

THE CYPRIOT EDUCATIONAL SYSTEM

AND THE LESSON OF

HISTORY

Petros N. Kimitris, B.A., M.Phil., Ph.D.

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INTRODUCTION

Over the past ten years a strong debate has been introduced and initiated by the government of Cyprus on reforming the structure and goals of education. A comprehensive report, prepared by a group of academics, pointed to the need to reshape the highly Greek-centralized Cypriot educational system (Committee on Educational Reform, 2004) and introduced the first seeds towards Cypriot educational autonomy (Karagiorgi & Nicolaidou, 2010). Additionally, the Cypriot government is striving to rationalize the educational system, emphasising on creating citizens that are inspired by democratic ideals and critical thinking. The strongest weapon for a nation-state is to have and use the teaching of language and history. With these subjects, the state, attempts to pass its traditions, customs, ideals, values and historical achievements to its students and future citizens (Persianis, 2010). Further, the knowledge of history will strengthen the national moral and foster attitudes and behaviors that a state needs from its citizens.

In addition, each country gives emphasis on those aspects of history that provide a better insight on the state. Therefore, inaccurate and untrue details or even myths (descriptions of hero's and events in mythical dimensions) are used in history school books by states that need to feel more national security, and want to increase their prestige (Persianis, 2010; Polydorou, 1995). Further, history's importance is seen when any two or more governments from any part of the world agree, usually after cruel and bloody conflicts among their states, to appoint joint committees of experts to study the history books and make suggestions for changes. The aim of the committee, which was established by the governments of the states that were

previously in hostility and war, was to abolish the elements that cultivate national prejudices and foster old enemies and passions (Persianis, 2010). Therefore, the governments of France and Germany, after World Wars I and II, decided to form a committee to re-write history books that would leave behind the tensions and passions of the World Wars, and lead the two nations through peace in the second half of the 20th and the beginning of the 21st century (Persianis, 2010).

Depending on the sociohistorical context, the aims of history education may range from the inculcation of national identity to the exploration of otherness. Further, among others, it emphasizes in the promotion of historical thinking and historical analysis. However, in many societies, and especially the ones under foreign occupation, the creation of empathy and the presentation of diverse viewpoints create sociopolitical diversions that cannot be silenced (Papadakis, 2008). Therefore, inaccurate and untrue details or even myths (descriptions of hero's and events in mythical dimensions) are used in history school books by states that need to feel more national security, and want to increase their prestige (Persianis, 2010; Polydorou, 1995). History is the lesson that navigates the ideological morale and even; the foreign policy of a state (Kimitris, 2017).

The recent history of Cyprus has been marked by multiple conflicts and foreign interventions. After independence from British rule in 1960, an independent educational policy that met the needs of a modern and sovereign state became subject to discussions. This effort to have an independent educational system was very difficult because of the large and acute dilemmas in educational principles, and the deep divisions between political parties and individuals. The politicized education that started during the Turkish rule of the island (1571-1878) continued and was more intense when Cyprus became independent (1960), but with

different contents and presentations. According to Zembylas (2002), Cyprus can be considered as an interesting example of a developing post-colonial country that struggles to discover a balance between local traditions and global influences. Therefore, there are the scientific arguments against the social arguments for the imbalance of reactions on the choice of history books depending on the historical and social circumstances of each historical period.

A basic outline of the island's recent political history, highly contested though it is, is necessary as background. Discussing the history of Cyprus and especially the modern and contemporary age is akin to stepping in the confrontations of a political and academic minefield (Papadakis, 2008).

Cyprus is geographically located in the eastern part of the Mediterranean Sea and this geographical position always had great importance in shaping the island's history and its inhabitant's lives (Hadjidimitriou, 2005). Cyprus is the third largest island in the Mediterranean Sea, just after Sicily and Sardinia of Italy, with a population of 800,000 inhabitants, as it was estimated in July, 2008 (Pashiardis, 2004). Cyprus' continuity of historical and cultural tradition interacts with recent political and economic commitments in regard to its recent entrance to the European Union in 2004 (Zembylas, 2002). Historically, Cyprus has had an adventurous history, mainly because of its geographical position at the juncture of three continents, which indirectly affected the current situation with education in Cyprus. More precisely, Cyprus survived the Assyrian, Egyptian and Persian empires and it also came through the rule of Alexander the Great and the Romans in the Ancient world (Hadjidimitriou, 2005). Additionally, Cyprus was the Eastern boarder of the Byzantine, Frankish and Venetian medieval empires (Persianis, 2010). In the last four centuries, Cyprus was conquered by the Ottoman Turks (1571- 1870) and then

