

**Research Notes**

# **THE ANATOMY OF THE CYPRUS STALEMATE**

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Again and again some analysts of the Cyprus crisis turn a blind eye to the years 1963 - 1974 as if that period was an irrelevance, something dug out of the cobwebs of history. The Greeks naturally shy away from it, since it would show them in bad light and weaken their moral stand, for that is when the Greek racialists ran rampant. Yet the period 1963 - 74, the preamble to 1974 and after, is very relevant, not only because it was only yesterday but also the people directly involved in those years are much those involved now. The story since 1974 is the follow-up to 1963 - 74: it is part 2 of the same story. It is important to realize the common thread running through the Cyprus events since 1963 if one is to understand the Cyprus stalemate. The fact that the question of a settlement arises now at all stems from the fact that there was no settlement in the years 1963 - 74: but for the pre-1974 stalemate the 1974 crisis and the present stalemate would never have occurred.

From the Greek propaganda line one might get the impression that everything was all right till 1974, when the tragedy struck, as if out of the blue. The pre-1974 picture of the Cyprus scene that the Greeks draw is a very rosy one, and it is truly rosy - from the Greek side. It is when one looks at it at the other side of the coin that the picture collapses. On the reverse we see the Greeks grabbing all, while the Turks languish as the meaningless inter-communal negotiations to return to them their human and constitutional rights drag on and on. By 1974, after a lapse of eleven years, there was still no settlement. How did the Greeks get away with it.

After the pre-Christmas massacre of the Turkish Cypriots that the Greek Cypriots had indulged in, they went ahead to dismantle the constitution which of course impinged on the guarantee by the guarantor powers like Great Britain. How did Britain react to the upsetting of the order established at Zurich? Sir Alec Bishop, the then British High Commissioner in Cyprus, has since regretted in a letter to the Times that Britain did not go beyond a verbal protest to Makarios at the time. The British government must have been aware of Makarios's blackmailing capacity over the British bases because of their vulnerability to local pressures. This fact, coupled, no doubt, with assurances by Makarios about the bases caused the then British Government to suffice itself with a verbal protest. Thus the Commonwealth, far from bringing Makarios to task over the violation of human and constitutional rights in Cyprus, became a vehicle for his gaining international respectability in spite of his racist practices at home.

It is incomprehensible how the Third World countries with their long and bitter experiences of racism continued to accord a racist like Makarios high honours as a valued member of their club. Racism, let it be remembered, is nothing to do with colour: it is to do with race. The standing that Makarios enjoyed in the Third World reacted against a settlement in Cyprus, for Makarios capitalized on his valued membership in glossing over his racialist practices against Turks.

The world community must bear some responsibility for the present state of affairs, which has its roots in the decade preceding 1974. Extending full recognition to the Greek Cypriots as the Government of Cyprus it encouraged them to adopt delaying tactics in the intercommunal negotiations. Having shut the Turks out of the administration, gagged them on international forums, the Greeks believed that under their various pressures the Turkish Cypriot community would soon fade away into oblivion. Those were the years when the status of a Turk in Cyprus was below that of a foreigner, for the latter at least enjoyed security of life, limb, and property, but the Turk did not. So the Greeks' strategy was to rest on their laurels as the "Government of Cyprus", while playing at negotiations in order to fool the world public. This is what prevented a settlement from 1963 to 1974, the period which the Greek propagandists would rather avoid. But the events of 1974 were a logical development of those between 1963 and 1974. It is worth emphasizing that if the Greek Cypriots, in collaboration with Greece, had not ousted the Turkish Cypriots from their rightful place in the Cyprus administration the nasty events of 1974 would not and could not have taken place. It is by turning Cyprus into an all-Greek affair, as if Turks did not exist, that the Greeks started squabbling among themselves about the timing of ENOSIS with all the attendant consequences.

Although in 1963, when Makarios threw overboard the Cyprus Constitution and illegally turned the administration into an all-Greek one, all Greeks would have been outraged if Britain as a guarantor power had acted decisively to reverse this illegal action and restore the status quo, now with the benefit of hindsight Greek Cypriots might rue that Britain had not taken such an action. All Greeks are now vociferously at one that Britain should have intervened on their behalf against the Turks in 1974 on the ground that the Cyprus Treaty and Constitution were then upset! But it is for the Greeks to explain how they could reconcile their stand now with that in 1963, when the Cyprus Treaty and Constitution were originally violated by them.

