

TURKISH CYPRIOTS - A PEOPLE UNFAIRLY TREATED AND ISOLATED BY THE INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY

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The struggles of the Turkish people of Cyprus for their national existence and fundamental human rights go back to the period of the British occupation of the island¹. When Cyprus was provisionally placed under the British administration by the treaty of alliance known as the 'Cyprus Convention', signed on 4 June 1878 between the Ottoman Empire and England², the Turkish Cypriots began to face a gigantic task in striving to preserve their ethnic, cultural and religious identity against a Hellenophile British administration that often tended to neglect and to abandon them to the mercy of the dominant, vociferous, aggressive and bigoted Greek and Greek Cypriot residents of the island³.

As soon as England (Britain) occupied Cyprus, many Turkish Cypriots, who did not wish to be under alien rule, emigrated to Turkey. According to John Reddaway, a former British colonial officer in the island: 'The historian may well discern errors and sins of omission and commission in the actions Britain took during the 100 years since this British connection in Cyprus... In disputes between the two communities at the local level, the Greek Cypriots probably fared better than the Turks in getting the ear of British officials because of their greater skill in argument'. However, Reddaway does not mention the philhellenism of many British colonial administrators⁴.

¹ See S. R. Sonyel: *The struggles of the Turkish people of Cyprus*, Cyprus Turkish Association publication, London, 1995, passim.

² For the Cyprus Convention see Public Record Office (PRO), Colonial Office documents CO 67/22; Command Paper 2057; Turkey No.36 (1878); Foreign Office (FO) documents, FO 371/file 2789: Sir Austen Layard to Foreign Office, dispatch, Istanbul, 31.5.1878; *Accounts and Papers* (AP), CIX; Command 9088; FO 371/9897/C 19180: Confidential memorandum by J.W. Headlam-Morley and W.J. Childs, London, 4.12.1924; see also J. C. Hurewitz: *Diplomacy in the Near And Middle East*, v.II, New Jersey, 1956, pp. 188 ff.

³ Sonyel, op. cit, pp. 9 ff.

⁴ John Reddaway: *Burdened with Cyprus, the British connection*, London, 1986, pp. 3 and 28.

The British Colonial Office documents preserved at the Public Record Office in London reveal the existence of Greek subjects on the island since December 1879⁵. When the British occupied the island, 'patriotic committees' were set up in Greece 'to encourage the emigration of Greeks to Cyprus for the promotion of the cause of the union of Cyprus with Greece (*enosis*)'⁶. With the coming to power of William Ewart Gladstone and his Liberal Party in England, following the general election held in April 1880, the influx of Greek subjects into the island reached its peak⁷. Greece had begun to send to Cyprus many teachers, lawyers, doctors, priests and other agitators in order to organise the Greek Cypriot community for the *enosis* movement⁸.

The agitation among the Greek Cypriots for *enosis* had reached such proportions that, in April 1882, the leaders of the Turkish Cypriot community sent a memorial to British Foreign Secretary Lord Kimberley, complaining against this situation; but nothing was done about it⁹. The years 1885 to 1888 witnessed much draught and failure of crops. There was misery almost all over the island, which compelled many Turks to emigrate to Turkey. By the turn of the century the influx of Hellenic subjects into Cyprus had reached huge proportions¹⁰. All this time the *enosis* movement was continuing. In this agitation and the disturbances which continued until the outbreak the First World War, Greek priests and school teachers took pride of place.

In 1914 when Turkey entered the First World War on the side of Germany and Austria, as Britain and Russia would not accept it into their alliance because they had secret plans to partition it, the British government annexed Cyprus on 5 November 1914. The outbreak of the war proved a disaster for the Turkish Cypriots, some of whom opted for Ottoman citizenship and left the island, as they were declared alien enemies by Britain,

⁵ CO 67/9: Biddulph to Salisbury, dispatch, Nicosia, 6.1.1880; Chobham to Biddulph, dispatch, Larnaca, 5.1.1880.

⁶ George Hill: *History of Cyprus*, vol. IV, 1952, p. 496.

⁷ CO 67/12 and 18: Biddulph to Salisbury, dispatch, Nicosia, 1.5.1880 and Biddulph to Kimberley, dispatch, Nicosia, 10.1.1881.

⁸ Turkish Cypriot Human Rights Committee: *A chronology of the Cyprus problem, 1878-1980*, June 1980, p. 16; see also Harry Luke: *Cyprus, a portrait and an appreciation*, London, 1957, p. 173; C. W. Orr: *Cyprus under British rule*, London, 1972, pp.131-2; CO 883/6: Report of British inspector of schools, 1901.

⁹ *Accounts and Papers*, ZHC 1,4465,1882: Command 3384: Biddulph to Kimberley, dispatch, Nicosia, 21.4.1882, transmitting a further memorandum from the Muslim community, dated 17.4.1882. It was signed by Esseid Ahmed Asim, Mufti, and a number of deputies.

¹⁰ CO 67/124/26615: Haynes Smith to Chamberlain, confidential dispatch, Troodos, 4.8.1900.

whilst some Turkish Cypriot leaders were imprisoned in the Kyrenia and Larnaca castles¹¹. In 1915 Cyprus was officially offered to Greece in order to lure it into the war on the side of Britain, but the Turkish Cypriots protested against this¹². One could imagine the great sense of relief of the Turkish Cypriots when Greece refused to accept the offer, as its government was pro-German.

Following the defeat of the Ottoman State, the signing of the Armistice of Mudros on 30 October 1918, and during the ensuing war of Turkish national liberation under Mustafa Kemal [Atatürk], Turkish Cypriots went through a very dangerous period, whilst the Greek Cypriots continued their agitation for *enosis*¹³. After the signing of the Treaty of Lausanne in July 1923 many Turkish Cypriots realised that Turkey's rule would not be restored; hence they preferred to migrate to Anatolia¹⁴. Meanwhile, on 10 March 1925 Cyprus was, by Royal Letters Patent, proclaimed a Crown Colony¹⁵. At the same time many teachers flooded into Cyprus from Greece and were given much liberty in settling in the island; carrying on anti-British and Philhellenic agitation and propaganda. In October 1931 Greek Cypriots, incited by many Philhellenes and Hellenic Greeks perambulating among them, caused riots all over the island. They burnt down the Government House in Nicosia, where Governor Sir Ronald Storrs resided¹⁶. As a result a number of people were killed. The ringleaders were arrested and deported¹⁷. Thereafter a policy of repression was implemented by the colonial administration until the outbreak of the Second World War from which Turkish Cypriots suffered equally together with the Greek Cypriots¹⁸.

