Mr. Fenech's Colony: Maltese Immigrants in Cyprus 1878-1950*

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Abstract
British Colonial Office documents describe negotiations beginning in 1878 between Cyprus administrators, the Colonial Office, and the Maltese government for several, separate schemes to bring colonies of agricultural workers to Cyprus. Then, beginning in 1879 the documents describe in detail and at length the existence of a Maltese colony of agricultural workers managed by Vicenzo Fenech, a land surveyor from Malta, as well as other schemes proposed by other entrepreneurs and Maltese governors through the turn of the century. However, a 1928 official report claims the earliest schemes "never crystallized." The purpose of this article is to demonstrate, in a case study of three Maltese immigration schemes in Cyprus between 1878 and the 1950s, how officials did indeed negotiate such schemes, sometimes in secret, and how these schemes ultimately failed.
Keywords: Cyprus, Malta, immigration, development, agriculture, settlements.

Özet
Britanya Kolonyal Dairesi belgeleri, 1878'de başlamak üzere, Kıbrıs İdaresi, Kolonyal Dairesi ve Malta Hükümeti arasında Kıbrıs'a tarım işçisi kolonileri getirilmesinin çeşitli yollarının görüşüldüğünü ortaya koymaktadır. 1879'dan yüzyılın sonlarına kadarki belgelerde, uzunca ve detaylı bir şekilde, toprak müfettişi Vicenzo Fenech yönetiminde Maltalı küçük bir işçi kolonisinin ve Maltalı vali ve yatırımcılarının buna benzer projelerinin bahsi geçmektedir. Ancak 1928 tarihli resmi bir rapor bu erken projelerin hiç bir zaman gerçekleşmediğini öne sürmektedir. Bu makalenin amacı, 1878-1950'ler arasında Malta'dan Kıbrıs'a gerçekleştirilmesi planlanan üç adet göç projesi özelinde, iddia edilenin tersine memurların kimi zaman gizlilik içinde de olsa nasıl bu türden görüşmeleri yürüttüklerini, ve bu projelerin başarısız olma sebeplerini gözler önüne sermektir.
Anahtar Kelimeler: Kıbrıs, Malta, göç, gelişme, tarım, yerleşim.

Britain occupied Cyprus in 1878 according to the agreements of the Congress of Berlin, then annexed the island in 1914 and made it a Crown

Colony in 1925. Yet Colonial Office documents explicitly outline British attempts to develop the island's resources immediately in 1878 as if it were already a colonial possession. By early 1879, High Commissioner Sir Garnet Wolseley could proclaim:

> suffice it to say that Cyprus is going to be a great success; I shall have a surplus this year… Next year I hope to embark upon some more important public works. Laugh at any one who tells you Cyprus is not going to be a complete success.[1]

Wolseley's idea of success was to have an economic surplus and to complete important public works like ports, buildings, irrigation, roads, and so forth.

Coincidentally, officials on another British-ruled island in the Mediterranean, Malta, saw the acquisition of Cyprus as a golden opportunity to relieve their own problems of overcrowding and impoverishment.[2] In the early years of the occupation, they petitioned the new Cyprus Government for numerous government-sponsored immigration schemes, including colonies of agricultural workers ranging from a group of 50 families to thousands of laborers. Governor Dingli of Malta hoped new colonies in Cyprus would attract "a continuous stream of Maltese emigrants."[3] Although a continuous stream never materialized, Colonial Office documents show that some groups did migrate to new Cyprus settlements. However, a 1928 official report claims the earliest schemes "never crystallised."[4]

The purpose of this article is to demonstrate, in a case study of three Maltese immigration projects in Cyprus how Cyprus administrators, the Colonial Office, and the Maltese government did indeed negotiate to bring colonies of workers to Cyprus between 1878 and the 1950s. The first of the negotiations began when the British occupied Cyprus in 1878. The slow pace and inability of the governments to reach agreement, however, left the door open for independent, private schemes. Documents for 1879 describe in detail and at length a colony of agricultural workers managed by Vicenzo Fenech, a land surveyor from Malta. Fenech bought property for himself in Cyprus and then solicited financial assistance from both governments to bring a small colony of Maltese families to Cyprus to live on his land as agricultural workers. This project succeeded initially but eventually failed for reasons to be discussed.

A second period of Maltese immigration to Cyprus spans the years 1909 to 1923, when, after another unsuccessful wave of governmental negotiations between Malta and Cyprus, Lt.-Colonel Harman J. Grisewood proposed the emigration of an agricultural colony of 320 families to be settled on land in Cyprus acquired by a private syndicate. His project attracted attention from both governments, who finally in 1927 carried out an official study of Maltese settlement in Cyprus through the office of the Minister of Migration. This study, however, declared emigration to Cyprus to be impractical and all official schemes were abandoned.

The third period begins around 1950, when the British government became alarmed at the plight of several groups of aged and destitute Maltese still languishing on Cyprus, as well as a more recent group of so-called "Maltese" refugees from Turkey and Greece, all of whom had become a drain on the island's financial resources.

These case studies show, first, how the British embraced private enterprise when it served to fill certain needs the government was unable or unwilling to finance in order to help settle and develop new imperial acquisitions, or as in the case of Malta, in order to relieve a particular imperial territory of excess population in times of depression and unemployment. Second, the example of Maltese immigrants in Cyprus demonstrates the desire of British administrators to settle their new territories with socially acceptable British citizens drawn from other parts of the Empire, that is, those who embodied a certain sense of "Britishness."