passed to the British Empire (1878-1960) which declared Cyprus a British colony in 1925 and ruled the island until 1960, when it became an independent republic (Papadakis, 2008). The recent history of Cyprus has been marked by multiple conflicts and foreign interventions, which provided the socio-political context of the island. The independence of Cyprus came after the EOKA struggle (1955-59) against the British colonial rulers. The struggle, of three hundred militants with the active or passive support of all the Greek Cypriots except the left-wing party members of AKEL, aimed to unite Cyprus with motherland Greece and achieve the *enosis*, the political union with Greece, but it failed and independence was chosen (Hatzivassiliou, 2005). In 1960, Cyprus was declared an independent state, the Republic of Cyprus whose population was 80% Greek Cypriots, 18% Turkish Cypriots and 2% Armenians, Latins and others (Hadjidimitriou, 2005). The solution of independence failed to satisfy the expectations of the Greek majority who aimed for *enosis* with the cultural motherland Greece and the Turkish minority that demanded *taksim*, partition of the island. Both ethnic groups continued to pursue their national objectives and in 1963 intercommunal conflicts broke out. These conflicts continued periodically until 1967 when a new conflict amongst the Greek and Turkish Cypriots broke out (Hadjidimitriou, 2005). With the rise to power of the Greek military government in 1967 the Greek Cypriot leadership gradually abandoned the objective of *enosis* and sought to safeguard the independence of the Republic of Cyprus (Hatzivassiliou, 2005). With the support of the Greek military government (Junta), that attempted to dictate policies in Cyprus, a small group of right-wing extremists named EOKA B staged a coup on the 15 July 1974, against the island's President Archbishop Makarios III with the purpose to bring union with the motherland Greece (Papadakis, 2008). On the 20 July 1974, Turkey invaded the

island and occupied approximately 37% of the total territory of the Republic and nearly 200,000 Greek Cypriots were displaced from the northern Turkish occupied areas of the island to the south that was controlled by the Republic of Cyprus. Around 45,000 Turkish Cypriots were also displaced to the northern side. Greek Cypriots suffered the most in terms of people killed, missing and all other social traumas of war and dislocation. All these and most of all the consequences of the Turkish invasion influenced every part of life in Cyprus, especially the economy, the educational system, and the society (Persianis, 2010). After the Turkish invasion of Cyprus the old Greek Cypriot ideal of enosis, the political union with Greece, collapsed. In 1983, the Turkish Cypriot authorities unilaterally declared their own state, the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus (TRNC), which has since been internationally recognized only by Turkey (Papadakis, 2008). In 1990, Cyprus applied for membership to the European Union and declared the European orientations part of its formal education. In 2004 Cyprus entered the European Union and in 2008 it introduced the Euro as its national currency. These developments along with the globalization on both economic and cultural levels created new needs to modernize all facets of education in Cyprus (Zembylas, 2002).

CHAPTER 1

CYPRriot EDUCATIONAL CONTEXT

Cyprus was under British rule from 1878 until 1960 and for the last fifty eight years it has been an independent Republic (MoEC, 2003). One of the most significant periods of the Cypriot educational system was in these decades. This period acquired special importance not only because its beginning marked the outset of the Cyprus Question as a major international problem, but also because it marked the moment when the Greek Cypriots were transformed, through education, to a modern European state. Unlike other Western European countries, Cyprus did not develop in peace after World War II, but experienced colonialism, a guarded Republic, Turkish invasion in 1974, occupation and refugees (MoEC, 2003). It is a great achievement, that under these aggravating and dramatic circumstances, Cyprus managed to make huge strides in the areas of culture, economy and social cohesion (Kimitris, 2017).

The Cyprus Educational System (CES), strongly influenced by historical and political developments over time, is currently characterized as highly conservative and Greek-centralized (Committee on Educational Reform, 2004). All forms of educational planning and policy as well as laws and guidelines remain the sole responsibility of the Ministry of Education and Culture (Karagiorgi & Nicolaidou, 2010). Schools follow the syllabi, curricula and school books that are supervised by the Ministry of Education and Culture. It is worth noting that, until September, 2006, Greek language books had remained unchanged for twenty years. Teachers are appointed, designated to schools and promoted by an independent five-member

committee, the Educational Service Committee, and are considered amongst the most benefited professionals because of extended holiday time, limited school hours, good salaries and guaranteed employment for life (Nicolaidou & Georgiou, 2009). Recent educational reform discussions emphasize the urgency for the development of new guidelines for teachers and school evaluation linked to teacher accountability, as well as sustainable teacher and school improvement (Kyriakides, 2001) that will meet the new European values.

