assisted in understanding the author’s main objective. At first reading I was uncertain where the book was proceeding or why chapters were in the order they were. The connecting thread often seemed to be the author’s intimate relations with the Oromo community in Melbourne. Such a problem is less apparent on second reading when the home and language motifs emerge more strongly.

The virtues of the *The Oromo in Exile* are many. It is almost totally free of jargon and is written with commitment and sympathy. At one point Gow, relating one of the many vivid anecdotes and personal stories to be found in the book, says that he and his friends had heard many such sad stories before and generally remained unmoved by them. For most readers that will not be the case as they learn more about what it means to be a refugee and a member of a people struggling to assert its identity.

The MUP paperback is attractively produced, with an excellent and wide-ranging bibliography. The colour photographs are of high quality and aid considerably in a reader’s understanding of the Oromo experience.

RICHARD TREMBATH
*University of Melbourne*


In less than four years *Britain and the Revolt in Cyprus* has become a classic and been reprinted, not in the customary softcover of reprints, but in an impressive hardcover edition, with the famed painting ‘Harding’s Nightmare’ present on the cover. This says much for its author Dr. Robert F. Holland, Professor in Imperial and Commonwealth History and head of the Institute for Commonwealth Studies at the University of London. He has produced something all historians desire, a popular and definitive masterpiece, which has already been translated into the Greek language.

Holland’s study is the first to use British Government documents and private papers to cover the Greek-Cypriot nationalist-led revolt by the EOKA in 1955 against British rule in the pursuit of *enosis* – the union of the island with Greece. Hitherto, the major works on this period have been by Doros Alastos (pseudonym of Evdoros Joannides), *Cyprus Guerrilla* (1960); two studies by Stephen Xydis, *Cyprus: Conflict and Conciliation, 1954-1958* (1967) and *Cyprus: Reluctant Republic* (1974); François Crouzet, *Le Conflict de Chypre, 1946-1959* (1973); and journalist Nancy Crawshaw’s *The Cyprus Revolt* (1978). These and other less detailed commentaries did not have access to the British, Cypriot and US archives utilised by Holland.

The study begins with the introductory chapter, which summarises the general tenets of British colonial policy on the island from 1878 to 1950. Although brilliantly written, in an especially entertaining style, this chapter places too great an emphasis on the ‘uprising’ of 1931 and its aftermath, with only a cursory glance at the period before. Holland’s
explanation of the desire for enosis takes the traditional line of describing the development of nationalist Greek-Cypriot identity, without analysing the development of the enosis ideal from a sentimental hope into a national imperative. Nevertheless, this chapter provides the necessary grounding for an understanding of the “Crisis of Trust” period 1950 to 1954, which precluded the uprising of 1 April 1955. This chapter covers the period aptly, including the short-lived governorship of Sir Robert Armitage. Holland describes Armitage as a modest, well-meaning man, who lacked ability, in conflict with his biographer Colin Baker, who believed Armitage to be the most able of stars in the colonial office.

In the event, the nine ensuing chapters compose the most comprehensive study of British colonial policy on the ‘Emergency Period’ ever written. It is the study of a British Conservative Government desperately trying to hold onto the sovereignty of a perceived strategically important island, while faced with a nationalist-led revolt. The British solicited the support of the Turkish government, as the protector of the 18 per cent Cypriot Turkish minority, to thwart the demands of the Greeks and Cypriot Greeks. The British government manoeuvred its way into the role of ‘umpire’ between Greece and Turkey, and gave the impression that if the island was abandoned civil war, if not a larger conflict between two NATO allies, would result. When, by the end of 1956, civil war had not eventuated and EOKA activity continued – ruining both preparations for and the actual attack on the Suez Canal in September 1956, despite the presence of Field Marshal Sir John Harding as Governor – London decided to apply self-determination to both communities. If the Turks decided on union with Turkey, the island would be partitioned (as desired by the nationalist Turkish Cypriots). Henceforth, British policy and proposals for a solution became geared to the approval of Ankara, which was an ally of Britain in the Baghdad Pact. Holland argues that the British failed in their efforts at decolonisation, and yet, quite ironically, were satisfied when Greece and Turkey decided that Cyprus would become an independent republic in early 1959. What becomes clear from the narrative, if not so explicit from the author, is that the British never planned nor offered to relinquish their total sovereignty over the island. The limit of their proposals was to share sovereignty of a portion of the island with Greece and Turkey. The rest of the island would remain under exclusive and perpetual British sovereignty. But by promoting a Greco-Turkish conflict, and in conceding to accept bases in Cyprus, Britain had implied a will to ‘relinquish’ the island, if Greece and Turkey agreed to a solution. Thus, when Greece and Turkey signed the Zurich Accords in February 1959, ruling out enosis and partition in favour of independence, Britain could not refuse to sign. Britain retained almost 5 per cent of Cyprus under its exclusive and perpetual sovereignty, as well as over thirty other military installations across the island.

Holland analyses the events from a multitude of angles and using various sources, making the important point that situations and decisions are complicated by a series of issues. There is no occasion when it can be intelligently concluded that he has favoured one side over the others.
More crucially, Holland covers the complex relations of all the players, whether individuals, departments, or states, in a most thorough and enlightening fashion.

Ultimately, what makes Britain and the Revolt in Cyprus a ‘must’ read is the entertaining and engaging voice of the author and the fact that it has general appeal to all those who are interested in understanding British reactions to the anti-colonial movements of the 1950s.

ANDREKOS VARNAVA
University of Melbourne


In the first chapter of this work Andrew Vincent characterises his argument as examining the modern ‘drift’ in political theory from ‘the universal’ to the familiar, which he denotes ‘the particular’. This is an important topic, particularly as international, multi-ethnic communities and ‘global’ identities are becoming modern concerns. In contrast to the process of globalisation, there is also a marked trend towards individuals defining themselves through essentially ‘tribal’ structures, drawing the lines between their own identities and those of the world by associating with different groups. Many of the theorists that Vincent examines argue that such group identification is caused by globalisation, and either claim the trend as a positive step or as a neutral process. For Vincent, the trend might be real, but the consequent shift in political theory is negative, and he goes so far as to say that it has left political theory ‘anaemic’.

According to Vincent, the vein that has been tapped is the older ‘universalist’ political theory. Throughout the book, the theory writers have moved away from seems to be as important as what they are moving towards. The reason for this is that Vincent finds it problematic that the ‘tribal group’ might take precedence over individuals in an increasingly global world community. Universalist theory does focus on individuals, and underpins human rights by attributing platonic ‘fundamentals’ to each and every human being, with the corollary being a denial of difference. This latter point has led many theorists to focus instead on the groups that people form. The difficulty that Vincent has with this shift is addressed through analysis of ‘nationalism’.

Nationalism, the author points out, can be said to be rooted in particularity, as it implies both specificity and connectivity. Moreover, Vincent argues that it is a void. He sets about proving this by analysing both what might be said to be the constituent parts of nationalism – sovereignty, the nation state, citizenship, patriotism – and those elements which might well be said to be the antagonists of nationalism – communitarianism, multiculturalism, cosmopolitanism, liberalism – as they imply connections and loyalties which do not give the nation primacy. The point that Vincent makes about the vacuity of nationalism is a valid one. Through contrasting nationalism against the other concepts,