicism in Victorian England* (London, 1968)).

although Fisher employed slightly less overtly racist language and made a clear distinction between Greeks and Turks. 'Ignorance at present is completely triumphant', he remarked, because, among the Christians, only monks could read. At the same time, the Cypriots 'are skilled in every trick that the deepest cunning and the most ingenious deception can suggest; and the net which they throw around you is woven with so much art, that it escapes the notice of the most vigilant eye'.[20] Meanwhile, Mrs. Scott-Stevenson wrote about 'the unsophisticated Cypriote' who 'whether Mussulman or Christian, is a quiet, docile creature, most hospitable to strangers' and 'devoted to their homes and villages', as well as displaying a 'fondness for their children' described as 'touching. Not only do they share all their property amongst them when they grow up but will often shield them from disgrace at any risk to themselves'.[21] Scott-Stevenson clearly placed the family at the heart of Cypriot life. In 1908 Basil Stewart published a travelogue on Cyprus, which included the chapter 'On the natives and some of their customs'. This focused partly on the 'primitive' methods of agriculture used on the island,[22] while also again stressing hospitality: 'In fact', he commented, 'I would far rather travel in' the 'remote parts' of Cyprus than 'visit some of the slums of our bigger towns'. Stewart suggested, however, that the Cypriots were 'not averse to murdering one another should occasion necessitate (murder being a rather frequent crime), arising perhaps from some old family feud'.[23]

The ignorant descriptions that characterized the early years of British rule may have declined by the time of the Surridge survey,[24] which built upon other statistical-based data-collection methods that had emerged since the British occupation of Cyprus, but the romanticized stereotypes largely remained – especially in photography and film, such as the work of John Thomson, a pioneering Scottish photographer.[25] Thomson's photographs were part of the establishment imperial gaze, as he also took pictures in the London slums and the Far East, including China,[26] but the images of Cyprus that he took immediately after the arrival of the British offer a fair representation of the realities of the island, focusing on architecture, harbours and individuals (perhaps most famously the 'Cyprian maid'), as well as rural life.[27] While Thomson's book understated the role of the peasant, it reflected the concerns of British painters in Cyprus, whose subjects included landscapes, cityscapes, architecture, and images of Greek and Turkish peasants.[28]

By the interwar years the people of Cyprus had moved to the centre of the British and international gaze. An article in the U.S. magazine *National Geographic* in 1928 did include elements of orientalism, yet also contained images with genuine humanity.[29] By the 1930s and into the post-war period, Cyprus had begun to appear in British

[20] F. H. Fisher, *Cyprus: Our New Colony and What We Know About It* (London, 1878), pp. 32–57.

[21] E. Scott-Stevenson, *Our Home in Cyprus* (London, 1880), p. 89.

[22] B. Stewart, *My Experiences of Cyprus* (London, 1906), pp. 95–9.

[23] Stewart, *My Experiences*, p. 106.

[24] See the complex analysis in M. Rousseau-Sinclair, *Victorian Travellers in Cyprus: a Garden of Their Own* (Nicosia, 2002).

[25] *Photography and Cyprus: Time, Place and Identity*, ed. L. Wells, T. Stylianou-Lambert and N. Philippou (London, 2014); and Rousseau-Sinclair, *Victorian Travellers in Cyprus*.

[26] G. Belknap, 'Through the looking glass: photography, science and imperial motivations in John Thomson's photographic expeditions', *History of Science*, lii (2014), 73–97.

[27] J. Thomson, *Through Cyprus With the Camera in the Autumn of 1878* (London, 1879); and M. Hadjimichael, 'Revisiting Thomson: the colonial eye and Cyprus', in *Britain and Cyprus: Colonialism and Post-colonialism, 1878–2006*, ed. H. Faustmann and N. Peristianis (Mannheim, 2006).

[28] R. Severis, *Travelling Artists in Cyprus* (London, 2000), pp. 151–92.

[29] O. M. Williams, 'Unspoiled Cyprus', *National Geographic*, July 1928, pp. 1–55. See the orientalist interpretation of this article in N. Philippou, 'The National Geographic and half oriental Cyprus', in Wells, Stylianou-Lambert and Philippou, *Photography and Cyprus*, pp. 26–53.

documentary films, essentially those of a paternalistic nature aimed partly at showing off this imperial possession but also at demonstrating the ways in which British rule had benefited the local peasant population.[30] The best known of these films was *Cyprus Is an Island*, made by Laurie Lee and Ralph Keene and released in 1946. The idea for this feature came from the governor of Cyprus, who contacted the Colonial Office and then the Ministry of Information, eventually reaching Laurie Lee (who had spent a few weeks in Cyprus before the Second World War).[31] Anyone who viewed this film would have come to the conclusion that the Cypriots consisted entirely of peasants, as most images focused on farming life. The film carried an underlying narrative that pointed to the benefits of British rule. It suggested that the improvement of irrigation had reduced conflicts on the land, as the storyline focused on the competition for resources between a farmer, Nikos, growing his own crops and tending his own trees with the help of his wife and children, and a goatherd, Vassos, whose animals stripped bare the trees of the cultivator.[32]

The British stereotypes of the Cypriots contained clear orientalist elements, if we follow Edward Said's assertion that *oriental* refers to the belief that certain traits characterize the peoples of the East.[33] This was the case especially when those stereotypes concentrated upon the Ottoman aspects of the people and island – although Nicos Phillipou has written about 'half oriental Cyprus'.[34] The concern of those who observed Cyprus therefore stemmed partly from orientalism, racism and a paternalistic desire to improve the position of the local inhabitants, as indicated by the wish to introduce irrigation. David Cannadine's observation in his controversial book on the British Empire seems especially appropriate with regard to perceptions of the people of Cyprus, with his focus on the idea that class mattered as much as race or colour in the way that imperial elites viewed the people they controlled. Certainly, in the sources quoted above the social status, poverty and resultant behaviour of the Cypriot peasant received as much attention as any inherent racial inferiority, demonstrating, in this case, that race and class operated together as factors in othering.[35]

But Cyprus would rarely make it to the forefront of British consciousness in imperial popular culture, which was much more focused on the empire's larger possessions,[36] until it was decided to move the British Middle East Military Headquarters from Egypt to Cyprus in 1952.[37] By the middle of the 1950s the armed struggle for political union (*enosis*) with Greece had also emerged, led by the paramilitary group E.O.K.A. (*Εθνική Οργάνωσις Κυπρίων Αγωνιστών*, the National Organization of Cypriot

[30] J. Stubbs, '"Did you ever notice this dot in the Mediterranean?" Colonial Cyprus in the post-war British documentary', *Historical Journal of Film, Radio and Television*, xxxv (2015), 240–56.

[31] L. Lee and R. Keene, *We Made a Film in Cyprus* (London, 1947).

[32] See *Cyprus Is an Island* [documentary film, online] dir. R. Keene, Ministry of Information, U.K., 1946, 32 mins. 42 secs. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wuoN3CovaLU> [accessed 7 Sept. 2021].

[33] E. Said, *Orientalism* (1978, repr. London, 2003), pp. 31–49. See the critique of Said's concept, but also its broader application to imperialism generally and the British Empire, in J. M. MacKenzie, *Orientalism: History, Theory and the Arts* (Manchester, 1995).

[34] Philippou ('National Geographic and half oriental Cyprus') asserts that photographers also sought classical elements in the Cypriot landscape and people.

[35] D. Cannadine, *Ornamentalism: How the British Saw Their Empire* (London, 2001).

[36] *Imperialism and Popular Culture*, ed. J. Mackenzie (Manchester, 1987).

[37] A. Varnava, 'Reinterpreting Macmillan's Cyprus policy, 1957–1960', *Cyprus Review*, xxii (2010), 79–106.