The Greek version of the Cyprus impasse is simplistic: it is all due to the intransigence of Turks, in particular Turkey, which wants to colonize Cyprus. The Greeks again draw the usual picture of prosperous Cyprus minding its own business when it was invaded by the colonizers. But the undisputable Greek prosperity was in mean way at the expense of an impoverished Turkish

Community, whom the Greeks had deprived of their human and constitutional rights. As for the supposed colonization by Turkey, the Greeks readily illustrate their argument by pointing to the fact that Turkish troops are still there. But Turkey had waited in vain with extraordinary patience for eleven years for the Greeks to return to Constitutional legality, before intervening at the eleventh hour in the exercise of its treaty rights and obligations. It was a very costly operation in men and materials, since the Greeks had worked with beaver-like diligence to turn the island into a secret arsenal and the Greek army was well-entrenched there. Turkey cannot afford another operation of this sort, and it would be the height of folly for Turkey to withdraw the troops at this stage before a settlement has been reached (not forgetting that Greece has still got many troops smuggled in Cyprus, as was the case prior to the 1974 crisis). It is by no means certain that the Greek racialists, if unchecked, would not resume their nefarious activities. But the Greeks contend that there was no need for Turkey to intervene even on account of the safety of Turkish Cypriots. The latest straw of an argument some Greek propagandists have clung to in this regard is that there was "no immediate danger" to Turkish Cypriots from Sampson and company. No immediate danger? Not in one second? Not in five minutes? Leaving the verbal acrobatics aside, the fact is that Sampson along with his armed hordes was notable for murderous attacks on defenceless Turkish civilians. There were well publicized pictures of him strutting like a hero after he and his irregulars had carried out a maniacal assault on a Turkish village. He was treated by the Greeks like a "palikari" for such "exploits"! Far from arresting him for this dastardly crime, the Makarios regime, the so-called Government of Cyprus, allowed him and his private army to harass Turks under the nose of "the security forces". The then "good guy" Sampson became a "bad guy" when he got his comeuppance as a result of the Turkish intervention. In the light of all this the Greeks' "holly" stance is very unconvincing except perhaps to the bigotted. And in spite of the Greek attempts to discredit Turkey for the intervention in 1974, any reasonable person would conclude that without the intervention of Turkey Cyprus's independence and the fate of Turkish Cypriots would have been doomed. Turkey's twin aim in Cyprus is to safeguard Turkish Cypriots and the security of Turkey, since in the event of Enosis the Greek encirclement of Turkey would be complete, and Turkey is well aware of Greece's expansionist dream.

Turkish Cypriots insist that after their great ordeal from strident Greek racialism that was rife in the years 1963 - 74, when they were besieged and embattled for eleven years, and in order to fend off the recurrence of this racialism the only tenable and realistic solution is a bizonal federation, with each community living according to its lights mainly in its own area, but both cooperating in the common good. If only the Greek Cypriot leadership had early countenanced the realities, which meant acceptance of the fact that the two communities after all that had passed between them would have to be geog-

raphically separated, a settlement could have been reached as early as 1974 with as little pain and acrimony as possible before the people uprooted could take new roots. Instead the Greek leaders embarked on a vicious propaganda campaign and got carried away by it with the result that a settlement has long been delayed, has been made more difficult, and maximum suffering has been inflicted on the unfortunate victims, who have been used as propaganda pawns. Why did the Greek leaders choose to act in this way?