Until the early 1950s Cyprus was relatively peaceful, and the Greek Cypriot community, favoured by the British colonial administrators, was prospering very rapidly at the expense of the Turkish community, which

¹¹ Turkish Cypriot Human Rights Committee: *A chronology of the Cyprus problem*, op.cit, p.17.

¹² CO 67/50520: Clauson to Colonial Office, cipher telegram, Nicosia, 2.11.1915.

¹³ CO 67/202/20544: M. Irfan and A. Sait to High Commissioner, confidential letter, Nicosia, 11.4.1921.

¹⁴ Pierre Oberling: *The road to Bellapais*, New York, 1982, p.53.

¹⁵ *Cyprus Gazette Extraordinary*, no.1.

¹⁶ Hill, op.cit, p.414; *The Times*, London, 23.10.1931.

¹⁷ Command 4045, 1931: Disturbances in Cyprus in October 1931. FO 371/15956/ C 2760; Colonial Office to Foreign Office, dispatch no. 98555/2, transmitting CO 4045, March 1931; see *Nuova Angolegia*, May 1932.

¹⁸ Oberling, op.cit., pp. 33 ff.

was neglected and abandoned to its own destiny, despite its loyalty to Britain. The Cypriot Greeks, who considered themselves as Hellenes, began to show their gratitude to British favouritism and indulged in a more violent campaign for *enosis*, despite the fact that, never in its entire history had Cyprus formed a complete and integral part of Greece¹⁹. The Greeks, in their attempt to over-power and silence the Turkish Cypriot community, began a campaign of insults, injustice, discrimination and hostility against the Turks. As this campaign for *enosis* grew in tempo under the leadership of the Greek Orthodox Church and of professional agitators from Greece, who had been infiltrating the island since the British occupation, attacks on the Turks and on their rights, and their humiliation in every sphere of life: discrimination in government services and at municipal functions, increased in proportion, thereby forcing the Turkish Cypriots increasingly to rely on their community's resources for self support and protection²⁰.

Nourished by Greek textbooks, fanned by the Greek Orthodox clergy, provoked by the Greek educationalists and politicians, the Greek dream of the *Great Idea (Megali İdea)*²¹ which *enosis* forms part of, spread and is still cherished by many Greeks, despite its setback twice: once in the hands of Mustafa Kemal [Atatürk] in western Anatolia in the summer of 1922, when the ravaging Greek army was expelled from Turkey by force of arms, and the second time at the hands of Turkish Prime Minister Bülent Ecevit who, in July 1974, forestalled the Greek plans to annex Cyprus to Greece, following the EOKA *coup d'état* against the Makarios administration, which coup was supported by the junta in Greece. Nevertheless, it was because of this dream of the *Megali İdea*, of resurrecting the Byzantine Empire, that the Turks of Cyprus were persecuted by the Greeks, deprived of their basic human rights, treated as third class citizens after the Armenians, and even massacred²².

The *enosis* movement intensified under the ambitious young Bishop Mouskos, who, as Archbishop Makarios III of Cyprus took the oath on 20 October 1950 that he would work for the Greek Cypriots' 'national free-

¹⁹ FO 371/1951/C 6403: Confidential memorandum of the Colonial Office on 'British policy in Cyprus', September 1935; FO 371/9897/C 19108: Confidential memorandum by J.G. Tahourdin, first secretary of the British Embassy, Athens, 22.12.1947; FO 371/5219/E 14338: Reply by Lt-Colonel Amery to a question by Lt-Commander Kenworthy, House of Commons, 15.11.1920; see also Hill IV, p.488.

²⁰ Turkish Information Centre: *Cyprus - the problem, in the light of truth*, Nicosia, September 1967.

²¹ Nancy Crawshaw: *The Cyprus Revolt*, London, 1978, p. 13; see also Oberling, op.cit., p. 11; Zenon Stavrinides: *The Cyprus Conflict, national identity and statehood*, Nicosia, 1975, pp. 19-20.

²² Oktay Öksüzoglu: *Persecution of Islam in Cyprus*, Nicosia, undated, p. 3.

dom' and would 'never waiver from the policy of uniting Cyprus with Motherland Greece'²³. He, together with George Grivas, a ruthless Greek Cypriot adventurer, colonel in the Greek army, concocted to set up the EOKA terrorist organisation in order to force the British out, to cow down the Turks and to bring about *enosis* by force. On 1 April 1955, with the blessings and material help of Makarios and the Greek Orthodox Church, there began a reign of terror and EOKA bloodbath in Cyprus during which the Turks too suffered and lost many loved ones²⁴. After four years of bloodbath, a partnership government was established on 16 August 1960 under the Zürich and London Treaties. Turkey, the U.K. and Greece took part as Guarantor Powers. The Treaty of Guarantee provided that the Guarantor Powers had a right and obligation to intervene to re-establish the state of affairs created by the Zürich Agreement of 19 February 1959; however, the Greeks became the active and the Turks the passive partners in the partnership government, as the latter's rights and freedoms were gradually curtailed²⁵. As a result, the partnership republic could not live long. With the objective of Hellenising and uniting the island with Greece through *enosis*, the Greek Cypriot leaders, supported by the junta regime in Greece, concocted and put into force the notorious Akritas plan for the total elimination of the Turkish Cypriots.

In December 1963 Makarios, who had been abusing the Cyprus Constitution for a long time, tried his utmost to abolish most of the Turkish Cypriots' rights, and when the Turks refused to accept this, on 21 December 1963 Greek Cypriot private armies attacked Turkish Cypriots throughout the island. Before the very eyes of the Western World, the religious leader of the Christian Orthodox Cypriots indulged in, or incited, a campaign of terror, murder, intimidation, arson, rape and genocide against the Turkish Cypriots. Entire Turkish villages were wiped out and their occupants, if not killed, were forced to take refuge in areas predominantly Turkish. About 30,000 Turkish Cypriots found themselves homeless refugees overnight. They had to depend on the charity of Turkey's government and its people in order to survive²⁶. In the same period many Turks - innocent civilians, including women and children - were murdered and thousands

²³ 'Chronology of the Cyprus conflict', *Turkish News*, London, 1.2.1979, p. 23.