Fighters), who killed British soldiers on the island and thus made headlines in the U.K.[38]

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While Cypriots had certainly migrated to London before 1939, the Cypriot community of London began to establish itself precisely in the years that the campaign for *enosis* with Greece began to develop. In 1921 the British census showed that there were only 316 Cypriots in England and Wales (105 in London), but by 1931 there were 1,059 (734 in London).[39] With the Great Depression hitting the island hard, the Greek Cypriot community in the U.K., especially in London, grew during the 1930s. A Greek Cypriot café was opened in Shaftesbury Avenue in the middle of the 1920s,[40] and catering became the major occupation of the 7,000 to 8,000 Cypriots who lived in Britain by the end of the 1930s, comprising mainly adult males living in Soho. One Colonial Office report from 1939 asserted that the majority of the 6,000 to 8,000 members of this community who lived in London in 1938 'work in hotels and restaurants', almost exclusively 'in the West End … Indeed, it is difficult to find a hotel or restaurant in the West End where no Cypriots are employed as waiters, commis-waiters, or kitchen hands'.[41]

The Cypriot community in the U.K., mainly in London, increased in size regardless of attempts by the British government to control this population. Despite the perceived criminality and deviant politics of the Cypriots, the restrictions imposed at the port of departure (Cyprus) on their migration to the U.K. were aimed at preventing destitution by keeping out those who could not fend for themselves.[42] This was an interesting basis for restriction, and as a result Styllou Christofi, who had a criminal record, was allowed into the U.K., even though other countries, such as Australia, required police clearance before the approval of visas for Cypriots (and other migrants).[43]

Despite these restrictions, the Cypriot community in Britain continued to grow; in 1942 the Cypriot government's London commissioner estimated there were 10,000 migrants, including 2,000 women and children.[44] The pioneer male migrants of the 1930s acted as the first link in a chain migration that would develop in the post-war years, as the Cypriot community in London became both larger and more evenly distributed in terms of gender. In 1953, the year that Styllou Christofi arrived in London, 1,850

[38] A. Varnava and C. Raeside, 'Punch and the Cyprus emergency', in *Comic Empires: the Imperialism of Cartoons, Caricature, and Satirical Art*, ed. R. Scully and A. Varnava (Manchester, 2019), pp. 277–301; and S. Carruthers, *Winning Hearts and Minds: British Governments, the Media and Colonial Counter-Insurgency, 1944–60* (Leicester, 1995), pp. 194–259. A vast literature exists on the E.O.K.A. campaign more broadly and the reaction of the British authorities towards it, including, recently, D. French, *Fighting EOKA: the British Counter-Insurgency Campaign on Cyprus, 1955–1959* (Oxford, 2015); and B. Drohan, *Brutality in an Age of Human Rights: Activism and Counterinsurgency at the End of the British Empire* (London, 2017), pp. 16–46.

[39] R. Oakley, 'Cypriot migration to Britain prior to World War II', *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies*, xv (1989), 509–25, at p. 513. The number of Cypriots for 1921 is given as 334 in V. George and G. Millerson, 'The Cypriot community in London', *Race & Class*, viii (1967), 277–92, at p. 277.

[40] Kings College London, Greek Diaspora Archive (hereafter K.C.L., G.D.A.), 28/11, Letter from John Stais to Robin Oakley on Early Cypriots in London, 22 Oct. 1965.

[41] T.N.A., CO 67/303/6, Employment of Cypriots in London as waiters, 1939. For the broader context of Soho in the 1930s, see J. R. Walkowitz, *Nights Out: Life in Cosmopolitan London* (London, 2012), which, however, barely mentions Cypriots.

[42] R. Oakley, *Changing Patterns of Distribution of Cypriot Settlement* (Coventry, 1987), p. 3; and Smith and Varnava, "'Creating a "suspect community"'.

[43] Varnava and Smith, 'Destitute Cypriots abroad'.

[44] T.N.A., FCO 141/2661, Percival to C.S.C., 28 Feb. 1943; Notes on Governor's visit to London Office, 25 Feb. 1943.

Cypriots departed Cyprus with papers for the U.K., with this figure increasing to 3,100 in the year of her hanging and 4,469 in 1955.[45] Her heinous crime did not result in the British imposing further restrictions on Cypriot migration to the U.K. The restrictions already in place were to combat destitution and not criminality, even though crime had been a factor in the introduction of those restrictions in the mid 1930s. By the end of 1950 18,000 Cypriots may have been living in the U.K., with 13,000 of those in London. The most densely Cypriot-populated London borough was St Pancras, followed by Marylebone, Westminster, Islington, Paddington and Lambeth, all within easy reach of the West End, where many Cypriots still worked in hotels and restaurants.[46] At the end of 1953 the *Daily Express* claimed that there were 25,000 Cypriots in the U.K.[47] This figure reached 34,040 in 1961, 45,000 in 1966 and 53,095 in 1971.[48]

One of the pioneering scholars on the history of the Greek Cypriot migration, Robin Oakley, utilizes the words *family*, *kinship* and *patronage* to describe the growth of the community, pointing both to the chains of family migration that evolved from the 1930s onwards and to village migration chains.[49] The importance of these chains is also stressed by other sociologists[50] and more recently by the migrants of the 1950s and their descendants.[51]

The Cypriot migrants had a number of characteristics on which the broader British community based stereotypes, especially the 'peasant type'. In terms of their economic activities, the focus on the catering trade continued, as the example of Stavros Christofi indicates. In 1952 the restaurant trade still accounted for 49 per cent of Cypriot male employment in London, although this figure had decreased to 30.5 per cent by 1958. With a high propensity for self-employment, Greek Cypriots opened their own catering establishments, especially in the fish and chip trade, as well as a range of other areas.[52] In addition to catering, the jobs that Cypriots undertook were, 'like [those of] other migrants … those least attractive to the indigenous population'.[53] During the 1950s about 33 per cent of men worked as tailors, shoemakers, mechanics, electricians, carpenters, painters and decorators, plumbers, and bricklayers, with a further 15 per cent as cooks, waiters and barbers.[54] At the same time 85 per cent of Cypriot women 'were employed as dressmakers and machinists in small workshops owned by Cypriots or Jews'.[55] By this time the Cypriots had begun to move away from their original heartland in Soho to inner

[45] T.N.A., CO 926/366, George Sinclair to Harding, 12 June 1956; and T.N.A., FCO 141/3808, Administrative secretary to deputy governor, 5 June 1956.

[46] T.N.A., CO 876/165, Terezopoulos to J. E. Thomas, Students Department, C.O., 7 Sept. 1951, enclosing: (1) confidential Terezopoulos Report for 1950, 28 Feb. 1951; and (2) article 'Cypriots in Britain', *Cyprus Review*, July 1951, pp. 14–15.

[47] *Daily Express*, 10 Nov. 1953.

[48] See Oakley, *Changing Patterns*, p. 5, whose census-based figures also point to the fact that around three quarters of Cypriots in England lived in London throughout these years.

[49] R. Oakley, 'Family, kinship and patronage: the Cypriot migration to Britain', in *Minority Families in Britain: Support and Stress*, ed. V. Saifullah Khan (London, 1979), pp. 13–36.

[50] Pamela Constantinides ('The Greek Cypriots: factors in the maintenance of ethnic identity', in Watson, *Between Two Cultures*, pp. 269–300, at pp. 289–94) uses two villages to which she, unhelpfully but following sociological norms, gives the pseudonyms of Agraia and Thalassia.

[51] S. Karayiannis (*Mandrites Abroad* (Nicosia, 2010)) provides detailed information on individuals and families who migrated from the village of Mandres.

[52] 'The Cypriots in London', *Manchester Guardian*, 14 Aug. 1954; and George and Millerson, 'Cypriot Community', pp. 283–4.

[53] F. Anthias, *Ethnicity, Class, Gender and Migration: Greek Cypriots in Britain* (Aldershot, 1992), p. 53.

[54] George and Millerson, 'Cypriot Community', pp. 282–3.

[55] V. George, 'The assimilation of Cypriot immigrants in London', *Eugenics Review*, xlviii (1966), 188–92, at p. 189.