The Need for Labor on Cyprus

Britain had eyed Cyprus as a potential strategic link in her chain of Mediterranean possessions, Gibraltar and Malta, before she militarily occupied it in July, 1878.[5] At the same time, the British consuls on the island — the men-on-the-spot — urged agricultural and mineral development. Vice-Consul White's report of March 1863 describes "harvests, trade, revenue and the general prosperity of the island." Consul Riddell insisted in both 1875 and 1876 that the island could indeed become highly productive and that trade in agricultural products, especially wheat, barley, cotton, madder roots, silk, wine, raisins, olive oil, locust-beans, tobacco, fruits, and vegetables, might be increased "under an enlightened government."[6] Consul Robert Hamilton Lang, writing for *MacMillan's*

Magazine in 1878, called for efforts to make the island prosperous, devoting seven pages to the potential agricultural and mineral wealth of the island.[7] When Lang imported English ploughs and harrows and found that the "natives could not give him effective aid with these implements," he replaced them with the best models of the native plough. He reported in August 1878 that "…the results of his efforts in the way of agriculture surpassed all his expectations."[8]

Then, beginning with the first High Commissioner, Sir Garnet Wolseley, subsequent administrators followed these efforts with development programs of their own.[9] By 1888, despite a drought season in 1887, wheat production rose from an average of 1,568,580 kiles for the period 1882-1886 to 1,930,720 kiles, and barley at 2,279,856 kiles in 1888 exceeded earlier averages of 1,689,040 kiles.[10]

Both consuls and administrators record difficulty in finding skilled, industrious labor. White notes in 1863 the "ignorance of the native cultivators, who would have to be taught the proper use of European implements, and…the want of skilled workmen to keep them in repair." By 1875, there was an even greater and increasing scarcity of field laborers, "even at comparatively high wages", and a lack of animal power for agricultural purposes, which had left much of the land insufficiently worked, according to Consul Riddell.[11] And Wolseley complained in 1878:

> At present, although I am paying a high rate (1s. 3d. a day) for labour, I get very little work out of the lazy, idle fellows who are good enough to accept our money, and frequently they bolt to their villages. I can never count upon having the same men for many days together, and sometimes the working parties are reduced to small proportions from the number of absentees.[12]

Wolseley noted that under Turkish law every man was obliged to work a certain number of days on the roads during the period from May through the end of October every year. Salisbury authorized Wolseley to implement the Turkish law, but "we think punishment in default should be a fine on village, and not fall on individuals; otherwise we shall be charged with setting up slavery."[13]

By 1881, Cypriot peasants continued to disdain regular work. Andrew Scott-Stevenson, District Commissioner of Kyrenia, reported:

> Although the demand for labour exceeds the supply, a great number of men, as soon as they have made sufficient money to provide for themselves with such food as is absolutely necessary and a few *paras* to spend on tobacco and coffee, refuse to work again until they have spent their last coin.[14]

This attitude perplexed British administrators, whose enthusiasm for new programs probably baffled the peasants in turn. Peasant work habits, that is, working in a variety of short-term seasonal jobs, which seemed lazy and less than ambitious to the British, actually enabled them to control their own working lives, a freedom more valuable than money.[15] One solution to the labor problem was to import other workers, preferably with the "British" work ethic. Thus Cyprus administrators found the idea of Maltese colonies worth consideration.

Maltese Emigration and the British Empire

First, to understand Maltese emigration to Cyprus, it is helpful to consider the background of Maltese emigration in general. The island of Malta, governed by the British since 1813, enjoyed and suffered variously periods of prosperity and economic depression, to a great extent fluctuating according to the level of British military action that required basing naval troops on the island that in turn provided local jobs and bolstered the economy. A more enduring problem, however, lay in the tendency of Maltese to have large, close-knit families, encouraged by the Catholic Church. Prosperity meant even larger families, while economic depression led to greater unemployment. Schemes to encourage Maltese men to find employment elsewhere and thereby relieve the island's overpopulation generally failed partly because the Maltese refused to move far from their community, or if they left, they often returned in a few years.[16]

In the broader scheme of the British Empire, an excess labor force in one area might have provided workers for more deprived areas. A few independent Maltese did take advantage of that opportunity on their own initiative, although most either returned when their purses were full or languished destitute in the new territory when the work ran out. A government-sponsored project to take whole communities of workers and their families to other territories seemed more pragmatic. But by 1880, all government organized schemes to take colonies of Maltese to other parts

of the Empire had failed for numerous reasons. This occurred in the West Indies, Algeria, the Ionian Islands, and Egypt, from around 1825 to the 1870s.[17]

Not surprisingly, by the late 1870s the Maltese government began to favor private enterprises, not least because in 1870 the Foreign Office prohibited official migration to Ottoman territories. Sir Adrian Dingli, the Crown Advocate on Malta, sought ways around the veto by involving himself and his office in joint ventures with private business, in particular the Maltese Emigration Society which proposed to buy land in Africa to establish small Maltese peasant communities. But even that project progressed slowly and finally ended completely with the 1876-1878 economic depression in Malta and growing public antagonism toward the British government. The answer seemed to be in fully private projects, an idea which found support from the next governor of Malta, Sir Arthur Borton, who served from 1878 to 1884.[18]

After 1890, Maltese migrations shifted from the Mediterranean, that is, from close to home, to further reaches of the British Empire, especially to Australia, where between 1890 and 1938, the Maltese population increased from a few hundred to a few thousand, and to the United Kingdom, and France[19], as well as the United States, Canada, and Brazil.[20] It should be noted that both government- and privately-organized schemes for sending groups of Maltese to other territories intended that these groups should be entirely voluntary, although contracts sometimes suggest indentured servitude, and given the tendency of Maltese to stay close to home, there had to be substantial incentives. It must be assumed, however, that had economic conditions at home been better, the Maltese would resist leaving under any circumstances. Therefore these enterprises generally operated under less than ideal conditions in regard to the enthusiasm of the workers. The ever-present possibility of workers giving up and returning home put these schemes on tenuous ground. The hope was that private enterprises could be more successful, and certainly less expensive to the government, than the earlier government schemes.

Maltese Government Emigration Schemes in 1878

As the Maltese government struggled to find relief for its overpopulated island, a new, exciting opportunity arose in July, 1878, when the British occupied Cyprus under the tenets of the Congress of Berlin. Wolseley

sought to redevelop that island's devastated agriculture and infrastructure, both of which required more willing labor than could be found on the island. The Maltese in government expressed great approval for individual Maltese emigration to Cyprus, and unemployed laborers made their way to Cyprus hoping to find work. By the end of July the Passport Office was receiving as many as 50 applications a day for passage to Cyprus, and the Port Department removed 20 to 30 stowaways every day from each ship headed for Larnaca.[21]

Some stowaways actually slipped through to Cyprus and found work. For example, Wolseley wrote to his wife in July, 1878 about importing a Maltese washerwoman who could starch his shirts properly,[22] and in 1879, an "illiterate Maltese" could be seen painting street signs.[23] Mrs. Scott-Stevenson, the wife of the British Civil Commissioner of Kyrenia, wrote in her journal in 1880 about a faithful Maltese house servant, Don Pasquale, who arrived in Cyprus as a stowaway.[24]