²⁴ S. R. Sonyel: *The Turco-Greek Conflict*, London, 1976; Crawshaw, op.cit., pp. 156 and 170.

²⁵ Sonyel: *Struggles of the Turkish people...*, op.cit., pp. 41 ff.

²⁶ UN Secretary-General U Thant's report S/8285, 8.12.1967; see also S. R. Sonyel: 'Birth of the Turkish Federated State of Northern Cyprus in blood and tears', *Special News Bulletin*, nicosia, vol.32, no. 4117, dated 13.10.1979.

maimed or wounded. Some of them were shot in their homes; others were rounded up in periodic purges, never to be seen again.

It was obvious that the Greek extremists wished to exterminate the Turkish Cypriots once and for all. The interview which Makarios gave to Oriana Falaci, in New York, in November 1974, shows this very clearly. 'One day', Makarios said, 'he (Brigadier Ioannides, who later became the leader of the Junta in Greece) came to see me with Nicos Sampson (a cold-blooded Greek Cypriot assassin), to suggest a project that would have settled forever the problem of Cyprus. He kissed my hand respectfully and said: "Your Beatitude, here is my project: to attack the Turkish Cypriots suddenly everywhere on the island and eliminate them to the last one..."²⁷. Even Makarios had shuddered at the thought of such a satanic plan.

The violations of the human rights of the Turkish Cypriots, particularly since the establishment of the now defunct Republic of Cyprus, are well known to the Turks but not to the international community, owing to the propaganda machinery of the Greeks. The international community shut their eyes to what the Greeks and Hellenes were doing to the Cypriot Turks, and still continue to recognise the Greek Cypriot state in the south as the legitimate government of the defunct Republic. What the Greeks tried to do in 1963, 1967 and 1974 was nothing but an attempted genocide against the Turkish Cypriots within the meaning of the UN Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide, as approved by General Assembly resolution 260A on 12 January 1951. Greece, Turkey and Cyprus were among the signatories of that instrument. Makarios had already declared, in a speech at his birth place, the village of Panayia, on 4 September 1962: 'Until this small Turkish community, forming a part of the Turkish race, which has been the terrible enemy of Hellenism, is expelled, the duty of the heroes of EOKA can never be considered as terminated'²⁸.

Even Makarios himself indirectly threatened the Turks with genocide. In a speech at Rizokarpaso on 26 May 1965, he declared: 'Either the whole of Cyprus is to be united with Greece, or it will become a holocaust... The road to the fulfilment of our national aspirations may be full of difficulties, but

²⁷ For the top secret Greek Akritis Plan aiming at the extermination of the Turkish Cypriots see Greek Cypriot newspaper *Patris* of 21.4.1966.

²⁸ Andrew Faulds (ed.): *Excerpta Cypria for today - a source book on the Cyprus Problem*, London, 1988, p. 47.

we shall reach the goal, which is *enosis*, alive or dead'²⁹. No wonder that the then British Prime Minister Harold Macmillan was, in the summer of 1958, contemplating to bring criminal proceedings against Makarios for 'complicity in murder and incitement to murder'; but had to change his mind owing to the advice given to him by the Attorney-General as the Law Officer of the Crown, in view of the non-availability of 'admissible evidence'³⁰.

Following the destruction of the constitutional order by the Greek Cypriots in 1963, the two communities on the island established their own separate administrations. The Greek Cypriots usurped the title of 'the government of Cyprus' and pretended to be the 'government of the Republic of Cyprus', even though it was not (and still it is not), either in law or in fact. The illegal writ of the Greek Cypriots never ran over the Turkish Cypriot people. The international community, however, treated the *de facto* Greek Cypriot administration as the government of Cyprus for convenience. This has constituted the main impediment in the way of a negotiated settlement until now. The Greek Cypriot administration utilised the advantages of recognition, and its economy has flourished at the expense of the Turkish Cypriots since it acquired all the international funds and aids, even those given for the benefit of the Turkish Cypriot people. The Turkish Cypriots, on the other hand, after they were expelled at gun point from all the state organs of the partnership state, faced all kinds of human rights violations.

The tragedy of the Turkish Cypriots caused by the Greek Cypriots and the Hellenic Greeks will be told by many generations to come. The Turkish Cypriot people were relieved from this agony, and saved from total extermination, only by the timely intervention of Turkey on 20 July 1974, undertaken in accordance with the 1960 Treaty rights and obligations. Turkey refrained from exercising this right until the junta in Athens, then ruling Greece, staged a *coup d'état* on 15 July 1974, through its military forces in the island, with Greek Cypriot collaboration. This being the case, it is total distortion of historical facts to describe the legitimate and justified Turkish intervention as an 'invasion' when it was clearly Greece, not Turkey, that had invaded and occupied Cyprus. During the coup, which was the final phase

²⁹ Pierre Oberling: 'The Cyprus Tragedy', *New Cyprus*, vol. V, no. 10, May 1990, p. 37.

³⁰ CO 926/639; S. R. Sonyel: 'Wanted for murder', *Impact International*, vol.20, No.5, London, 9-22.3.1990, pp. 8-9.

of the armed take-over of Cyprus, both Turkish and Greek Cypriots, who opposed the new regime, were killed in large numbers and many of them had to flee from their homes. As a result of the Vienna Agreement in 1975 whereby the two sides agreed on a regrouping of the population in their own respective territories, Turkish Cypriots preferred to move to the northern part of the island and the Greek Cypriots to the south. Today, the presence of Turkish forces in Northern Cyprus is continuing since it is observed as a deterrent against the repetition of Greek Cypriot aggression, and it continues to be a vital security requirement for the Turkish Cypriot people.