North London, with most of the post-war 'newcomers' settling in and around Camden Town. During the 1950s a type of high street developed there for Greek Cypriots, with shops that provided commodities from the homeland and a Cypriot church, All Saints, which was consecrated in Pratt Street on 25 April 1948. Later the group moved further north towards Haringey and subsequently towards Enfield, especially Palmers Green.[56]

As the travel writers who visited Cyprus at the end of the nineteenth century had recognized, the family remained at the centre of Cypriot migrant life. In 1966 a B.B.C. series producing documentaries on individual communities called *Minorities in Britain* looked at Cypriots through the example of Chrisostomos Sosti. Sosti had moved to London in 1955 with his five children. By 1966 his first three children, aged between twenty-one and twenty-five, had all married other Cypriots, while his nineteen-year-old student son had a fiancée from his own ethnic group. The youngest daughter, Irene, could venture out only with a chaperone.[57] This exemplified the embedded concepts of honour and shame in Greek Cypriot culture, as identified in an article by J. G. Perestiany. He stated that Cypriot 'women's foremost duty to self and family is to safeguard herself against all critical allusions to her sexual modesty', whether she was married or single. 'If it were possible to combine the concepts of virginity and motherhood the ideal married woman would be a married virginal in sensations and mind'.[58] Both in the homeland and in London the Greek Cypriot had clearly delineated gender roles within the family: 'manliness/assertion of masculinity' or 'femininity/passive modesty'.[59] Partners, who were often from the same village, met each other through arranged marriages organized by their parents and their families and friends, whether in Cyprus or in London, although the children had the right of veto. The provision of a dowry played some role in the marriage agreement, at least in Cyprus. Despite this, the Cypriot family in London could certainly become dysfunctional, as the unit depended upon the economic activity of both husbands and wives and could also include parents or siblings.[60] The importance of marriage found reflection in the wedding, which in Cyprus offered the peasant population an opportunity to celebrate in a calendar that otherwise revolved around Greek Orthodox festivals. Wedding festivities could last for over a week.[61]

Other than work and family, the social lives of many non-communist Cypriots revolved around the Orthodox Church and, while some early newcomers may have utilized St. Sophia in Bayswater, founded by Greek merchants in the nineteenth century,[62] by the 1950s new establishments had evolved. The creation in 1922 of the Oecumenical Patriarch

[56] H. Evangelou, *Tales From Riding House Street: a Faded London House and the Cypriots Who Lived in It* (London, 2018); Oakley, *Changing Patterns*, pp. 7–15; George, 'Assimilation', p. 189; A. Hassiotis, *The Greek Cypriot Community in Camden* (London, 1989); and T.N.A., CO 537/4042, Terezopoulos to C.S.C., 29 Apr. 1948. See also T.N.A., FCO 141/2611. The B.B.C. television documentary film *Minorities in Britain: the Cypriot Community* (1966) provides a flavour of Camden Town during the 1960s (K.C.L., G.D.A., 7/AV1). See the London Cypriot newspaper *Το Βημα* for shops in Camden Town advertising their wares, including the edition of 15 May 1954.

[57] K.C.L., G.D.A., 7/AV1, B.B.C. television documentary film entitled *Minorities in Britain: the Cypriot Community*, 1966.

[58] J. G. Perestiany, 'Honour and shame in a Cypriot highland village', in *Honour and Shame: the Values of Mediterranean Society*, ed. J. G. Peristiany (London, 1966), 171–90, at p. 182.

[59] Perestiany, 'Honour and shame', p. 189.

[60] See esp. Anthias, *Ethnicity, Class, Gender and Migration*, pp. 77–94; Oakley, 'Family, kinship, patronage'; and P. Sant Cassia, 'Property in Greek Cypriot marriage strategies', *Man*, new ser., xvii (1982), 643–63.

[61] Surridge, *Rural Life in Cyprus*, p. 25; Stylianou, *Inner Life of Cyprus*, pp. 66–71; A. Tarsoule, *Κύπρος* (Athens, 1963), pp. 433–53; and V. Argyrou, *Tradition and Modernity in the Mediterranean: the Wedding as Symbolic Struggle* (Cambridge, 1996).

[62] *Treasured Offerings: the Legacy of the Greek Orthodox Cathedral of St. Sophia London*, ed. G. Kakavas (London, 2002).

of the Diocese of Thyateira, with jurisdiction over the whole of Western Europe and with its headquarters in London, facilitated this process. Congregations usually emerged when the migrants took over churches previously used by indigenous Christian sects. For example, one of the first places of worship was St. Andrew's in Kentish Town (previously Anglican), which was adopted by the community in the mid 1950s. Even earlier than this, the Orthodox hierarchy took over another Anglican church, All Saints Church in Pratt Street in Camden Town, which remained the centre of Greek Cypriot life until the 1970s and hosted the majority of weddings up to that period. For a community in which religion remained a key marker of identity, the church acted as the centre of the main rituals of life, including baptism, which all Orthodox children born in London during the 1950s and 1960s would have undergone, while attendance at Sunday services in these decades remained significant. At the same time, the Greek Orthodox church facilitated the teaching of Greek-language lessons after school with the help of Cypriot parents, through the Greek Parents Association, and, eventually, the government of Cyprus.[63] The Greek Parents Association came into existence as early as October 1952, opening a school, initially in a private house, which was attended by about 160 children by the following summer.[64] By the end of the 1950s village associations, which would come to characterize the later history of the Cypriots in London, had emerged, including a Yialousa Association, whose primary aim consisted of sending money back to Cyprus to improve 'social amenities'.[65]

While religion may have remained core to the lives and identity of the London Cypriot community in the 1950s and 1960s, the other main activities revolved around politics, partly a transfer of activities from Cyprus connected with trade unionism and the demand for *enosis* with Greece. The British had sponsored and tried to control the conservative Cypriot Brotherhood of St. Barnabas, which had emerged in the early 1930s and operated into the 1950s, but dropped its support after the Brotherhood endorsed *enosis* under the influence of the Cypriot Orthodox Church under Makarios III in 1955.[66] The Brotherhood splintered with the onset of the E.O.K.A. campaign, with many opposing the adoption of violence to bring about *enosis*, while others lent their moral support to the campaign. The other group were the communists. They were influential as members of the Communist Party of Great Britain from the 1930s onwards, boasting the only consistent ethnic branches in the party until they were merged in 1966. Several members served in the Spanish Civil War (including Ezekias Papaioannou and Michael Economides) and in the League Against Imperialism (such as Evdoros Ioannides). Soon after Papaioannou returned to Cyprus in 1945, he took control of A.K.E.L. (Ανορθωτικό Κόμμα Εργαζόμενου Λαού, the Communist Party of Cyprus), which had adopted a policy of support for *enosis* in contradiction to the previous Communist Party of Cyprus

[63] Constantinides, 'Greek Cypriots', pp. 284–7; C. Zavros, *Ιξτοπρια της Κυπριακις Παροικιας στη Μεγαλη Βρετανια* (London, 2000); *Ιερος Ναος Αγιων Παντων Λονδινου, Αναμνηστικὸν Λεὶκωμα εμι τη Εικοσαετηριδι 1948–1968* (London, 1968); J. Lovett and D. Partasides, *A Life Portrayal of Kyriacos Mouskas* (London, 2013); M.-R. Oakes, *The Greek Orthodox Cathedral Church of All Saints, Camden Town, London* (London, 2009); and T.N.A., FCO 141/3348B, Cyprus: reports on the Cypriot community in London, 1954–9.

[64] T.N.A., FCO 141/2348B, Cyprus Government London Office to colonial secretary, 15 Sept. 1954.

[65] T.N.A., FCO 141/3899, 'The Yialousa Association', n.d.

[66] T.N.A., FCO 141/3348B, Cyprus: reports on the Cypriot community in London, 1954–9; FCO 141/4198, Cyprus: Government of Cyprus London Office; activities of Greek Cypriots in London; and S. Jospehides, 'Associations amongst the Greek Cypriot population in Britain', in *Immigrant Associations in Europe*, ed. J. Rex, D. Joly and C. Wilpert (Aldershot, 1987), pp. 42–61, at pp. 46–7. Smith and Varnava ('Creating a "suspect community"') discuss how the British authorities financed and tried to use the Cypriot Brotherhood of St Barnabas as an anti-communist and pro-British organization to keep control of the Cypriots in London, and they also discuss the murder of Angelos Zemenides, the founder of the organization, who had been hand-picked by the British for the role.

(which had supported independence), and began to control the Cypriot communists in Britain.[67] This led to a purge of the Cypriot branches in 1952, with several members, most notably Ioannides, suspended and George Pefkos becoming the Cypriot communist leader in the U.K.[68]

The London Office of the Cyprus government played a pivotal role for Cypriots in the U.K. It dealt with all matters relating to the promotion of Cyprus and the welfare of Cypriots in the U.K. Most commissioners were from the Cyprus civil list, but the one constant was Sotiris Terezopoulos, a Greek who obtained British Cypriot nationality while in Cyprus and emigrated to the U.K. in the 1920s, becoming commissioner in the mid 1940s.[69] The activities of the Cypriots in London in general, but especially those of the communists, were monitored by the British authorities, namely through the liaison office and its regular reports to the Cypriot government and the Colonial Office. The communists had two newspapers: *Κυπριακα Νεα* from the 1930s onwards, which was the more orthodox communist newspaper and enjoyed a small print run; and *Το Βημα* from late 1939 onwards, which was also communist but less militant, publishing about 1,000 copies in 1940 but selling a mere 250.[70] These ideological divisions continued into the 1950s, although they became further complicated by the Cold War and the prosecution of *enosis* in Cyprus.