Therefore, the Maltese government, while not proposing necessarily a government-sponsored colony scheme, felt confident in their petition to the Cyprus government to accept Maltese workers. In a memorandum to the Governor of Cyprus in October 1878, Dingli requests free land, tax assistance, and materials for Maltese workers, arguing for the mutual benefit of both islands:

> Our emigrant is not a man of capital seeking investment for it; nor a man whom bad laws or bad rulers drive to other lands, for peace or protection. He is simply a laborious, industrious, working man, asking for employment which at home, he looks for in vain. In Cyprus all is to be repaired, and a great deal to be demolished, and reconstructed on a better system, to become really useful for the object for which it is intended…
>
> The population of Cyprus is too small to furnish all the labour that will be required; and contractors for great works will soon find out, that, of all the countries bordering on the Mediterranean, the best supply of labour, for employment in Cyprus, is to be looked for in Malta.[25]

Dingli wanted enough land on Cyprus to settle at least 1,000 Maltese workers. This shocked Cyprus governor Wolseley, who wrote in his private journal on 26 November:

> His scheme is simply preposterous. He wants 25 square miles of land for nothing and that no taxes should be charged upon it for ten or twelve years. It is the coolest and most silly project I have ever read over. It is thoroughly Maltese in all its lines, goes in for priests etc. It ought to have emanated from the "propaganda" at Rome.[26]

Wolseley's outrage apparently softened by late December, when he inspected a site in Kiti "for a Maltese colony and for eucalyptos plantations."[27]

But he was not going down without a fight! By the following June, 1879, correspondence flew fast and furious between Dingli and two other British administrators, Hicks Beach and Colonel Greaves. Dingli apparently visited Cyprus while Wolseley was in London and meeting with Greaves instead, noted Greaves' opinion "that emigration from Malta would tend greatly to the benefit of that island…" Wolseley, however, saw Malta's proposal as a scheme "to relieve itself of a portion of its redundant population against any benefit accruing to Cyprus..." When he finally agreed to a compromise, he insisted that the Maltese pay for land which they had requested *gratis* and without taxation.[28] This negated the Sultan's Decree of 1855 that offered to immigrants into the Asian Turkish dominions fertile lands in healthy localities *gratis*, with exemption from taxation for a period of 12 years.

The Secretary of State for the Colonies informed Sir Arthur Borton, that Her Majesty's Government would not accept the Sultan's Decree as binding on the British administration of Cyprus.[29] Dingli agreed to this but complained that,

> No part of the lands pointed out by Sir Garnet Wolseley to the agents of the Malta Government (Messrs. Testaferrata Olivier and Galizia) for inspection is of the best quality, or irrigable by running water; no water on them can be had in the dry season, except by works of a costly nature; and a considerable portion of them is of very inferior quality, hardly saleable in Cyprus for 5*s*. an acre.[30]

While the Maltese delegation hardly thought 5 shillings an acre for poor unimproved land acceptable, Wolseley asked 30 shillings an acre for partially inhabited land that required compensation to the owners, and offered one year of relief from taxation rather than twelve. Dingli suggested a compromise of 15 shillings for entirely unoccupied land and no taxation for five years.[31] The question remained unsettled during Wolseley's tenure as High Commissioner on Cyprus, although he proposed the Taxation Ordinance of 1879 which passed Council on 28 April. The ordinance forbade any right of exemption from payment of "any tax, impost, duty, or obligation, except where expressly stated and allowed."[32]

Wolseley left Cyprus in June 1879, succeeded by Robert Biddulph as High Commissioner and Commander-in-Chief in Cyprus. Biddulph, just as ambitious as Wolseley, continued the process of agricultural revitalization, as well as currency reform, new administrational structure for justice and taxation, anti-locust campaigns and public works.[33] The subject of workers remained on the table.

Mr. Fenech's Colony

The insistence of emigration supporters that Maltese were good workers was tempered by complaints by those who had failed, such as Charles James Napier, who, after a scheme under his governorship of Cephalonia, a British protectorate in the Ionian Islands, complained to Westminster after the colony's failure in 1833 about the incompetence and feebleness of the Maltese labourers. Ironically Napier had decided in 1826 to improve Cephalonian agriculture by importing a colony of Maltese farmers "because their well-known industry and skill would inspire the lazy and indifferent Cephalonians to exploit properly their agricultural resources."[34] In the West Indies from 1839 to 1841, Maltese laborers had complained of being overworked and underpaid in comparison to indigenous workers; they disliked Caribbean food yet demanded larger rations when they discovered they could make money selling the extra amounts; and they finally stopped working when their demand was ignored, despite their contracts with the British government.[35] Perhaps Fenech felt similarly about the Maltese in Cyprus, but certainly he was aware of the previous problems.

Thus, when Fenech, a land surveyor in the Land Revenue Department in Malta, submitted a petition to Sir Arthur Borton, Governor

of Malta on August 26, 1879, requesting government assistance in an emigration scheme to Cyprus, he clearly wanted to avoid similar problems and attempted to solicit certain guarantees. These problems and his suggested remedies, while interesting in regard to Fenech's scheme, should be analyzed here more importantly because they exemplify some of the problems with colonization that plagued the British government throughout the Empire.

To begin his petition, Fenech explained that he intended to settle in Cyprus "in order to carry on farming with the aid of Maltese labourers or colonists" and promised to dig wells, construct water wheels, lay out water-channels, and cultivate the land. Already in the process of acquiring some 500 acres from several Cypriot landowners, Fenech intended to erect cottages as well as a small church "to be furnished with all the necessary sacred utensils."[36] The construction of a church was intended to help allay Maltese feelings of isolation and potentially rough and lawless behavior away from home. Government documents demonstrate the reputation of the Maltese—in the eyes of British administrations—as prone to such behavior, and also the "civilizing" capabilities of the church in such circumstances. As for civilizing the badly behaved Maltese, Cyprus High Commissioner Robert Biddulph, referring to rumors being circulated among the Cypriots themselves, in July 1880 insisted that Maltese of "bad character" not be allowed to come to Cyprus with the colony:

