



International development: challenges for a world in transition

Londons Greek community

Floya Anthias

In the 1930s when the first Cypriots came over, they already developed organisations. Some of them to help migrants find work. Others to help them keep their language and their cultural traditions. Then when the bulk of Cypriots came over in the late 50's and 60's they found those, and developed new ones as well. For example this centre itself is one of the outcomes of some of those struggles and activities. Cypriots fought quite hard to get Haringay Council to actually build this and were quite successful in that.

Narrator

British born Cypriots, Aggie Zachariah and John Antonio are old friends, and meet up on a regular basis.

Aggie Zachariah

What's he doing? Is he having something to eat as well?

This is typical manjana Cypriot style – later. Don't worry about the customers as long as he's...look he's eating

Susie Constantinides, Cypriot Community Centre

This is a drop in centre. They can come anytime. They can take advantage of the building in any way. We've got for example, normal youth things, like Tai Kwando, where all your limbs come off! And then we've got cultural things. We've got the women's only dance class because they want to be on their own, fair enough. Then we have mixed traditional classes. Then we have language classes. English as a second language, for those who want to. Even language classes for older ones who may have missed out on their writing part, literacy, great. And then we have Greek classes, Turkish classes. Then we have people who aren't Cypriot origin who might want to brush up. And then you have people who are married to example, or even professionals who work with Cypriots, who'd like to learn the languages.

Aggie Zachariah

Nothing's really changed. There are no women in here. There are no young people. Actually there's no one our age. It's our parents and their parents who are still in here. But here they're not gambling with money. Looking around at people here, it's not something that I would do, and it's not something that my children would do. And perhaps in twenty, thirty, forty years time, these places won't exist anymore. Because there won't be a call for it. Because at our age, yes we go out.. We're more classy now. We'll go to the Sportsman Casino in London on a night out. But our wives will come with us, and we'll all dress up. That's where we do our gambling now.

To me, it's not for me. I don't miss it. I don't even think I should be in here. Maybe I'm going to get told off in a minute, because I'm too young.

We should get out of here.

Narrator

Greek Cypriots have made London home, without losing their attachments to Cyprus.

George Eracleous

London is a good place to be. And also it's a place to make noise. In other words to make a living. Give your children a better education.

Narrator

London Greek Radio keeps its listeners in touch with each other and with events in Cyprus. Through music, news and competitions, a Greek Cypriot identity is kept alive for younger generations in London.

George Eracleous - *DJ speaking in Greek*

....table for two!...

Aggie Zachariah

I remember when we were younger, all we used to hear in England was Demis Roussos and Nana Mouskouri. And it was as if that was the only music there was.

John Antonio

...Greek at that time wasn't it!

Aggie Zachariah

Do you remember those Christmas specials with Nana Mouskouri was the other one. And we had to watch it.

John Antonio

We all used to sit around the table and just to listen to the odd Greek word that she used to sing. Because it was mainly English songs she was singing, with the odd Greek work. And it was manamoo, oh look, it's Greek, Greek, Greek you know.

Female Presenter

Was that important to your parents then?

John Antonio

Oh yes, very important.

Aggie Zachariah

Oh yes. It was.. because then 15, 20, 25 years ago a lot of the Cypriots had only been here for 10 years or so, 15 years. So it was nice to hear a bit of Greek.