

Durrell's bitterness: Lawrence Durrell in Cyprus, 1953–56

More than fifty years after its publication, *Bitter Lemons* – Lawrence Durrell's memoir of his stay in Cyprus in the 1950s (1953-56) – still attracts a regular following, good sales, and a fair share of mentions in the press. Despite the book's success, however, the history of *Bitter Lemons* and of Durrell's years in Cyprus has, as yet, not been the subject of any book. My project has two main aims: (a) to trace in detail Durrell's life during the three years he spent in Cyprus, and (b) to map out the significance of a book that, on the one hand, brought fame and recognition to Durrell in the UK, and, on the other, caused reactions in Cyprus as an overtly political book that supported colonialism. In addition to addressing issues of post-coloniality in Cyprus's history, my book intends to experiment with form in Life Writing: it proposes to be the biography of an autobiography, or the biography of a book. Moving away from the cradle-to-grave approach to biography, it aims to illuminate the whole by looking at the specific; in this case, to shed light on Durrell's life and overall production by closely inspecting three years in his life that brought about several changes – both in his literary career and in his deeply unconventional and controversial personal life.