> The Maltese of bad character have the reputation of being exceedingly troublesome, and the prospect of the arrival of a colony from Malta has already attracted attention. It is stated that the merchants and bankers who have hitherto been in the habit of sending groups of money about the island in charge of a muleteer and without any escort will no longer be able to do so; and there is some apprehension that the criminal ranks of the population will be swelled by the addition of a more daring and adventurous class than have hitherto found their way here. I have therefore considered that it is only fair to the inhabitants of the Island that the Government should restrict this official immigration to men of good character.[37]

Biddulph's opinion reflects the impressions of other administrators who reported earlier on the Maltese as "horribly dirty" with "exceedingly filthy habits."[38]

But Fenech apparently felt confident of taming such behavior and habits in a productive, economic enterprise. Suggesting that his project benefited the Maltese government by relieving that island's overpopulation but also benefited the Cypriot government by redeveloping fallow land in Cyprus, the next section of Fenech's petition solicited five conditions from the Maltese government in exchange**.** First, Fenech points to the fact that his enterprise is a civilian scheme independent of previous failed government schemes, but he insists that the Maltese as British citizens should be privileged with British rights in Cyprus. Fenech clearly was aware of the failures of Maltese colonies sent to other parts of the Empire without this guarantee.

In the next two items in the petition, Fenech tries to strike an economic deal, that is, that the Government of Malta should provide free passage to Cyprus for the emigrants, their baggage and agricultural implements, and that they should receive government aid in the way of animals, seeds, and food, the cost of which would be repaid from the sale of the first crops. In item four Fenech suggests that the church should be supplied with a priest. In Item five he covers his own needs, that is, he requests his own leave of absence from Malta for two years "in order that he may be enabled to prepare what is necessary for and give a good start to his undertaking", and "should his efforts be crowned with success, a pension for the time employed by him in the service of the Local Government since 1862."[39]

At the same time, the enterprising Fenech made certain guarantees to the Maltese in his colony. Colonial office correspondence published in 1882 details the "Conditions of Agreement made by Mr. Fenech with the Emigrants whom he took out to Cyprus:"

> 1. Portions of land to be granted on lease to the emigrants for a period of four years, renewable, at the option of the tenant, for another four years. Mr. Fenech receiving for rent half the amount of the yearly profits.
> 2. Mr. Fenech to grant free passage from Malta to Larnaca to the emigrants and their families, and to furnish the implements, animals, seeds, manure, and other necessaries required for the

> cultivation of the lands, the expenses incurred being reimbursed to Mr. Fenech out of the receipts for the crops of the first year.
> 3. Mr. Fenech to furnish also food to the emigrants and their families on condition that they will toil daily in the said lands and cultivate the whole extension of them; Mr. Fenech being repaid of the amounts so incurred from the profits of the first year previous to any other sum due to Mr. Fenech being paid to him.
> 4. In the event of any of the emigrants neglecting the portion of lands assigned to him Mr. Fenech to be relieved from the obligation of supplying money for food or otherwise and to have a claim to compensation for damages, expenses, and interests.[40]

In every instance, Fenech made sure to cover his own expenses and profits. It was clearly a commercial venture.

On March 8, Fenech reported his acquisition of land between the villages of Kuklia and Kalopsida, within the limits of Messaorea and about ten miles from Larnaca, measuring about 800 tumoli (200 acres), with rural buildings and running water, and that he had "commenced their cultivation by means of Maltese colonists."[41] This came as somewhat of a surprise to Lord Salisbury in London, who requested more information from Biddulph, who as a somewhat more astute negotiator than the temperamental Wolseley, and governing more independently, had reached a final compromise with the Maltese government. Finally, at the end of April, 1880, Fenech received a leave of absence to go to Cyprus to settle a colony.

The Maltese colony of nine families (42 persons) brought to Kuklia in March 2, 1880 by Mr. Fenech under a contract with the British government settled into ordinary peasants' cottages in the village of Kuklia and the Daoud chiftlik, on which they were employed by Mr. Fenech. Over the next few years they suffered from malaria, as well as the inability to withstand "heavy drinking and fruit." The latter killed one man the first summer.[42] Some of the malaria-stricken fled to Larnaca, where they squeezed into four small rooms in the Poorhouse. These were transferred to a public hospital and repatriated to Malta in October.[43] Other malaria-stricken moved to Maccrassica, a village two miles away. Colonial Office documents, however, explain that the colony managed to plant cotton, maize, and vegetables each on their allotted land of 500

dönüm, for which they received one pair of oxen and a cart, and they found water near the surface for irrigation. Then another plight beset them—locusts—which destroyed the vegetables. The listing of sufferings of the Maltese colonists continues in the documents, as well as problems between the Maltese, native Cypriots, and British society on the island. A file by the Chief Secretary of Malta notes that a malaria-stricken group in "a nearby village" stuck it out until 1881 but returned to Malta in March and April.[44]

Maltese Emigration in the Twentieth-Century

On November 12, 1903, the British governor of Malta, Sir Charles Mansfield Clarke, warned the new Legislative Assembly in Valletta about a "major headache" that was troubling the administration, that is, the expanding population of the Maltese islands which in 1901 had reached the total of 184,742. From 1900 to 1914, the government worried about too many civilians crowding the restricted space of these small islands, which had become an important base for the British navy.[45]

Indeed, the British presence increasingly affected the island's economy. By the turn of the century, Maltese prosperity depended not on trade in the Mediterranean but on British investments in naval and military defensive ports. Maltese private enterprise fluctuated relative to the ups and downs of British naval activity on the island, with the result that when the Imperial naval and military garrisons were reduced by six battleships and two battalions in 1911, Maltese industries were set to lose upwards of £400,000 a year. Malta's position as a significant trading port in the Mediterranean also lost ground as new long-distance steamships passed by the coaling stations on Malta. Other Mediterranean cities like Algiers, Tunis, Alexandria, and Port Said now provided ports superior to Malta's Grand Harbour, the last two in Egypt, coincidentally, built largely with the help of thousands of Maltese immigrants. All of this created unemployment and increased emigration out of Malta.