In Cyprus both Public and Private Education is provided. Both the public and private sector in the non-occupied part of the Republic is under the supervision of the Ministry of Education and Culture (MoEC, 2003). Public education is compulsory from the age of five to fifteen and it is free. Compulsory education consists of the pre-primary, primary and secondary education. At the age of five and eight months children attend primary education and a primary school leaving certificate is required in order to enroll in the Gymnasium (MoEC, 2018). Secondary education in Cyprus consists of the Lower High School also called the Gymnasium and of the Upper High School also known as Lykeio. The Gymnasium offers full time compulsory education to pupils of twelve to fifteen years of age. Its structure and curriculum have been recently changed, through an educational reform, in order to cover a wider range of general and technical knowledge on topics such as Greek, mathematics, foreign languages, art, design and technology and information and communication (ICT) (Committee on Educational Reform, 2004). Lykeio offers a three year education program for students aged fifteen to eighteen (MoEC, 2007) and is not compulsory. Students for their Upper School Education can also follow the route of the Vocational and Technical Education (MoEC, 2018).

Apart from public schools, thirty-six private schools operate in Cyprus many of which are foreign language schools, having Greek, English, French, Italian or Russian as the main language of instruction (MoEC, 2018). Private education lasts from six to seven years depending on the school. The main characteristic of these private schools is the considerable degree of independence they have with respect to their activities and curriculum. Despite this independence many of these Private schools are registered with the Ministry of Education and Culture and comply with mandatory law requirements related to their curriculum (MoEC, 2018).

As far as the history lesson status in Cyprus' schools is concerned, there was an attempt to enrich it over the years (MoEC, 2003). Pre-historic, Ancient, Roman, Medieval and Modern histories are compulsory for all six classes of primary education and also for all three classes of lower secondary school, the Gymnasium. At upper secondary, that is the Lykeio with clear course directions since September 2015, History is mandatory and examined at the end of the academic year for pupils who choose Classical Studies, Art and Languages and European Studies. Reasonably, the choice of compulsory History made in first class continues to the second and third class too. The majority of pupils who plan to study at the University subjects that apply to the Social Sciences and Humanistic departments do choose History. The lesson of History is taught four periods per week at the first class, six periods per week at the second and seven periods per week at the third class of the Lykeio (MoEC, 2018). Students who do not choose History as an elective are required to take Modern and Contemporary International, Greek and Cypriot History for two periods per week at the first, second and third class of the Lykeio, but they are not required to give exams on the subject at the end of each academic year. Additionally, Private schools according to their curriculums do provide mandatory

teaching of History at the first three years, but in upper school History is an elective subject and students take at the end of each academic year their international exams (IGCSE, A-Level or IB Diploma).

The background and the basic principles of the Greek Cypriot school books are based dominantly on the paradigm of the history of Greece. The dominant narrative of the history of Greece is mainly divided into three main periods: Ancient Greece, Medieval Greece (the ‘glorious’ Eastern Roman Empire – Byzantine Empire), and Modern Greece (the creation and expansion of the Greek state in the 19th and 20th century). Particular emphasis is added in pre-historic Ancient Greece and especially the eras of the Cyclades, Minoan and Mycenaean civilizations. Ancient Greece is also described as the beginning of History, which is succeeded by ‘foreign domination’. Greek history continues with the rise of the one thousand years Byzantine Empire (which is considered to be a glorious ‘Greek’ empire) and finally, it describes the liberation from ‘Ottoman Turkish occupation’ and the creation of the Modern Greek state (Papadakis, 2008).

THE ORTHODOX CHURCH OF CYPRUS AND EDUCATION

The great religious, moral and financial strength of the Orthodox Church of Cyprus and the election of Archbishop Makarios III as the first President of the Republic of Cyprus in 1960 revealed the status of the Orthodox Church in the Greek Cypriot society. The election of Makarios III as President was the natural outcome of the role played by each Archbishop of Cyprus as an Ethnarch, especially when Cyprus was under Ottoman and British rule. Further, the specific conditions of the Turkish and the British rule of Cyprus contributed not only to maintain this role, but

also to increase the moral power of the Archbishop. Thus, the presidency of the state by the Archbishop came as a natural outcome. Political positions were also undertaken during the British rule of Cyprus and by other members of the ecclesiastical hierarchy. Specifically, three bishops and the abbot of a monastery were elected as members of the Legislative Board (The three bishops were Kitiou Kyprianos, Kitiou Kyrillos and Kitiou Nicodemos, and the abbot of Kykkos monastery Gerasimos) (MoEC, 2003).