The effective separation of the two communities since July 1974, when Turkey used its treaty powers and intervened in the island, has helped the Turkish Cypriots to live in peace and security and to establish in 1975 what they called the Turkish Federated State of North Cyprus, with the hope that, sooner or later they would establish a federal system of government with the Greek Cypriots. When this did not materialise by 1983, they set up the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus [TRNC]. Since Turkey's intervention, the inter-communal clashes have ceased. Both of the communities enjoy the blessings of the island in their own region, on an equal footing. This, however, should not be misunderstood. Through their world-wide propaganda campaign the Greek and Greek Cypriot joint front has been able to convince the world that 'Cyprus was a paradise until 1974 when Turkey's intervention turned it into hell'. Nicos Rolandis, the then Foreign Minister of the Greek Cypriot administration, publicly claimed, in an address to the Lyons Club in Limassol on 15 May 1980, that 'the Cyprus problem has been created by an invasion carried out by Turkey against one of the smallest, non-aligned countries'³¹, which is far from the truth. The Greek Cypriot propaganda machine is deliberately cultivating and encouraging, with some degree of success, this erroneous view, in order to obscure the culpable actions and mistaken policies of Greek and Greek Cypriot leaders for over a century. The Greeks hope that, by making the world believe that the Cyprus problem, and the present situation, came about as a result of the events of 1974, they can put the clock back to pre-1974 days, which Spiros Kiprianou, former Greek Cypriot president, has described as 'happy days'

³¹ Official press release, no. 6, of Greek Cypriot Public Information Office, 15.5.1980; *Cyprus Mail*, Nicosia, 16.5.1980.

- for the Greek Cypriots of course, when the latter had military supremacy in Cyprus over the Turkish Cypriots, who were scattered in enclaves all over the island, and whom the Greek Cypriots completely dominated and had at their mercy.

The Greek Cypriot administration would thus have the world believe that Turkey's intervention was carried out purely for political and military reasons. It fails to mention, however, that it was the repeated and flagrant violations of the human rights of Turkish Cypriots for more than 11 years that prompted Turkey's intervention, and overlooks the fact that, in the absence of a political settlement, the Turkish military forces in Cyprus are the only guarantee for the protection of the human rights of Turkish Cypriots. Since the Greeks' destruction of the 1960 Republic of Cyprus, through force of arms, the main aim of the Greek Cypriot side has been to constantly deny to the Turkish Cypriot people any opportunity to engage in political, economic, social, cultural and sporting contact with the rest of the world, and aiming to bring about their collapse and submission to Greek demands. The embargoes imposed on the Turkish Cypriot people range from denying them the right of representation in international forums; preventing or restricting their travel abroad, as well as their communication with the outside world as direct flights cannot take place to and from North Cyprus; exports of products like citrus and potatoes to Europe through its ports are prevented. Moreover, trade and tourism between North Cyprus and the outside world is curtailed; all cultural and sporting relations with other countries are hampered; and attempts are being made to prevent academic cooperation between the universities in North Cyprus and other countries³².

The Turkish Cypriot side has always supported efforts towards a comprehensive settlement of the Cyprus problem under the good office mission of the UN Secretary-General. It is in this spirit that the Turkish Cypriot side has participated in UN sponsored negotiations for decades. However, the Greek Cypriot side has made it clear that they do not want a settlement based on the principles of political equality and bi-zonality. Their rejections of the 1985-6 draft framework agreement, the UN sponsored Set of Ideas, and the package of confidence building measures of 1994, are examples of

³² *The inhuman isolation of the Turkish Cypriot people*, Public Relations Department, Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus, undated.

Greek Cypriot intransigence. Against this background, the Greek Cypriot side has astonishingly managed to convince the world of its political will for a solution, and portrayed the Turkish Cypriots as intransigent in all the long processes of negotiations.

Although the isolation of the Turkish Cypriot people is instigated by the Greek Cypriot administration, the international community, too, whether intentionally or not, participates in this by treating the Greek Cypriot side as the 'legitimate government of the whole of Cyprus'. This is the main reason as to why the isolation imposed on the Turkish Cypriots is effective. In reality, there is no UN Security Council Resolution enforcing such restrictions on the Turkish Cypriots. Nevertheless, the Greek Cypriot administration continues to violate the right of equal representation of the Turkish Cypriot people at international forums, by managing to pull the wool over the eyes of the EU, and with the complicity and threats of Greece, which compelled the EU to admit to membership a divided island - an action never heard of in the annals of Europe - and to perpetuate the economic embargo against the Turkish Cypriots. This malicious, uncalled for and unjustified economic blockade of Northern Cyprus, with the connivance of the so-called friends of Turkey - e.g. EU, NATO etc. - is inflicting severe suffering on the Turkish Cypriots. However, there is no doubt that Turkey and the Turkish Cypriot leaders are determined to protect the national identity of the Turkish Cypriots and to enable them to govern themselves. After having freed themselves from colonial rule and established a bi-communal partnership state, they declare that they could never accept to live, once again, as an oppressed 'subject community' under an administration totally in the monopoly of Greek Cypriots; nor could they accept to be put, as a result of *enosis*, under the rule of a foreign state³³.

The EU had no moral, legal or constitutional right to accept Greek South Cyprus as a full member without taking into consideration the requirements of Turkish Northern Cyprus as well, as it had promised to do so many times in the past. The EU leaders know very well that the TRNC has declared to the UN Secretary-General in New York, on 11 October 1989, the following fundamental precepts for a solution of the Cyprus problem: the reality of the existence of two politically equal people (as later recognised by

³³ S. R. Sonyel: 'Support North Cyprus call', *Arabia*, vol.4, no.40, December 1984, p. 23.

the UN Resolution No.649 of 12 March 1990), who are co-founder partners in the sovereignty of the island; the separate right to self-determination of each of these two peoples, recognised internationally since the 1950s; the acknowledgment of the distinct cultural, religious and national identities of each people; a relationship between them based on respect for each other's existence, integrity and political equality; non-use of force or violence; alignment of the policies, positions and actions of the two sides with the peaceful aim of negotiations, and abstention from contradictory practices; a bi-zonal, bi-communal federation, with adequate and effective guarantees³⁴.

The Turkish Cypriots do not wish to be treated as 'guests in Cyprus for 400 years', a phrase used by George Vassiliou, a former president of the Greek Cypriot administration during a West German television broadcast on 4 July 1989. They have been governing themselves for the past 33 years, and are quite satisfied and enjoy their newly-found freedom. Those who have ruled themselves for 33 years cannot submit to the yoke of others. Despite the uncalled for and unfair isolation imposed by the international community on the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus, the Greek Cypriots have not achieved the unification of the island, simply because they have been spoilt by Greece and a Grecophile Europe. If this isolation continues, and Turkey is ultimately refused membership of what now appears to some observers as the Christian brotherhood of EU, then what is there to deter Turkey from annexing North Cyprus?