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Eric Richards argues that migration and empire were intimately linked, yet these links have been 'consigned to the wings of the imperial stage'. The link, especially in this case, is race, or, to be more precise, racism. As numerous historians have shown, colonial subjects had a great deal of 'empire identification', and migrating to the imperial metropole or enlisting in the two world wars was often propelled by a desire to take advantage of that connection. But, as many historians have also shown, these people were subjected to racism as 'others', with their British status often ignored. This racism transcended colour, although African, Asian and West Indian migrants were easier targets than 'white' colonials, such as Cypriot and Maltese migrants.[71]

After the hanging of Styllou Christofi, hostility towards Cypriots became more overt, as E.O.K.A. violence targeting British people (after April 1955) resulted in the branding and stereotyping of many Cypriots, especially Archbishop Makarios, as religious zealots.[72] But earlier labels had developed during the course of the 1930s, when the Soho community had become associated with political subversion and 'vice', while the trope of the peasant developed in the imperial imagination had also survived.

[67] Smith and Varnava, 'Creating a "suspect community"'; and E. Papaioannou, *Ενθημίσεις από την Ζωή Μου* (Nicosia, 1988).

[68] See People's History Museum files relating to Cyprus branches and Cypriot communism in the U.K. from the 1930s to the 1970s, e.g. T.N.A., CP/LON ADVC 4/1–16. See also A. Flinn, 'Cypriot, Indian and West Indian branches of the CPGB, 1945–1970: an experiment on self-organisation?', *Socialist History*, xxi (2002), 47–66.

[69] For Terezopoulos's nationality, see T.N.A., HO 144/8489; HO 334/250/613; CO 876/165, Terezopoulos to J. E. Thomas, Students Department, C.O., 7 Sept. 1951, enclosing: (1) confidential Terezopoulos Report for 1950, 28 Feb. 1951; and (2) article 'Cypriots in Britain', *Cyprus Review*, July 1951, pp. 14–15.

[70] TN.A., CO 67/306/17, secret, T. S. Bell, Liaison Office, to colonial secretary, Cyprus (sent to C.O. on same day), 8 Feb. 1940; and CO 67/306/17, R. St. J. O. Wayne, Liaison Office, to colonial secretary, Cyprus (sent to C.O. on same day), 17 May 1940.

[71] E. S. Richards, *Britannia's Children: Emigration From England, Scotland, Wales and Ireland Since 1600* (London, 2004), Preface and pp. 1–15.

[72] Varnava and Raeside, 'Punch and the Cyprus emergency'; and Carruthers, *Winning Hearts and Minds*, pp. 194–259.

These stereotypes directed against Cypriots in interwar London revolved around perceived criminality and sexual promiscuity (sometimes both simultaneously), both of which were seen as targeting the 'white British' population. Cypriots, like the Maltese, were accused of running brothels and spreading venereal disease.[73] A Metropolitan Police report from 1933 mentioned that 'there is no doubt … that venereal disease is rife amongst these Cypriots, and strange to say they seem to have some fascination for white women, and they can often be seen in their cafes in the company of white women, usually of the prostitute type'.[74] Clearly, there was a distinction between Cypriot men and white British women. Ultimately, it did not matter if Cypriots were white or not; they were still an 'other'. Many of the early male Cypriot settlers had relationships and married white British, German or Scandinavian women, such as the left-wing political activists Ezekias Papaioannou, Michael Economides, George Exadaktylos, Evdoros Ioannides and Stavros Georgiou (the father of Cat Stevens, who ran a restaurant on Shaftesbury Avenue).[75] Of the 104 marriages in the community in 1942, 70 were mixed marriages, indicating a significant level of integration into British society, but explained by the absence of Cypriot women in London at this time.[76] In 1948 the Metropolitan Police focused on the 'criminal tendencies' of both the Maltese and Cypriots, which were 'not negligible', especially 'their association with, and preying upon [English] women', a fear that also surfaced in relation to West Indian migrants in post-war London.[77]

But it was not merely relationships between Cypriot men and white women that triggered racism; it was also Cypriot men involved in the prostitution of white women. In May 1938 magistrate J. B. Sandbach, who had been dealing with Cypriot criminal activity in his court for the best part of a decade, came across a case of a Cypriot, Socrates Costa Michaelides, who was involved in, and perhaps even in charge of, a sex-trafficking business. Michaelides was found with letters that showed he was bringing white women into London for the purposes of prostituting them. Sandbach stated that 'this looks like white slavery' and that it was 'the worst case I have ever had to deal with', with his only 'regret' being that Michaelides was a British subject and could therefore not be deported.[78] For Sandbach, the outrage was not merely the fact that Michaelides had broken the law but that he was prostituting white women.

Not only was this racism aimed at those involved in criminal activity and those 'taking' white women, but since the majority of the Cypriots were concentrated in Soho, they were all easily targeted when police 'investigations' were initiated. For example, when Angelos Zemenids was murdered in 1933, the police went to all the known Cypriot establishments to 'round up' suspects.[79] Additionally, the Cypriot liaison officer in London

[73] R. Oakley, 'The control of Cypriot migration to Britain between the wars', *Immigrants and Minorities*, vi (1987), 30–43, at p. 31; and Smith and Varnava 'Creating a "suspect community"'.

[74] T.N.A., CO 67/260/7, C. E. Campton to W. Collins, 8 Oct. 1933.

[75] T.N.A., KV 2/4400, File on Ezekias Papaioannou; and A. Varnava, 'Yusuf Islam (Cat Stevens) and his anti-war and pro-peace protest songs: from hippy peace to Islamic peace', *Contemporary British History*, xxxiii (2019), 548–72.

[76] T.N.A., FCO 141/2661, Percival to C.S.C., 28 Feb. 1943; Notes on Governor's visit to London Office, 25 Feb. 1943.

[77] T.N.A., MEPO 3/2143, Metropolitan Police letter dated 2 Feb. 1948. The Maltese community in early post-war London receives attention in G. Dench, *The Maltese in London: a Case Study in the Erosion of Ethnic Consciousness* (London, 1975). For attitudes towards West Indian migrants, see the classic M. Banton, *The Coloured Quarter: Negro Immigrants in an English City* (London, 1955).

[78] *Daily Express*, 10 May 1936.

[79] Smith and Varnava, 'Creating a "suspect community"'.

routinely visited Cypriot coffee houses in order to provide his monthly (during the war) and later yearly reports on the activities of the community in London.[80]

While Cypriots may not have faced the type of racism that was directed against those of African-Caribbean origin in 1950s Britain, certainly not on the scale of the Nottingham and Notting Hill race riots,[81] they did experience hostility. As shown above, this predated the E.O.K.A. crisis, which worsened hostility due to the killing of British soldiers, police officers and civilians in Cyprus. Teddy boys, the 'insecure offenders' identified by Tosco Fyvel in his study of adolescent violence in the late 1950s and early 1960s, attacked Cypriot cafes and Cypriots in the streets. One Teddy boy remembered that 'one time we used to go regularly to the Angel where there's a lot of cafes and we aimed to start trouble with the Greeks and Turks and start a punch-up. They're Cypriots, you know, grease monkeys we used to call them – our chaps all hated them'. Fyvel partly explained this behaviour by citing racial prejudice but also mentions resentment that Cypriots had progressed up the social ladder.[82] Those on the receiving end of such behaviour included Loizos Loizou, who, while he dismissed the Teddy boys as a 'passing phase', remembered that he and other Cypriots who had lived in Kings Cross had 'had to arm themselves with pieces of wood and knives just to be able to make it out of the estate where they were living'.[83] Worse still, on the day of the acquittal of 'the EOKA gunman Nikos Samson' for the murder of 'Sergeant Carter and Sergeant Thorogood, two police officers stationed in Cyprus', Loizos arrived home late after work. His son, Fotis, recalled: 'We were shocked to see that he had been badly beaten about the face. His face was bruised and covered in blood; his eyes were black and swollen. As he staggered into the room, my mother let out a cry'. While he had been waiting for his bus, three men in their mid twenties had called Loizos a 'fucking Greek bastard' and attacked him.[84] Violence may have represented the most extreme manifestation of the racism that Greek Cypriots experienced in London during the 1950s and 1960s, but other low-level hostility also surfaced. Stavros Pepes remembered that he had faced 'racist remarks. One night with another Cypriot we went to the pub for a beer, and naturally we were speaking Greek. One gentleman did not like it and he started to swear and be aggressive towards me, luckily we managed to get away without any problem'.[85]

In essence, this type of racism represented a working-class reaction to the arrival of foreign Europeans, but it also appears to have gained additional dynamism as a result of the E.O.K.A. campaign in Cyprus. The stereotype in this instance was not based on the Cypriot peasant, as the London working classes would not have engaged with this concept, relating as it did to people of similarly low social status in the eyes of the elites. However, elite discourse of this time does reveal social and racial prejudice of the type that surfaced in the late nineteenth-century travelogues, especially during the trial of Styllou Christofi, but also in 1950s London polite society more generally.