The economic power of the Church was due to the wealth and the large number of estates that belonged to the Archdiocese, the Archbishoprics and especially the monasteries. The moral strength of the Church was the result of the Church's contribution to the Greek Cypriots throughout the centuries particularly in the field of education. The Orthodox Church was identified with education ideologically, historically and practically. Ideologically, education was considered very closely intertwined with religion. Historically, the Church supported and promoted education at the highest level with brightest examples being Archbishops Kyprianos and Makarios I. Practically, the Church founded schools throughout Cyprus, maintained them and cared for the spiritual progress of the members of the Greek Cypriot community. Additionally, the Church provided the teachers who taught at schools before being ordained to episcopal duties (Persianis, 2006). The British administration of Cyprus recognized the role of the Church and with the law of 1895 the Archbishop was appointed vice president of the Christian Educational Council, which was the highest educational authority for the Greek Cypriot community, and the Bishops became vice presidents of the provincial school committees.

The concern of the Cypriot Orthodox Church for secondary education continued throughout the British rule of the island. The church leaders were prepared to offer financial assistance even beyond their economic possibilities for the development of secondary education. The result of this policy was the establishment of secondary schools by the Archbishop, the Bishops and the Monasteries. The Famagusta gymnasium was founded by Archbishop Kyrillos III in 1918 and the Rizokarpaso gymnasium was established in 1926 by the Monastery of 'Apostolos Andreas'. Additionally, The Bishopric of Paphos founded in 1922 the gymnasium at the village of Polemi (Zannetos, 1911). Other gymnasiums were in whole or partly maintained by local churches or monasteries and, for example, 200 out of the 700 pounds needed for the establishment of the Pancyprian gymnasium in Nicosia in 1893 were paid by the Archbishop, the Bishops, the local churches and some monasteries (Pancyprian Gymnasium, 1944).

High profile and emphasis were provided by the Cypriot Orthodox Church to the development of secondary education at a time when the indifference of the colonial government was condemning secondary education to almost nothingness (Persianis, 2006). This growth contributed much to the intellectual, economic and professional development of the island, since several graduates of secondary schools continued their studies at Greek universities and especially the Universities of Athens and Thessaloniki.

After 1960, when Cyprus became a republic, the Church's involvement in the educational system declined sharply. Education came under the authorities of the Ministry of Education and Culture (MoEC) and the Church's political power and influence were decreasing in a multicultural country with an increased spirit of secularization. For these reasons, the Church reduced its interest in just appointing

the Religious Knowledge teachers in secondary education. Despite this fact, the Archbishop still has the right to express his opinion and beliefs on every aspect of modern Cypriot education. This situation continues until today.

THE CYPRIOT EDUCATIONAL SYSTEM

After Cyprus became a republic in 1960, the Cypriot educational system developed its own particularities that were characterized by a centralization of powers (Pashiardis, 2004). The administrative body of the Government for education is the Ministry of Education and Culture (MoEC), which is responsible for all educational institutions in Cyprus via the inspectorate and the school headteachers. The Ministry of Education and Culture is responsible for the preparation and enforcement of new legislation concerning education, as well as for the prescription of the syllabi, the national curriculum and the national school books (Pashiardis, 2004). Furthermore, Kambouri (2012), identifies that the Cypriot education system consists of pre-primary and primary schools, secondary general and secondary technical/vocational schools, and special schools for students who are blind, or deaf, and others with an intellectual disability. In addition, there were institutions for teacher training, specialized instruction, and informal education. As of 1990, there was no university in the Republic of Cyprus, and until one opened in the early 1990's, further studies had to be pursued abroad. There was also a small number of private schools. The constitution of 1960 assigned responsibility for education to the Greek Cypriot and Turkish Cypriot communal assemblies. After the withdrawal of the Turkish Cypriots from all state institutions in 1963, the government proceeded with the establishment of the Ministry of Education in 1965.

Under this ministry, the educational system evolved into its present structure: one to two and one-half years of pre-primary schooling for children aged three to five and one-half years; six years of primary school for children aged five and one-half to eleven and one-half years; six years of secondary schooling, followed by two to three years of higher education for those who did not go to study abroad (Kambouri, 2012; Solsten, 1991).