While the Turkish Cypriot side is subjected to many restrictions, the Greek Cypriot side continues to enjoy the benefits of the title of the Republic of Cyprus, which they have usurped in 1963. Many foreign reporters and politicians have stressed in their articles, or speeches, that the isolation imposed on the Turkish Cypriot people is unjust and should be lifted. In order to put an end to this injustice and find its rightful place within the international community, the Turkish Cypriot side has always supported the efforts towards finding a comprehensive settlement to the Cyprus problem, under the good offices mission of the United Nations Secretary-General. It is in this spirit that the Turkish Cypriot side has participated in the UN-sponsored negotiations for decades. However, the Greek Cypriot side has made it clear, at every opportunity, that the Greek Cypriots do not want a settlement based on the principles of political equality and bi-zonality.

³⁴ *New Cyprus*, vol.1, no.7, August, 1985, p. 7.

The latest negotiations, which continued for 4 and half years, came to an end on 31 March 2004, as the UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan finalized the last version of the plan, well-known as the Annan plan, which was based on compromise. It envisaged a new partnership the based on the political equality of the two peoples, which would be submitted to both peoples in two separate, simultaneous referenda, on 24 April 2004. While 76 % of the Greek Cypriot people overwhelmingly rejected the plan, 65% of the Turkish Cypriot people approved it. Such an overwhelming negative response by the Greek Cypriot side demonstrated that neither the Greek Cypriot leadership, nor the Greek Cypriot people are ready to enter in a power-sharing arrangement with the Turkish Cypriots. In fact, the results of the referenda have shown which side is for a solution and which side is against a final settlement.

After the referenda, the Secretary-General of the UN, Kofi Annan, stressed in his report to the Security Council, dated 28 May 2004³⁵, that the referenda results had undone whatever rational might have existed for pressuring and isolating the Turkish Cypriots, and called upon the international community to cooperate bilaterally, and in international bodies, to eliminate the unnecessary restrictions and barriers that have had the effect of isolating the Turkish Cypriots and impeding their development. Moreover, the European Council of Foreign Ministers concluded, on 26 April 2004, that 'the Turkish Cypriot people have expressed their clear desire for a future within the EU. The Council is determined to put an end to the isolation of the Turkish Cypriot community and to facilitate the reunification of Cyprus by encouraging the economic development of the Turkish Cypriot people'.

This was followed by the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe Resolution of 1376 (2004) stating: 'The international community in particular, the Council of Europe and the EU, cannot ignore or betray the expressed desire of the majority of Turkish Cypriots for greater openness and should take rapid and appropriate steps to encourage it. The Turkish Cypriots' international isolation must cease'. On 26 April 2004 the EU Enlargement Commissioner Gunther Verhaugen stated: '... now we have to end the isolation of the North. The Commission is ready to take various measures for that aim'. Ben Chapman, Labour MP in the UK House of Commons,

³⁵ S/2004/437.

during the parliamentary debate on Cyprus on 10 January 2007 stated: 'Turkish Cypriots, who had voted for the (Annan) plan were punished with isolation and Greek Cypriots, who voted negatively, were rewarded with EU membership. The situation has reached upside down proportions. Is it not important that we resume, for example, direct links and end the isolation of Turkish Cypriots? Is that not a fundamental right for the Turkish northern Cypriots?' But these questions still remain unanswered.

On 7 July 2004, the EU Commission proposed an aid package aimed at ending the isolation of the Turkish Cypriots. The proposal envisaged the transfer of 259 million Euros as financial aid to enable direct trade with the TRNC. The European Council of Foreign Ministers could only approve the Financial Aid Regulation on 27 February 2006, owing to Greek Cypriot obstructionist efforts. Yet this decision did not meet the expectations of the Turkish Cypriots; particularly the main expectation has been the initiation of direct trade. However, the direct trade regulation, which is vital for the economic development of the Turkish Cypriot people is still pending. As progress to find a settlement based on political equality and bi-zonality can only be achieved by positive contributions of both sides in the island, the TRNC and Turkey have been putting forward numerous initiatives for reconciliation, regardless of Greek Cypriot intransigence. Turkey took the initiative on 30 May 2005 by proposing the total elimination of restrictions on all sides, which was rejected out of hand by the Greek Cypriot administration. It then proposed the 'Action Plan' on 24 January 2006, which envisages the opening of seaports and airports of Turkey to Greek Cypriots in return lifting the international restrictions on the TRNC.

The Turkish Cypriot side has also adopted a constructive approach and taken concrete unilateral steps designed to break the impasse in the process, and to contribute to the building of confidence between the two peoples. It suggested that technical committees should be established between the Turkish and Greek Cypriots in order to overcome the difficulties that arise in the daily lives of both Turkish and Greek Cypriot peoples. However, there was no positive response from the Greek Cypriot administration. As a result of the efforts of the UN, TRNC President Mehmet Ali Talat met his Greek Cypriot counterpart Tassos Papadopoulos in the presence of the UN representative at the UN residence in the buffer zone. The

two leaders agreed on five principles, including 'finding a comprehensive settlement based on bi-zonality and political equality, and on the formation of working groups and technical committees, until the end of July'. However, since no progress has been achieved, and the technical committees, which should have been functional by 31 July 2006 are yet to be established, the UN Under-Secretary for Political Affairs, İbrahim Gambari, wrote a letter to the two leaders, which was received by both sides on 16 November 2006, urging the implementation of the July agreement. The Turkish Cypriot side responded immediately, reiterating its readiness for progress. As a result, talks of the representatives of the two sides, appointed by the leaders for preparing the ground for the resumption of fully-fledged negotiations not later than the first quarter of 2007, was embarked upon, but so far borne no fruit, because of the Greeks Cypriots' delaying tactics. There is no doubt that the impasse in the UN process stems from the Greek Cypriot side's efforts to extract unilateral concessions from Turkey within the context of Turkey-EU accession negotiations.

