



Cyprus: A Modern History

William Mallinson

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In the troubled island of Cyprus, the national interests and rivalries of Greece and Turkey still collide, the population remains divided between the Greek and Turkish communities and the country is still a cat's paw of outside powers - especially the USA and the now resurgent Russia - as it has been since the acquisition of the island by Britain in 1878. Global rivalry between the great powers and Cyprus's vitally strategic position in the Eastern Mediterranean - a 'listening post' in the Cold War and even today - has meant that the populations have never been free to shape their own destinies which have been constantly influenced by great power interests. These are problems that have been brought into sharp focus by Cyprus's entry into the European Union.

William Mallinson's book is a fast-moving and incisive narrative history which portrays Cyprus as a continuing source of international tension in the Mediterranean and beyond. It features the latest source material from the recently released National Archive, vivid interviews with key players, even reports which raise awkward and embarrassing questions. His critical eye uncovers the underlying story of American and British involvement in the island's affairs, first as a key territory in Cold War politics with its close proximity to the Middle East and Asia and now as a key asset in the 'war on terror'.

Mallinson's new insights and revelations on the period leading up to and following the Turkish invasion in 1974, when Greece and Turkey - both NATO members - were on the brink of war are fascinating and make essential reading. Henry Kissinger is seen to be even more the master puppeteer, pressuring Britain not to give up her bases. Mallinson examines how after the Turkish invasion Kissinger planned the abortive Annan Plan to divide the island and how he regarded the retention of Cyprus as vital for a future solution of the Arab-Israeli problem. For Kissinger Cyprus was the important square on the 'world chequer-board' while British influence continued to decline and her independence in foreign policy was virtually non-existent.

Mallinson also explores how Turkey's drive to join the EU will affect not only stability in Cyprus but also the whole region, as Russia's influence in the Balkans and the Eastern Mediterranean expands. So, in William Mallinson's words, 'Cyprus lies [still] at the epicentre of this whole geopolitical merry-go-round'.

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