Pre-Primary Education and Primary Education are very closely related and evidence for this is that they share the same National Curriculum (Kambouri, 2012). In 1973 only eleven percent (11%) of children who were younger than five years old attended public or private nurseries or kindergartens. Following the 1974 invasion, the Cypriot government became much more involved with the establishment of pre-primary nurseries and kindergartens for the thousands of refugees who had to flee from northern areas. Furthermore, Kambouri (2012), identifies that Pre-Primary Education became a particular priority after the Turkish invasion of 1974 in order to support refugee families, equalize educational opportunities across economic groups, and enable more mothers to secure gainful employment. The 1980's saw a further expansion of public education of this kind (Zembylas, 2002). Additionally, the contemporary Pre-Primary Education aims to satisfy the children's needs for the development of a wholesome personality in an experiential environment which enables them to recognize their capabilities and enhance their self-image (MoEC, 2018).

After that, Primary Education is the initial stage of education and has as its basic aim to create, establish and offer opportunities to all children, regardless of age, gender or country of origin, to achieve a balanced cognitive, emotional and psychomotor development (MoEC, 2018). Attendance in Primary Education is

compulsory for all the children who have reached the age of five years and eight months. The National Curriculum and the teaching methodologies adopted in Cyprus Primary Education emphasize the learning process and focus on strategies which assist pupils in learning how to learn and in developing their critical and creative thinking. Further, Primary Education, has as its basic responsibility to help pupils become acquainted with their civilization and tradition and to develop respect and love for their national heritage, become aware of their national identity, the Greek language, the Greek Orthodox religion and their history. At the same time, there is awareness of the multicultural trends that are developing in the modern world. Consequently, Primary Education supports the development of intercultural awareness, tolerance and respect of otherness. Primary Education works towards the harmonious co-existence of pupils regardless of differences in ethnicity or cultural background (MoEC, 2018).

Secondary education, which is also free like Pre-Primary and Primary Education, is open without examination to all children who complete primary schooling. Secondary education extends over six years (ages 12-18). It is divided into two cycles, each consisting of three grades: the lower or Gymnasium (ages 12-15) and the upper or Lyceum (ages 15-18) (MoEC, 2014; MoEC, 1994). In Cyprus education is compulsory up to the age of fifteen and almost 100% of students reach this level because education in Cyprus has a high priority in all social groups (MoEC, 2003). During the first stage, the Gymnasium, all students are taught the same general subjects, with a special emphasis on the humanities. The second stage consists of either the lyceum, which offers five main fields of specialization (classical studies, science, economics, business and languages), or a vocational-technical course (Solsten, 1991). In the recent years, the educational system in the

lyceum, has gradually become more flexible and offers different directions depending on inclinations, skills and interests of students. Particularly with the implementation of the institution of (Eniaio Lykeio) Lyceum in the year 2000-2001 throughout Cyprus, flexibility and the prospects for students have increased even more. This new institution requires that all students be taught the same general subjects in the first year of the Eniaio Lykeio and requires students who are taught some main subjects that are compulsory for everyone, but also requires them to choose a number of topics that they want to study in more depth for the other two years (MoEC, 2014). Since September 2015 the Eniaio Lykeio has been transformed into a high school with clear educational course directions.

On the contrary, Secondary Education had to face the principal challenge of providing an education more responsive to the needs of the economy. The first vocational-technical schools were established after independence in an attempt to provide the rapidly expanding economy with technicians and skilled workers (MoEC, 2014). However, Cypriots retained a tendency to choose academic rather than technical courses, for reasons of social prestige. Cyprus therefore faced a chronic shortage of skilled workers and a high rate of unemployment for university graduates because students did not prefer vocational-technical schools that aimed at providing industry technicians and craftsmen. Vocational schools train many students for work in the country's important tourist industry; technical schools emphasized mathematics, science, and training in various technologies. The above information is important as it suggests that not all students were taught science during their secondary education; if they did not choose science as one of their main subjects it means that they were only taught science about one hour per week. The assessment in the educational system of Cyprus and especially for main subjects like

Greek literature, mathematics and science consists of both formative and summative assessment and is provided by diagnostic tests, quizzes, projects and written exams at the end of the year (Kambouri, 2012; MoEC, 2014). The assessment scale is on A to E for Gymnasium and 1-20 for Lyceum. Lessons last for 45 minutes and the policy of the Ministry of Education and Culture is mixed ability teaching for all subjects.

BOOKS IN THE CYPRIOT EDUCATIONAL SYSTEM

The nature and dilemmas surrounding the issue of school books and especially the history books was very different between Cyprus and the national center Greece. In Greece the problems the school books had to face focused on language, content, quality and gnosiological assumptions, whereas in Cyprus issues of political expediency, political sensitivity, and persistence in the irredentist spirit raised serious dilemmas. These dilemmas focused on the many difficulties that the history books faced when being imported from Greece, the lack of specific scientific knowledge and experience for editing and printing books in Cyprus and the fact that the school books expressed realities of Greece and not of Cyprus (Persianis, 2010).