After Mehmet Ali Talat met UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan in Geneva on 20 November 2006, Annan called for the removal of the isolation of the Turkish Cypriot people and reiterated in the report of 1 December 2006 that the international isolation of the TRNC should be lifted and a comprehensive settlement found in the island. However, these calls did not bring about tangible results. The Turkish Cypriot people are still being subjected to restrictions, now enforced by the Greek Cypriot administration with added zeal and impetus owing to the benefits accruing to the Greeks through the EU membership, whereas the Turkish Cypriots have been ignored as none of the promises made to them by the international community have been kept so far. The continued non-settlement of the issue has provided the Greek Cypriot side with the opportunity to continue its assault against the Turkish Cypriots in a more disguised way, in the form of total isolation. The Greek Cypriot leadership is holding out with the hope that the Turkish Cypriots will eventually surrender and accept the Greek Cypriot terms for a final settlement. The Turkish Cypriot side, however, remains committed to a comprehensive settlement of the Cyprus issue based on bi-zonality and political equality under the good offices mission of the UN Secretary-General. In face of this malicious and counter-productive policy of the Greek Cypriot administration, particularly under a Turcophobe and

hardliner president³⁶, it is up to the international community to take urgent measures for lifting the isolation of the Turkish Cypriot people, which will surely be a positive step towards achieving reconciliation in the island³⁷. But alas! the isolation is still continuing. According to the Turkish newspaper *Olay* of London, dated 29 June 2007, the TRNC President Mehmet Ali Talat, during a working lunch with the Foreign Minister of Sweden, Carl Bildt, lasting for almost three hours, gave full details to the Minister on the never-ending isolation imposed on the Turkish Cypriots.

Despite the absence of a political settlement in the island, and the Greek Cypriot side's responsibility for it, South Cyprus was unjustly admitted to EU membership on 1 May 2004. The EU had long pursued a policy of non-intervention in the Cyprus issue³⁸. It merely encouraged the good-offices of the UN Secretary-General in search of a lasting solution to the Cyprus conflict³⁹. According to Christopher Brewin, 'with the exception of Greece, the member-states of the EU had never shown any enthusiasm to get involved in the Cyprus question'⁴⁰. Undoubtedly, before 1990 a divided Cyprus was an unlikely candidate for EU membership. The divided island had become an intractable problem, and the situation was highly charged, from the EU's perspective, because two external parties to the Cyprus conflict were a full EU member (Greece) and an associate/aspiring member (Turkey)⁴¹. Nevertheless, on 3 July 1990 South Cyprus applied, on behalf of all of Cyprus, for accession to the EU. On 30 June 1993 the European Commission issued its *avis*, which considered Cyprus (actually South Cyprus) eligible for membership, and in expectation

³⁶ Public Record Office, British Foreign and Commonwealth Office documents, FCO 9/ File 2387, ref. WSC 023/1: Michael Percival to Miss Maeve G. Fort, secret letter, Nicosia, 13.10.1976.

³⁷ Public Relations Department, TRNC Deputy Prime Ministry and Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Nicosia, undated.

³⁸ Heinz Kramer: 'Regional conflict resolution; the Cyprus problem and European Security', *Survival*, The IISS Quarterly, Autumn 1997, p. 25.

³⁹ Halûk Kabaalioglu: 'Cyprus and the EU: a perspective', *Proceedings of the First International Congress on Cyprus Studies*, 20-23 November, 1996, Eastern Mediterranean University, Gazimagosa, 1997, p.219; Constantine Stephanou and Charalambos Tsardanides: 'The EC factor in the Greece-Turkey-Cyprus triangle', (ed.) Dimitri C. Costas: *The Greek-Turkish conflict in the 1990s*, London, 1991, pp.207-239; see also Dimitri P. Droutsas: 'The EU and the Mediterranean: the Cypriot application for full membership in the regional context' in *Cyprus and the European Union - new chances for solving an old conflict?* (eds.) Heinz-Jürgen and Hans-Jörg Brey, Munich, 1997, pp.207-9 and 212; Demetrios A. Theophylactou: *Security, identity and nation building*, Aldershot, 1995, p. 117.

⁴⁰ Christopher Brewin: 'Turkey, Greece and the EU' in *Cyprus, the need for new perspectives*, Eothen Press, 1999, p. 149.

⁴¹ John Redmond: *The next Mediterranean enlargement of the European Community*, Aldershot, 1993, p. 96.

of progress in the settlement of the Cyprus issue, confirmed that the Community would begin the process that should lead to 'Cyprus's eventual accession'. It is clear that the Commission was motivated, in part, by a belief that, accelerating this process would help bring about a solution to the Cyprus dispute⁴². In June 1994 the EU dramatically changed its position and committed itself to begin accession negotiations with South Cyprus. This *volte face* (U-turn) of the EU was the result of pressure by Greece at the Corfu summit of 24-25 June 1994. This decision was confirmed at the Essen summit in December 1994. Thus, Greece used, or rather abused, her presidency and coerced the EU by threatening not to ratify the EU-Turkey Customs Union and the treaties for enlargement involving Austria and the Scandinavian states⁴³, unless the application of South Cyprus was also considered⁴⁴.

The EU has been rightly criticised for its 'one-sided' attitude and 'unacceptable interference', not only challenging the hitherto agreed basis for a Cyprus settlement, but also threatening the basic rights of Turkish Cypriots to determine their own future, even their right to exist as a politically equal community in Cyprus. This attitude of the EU did not contribute to the solution of the Cyprus issue; on the contrary, it exacerbated it, as it made the Greek side more intransigent. When the EU was induced by Greece, who wielded her veto power, to put Greek South Cyprus on the enlargement agenda, it believed that this might act as a catalyst to the solution of the Cyprus issue. However, so far this has resulted in an *impasse*, completely opposite to EU expectations. The hope that the economic benefits of EU membership would buy the consent of the Turkish Cypriots did not materialise, nor did promises made by the EU to Turkish Cypriots.

According to German Professor Axt, the formula that EU prospects would serve as a catalyst for the settlement of the Cyprus conflict, as quoted by the European Council in Cannes in June 1995, by the Commission's Agenda 2000 issued on 16 July 1997, by the European Council of Luxembourg in December 1997 and in the draft report of the Committee on

⁴² 'EU and Cyprus: an expert view', opinion of Prof. M. H. Mendelson QC on the application of the 'Republic of Cyprus' to the EU, Lefkosa, August, 1997, p. 22.