This new wave of emigration meant a reconsideration of colonial and private schemes for labor immigration to Cyprus. In 1928 the Malta legislative assembly requested an assessment of the situation from the Minister of Migration, in response to an offer made by a Lt.-Colonel Harman J. Grisewood to establish a Maltese settlement in Cyprus. The question particularly required a comparison of Cyprus with Australia, Canada, and other states within the British Empire, "which may be more

fully developed", and outlined what *prima facie* hopes there were of a successful settlement of Maltese.[46]

The exhaustive analysis written in response by the emigration officer, Henry Casolani, details Maltese settlement in Cyprus beginning with the British occupation in 1878, suggesting that some proposals were forwarded but none completed. Curiously, the report makes no specific mention of Fenech's colony. In 1909, the report continues, the question of emigration to Cyprus was revived, but "for various considerations, the then High Commissioner strongly deprecated any immigration of Maltese into the Island."[47] In 1915, a contingent of Maltese militia, who had been stationed in Cyprus for almost a year and struck down by malaria and other diseases, returned home with "a very sinister impression." Then, in response to a Government inquiry in 1921, the High Commissioner of Cyprus, Sir Malcolm Stevenson, announced that conditions in the island definitely were unfavorable to such immigration.[48]

Yet in 1922, Stevenson suggested that while a large scale settlement was not practical, perhaps a small concession, namely two large farmsteads accommodating several "selected" families with their own priests and schools, might be made available. This plan also was rejected, however, after a Maltese representative, Cassar Torreggiani, in July 1923, examined the proposal and with the Government decided that Cyprus was not, at the time, "a place to which the Maltese could emigrate with any success." At the same time the Emigration Committee on Malta excluded Cyprus from its enquiries "as a land of small opportunities."[49]

Colonel Grisewood would not be so easily dissuaded. In October 1927, Grisewood proposed a scheme to settle a Maltese agricultural colony of 320 families, about 2,000 people, on an equivalent number of farms on land to be acquired by a private syndicate, under the Limited Liability Company Acts of Great Britain. The colony would include an administrative staff made up of a manager, assistant manager, engineer, assistant engineer, doctor, and chaplain, as well as butchers, cooks, motor-drivers, mechanics, clerks, draughtsmen, and storekeepers. The immigrants would be given free transportation, machinery, board and lodging and 12 shillings to 14 shillings per week each. The farms would be cultivated communally and after thirty months become the property of the colonists. At the end of five years, Grisewood calculated, the estate should produce gross revenue of at least £100,000 a year, or an average of

£312 per farm. The initial period of two and a half years would require around a £220,000 investment by the Government.[50]

As might be expected, Grisewood's scheme was rejected by the Cyprus Government. But on February 22, 1928, Grisewood circulated a leaflet on Cyprus referring to what he now called the Margo Estate, with a revised offer to sell 80 small farms to Maltese farmers. The advertisement included a letter from the Chief Medical Officer of Cyprus assuring the Government that if the marshy land on the Margo Estate, which lay near the river, was drained and filled in, the danger of malaria would be practically diminished. In July, three Maltese farmers went to Cyprus to inspect the Margo Estate and gave a favorable report, which was published in August. Subsequently farmsteads were offered to Maltese farmers on cash or easy installment terms. However, although the Honourable C. Mifsud Bonnici announced in the Legislative Assembly on August 11 that about 200 Maltese families would be established on the Margo Estate within two months (with money advanced to them from the Cyprus Government), no farmers responded.[51]

At this point it should be remembered that the official report describing these events had omitted events concerning Fenech's colony in 1879, so its bias in favor of the Government should be considered cautiously. Nevertheless, it is apparent that Grisewood pursued his scheme persistently, which understandably would cause concern. The report continues that Grisewood further advertised his offer to farmers in the *Daily Malta Chronicle*, with no response, and that it soon came to light that the Margo Estate had remained uncultivated for a long period, being abandoned by Jewish settlers before the war principally because of the problem of malaria. Grisewood attacked this criticism with a new scheme called "Pioneer Farms", which offered a "repairing lease" on 12 farms at Margo Estate at £60 per year, with the option to purchase after five years. He promised that cases of malaria would be treated *gratis* or repatriated to Malta. Supposedly, by November 19 four young men from Naxaro had accepted the offer, but apparently Grisewood's scheme was never realized.[52]

The press and annual governmental Cyprus Reports continued to detail the problems of malaria, as well as influenza and dysentery.[53] But Casolani suggested another cause of the failure of Maltese colonies in Cyprus:

> Careful observation…have convinced me…that while such settlements should be successful in Australia—and, in a lesser degree, in Canada—with nuclei of specially trained public school boys, around which peasants and others would later gather—they are doomed to failure if they are established elsewhere, and with elements other than those I have just indicated.
>
> The Maltese agriculturist and rough labourer is, in every respect, a truly superb *independent* migrant, but he completely loses his grit and his pioneer spirit when he comes under any kind of tutelage or control. I have no hesitation to say that for any form of group of community settlement, in any country, he is at present, temperamentally unfit.[54]

Casolani believed that the temperament of the Maltese predisposed him to be unable to function in the manner expected if controlled by superiors. Only by independently running their farms, or at least with the influence, but not under the control, of others of the same class in already established groups, would there be a possibility of Maltese immigrants maintaining successful colonies.

It seems more likely, however, that many other factors were at fault, not the least the prevalence of disease and the lack of medical treatment for peasants and immigrants. Dingli noted in October, 1878, that men of the lower classes usually slept in the open air and often contracted cases of ague (like malaria), while well-to-do people generally kept a supply of quinine on hand, which put them right immediately after the first sign of illness. Dingli also noted stagnant waters; the "great, all-pervading, accumulation of filth" in the towns; and polluted water. In Nicosia, the public water flowed into houses through open channels in the streets where dogs defecated. Indeed, sanitary public works to alleviate these problems could have employed Maltese immigrants as easily as agricultural projects.[55] But such projects failed to materialize.

Maltese Camp at Dekhelia

A third case of Maltese immigration to Cyprus involves people from Malta living in Greece and Turkey, who, as British subjects were evacuated to Cyprus or India in 1941 when the Germans advanced through the Balkans. In 1949, a camp was opened at Dekhelia, Cyprus, to

house some 400 British subjects from India who were unable to return to their home after the war. They still were labeled "Maltese" and therefore British citizens, because they descended from Maltese in Malta, although none spoke that native language. By December, 1950, 70 of the original 400 had settled in other countries with guaranteed maintenance of employment, and the Cypriot government hoped to relocate the rest.[56]

The main concern of the British government was the continued expense of maintaining the refugees (almost £92,000 in 1949), who were slow to be educated "after many years of enforced idleness" in various refugee camps, that fell to the British Government, not the Cyprus government. The discovery of this expense by the British newspapers prompted the *Cyprus Mail Reporter* to print the "whole scandalous story:"

> Everyone is accommodated rent free. Everyone is fed. Hot water is available for baths and family washing three times a week. Everyone "on the staff" gets a salary. And that is in addition to the allowances, from 3s. a day for bachelors to as much as £20 a month for families, which all get, whether they work or not. [57]

The writer explains that Maltese in the camp were on the dole, a scandalous story indeed.