These problems and dilemmas, as well as the change in the British government policy, were reflected in the different arrangements made from time to time during the last two centuries in relation to the approval of the books, the source of supply, the coverage of the expenditure, the place where the books were printed and the use or not of supporting educational materials.

In relation to the approval authority, five different periods for the primary school books and especially for history books can be distinguished. From 1800 to 1895 the books were approved by the School Committees and from 1895 to 1933 by

the Board of Education (Mirianthopoulos, 1946). From 1933 to 1960 the approval authority was the British governor of the island and he was succeeded, when Cyprus became a republic in 1960, by the Greek Cypriot Community Assembly until 1965. From 1965 until today the approval authority of books is the Ministry of Education and Culture. The approval authority for school books for secondary schools was adapted from 1800 to 1961 by the School Committees, from 1961 to 1965 by the Greek Cypriot Community Assembly and from 1965 until today by the Ministry of Education and Culture (Persianis, 2006).

In relation to the source of supply, three periods for primary and two for secondary school books can be seen. From 1800 to 1934 the School Committees were supplied with books from booksellers and then sold to students, and from 1934 to 1960 the books were supplied by the Education Office that bought them from Greece and Britain (the English books) or by just printing them in Cyprus. From 1960 the Greek Cypriot Community Assembly first and then the Ministry of Education and Culture subsequently obtained the books from Greece except for the ones that were prepared in Cyprus (Persianis, 2006). Students of secondary schools from 1800 to 1964 bought their books from booksellers or from the school bookstore, and from 1964 to today most of the books are supplied for free from Greece. At the same time, from 1980 to 1998 school books that were prepared by the Curriculum Development Service of Cyprus were bought by the Ministry of Education and Culture. From 1998 these books are available and are free of charge (MoEC, 2018).

The cost for the primary school books was covered by the parents of the students from 1800 to 1944; the year when the British administration of Cyprus started paying for the books (until 1960). From 1960 to 1964 the cost for the books

was covered by the Greek Cypriot Community Assembly and from 1964 until today most books come with no cost from Greece, while the rest (especially supporting educational materials for History and Geography of Cyprus) were prepared in Cyprus and distributed by the Ministry of Education and Culture. The secondary school students bought the books until 1964, and until today these books are given to students without any cost by the government of Greece (Polydorou, 1995).

The place for printing primary and secondary books also differed. As long as the books were supplied by the School Committees, they were sometimes bought from Constantinople, or from Smyrna or even from Athens, according to the most appropriate prices. Books from Constantinople were much cheaper because the law on property rights did not exist and most of the books were pirated (Persianis, 2006). The British administration of Cyprus procured books from Greece during World War II and also printed Greek books in Cyprus after the permission was given by the Greek government. In Cyprus books by Cypriot writers were also printed. Secondary education books were printed in Greece except the ones that were written by Cypriots (Polydorou, 1995).

HISTORY BOOKS WHICH ARE TAUGHT FOR THE CYPRIOT EDUCATIONAL SYSTEM

The background and the basic principles of the Greek Cypriot school books are based dominantly on the paradigm of the history of Greece. The dominant narrative of the history of Greece is mainly divided into three main periods: Ancient Greece, Medieval Greece (the ‘glorious’ Eastern Roman Empire – Byzantine Empire), and Modern Greece (the creation and expansion of the Greek state in the

19th and 20th century). Particular emphasis is added in pre-historic Ancient Greece and especially the eras of the Cyclades, Minoan and Mycenaean civilizations. Ancient Greece is also described as the beginning of History, which is succeeded by 'foreign domination.' Greek history continues with the rise of the one thousand years Byzantine Empire (which is considered to be a glorious 'Greek' empire) and finally, it describes the liberation from 'Ottoman Turkish occupation' and the creation of the Modern Greek state (Papadakis, 2008).

Various sources before talking about any differences between the Greek Cypriots and the Turkish Cypriots in attainment, teaching and learning of History, first explore the geostrategic, social and economic differences of each historical period (Papadakis, 2008; Persianis, 2010; Polydorou, 1995; Zembylas, 2002). These authors more or less argue that history books are meant to teach the 'truth' and describe the historical events objectively.