But the elites' concern with the Cypriot community in Britain at this time also reflected, in a more subtle way, the attitudes of the working-class attackers, who, driven on by the press, reacted violently to events in Cyprus. For the Metropolitan Police, and the office of the Cyprus government in London, the main concern was to control the activities of Cypriots in the imperial capital who might in any way assist their countrymen

[80] See T.N.A., CO 67/306/17; and CO 876/165.
[81] Pilkington, *Beyond the Mother Country*.
[82] T. R. Fyvel, *The Insecure Offenders: Rebellious Youth in the Welfare State* (Harmondsworth, 1963), pp. 13, 34, 102.
[83] F. Loizou, *Voices From the Past: an Autobiography of a London Cypriot* (London, 2011), pp. 66–7.
[84] Loizou, *Voices From the Past*, pp. 107–8.
[85] Quoted in Ethnic Communities Oral History Project, *Xeni: Greek-Cypriots in London* (London, 1990), p. 4.

in the homeland. This stemmed from the perception that these Cypriots maintained anti-British feeling.[86] Concern surfaced about the activities of communists and the suggestion that collections took place in All Saints Church to help the cause of *enosis* in Cyprus by supporting the families of those detained.[87] Constantinides, the commissioner in London, maintained that the perception of Cypriots in London as supporters of *enosis* in their homeland was flawed because the Metropolitan Police only 'had knowledge of a few political agitators whom it is their duty to watch'. Constantinides suggested that '90%, if not more, of the Cypriots residing in the Greater London area are of peasant stock of a very low intellectual level and semi-literate and as such they can easily be influenced by clever political vagabonds'. He continued:

> These Cypriots fail to understand why in the heart of London there an open and systematic anti-British propaganda is being carried on, which H.M.G. suffers in silence. To any man of intelligence this may not be very significant, but to people with the ignorance and mentality of our emigrants, this is an indication that the public as a whole entirely supports this propaganda.[88]

While the commissioner's comment on the origins of the majority of London Cypriots was true, the figure of 90 per cent may have been misleading. The official concern linked a peasant farming background, which the majority of the London community shared, with ignorance and an inability to reason, despite the fact that by 1958 many Cypriots arriving in the U.K. had lived and/or worked in Cypriot towns, some had at least some secondary schooling, and Cypriots in the U.K. had opened up their own businesses, first in and around Soho and then in Camden Town. They included, to give just one example, George 'Roosevelt' Sophocleous, born to illiterate parents in the village of Analiontas, who went to secondary school, moved to London before the Second World War, opened a grocery store in Fulham and then settled in Camden Town, where he established both a grocery shop and a hotel and restaurant and also became a leading figure in All Saints Church.[89]

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The stereotypes relating to Cypriots in London were evident in the trial of Styllou Christofi. The hanging of Ruth Ellis, the final woman to die in this way in Britain, received much attention both at the time and subsequently, to the extent that her death became the subject of a feature film.[90] However, Styllou Christofi, who perished just six months before Ellis, has received less attention, although various popular books on the fate of women who faced capital punishment consider the two women, as well as others, in conjunction.[91] The executioner who hanged Ellis and Christofi, Albert Pierrepoint, explained the different contemporary reactions towards the two by contrasting the 'blonde night-club hostess' with the 'grey-haired and bewildered grandmother who spoke no English'.[92] The *Daily Mirror* pointed to the fact that millions of British people

[86] T.N.A., FCO 141/4198, Metropolitan Police Special Branch report, 28 Nov. 1957.

[87] T.N.A., FCO 141/3348B, Cyprus: reports on the Cypriot community in London, 1954–9.

[88] T.N.A., FCO 141/4198, Government of Cyprus top secret report, 12 Feb. 1958.

[89] K.C.L., G.D.A., 27/AV2, Interview with George Sophocleous, London, 1980s.

[90] *Dance With a Stranger* [feature film] dir. M. Newell, Goldcrest Films International, U.K., 1985, 102 min.

[91] Jones, *Quickly to Her Fate*; P. Wilson, *Murderess: a Study of the Women Executed in Britain Since 1843* (London, 1971); and R. Huggett and P. Berry, *Daughters of Cain: the Story of Nine Women Executed Since Edith Thompson in 1923* (Bath, 1971). More serious considerations of the execution of these two women, as well as others in 20th-century Britain, can be found in A. Ballinger, *Dead Women Walking: Executed Women in England and Wales, 1900–1955* (Aldershot, 2000); and C. Langhamer, '"The live dynamic whole of feeling and behaviour": capital punishment and the politics of emotion, 1945–1957', *Journal of British Studies*, li (2012), 416–41.

[92] A. Pierrepoint, *Executioner: Pierrepoint* (Litton, 1976), p. 401.

were 'worried about the fate of Ruth Ellis' and sympathized with her because she was 'pretty' and 'young', in contrast with the 'ugly Mrs Christofi'.[93]

The press reaction to the prosecution, trial and execution of Styllou reflects the series of stereotypes outlined above resulting from the British perception of the 'Cypriot peasant'. The first reports appeared on Friday 30 July, before Styllou was charged. The *Daily Mirror* ran with the front page headline 'Murder riddle in back garden'.[94] On 30 and 31 July the newspapers broke the story that Styllou Christofi had been charged with the murder of Hella, although news of her death actually reached the newspapers before the charge.[95] The *Daily Mirror* ran with the story on the front page, and although it was not the main headline, its report included the first photograph of Styllou.[96] The article appearing in the centre pages detailed the events leading to her being charged and described her as 'a little dark-haired woman, with stooping shoulders', who had stated that she did not understand the charge, even after it had been translated to her, and had asked to know why she was being kept in custody. Detective Superintendent Leonard Crawford revealed that when Styllou had been charged, she had said that she had not made use of any petrol, but some petrol had spilled a few days earlier and she had stepped on it.[97] Other newspapers provided much shorter summaries, with the *Manchester Guardian* adding that the coroner, W. Bentley, had opened an inquest that had been adjourned until 4 August and the Home Office pathologist, F. E. Camps, was still conducting the post mortem.[98] Styllou appeared in court again on 4 August, when she was granted legal aid.[99] The *Hampstead and Highgate Express* offered more information, disclosing that Styllou was represented by H. J. Rustomji, an Indian barrister from Cyprus who was on holiday in England. Rustomji had added to the air of mystery surrounding Styllou when he had told the bench, 'I appear for this poor, unfortunate illiterate woman who is a stranger in our midst'.[100] On Friday 13 August Styllou made another court appearance and was remanded until 24 August.[101]

Numerous newspapers reported on the hearing that began on 24 August in fairly factual and non-judgemental terms. J. F. Claxton, the prosecutor, established the facts of the murder.[102] The proceedings continued on Thursday 26 August. The main headline concerned the statement by Z. Vardy, Styllou's counsel, that she was 'absolutely bewildered by the proceedings'.[103] On 7 September Styllou was formally committed for trial at the Central Criminal Court, charged with murder. When the charge was read to her, she shook her head and said, 'No'. Vardy spoke on her behalf to plead not guilty.[104]

Christofi's trial opened on Monday 25 October 1954. The *Daily Mirror* reported on the first day's proceedings. The main headline was taken from the statement of the prosecutor, Christmas Humphreys, a Buddhist convert, that this was 'a stupid murder by

[93] *Daily Mirror*, 14 July 1955.
[94] *Daily Mirror*, 30 July 1954.
[95] *Evening Standard*, 29, 30, 31 July 1954.
[96] *Daily Mirror*, 31 July 1954.
[97] *Daily Mirror*, 31 July 1954.
[98] *Evening News*, 30 July 1954; *The Times*, 31 July 1954; and *Manchester Guardian*, 31 July 1954.
[99] *Manchester Guardian*, 5 Aug. 1954.
[100] *Hampstead and Highgate Express*, 1 Aug. 1954.
[101] *The Times*, 14 Aug. 1954; *Manchester Guardian*, 14 Aug. 1954; and *Daily Mirror*, 14 Aug. 1954.
[102] *The Times*, 25 Aug. 1954; *Daily Express*, 25 Aug. 1954; *Manchester Guardian*, 25 Aug. 1954; and *Daily Mirror*, 25 Aug. 1954.
[103] *The Times*, 27 Aug. 1954; *Manchester Guardian*, 27 Aug. 1954; *Daily Mirror*, 27 Aug. 1954; and *Hampstead and Highgate Express*, 27 Aug. 1954.
[104] *The Times*, 8 Sept. 1954; *Manchester Guardian*, 8 Sept. 1954; and *Daily Mirror*, 8 Sept. 1954.