⁴³ Peter Zervakis: 'The accession of Cyprus to the EU: the Greek viewpoint' in *Cyprus and the European Union*, op. cit, pp. 144-5' H. Tank Oğuzlu: 'Perennial conflict o everlasting peace: the EU's involvement in Cyprus', *Perceptions*, vol.VI, no.2, June-August 2002, p. 86.

⁴⁴ Clement H. Dodd: *The Cyprus Issue - a current perspective*, Eothen Press, UK, 1995, p. 18.

Foreign Affairs, Human Rights Common Security and Defence Policy of European Parliament, dated 6 June 2001, based on the anticipation that the economic and financial benefits of EU membership will be attractive to Turkish Cypriots in order to overcome their objections to accession to the EU did not materialise. Prof Axt rightly stated that the Turkish demand for equality outweighed any pecuniary gains, which never materialised anyhow, owing to Greek Cypriot intransigence⁴⁵.

There is no doubt that the EU has removed the incentives of Greek Cypriots to negotiate a new deal with the Turkish Cypriots and has given them moral support when it made it clear that the solution of the Cyprus conflict would not be a precondition for the Greek Cypriot state's membership as representing the whole island. Why would the Greek Cypriots agree to share their internationally recognised 'sovereignty' over the island with the Turkish Cypriots under a new constitutional framework in which both communities would be considered as politically equal? On the other hand, who would stop Turkey from annexing North Cyprus if her application for EU membership is ultimately turned down? Thus the EU has become a part of the Cyprus conflict between the interested parties and is favouring the Greek side. According to the *Daily Telegraph* of 15 August 1996: 'The EU tends to be sympathetic to the Greek position, and has allowed Greek Cyprus to apply for membership on behalf of the whole island, a flagrant breach of the Cyprus constitution, which prohibits political or economic union with any other country'.

The official view in the TRNC, which also reflected the view of the overwhelming majority of the Turkish Cypriots, was that the EU membership of Cyprus was a complex question which had legal, political and economic implications. It was *sui generis* in view of the special nature of the international treaties which established the original bi-communal Republic of Cyprus in 1960 and the situation prevailing in the island at that time. According to this view, on 3 July 1990 the Greek Cypriot administration had made an unilateral application for membership, under Article 237 of the treaty establishing the EEC, and purporting to act on behalf of the whole of Cyprus by using

⁴⁵ Heinz-Jurgen Axt: 'Cyprus and the EU' in *Looking into the future of Cyprus-EU Relations*, (ed.) Susanne Baier-Allen, Baden Baden, 1999, p.227.

the usurped title of government of the Republic of Cyprus⁴⁶. This application was considered by the Turkish Cypriot leaders to be illegal as the Greek administration of South Cyprus had no lawful authority to make it on behalf of the whole of the island or the Turkish Cypriot people. Turks had addressed a memorandum on 12 July 1990 to the EU and had asked for the Greek application to be regarded as null and void in law and not acted upon⁴⁷. This application was also open to objections on the ground arising from Article 1 of the Treaty of Guarantee⁴⁸ and reflected in Article 185 of the Cyprus Constitution specifying that the Republic of Cyprus undertakes not to participate, in whole or in part, in any political or economic union with any state whatsoever. Moreover, the Republic of Cyprus could not join any international organisation of which both Turkey and Greece were not members⁴⁹. Therefore legally the Greek Cypriot application was 'null and void'.

It was claimed in certain EU political circles that if Cyprus was admitted, this would also help solve the Cyprus problem. The great majority of the Turkish Cypriot people did not accept this claim, and they stated that the EU was aspiring to make itself a party to the Cyprus dispute, which was an inter-communal issue, ignoring completely the government of the TRNC and trying to influence the Turkish Cypriot people behind the back of their government 'to jump onto the Cyprus train departing for Europe'. The Turkish Cypriots did not believe that the EU, of which Greece was a member, whereas Turkey was not, could make an impartial and constructive contribution to the settlement of the Cyprus question. The more so, in view of the fact that, with its ruling of 5 July 1994 the European Court of Justice had sanctioned the terrible embargo imposed by the Greek Cypriots on the Turkish Cypriot people who were the real victims. Moreover, under pressure from Greece, who had thoroughly made a nuisance of herself, the EU had

⁴⁶ George Iacovou to Gianni de Michelis, President of the Council of European Communities, letter, dated Brussels, 3.7.1990.

⁴⁷ For documentary evidence on how the Makarios administration came to be recognised as the *de facto* 'government of Cyprus' by default, in 1964, see PRO, British Foreign Office documents, 371/173745/C 1015/167; 371/174746/C 1015/374; 371/179986/CC 1151/8A; see also S. R. Sonyel: 'Reactions in the TRNC to the Application by the Greek Cypriot administration of South Cyprus for membership of the EU', paper submitted to the conference on *Cyprus: the accession to the EU - a new tool to resolve an old conflict?* held at Munich between 22 and 24 April 1996.

⁴⁸ Command 1093, pp.86-87.

⁴⁹ Public Record Office, Foreign Office documents, FO 371/ RGC 1073/25: Record of a meeting held at the British Foreign Office on 12.2.1959 on Cyprus.

unjustly decided to consider the unilateral application of South Cyprus for EU membership, ignoring completely the legal and moral rights of the Turkish Cypriot people to be also consulted. In view of all these points, the EU could not be considered impartial.

There was no reaction to these logical and fair points raised by the Turkish side. In fact, on 6 March 1995 the EU Foreign Affairs Council reaffirmed the suitability of 'Cyprus' for accession to the EU and confirmed the EU's will to incorporate 'Cyprus' in the next stage of enlargement. It regretted the lack of progress in the inter-communal talks and considered that 'Cyprus's accession to the EU should bring increased security and prosperity to both communities on the island. In particular, it should allow the North to catch up economically, and should improve the outlook for growth and employment, particularly for the Turkish Cypriot community. 'Cyprus's accession should benefit all communities and help to bring about civil peace and reconciliation'⁵⁰. This was wishful thinking, for, nothing concrete materialised in view of the obstinacy of the Greek side.