The main purpose of the course of History, according to the new Curriculum of History and the Ministry of Education and Culture (2018), is to foster historical thinking and develop historical consciousness. The new Curriculum of History (2014) seeks the development of historical literacy with children's participation in the discovery of historical knowledge, and the use of the new curriculum as a versatile tool which will set the stage for the first view of history as a field of reflection and research. The basic elements and modules offer flexibility in the choice of the cognitive content of the learning process and encourage (with prompts for update option, comprehensive overviews, thematic and in-depth studies) the development of research methods, and the use of a variety of sources. This contributes to the development of new ways to evaluate and control the historical knowledge of students. The development of historical literacy will assist students to understand the

world through the study of the past and its relationship to the present and the future (MoEC, 2018).

Pre-Primary and the first two years of Primary Education's aim, according to the Ministry of Education and Culture (2018), is to satisfy the children's needs for the development of a wholesome personality in an experiential environment which enables them to recognize their capabilities and enhance their self-image. Children, in both Public and Private Pre-Primary and early Primary Education, become familiar with Aesop's Fables and discover through stories and pictures; the mythical world of the Ancient Greeks (The Trojan War, Hercules, Theseus, The Minotaur and the Ancient Greek Gods). Further, children in Pre-Primary and early Primary Education learn about specific historical themes and events and especially about the national days of 25 March 1821, 28 October 1940, 1 April 1955 and 1 October 1960. On 25 March 1821 the Greek War of Independence started against the Ottoman Empire and on 28 October 1940 Greece entered World War II after an attack by Fascist Italy and managed to win the war, until Nazi Germany occupied Greece in April 1941. Further, on 1 April 1955 EOKA started a military struggle against the British Empire with the aim to unite Cyprus with motherland Greece and on 1 October 1960 Cyprus became an independent state. These basic historical events help children through stories, pictures and school performances to experience the Greek nation's historical past.

History as a lesson starts to be taught at the Third Year of Primary Education and continues until the Sixth Year, and is taught for two periods a week (80 minutes). The Ministry of Education and Culture emphasizes the development of historical literacy that will assist pupils in Primary Education to understand the world through the study of the past and its relationship to the present and the future (MoEC, 2018).

This historical development will enable students to understand content knowledge (what happened in the past) and to develop historical thought (how we learn about the past, the methods and procedures of science history, forms of historical knowledge and its limits). Primary Education in Year Three consists of the knowledge of Ancient Greece and Cyprus. The historical context is divided into six units and pupils must learn about the historical and cultural monuments in their district, Greek mythology, life in the Stone Age, life in the Bronze Age, the Greek civilization in Cyprus and ancient religion in Greece and Cyprus. In Year Four students must develop their skills and abilities to understand the Ancient Greek Classical World. According to the new Curriculum of History (1995) students must research an archaeological site or monument of Cyprus; they must be able to discover the characteristics that united the Greeks and the Cypriots in antiquity and be able to understand the basic life of people in Ancient Greece and Cyprus. Additionally, the Curriculum consists of the knowledge of Classical Greece and how divisions and unity amongst the Greeks caused failures and achievements respectively. History in Primary Education changes historical period in Year Five and students leave the knowledge of the Ancient World and shift to the Roman and Medieval periods. They discover the Roman State and the Roman civilization and they also learn about the Byzantine (Eastern Roman Empire) monuments of Cyprus. The Curriculum also enables the students to understand the Byzantine period and its effects on modern Cyprus. Year Six History consists of the knowledge of the Frankish, Venetian and Ottoman rule of the island. It also describes the Greek Revolution in 1821 and enables students to understand the Balkan Wars in 1912-1913, the two World Wars, the Asia Minor catastrophe of 1922, and the struggles of the Greek Cypriots to free themselves from British rule (MoEC, 2018). The teaching

of History in Primary Education seeks not to just create young researchers who will foster historical thinking and develop historical consciousness but also to create students who will be able to participate in national and historical school events.

The teaching of the lesson of History in Secondary Education (Gymnasium and Lyceum) aims to develop critical thinking, historical culture and historical consciousness. Through adequate and diverse knowledge of the past; students should develop progressively the complex mental skills that will allow them not only to interpret historical events and phenomena, but also to understand the various factors (historical, social, economic, cultural and political) that affect modern nations, especially in their own broad social and national contexts. Students, with the development of critical historical thinking, will reach conclusions without prejudging the outcome of history, but will also develop basic knowledge to appreciate and respect the religion and the cultural characteristics and attitudes of other nationalities. Finally, having a solid intellectual background of historical, cultural and national identity, students will be able, as conscious members of the Greek Cypriot community, to emerge as responsible and active citizens of the Republic (MoEC, 2018).