They knew that a settlement had to be realistic: it had to take into account the gross injustices of the Makarios regime, its tyranny over the Turkish Cypriot community and the inevitable troubles and the consequent realities of to-day. There have been nagging fears in the minds of the Greek Cypriot leaders that they will have to give an account to their own people for leading them to the present pass, for no realistic settlement can be favourable to the Greek side, which up to 1974 had appropriated, rather misappropriated practically all power and wealth of Cyprus. So the delay was a desperate attempt on the part of the Greek leadership to buy time and prolong their political lives by postponing the day of reckoning that was bound to come. So they concocted the romantic doctrine of the "long struggle", that if they could stick it out long enough, there was no telling how long, they could win back all and thus subjugate the Turkish Cypriot community. In the meantime the Greek Cypriot leadership mobilised the Greek lobbies in the U.S.A. and elsewhere and tried to keep up the morale of their people by concentrating on chalking up propaganda victories. To help the Greek Cypriot leaders along was their last straw: recognition. It is this that they flashed to their people saying that the Turkish Cypriot side unrecognized, unrepresented, muzzled, and friendless in the world would in the long run be worn down by being shunned and barred from the councils and markets of the world. The fruits of recognition became a pious hope for the future, and that is what kidded the Greek public that they could afford to wait.

But this has been an all-Greek government, illegal and unconstitutional since 1963. The constitution is not something they can disable when it does not suit them and re-enable when it does. There is an inconsistency in the attitude of those who say that they recognize the Greek Cypriot leader as the President of Cyprus and the Turkish Cypriot leader as the Vice-President, as stipulated in the Constitution of Cyprus, for anybody who bothers to read the original Constitution, which is now defunct through the Greek Cypriot violations, cannot but reasonably conclude that the President was powerless, as in international affairs, unless he enjoyed the support of his Turkish Cypriot colleague. Yet in international circles the Greek Cypriot leader's appeals have been treated, unjustifiably, as the voice of Cyprus, without any reference to the views of the Turkish Cypriot leader on the subject. Recognizing the Greeks as "The Government of Cyprus" and "The President of Cyprus" encouraged them no end in the years 1963 - 74 to avoid a settlement. Those who shout loudly about human

rights in Cyprus now would sound the more convincing if they had taken a firm stand against the suppression of human rights there during Makarios's regime for eleven years. Had they done so, not only would their voice now carry more weight, they might have nothing to complain about to-day, since such a firm stand could well have pressurized Makarios into changing his racialist practices.

In the recent U.N. resolution on Cyprus there is a stipulation that the inter-communal talks be resumed "on an equal footing." This was the positive aspect of the resolution. But how does the world community propose to translate this into concrete action? A corollary of this is that the Greek Cypriots should give up the pretensions to such titles as "The President of Cyprus" and the "Government of Cyprus". Regrettably, earlier in the debate the Assembly's decision not to allow the Turkish Cypriots to speak at all, let alone on an equal footing, contradicts the "equal footing" provisions in the resolution. This was against the tenet of fair play in view of the well-known circumstances of Cyprus, which has enshrined in its constitution the principle of partnership between the Greek and Turkish Cypriot communities, where the Turkish community has been deprived of all say in the administration since 1963 and the Greek Cypriot regime cannot speak for Turkish Cypriots.

Many of those who opposed the Turkish voice being heard in the Assembly have no pretensions as regards democracy and freedom of speech, the wisdom of hearing all sides of an argument. Although they are misguided, one thing that can be said for them is that as far as they are concerned there is no contradiction between their professed beliefs and practices in this respect. But others who ganged together to deny Turkish Cypriots the right of speech pride themselves on being great lovers of democracy and freedom including of speech. This is a clear case of people not practising what they preach. It seems that for them the passionate pleas of democracy and free speech are just political expedience: good propaganda tools in ideological warfare and questions of self-interest. Does it not smack of hypocrisy?

When last year the Turkish community were refused the right to speak in the Assembly, the London newspaper "The Times" argued in a leader that it was known what the Turkish Cypriot representative would have said anyway. On the same basis it can be argued that it was pointless for the Greeks to speak either as it was known what the Greeks would say, since their huge propaganda machine had left no stone unturned. Indeed, much the same argument could be put forward about an accused in the dock who pleads not guilty: it is known that he denies it, so why call him to give evidence? If the argument of "The Times" were applied in countless instances, as it could be, then it would be good-bye to the right of speech. Altogether it is a dangerous doctrine.