Meanwhile, exploiting the privileges of its new EU membership, the Greek Cypriot administration is continuing vehemently its campaign of isolating the Turkish Cypriot people and enjoying the benefits accruing to it by usurping the title of 'the government of the Republic of Cyprus'. After the UN referendum on the unification of Cyprus, many world leaders and interational personalities had applauded the 'Turkish Cypriots' affirmative vote and had called for an end to the unjust isolation of the Turkish Cypriots. These calls had once more disposed of the Greek Cypriot administration's allegation that 'there is no isolation of, and embargoes on, the Turkish Cypriots' and proved that its argument is totally misleading and factually wrong. The isolation imposed on the Turkish Cypriots by the Greek Cypriot administration and the international community constrains the economic development of the TRNC. It should be stressed that the reason as to why the Turkish Cypriot economy could not reach the same level as that of the Greek Cypriot economy is not the structural character of the economy; nor is it related to structural weaknesses, low productive capacity, the size of the

⁵⁰ *Cyprus and the EU: the expert view*, published by the Foreign and Commonwealth Office, London, September 1995. See also S. R. Sonyel: 'The EU meddling in Cyprus', *Impact International*, June 1996, pp. 16-17.

population or the inability to compete. If isolation was lifted, the two communities would have the same opportunities to compete. Clearly, the continued non-settlement of the Cyprus issue has provided the Greek Cypriot side with the opportunity to continue its assault against the Turkish Cypriots in a more disguised fashion, in the form of total isolation.

Claims that the sovereignty of the Greek Cypriot administration extends over the whole island, including the territory and airspace of the TRNC, are baseless and contrary to the realities in Cyprus, namely, the existence of two independent states, each exercising sovereignty and jurisdiction within and above its respective territory on the island. Despite this reality, not only is the freedom of movement of Turkish Cypriots but also of foreign visitors is restricted. Moreover, restrictions on direct trade with foreign states has a negative impact on the development of the TRNC economy. Higher education is a fast developing sector in the TRNC and the Greek Cypriot administration is doing its utmost in order to prevent its development and to bring about its total collapse. It is of vital importance that air and sea transport to the ports and airports of North Cyprus should continue without any hindrance so that the Turkish Cypriots could develop their potential in tourism, trade, education and other sectors. Since the usurpation of the 1960 Republic of Cyprus by the Greek Cypriots, all means and privileges of the Republic have been utilised for the welfare solely of the Greek Cypriot population. The Greek Cypriot administration, by misappropriating the title of the so-called Republic of Cyprus, continues to be one of the most subsidised countries in the world. It receives massive aid from international organisations such as the IMF and the EU. If the Turkish Cypriots are not prevented from exercising their co-founder rights, they would enjoy the same economic welfare and proportionate increase in their GNP as the Greek Cypriots. This would greatly contribute to decreasing the gap between the two sides' economies and facilitate the finding of an equitable and viable settlement between the two parties.

However, it seems that the Greek Cypriot attitude would continue. In face of this unfair and counter-productive policy of the Greek Cypriot administration, it should be the responsibility of international mediators interested in the resolution of the Cyprus problem to take the necessary and urgent measures in order to end the isolation of the Turkish Cypriot people,

which will surely be a positive step for achieving reconciliation in the island. Once the ever-growing economic gap between the two sides is eliminated, the path towards conciliation and a comprehensive settlement will be opened. It is obvious that, leaving the termination of the isolation of the Turkish Cypriot people to the 'good will' of the Greek Cypriot administration would be tantamount to keeping the Turkish Cypriot people's rights and freedoms as a hostage in the hands of that administration which has a grudge against the Turkish Cypriots. In the words of Lord Maginnis of Drumglass⁵¹: "... (this isolation) denies the Turkish Cypriots the right of representation in almost every international forum; it prevents or restricts the use of the ports and airports in Northern Cyprus. It precludes the Turkish Cypriots having access to financial markets; it curtails trade and tourism, and hampers all cultural and sporting relations between the TRNC and the other countries. The Turkish Cypriots have done nothing to deserve the treatment, nor has it ever been authorised by a sanctions resolution under Chapter 7 of the UN Charter. The Turkish Cypriots have been under isolation from as long ago as 1963, when the Greek Cypriots massacred hundreds of their men, women and children, and drove them into defensive enclaves... The Turkish Cypriots have earned the right to be relieved of their isolation when they voted for the Annan plan'.

Derek Halligan, in the *Fortnight Politics*, June 2004, observed: 'The international embargo that has been in place for the last 40 years, making a mockery of international law and basic human rights, is to be reconsidered'. Andrew Borowiec, in the *Washington Times* of 7 November 2005 said: 'Hopes for reunification have been steadily deteriorating since the Greek Cypriots rejected, in a referendum 18 months ago, a unification plan submitted by the UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan'. Lords Ahmed, Harrison, Kilclooney, Maginnis, Monson, Rogan and Ladies Knight and Battenworth observed the following in a letter published in the *Daily Telegraph* on 5 December 2006: 'The EU failed to honour its promises to the Turkish Cypriots that their isolation would end if they voted for the UN proposals for a settlement in Cyprus. In contrast, the EU rewarded the Greek Cypriots with full membership of the EU after they voted against the UN plan. It is unfair and unreasonable for the EU to demand access to Turkish ports for Greek Cypri-

⁵¹ He was addressing the House of Lords on 20 November 2006.

ots and at the same time to continue to deny access to EU ports for Turkish Cypriots. The Government must now unilaterally agree to direct access to Britain for transport to Northern Cyprus'.

In conclusion, it is relevant to point out that, in the final analysis, the EU needs to realise that, favouring Greece and Greek South Cyprus, and marginalizing Turkey, which has been a staunch ally of Europe for more than half a century, will not only fail to solve the Cyprus issue, but also, in the words of Heinz Kramer, will 'lead to the disruption of the strategic pattern in the Aegean and the Mediterranean region, with serious consequences for Europe's future security'. To this I may add that the EU's profitability and credibility will also suffer because Turkey, isolated and abandoned by the West, may turn elsewhere for solace. Hence, the EU's venture into the Cyprus imbroglio will not be a catalyst, it will be catastrophic⁵².

⁵² Kramer, *op.cit.*, p.19.