

BRITISH HERITAGE

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If the assumption applying to the Greek state is valid, that many of its misfortunes are a consequence of the fact that it passed from the Ottoman period into a western adaptation without the necessary stopovers experienced by the West, this is even more true for Cyprus which passed from the Ottoman era into English colonialism. Although the British occupation of Cyprus could have initiated a policy process of gradual modernization of the Cypriot society, by introducing institutions of liberal representative democracy, this did not happen. On the contrary English colonialism undermined the possibility of importing the political liberalism of the metropolis in the life of Cyprus. That's because the colonial regime introduced from the start, with the first constitution adopted in 1882, a rudimentary and distorted version of the institutions of representative government by creating the so-called Legislative Council. The British policy in Cyprus was criminal since it continued using the principle of millet dating from the Ottoman era. The millet system, emphasized the role of the confessional ethno-religious communities and reinforced the confrontational logic between them, instead of introducing the ideological component of political liberalism which gave more emphasis to citizens and their rights without bounding them to their millets and therefore separating them on the basis of ethnic or religious affiliation. As characteristically wrote the Cypriot historian G.S. Georgallides "the Cyprus constitution incorporated two irreconcilable ideas : the old Ottoman principle of representation by the millet with the western democratic concept of the rights of the majority". He stresses also that the British did not hesitate to use one community against the other, a matter which has repeatedly been raised by other scholars.

The deformation of the liberal democratic political ideology led to the introduction of separate electoral rolls for the Greek Cypriots and the Turkish Cypriots on exclusively communal and confessional lines. So Cypriots were not

treated as citizens as it was happening in all current democracies of the West, but as ethnic and religious groups. The introduction of this mixture of authoritarian liberalism-Ottomanism gradually led to intercommunal conflict instead of creating a single political body. Hence political relations in Cyprus built by British colonialism were based on racial criteria, and this became the norm for the island's political life and in the coming years with the Zurich and London agreements that created the Republic of Cyprus. In order to understand the criminal character of this British policy one has to imagine what would have resulted in various Western countries, including Britain, if the same principle and biased liberal democracy was applied. Should there exist separate electoral rolls for Catholics, Protestants, Scots, Welsh, Basques, Corsicans, etc. etc. ? Can one also imagine the political Babel which would result in the U.S. if the principle of "racial" representation was accepted and similarly in Canada or South Africa, and in many other countries ? Hypothetically also, what would have happened if the six million French Muslims obtained ensuring rights for separate political representation? This of course would lead to the election of political representatives on racial and communal lines as well as the distribution of power in the same way. Perhaps then the countries of the West would seek today to resolve their political problems out in the same way that they suggest a solution to the Cyprus problem, a State in which the democratic principles and human rights are abrogated. If these claims were applied to any other western country such claims would be considered absurd and outrageous and would not make it to the table of discussions whereas in the case of Cyprus, all these racist propositions are presented as logical and are on the table. The various neo-liberals, postmodernists and mutants of the left, representatives of the new order who divorced from the ideas of enlightenment, are keen on mentioning "nationalism" when someone defends those same rights enjoyed by British, French, Portuguese, Americans, Canadians, Spaniards and Australians ... Because Cypriots, are trying to convince us, they are citizens with "special" needs ...