Secondary education in Cyprus consists of the Lower Secondary also called The Gymnasium and the Upper Secondary also known as the Lykeio. The Gymnasium offers full time compulsory education to pupils of twelve to fifteen years of age. Its structure and curriculum provide two periods of the lesson of History per week. Pupils, in Year One, have the opportunity to enrich their knowledge on Pre-historic periods, Classical and Hellenistic Greece and Rome. In the second class of the Gymnasium pupils learn about the Byzantine Empire and focus on the Crusades and the Frankish, Venetian and Ottoman occupation of Cyprus from 1189-1878.

Year Three enables students to learn the period of Enlightenment, the French Revolution in 1789 and the era of Napoleon Bonaparte, the Greek Revolution in 1821 and the establishment of the first Greek State in 1830, Industrialization and the creation of the national states, World War I and II, the Asia Minor Catastrophe in 1922 and generally contemporary Greek history. Additionally, at the end of each academic year of the Lower Secondary School pupils are examined on the material they have covered in one of the four subjects (Modern Greek, Mathematics, Science and History) and History is examined in all Public Secondary Schools.

At the upper secondary, that is Lykeio, History is a mandatory subject and examined at the end of each academic year for pupils who choose Classical Studies, Art and Languages and European Studies. The lesson of History is taught four periods per week at the first class, six periods per week at the second and seven periods per week at the third class of the Lykeio (MoEC, 2018). Students who do not choose History as an elective are required to be taught Modern and Contemporary International, Greek and Cypriot History for two periods per week at the second and third class of the Eniaio Lykeio, but they are not required to take exams on the subject at the end of each academic year.

TEACHING, METHODOLOGY AND EVALUATION ON THE LESSON OF HISTORY

Most teachers' attitude towards the lesson of History is examined since they witnessed it through historical sources or directly from the classroom (Persianis, 2010; Polydorou, 1995). Teachers are presented as the most educated members of the Cypriot society and according to the Ministry of Education and Culture the

teaching of history is necessary to “engage” and “involve” pupils in the understanding of different historical periods. This process has an important role in familiarity and use of various sources of evidence of history, but also the presentation of the history through a rationally structured historical narrative. The methods of teaching approaches and the instructional resources that can be exploited in the course of history vary. That is exactly why teachers are required to choose every time approaches, strategies and methods that correspond to the needs of the curriculum unit and the potentials of the students (social and cognitive). According to the new History Curriculum (MoEC, 2018) the student-centered approach provides the teacher a limited narrative role in the presentation of a historical unit. The teachers approach should focus on the essentials and not on references to historical dates, personal details and exuberant historical facts and data. Additionally, the importance of an event or phenomenon should not be removed from its historical context. This process requires a comprehensive and extremely abridged presentation of each module, but the limitation of completing the curriculum for examination purposes causes problems for the lesson of History and the material is delivered to the students in a very swift and difficult way for them to understand. In order to avoid such setbacks, the Ministry of Education and Culture through the Curriculum for the lesson of History (MoEC, 2018) advises teachers to summarize the general historical context and to assess the importance of the necessary course of historical information. Additionally, the Ministry of Education and Culture (2014) encourages through the Curriculum of History that educators must organize, structure, and target dialogues that will be developed in the classroom or between teachers and students during the course of the lesson. The acquisition of historical knowledge also facilitates the use of technology and especially visual aids,

such as the interactive whiteboards, applications of information technology and the internet. Further, the lesson of History may be enriched with visits to museums, archaeological and historical sites, provided that the educators would be well prepared in terms of teaching materials (worksheets) and would involve the students in workshops that will assist them to achieve the goals and objectives of the lesson.

The lesson of History is examined in all the years of the Lower School and by all pupils who choose History as an elective in Upper School at the end of each academic year. The evaluation, according to the Ministry of Education and Culture (2014) must be “oral, written, diagnostic, formative and final.” Evaluation is a continuous and an open ongoing process, which is also an organic part of the teaching methodology. Within just this process, the teacher realizes the effective use of the methods and strategies practiced, and the instruments used in the teaching process. As in other courses, the diagnostic evaluation should be performed at the beginning of each academic year in order to diagnose deficiencies and weaknesses of students in relation to their knowledge and skills. The evaluation of students must be done through multiple and alternate formats, such as oral and written examination, small or larger interdisciplinary or multidisciplinary synthetic work or other activities, such as the organization of historical reports and issues, the construction of maps, and the research of historical knowledge in historical documents and newspapers. Particular attention should be given to the questions asked orally or in various examination essays. Further, the primary goal of History is the development of historical thinking and historical consciousness.

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