The hostile Greek propaganda, whatever delights it may bring, is wasteful of resources and costly. But it squanders much more. It is a negative force: it is counter-productive and poisons human relations. It generates a reaction in the form of counter-propaganda, and the first casualty of a propaganda war is goodwill. Mr. Perez de Cuellar, the Cyprus representative of the U.N. Secretary-General, speaking on the prospect of a Cyprus solution has rightly pointed to the mistrust between the two communities. The problem of Cyprus now is one essentially of goodwill and trust between the two estranged peoples. A reservoir of goodwill has to be worked for, bridges of trust have to be built. Both are labour-intensive and time-consuming. It is an unfortunate fact of life that it is harder to build than to destroy. It has taken eleven years to destroy every bridge between the two communities in the island. It will take many more years to build new bridges of trust. It is not easy to live down the bitterness, the legacy of the years since 1963.

It cannot be over-emphasized that for all its anomalies the period from 1974 onwards has been free from intercommunal bloodshed, which was a feature of the island in the years 1963 - 74. The Cyprus problem does not lend itself to a "flood-gate" solution, that is, open the floodgates and hey presto, the problem is solved! Any such attempt would once again plunge the island into bloodshed, for there are a lot of private and communal scores to be settled. The Turkish Cypriot community alone has lost about one per cent of its numbers through many kidnappings, murders and massacres by the Greek racialists over the years 1963 - 74. There is hardly a Turkish family in the land who has not lost a relative or close friend in this way. To ignore the significance of these facts is to ignore human psychology - at a peril. Any rapprochement between the two communities will have to be a slow process: to try to force the pace is to tempt Providence. A cautious approach is a realistic approach. It is in the light of this that one can see the wisdom in the Turkish invitation extended to the Greek businesses to resume business in Varosha. This is an important step in the right direction on the road to normalcy.

In the progress towards normality the attitude of the Church is crucial. The Cyprus story is a shameful story, but the greatest shame of all must attach to the Church, for it not only created the Enosis monster but also played a central role in the intercommunal conflict. One would have hoped that the lesson would have sunk in that an essential prerequisite of intercommunal reconciliation is the Church keeping a low profile. But, alas, the new head of the Greek Orthodox Church of Cyprus, oblivious to his Church's dismal record in the tragic story of Cyprus, promised to meddle in politics, breathing fire on his enthronement. One is reminded of Archbishop Makarios's fiery start to his episcopal office, when he unleashed the long bloody Enosis struggle. It is a sad comment on Greek Cypriot politics that key positions go not to men of conciliation



which is what Cyprus needs, but to extremists. The election of Archbishop Chrysostomos does not augur well for intercommunal relations.

After the death of Makarios four Greek party leaders came together and produced with the sleight of hand of a magician, as if out of a hat, a new "President of Cyprus"! Although the Greek leaders were known to belong to the old Makarios school it was hoped that they would be more realistic. But, unfortunately, they have come up with the same old policy: a mixture of bravado about the "long struggle" to put the clock back and smugness about being recognized as the one and only government of Cyprus.

The Greek Cypriots feel that they have a strong trump card: recognition. So they can afford to wait as long as they enjoy recognition in sole splendour. Thus the very thing that prevented the settlement of the Cyprus problem in 1963 - 74 has also been delaying it since 1974. On the one hand they sound desperately anxious for an urgent solution of the Cyprus problem and on the other they ensure the prolongation of the stalemate with their bombastic claim that they are the "Government of Cyprus" while the Turks are just "rebels". The Greeks have need to come down from their high pedestal so that they may negotiate with their Turkish compatriots, not as a "Government of Cyprus" negotiates condescendingly with "rebels" but as equal partners: two equal peoples with a common problem. Here the international community can help bring the Greeks back to earth, for if the Greeks have the trump card of recognition the international community too have a trump card: recognition. It can and should be used effectively against the mythical pan-Cyprian claims of a government that has been one hundred per cent Greek since 1963. This is a case of the world community being rather cruel to be kind: cruel, that is, to drive home to the Greek Cypriot administration the simple but, to them, painful truth that they can only represent Greek Cypriots; kind, that is, to get them to see the realities of the situation by administering to them the shock treatment of the truth. So an action by the world community would be not only in keeping with but also a logical sequence to the U.N. resolution, which stipulates that the two sides negotiate urgently "on an equal footing".

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