a stupid woman of the illiterate peasant type'. Humphreys argued that Styllou must have been the murderer because only someone so stupid could believe that by washing the floor could bloodstains be eliminated and that with a small tin of paraffin she could burn a body beyond recognition. He sarcastically commented, 'So this is a murderess who is remarkably tidy in clearing away the evidence of the murder'.[105]

The trial continued on Tuesday 26 October, when the prosecution closed their case. At the end of the day's proceedings, Justice Devlin agreed to the request of the defence, led by David Weitzman, for the jury to visit the scene where the body was found during the hours of darkness.[106] The trial continued on Wednesday 27 October, when Styllou testified. She admitted that she had left her son's house two times in the last eight months, but stated that this had not been because she had quarrelled with her daughter-in-law. She related that on the night of the murder she had awoken and smelt smoke, and when she had come down the stairs, two men, one with a briefcase, had run out, and she had found Hella burning. Weitzman asked her if she had killed Hella, if she had strangled or burnt her, and to each of these she replied, 'Never'. During the cross-examination by prosecutor Humphreys, she denied that she had been jealous of Hella because she was young and had pretty clothes, and she claimed she had not felt unwanted because she was being sent back to Cyprus. In summing up, Justice Devlin told the jury that if the defence had shown that there was a reasonable possibility that the murder had been committed by someone else, they should find Styllou not guilty.[107]

On Thursday 28 October 1954 Styllou Christofi was found guilty by the jury, which had deliberated for an hour and fifty-five minutes, and was sentenced to death. When Styllou was brought from the cells to hear the sentence, she was asked if she had anything to say about why the death sentence should not be pronounced, and she replied that she wanted to say something and asked if she could go into the witness box. A few seconds of tense silence followed, before Justice Devlin nodded to the usher for the half-minute ceremony with the black cap, thus ignoring her request and proceeding to sentence her to death. The *Daily Mirror* and the *Hampstead and Highgate Express* both ran the story on their front pages, with the former carrying the headline 'The life or death ordeals of Mrs Christofi'. It focused on the revelation during the trial that Styllou had been charged with murdering her mother-in-law by forcing a burning stake into her mouth, along with two other women in Cyprus in 1925. On those previous occasions she had been found not guilty of murder and guilty of manslaughter. But this time she had been found guilty. Stavros was not present for the verdict, perhaps because he had already passed judgement over his mother, and stated in an interview published on 15 December, the day of her execution, that 'I cannot find it in my heart to forgive my mother … The word "mother" has become a mockery to me'. Her solicitor, B. Baker, stated that they would consider an appeal,[108] which followed,[109] although she lost and did not appear in court at the hearing, which lasted for four minutes, on 29 November,[110] with an execution date set for 15 December.[111]

[105] *Daily Mirror*, 26 Oct. 1954.
[106] *The Times*, 27 Oct. 1954; *Manchester Guardian*, 27 Oct. 1954; *Daily Express*, 27 Oct. 1954; and *Daily Mirror*, 27 Oct. 1954.
[107] *The Times*, 28 Oct. 1954; *Daily Express*, 28 Oct. 1954; and *Daily Mirror*, 28 Oct. 1954.
[108] *Reading Eagle*, 15 Dec. 1954; *Manchester Guardian*, 29 Oct. 1954; *Daily Express*, 29 Oct. 1954; *Daily Mirror*, 29 Oct. 1954; and *Hampstead and Highgate*, 29 Oct. 1954.
[109] *Manchester Guardian*, 2 Nov. 1954; *Daily Mirror*, 2 Nov. 1954; and *Daily Express*, 2 Nov. 1954.
[110] *Manchester Guardian*, 30 Nov. 1954; and *Daily Mirror*, 30 Nov. 1954.
[111] *The Times*, 3 Dec. 1954; and *Daily Mirror*, 3 Dec. 1954.

The *Hampstead and Highgate Express* ran a long piece under the headline 'Mrs Christofi: cold and pitiless', focusing on an exclusive interview with Detective Superintendent Leonard Crawford on Thursday 2 December. Crawford described the killing as 'the most gruesome murder of modern times' and described Christofi as 'such a strange person' and a 'hard peasant type of very low mentality'. He contrasted her with 'her daughter-in-law, a girl who came from a good home and was very methodical and scrupulously clean'.[112]

On 13 December the home secretary, Gwilym Lloyd George, decided that he would not reprieve Styllou and that the execution would take place on 15 December. The newspapers mentioned that Styllou would be the fourteenth woman hanged in the U.K. since 1900 and the first in London since 1923.[113] On 14 December a group of M.P.s made an eleventh-hour attempt to save Styllou. Led by the Labour M.P.s Sir Leslie Plummer and Sydney Silverman, both anti-capital punishment campaigners, they tried to convince Lloyd George to accept the evidence of Dr. Thomas Christie, the principal doctor at Holloway Gaol, who had been observing Styllou for months. Christie believed that Christofi was suffering from 'a brain disease', which prevented her from knowing that what she had done was wrong, and perhaps, had the jury known about this, they might have found Christofi guilty by reason of insanity and therefore not sentenced to death. This report, which found Styllou 'mentally deranged' and 'insane' yet 'medically fit to plead and stand trial',[114] had not been introduced at her trial because Styllou had instructed her lawyers not to do so. The M.P.s tried to see Lloyd George on Monday, but he refused, announcing that he had read all the medical reports, including one from a panel of mind experts set up after her sentence had been passed, and the M.P.s claimed that his refusal to meet them was 'unprecedented'. Stavros confirmed that his mother had refused to plead insanity, believing that 'I am a poor woman of no education, but I am not a mad woman, never, never, never'.[115] The home secretary had also received pleas for clemency from priests and other villagers from Rizokarpaso (thirty-seven people in all).[116]

On 20 December Lloyd George announced that he had received advice from three distinguished doctors that Styllou was not insane or suffering from any minor mental abnormality to justify their recommending a reprieve. Lloyd George revealed that it was after considering Dr. Christie's report that he had asked the three other doctors to examine Styllou.[117] In the first half of 1955 Lloyd George reprieved two other women from execution for murder. The first was Margaret Williams, found guilty of infanticide, a crime for which a reprieve was not uncommon, and the second was Sarah Lloyd, who had been feuding with her eighty-year-old neighbour and attacked her with a spade.[118] Lloyd claimed that she had been provoked and lost control and that she had not planned to kill her neighbour. Although her appeal was rejected, Lloyd George granted her a reprieve. No official reasons were given, but the newspapers speculated that he had taken into account the provocation and also that she had been ill. On the other hand, Lloyd

[112] *Hampstead and Highgate Express*, 3 Dec. 1954.
[113] *The Times*, 14 Dec. 1954; *Manchester Guardian*, 14 Dec. 1954; *Daily Express*, 14 Dec. 1954; and *Daily Mirror*, 14 Dec. 1954.
[114] T.N.A., PCO M9/1721, T. Christie report on Styllou Christofi, 7 Sept. 1954.
[115] *Daily Mirror*, 15 Dec. 1954; and *Daily Express*, 15 Dec. 1954.
[116] The letters are contained in L.M.A., CLA/003/PR/04/003, Correspondence and papers relating to Styllou Christofi.
[117] *Daily Express*, 21 Dec. 1954; and *The Times*, 21 Dec. 1954.
[118] *Daily Mirror*, 7 May 1955; and *Daily Express*, 6 July 1955.

did not reprieve Styllou Christofi, and despite a concerted campaign, with thousands of people signing a petition, he did not reprieve Ruth Ellis either.[119]

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The case of Styllou Christofi throws up a number of questions about the nature of Greek Cypriot settlement and family in London and brings to the surface the way in which imperial stereotypes impacted on the ignored Cypriot population, although, as some of the personal experiences outlined above indicate, they were visible, stereotyped and racialized.