The reason given for providing asylum for the refugees was, in an official statement from the Cyprus government, that

> they are British subjects… of Mediterranean origin, descendents of Maltese who had long ago abandoned their mother tongue to speak Greek or Turkish… Their language and background make it probable that they will find a readier chance of returning to normal life in Cyprus than in any other territory available in them and in these circumstances the Government of Cyprus has agreed to give them asylum in the Island.[58]

If the Cyprus government felt that this group of "Maltese" descendents might be another source of labor, this is not indicated in the documents.

The camp made no pretensions of being an agricultural work camp, although one large building had been set aside as a workshop. That workshop was used only by a few middle-aged men building an

occasional table, and a partly-assembled truck motor lay "neglected and rusty." Tellingly, two families of carpenters had left the camp for Australia, where they were known to be doing well, and about 50 to 70 Maltese were rumored to be leaving for Australia by Christmas. But the *Cyprus Mail* reporter claims it would take an atom bomb to move the rest. It seems that those from Turkey, at least, resented evacuation from their own country, where they were "comfortably situated" and had property, and insisted that Britain must continued "to be their fairy godmother."[59]

On December 8, 1950, Cyprus governor Sir Andrew Wright telegrammed to the Secretary of State for the Colonies that Cyprus had initiated relocation and/or employment plans for the remaining 340 in camp, which now included eight babies. 70 persons had already left to settle in various countries that guaranteed their maintenance or employment, with the hope of another 38 persons to leave soon under the same conditions. Additionally, negotiations with the Australian government to emigrate 66 persons to Australia looked hopeful. Those who remain were encouraged to take up local employment, and many were being moved to live closer to the employment centers. It was also decided to reduce by one-third the maintenance allowance as of March 31, 1951, for all persons "capable of work", in order to make continued residence in the camp less attractive.[60]

Various letters and telegrams between the colonial office, the treasury, and Wright discuss how the expense of the proposed resettlement schemes was met from United Kingdom funds, not from Cyprus revenues. This would be relieved when the total of some £91,800 was reduced to about £30,500 in 1951-2 when "there will be fewer in the camp and certain economies can be made." The real problem, however, and one that seemed to have no solution, was that the United Kingdom would undoubtedly be saddled with the eventual "nucleus of the aged and infirm" that would be in permanent need of relief, as Wright had suggested earlier.[61] To this point, this writer has found no further documents to explain the plight of the aged Maltese on Cyprus.

Cyprus had served as a safe haven for refugees of many sorts, separate from any specific labor enterprise, during various stages of British rule. For example, in 1896 a British activist, Emma Cons, on the return journey from observing atrocities in Armenia and Constantinople, rescued a small number of Armenian refugees and arranged for their passage to Cyprus. There she organized work parties according to refugee

capabilities—tobacco sorters, coppersmiths, silk weavers, carpenters, blacksmiths, dressmakers, block printers, porters, and so forth—to be distributed in various locations on the island. Another humanitarian, Mrs. Sheldon Amos, had already established a silk factory in Cyprus for Armenian widows and orphans when Cons arrived.[62] Further research needs to be done to discover the effect of these refugees, if any, on the local labor force. Other examples are the German Templers who lived in Cyprus as refugees from April through October, 1948, and Jewish refugees who arrived beginning in August 1946. Some Templers found local work such as housekeeping, but the Jewish lived in detention and refugee camps, only passing through Cyprus on their way to Palestine.[63] As the Secretary of State for the Colonies noted in March, 1941, Cyprus was a "magnet for refugees."[64] By that time, in these cases and in the case of the Maltese refugees at Dekhelia, the need to satisfy the humanitarian mission overshadowed any question of real or perceived need for labor that might be lacking in the local population.

Conclusions

It is clear that the British government in 1878 supported development schemes in Cyprus but found independent financing to be more practical and desirable. Cyprus at that time still fell under Ottoman suzerainty, and "official" colonial development projects could not be sanctioned without extreme justification. Maltese immigration in the early decades of British rule in Cyprus was acceptable because the new development programs of the first administrators required workers and agricultural laborers, the immigration schemes were self-supporting, and Maltese were, after all, British, whereas the quality and number of able Cypriot workers seemed inadequate for the task.

By the early 1950s, however, when the Maltese schemes had clearly failed, the remaining immigrants became a burden rather than an economic advantage. Thus the viability of the three schemes in the three periods can be compared. In the case of a group of agricultural workers brought to Cyprus in 1879 by the independent entrepreneur Vincenzo Fenech, the British government struck a deal that would support the plan without much initial investment from the government. Fenech's scheme relied on support from the Maltese government, Malta being governed at the time by the British, but the Cypriot government would not be held liable. Grisewood attempted to persuade private Maltese to buy into his

scheme independently, and at the same time petitioned the government, although it was never clear what he expected from the government specifically. And by the 1940s and 1950s, immigration rested mainly on humanitarian responses. The government accepted the responsibility of "new" Maltese immigrants, even after government-sponsored work programs failed. This article shows, then, that the Cypriot government did end up with the burden of the expense of the Maltese immigrants but, even while attempting to disperse them to more suitable parts of the Empire, accepted the responsibility to provide for them as British citizens.

Endnotes

[*] This essay benefited from research at the National Archive of the United Kingdom in Kew, England, supported in part by the Churchill Scholarship and the Dora Bonham Scholarship from University of Texas at Austin, and from archival documents of the Government of Malta available at the Perry-Castaneda Library at University of Texas at Austin. It is based on a paper read at the *Sixth International Congress on Cyprus Studies* in Famagusta, Cyprus, in October, 2007.

[1] "Letter from Cyprus," in *MacMillan's Magazine* 39 (Nov. 1878-April 1879), 96.

[2] Malta consists of three inhabited islands, Malta (the largest), Gozo, and Comino, and two uninhabited islets, Comminotto and Filfla, located on a small archipelago south of Sicily in the Mediterranean Sea. Its area is 122 sq mi (316 sq km). British sovereignty was ratified in the 1814 Treaty of Paris. Malta became self-governing in 1921 but reverted to a colonial regime in 1936. (EBritannicareadyreference, 2001, Encyclopaedia Britannica, Inc.)

[3] Colonial Office [CO hereafter] 883/2, National Archive of the United Kingdom, Dingli in "Maltese Emigration to Cyprus," Report by Sir Adrian, October 17, 1878, notes 20 and 87.

[4] "Report on the Subject of a Maltese Settlement in Cyprus," by the Minister of Migration, 17 Dec. 1928, Malta Government Printing Office, 1928.

[5] G. S. Georghallides, *A Political and Administrative History of Cyprus 1918-1926* (Nicosia: Cyprus Research Centre, 1979), 4-6.

[6] The consul reports were discussed in WO 106/6112, "Report on Cyprus, compiled in the intelligence branch, quarter-master-generals department" by Captain A. R. Savile, 31 Aug. 1878, 2-3.

[7] R. Hamilton Lang, "Cyprus," Parts I and II, in *MacMillan's Magazine* 38 (May 1878-October 1878) (London: Macmillan and Co., and NY 1878), 325-347.

[8] WO 106/6112, "Report on Cyprus, compiled in the intelligence branch, quarter-master-generals department" by Captain A. R. Savile, 31 Aug. 1878, 98.

[9] Sir Garnet Joseph Wolseley served as High Commissioner of Cyprus from 1878 to 1879.

[10] Rolandos Katsiaounis, *Labour, Society and Politics in Cyprus during the second half of the nineteenth century* (Nicosia: Cyprus Research Centre, 1996), 107.

A *kile* is a dry measure roughly equal to a bushel. See *The Redhouse Turkish-English Dictionary* (Istanbul: Redhouse, 2000), 531.

[11] The consul reports were discussed in WO 106/6112, "Report on Cyprus, compiled in the intelligence branch, quarter-master-generals department" by Captain A. R. Savile, 31 Aug. 1878, 2-3.

[12] Letter from Sir Garnet Wolseley to the Marquis of Salisbury, Sept. 29, 1878, in FO 78/3373, "Correspondence respecting an Ordinance enacted in Cyprus, providing for the Execution of Public Works," No. 1.

[13] Letter from the Marquis of Salisbury to Sir G. Wolseley, Oct. 25, 1878, in FO 78/3373, "Correspondence respecting an Ordinance enacted in Cyprus, providing for the Execution of Public Works," No. 2. The twenty-two mile Limassol-Platres road opened in mid-June 1879 at a cost of £11,900, built with the forced labor of up to 6,000 Cypriot men and women. The government required surrounding villages to contribute working parties, with each person paid a paltry one shilling per day. See Anne Cavendish, ed., *Cyprus 1878: The Journal of Sir Garnet Wolseley* (Nicosia: Cyprus Popular Bank Cultural Centre, 1991), note at 166. Esmé Scott-Stevenson, the wife of Andrew Scott-Stevenson, Commissioner of Kyrenia, observed men, women and boys working in gangs on the new road under construction from Limassol to Kyrenia. She counted over one thousand employed on the road, "every batch of a hundred having an overseer, who, when they lagged, cried out, and threatened their backs with a light whip." Esme Scott-Stevenson, *Our Home in Cyprus, with illustrations and a map*, 3rd ed. (London: Chapman and Hall, Ltd, 1880), 231.

[14] Report by Andrew Scott-Stevenson, Commissioner of Kyrenia, to Falk Warren, Chief Secretary, January 27, 1881, 41, cited in Rolandos Katsiaounis, *Labour, Society and Politics in Cyprus during the second half of the nineteenth century* (Nicosia: Cyprus Research Centre, 1996), 134.

[15] Katsiaounis, *Labour, Society and Politics*, 134.

[16] Charles A. Price covers this problem at length in *Malta and the Maltese, A Study in Nineteenth Century Migration* (Melbourne: Georgian House, 1954).

[17] Price, *Malta and the Maltese*, 230.

[18] *Ibid.*, 168-172.

[19] Barry York, "Maltese Migration: Historical Statistics, 1890-1938," In *Working Paper No. 14, Department of Demography*, Australian National University, Canberra, ACT, 2600 (1996), 1.

[20] *Ibid.*, 20-46.

[21] Price, *Malta and the Maltese*, 12-3

[22] Lord Wolseley to Lady Wolseley, July 18, 1878, in Sir George Arthur, ed., *The Letters of Lord and Lady Wolseley 1870-1911* (London: William Heinemann, 1922), 30-32.

[23] K. W. Scharr, M. Given, and G. Theocharous, *Under the Clock: Colonial Architecture and History in Cyprus, 1878-1960* (Bank of Cyprus, 1995), 23.

[24] Esmé Scott-Stevenson, *Our Home in Cyprus, with illustrations and a map*, 3rd ed. (London: Chapman and Hall, Ltd., 1880), 69.

[25] CO 883/2, "Maltese Emigration to Cyprus," Memorandum to Governor of Cyprus from A. Dingli, Oct. 1878

[26] Anne Cavendish, ed., *Cyprus 1878: The Journal of Sir Garnet Wolseley*, (Nicosia: Cyprus Popular Bank Cultural Centre, 1991), 150.

[27] *Ibid.*, 159-60.

[28] CO 883/2, Enclosure 2 in No. 1, Letter dated May 26, 1879, from Sir A. Dingli at the Latin Monastery in Nicosia, to Colonel G. R. Greaves, in "Correspondence relating to Projects of Maltese Colonization in Cyprus," Colonial Office, Aug. 1882.

[29] Borton was Governor of Malta from May 1878 to May 1884. See R. H. Vetch, "Sir Arthur Borton," in *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (Oxford University Press, 2004-7)

[30] CO 883/2, "Financial Administration of Cyprus: Sir Biddulph's Reply to Mr. Fairfield's Memorandum" (continuance of Mediterranean No. 5), Colonial Office May 1883.

[31] CO 883/2, Enclosure 2 in No. 1, Letter dated May 26, 1879, from Sir A. Dingli at the Latin Monastery in Nicosia, to Colonel G. R. Greaves, in "Correspondence relating to Projects of Maltese Colonization in Cyprus," Colonial Office, Aug. 1882

[32] CO 883/2, Enclosure 2 in No. 6, Cyprus, No. XXIII, 1879, Biddulph to Lord Granville, July 1880.