The invisibility of the Cypriots needs consideration first, as this group has received little attention from historians. Ideas of multicultural Britain have typically focused on the migration of people from the West Indies, epitomized by the concept of the *Windrush* generation, which began to gain traction in the 1990s.[120] In the negative racist public consciousness, people of South Asian ethnicity became the other visible group from the 1960s onwards as their numbers increased.[121] Whether within academic circles or in the popular memory, little space remained for other ethnic groups in conceptions of multiracial Britain. The history of post-war Black Britain focuses overwhelmingly on the experiences of people from the Caribbean to the exclusion of those from Africa, despite the significant numbers counted from the early 1950s onwards.[122] The explanation for this state of affairs may lie partly in the greater amount of racism experienced by West Indians (but surely not in comparison with that experienced by Africans) and also in the sense of disappointment that West Indians felt when arriving in the mother country because, unlike virtually any other migrant community that has settled in the U.K., they believed that they were moving to the country to which they belonged and that had determined their education. In essence, the construction of the memory of West Indian migration stems from a sense of betrayal.[123] Other communities – whether South Asian, African or Greek Cypriot – may have faced similar prejudice, but they did not experience the same sense of betrayal.[124]

The Greek Cypriot community in Cyprus generally remained uneducated, with many fortunate to have even attended primary school until the age of twelve. According to the 1911 census of Cyprus (when Styllou would have been ten years old), 61 per cent of the male and 86 per cent of the female population was illiterate. Literacy improved over the next twenty years (in 1921 50 per cent of males and 78 per cent of females were illiterate; in 1931 41 per cent of males and 69 per cent of females were still illiterate) but rates remained very low for women.[125] The teaching that they experienced centred around the inculcation of Greek Orthodox values. If a mother country existed, it was

[119] *Daily Express*, 6 July 1955.

[120] See esp. M. Phillips and T. Phillips, *Windrush: the Irresistible Rise of Multi-racial Britain* (London, 1998).

[121] The growth of the South Asian presence is outlined in tabular form in R. Ballard, 'Introduction: the emergence of Desh Pardesh', in *Desh Pardesh: the South Asian Presence in Britain*, ed. R. Ballard (London, 1994), pp. 1–34, at p. 7.

[122] In 1951 the number of West Africans in Britain stood at 5,600 in comparison to 15,300 West Indians, although by 1961 the two groups had reached 19,800 and 171,800, respectively, according to figures gathered from the census in E. J. B. Rose and others, *Colour and Citizenship: a Report on Race Relations in Britain* (London, 1969), p. 97.

[123] This argument is put forward especially in Pilkington, *Beyond the Mother Country*.

[124] Some of the most recent analyses of Black London, and Britain more generally, have focused on the development of Black political consciousness and activism as a reaction against the endemic anti-Black racism in Britain, including Waters, *Thinking Black*, and Perry, *London Is the Place for Me*, building – especially in the case of the latter – on the longer-term perspective of M. Matera, *Black London: the Imperial Metropolis and Decolonization in the Twentieth Century* (Berkeley, 2015).

[125] *Cyprus: Report and General Abstracts of the Census of 1921 Taken on the 24th April 1921* (London, 1922), p. 13; and *Cyprus: Report and General Abstracts of the Census of 1931 Taken on April 27–28, 1931* (Nicosia, 1932), p. 17.

Greece, to which Cyprus would eventually become attached through a process of *enosis* as the Megali Idea of Greek irredentism spreading outwards from Greece impacted upon the multi-religious island, particularly following the First World War, ignoring the presence of Muslim Turks.[126]

But the history and memory of the Cypriots in Britain has almost disappeared, even though London, that unique city of migration, accounts for at least 50 per cent of migrant groups settling in the U.K., and far more in the case of some, such as the Cypriots,[127] who as late as 2001 constituted the tenth-largest foreign-born community in the British capital.[128] In the 1950s and 1960s they stood even higher on this ladder.

In academic circles the Cypriots have tended to remain ignored, certainly among historians. The recent volume by Clair Wills, which aims to reconstruct the lives of first-generation migrants in Britain from the end of the 1940s to the late 1960s, devotes just four lines of its 442 pages to Greek Cypriots.[129] Sociologists, especially those of Cypriot origin, have given more attention towards their countrymen, beginning with Vic George, the only scholar to seriously study the 1950s, followed by Sasha Josephides and Floya Anthias, as well as Robin Oakley.[130] Turkish Cypriots, perhaps the most ignored and under-researched migrant group in post-war London, have received even less attention than Greek Cypriots,[131] although some community-type studies of both groups have emerged.[132]

Various reasons suggest themselves for the absence of the Cypriots from the memory of multicultural Britain. The lack of a sense of betrayal may have played a role. 'Whiteness' may also have made the Cypriots 'invisible' in the same way as it has Jews and the Irish, the most important and persecuted pre-1945 migrant groups in Britain and London,[133] while the small size of the Cypriot community may also have had an influence. Rather than constructing its own history, perhaps the Cypriot community in Britain has preferred to focus on its religion;[134] on political activity, at least during the 1950s; or on entrepreneurship, with the result that by 1966 a total of 19.6 per cent of this group were self-employed, when the figure for the population as a whole stood at 7.1 per cent.[135]

As we have shown, the Cypriot community in post-war Britain faced persecution. Perhaps this represents the tip of an iceberg, or perhaps male Cypriot migrants have kept any memories of racism they may have experienced in London suppressed, possibly because migration to the imperial capital provided an escape from the persecution that

[126] Varnava, *British Imperialism in Cyprus*, pp. 152–201; and A. Varnava, *British Cyprus and the Long Great War, 1914–1925: Empire, Loyalties and Democratic Deficit* (London, 2020), pp. 185–217.

[127] As argued in Panayi, *Migrant City*.

[128] Greater London Authority, *The World in a City: an Analysis of the 2001 Census Results* (London, 2005), pp. 70–1.

[129] C. Wills, *Lovers and Strangers: an Immigrant History of Post-War Britain* (London, 2017).

[130] The publications of these scholars have been cited above.

[131] Those studies of the Turkish Cypriots that do exist are often in the form of reports such as Bhatti, *Turkish Cypriots in London*. The few academic publications include Ladbury, 'The Turkish Cypriots'; and Robins and Aksoy, 'Spaces of identity'.

[132] On the Greeks, see e.g. I. Kykkotis, *Εξ Ανατολων: Η Ιστορια της Κυπριακης Παροικιας της Μεγαλλις Βρεττανιασ* (London, 1968); and Zavros, *Ιζτορια τηζ Κυπριακηζ Παροικιαζ*. On the Turks, see Abdullah and Sinker, *Departures and Arrivals*.

[133] M. Mac an Ghaill, 'The Irish in Britain: the invisibility of ethnicity and anti-Irish racism', *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies*, xxvi (2000), 137–47; J. Corbally, 'The jarring Irish: postwar immigration to the heart of empire', *Radical History Review*, civ (2009) 103–25; and G. Schaffer and S. Nasar, 'The white essential subject: race, ethnicity, and the Irish in post-war Britain', *Contemporary British History*, xxxii (2018), 209–30. For pre-1945 migration, see C. Holmes, *John Bull's Island: Immigration and British Society, 1871–1971* (Basingstoke, 1988), pp. 19–206.

[134] A total of thirty-two Orthodox Churches existed in London by the early 1990s, for which see P. Panayi, *An Immigration History of Britain: Multicultural Racism Since 1800* (London, 2010), p. 156.

[135] Panayi, *Immigration History of Britain*, p. 116.

they experienced at home, as the British authorities in Cyprus regarded all males as potential terrorists.[136] In fact, male migration to London intensified partly as a result of the way in which the British authorities unsuccessfully tried to crush the activities of E.O.K.A. in Cyprus.[137]

Did the foreign birth of Styllou Christofi and the preconceived stereotypes about the Cypriot peasant influence Lloyd George's decision not to prevent her hanging, especially in view of the fact that he offered reprieves for two other women due to hang? No direct evidence exists to suggest any racial or ethnic motivation on the part of the home secretary, and we also need to bear in mind the fact that Ruth Ellis came from indigenous British stock. However, the racialization of Styllou during the trial suggests that her ethnic and social origins had some impact on the decision to proceed with her execution, as did the fact that her son believed in her guilt.