[33] C. V. Owen (rev. James Lunt), "Sir Robert Biddulph," in *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (Oxford: University Press, 2004-6). Biddulph served as High Commissioner of Cyprus from 1879 to 1886.

[34] Price, *Malta and the Maltese*, 41.

[35] Ibid, 80-83.

[36] CO 883/2, Enclosure 1 in No. 7, August 26, 1879, Fenech to Sir Arthur Borton, Governor and Commander-in-Chief in and over the Island of Malta, "The Petition of Mr. Vincenzo Fenech, Land Surveyor No. 4 in the Land Revenue Department."

[37] CO 883/2, Report from Robert Biddulph, Cyprus High Commissioner, to Earl Granville, July 10, 1880.

[38] CO 883/2, Report by Commissioner James Inglis, Famagusta, 19 August 1880.

[39] CO 883/2, Enclosure 1 in No. 7, Sir Arthur Borton, Governor and Commander-in-Chief in and over the Island of Malta, Report on "The Petition of Mr. Vincenzo Fenech, Land Surveyor No. 4 in the Land Revenue Department," August 26, 1879.

[40] CO 883/2, Enclosure in No. 10, "Correspondence relating to Projects of Maltese Colonization in Cyprus," Colonial Office, August, 1882.

[41] CO 883/2, Letter from Mr. V. Fenech to the Chief Secretary to Government, from Larnaca, Cyprus, dated March 8, 1880, Enclosure in No. 3 in "Correspondence Relating to Projects of Maltese Colonization in Cyprus," Colonial Office, Aug. 1882.

Four tumoli equal approximately one English acre; 800 tumoli would be 200 acres, according to R. Montgomery Martin, *History of the British Colonies, Vol. 5 Possessions in Europe* (London: James Cochrane & Co., 1835).

[42] CO 883/2, Enclosure 1 in No. 7, "Correspondence relating to Projects of Maltese Colonization in Cyprus," CO, August, 1882 Letter to Sir Arthur Borton, Governor of Malta, from Mr. Vincenzo Fenech, Land Surveyor No. 4 in the Land Revenue Department (Naxaro, August 26, 1879)

[43] Chief Secretary's Files (Malta) 6558, 6633 (1880) noted in Price (1954), 175.

[44] Chief Secretary's Files (Malta) 6876 (1880) noted in Price (1954), 175-6. A dönüm in the Ottoman Empire was defined as "forty standard paces in length and breadth," but varied from place to place. At this time in Cyprus the dönüm was 919.3 square metres, or 9,895 sq. ft., but the metric dunam adopted in 1928 is 1,000 meters. Roza I. M. El-Eini, *Mandated Landscape* (Routledge, 2006), xxiii, cited in [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Dunan].

[45] Fr. Lawrence E. Attard, *Early Maltese Emigration, 1900-1914* (Valletta, Malta: Gulf Publishing Ltd., 1983), 1.

[46] "Report on the Subject of a Maltese Settlement in Cyprus," to the Legislative Assembly from the Minister of Migration, Dec. 17, 1928, Malta Government Printing Office (1928), 5.

[47] *Ibid.* Sir Charles Anthony King-Harman was the High Commissioner of Cyprus from 1904-1911. See "Colonial administrators and post-independence leaders in Cyprus," in *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Oxford University Press 2004-7).

[48] *Ibid.* Sir Malcolm Stevenson was acting High Commissioner of Cyprus 1918-1920, High Commissioner 1921-1925, and Governor 1925-1926. (See "Colonial administrators and post-independence leaders in Cyprus," *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Oxford University Press 2004-7).

[49] "Report on the Subject of a Maltese Settlement in Cyprus," to the Legislative Assembly from the Minister of Migration, December 17, 1928, Malta Government Printing Office (1928), 5.

[50] *Ibid.*, 5-6

[51] *Ibid.*, 6.

[52] *Ibid.*, 7. Danny Goldman, in "Jewish Settlers in Cyprus During the British Rule, 1880s-1940s" in *Journal of Cyprus Studies* [*JCS* hereafter] 12 (2006): 21-38; 27, describes the Margo Settlement established by a Jewish immigrant group in 1897, "next to the road connecting Nicosia and Lanarka," on land purchased from the Greek Cypriot, Georgio Papadopoulu. The Margo settlement was successful for a time, but failed due to the summer heat, malaria, lack of running water, and social problems arising from feelings of cultural isolation. The settlement was abandoned in 1912.

[53] Cyprus High Commissioner's Annual Report, 1927

[54] "Report on the Subject of a Maltese Settlement in Cyprus," from the Minister of Migration, Dec. 17, 1928, Malta Government Printing Office, 1928, 8.

[55] CO 883/2, "Maltese Emigration to Cyprus," Memorandum to the Governor, from Crown Advocate Dingli, Oct. 1878, 6.

[56] CO 67/372/7, "Scandal of the Maltese Camp at Dekhelia: British Taxpayer Still Keeps 339, Passport as Soup Ticket for the Idle," in the *Cyprus Mail*, Nov. 17, 1950

[57] *Ibid.*

[58] *Ibid.*

[59] *Ibid.*

[60] CO 67/372/7, "Inward telegram," from Sir A. Wright, Cyprus, to the Secretary of State for the Colonies, Dec. 8, 1950.

[61] CO 67/372/7, letter from Mr. Griffiths to Mr. Harris, Jan. 1, 1951.

[62] Cons, Emma (Dec. 1896). "Armenian Exiles in Cyprus." In *Contemporary Review* December 1896: 888-895.

[63] Danny Goldman, "Famagusta's Historic Detention and Refugee Camps," *JCS* 11 (2005): 29-54; 48. See also D. Goldman, "Jewish Settlers in Cyprus:" 21-38. After 1943, Jews escaping to Turkey became eligible for transportation to Palestine where they would be placed in camps and gradually released as legal immigrants, but Jews in Cyprus would remain there. (WP (43) 277, CAB 66/38, cited in George H. Kelling, *Countdown to Rebellion, British Policy in Cyprus, 1939-1955* (NY, London: Greenwood Press, 1990), 58, note 95.

[64] CAB 66/15, Memorandum by Secretary of State for the Colonies, March 28, 1941, cited in Kelling, *Countdown*, 57, note 94.