The Styllou Christofi case can also serve as an entry point into the Cypriot family in London in the 1950s and 1960s. Both in the homeland and in the diaspora, the British recognized the importance of the family unit. Exogamy and interracial sex were common in the first wave of interwar Cypriot arrivals, but it became rare among the early post-war Cypriot arrivals because of the fairly even gender ratio, the fact that families often migrated as a unit and the control of the family over the relations and marriage of their children, whether they were born in Cyprus or in the U.K.[138]

Although Styllou Christofi had already murdered her own mother-in-law and therefore destroyed the family of her husband as well as her own, perhaps she felt that she had a duty to protect the honour and integrity of her son. The patriarchal traditions of the Cypriot family, in which women had a distinct role to play, including protection of their own honour and that of the women over whom they felt responsibility, had transferred to London. In the early days of migration, the Cypriot peasant, like his Polish counterpart in early twentieth-century America,[139] replicated the traditions and customs of the homeland. This received support from the London-based Cypriot newspaper *To Βημα*, which carried a regular feature entitled 'Mother and child'.[140]

Styllou Christofi may have felt that her daughter-in-law failed to live up to the expectations of a Cypriot wife and mother. While many accounts point to Hella as a devoted wife working in the West End clothing trade, other evidence suggests an alternative picture of Hella's behaviour, which may have contributed to the downward spiral that led to the breakdown of the relationship between the two women and the murder. The initial report in the *Daily Mirror* suggested that 'attractive Hella, mother of three, used to leave the quiet of Hampstead each evening and spend her nights in the clubland area of Mayfair and the West End',[141] although Stavros subsequently successfully sued the paper for alluding to the possibility that his murdered wife had been a prostitute.[142] His mother claimed that Hella had 'boy friends' and that 'she had seen and

[136] French, *Fighting EOKA*.

[137] Vic George ('Assimilation', p. 188) has suggested that the British authorities in Cyprus encouraged migration as part of 'a politically motivated policy aimed at draining away from Cyprus the young who formed the rank and file of EOKA', although John Solomos and Stephen Woodham ('The politics of Cypriot migration to Britain', *Immigrants and Minorities*, xiv (1995), 231–56, at p. 252) dispute this assertion.

[138] George, 'Assimilation', pp. 191–2; and Oakley, 'Family, kinship, patronage', pp. 17–22.

[139] See the description of the replication of family norms and structures in the classic W. I. Thomas and F. Znaniecki, *The Polish Peasant in Europe and America* (New York, 1927), pp. 87–128.

[140] See e.g., *To Βημα*, 22 Feb. 1958.

[141] *Daily Mirror*, 30 July 1954.

[142] *Daily Mirror*, 3 Nov. 1955.

heard Hella often with men'.[143] Although we might dismiss this in view of the fact that Styllou made up an elaborate story that others had murdered Hella, the report of the case drawn up by Crawford perhaps gets closer to the crux of the matter. Crawford contrasted the 'German woman … a bright, wholesome type, though not expensively dressed' with 'the older woman … a typical Cypriot peasant type, low intellect, somewhat miserable demeanour, and looking a dowdy old woman, years older than her age, except for her jet black hair'. Crawford almost assigned racial characteristics to Styllou. He explained the quarrelling between the two women essentially as a clash of cultures. Styllou resented her daughter-in-law because Hella 'was a German' – that is, not a Greek Cypriot – 'spent money on clothes', and went out to work while Styllou had to stay at home and look after the children. 'The deceased, on the other hand, was also resentful of her mother-in-law and probably detested her peasant habits and mode of life and was afraid she would transmit these to her children'.[144]

Perhaps the tragic case of the Christofi family tells us something about the adjustments taking place in early multiracial London. The era of the dying imperial capital in the 1950s constituted a turning point in the history of migration into this city,[145] which would attract the epithet of 'super-diverse' by the twenty-first century.[146] Cypriots clearly had to face stereotyping and racism but brushed them off for the reasons outlined above. In the longer term they became integrated and intermarriage became increasingly normal, but in the shorter term, the newcomers, or second wave, from the 1950s to the 1960s experienced an almost pure transplantation from their home village to Camden Town, with the different constituent parts following the traditional roles assigned to them in Cyprus, even though they now carried out completely different work and came into contact with a range of ethnic groups. The problem for the Christofi family lay in the fact that Stavros had entered catering and married outside of his community, in the same way that many of his compatriots had done in the 1930s, mirroring the mixed-ethnicity marriages that had characterized London for centuries, and which would become increasingly normal as the twentieth century progressed.[147] But crucially, this meant that he had left the village behind, whereas the new Cypriot arrivals in the 1940s and 1950s remained overwhelmingly endogamous. Into this London family came Styllou Christofi, already a murderess, who appears to have attempted to impose peasant discipline and control even though she had previously destroyed her family in Cyprus. The racialized bewildered peasant acts as a symbol of the complexities of emerging multicultural London.

This article has inevitably focused on Styllou Christofi, rather than the family that she ruined, because the available material draws us towards her. Little information exists on the background of Hella, whether she had escaped as a Jewish refugee, or if she developed connections with either the Jewish or the non-Jewish German communities in London at that time.[148] Stavros, meanwhile, actually married a second time. In 2019

[143] T.N.A., PCO M91721, Statement re. 8034, Stylou P. Chrstofi, H. M. Prison Holloway, 10.12.54.

[144] T.N.A., PCO M91721, Report by Detective Superintendent L. Crawford, 11 Aug. 1954.

[145] Panayi, *Migrant City*.

[146] Steven Vertovec ('Super-diversity and its implications', *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, xxx (2007), 1024–54) uses London as a case study.

[147] See Panayi, *Migrant City*, ch. 6.

[148] For the difficulties of German Jewish emigration to Britain at this time, see esp. L. London, *Whitehall and the Jews, 1933–1948: British Immigration Policy and the Holocaust* (Cambridge, 2000). Limited research exists on the wider German community other than that by James J. Barnes and Patience P. Barnes, including 'London's German community in the early 1930s', in *Germans in Britain Since 1500*, ed. P. Panayi (London, 1996), pp. 131–46. One of the best accounts of German Jews in post-war London is M. Berghahn, *Continental Britons: German-Jewish Refugees From Nazi Germany* (Oxford, 1988). However, no evidence exists to suggest that Hella had any connection with this group.

the grandson of Styllou (by her son's second wife), Toby Christofi, unsuccessfully tried to prove her innocence by claiming her insanity as part of a B.B.C. documentary series entitled *Murder, Mystery and My Family*.[149] However, the children of Stavros and Hella have disappeared from the limelight.

Ultimately, according to both the original jury and the judges who tried her again in 2019 as part of the B.B.C. documentary, Styllou Christofi murdered her German daughter-in-law. She committed this crime either because of a clash of generations or ethnic cultures or because she saw the murder as justified according to her own world view, developed in early twentieth-century Cyprus, where she had grown up. Bearing in mind the previous murder she had committed, she must have seen this course of action as legitimate. In this respect, she resembles Asian parents who carried out so called 'honour killings' in twentieth- and twenty-first-century Britain.[150] Violence in the Cypriot family in London was not confined to the multi-ethnic German–Greek Cypriot Bleicher-Christofi family. Ioannos Sotirious from Kentish Town, for example, faced conviction in August 1954 for kicking his wife, Anna, another Cypriot, in the stomach when she attended a party in Goodge Street without him, although it appears that this represented the final act in a doomed and abusive marriage.[151] Styllou Christofi and Ioannos Sotirious appear to have brought concepts of honour with them from Cyprus, and both displayed a readiness to carry out acts of violence. The transplantation of the Cypriot family to London therefore displayed continuities because of its importance as the main social unit, demonstrated especially, in a more positive light, in the B.B.C. documentary, which also featured Chrisostomos Sosti.[152] But just as transplantation of the family occurred from Cyprus to London, the Anglocentric prejudices that had developed from the British takeover of the island in 1878 informed the debate that surrounded the Styllou Christofi trial (even though they did not lead to the conviction because of the indisputability of the evidence) and contributed to wider prejudice towards Cypriots in Britain. This article has offered an insight into the complexities of Cypriot migrant life in London in the middle of the twentieth century.

[149] Episode 2, *Murder, Mystery and My Family*, series 2 [television programme, online] prod. S. Cooper, B.B.C., U.K., 26 March 2019, BBC One, 44 mins. <https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/m0003mdk> [accessed 22 Dec. 2020].

[150] See V. Meetoo and H. S. Mirza, '"There is nothing 'honourable' about honour killings": gender, violence and the limits of multiculturalism', *Women's Studies International Forum*, xxx (2007), 187–200.

[151] *Hampstead and Highgate Express*, 24 Aug. 1954.

[152] K.C.L., G.D.A., 7/AV1, B.B.C. television documentary film entitled *Minorities in Britain: the Cypriot Community*, 1966.